

Africa, legislation in 2002 extended unemployment insurance to domestic workers; by 2008, 633,000 domestic workers were registered. Among other benefits, the scheme allows domestic workers to take at least four consecutive months of paid maternity leave<sup>79</sup> (Samson, 2009; ILO, 2013a). In March 2013, Argentina adopted a new domestic workers law,<sup>80</sup> which established maternity leave along with a series of other measures designed to improve the working conditions of women in this economic activity. In Mauritius, apprentices, share workers and part-time workers (as long as they accumulate 12 months of continuous employment with the same employer) are included in maternity protection legislation; in Viet Nam, temporary and casual workers are explicitly covered; and in Belarus, Madagascar and the Russian Federation, even students are explicitly covered.<sup>81</sup> In India, the Unorganized Workers Social Security Act of 2008 was passed to create schemes to extend social security to informal industry workers, such as artisans, weavers, construction workers, cigar rollers and persons working in fisheries. In Thailand, a new voluntary social security system for informal sector workers was initiated in 2011. The scheme is based on contributions from workers and Government to finance old-age, disability, survivors', sickness, and maternity benefits.

Several Latin American countries have undertaken initiatives to extend maternity leave benefits to domestic workers (Brazil, El Salvador and Uruguay; see ILO, 2013b) and to other vulnerable women workers, including informal economy workers in Argentina and micro-entrepreneurs in Brazil (ILO, 2013c). In Brazil, as of 2010, individual micro-entrepreneurs can now easily register and, with a single contribution, access medical care, paid maternity leave and other social security benefits. It is estimated that 3 million workers have been formalized in this way (ILO, 2013c). Since 2003, China has rapidly expanded social security coverage, including maternity and parental benefits, committing to full social security coverage for all workers by 2020. The process is aimed at expanding social security coverage to rural and marginalized communities in order to lower inequality between social groups. Progress has been rapid with coverage for maternity insurance rising from 65 million in 2006 to nearly 139 million in 2011 (International Social Security Association, 2013).

Extending coverage to **self-employed workers**, including employers, own-account workers, members of producers' cooperatives and contributing family workers, is a key challenge and critical to women's access to maternity protection. Worldwide, 51.2 per cent of women were in the most vulnerable types of self-employment as own-account workers and contributing workers in 2009, and this reached as high as 84 per cent in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa (ILO, 2010). In Spain, social security legislation specifically includes casual, seasonal and self-employed workers within the scope of maternity benefits. Self-employed workers are also mandatorily covered for cash benefits in Azerbaijan, Brazil and Singapore. Some countries opt to cover the self-employed on a voluntary basis, such as Bulgaria, Mali and Paraguay.

In some countries, employer policies or **collective bargaining agreements** have increased the number of women covered or the amount of benefits paid. In Australia, for example, collective bargaining coverage has improved women's access to paid maternity leave (Baird and Litwin, 2005) and, by 2010 (just as Australia was first introducing statutory maternity leave), 14 per cent of all collective bargaining agreements included maternity leave provisions (Baird and Murray, 2012). In California (United States), unionized employees were more than three-and-a-half times more likely to have access to leave benefits which were above the legal requirements than their non-unionized counterparts (Milkman and Appelbaum, 2004).

Collective bargaining agreements can help to reinforce legislation, even if they fail to improve upon it, and this can serve to strengthen implementation. In South Africa, a study of 361 enterprise-level agreements and 31 bargaining council agreements found that most of the collective agreements mirrored the four months of leave set out by the labour code. Some 7 per cent of agreements specifically provided for additional unpaid maternity leave of about two months (Elsley, 2007). In Greece, centralized collective bargaining has increased the length of maternity leave for covered workers (European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions, 2006). However, the Greek National Human Rights Commission has expressed concern that, since the financial crisis and the related austerity measures, Greece has introduced, along with other gender equality provisions, a new kind