

Forum: SDG 5**Student Officer(s):** Tony Lee, Junsuk Kim, Nguyen Tue Minh**TOPIC 2: The question of the expansion of maternity and paternity leave**

[Please consult the SDG5 Topic LibGuide for guidance on your research](#)

I. Introduction to the Topic

Currently, almost all nations have maternity leave policies in place that permit mothers to take a brief break from work around giving birth and then return to their prior employer. Generally, national policies allow mothers and, according to recent trends, fathers to take time off work after the birth or adoption of a child by providing a period of job-protected leave and some level of income replacement. Therefore, the normalisation of paternal leave of a country depends heavily on income placements and coverages provided for both parents. In addition to the policy provisions already in place, mothers' perceptions of how taking time off would impact their job security and career advancement were among the employment factors that influenced them.

However, the effects of leave policies and duration on mothers' physical and mental health as well as the development of their children are currently attracting a lot of attention. Inadequate maternity leave can cause relationship problems, anxiety, depression, and the inability to return to work. A typical 12 weeks maternity leave is only the fourth trimester after pregnancy and birth. It takes three to four months after delivery for problems that require assistance to even become apparent, therefore as a result many parents around the world suffer from physical deterioration along with mental health concerns. Delegates must also be aware how different workforces and governmental bodies would tackle this. Depending on different legislations of that nation, parental leave may diminish economic efficiency in a competitive spot labour market, which are heavily prominent in LEDCs, because they prevent employers and employees from freely choosing the best compensation package. Member nations which are against the expansion of parental leave might also discuss cases of exploiting parents through financial drawbacks, such as lower wages.

Financial and employment-related factors seem to be the main determinants of decisions regarding taking leaves of absence for paternity leave. As such, even different multilateral institutions and governmental bodies struggle to find the appropriate line, and many individuals would notice drastic differences in the time allocations. For example, in January 2023, the United Nations announced changes to its parental leave policy. Under the new policy, all parents are given the same paid time off of 16 weeks, regardless of gender. Compared to other organisations like the International Monetary Fund, which currently provides 12 weeks of parental leave to birth mothers and 8 weeks to fathers and adoptive parents, the changes can be considered quite extensive for different member nations.

II. Definition of Key Terms & Concepts

Maternity Leave: refers to the time, either paid or unpaid, that a new mother takes off work after the birth or adoption of a child.

Paternity Leave: is the policy that allows fathers to take a time off from their work following the birth or adoption of a child, shared caregiving responsibilities of the child and promoting the family relationship.

Gender Equality: is a principle that all genders should have equal rights, opportunities, and treatment from all aspects, including the workplace.

GENEVA: is conventions and form of additional protocols of the core of international humanitarian law, a series of international treaties concluded between 1864 and 1949, which discusses the idea of maternity and paternity leave briefly.

International Labor Organization: is an agency of the UN, responsible for global labor issues, such as work, employment, unemployment, and ethics. Dealing with policies regarding the nation's measure on paternity and maternity leave closely connects to the ILO as one of the issues that concern the leaves are economic productivity and 'loss' of companies' work force.

III. Key Stakeholders

The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)

The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC), which is composed of 15 members appointed by the UN General Assembly, is responsible for making recommendations on parental leave policies for adoption by the General Assembly and the governing bodies of the organisations within the UN common system of salaries, allowances and benefits.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is the organisation that advocates for the implementation of Family-Friendly policies: paid maternity, paternity, and parental leave, to ensure the health and well-being of children and parents. Also UNICEF recommends at least six months of paid leave for all, with a specific allocation for mothers, as it has been associated with various benefits, including lower rates of acute infant and chronic child illness, also improved cognitive development, and lower rates of postnatal depression for mothers.

International Labour Organization

The International Labour Organization (ILO) adopted several conventions related to maternity and paternity leave, such as: "Maternity Protection Convention" in 1919 and the "Parental Leave Convention" in 2000. Those conventions established the right to paid maternity and paternity leave for workers, with the aim of promoting gender equality, protecting the health and well-being of workers and their families, and lastly ensuring a fair and equitable distribution of family responsibilities. Moreover, the ILO has

researched and published policy briefs on the impact of maternity and paternity leave on gender equality, the health and well-being of workers and their families, and the labour market outcomes of women.

IV. Key Issues including Background Information

Economic Disparities

The lack of paternity leave not only reinforces gender inequalities but also exacerbates the economic disparities in families. Moreover, for example: fathers facing financial barriers to taking time off work, may be compelled to prioritize employment over caregiving responsibilities, which leads to a persistent imbalance in family income and stability.

Health and Well-Being issues

The absence of paternity leave not only limits the fathers from creating bonds with their children but also contributes to negative physical and mental health outcomes for both fathers and family members. The limited opportunities for active involvement in childcare can lead to increased stress for fathers, potentially impacting their mental well-being.

