

PROGRAMME		
08 : 30	Arrival of Participants Arrival of Senior Government Officials Arrival of Invited Guests Arrival of Guest of Honour National Anthem and Prayer	Secretariat
09:00	Opening Session of the National Dialogue -Hosted by the Ministry of Gender & Ministry of Labour	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remarks by the International Labour Organization • Welcome Remarks by the Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Labour • Remarks by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender • Opening Speech by Guest of Honour, Dr. Christine Kaseba Sata 	
10:00	Information Dissemination Session	
10:00	Presentation by the Ministry of Labour on Existing Policies and Laws on Maternity Protection in Zambia	Ministry of Labour
10:20	Presentation by the Ministry of Gender on the Gender Policy Theme 1: <i>Youth entrepreneurship and self-employment</i>	Ministry of Gender
10:40	Q&A Session	
11:10	Tea Break and Interaction Session	
11:30	Presentation on the Maternal Health Policy in Zambia	Ministry of Health
11:50	Presentation of the Maternity Protection Resource Package	International Training Centre of the ILO
12:20	Presentation of the MPRP to the First Lady-Symbolic of the Launch of the MPRP	
12:45	Guests Invited to Lunch	

Design by the International Training Centre of the ILO, Turin, Italy



National Dialogue and Launch of ILO Maternity Protection Resource Package in Zambia

Lusaka, Zambia

29 May 2012



International Labour Organization



International Training Centre

www.itcilo.org

National Dialogue and Launch of ILO Maternity Protection Resource Package in Zambia

Background and rationale

Healthy pregnancies and healthy newborn children, combined with a measure of economic security, are an aspiration for all working mothers. Maternity protection at work supports this aspiration. Its goals are twofold:

- to ensure that a woman's economic activities do not pose risks to the health of the woman and her child, and
- to ensure that women's reproductive roles do not compromise the economic security of their households. Maternity protection at work encompasses a host of different components ranging from maternity leave, health protection and non-discrimination to social protection and breastfeeding.

Principles and rights related to maternity protection at work have been embedded in three Conventions on maternity protection of the International Labour Organization (ILO). These rights are also firmly established in a host of international treaties relating to human rights, women's rights, rights to health, and the rights of the child. Almost every nation echoes these commitments in its national legislation.

Nevertheless, while maternity protection is widely regarded as part of the core values of our societies, many women, both in the formal and informal economies, continue to face maternity-related threats to their health and economic security. Many women lack access to a period of paid leave before and after childbirth, and many others continue to face dismissal and discrimination at work because they are or may become pregnant. Working conditions, and biological, physical, and chemical agents associated with productive work can potentially pose risks to reproduction in the absence of information, monitoring and evaluation. The ability of new mothers to breastfeed their child according to international health recommendations may be interrupted by productive work when breastfeeding support is lacking. Bringing up children without

jeopardizing parents' access to, participation in and advancement in economic activity, remains a challenge when quality and affordable childcare arrangements are not widely available.

While the situation of women working in formal, standard jobs is uneven, for great numbers of women working in atypical, non-standard and precarious jobs and the informal economy, maternity protection remains well beyond reach. The absence of any form of social protection deprives these women of appropriate maternal and infant health care, thus forcing some of them into catastrophic health expenditures and poverty. Clearly, more action is needed to bridge the distance between international aspirations for maternity protection, as reflected in the Millennium Development Goals (in particular MDG's 4 and 5) and the Decent Work Agenda operationalised at country level through the Zambia Decent Work Country programme, and the realities on the ground. The world of work is a promising entry point for scaling up interventions aimed at improving maternal and infant health, addressing income and social insecurity and poverty.

In Zambia, the work on Maternity protection awareness has been ongoing to the extent that the Tripartite Consultative Labour Council through the Labour Law Reform Process has been engaged in the discussions. The current Employment Act Cap 268 of the laws of Zambia in regards to Maternity Protection is based on C103 of 1952 which Zambia ratified in 1972.

The Act states that:-

- every female employee who has completed at least two years of continuous service with her employer from the date of first engagement or since the last maternity leave taken, as the case may be, on production of a medical certificate as to her pregnancy signed by a registered medical practitioner, be entitled to maternity leave of twelve weeks with full pay.

- a woman who falls ill arising from pregnancy and results in becoming temporarily incapable of performing her official duties, such an employee shall be entitled to sick leave in accordance with the provisions of section fifty-four of the same Act which states "...shall provided he has produced a valid medical certificate, receive pay for the days absent up to a maximum of twenty-six working days in any period of twelve months".
- An employer shall not terminate the services of a female employee or impose any other penalty or disadvantage upon such employee for reasons connected with such employee's pregnancy

The Act therefore addresses most issues potent in C183 which are; maternity leave (which is a minimum of 14 weeks in C183), other related types of leave, cash benefits, employment protection and non-discrimination and health protection but not breast feeding breaks.

Another piece of legislation is the Statutory Instrument No. 2 of 2011, which can be cited as the Minimum wages and Conditions of Employment (General) Order, 2011 catering for vulnerable workers who are not represented by unions and those not in management positions. This SI provides for 120 days of maternity leave with full pay for workers covered under its provisions.

Zambia, therefore is not far lagging in the provision of Maternity Protection as it ratified and applied mandatory elements that were contained in C103 of 1952 which is preceded by the current Convention 183 on Maternity Protection of 2000. It is evident to say that Zambia has made great strides towards providing adequate Maternity Protection though it should be noted that much work remains to be done in ensuring that women especially in the informal sector are accorded an opportunity to access improved conditions of service as regards to maternity protection.

Dialogue Objective

To galvanise political ownership for the ratification process of Convention through awareness creation on the components of the convention.

More specifically, the dialogue aims:

- to familiarise participants with the key issues, actors and frameworks around maternity protection at work;
- to provide them with information, analytical tools and practical resources to take action at national, local and workplace levels;
- to assist in the design of a strategy for further outreach and dissemination of knowledge and competence, within the governmental structures and the society, addressed to various audiences and based on the current international and other national state-of-the art in this area.

The dialogue will draw extensively from the recently published **ILO Maternity Protection Resource Package (2012)**. <http://mprp.ilo.org/pages/en/accessibility.html>

Participants profile

The intended audience may include:

- Policy and decision-makers
- Heads of large institutions as well as representatives from the informal sector.
- representatives of workers' and employers' organizations;
- staff of the UN system, including UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, UN-Women and other United Nations agencies working on health, nutrition, gender equality, social protection, human rights and employment issues;
- non-governmental organizations, including women's and breastfeeding advocacy groups and faith based organizations.