

Rwanda

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

The Government of Rwanda is participating in a regional program to prevent the participation of children in armed conflicts in Central Africa, which is sponsored by ILO-IPEC and funded by USDOL.²¹²⁶ UNICEF is also sponsoring a rehabilitation program for child soldiers with the WFP, the International Red Cross, the International Rescue Committee, and Save the Children to provide health care, food and water, psycho-social counseling, and reunification for children.²¹²⁷

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 1999, the ILO estimated that 41.4 percent of children between the ages of 10 and 14 in Rwanda were working.²¹²⁸ Most child labor occurs in the agricultural sector.²¹²⁹ As recently as August 2001, children have been rescued from forced recruitment in domestic fighting, where they have been working either as soldiers or as servants for the armed forces.²¹³⁰ Reports indicate that children as young as ages 10 to 18 have been recruited by government armed forces.²¹³¹ Because of the genocide of 1994, many households are being run by children, creating extreme pressure for them to provide for their families.²¹³²

Primary education in Rwanda is compulsory from the ages of 7 to 12 years.²¹³³ Families must pay fees to enroll their children in school.²¹³⁴ In 1991, the gross primary enrollment rate was 81.3 percent and the net primary enrollment rate was 75.4 percent.²¹³⁵ In 2000, the net primary attendance rate was 65.6 percent for children between the ages of 7 and 12 and 73.7 percent for

²¹²⁶ ILO, *Phase I: Regional Programme on the Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflicts in Central Africa* (Geneva, 2001).

²¹²⁷ Ibid.

²¹²⁸ ILO labor force statistics as cited in *World Development Indicators 2001* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001) [hereinafter *World Development Indicators 2001*] [CD-ROM].

²¹²⁹ *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Rwanda* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2001) [hereinafter *Country Reports 2000*], Section 6d, at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/af/index/cfm?docid=720>.

²¹³⁰ UNICEF, press release, at <http://unicef.org/newsline/01pr69.htm>.

²¹³¹ Ibid. The genocide killed 800,000 Rwandans.

²¹³² *BBC World Service*, “Children of Conflict: Child-Headed Households,” at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/childrights/conflict/headed.shtml>.

²¹³³ *Enquete à Indicateurs Multiples (MICS2) Rapport Preliminaire: Rwanda*, Ministère des Finance et de la Planification Economique B.P 46 Kigali, January 11, 2000 [hereinafter *Enquete à Indicateurs Multiples*] 8.

²¹³⁴ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

²¹³⁵ *World Development Indicators 2001*.

children ages 8 to 13.²¹³⁶ Of the children who enter the first grade, 76 percent reach the fifth grade.²¹³⁷ There is a high dropout and repetition rate among primary school children.²¹³⁸ Public schools lack basic supplies and cannot accommodate all primary age school children, and private schools are inaccessible or too costly for the majority of the population. School fees are regularly waived for orphans.²¹³⁹

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The minimum age for employment is 15 years. However, children between the ages of 13 and 14 can work, with Ministry of Labor approval, if the work will not have a negative effect on their health, development, or education.²¹⁴⁰ With the exception of subsistence agriculture, children under age 16 are prohibited from working at night or in unhealthy, strenuous, noxious, or dangerous conditions.²¹⁴¹ Forced or bonded labor by children is not specifically prohibited.²¹⁴² Under Article 374 of the Criminal Code, trafficking is an aggravated offense, with a doubled penalty for delivering a minor into prostitution upon entering or exiting the country.²¹⁴³ Legislation from 1977 sets the minimum voluntary age for military service at age 16.²¹⁴⁴

The Ministry of Public Service and Labor does not effectively enforce these laws in part because of the large number of children who are heads of household.²¹⁴⁵ Rwanda ratified ILO Convention 138 on April 15, 1981, and ILO Convention 182 on May 23, 2000.²¹⁴⁶

²¹³⁶ *Enquete à Indicateurs Multiples*.

²¹³⁷ *Ibid* at 8.

²¹³⁸ *Ibid* at 4.

²¹³⁹ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

²¹⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State, electronic correspondence from U.S. Embassy-Rwanda to USDOL official, November 30, 2001.

²¹⁴¹ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d. *See also* Electronic Correspondence from U.S. Department of State Official Mark J. Wildermuth to U.S. Department of State Official, Amy S. Radetsky, November 30, 2001. An ILO committee report indicates that the draft revision of the Rwandan labor code will extend the minimum age to the agricultural sector. *See* CEACR: Individual Observation Concerning Convention No. 138, Minimum Age, 1973, Rwanda (ratification: 1981, published: 2001).

²¹⁴² *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d. *See also* The UN Human Rights System, "For the Record 2000: Rwanda" [hereinafter "For the Record 2000"], at <http://www.hri.ca/fortherecord2000/vol2/rwandatr.htm>.

²¹⁴³ The Protection Project, *Commercial Exploitation of Women and Children: A Human Rights Report on Rwanda*. According to the Protection Project, prostitution and compelling another person to become engaged in prostitution are prohibited by Articles 363-365 of the Criminal Code. Punishment for these crimes is imprisonment for up to 5 years and a fine.

²¹⁴⁴ The Global March Against Child Labor, "The Worst Forms of Child Labour: Rwanda," at <http://www.globalmarch.org/worstformsreport/world/rwanda.html>.

²¹⁴⁵ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d. *See also* "For the Record 2000."

²¹⁴⁶ ILO: Ratifications of the Fundamental Human Rights Conventions by Country at <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/index.htm>.

NOTE: Hard copies of all Web citations are on file.

Saint Kitts and Nevis

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

The Government of St. Kitts and Nevis has an extensive childcare and early childhood program to prevent children from being withdrawn from school to look after younger siblings.²¹⁴⁷ The government to relieve some of the financial burden of attending school has implemented a school meals program and a school fee subsidy.²¹⁴⁸ The government has also worked with UNICEF to promote children's rights and offer workshops and training for government personnel dealing with children.²¹⁴⁹

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in St. Kitts and Nevis are unavailable. In rural areas, children assist with subsistence agriculture activities on family plots, including livestock farming and vegetable production.²¹⁵⁰ Children, particularly girls, perform domestic labor for their families as well as for other households.²¹⁵¹

Pursuant to the Education Act of 1976, education is compulsory between the ages of 5 and 16.²¹⁵² In 1997, the gross primary enrollment rate was 97.6 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 88.6 percent.²¹⁵³ Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for St. Kitts & Nevis. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.²¹⁵⁴

²¹⁴⁷ U.S. Department of State, unclassified telegram no. 1791, September 2001 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 1791].

²¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴⁹ *Initial Reports of States Parties Due in 1992*, Committee on the Rights of the Child, UN Document CRC/C/3/Add.51 (Geneva, May 5, 1997) [hereinafter *Initial Reports of States Parties*], para. 5(e).

²¹⁵⁰ Unclassified telegram 1791.

²¹⁵¹ Agriculture, domestic service, and illicit activities have been acknowledged by the government as sectors in which children could find work in high-risk jobs. *See* unclassified telegram 1791.

²¹⁵² Leroy Richards, Labor officer, Government of St. Kitts and Nevis, Department of Labor, interview with USDOL official, November 29, 2001 [hereinafter Richards interview]. *See also* *Initial Reports of States Parties* at para. 40.

²¹⁵³ UNESCO, *Education for All: Year 2000 Assessment* (Paris, 2000) [CD-ROM].

²¹⁵⁴ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see *Introduction* to this report.