

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

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire is an associated country of ILO-IPEC.¹¹⁹⁵ Côte d'Ivoire is one of nine countries participating in the USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC project to combat the trafficking of children for exploitative labor in West and Central Africa.¹¹⁹⁶ In September 2002, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and NGOs held a forum in Bouaké that focused on the trafficking of Nigerian girls for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation in urban areas of Côte d'Ivoire.¹¹⁹⁷ In January 2002, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, in collaboration with INTERPOL, organized a meeting that was attended by officials from Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali, Niger, and several UN agencies and NGOs, to discuss child trafficking in West and Central Africa. Issues that were covered included prevention of trafficking, rehabilitation of victims, and the implementation of a September 2000 agreement between Côte d'Ivoire and Mali to combat child trafficking.¹¹⁹⁸ In the resulting Yamoussoukro Declaration, the conference participants pledged to conduct coordinated information campaigns on child trafficking.¹¹⁹⁹ The Government of Côte d'Ivoire has also worked with Burkina Faso and Togo to establish agreements similar to the one with Mali, but progress has stalled since the September 2002 rebellion.¹²⁰⁰

In June 2002, the U.S. State Department's Africa Bureau announced its West Africa Regional Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which includes Côte d'Ivoire. As part of this strategy, U.S. missions in the region will focus U.S. Government resources to support efforts by host governments to prosecute traffickers, protect and repatriate victims, and prevent new trafficking incidents. The strategy will be implemented through improved coordination among donors, funding of regional and international organizations, and direct funding for host government or local NGOs.¹²⁰¹

In July 2001, the National Committee for Combating Trafficking and Exploitation of Children was created in Côte d'Ivoire by presidential decree.¹²⁰² The government has also undertaken several educational and training programs to discourage domestic trafficking¹²⁰³ and is utilizing the police along the country's borders to stop international trafficking.¹²⁰⁴

¹¹⁹⁵ ILO-IPEC, *All About IPEC: Programme Countries*, [online] August 13, 2001 [cited June 26, 2003]; available from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/about/countries/t_country.htm.

¹¹⁹⁶ ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Trafficking of Children for Labour Exploitation in West and Central Africa (Phase II): Country Annex IV: Côte d'Ivoire*, project document, RAF/01/P53/USA, Geneva, April 2001. See also ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Trafficking of Children for Labour Exploitation in West and Central Africa (Phase II)*, project document, RAF/01/P53/USA, Geneva, April 2001.

¹¹⁹⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2002: Côte d'Ivoire*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 6f; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18179pf.htm>.

¹¹⁹⁸ S.E. M. Abou Drahamane Sangaré, *Déclaration par S.E. M. Abou Drahamane Sangaré, Ministre d'État, ministre des affaires étrangères, à la Session Extraordinaire de l'Assemblée Générale des Nations-Unies consacrée aux Enfants*, United Nations, [online] May 10, 2002 [cited August 28, 2003]; available from <http://www.un.org/ga/children/ivoryF.htm>. See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, "West Africa: Child Trafficking Conference Opens", IRINnews.org, [online], January 8, 2002 [cited August 28, 2003]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=18563>. See also UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, *Regional Efforts Against Child Trafficking*, allAfrica.com, [online] January 21, 2002 [cited November 2, 2002]; available from <http://allafrica.com/stories/200201210319.html>.

¹¹⁹⁹ UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, *Regional Efforts Against Child Trafficking*.

¹²⁰⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2002: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 6f.

¹²⁰¹ The strategy is intended to encourage governments in the region to develop and implement laws that allow for the prosecution of traffickers. See U.S. Embassy- Abuja, *unclassified telegram no. 1809*, June 2002.

¹²⁰² Ministry of Families, Women, and Children, *Combating Trafficking and Economic Exploitation of Children in Côte d'Ivoire*, Abidjan, July 2001, Section II.

¹²⁰³ U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 2176*, June 2001.

¹²⁰⁴ Ministry of Families, Women, and Children, *Combating Trafficking and Economic Exploitation of Children*.

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire has stated its support for efforts to combat the exploitation of children in the country's cocoa sector. In a joint statement issued in November 2001, the government, along with industry and NGOs, committed to undertake collaborative efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the cocoa industry, and agreed to establish a joint foundation to oversee these efforts.¹²⁰⁵ An ILO-IPEC program funded by USDOL and the Cocoa Global Issues Group, launched in August 2003, seeks to withdraw children from hazardous work in this sector, provide income generation and economic alternatives, and promote education.¹²⁰⁶ In collaboration with this project, in November 2003, US NGO Winrock held a round table on alternative education opportunities for children who work. Relevant ministries from the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and the U.S. Ambassador took part.¹²⁰⁷ In addition, the USAID-supported Sustainable Tree Crops Program is incorporating child labor elements into its program and is coordinating with the USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC program to address child labor in the cocoa sector.¹²⁰⁸ 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 Nigeria.¹²⁰⁹ A national survey of child labor in Côte d'Ivoire is currently in the preparation stages with technical assistance from ILO-IPEC's SIMPOC.¹²¹⁰

