

filing cases in view of the high court fees, and failing to deter discriminatory practices (*ibid.*). The Free Confederation of Mauritanian Workers (CLTM) sent a communication examined by the CEACR in 2013 in the framework of the monitoring of the application of Convention No. 3, in which it indicated that the absence of any monitoring or punishment of offences due to the lack of regulations to implement the 2004 Labour Code is resulting in a “decline in maternity protection”: few employers comply with the law and the number of pregnant or nursing women exposed to increased hazards and serious risks is rising (ILO CEACR, 2014).

A number of countries have adopted initiatives to improve the implementation of legal rights in practice. Active research agendas and information dissemination measures, such as websites, media releases and workplace campaigns can be found in a number of countries (e.g., Australia, Hong Kong (China), Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Singapore and Sweden). Some governments have established special bodies to investigate and monitor workplaces and to receive complaints. France, for example, has a constitutional authority called the Defender of Rights. This body receives and mediates complaints and promotes information and research on the principle of equality and non-discrimination. Its 2012 annual report noted that pregnancy remains the leading cause of discrimination in France, with 10.6 per cent of women reporting discrimination on the basis of pregnancy over the course of their careers (Le Défenseur des Droits, 2012). Since 2008, the Defender of Rights and the ILO have also published a yearly “Barometer on discrimination at work”, which monitors workers’ perceptions on this issue. The 2014 Barometer revealed that one-third of working women have been the victim of workplace discrimination and that gender, along with pregnancy/maternity, remain the primary causes of discrimination. Among the measures to promote equality between women and men, the development of accessible childcare solutions is the step most widely supported among the respondents.<sup>27</sup> The Committee of Experts under Convention No. 111 has also pointed out that, in order to repeal discriminatory measures against women, “it would undoubtedly be necessary to examine other measures, such as those to improve the health protection of all workers, safety and adequate transport, the availability of social services to improve the sharing of family responsibilities which

would be necessary to enable women to benefit from the same opportunities as men in terms of access to employment” (ILO CEACR, 2014).

In Australia, the Fair Work Act of 2009 provides mechanisms to promote research and education, and to investigate, monitor and enforce compliance with anti-discrimination laws.<sup>28</sup> In Spain, the Labour and Social Security Inspectorate stepped up efforts to monitor companies’ compliance with equality provisions, uncovering violations and imposing sanctions (Mas-selot et al., 2012). In Uruguay, a tripartite commission for equal treatment and opportunities leads efforts to promote gender equality, including the principles of maternity protection, in collective bargaining and has successfully targeted efforts at extending equal opportunity and treatment to domestic workers as well.

Adequately staffed, trained and efficient labour inspection services are also important. In Morocco, in 2013, the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training organized training sessions for labour inspectors on fundamental rights, including equality and non-discrimination, in various municipalities. A ministerial circular on the implementation of legal provisions against gender discrimination at work was also adopted. It requires labour inspectors to submit data on “labour indicators on women wage earners” to the central administration, which specify, among other things, the number of infringements of maternity protection laws (ILO CEACR, 2014).

Trade unions, employers’ organizations and civil society organizations all have key roles to play as well, in research, education, advocacy and representation. In the United Republic of Tanzania, for example, the Association of Tanzania Employers (ATE) has provided training and materials for employers around the country to help them understand the provisions and implications of the law, including those related to maternity protection, while trade unions at national and international levels have produced research on maternity protection and discrimination, as well as awareness-raising information for workers on the principles and rights related to maternity protection, including employment protection and non-discrimination.

The ILO Maternity Protection Resource Package provides practical guidance for all of the stakeholders on practical measures that can be adopted to improve the realization of legal rights (ILO, 2012b, Module 9).