

Zimbabwe

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

The Government of Zimbabwe is making efforts to incorporate child labor issues into the plans and policies of several government ministries, such as the Ministries of Health and Education.²⁷³⁶ The Government of Zimbabwe is in the preliminary stages of cooperating with ILO-IPEC²⁷³⁷ and has conducted a national child labor survey with technical assistance from ILO-IPEC's SIMPOC.²⁷³⁸

Zimbabwe has made progress in the education sector by promoting better access to schools and improving the quality of schooling.²⁷³⁹ Since 1980, overall primary school attendance has increased by over 4,000 percent.²⁷⁴⁰ The government plans to build more schools and expand existing schools to take on more students, provide scholarships or cover education costs for poor children through the Social Development Fund and other social safety nets, and continue training staff and improving school facilities. From 1990 to 1999, the number of training centers for out-of-school youth has increased from 3 to 15 nationwide.²⁷⁴¹

²⁷³⁶ The Ministry of Health included child labor in its 1992 portfolio *Child Welfare*, and it chaired the meeting to develop the National Action Plan for Children, which establishes child labor as a problem area and called for improved legal protection of working children. The Ministry of Education policy position supports the right of working children to attend school and warns that child labor should not undermine schooling. See *Child Labour in Commercial Agriculture in Africa*, technical workshop on child labor in commercial agriculture in Africa, August 27-30, 1996, Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania (Geneva: ILO, 1997), at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/publ/policy/papers/africa/index.htm> on 11/30/01.

²⁷³⁷ LO-IPEC, "All About IPEC: Programme Countries," at http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/about/countries/t_country.htm on 9/21/01.

²⁷³⁸ Government of Zimbabwe, Central Statistical Office, Ministry of Public Service, Labour, and Social Welfare, *National Child Labour Survey*, Country Report, Zimbabwe, 1999 (Harare: ILO, 1999) [hereinafter *National Child Labour Survey*], 53, at <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpoc/zimbabwe/report/index.htm>.

²⁷³⁹ Line Eldring, Sabata Nakanyane, and Malehoko Tshoamedi, *Child Labour in the Tobacco Growing Sector in Africa*, report prepared for the IUF/ITGA/BAT conference on Elimination of Child Labor, October 8-9, 2000, (Nairobi: FAFO, 2000) [hereinafter *Child Labour in the Tobacco Growing Sector*], 84.

²⁷⁴⁰ *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Zimbabwe* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2001) [hereinafter *Country Reports 2000*], Section 5, at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/af/index.cfm?docid=852>.

²⁷⁴¹ UNESCO, *The Education for All (EFA) 2000 Assessment: Country Reports—Zimbabwe*, at <http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/zimbabwe/contents.html>.

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 1999, a child labor survey conducted by the Zimbabwe Central Statistics Office, in cooperation with ILO-IPEC, estimated that 33 percent of children between the ages of 5 and 14 in Zimbabwe were working.²⁷⁴² Over 90 percent of working children reside in rural areas.²⁷⁴³ Children work in a variety of sectors including traditional and commercial farming, domestic work, small-scale mining and gold panning, micro industries, and informal economic activities.²⁷⁴⁴ According to the 1992 census, an estimated 800,000 children in Zimbabwe live on large-scale commercial farms, and children as young as 10 to 12 years of age have been reported to work on cotton, tea, and tobacco farms. Many children on commercial farms work for long hours in the fields, often in exchange for education at farm boarding schools.²⁷⁴⁵

In 1999, there were a reported 12,000 street children in Harare, and the number is said to be increasing across the country.²⁷⁴⁶ Street children are found selling wares or watching cars.²⁷⁴⁷ A rising number of children under 17 years are engaged in prostitution, and children are reportedly trafficked to South Africa for purposes of prostitution and forced labor.²⁷⁴⁸ The traditional practice of offering a young girl as payment in an inter-family feud continues to occur in Zimbabwe.²⁷⁴⁹ The child labor situation is also affected by the prevalence of HIV/AIDs, which has left nearly one million children orphaned and reliant on informal work to supplement lost family income.²⁷⁵⁰

²⁷⁴² Fourteen percent of children between ages 5 and 17 were found to work over 3 hours per day. See *National Child Labour Survey* at 53.

²⁷⁴³ In rural areas, 53 percent of working children are boys. In urban areas, the percentages of working boys and girls are equal. See *National Child Labour Survey* at xii.

²⁷⁴⁴ *Child Labour in the Tobacco Growing Sector* at 87.

²⁷⁴⁵ Commercial farming accounts for 40 percent of Zimbabwe's foreign exchange earnings and 15 percent of the national GDP. While it is unknown how many children work on the farms, child labor is reported to be widespread. Children work after school during the planting and harvesting seasons and full time during holidays. Special boarding schools on the farms allow children to work during busy seasons. See *Child Labour in the Tobacco Growing Sector* at 87. See also *Country Reports 2000*, Section 6d, and USDOL, *By the Sweat and Toil of Children: Child Labor in Commercial Agriculture*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Labor, 1995), 39-44.

