

# Nigeria

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

The Government of Nigeria became a member of ILO-IPEC in August 2000.<sup>2652</sup> The government is implementing a USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC national program to eliminate child labor<sup>2653</sup> and participates in a USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC regional project to combat the trafficking of children.<sup>2654</sup> Working with ILO-IPEC, the government established a National Steering Committee on child labor in 2000.<sup>2655</sup> The Nigerian Federal Office of Statistics is completing a national child labor survey funded by USDOL, with technical assistance from ILO-IPEC.<sup>2656</sup>

The Government of Nigeria has developed a national plan of action to combat child trafficking<sup>2657</sup> and is working with ECOWAS to develop a regional action plan.<sup>2658</sup> The government is participating in a program funded by USDOL and the Cocoa Global Issues Group that will seek to withdraw children from hazardous work in the cocoa sector, provide income generation and economic alternatives, and promote education.<sup>2659</sup> In addition, the USAID-supported Sustainable Tree Crops Program is incorporating elements into its program and is coordinating with the USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC program to address child labor in the cocoa sector.<sup>2660</sup> In July 2002, the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and national research collaborators completed a study of child labor in the cocoa industry in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and

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<sup>2652</sup> ILO-IPEC, *All About IPEC: Programme Countries*, [online] August 13, 2001 [cited November 4, 2002]; available from [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/about/countries/t\\_country.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/about/countries/t_country.htm).

<sup>2653</sup> ILO-IPEC, *National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour in Nigeria*, NIR/99/05/060, Geneva, November 1999. The project began in January 2000 and will end in December 2002. See ILO-IPEC, *National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour in Nigeria*, technical progress report, Geneva, September 9, 2002.

<sup>2654</sup> The project began in 1999 and is currently in its second phase. ILO-IPEC, *Combating the trafficking of children for labour exploitation in West & Central Africa (Phase II)*, RAF/01/P53/USA, Geneva, March 2001.

<sup>2655</sup> ILO-IPEC, *National Program on the Elimination of Child Labour in Nigeria*, technical progress report no. 3, Geneva, September 6, 2001.

<sup>2656</sup> Ibid. See also ILO official, electronic communication to USDOL official, August 28, 2002. See also ILO-IPEC, *National Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour*.

<sup>2657</sup> Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Youth Development, *National Report on Follow-up to the World Summit for Children*, Abuja, December 2000, [cited December 17, 2002] 17; available from [http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/how\\_country/](http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/how_country/).

<sup>2658</sup> Roger Laloupo, ECOWAS Director of Legal Affairs, interview with USDOL official, August 1, 2002.

<sup>2659</sup> ILO-IPEC, *West Africa Cocoa/Commercial Agriculture Programme to Combat Hazardous and Exploitative Child Labour (WACAP)*, project document, RAF/02/P50/USA, Geneva, September 2002.

<sup>2660</sup> Ibid., 8 and 12. See also USAID, *Trafficking in Persons: USAID's Response*, September 2001, 4.

Nigeria.<sup>2661</sup> The Government of Nigeria is working with the Global Program against Trafficking in Human Beings of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to strengthen anti-trafficking efforts for women and children. UNODC is providing technical assistance in areas such as research and law enforcement training.<sup>2662</sup>

In 1999, the government relaunched a Universal Basic Education Scheme, which aims to promote access to education, reduce the incidence of drop-out, provide alternative education to dropouts, and ensure the acquisition of life skills in school.<sup>2663</sup> In September 2002, the Government of Nigeria was approved to receive funding in the amount of USD 101 million to support this project.<sup>2664</sup>

## **Incidence and Nature of Child Labor**

In 2000, the ILO estimated 23.9 percent of children ages 10 to 14 years in Nigeria were working.<sup>2665</sup> Children work in agriculture, usually on family farms, in fishing, and with cattle herding.<sup>2666</sup> Children also work on commercial farms.<sup>2667</sup> Within the non-agricultural informal sector, children work in domestic service, cottage industries and public places. Children work in public markets and streets as hawkers, vendors, stall minders, beggars, car washers, scavengers, bus

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<sup>2661</sup> The study was conducted with support from USAID, USDOL, World Cocoa Foundation, the ILO, and the participating West African governments, and was carried out under the framework of the Sustainable Tree Crops Program. International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, *Summary of Findings from the Child Labor Surveys in the Cocoa Sector of West Africa*, 2002.