The government is also implementing a National Development Plan for Education, which calls for universal primary school education by 2010.¹²¹¹

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, UNICEF estimated that 40.3 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years in Côte d'Ivoire were working.¹²¹² The disparity between rural and urban areas is significant: 56.8 percent of rural children ages 5 to 14 were working, compared to only 22.5 percent of urban children in this age group.¹²¹³ The majority of working children

¹²⁰⁵ Signatories include the Association of the Chocolate, Biscuit and Confectionary Industries of the EU, the Chocolate Manufacturers Association of the USA, the World Cocoa Foundation, the Child Labor Coalition, Free the Slaves, the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Associations, the National Consumers League and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire. See Government of Côte d'Ivoire, World Cocoa Foundation, and Child Labor Coalition, Joint Statement, November 30, 2001.

¹²⁰⁶ 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. See also Sherin Khan, ILO-IPEC official, electronic communication to USDOL official, February 19, 2004.

¹²⁰⁷ U.S. Embassy- Abidjan official, electronic communication to USDOL official, February 26, 2004.

¹²⁰⁸ ILO-IPEC, *West Africa Cocoa/Commercial Agriculture Programme, program document*, 8, 12. See also USAID, *Trafficking in Persons: USAID's Response*, September 2001, 4.

¹²⁰⁹ 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. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches using three different types of inter-related surveys were designed to collect data on child labor practices in the cocoa sector of West Africa. The surveys employed in the study were the Baseline Producer Survey, the Producer-Worker Survey, and the Community Survey. Producer-Worker Surveys and Community Surveys were conducted in Côte d'Ivoire. See International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, *Summary of Findings from the Child Labor Surveys in the Cocoa Sector of West Africa: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria*, IITA, July 2002.

¹²¹⁰ ILO-IPEC, *IPEC: International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour- A UN/ILO initiative: SIMPOC*, in ILO-IPEC, [online] September 11, 2002 [cited June 26, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipec/simpoc/countries.htm>. The ongoing conflict in the country will likely slow progress on the project.

¹²¹¹ Government of Côte d'Ivoire, *Enquête à Indicateurs Multiples - MICS2000: Rapport Final*, UNICEF Statistics, Abidjan, December 2000, 24.

¹²¹² Children who are working in some capacity include children who have performed any paid or unpaid work for someone who is not a member of the household, who have performed more than four hours of housekeeping chores in the household, or who have performed other family work. Government of Côte d'Ivoire, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2*, Abidjan, 2000, [cited October 10, 2003]; available from <http://www.ucw-project.org/resources/>. See also Government of Côte d'Ivoire, *Enquête à Indicateurs Multiples - MICS2000: Rapport Final*, 48.

¹²¹³ Government of Côte d'Ivoire, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2*.

are found in the informal sector,¹²¹⁴ including on family farms, in family-operated artisanal gold and diamond mines, in fishing, in small trading, and in domestic work.¹²¹⁵ They also shine shoes, run errands, watch and wash cars, prepare and serve food in street restaurants, and work as vendors or in sweatshop conditions in small workshops.¹²¹⁶ There have also been reports of children serving as soldiers in both the national armed forces and rebel groups.¹²¹⁷

Children have been trafficked into the country from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania and Togo to work as domestic servants, farm laborers, and indentured servants.¹²¹⁸ Côte d'Ivoire is also a destination country for girls trafficked from Nigeria, Liberia and Asia for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation.¹²¹⁹ Children have been trafficked out of Côte d'Ivoire to Africa, Europe and the Middle East.¹²²⁰ The September 2002 rebellion has resulted in the closure of borders with neighboring countries and a change in trafficking patterns.¹²²¹

The IITA study on children working in the cocoa sector revealed that in Côte d'Ivoire most children work alongside their families.¹²²² Approximately 200,000 children in Côte d'Ivoire are involved in hazardous tasks that include spraying pesticides without protection, using machetes to clear undergrowth and carrying heavy loads.¹²²³ Approximately one-third of children ages 6 to 17 years who live in cocoa producing households have never attended school.¹²²⁴ A minority of the children working in the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire are engaged in full time work.¹²²⁵ Most of these children come from outside the country's cocoa zone, either from other regions of Côte d'Ivoire or from countries such as Burkina Faso.¹²²⁶

¹²¹⁴ U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 3470*, October 2001.

