

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."¹³⁰⁸ The government is translating the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which includes provisions on child labor, into the national languages (Afar, Somali).¹³⁰⁹ With assistance from 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 for the advancement and protection of girls.¹³¹⁰ November 20 is the Djiboutian Day of the Child; on this day each year children's rights are discussed in schools, NGOs and in the media, and children participate in shows and debates.¹³¹¹

The World Bank supports several projects in Djibouti. The School Access and Improvement Project is building new classrooms for primary and secondary schools, upgrading training materials, providing training, and improving government capacity to manage education reform.¹³¹² The Social Development and Public Works Project is enhancing living standards in Djibouti by construction/rehabilitation of social infrastructures such as stand pipes, health posts, and schools.¹³¹³ On October 8, 2002, the Ministry of Justice, in collaboration with UNICEF, organized an awareness seminar on the rights of children.¹³¹⁴

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.¹³¹⁵ 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.¹³¹⁶ Children displaced from Ethiopia, Eritrea and Somalia seek work in the informal sector in Djibouti's cities as shoe polishers,

¹³⁰⁸ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1503*, August 2000. See also U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1072*, October 2002.

¹³⁰⁹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record of the 637th Meeting: Djibouti*, CRC/C/SR.637, United Nations, Geneva, January 8, 2001, para.23; available from http://www.bayefsky.com/summary/djibouti_crc_c_sr.6372000.php.

¹³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 3.

¹³¹¹ *Ibid.*, para.22.

¹³¹² World Bank, *School Access and Improvement Project*, [online] June 4, 2003 [cited June 6, 2003]; available from <http://www4.worldbank.org/projects/Project.asp?pid=P044585>.

¹³¹³ World Bank, *Social Development and Public Works Project*, in *Projects Database*, [database online] September 16, 2002 [cited September 18, 2002]; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P044584>.

¹³¹⁴ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1072*.

¹³¹⁵ *Ibid.* 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, February 1998, para.144-45; available from http://66.36.242.93/reports/djibouti_crc_c_8_add.39_1998.php.

¹³¹⁶ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, paras. 144-45.

street peddlers, money changers, or as beggars.¹³¹⁷ Child prostitution reportedly is increasing, particularly among refugee street children in the capital city.¹³¹⁸

Education is free and compulsory for children between the ages of 6 and 16.¹³¹⁹ Although education is free, there are additional expenses (e.g., transportation and books) that often prohibit poor families from sending their children to school.¹³²⁰ In 2000, the gross primary enrollment rate was 40.3 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 32.6 percent.¹³²¹ Both gross and net enrollment rates are lower for girls than for boys.¹³²² In 1998, 76.7 percent of children enrolled in primary school reached grade 5.¹³²³ 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.¹³²⁴

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years.¹³²⁵ Night work is prohibited for children under the age of 16, and the hours and conditions of work by children are regulated.¹³²⁶ Forced labor of children is also prohibited.¹³²⁷ Djiboutian law criminalizes prostitution.¹³²⁸ The authority to enforce child labor laws and regulation rests with the Police Vice Squad "Brigade Des Moeurs" and the local Gendarmerie.¹³²⁹ The government however has a shortage of labor inspectors and financial resources, which reduces the likelihood of enforcement of child labor laws.¹³³⁰ Child labor offences fall under the Criminal Code with the first offence being punishable with a fine and the second offence punishable with imprisonment.

The Government of Djibouti has not ratified ILO Convention 138 or ILO Convention 182.¹³³¹

¹³¹⁷ 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 UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Djibouti: Drought and Economic Refugees Overburden Capital", IRINnews.org, [online], 2001 [cited June 6, 2003]; available from http://irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=11104&SelectRegion=Horn_of_Africa&SelectCountry=DJIBOUTI.

¹³¹⁸ ECPAT International, *Djibouti*, in ECPAT International, [database online] [cited June 6, 2003]; available from http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/. 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; available from [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/CRC.C.15.Add.131.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/CRC.C.15.Add.131.En?OpenDocument). See also UN Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Djibouti: Drought and Economic Refugees Overburden Capital".

¹³¹⁹ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1072*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2002: Djibouti*, Washington D.C., March 31, 2003; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18180.htm>.

¹³²⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Djibouti*, Section 5. See also U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1503*.

¹³²¹ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003* [CD-ROM], Washington D.C., 2003.

¹³²² In 2000, the gross primary enrollment rate was 34.7 percent for girls and 45.9 percent for boys. The net primary enrollment rate was 28.42 percent for girls and 36.76 percent for boys. *Ibid.* See also U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1072*.

¹³²³ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003*.

¹³²⁴ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

¹³²⁵ See ILO, *The Effective Abolition of Child Labour: Djibouti*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Djibouti*, Section 6d. 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*.

¹³²⁶ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para. 25.

¹³²⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Djibouti*, Section 6c.

¹³²⁸ ECPAT International, *Djibouti*. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para.148.

¹³²⁹ U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1072*.

¹³³⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Djibouti*, Section 6d. See also U.S. Embassy- Djibouti, *unclassified telegram no. 1072*.

¹³³¹ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited April 29, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/docs/declAF.htm>.