

Box 2.8 Social cash transfers and employment guarantee schemes (EGS) delivering maternity protection to vulnerable workers

Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme is an EGS that provides cash transfers with no work requirement (de facto paid maternity leave) to women beneficiaries who are more than six months pregnant or nursing an infant up to 10 months old. It also allows women to adjust their working hours according to family responsibilities, arriving late or leaving early if necessary (Holmes and Jones, 2013). The Government of **Ghana** is committed to improving maternal health and women's economic opportunity as part the joint UN Millennium Acceleration Framework. A project is set to test a gender-sensitive maternity protection benefit package for pregnant and nursing women as a means of addressing demand-side related causes of maternal mortality. The package aims to delivery maternity protection, including through labour-intensive public works.

In **India**, the *Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana* (IGMSY) provides a cash transfer programme in 52 pilot districts reaching out to nearly 1.4 million pregnant and lactating mothers. A daily benefit (US\$ 1.68 for six weeks) for all women aged 19 and over (limited to the first two pregnancies and excluding those who are covered through benefits provided to public sector employees) aims at providing partial compensation for wage loss to encourage women to take adequate rest before and after confinement. On the fulfilment of

certain conditions relating to maternal and child health care practices, including breastfeeding, all eligible women also receive a cash incentive of nearly US\$ 100 in three instalments from the end of the second trimester of pregnancy until the child reaches 6 months, both as partial wage compensation and as an incentive to promote self-caring behaviour (Fultz and Francis, 2013).

In **Peru**, *Juntos* is a Government-led cash transfer programme which targets the lowest income households with children under the age of 14 or pregnant women. In 2012, it covered over 490,000 households with a transfer of around US\$ 70 every two months conditional, among other things, on attendance at antenatal and postnatal visits for the mother and the child, delivery in a health facility and information on reproductive health and family planning. Impact assessments show a 65 per cent increase in access to maternal and infant health services, which is expected to improve health outcomes, given the high level of maternal mortality in poor rural areas. Beneficiaries also reported improved equity in the division of family responsibilities between women and men, with men reporting more involvement in childcare and domestic chores. However, the programme still promotes women's role as the main caregiver, which, combined with programme conditionalities, is likely to reinforce women's time poverty (Holmes and Jones, 2013).

Eligibility requirements for maternity leave

On production of a medical certificate or other appropriate certification, as determined by national law and practice, stating the presumed date of childbirth, a woman to whom this Convention applies shall be entitled to a period of maternity leave of not less than 14 weeks.

Convention No. 183, Article 4(1)

According to Convention No. 183, as well as the older ILO maternity protection standards, the sole prerequisite for a worker's right to maternity leave is the production of a certificate indicating the expected date of birth. In national laws, a woman's right to take maternity leave is often linked to various eligibility

requirements. These differ from country to country, but some of the more common requirements are discussed below.⁸⁵

Often, national laws prescribe a certain period of notice which a woman must give her employer should she plan to go on maternity leave.⁸⁶ In Croatia, for example, a worker must notify her employer of her intention to take maternity leave as soon as possible, and not less than one month before the leave is due to begin. In Belgium, a woman must inform her employer no later than seven weeks before the expected birth, based on medical certification. In Colombia, there is no fixed period of notice, but an employee must inform the enterprise of her pregnancy, the presumed date of childbirth and the date on which the period of leave will commence, as well as presenting a medical certificate