

Namibia

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

The Government of Namibia collaborated with ILO-IPEC and UNICEF on a national child labor survey in 1999.²⁵¹⁵ The tripartite Labor Advisory Council, comprised of government, union and private sector representatives, sponsored a series of awareness-raising workshops in 2001 for employers on child labor regulations.²⁵¹⁶ Police and immigration officials have received training in combating trafficking in persons.²⁵¹⁷ The Ministry of Health and Social Services is running a Street Children Program that seeks to place street children in shelters and register their parents in income-generating programs.²⁵¹⁸

The Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture is building and renovating school facilities, and working to improve access to basic education for children from marginalized groups. Specific efforts include the creation of community-based curricula, mobile schools and school meal programs.²⁵¹⁹

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, the ILO estimated that 17.4 percent of children ages 10 to 14 years in Namibia were working.²⁵²⁰ Approximately 95.4 percent of working children live in rural areas, with 77.8 percent working in agriculture, hunting and forestry.²⁵²¹ Children in Namibia also work in trading, basket weaving, beer making, barbering, herding, and selling firewood.²⁵²² During the war in Angola

²⁵¹⁵ Government of the Republic of Namibia, *Namibia Child Activities Survey 1999: Report of Analysis*, Ministry of Labour, Windhoek, December 2000, iv [cited August 29, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/simpec/namibia/report/namibia.pdf>.

²⁵¹⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Namibia*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, 494-96, Section 6d [cited August 29, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/af/8395.htm>.

²⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 494-96, Section 6f.

²⁵¹⁸ ILO, *The Effective Abolition of Child Labour: Review of Annual Reports under the follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, GB.280/3/2, Geneva, March 2001, [cited August 29, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/relm/gb/docs/gb280/pdf/gb-3-2-abol.pdf>.

²⁵¹⁹ Government of the Republic of Namibia, Ministry of Basic Education, Sport, and Culture, *A Decade of Peace, Democracy and Prosperity 1990 - 2000*, [online] [cited August 29, 2002]; available from http://www.op.gov.na/Decade_peace/b_edu.htm.

²⁵²⁰ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2002. The *Namibia Child Activities Survey 1999* found that 16.3 percent of children aged 6 to 18 years were working. Government of the Republic of Namibia, *Namibia Child Activities Survey 1999*, 40.

²⁵²¹ Government of the Republic of Namibia, *Namibia Child Activities Survey 1999*, 5 and 7.

²⁵²² *Ibid.*, 4. 84.4 percent of children worked on family farms or in their own home. Government of the Republic of Namibia, *Namibia Child Activities Survey 1999*, 58.

from 1975 to 2002, there were reports that children were reportedly recruited children by Angolan armed forces from Northern Namibia to fight in Angola against rebel forces.²⁵²³

Education is compulsory in Namibia. Children are required to be in school until they complete their primary education or until the age of 16.²⁵²⁴ Although the Constitution mandates that primary education shall be free, in practice there are numerous fees for such items as uniforms, books and school improvements.²⁵²⁵ In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 126.1 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 86.3 percent.²⁵²⁶ Attendance rates for Namibia are not available. While enrollment rates reflect a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.²⁵²⁷

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Act sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years, prohibits the employment of children under the age of 15 in any mine or industrial setting, and prohibits children under the age of 16 from working underground.²⁵²⁸ The Constitution provides that children under 16 are entitled to be protected from economic exploitation and are not to be employed or required to perform work that is likely to be hazardous, harmful to their health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development, or to interfere with their education.²⁵²⁹ The Constitution also prohibits slavery and forced labor.²⁵³⁰

²⁵²³ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Namibia*, 492-94, Section 5.

²⁵²⁴ *Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, 1990*, (February 1990), Article 20 [cited August 29, 2002]; available from http://www.uni-wuerzburg.de/law/wa00000_.html.

²⁵²⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Namibia*, 492-94, Section 5. See also *Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, 1990*, Article 20.

²⁵²⁶ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002*. A study conducted for the Ministry of Health and Social Services estimated that there are 82,667 orphans, representing 20 percent of all Namibian children aged 17 and younger. As a consequence of the HIV-AIDS epidemic, government policymakers face a budgetary choice between training replacement teachers or using those resources to assist HIV-AIDS affected children to pay school fees. See U.S. Embassy- Windhoek, *unclassified telegram no. 0315*, April 2002.

²⁵²⁷ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

²⁵²⁸ Government of the Republic of Namibia, *Labour Act 1992*, Section 42, cited in Government of the Republic of Namibia, *Namibia Child Activities Survey 1999*, 8.

²⁵²⁹ *Constitution of the Republic of Namibia, 1990*, Article 15.

²⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, Article 9. There have been reports, however, of children working as farm laborers without adequate compensation. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Namibia*, 494-96, Section 6d.

The Ministry of Labor is responsible for enforcing the Labor Act.²⁵³¹ The ministry has limited resources and its 24 inspectors are not trained specifically in child labor issues.²⁵³² Labor inspectors have experienced difficulties inspecting family-owned, commercial farms to investigate child labor.²⁵³³

The Government of Namibia ratified ILO Convention 138 and ILO Convention 182 on November 15, 2000.²⁵³⁴

²⁵³¹ ILO, *The Effective Abolition of Child Labour*, 322.

²⁵³² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Namibia*, 494-96, Section 6d. See also ILO, *The Effective Abolition of Child Labour*, 322.

²⁵³³ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Namibia*, 494-96, Section 6d.

²⁵³⁴ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited August 29, 2002]; available from <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/newratframeE.htm>.