¹²¹⁵ Ibid. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2002: Côte d'Ivoire.*, Section 6d. See also U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 2046*, August, 2003.

¹²¹⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2002: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 6d.

¹²¹⁷ UN General Assembly, *Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General*, A/58/546-S/2003/1053, November 10, 2003, 20. See also Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, London, 2003; available from <http://www.amnestyusa.org/annualreport/>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2002: Côte d'Ivoire.*, Section 5.

¹²¹⁸ U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 2176*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2002: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 6f. See also U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Washington, D.C., June 11, 2003; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2003/21275.htm>.

¹²¹⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Côte d'Ivoire*.

¹²²⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2002: Côte d'Ivoire*.

¹²²¹ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 6f.

¹²²² The Producer-Worker Survey revealed that 604,500 (96.7 percent) of the 625,100 children working in cocoa in Cote d'Ivoire had a kinship relation to the farmer. See International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, *Child Labor in the Cocoa Sector of West Africa: A synthesis of findings in Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria*, August 2002, 16.

¹²²³ International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, *Summary of Findings from the Child Labor Surveys in the Cocoa Sector of West Africa*. See also USAID, *USAID and Labor Department Release Data from Collaborative Survey on Child Labor on Cocoa Farms in West Africa: W.African Governments and Global Chocolate Industry Working Jointly with U.S. to Combat Problem*, press release, Washington, D.C., July 26, 2002, [cited August 28, 2003]; available from http://www.usaid.gov/press/releases/2002/pr020726_2.html.

¹²²⁴ International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, *Summary of Findings from the Child Labor Surveys in the Cocoa Sector of West Africa*.

¹²²⁵ The Producer-Worker survey found that 5,120 children were employed as full-time hired workers in cocoa in Cote d'Ivoire versus 61,600 adults. See International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, *Child Labor in the Cocoa Sector of West Africa: A synthesis of findings*, 12.

¹²²⁶ The Community survey found that these children originated entirely from outside the Ivoirian cocoa zone: 59 percent were from Burkina Faso, while most of the remainder (24 percent of the total) were Baoule children originally from eastern Cote d'Ivoire. An intermediary was involved in the recruitment process for an estimated 41 percent of the full-time child workers. Of the children employed as full-time workers, 29 percent reported that they were not free to leave their place of employment should they wish to. See Ibid., 12-13.

Primary education in Côte d'Ivoire is not compulsory.¹²²⁷ The government abolished uniforms for primary schools,¹²²⁸ and as of the 2001–2002 school year, tuition fees for primary school students were waived.¹²²⁹ However, parents must still pay an annual fee of 2,600 FCFA (USD 4.98) for each child's enrollment in public secondary schools and a monthly fee of 3,000 FCFA (USD 5.74) for transporting their secondary school children.¹²³⁰ Parents also are responsible for buying books and school supplies.¹²³¹ However, in September 2002, the government undertook the responsibility of distributing free textbooks to 1.2 million students attending 4,500 primary schools in 94 sub-prefects.¹²³² In 1999, and with support from UNDP and WFP, the Ministry of Education and Training launched a school lunch program in order to encourage families in rural areas to enroll their children, particularly girls.¹²³³ According to the program director, primary school enrollment in the implementing areas has risen by almost 40 percent as a result of the program.¹²³⁴ In response to the September 2002 rebellion, the program opened 600 new school canteens that reach over 65,000 displaced children.¹²³⁵ In rebel-occupied areas where classes had been suspended, the program, in collaboration with UNESCO, worked to reopen schools.¹²³⁶ Also, UNDP and the Belgian Chamber of Commerce have undertaken a joint initiative that includes the provision of school supplies to ensure the continued education of displaced children in Yamoussoukro.¹²³⁷

In 2000, the gross primary enrollment rate was 81.3 percent (92.2 percent for boys and 70.3 percent for girls), and the net primary enrollment rate was 64.2 percent (73.2 percent for boys and 55.2 percent for girls).¹²³⁸ In 1999, 90.7 percent of children enrolled in primary school reached grade 5.¹²³⁹ A UNICEF study in 2000 indicated that 56.9 percent of Ivorian children ages 6 to 11 attend school.¹²⁴⁰ There is a disparity in primary school attendance between children in urban areas (66.5 percent) and rural areas (48.5 percent), as well as between boys (61.4 percent) and girls (51.8 percent).¹²⁴¹

¹²²⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2002: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 5.

¹²²⁸ Ibid.

¹²²⁹ U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 3470*.

¹²³⁰ Ibid. For currency conversion see FXConverter, [online] [cited December 31, 2003]; available from <http://www.carosta.de/frames/convert.htm>.

¹²³¹ U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 3470*.