Global Disparities

The global disparities in paternity leave provisions are explicit, with numerous countries, especially: Africa and Asia. Those countries are lacking sufficient measures to support fathers for achieving a balance between work and family responsibilities.

Link to Gender equality Issues

Because lots of countries insist on believing that it is women, and mothers' job to take appropriate care of their children, instead of their fathers. However, women's job income is also vital for the survival of the family, and thus maternity and paternity leave issues appear more explicitly in nations with weak foundations for gender equality and perceptions, in nations such as Syria, DR Congo, Iran.

V. Timeline of Resolutions, Treaties, and Events

Date	Description of event
1919	The International Labour Organization adopted the Maternity Protection Convention of 1919, which policy required 12 weeks of paid maternity leave, free prenatal and postpartum care, employment guarantees upon return to work, and periodic time off to care for children.
1952	The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions supported maternity leave and they improved conditions for working mothers, which contributed to a growing international awareness of the need for family-friendly workplace policies.

1970~1980	Many Western nations were influenced by changing social norms rapidly and the feminist movement, which resulted in extending the maternity leave durations and introducing policies in the workplace and recognizing the importance of gender equality in the workplace.
1994	The International Conference on Population and Development emphasised the need for gender equality, also addressing the issues related to maternity and paternity leave.
2000	The Millennium Development Goals include the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment, which encouraged the countries to consider expanding maternity and paternity leave policies.
2011	The International Labour Organization revised the “Maternity Protection Convention”. They updated the standards and recommendations to reflect contemporary challenges and advancements to reinforce and remind the importance of maternity protection to the world.
2019	The International Labour Organization celebrates the centenary of the “Maternity Protection Convention” by highlighting achievements that they made so far, acknowledging ongoing challenges, and calling for renewed efforts to expand and enhance maternity and paternity leave globally.
2020	The global pandemic called "Covid-19" that happened in 2022 underscores the importance of family-friendly policies, which led to increased discussions about the need for more flexible and supportive maternity and paternity leave policies.

VI. Possible Challenges & Solutions

Economic Disparities

Addressing the economic disparities requires a multifaceted approachment. The implementation of paid paternity leave policies supported by government and corporate programs can reduce fathers' financial burden and also promote an equitable distribution of care responsibilities.

Health and Well-Being issues

To address the health and well-being issues, selling the use of paternity leave to improve fathers' intellectual health and proper-being, and imposing regulations will provide better economic aid and create an organisation that supports the lifestyle of fathers to take paternity leave.

Global Disparities

In order to address global disparities, international advocacy for coverage reforms, tailor-made to various cultural contexts, and selling recognition to shift societal expectations. I believe those possible solutions will permit fathers in all areas to interact actively in infant-rearing without compromising their lifestyle stability.

VII. Recommendations for Resolution Writing including Research

Because the issue is not extensively one-sided towards MEDCs or LEDCs, delegates must take careful notice of their country's stance. When researching, be sure to discuss both aspects of maternity and paternity leave, as certain nations could have different legislations depending on gender. For nations which actively support the expansion of parental leave, it is advised to consider the economical and social impacts towards both the parents and children, the workplace, and existing policies taking place in the delegate's respective country. For nations which may go against otherwise, consider how the country can provide practical and effective solutions to the existing postpartum struggles of parents, and whether or not different member states' typical parental leave time is justified. If there are any concerns during researching and writing resolutions, please feel free to contact the chairs for more support!

Solutions from countries such as Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, which are main nations known to have maternity and paternity leave and health benefits by law, would be significant. Countries with low income, and weak foundations for gender equality, such as Syria, DR Congo, and Iran, might stand against the idea of 'paternity and maternity leave' at first hand, and their role would be to justify their stances based on their background and origin of such stances.

