



## World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA)

### Concept note for Empowering Parents Campaign (EPC) - Advancing Social Protection for Breastfeeding and Work

#### Introduction

As early as 1919, the ILO included maternity protection in Convention no 3. In 2000, the ILO adopted Convention C 183 which provides 14 weeks of paid maternity leave and provisions for paid breastfeeding breaks as a minimum standard. Progress on ratification of C183 has been relatively slow with 41 ratifications to date<sup>1</sup>. Increasing numbers of women of child-bearing age are entering the paid workforce. Globally more than 800 million women workers (41%) still do not have adequate maternity protection, and paternity leave is offered in 92 countries<sup>2</sup>. Recent evidence from the Lancet confirms the importance of breastfeeding for survival, health and wellbeing of both mothers and children<sup>3</sup>. Work is one key barrier to continued breastfeeding. Global breastfeeding rates have been stagnant partly due to lack of social protection and other support measures. Research shows that paid maternity leave policies could help reduce infant mortality by 13% for each additional month of maternity leave<sup>4</sup>. Several countries in, for example, Asia are working towards improved maternity leave provisions<sup>5</sup>.

The 1990 Innocenti Declaration<sup>6</sup> fourth target covers imaginative legislation for working women. WABA's involvement in maternity protection has been ongoing since 1993. Two World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) themes have featured maternity protection (1993 and 2015). Advocacy of the WABA Women and Work Task Force together with partners of the Maternity Protection Coalition (MPC)<sup>7</sup> during the revision of the 2000 ILO C183 contributed to ensuring that breastfeeding breaks were retained and that the maternity leave was increased to 14 weeks as a minimum. The Maternity Protection Campaign Kit: a Breastfeeding Perspective was developed by the MPC as a campaign tool to improve ratification and mother-friendly workplaces. In 2012, a Maternity Protection Resource

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<sup>1</sup> ILO 2017

<sup>2</sup> ILO report 2014

<sup>3</sup> Victora et al 2016

<sup>4</sup> Nandi et al 2016

<sup>5</sup> Alive and Thrive 2013

<sup>6</sup> Innocenti Declaration 1990

<sup>7</sup> In 1998, four NGOs— IBFAN (International Baby Food Action Network), ILCA (International Lactation Consultant Association), LINKAGES, and WABA joined their strengths to create the Maternity Protection Coalition with technical support of IMCH (International Maternal and Child Health, Uppsala University, Sweden) and of UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund). As of 2008, LINKAGES is no longer active in the coalition, but La Leche League International (LLL) had joined.



Package<sup>8</sup> was also developed to provide guidance and tools to strengthen and extend maternity protection to women in all types of economic activity. WABA focused the WBW 2015 theme on breastfeeding and work issues. This was followed up by a technical symposium in Stockholm that resulted in the development of a Framework for Action that called for a multi-pronged approach in addressing contemporary challenges regarding implementation of maternity protection, parental protection and other gender equitable measures for both formal and informal sectors workers<sup>9</sup>.

WABA plans to explore and develop a campaign focused on empowering parents with information and ensuring coverage of social protection measures to enable them make the best choice in infant feeding. WABA together with a broad alliance of partners/stakeholders will develop and advance a menu of actions to ensure that maternity, paternity and parental protection measures are recognised and included as part of social protection coverage that will ensure a healthy, just, gender equal society and survival as outlined in the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### Strategy

A two-pronged strategy will be used to increase the supply of gender equitable social protection and create demand for the same. This will be achieved by working through the tried and tested tripartite structure comprising of governments, employers and trade unions. WABA and its Civil Society (CSO) partner organisations will use social mobilisation, information and communication strategies to promote positive attitudes and social norms that will lay a foundation for gender equitable social protection. WABA will also advocate to governments who are responsible for the supply of gender equitable social protection. This will be done using the ratification and implementation of the C183 into national law and practice (NLP). WABA and partners will furthermore identify employers who responsible for creating and implementing parent friendly work policies with the aim of scaling up. WABA and partners will work with the trade unions that in turn create demands for gender equitable social protection supporting and informing workers of their rights, including social security policies and monitoring the implementation of NLPs. In order to realise the goal of the gender equitable social protection, WABA and other partners (e. g. within the UNICEF/WHO-led Global Breastfeeding Collective (GBC) will explore mechanisms of financing parental social protection with funding institutions and governments. In the longer term, the GBC (which now includes the ILO) can explore the development of a new ILO convention on Parental Social Protection that will encompass all the demands on parental social protection, including those required for optimal breastfeeding. This new Convention will aim to set a new global standard that will promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all as outlined in the

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<sup>8</sup> The package is a joint collaboration between the ILO Conditions of Work and Employment Branch (TRAVAIL), the Bureau for Gender Equality (GENDER), ILO-Beijing, ILO-Moscow and the ILO International Training Centre, in partnership with the WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women and IBFAN-GIFA.

