

100 Years of Maternity Protection: Transforming Leave and Care Policies for All

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The year 2019 marks both the ILO's first centenary and the 100th anniversary of international labour standards on maternity protection. It was during the first International Labour Conference (ILC) in November 1919 that the Maternity Protection Convention, 1919 (No.3), the first gender equality international labour standard, was adopted. The convention recognised the right to paid leave with childbirth with employment protection. This major achievement was the result of strong advocacy, including during the Women's Labour Congress in 1919.

Fast-forward to June 2019, when the ILC adopted the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work , which calls for "achieving gender equality at work through a transformative agenda".

Marking the Centenary of the first international labour standards on maternity protection offers a unique opportunity to reflect on the progress and challenges of realising this crucial right and to call on member States to ratify and implement Convention No. 183 and Recommendation No. 191 (ILO, 2019b, Section IV, part B).

On 8 November 2019, the ILO and the European Commission, in collaboration with UNICEF, UN Women, the WHO and the International Network on Leave Policies & Research (INLPR), will host an expert seminar on maternity protection and care policies with senior policymakers, to mark these primary concerns of the ILO.