Djibouti

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

The Government of Djibouti supports several small programs to encourage children to attend school, including the Ministry of Labor's "War on Poverty."[1107] The government has translated the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes provisions on child labor, into the national languages (Afar, Somali) and integrated elements of the Convention into the national school curriculum. Furthermore, the government has promoted the Convention by publishing a brochure for children in French.[1108] With assistance from the National Education Centre for Research and Pedagogical Information and UNICEF, the government has produced a handbook on the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including guidelines for how primary school teachers can integrate the articles of the Convention into their lessons. This collaboration has enabled the government to produce radio broadcasts in four languages on the advancement of girls.[1109]

The World Bank supports a Social Development and Public Works Project with the objective of enhancing living standards in Djibouti by construction/rehabilitation of social infrastructures such as stand pipes, health posts, and schools.[1110] On October 8, 2002, the Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with UNICEF, organized an awareness seminar on the rights of children.[1111]

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in Djibouti are unavailable. Information on the incidence of children's work is limited, although reports indicate that child labor exists, primarily in informal economic activities.[1112] In rural areas, children perform unpaid labor on family farms; in urban areas, children often work in small-scale family businesses, trade, catering or craft sectors, or as domestic servants.[1113] Children displaced from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia seek work in the informal sector in Djibouti's cities as shoe polishers, street peddlers,

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[1107] U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1503*, August 2000.

[1108] ECPAT International, *Djibouti*, in ECPAT International, [database online] [cited August 9, 2002]; available from http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/.

[1109] Ibid.

[1110] World Bank, *Social Development and Public Works Project*, [online] September 16, 2002 [cited September 18, 2002]; available from http://www4.worldbank.org/sprojects/Project.asp?pid=P044584.

[1111] U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1072*, October 2002.

[1112] U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1503*. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties due in 1993*, CRC/C/8/Add.39, prepared by Government of Djibouti, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, August 1998, para.144-45.

[1113] UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, paras. 144-45.

money changers, or as beggars.[1114] Child prostitution reportedly is increasing, particularly among refugee street children in the capital city.[1115]

Education is free and compulsory between the ages of 6 and 16.[1116] Although education is free, there are additional expenses (e.g., transportation and books) that often prohibit poor families from sending their children to school.[1117] In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 38.8 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 31.9 percent.[1118] Both gross and net enrollment rates are lower for girls than for boys.[1119] Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for Djibouti. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.[1120]

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years.[1121] Night work is prohibited for children under the age of 16, and the hours and conditions of work by children are regulated.[1122] Forced labor of children is also prohibited.[1123] The Penal Code criminalizes prostitution.[1124] The authority to enforce child labor laws and regulation rests with the Police Vice Squad "Brigade Des Moeurs" and the local gendarmerie.[1125] Child labor offences fall under the Criminal Code with the first offence being punishable by fine and the second offence punishable by

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[1114] ILO, *Review of Annual Reports Under the Follow-Up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, The Effective Abolition of Child Labour: Djibouti, GB.277/3/2*, Geneva, March 2000, 270. See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Djibouti: Drought and Economic Refugees Overburden Capital", IRINnews.org, [online], 2001 [cited September 30, 2002]; available from http://irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=11104&SelectRegion=Horn_of_Africa&SelectCountry=DJIBOUTI.

[1115] ECPAT International, *Djibouti*, "Child Prostitution". See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Djibouti*, CRC/C/15/Add.131, United Nations, Geneva, June 2000, para. 57. See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Djibouti: Drought and Economic Refugees Overburden Capital".

[1116] U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1072*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Djibouti*, Washington D.C., March 4, 2002, 219-20, Section 5 [cited December 10, 2002]; available from http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/af/index.cfm?docid=665.

[1117] U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Djibouti*, 219-20, Section 5.

[1118] World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002* [CD-ROM], Washington D.C., 2002.

[1119] In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 32.0 percent for girls and 45.6 percent for boys. The net primary enrollment rate was 26.6 percent for girls and 37.1 percent for boys. Ibid.

[1120] For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

[1121] See ILO, *The Effective Abolition of Child Labour: Djibouti*. The government is currently drafting a new Labor Code that will raise the minimum age for employment from age 14 to 16. See U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1503*.

[1122] UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para. 25.

[1123] U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Djibouti*, 221-22, Section 6c.

[1124] ECPAT International, *Djibouti*.

[1125] U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1072*.

a jail sentence. However, no incidents of child labor violations have been brought before the judicial system to date.[1126]

The Government of Djibouti has not ratified ILO Convention 138 or ILO Convention 182.[1127]

[1126] Ibid. There is reported to be a shortage of labor inspectors, which may contribute to the lack of reported child labor violations. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Djibouti*, 221-22, Section 6d.

[1127] ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited September 30, 2002]; available from http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/newratframeE.htm.