

Uzbekistan

<i>Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor</i>	
Percent of children 5-14 estimated as working in 2000:	16.5% ⁴⁴¹⁵
Minimum age of work:	16 ⁴⁴¹⁶
Age to which education is compulsory:	For 9 years ⁴⁴¹⁷
Free public education:	Yes ⁴⁴¹⁸
Gross primary enrollment rate in 2004:	100% ⁴⁴¹⁹
Net primary enrollment rate:	Unavailable
Percent of children 5-14 attending school in 2000:	79.6% ⁴⁴²⁰
As of 2001, percent of primary school entrants likely to reach grade 5:	89% ⁴⁴²¹
Ratified Convention 138:	No ⁴⁴²²
Ratified Convention 182:	No ⁴⁴²³
ILO-IPEC participating country:	Yes, associated ⁴⁴²⁴

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, approximately 19.9 percent of boys and 12.9 percent of girls ages 5 to 14 were working in Uzbekistan.⁴⁴²⁵ Children work in agriculture in rural areas, where the widespread, compulsory mobilization of children to help with cotton harvests has been reported.⁴⁴²⁶ Schools close in some rural areas to allow pupils and teachers to work during the harvest, sometimes without remuneration. Reports indicate that children have been forced to spray harmful chemicals, with no protection, and to endure poor living conditions on farms located far from their homes and

⁴⁴¹⁵ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*, October 7, 2005.

⁴⁴¹⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Uzbekistan," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2006*, Washington, DC, March 6, 2007, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78848.htm>.

⁴⁴¹⁷ Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Education" (1992) as cited in Ministry of Public Education and Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education, *National Action Plan on Education for All in the Republic of Uzbekistan*, Tashkent, 2002, 13; available from http://www.unescobkk.org/fileadmin/user_upload/efa/UzbekistanNatlPlan.pdf.

⁴⁴¹⁸ *Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, 1992*, (December 8, 1992); available from <http://www.umid.uz/Main/Uzbekistan/Constitution/constitution.html>.

⁴⁴¹⁹ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

⁴⁴²⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁴²¹ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting, December 20, 2006*.

⁴⁴²² ILO, *List of Ratifications of International Labor Conventions, C138 Minimum Age Convention, 1973*, accessed February 5, 2007; available from <http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/appl-byConvYear.cfm?hdroff=1&Lang=EN&conv=C138>.

⁴⁴²³ ILO, *List of Ratifications of International Labor Conventions, C182 Worst Forms of Child Labor Convention, 1999*, accessed February 5, 2007; available from <http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/appl-byConvYear.cfm?hdroff=1&Lang=EN&conv=C182>.

⁴⁴²⁴ ILO-IPEC, *IPEC Action Against Child Labor: Highlights 2006*, Geneva, October 2006.

⁴⁴²⁵ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

⁴⁴²⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Uzbekistan," Section 6d. See also U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting, December 20, 2006*. See also UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Uzbekistan: Focus on Rural Schools*, [online] August 10, 2004 [cited February 2, 2007]; available from http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=42608&SelectRegion=Central_Asia&SelectCountry=UZBEKISTAN

families.⁴⁴²⁷ There are reports that children help cultivate rice and raise silk worms in rural areas.⁴⁴²⁸ Children as young as 7 or 8 routinely work in family businesses in cities during school holidays and vacations.⁴⁴²⁹ Children also work in street vending,⁴⁴³⁰ services, construction, building materials manufacturing, and transportation.⁴⁴³¹ Older children frequently work as temporary hired workers.⁴⁴³² The Commission on Minors registered 15,000 children living and working on the streets between 2001 and 2005.⁴⁴³³ Child beggars are present in Tashkent.⁴⁴³⁴ Minor girls are engaged in forced prostitution and are trafficked internally and externally, including to destinations in the Persian Gulf, Asia, Russia and Western Europe, for sexual exploitation.⁴⁴³⁵

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Constitution sets the minimum age for employment at 16 years.⁴⁴³⁶ Fourteen-year-olds may only work in light labor that does not negatively affect their health and/or development.⁴⁴³⁷ Children 14 to 16 years are required to obtain written permission from a parent or guardian in

⁴⁴²⁷ International Crisis Group, *The Curse of Cotton: Central Asia's Destructive Monoculture*, February 28, 2005, 17-18; available from http://www.icg.org/library/documents/asia/central_asia/093_curse_of_cotton_central_asia_destructive_monoculture.pdf. See also U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting*, August 11, 2004. See also Legal Aid Society, STATUS, Center for Social and Humanitarian Researches, Business Women Association (Kokand), Mekhri, Beguborlik, SABO, PIASC, KRIDI, Mekhr Tayanchi, UNESCO Youth Club, Kokand Children's Club, Shygiz Children's Club Kukus, Mothers and Daughters, Bolalar va Kattalar Children's Club, Save the Children (UK), and UNICEF, *Supplementary NGO Report on the Implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in the Republic of Uzbekistan, 2001*, [accessed October 22, 2006,] 10, 33; available from <http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/crc.28/Uzbekistan.doc>. See also Integrated Regional Information Network, "Uzbekistan: Forced Labour Continues in Cotton Industry", IRINNews.org, [online], December 9, 2005 [cited October 22, 2006]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=50586&SelectRegion=Asia&SelectCountry=UZBEKISTAN>.

