

### National provisions and duration

In total, parental leave provisions were found in 66 of the 169 countries for which information was available (see Appendix IV). Nearly all of the Developed Economies, Eastern European and Central Asian countries that were analysed provide a period of parental leave to take care of a newborn or young child, even if the length of the leave differs by country. Some 35 countries out of the 36 Developed Economies and all 16 countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia provide for parental leave. Among the countries in these regions for which full information is available in the database, Switzerland is the only country with no federal parental leave provisions. In Estonia, a mother or a father shall be granted unpaid parental leave to raise a child up to 3 years of age. In Belgium and the United Kingdom, each parent has an independent right to a period of parental leave: four months paid at a flat rate in Belgium and 13 unpaid weeks in the United Kingdom.

Parental leave and, in particular, paid parental leave, is rarer in developing countries and the less industrialized parts of the world. Five countries assessed in the Middle East offered unpaid parental leave solely for mothers. Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic provide 1 year while in Kuwait the employer can grant a working woman four months, at her request. Among the African countries analysed, only five provide for the kind of long-term parental leave described above, all on an unpaid basis: they are Burkina Faso, Chad, Egypt, Guinea and Morocco (where leave is granted with the agreement of the employer).<sup>17</sup> In Guinea, after the expiration of the 14-week maternity leave period, women may take an additional nine months of unpaid leave. In Burkina Faso, male or female employees can request up to six months of unpaid leave (renewable once) to care for their children. In the case of illness, the leave period can be extended to 1 year (also renewable once). Chad also provides the same entitlement to either parent, while in the remaining countries only mothers are eligible.

Among the Asian countries analysed, only three of the 25 where information was available provide for parental leave. In Mongolia, parents are entitled to leave to take care of a child under the age of 3. The Republic of Korea also allows childcare leave, paid at 40 per cent of previous earnings, for up to 1 year for children aged 6 and under. Nepal's labour code grants unpaid "special

leave" for up to 30 days in 1 year that can be used by any permanent employee for family-related purposes. In addition, the Philippines provides a specific type of childcare leave that is available only to single parents and which allows up to seven days off work per year.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, parental leave provisions also seem to be rather scarce, with just two countries out of 31 offering this entitlement. In Cuba, following maternity leave, either parent is entitled to parental leave, paid at 60 per cent of wages, until the child reaches 1 year of age. In Chile, women workers are entitled to paid parental leave (at 100 per cent of previous earnings with a ceiling) for up to 12 weeks after the end of their maternity postnatal leave. Women workers may take part-time paid parental leave for up to 18 weeks, in which case they will receive 50 per cent of maternity benefits and 50 per cent of their wages. If the mother agrees, then the father may take part of the parental leave benefit, with at least six weeks reserved for the mother.

### Eligibility for parental leave

As is the case for maternity and paternity leave, the right to parental leave and the corresponding cash benefits are often linked to different eligibility requirements, which are determined by each country. These are often similar to the eligibility requirements discussed in the previous sections. One frequent condition for parental leave concerns the worker's previous employment. In the few countries where payment is provided during parental leave, the eligibility requirements for cash benefits may be more restrictive than those governing the leave.<sup>18</sup> In others, entitlement to leave is automatically associated with benefits.<sup>19</sup>

As in the case of maternity and paternity leave, certain categories of workers are implicitly or explicitly excluded by the national legislation that provides for parental leave, including self-employed, non-standard, domestic workers or employees working in SMEs. There are, however, examples of inclusive parental leave policies. In Azerbaijan, for example, partially paid parental leave is available to any worker caring for a child, including single parents or other family members. In other countries, part-time and casual workers are explicitly covered by parental leave legislation, as is the case in Spain, where casual, seasonal