<sup>2662</sup> UN Office on Drugs and Crime, *Pilot Projects*, [online] [cited February 19, 2003]; available from [http://www.odccp.org/odccp/trafficking\\_projects.html](http://www.odccp.org/odccp/trafficking_projects.html).

<sup>2663</sup> UNESCO, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports-Nigeria*, prepared by Federal Ministry of Education, pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 52/84, 2000, [cited November 5, 2002]; available from [http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/nigeria/rapport\\_3.html](http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/nigeria/rapport_3.html).

<sup>2664</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Nigeria: US \$101 million for basic education", IRINnews.org, [online], September 17, 2002 [cited September 30, 2002]; available from [http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=29938&SelectRegion=West\\_Africa&SelectCountry=NIGERIA](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=29938&SelectRegion=West_Africa&SelectCountry=NIGERIA). See also World Bank, *Universal Basic Education Project*, [online] November 4, 2002 [cited November 4, 2002]; available from <http://www4.worldbank.org/sprojects/Project.asp?pid=P071494>.

<sup>2665</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2002. The actual numbers of children in exploitative or hazardous work are unknown, due to the wide dispersion of child workers, their extensive employment in the unmonitored informal sector and in agriculture, and the limited data. A study in 1999 estimated a lower limit of 8 million child workers. See Anthony Hodges, *Children's and Women's Rights in Nigeria: A Wake-up Call, Situation Assessment and Analysis 2001* (Lagos: UNICEF and the Nigeria National Planning Commission, 2001), 204. The U.S. Department of State cites an ILO figure of "upward of 12 million." See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Nigeria*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, 531-35, Section 6d [cited August 28, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/af/8397.htm>.

<sup>2666</sup> Hodges, *Children's and Women's Rights in Nigeria*, 204.

<sup>2667</sup> Ibid.

conductors, and head-loaders.<sup>2668</sup> Children work in cottage industries as mechanics, tire repairers, metal workers, carpenters, tailors, weavers, barbers and hairdressers.<sup>2669</sup> Child begging is especially widespread in northern Nigeria.<sup>2670</sup>

Child prostitution is common in many cities in Nigeria,<sup>2671</sup> and the average age of commercial sex workers is reportedly 16 years.<sup>2672</sup> Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for trafficked persons, including children.<sup>2673</sup> Children from Benin and other African countries are trafficked to Nigeria, where some are forced to work as prostitutes<sup>2674</sup> or in domestic and agricultural labor.<sup>2675</sup> Children are trafficked for domestic and agricultural labor to Benin, Cameroon, Gabon, and Togo,<sup>2676</sup> and there have been reports of children trafficked to Europe for sexual exploitation.<sup>2677</sup>

Education in Nigeria is compulsory for nine years.<sup>2678</sup> In 1996, the gross primary enrollment rate was 81.9 percent.<sup>2679</sup> In 1999, the net primary attendance rate was 55 percent.<sup>2680</sup> Compulsory primary education is often not provided.<sup>2681</sup> Federal government expenditures on education fell consistently in the 1980s and 1990s, and in 1998 were 77 percent less than in 1980. The Nigerian government has estimated that budgetary allocations for all levels of education are in the range of 2 to 3 percent of GDP, well below that of other African countries.<sup>2682</sup>

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<sup>2668</sup> Ibid. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Nigeria*, 531-35, Section 6d.

<sup>2669</sup> Hodges, *Children's and Women's Rights in Nigeria*, 205.

<sup>2670</sup> As poverty has become more widespread in Nigeria, the *almajiranci* system of semi-formal Koranic education has come to rely on child pupils engaging in begging to support their *mallam*, or Islamic teacher. UNICEF Nigeria reports that the Nigerian government has done little to address the problem of child begging. Ibid., 209.

<sup>2671</sup> Ibid., 209-10.

<sup>2672</sup> ECPAT International, *Nigeria*, in ECPAT International, [database online] 2002 [cited November 27, 2002]; available from [http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat\\_inter/projects/monitoring/online\\_database/index.asp](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/index.asp).