⁴⁴²⁸ Cango.net, *Initiative Newsletter: The Situation with Child Labour is Unlikely to Change in the Foreseeable Future*, [online] 2002.

⁴⁴²⁹ U.S. Department of Labor- Bureau of International Labor Affairs, *Foreign Labor Trends Report: Uzbekistan 2006*, December 2006; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/78396.htm>.

⁴⁴³⁰ Najibullah Farangis, *Central Asia: For Many Young Uzbeks and Tajiks, Working is a Way of Life*, [online] May 27, 2003 [cited June 15, 2005]. See also Legal Aid Society, STATUS, Center for Social and Humanitarian Researches, Business Women Association (Kokand), Mekhri, Beguborlik, SABO, PIASC, KRIDI, Mekhr Tayanchi, UNESCO Youth Club, Kokand Children's Club, Shygiz Children's Club Kukus, Mothers and Daughters, Bolalar va Kattalar Children's Club, Save the Children (UK), and UNICEF, *Supplementary NGO Report*, 33.

⁴⁴³¹ Cango.net, *The Situation with Child Labour is Unlikely to Change in the Foreseeable Future*.

⁴⁴³² Ibid.

⁴⁴³³ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting*, December 20, 2006.

⁴⁴³⁴ Study by Mekhr Tayanchi (Support of Love) as cited by Uzbekistan Daily Digest, "Homeless Children Become Focus of Concern in Uzbekistan", September 19, 2003; available from <http://www.eurasianet.org/resource/uzbekistan/hypermail/200307/0023.shtml>.

⁴⁴³⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Uzbekistan," Section 5, 6d. See also U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting*, August 26, 2005. See also U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, Email Communication to USDOL official, August 1, 2007.

⁴⁴³⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Uzbekistan," Section 6d. See also U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting*, December 20, 2006.

⁴⁴³⁷ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting*, October 16, 2002. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Uzbekistan," Section 6d.

order to work, as long as work does not interfere with their studies. Children ages 14 to 16 may only work 12 hours per week while school is in session and 24 hours per week during school vacation. Children 16 to 18 years may only work 18 hours per week when school is in session and 36 hours per week during school vacations.⁴⁴³⁹ In addition to establishing limited work hours for minors, the law prohibits children under 18 years from working in unfavorable labor conditions.⁴⁴⁴⁰ Prior to employment, children under 18 years must undergo a medical examination to establish their suitability for their chosen work and must repeat the examination at the employer's expense once a year until they become 18.⁴⁴⁴¹

The law prohibits forced labor, except when fulfilling a court sentence.⁴⁴⁴² The law prohibits profit from promoting prostitution or maintaining brothels. Penalties increase when a child is involved, which can result in jail sentences of 5 to 10 years.⁴⁴⁴³ The law prohibits trafficking, with higher penalties when victims are taken out of the country. The penalty for recruitment for trafficking is 6 months to 3 years in prison. Trafficking of children outside the country is punishable with 5 to 8 years in prison.⁴⁴⁴⁴

The law does not provide jurisdiction for inspectors from the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection to focus on child labor enforcement.⁴⁴⁴⁵ Instead, the Prosecutor General and the Ministry of Interior's criminal investigators are responsible for the enforcement of child labor laws. While enforcement appears effective in deterring child labor in the formal sector, the U.S. Department of State reports that it is not effective in regulating children's work in family-based employment and in the agricultural sectors. There were no reports of enforcement efforts in the cotton industry.⁴⁴⁴⁶ An anti-trafficking unit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs investigates trafficking-related crimes.⁴⁴⁴⁷ The government has investigated numerous trafficking-related crimes through the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) Anti-Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Unit and the Prosecutor's Office.⁴⁴⁴⁸

There were no reports of inspections resulting in legal proceedings or administrative penalties for violations of domestic child labor laws.⁴⁴⁴⁹ Allegations have been made against some local

⁴⁴³⁹ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, Email Communication to USDOL Official, August 1, 2007.

⁴⁴⁴⁰ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties Due in 1996*, CRC/C/41/Add.8, prepared by Government of Uzbekistan, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, December 27, 1999, paras. 315 and 318; available from [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/aacfcf7e3feaabf2c1256a4d00391fbc/\\$FILE/G0140749.pdf](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/aacfcf7e3feaabf2c1256a4d00391fbc/$FILE/G0140749.pdf). See also International Crisis Group, *The Curse of Cotton: Central Asia's Destructive Monoculture*, 18.

⁴⁴⁴¹ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, Email Communication to USDOL Official, August 1, 2007.

⁴⁴⁴² *Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan*, 1992, article 37.

⁴⁴⁴³ Penal Code Clauses 121 and 127 as cited by Interpol, *Legislation of Interpol Member States on Sexual Offences Against Children- Uzbekistan*, accessed October 22, 2006; available from <http://www.interpol.int/Public/Children/SexualAbuse/NationalLaws/csaUzbekistan.asp>.

