

# São Tomé and Príncipe

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

The Government of São Tomé and Príncipe is working with the IMF and the World Bank to introduce equality of access in the educational system and to improve the quality of education.<sup>3142</sup> Some of the ways in which the government plans to carry out its goals are encouraging enrollment for all children (particularly girls and children in disadvantaged areas); reducing repetition and dropout rates at the primary level; renovating existing schools and constructing new ones; encouraging community participation; providing teacher training for primary and secondary teachers; and strengthening institutional and managerial capacities in the field of education.<sup>3143</sup> The Government of São Tomé and Príncipe is also working under UNESCO's Education for All Initiative to strengthen its teacher-training program.<sup>3144</sup>

The World Food Programme began a four-year program in 2000 to provide a mid-day meal to over 30,000 children in primary schools and kindergartens to alleviate short-term hunger and maintain attendance rates.<sup>3145</sup> In conjunction with the government, UNICEF is implementing an education program that focuses on the improvement of education quality in general, and more specifically, increasing primary school access for children up to the sixth grade.<sup>3146</sup> UNICEF also carried out an initial rapid assessment on working children in A. Grande and Caue.<sup>3147</sup> Funds from the Portuguese Government are supporting a school-mapping program.<sup>3148</sup>

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<sup>3142</sup> The government intends to increase the gross primary school enrollment rate from 70 percent in 1999 to 90 percent by 2002, with a longer-term goal of achieving universal enrollment by 2005. World Bank, *Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for 2000-02*, prepared by São Tomé and Príncipe Authorities, April 6, 2000, para. 35 [cited November 13, 2002]; available from <http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/sao%20tome%20principe%20iprsp.pdf>.

<sup>3143</sup> The government also plans to develop technical and vocational training and promoting apprenticeship training. A more complete listing of government efforts can be found at *Ibid.*, para. 36-37.

<sup>3144</sup> UNESCO, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports: São Tomé and Príncipe*, prepared by Ministry of Education and Culture, pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 52/84, 2000, Part II, Analytical Section, 8 [cited October 25, 2002]; available from [http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/saotome\\_principe/contents.html](http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/saotome_principe/contents.html).

<sup>3145</sup> World Food Programme, *Projected 2002 Needs for WFP Projects and Operations: Country Brief: São Tomé and Príncipe*, 2002, [cited October 10, 2002]; available from <http://www.wfp.org/countrybrief/indexcountry.asp?country=79#>.

<sup>3146</sup> UNICEF, *Education Programme*, 2000, [cited September 4, 2002]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/saotome/educatio.htm>.

<sup>3147</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Publications in São Tomé and Príncipe*, 2000 [cited September 4, 2002]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/saotome/publicati.htm>.

<sup>3148</sup> Also called "Carta Escolar." See World Bank, *São Tomé and Príncipe- Social Sector Support Project*, no. PID11127, Washington, D.C., 2002, 2 [cited September 4, 2002]; available from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/04/19//000094946\\_02041804135555/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/04/19//000094946_02041804135555/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf).

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, UNICEF estimated that 2 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years in São Tomé and Príncipe were working as paid laborers, and another 6 percent participate in unremunerated work outside of the household.<sup>3149</sup> Five percent of children within this age group carry out domestic tasks such as cooking, collecting water and watching other children for more than four hours per day.<sup>3150</sup> Sometimes from an early age, children reportedly work in subsistence agriculture, on plantations, and in informal commerce.<sup>3151</sup> About 10 percent of children ages 5 to 14 work for their families in the streets, participate in agricultural labor on commercial farms or engage in activities in the informal sector. This percentage is highest in Príncipe (18 percent) and in the north (15 percent).<sup>3152</sup> Many children work in the absence of available education beyond the fourth grade.<sup>3153</sup> There is little information about the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the country, but the government reportedly expects that, with the increase in tourism, the establishment of tax-free zones, oil exploration and increased migration to São Tomé, children are at risk of such exploitation.<sup>3154</sup>

Education is free and universal through the age of 14 and compulsory through the sixth grade; education after the sixth grade or after the age of 14 is not free.<sup>3155</sup> In 1999, the gross primary enrollment rate was 70 percent. Children in primary schools had a repetition rate of 31 percent<sup>3156</sup> and a drop-out rate of 34 percent.<sup>3157</sup>

Although the triple shift system designates four hours for class time, shifts last between two and three hours.<sup>3158</sup> In addition, the proportion of qualified primary school teachers is declining.<sup>3159</sup>

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Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, *Enquête de grappes à indicateurs multiples MICS: Rapport d'analyse*, UNICEF, July 14, 2000, 9.