<sup>2673</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2002: Nigeria*, Washington, D.C., June 5, 2002, 80 [cited December 17, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2002/10680.htm>. See also ILO-IPEC, *Combating the trafficking of children for labour exploitation in West & Central Africa (Phase I)*, RAF/01/P53/USA, Geneva, July 1999, 2.

<sup>2674</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Combating the trafficking of children in West & Central Africa (Phase I)*, 1.

<sup>2675</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Nigeria*, 80.

<sup>2676</sup> Ibid. Between 1994 and 1997 at least 400 trafficked children were rescued in Akwa Ibom state, enroute to Gabon. See Hodges, *Children's and Women's Rights in Nigeria*, 211.

<sup>2677</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Nigeria*, 531-35, Section 6f.

<sup>2678</sup> UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Report: Nigeria*, [cited November 5, 2002].

<sup>2679</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002*.

<sup>2680</sup> Hodges, *Children's and Women's Rights in Nigeria*, 146. In 1990, the most recent year for which figures are available, the gross primary attendance rate was 83.4 percent. See USAID, *GED 2000: Global Education Database [CD-ROM]*, Washington, D.C., 2000.

<sup>2681</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Nigeria*, 521-31, Section 5.

<sup>2682</sup> Hodges, *Children's and Women's Rights in Nigeria*, 164-65.

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Act sets the minimum age at 12 years for employment and apprenticeships, except for light agricultural or domestic work performed for the family.<sup>2683</sup> The law prohibits children under 12 years from lifting or carrying any load likely to injure physical development, and establishes a minimum age of 15 years for industrial work and maritime employment.<sup>2684</sup> The law prohibits children under 16 years from working underground, on machines, at night, more than four consecutive hours, or more than eight hours a day.<sup>2685</sup> The law also prohibits children under 18 years from any employment that is dangerous or immoral.<sup>2686</sup> The law does not apply to domestic service.<sup>2687</sup> Nigeria has no federal laws to address trafficking.<sup>2688</sup>

The Ministry of Labor, Employment and Productivity is responsible for enforcing legal provisions relating to conditions of work and protection of workers. However, there are few labor inspectors, and inspections are conducted only in the formal business sector where there are few occurrences of child labor.<sup>2689</sup> Enforcement provisions have not deterred violations. As of November 2002, no recent child labor inspections had resulted in fines, penalties or convictions.<sup>2690</sup> Investigations of child trafficking are hampered by widespread corruption among government, and particularly law enforcement, officials.<sup>2691</sup>

The Government of Nigeria ratified ILO Convention 138 and ILO Convention 182 on October 2, 2002.<sup>2692</sup>

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<sup>2683</sup> *Nigeria Labour Act*, Articles 49 and 59 [cited December 17, 2002]; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/scripts/natlexcgi.exe>.

<sup>2684</sup> *Ibid.*, Articles 59 and 61.

<sup>2685</sup> *Ibid.*, Articles 59 and 60.

<sup>2686</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 59.

<sup>2687</sup> *Ibid.*, Articles 59 and 65.

<sup>2688</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Nigeria*. Edo State in Nigeria has an anti-trafficking law. See U.S. Department of State official, electronic communication to USDOL official, February 2003.

<sup>2689</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Nigeria*, 531-35, Section 6d. See also Hodges, *Children's and Women's Rights in Nigeria*, 204. A recent attempt to prosecute an alleged child trafficker failed when witnesses to attest to the identities of 15 allegedly trafficked children failed to appear. See U.S. Embassy- Abuja, *unclassified telegram no. 2976*, November 2002. See also Victor Efeizomor, "Bisket Freed, Acquitted of Child Trafficking Charges," *This Day* (Lagos), December 6, 2001, [cited August 29, 2002]; available from <http://allafrica.com/stories/200112060455.html>.

<sup>2690</sup> U.S. Embassy- Abuja, *unclassified telegram no. 2976*.

<sup>2691</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Nigeria*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Nigeria*, Section 6f. See also ECPAT International, *Nigeria*.

<sup>2692</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited November 4, 2002]; available from <http://iloex.ilo.ch:1567/english/newratframeE.htm>.