VIII. Bibliography

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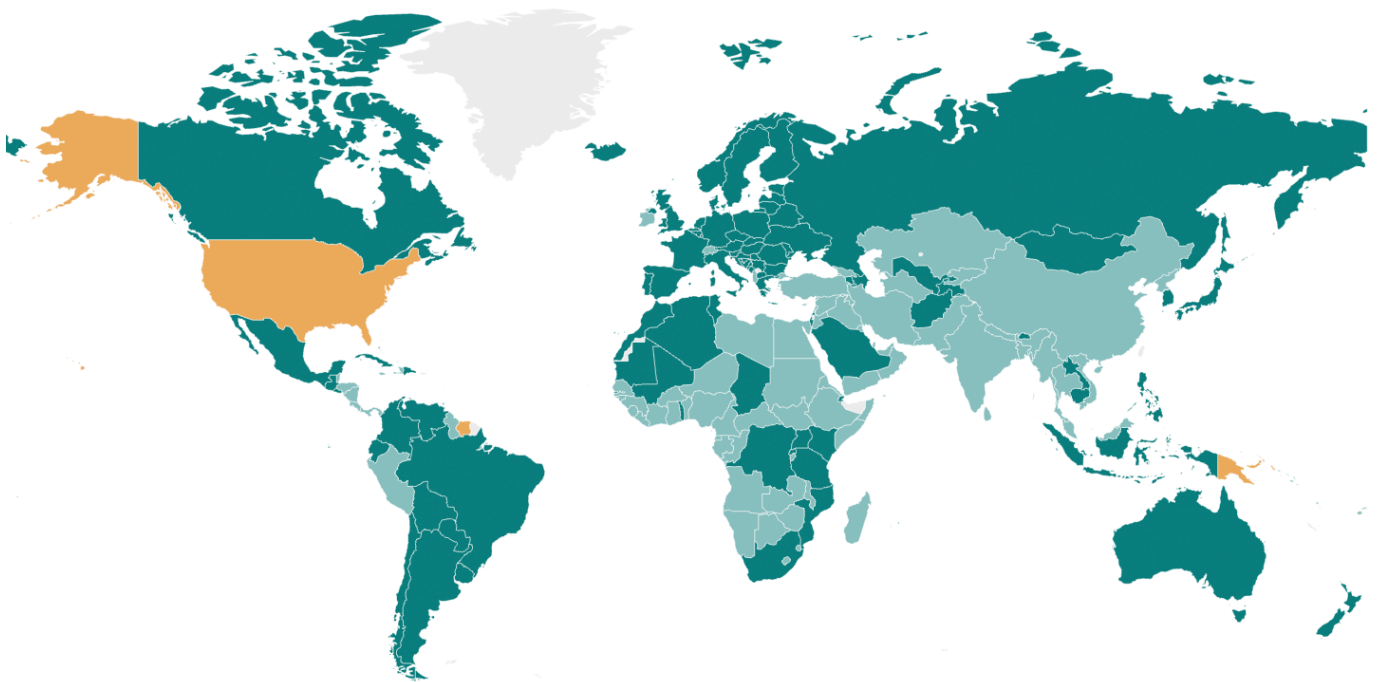
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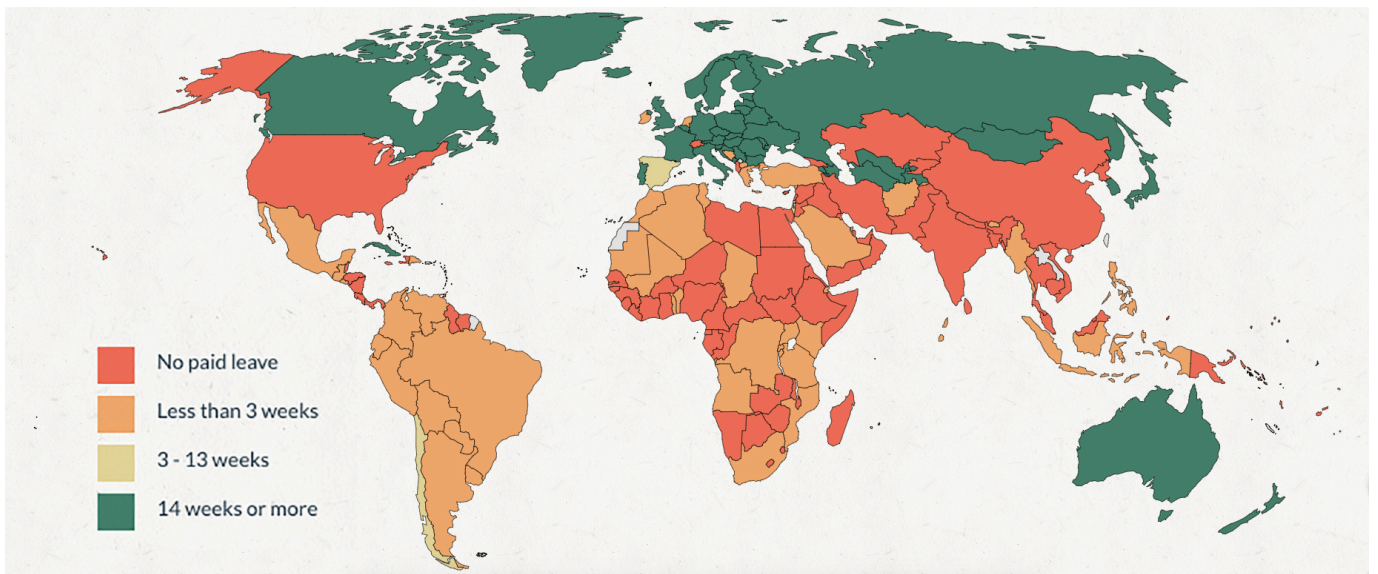
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IX: Additional Resources

■ Maternal and paternal leave ■ Maternal leave only ■ No paid leave ■ Data not available



(Countries with Maternal and/or Paternal Leave)



(Countries with paid paternity leave - and the average time allocated)