<sup>3150</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3151</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: São Tomé and Príncipe*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, 553-54, Section 6d [cited August 30, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/af/8399.htm>.

<sup>3152</sup> Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, *Enquête de grappes à indicateurs multiples MICS*, 9.

<sup>3153</sup> UNICEF, *Education Programme*.

<sup>3154</sup> ECPAT International, *São Tomé and Príncipe*, in ECPAT International, [database online] 2002 [cited August 30, 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>3155</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: São Tomé and Príncipe*, 553-54, Section 6.

<sup>3156</sup> International Monetary Fund and International Development Association, *São Tomé and Príncipe: Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative- Decision Point Document*, December 5, 2000, 11 [cited August 30, 2002]; available from <http://www.imf.org/external/np/hipc/2000/stp/stpdp.pdf>. Access to the first year of school is universal, and 78 percent of children who enter first grade reach the fourth grade. However, only 52 percent reach the eighth grade. See also World Bank, *São Tomé and Príncipe- Social Sector Support*, 2.

<sup>3157</sup> International Monetary Fund and International Development Association, *São Tomé and Príncipe: Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries*, 13.

<sup>3149</sup> <sup>3158</sup> Ibid. See also World Bank, *São Tomé and Príncipe- Social Sector Support*, 12.

<sup>3159</sup> From 48.8 percent in 1999-2000 to 44.7 percent in 2000-2001. International Monetary Fund and International Development Association, *São Tomé and Príncipe: Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries*.

The educational system has a shortage of classrooms, insufficiently trained and underpaid teachers, inadequate textbooks and materials, high rates of repetition, poor educational planning and management, and a lack of community involvement in school management.<sup>3160</sup> There is also a lack of inter-agency coordination<sup>3161</sup> and domestic financing for the school system, leaving the system highly dependent on foreign financing.<sup>3162</sup>

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The minimum age for admission to employment as established by national legislation is 16 years.<sup>3163</sup> The Ministry of Justice and Labor is responsible for enforcing labor laws.<sup>3164</sup> The Penal Code addresses the commercial sexual exploitation of children although there have been few prosecutions.<sup>3165</sup> Forced and bonded labor, including by children, is prohibited and not known to exist.<sup>3166</sup>

The Government of São Tomé and Príncipe has not ratified either ILO Convention 138 or ILO Convention 182.<sup>3167</sup>

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<sup>3160</sup> United Nations House, *São Tomé and Príncipe: Common Country Assessment*, [cited September 4, 2002], 3; available from <http://www.uns.st/uns/Summary.html>.

<sup>3161</sup> UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Report: São Tomé and Príncipe*, 10, 19.

<sup>3162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3163</sup> The minimum age does not apply to family-owned or operated enterprises, home work, domestic services, self-employed work, family-owned or small-scale farms, and light work. It does apply to such areas as commercial agriculture and export processing zones. ILO, *Review of Annual Reports under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, Geneva, March 2002, Part II. For legislation on working minors, See also Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, *Ley Núm. 6/92, por la que se establece el regimen jurídico de las condiciones individuales de trabajo*, [cited October 10, 2002]; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/scripts/natlexcgi.exe?lang=E>.

<sup>3164</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: São Tomé and Príncipe*, 553-54, Section 6d.

<sup>3165</sup> ECPAT International, *São Tomé and Príncipe*.

<sup>3166</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: São Tomé and Príncipe*, 553-54, Section 6.

<sup>3167</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online], [cited December 18, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.