¹²³² These sub-prefectures represent approximately 50 percent of all sub-prefectures. See U.S. Department of State official, electronic communication to USDOL official, February 27, 2003.

¹²³³ UNDP, "Lunch Programme Helps Students Cope with Côte d'Ivoire Crisis", UNDP Newsfront, [online], 2003 [cited June 24, 2003]; available from <http://www.undp.org/dpa/frontpagearchive/2003/may/28may03/>. See also U.S. Department of Agriculture Foreign Agricultural Service, *The Global Food for Education Pilot Program, Côte d'Ivoire: World Food Program*, FASonline, [report online] February, 2003 [cited June 18, 2003]; available from <http://www.fas.usda.gov/excredits/gfe/congress2003/africa.htm>.

¹²³⁴ UNDP, "Lunch programme helps students".

¹²³⁵ Ibid..

¹²³⁶ Ibid.

¹²³⁷ UNDP, *Intervention du Pnud dans la gestion de la crise*, in UNDP-Côte d'Ivoire, [online] [cited June 24, 2003]; available from [http://www.ci.undp.org/Intervention du pnud dans la gestion de la crise.html](http://www.ci.undp.org/Intervention%20du%20pnud%20dans%20la%20gestion%20de%20la%20crise.html).

¹²³⁸ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2003.

¹²³⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁴⁰ Government of Côte d'Ivoire, *Enquête à Indicateurs Multiples - MICS2000: Rapport Final*, 27–28.

¹²⁴¹ Ibid., 27.

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years, even for apprenticeships, and prohibits children under 18 years from working more than 12 consecutive hours or at night.¹²⁴² Decree No. 96-204 also prohibits night work by children aged 14 to 18 years, unless granted an exception by the Labor Inspectorate,¹²⁴³ and Decree No. 67-265 sets the minimum age for hazardous work at 18 years.¹²⁴⁴ The Minority Act requires parents or legal guardians to sign employment contracts on behalf of children under 16 years of age and to serve as witnesses to the signing for children between the ages of 16 and 18.¹²⁴⁵ The Labor Inspectorate can require children to take a medical exam to ensure that they can undertake the work for which they are hired. If the child cannot perform the required tasks, the employer must move him/her to a suitable job, and if that is not possible, the contract must be cancelled.¹²⁴⁶ Decree No. 96-193 restricts children from working in bars, hotels, pawnshops, and second-hand clothing stores.¹²⁴⁷

The Labor Code prohibits forced or compulsory labor,¹²⁴⁸ and according to the Penal Code, persons convicted of procuring a prostitute under age 21 may be imprisoned for 2 to 10 years.¹²⁴⁹ In 1998, the government instituted measures against the statutory rape of students by teachers in order to combat low enrollment rates among girls.¹²⁵⁰ The child labor laws in Côte d'Ivoire apply to all sectors and industries in the country, although the lack of government resources makes them difficult to enforce in the informal sector.¹²⁵¹ Minimum age laws are enforced by the Ministry of Employment and Civil Service only in the civil service and in large multinational companies.¹²⁵²

There is no law specifically prohibiting trafficking in persons, although one is pending in the National Assembly, but the government prosecutes traffickers using laws against child kidnapping and forced labor.¹²⁵³

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire ratified ILO Convention 138 and ILO Convention 182 on February 7, 2003.¹²⁵⁴

¹²⁴² *Code du travail, 1995*, no. 95/15, Titre II, Chapter 2, Articles 22.2, 22.3 and 23.8 [cited August 28, 2003]; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/txt/F95CIV01.htm>.

¹²⁴³ Decree No. 96-204, as cited in U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 3470*. Employers found in violation of the night work prohibition are punishable with imprisonment from 10 days to 2 months and/or a fine ranging from 2,000 to 72,000 FCFA (USD 3.83 to 137.83). For currency conversion see FXConverter, at <http://www.carosta.de/frames/convert.htm>.

¹²⁴⁴ ILO, *The Effective Abolition of Child Labour*, 2001, 261.

¹²⁴⁵ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties Due in 1993, Addendum*, CRC/C/8/Add.41, prepared by Government of Côte d'Ivoire, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2000, para. 85.

¹²⁴⁶ *Code du travail, 1995*, Titre II, Chapter 3, Article 23.9.

¹²⁴⁷ U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 3470*.

¹²⁴⁸ *Code du travail, 1995*, "Dispositions Générales", Article 3.

¹²⁴⁹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Report of States Parties, Addendum: Côte d'Ivoire*, para. 187.

¹²⁵⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Côte d'Ivoire*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, 202-07, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/af/8355.htm>.

¹²⁵¹ U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 3470*.

¹²⁵² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports - 2002: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 6d.

¹²⁵³ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Côte d'Ivoire*.

¹²⁵⁴ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [online database] [cited June 18, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.