⁴⁴⁴⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Uzbekistan," Section 5.

⁴⁴⁴⁵ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting, December 20, 2006*.

⁴⁴⁴⁶ *Ibid.* See also U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting, August 26, 2005*. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Uzbekistan," Section 6d.

⁴⁴⁴⁷ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting, August 26, 2005*.

⁴⁴⁴⁸ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting, December 20, 2006*.

⁴⁴⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Uzbekistan," Section 6d.

officials working for the Ministry of the Interior, customs, and border guards for accepting bribes and assisting traffickers.⁴⁴⁵⁰

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Although the Government of Uzbekistan does not have a comprehensive policy on the eradication of child labor, it publicly acknowledged the existence of child labor in Uzbekistan in 2006.⁴⁴⁵² Representatives from the Government of Uzbekistan are working with neighboring countries to gather information about the child labor situation in Central Asia. USDOL has provided funding to ILO-IPEC for a USD 2.5 million sub-regional project to enhance the capacity of national institutions to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in Uzbekistan and to share information and experiences across the sub-region, including in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan.⁴⁴⁵⁴ The German Government has provided funding to ILO-IPEC for a EURO 1 million sub-regional project to combat the worst forms of child labor through education and youth employment in Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Tajikistan.⁴⁴⁵⁵

In 2006, ILO-IPEC launched a social dialogue process on child labor through the creation of a multi-agency government working group that included: UNICEF; Cabinet of Ministers Social Complex; Ministries of Labor, Health, Public Education, Higher and Specialized Education; National Human Rights Center; Children's Fund; and trade unions. The working group met six times in 2006 and once in 2007 during this publication's reporting period. Topics discussed included cotton picking and street children.⁴⁴⁵⁶ In cooperation with ILO-IPEC, the Cabinet of Ministers adopted a four-year national action plan on securing child welfare in Uzbekistan in January 2006. The national action plan includes reviewing the ILO conventions 138 and 182 for ratification and combating child labor in agriculture through revising current practices and establishing a child labor monitoring system.⁴⁴⁵⁷

The government operates an inter-agency working group to combat trafficking in persons, and actively cooperates with local NGOs and the OSCE on anti-trafficking training of law enforcement and consular officials.⁴⁴⁵⁸ Through U.S. government programs and non-governmental organizations, Uzbek consular officials abroad and domestic law enforcement officials have received training in dealing with trafficking victims. The government also works with Mahalla organizations, a pre-Soviet system of community-based management and social service provision, to protect children at the community level through a neighborhood monitoring

⁴⁴⁵⁰ See also U.S. Department of State, "Uzbekistan (Tier 3)," in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006*, Washington, DC, June 5, 2006; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/>.

⁴⁴⁵² Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵⁴ ILO-IPEC, *CAR Capacity Building Project: Regional Program on the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, project document, RER/04/P54/USA, Geneva, September 2004, vii.

⁴⁴⁵⁵ ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Central Asia through Education and Youth Employment (EYE): An Innovative Regional Program*, project document, Geneva, 2005, cover page, 42.

⁴⁴⁵⁶ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, Email Communication to USDOL Official, August 1, 2007.

⁴⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Uzbekistan," Section 5.

mechanism. The government also has an education campaign through the Mahallas to publicize the dangers and eliminate hazardous conditions for minors.⁴⁴⁵⁹

The government allows the IOM to meet returning children rescued from trafficking at the airport, provide assistance, and help them with their preliminary statements to the Interior Ministry.⁴⁴⁶⁰ In cooperation with the IOM, the government is engaged in a research study to determine the extent of trafficking in Uzbekistan and participates in a trafficking prevention campaign and a law enforcement training program.⁴⁴⁶¹ It also actively supported a public awareness campaign including posters on buses, subway cars, and at passport offices as well as advertising on state-controlled television and radio.⁴⁴⁶² The Cabinet of Ministers approved the ILO Red Card to Child Labor campaign and public service announcements aired on television stations in July 2006.⁴⁴⁶³ Numerous newspaper articles and television programs on victims of trafficking, including minors, have appeared in state controlled media.⁴⁴⁶⁴

UNICEF's HIV/AIDS prevention project supports existing government efforts to improve awareness of healthy lifestyles for at-risk adolescents including children engaged in sex work.⁴⁴⁶⁵ In cooperation with UNICEF in 2007, the government has begun a program to research internal trafficking of children in Uzbekistan.⁴⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁴⁵⁹ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting, December 20, 2006*.

⁴⁴⁶⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Uzbekistan," Section 5.

⁴⁴⁶¹ IOM, *Combating Trafficking in Persons in Central Asia: Prevention, Prosecution, Protection (ASPPP)*, accessed June 15, 2005.

⁴⁴⁶² U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006: Uzbekistan." See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Uzbekistan," Section 5. See also U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting, December 20, 2006*.

⁴⁴⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁶⁴ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, *reporting, December 20, 2006*.

⁴⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁶⁶ U.S. Embassy- Tashkent, Email Communication to USDOL Official, August 1, 2007.

⁴⁴⁶⁹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Gross Enrolment Ratio. Primary. Total*, accessed December 20, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.