



# Maternity Protection of Viet Nam: The Investment Case

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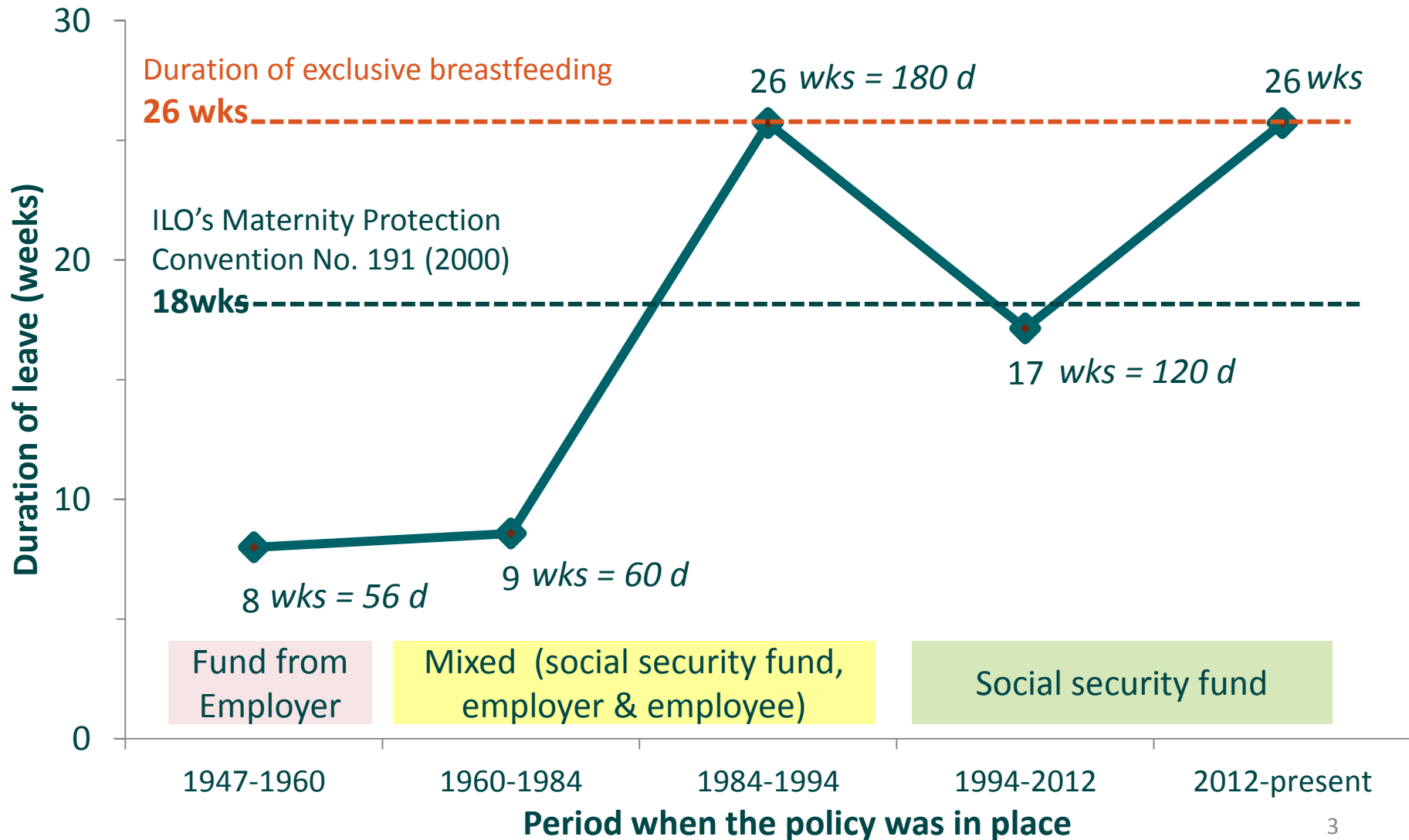


# Viet Nam: Background

- 90 million population, average income: USD2,200 (2014)
- Women contribute significantly to the economy
  - 48% of total labor force
  - 73% women (aged 15+) in workforce
- Women involved in politics, sciences and management
  - ~25% of the 500 parliament members are women
- Government has long history of and commitment to protect and promote woman and child's rights, gender equality and work-life balance
  - 1990: Ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child
  - 1997: Ratified ILO's Conventions on gender equality: No. 100 on Equal Remuneration and No. 111 on Discrimination (Employment and Occupation)
  - 1994: Labor Code with a chapter on female workers adopted, then amended in 2002, 2006, 2007 and 2012 (as new Labor Code)
  - 2011: Law on gender equality adopted
  - 2015 (end): Decree on regulations for female workers: to be adopted



# History of maternity protection in Viet Nam



# Recent policy win to promote maternity protection in Viet Nam

June 18, 2012

## Amended Labor Code

Paid maternity leave extended from 4 to 6 months



91% of MP voted for 6 month paid maternity leave

# Building the evidence for maternity protection: Addressing key questions

## Do women really want to take longer maternity leaves?

- Survey results: 89% female workers wanted 6 months of paid maternity leave

## What are employers' opinions? Do they support?

- Survey results: 79% employers and trade union representatives agreed to support paid maternity leave to 6 months

## Does longer maternity leave cause discrimination to women in recruitment?

- ILO Rec 191 says discrimination can be prevented by allocating public funds to cover ML
- While a concern, in lower-income countries, there is still a greater positive effect on women's lives and employment outcomes
- Workplace support should be coupled with protection against anti-discriminatory practices

## Who pays? Is it affordable?

- Social Insurance Fund during 2007-2010 had a surplus of ~USD 340 million (36%)
- If maternity leave extended to 6 months, the fund would be sufficient, remaining at a surplus of 8%
- In Viet Nam, all maternity protection is paid through the social insurance fund

# Vietnam Maternity Protection Scorecard

## Maternity leave

- 6 months fully paid by Social Insurance
- Also applicable to women adopting child under 6-month old, surrogate mothers and intended mothers

## Health protection at work for pregnant and BF women

- Lighter work, no night shift
- Paid leave for convalescence and recovery after maternity leave

## Cash and medical benefits

- Ante natal care costs covered by Social Health Insurance (max 5 visits)
- One-time allowance of 2 month minimum wage

## Employment protection and non-discrimination

- Entitled to unilaterally terminate or postpone labor contract
- Job security for pregnant women and new mothers after maternity leave

## Breastfeeding support after the return to work

- Workplace Lactation Program implemented by General Confederation of Labor
- Expect to be regulated in the forthcoming Government's Decree

## Flexible or reduced hours working arrangements

- Breastfeeding break: 1 hour/day for working mothers with child <1y (can be accrued or flexibly taken)

## Paternity and parental leave

- 5 - 7 days
- Fully paid by Social Insurance

## Child-care support

- Mentioned in Labor Code but not yet well implemented
- Expect to be regulated in the forthcoming Government's Decree

# Key messages

- A major driver for improved maternity protection in Viet Nam was the State's commitment to fulfill women and children's rights, including the right to breastfeeding.
- Extension of paid maternity leave to six months using public funds was seen affordable in Viet Nam and an investment in the future workforce.
- More women are entering the global and national workforce and need support to be able to balance breastfeeding and career
- In addition to generating additional tax income for the state through increased labor participation, maternity protection contributes to improved health and development outcomes and reduce companies' and nation's healthcare costs.
- National and regional platforms must be used to improve all aspects of maternity protection



*“The prosperity of Viet Nam is made by the great contribution of our women, from young to old, that makes the country more brilliant.”*

Ho Chi Minh



**THANK YOU!**