²⁷⁴⁶ *Country Reports 2000* at Sections 5. See also U.S. Embassy-Harare, unclassified telegram no. 2971, October 2001 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 2971].

²⁷⁴⁷ A University of Zimbabwe study in 1991 surveyed children working in the streets in five areas of Zimbabwe and found that 85 percent spent part of their time in trading centers and returned home at the end of the day, while 15 percent worked and lived in the streets. See unclassified telegram 2971. See also *National Child Labour Survey* at 9.

²⁷⁴⁸ Unclassified telegram 2971.

²⁷⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁵⁰ *Ibid.* See also *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

Education is not free or compulsory.²⁷⁵¹ Primary and secondary school fees were reintroduced under the country's Economic Structural Adjustment Program of 1991.²⁷⁵² In 1997, gross primary school enrollment was 112.4 percent.²⁷⁵³ In 1994, the gross primary attendance rate was 108.9 percent, and the net primary attendance rate was 84.6 percent.²⁷⁵⁴ Certain segments of the educational system are particularly weak, including schools in the suburbs, on large-scale farms, and in refugee camps.²⁷⁵⁵ Few commercial farms have schools, and landowners have reportedly suspended children from attending if the children refuse to work for them.²⁷⁵⁶

²⁷⁵¹ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

²⁷⁵² *Child Labour in the Tobacco Growing Sector* at 84. See also World Bank, "Structural Adjustment and Zimbabwe's Poor," Operations Evaluation Department, at <http://wbIn0018.worldbank.org/oed/oeddoelib.nsf/e90210f184a4481b85256885007b1724/15a937f6b215a053852567f5005d8b06?OpenDocument> on 1/10/01.

²⁷⁵³ *World Development Indicators 2001* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001) [CD-ROM].

²⁷⁵⁴ In 1994 the gross primary enrollment rate was 111 percent. See USAID, GED 2000: Global Education Database (Washington, D.C., 2000), at http://www.usaid.gov/educ_training/ged.html.

²⁷⁵⁵ *Child Labour in the Tobacco Growing Sector* at 84.

²⁷⁵⁶ *Child Labour in the Tobacco Growing Sector* at 84. See also Rene Loewenson, *Child Labour in Commercial Agriculture in Zimbabwe: Report of a Case Study* (Harare: ILO-IPEC, March 1995), 7. According to an April 2001 report in the *Daily News*, 125,000 children living on farms in Zimbabwe do not attend classes because there are no schools. See *IRIN News*, "Zimbabwe: 125,000 Children on Farms Not Attending School," UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Johannesburg, April 18, 2001), at <http://www.irinnews.org/> on 12/6/01.

²⁷⁵⁷ Light work is defined as anything that will not infringe upon a child's education, health, safety, rest, or social, physical, or mental development. See *Child Labour in the Tobacco Growing Sector* at 86. See also unclassified telegram 2971.

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Employment of Children and Young Persons Regulation of 1997 sets 12 years as the minimum age for general employment and 16 years as the minimum age for activities other than light work, apprenticeships, or vocational training.²⁷⁵⁷ Children under 18 years may not be employed during school terms without the approval of the Ministry of Labor or in hazardous, overtime, or night work.²⁷⁵⁸ Additional protection is provided by the Labor Relations Act, which stipulates that any employment contract for a child under 16 years cannot be considered legally valid.²⁷⁵⁹ The Children's Protection and Adoption Act of 1972 protects children's right to education, should they work, and prohibits certain types of street vending and trading by children under 16 years.²⁷⁶⁰ Forced labor is also prohibited.²⁷⁶¹

Pursuant to the 2001 Sexual Offenses Act, prostituting children under the age of 12 or the procurement of any person for prostitution are criminal offenses and punishable by fines of up to USD 167 or up to 10 years of imprisonment.²⁷⁶² No laws specifically address trafficking in persons.²⁷⁶³ Labor regulations, and specifically child labor laws, are poorly enforced because of weak interpretations of the laws themselves, a lack of labor inspectors, and a poor understanding among affected workers of basic legal rights.²⁷⁶⁴ Zimbabwe ratified ILO Convention 138 on June 6, 2000, and ILO Convention 182 on December 11, 2000.²⁷⁶⁵

²⁷⁵⁸ *Child Labour in the Tobacco Growing Sector* at 86.

²⁷⁵⁹ *Child Labour in the Tobacco Growing Sector* at 85.

²⁷⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁶¹ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6c.

²⁷⁶² Unclassified telegram 2971.

²⁷⁶³ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6f.

²⁷⁶⁴ *Child Labour in the Tobacco-Growing Sector* at 85, 86. In coordination with organized labor, women's groups, and other advocates, the Government of Zimbabwe is currently drafting legislation to expand national child protection laws. Several proposed provisions in the draft legislation deal with strengthening child labor monitoring and inspection services. *See* unclassified telegram 2971.

²⁷⁶⁵ ILO, ILOLEX database: Zimbabwe, at <http://www.ilolex.ilo.ch> on 11/30/01. Although ILO Convention No. 182 has been ratified by Parliament, it has not yet been incorporated into national law. *See* unclassified telegram 2971.

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