

Presentation to EP by Tim Shand, Promundo

Thank you. Privilege to participate

I'm co-ordinator of global MenCare campaign. Global movement of over 45 countries – including 18 member states of the EU - seeking to increase men's engagement as fathers and caregivers, with goal of men doing 50% of unpaid care. We produce research and reports, support fatherhood programs, and undertake policy advocacy and campaigns.

We're not about saying men do caregiving in some special or unique way to mothers and women; about saying men are as biologically wired to care as much as women. That men's caregiving matters for everyone. Father of 2 year old son – experienced personally the importance of men's caregiving.

We welcome this Directive seeking to provide both paternity leave and parental leave (article 4 and 5). Need to focus on parental leave, not just maternity leave. These proposed policies provide critical opportunity for the EU to invest in worklife balance of parents and carers, make a real difference to gender equality, and invest in the development of our children.

Leave alone will not change behaviours. Four key recommendations from MenCare: 1) that the leave should be non-transferrable; 2) sufficient in length; 3) paid sufficiently; and 4) part of a push for the next generation care friendly workplaces.

What does our research tell us – such as our State of the World's Fathers report we conduct every two years – on why effective parental leave is so essential?

Know benefits to women and gender equality – increasing women's participation in the paid workforce, addressing pay gap, central to addressing unequal burden of care. World Bank, countries that mandate parental leave, have significantly higher women's employment. Know it leads to more women in senior management positions. Know societies which are more equal have greater economic growth [Jenny Klugman]

And know its beneficial for children. Leave for fathers leads to men doing more caregiving. It encourages men's participation in the lives of their children from early on. Fathers matter for children's emotional and intellectual development. Fathers involvement can also contribute to lower rates of depression, and for children's greater career and economic success. And contribute to more gender equitable boys, more empowered girls, and future male partners who will do more housework. Studies have shown men involvement in ANC, delivery and supporting women thereafter creates pattern of greater caregiving for life. Men's caregiving is also protective factor to reduce child exposure to violence.

Talk less about benefits to men. Our International Men and Gender Equality (IMAGES) research consistently finds men saying they want to spend more time with their families. Know benefits men's health – improved physical, mental and sexual health, less social isolation. Significant benefit through enjoying greater connections to your children. Female partners of involved fathers are happier.

But what makes a father take it up? MenCare created Parental Leave Platform. 10 point plan on works on parental leave. Have seen successes in Spain, Netherlands, but we have significant way to go.

What works? See handout that explains these areas in further detail.

Parental leave should be non-transferable. Central to encouraging men's uptake of leave and equal participation in care work. If transferable, men much less likely to take it, families tend to opt for the family member that earns a lower salary (generally women) to take the leave, places burden of responsibility on women, reinforces notion that childcare is women's sole business, and doesn't change our workplaces. **Keep commitment in article 5 on period that can't be transferred between parents.**

Countries which have adopted individual fathers entitlements or quotas such as Sweden, with 90% uptake, have far higher uptake of parental leave among men than countries that don't, such as Denmark (24% uptake) or Slovenia (6% uptake). In Iceland, after they introduced a 'use it or lose it' fathers leave policy in 2000, uptake increased from average 39 days in 2001 to 103 days in 2008. **Datapoint on Iceland uptake based on changes.** Today 90% of dads in Iceland take parental leave. Similar patterns in Norway and Sweden.

This normalizes men and women's caregiving, and doesn't require women to give up their leave so fathers can take it. UK example of lack of uptake by men as parental leave is transferrable.

Leave for fathers should be sufficient in length. 4 months should be a minimum, as in article 5. We should aspire for greater period. Iceland example highlights how uptake increased as period increased from one to two and then three months. **Data point on Iceland.** Today they offer 26 weeks.

Parental leave should be sufficiently paid. Article 8 should go further. Ideally 100%. Particularly affects fathers' uptake, especially low income men, as many individuals can't afford to take it. Fathers in EU most frequently cited insufficient compensation as the reason for not taking leave. For example, when Estonia increased paternity leave benefits to 100% of previous earnings, uptake increased from 14 percent in 2007 to 50 percent in 2008.

Sick leave may have significant differences between states. Recommendation that where it is low, states should be compelled to top-up. Otherwise, discrimination against low income families.

It makes business sense. Our State of the World's Fathers Report 2017. Improves employee retention, reduces turnover, increases productivity and morale, reducing absenteeism (such as sick leave). More committed employees means lower costs. Countries can main low unemployment and remain highly economically competitive even when ample leave policies are made, with most countries providing replacement of 70% of father's wages. **See table 2.**

Also about changing workplace cultures, as in article 9. Provides opportunity for countries to look at how they can provide leadership in better approaches to worklife balance more broadly. A study by Women Inc in the Netherlands found not only these benefits, but the organizations with more flexible working arrangements had higher profits, with 1-3% more growth in revenue. So care-friendly

employers perform better. If all companies adopted paid parental leave, the whole business sector would gain billions of Euros.

Important that leave supports a diversity of family structures, and open to all partners irrespective of their sexual orientation, as is the case in some countries in the EU (Netherlands, UK). Support the call from COFACE for the directive to consider single parents.

Summary of my specific recommendations:

- Paternity leave and parental leave essential, and critical to shifting norms around men's involvement in caregiving.
- Parental leave should have a 'use it or lose it' quote for fathers
- Parental leave should be sufficient in length
- Parental leave should be sufficiently paid
- This directive can be opportunity to change workplaces for everyone's benefit

This is good for business, good for women, good for children and good for men. Unique opportunity for EU to make a difference and would strongly encourage you to do so.