<sup>9</sup> Stockholm Framework for Action (FFA) 2016



SDGs. 2019 marks the ILO centenary and would be an opportunity to launch the process of the new convention.

### Overall objective

To promote gender equitable social protection<sup>10</sup> measures in order to empower parents and carers to facilitate the integration of caring work (includes breastfeeding) and work.

### Specific objectives<sup>11</sup>

1. Create protective global policy environments and national legislation that are supportive and do not hinder the achievement of gender equitable social protection
2. Promote family friendly values and equitable social norms and practices at all levels.
3. Support workplace policies and conditions that will facilitate the integration of women's and men's productive and reproductive work and lives in both formal and informal work settings.

### Outputs/Expected results<sup>12</sup>

- 1a. Strategic advocacy directions and research based messages are identified and stronger national measures on parental social protection for working parents including those in the informal sectors are achieved.
- b. Gender transformative and equitable education materials developed by a wide range of stakeholders.
- 2a. Mechanisms for financing of Social Protection developed and implemented.
- b. Increase in C183 (as a minimum) ratification and implementation at national level. Increase in National Law and Practices (NLP) at the country level and regional policies.
- c. A process for the development of a global standard for gender equitable social protection is in place.
3. Several models of family-friendly workplace policies are documented, shared widely and replicated.
4. A range of responsive information/communications services from mainstream to alternative media (publications, social media, e-activism, creative media) provided to support and strengthen the breastfeeding network and to link with other stakeholders.

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<sup>10</sup> Social protection includes maternity protection standards e.g. C 183 and other relevant ILO conventions

<sup>11</sup> From the FFA

<sup>12</sup> From the FFA and aligned with WABA SP (2014-2018)



## Activities <sup>13</sup>

1. To facilitate and mobilise public awareness via information/communication and action on IYCF at all levels of society, across generations, with multiple partners to garner support for breastfeeding women and their partners<sup>14</sup>
  - (a) Raising awareness using the annual WABA World Breastfeeding Week campaign themes with a focus in 2019 on centenary of C183 – Convention on Maternity Protection.
  - (b) Outreach and networking with new and existing groups using WABA's social media platforms (website, Facebook, twitter).
  - (c) Development and promotion of gender transformative and equitable education materials via Men care, ICM, ABM, ILCA.
2. To identify and analyse gaps in leadership and advocacy in the global network, and address priorities (value added prioritisation)<sup>15</sup>
  - (a) Conduct and organise a global conference addressing the issue of maternity/parental entitlements financing. Regional conferences will be targeted as appropriate.
  - (b) National level ratification campaign of C183 in at least 3 countries per region.
  - (c) To advocate for a new ILO convention pertaining to Parental Protection.
3. To build the capacity and disseminate relevant information on workplace policies and support in both the formal and informal sectors among WABA and its partners<sup>16</sup>.
  - (a) Develop and promote Family-Friendly Workplace Initiatives via seed grant projects, guidelines, online mapping, and compilation of case studies.

## Partners

Multi stakeholders consisting of existing and new partners/individuals : All WABA Core Partners (ILCA, LLLI, ABM, IBFAN), ILO, UNICEF, WHO, GBC, National Governments, Other relevant UN Bodies, NGOs (MenCare, Alive and Thrive, Girls Globe, and more) Trade Unions, Employers, ICM, Research/Academic Institutions (Penang Medical College, McGill University, and more ).

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<sup>13</sup> In relation to WABA current log frames and Strategic Plan (2014-2018)

<sup>14</sup> SP Str Obj 1

<sup>15</sup> SP Str Obj 2

<sup>16</sup> SP Str Obj 3



### Next steps

1. To share and obtain feedback on the concept note with WABA Steering Committee, Stockholm Symposium participants and the network at large.
2. Share the concept at the WABA Global Breastfeeding Partners Forum in October 2016 to gauge interest and commitment from attendees, and map out activities/commitments to be undertaken by different partners.
3. Develop and implement parent friendly workplace seed grant project.
4. Develop the EPC working group with interested members.

### For further information, contact

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## Strategy for Gender Equitable Social Protection

