

Solomon Islands

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

The ILO estimated that 22.4 percent of children ages 10 to 14 years in the Solomon Islands were working in 2002.³⁶³² Commercial sexual exploitation of children is reportedly a growing problem in the Solomon Islands.³⁶³³ It was reported in 2000 that several hundred child soldiers were fighting in the ranks of the Guadalcanese and Malaitan militias. Dozens of these children are reportedly still affiliated with their former commanders in quasi-criminal gangs.³⁶³⁴

Education in the Solomon Islands is not compulsory,³⁶³⁵ and school fees are high relative to local family incomes.³⁶³⁶ Many children are reportedly denied access to education due to early entrance into work.³⁶³⁷ Gross and net primary enrollment rates are unavailable for the Solomon Islands.³⁶³⁸ However, some education data show that only 60 percent of school-age children have access to primary education.³⁶³⁹ Recent primary school attendance statistics are not available for the Solomon Islands. The state of education is reported to have worsened in recent years due to poor infrastructure, lack of financial resources, and irregular payment of teachers. This has caused some schools to shut down completely.³⁶⁴⁰

³⁶³² World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2004.

³⁶³³ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, online, CRC/C/51/Add.6, Geneva, July 12, 2002, 115; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/CRC.C.51.Add.6.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/CRC.C.51.Add.6.En?OpenDocument). See also Global March Against Child Labor, *Worst Forms of Child Labour: Solomon Islands*, [online] [cited February 11, 2004]; available from <http://www.globalmarch.org/worstformsreport/world/solomon-islands.htm>.

³⁶³⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Solomon Islands*, February 25, 2004 [cited February 26, 2004]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27789.htm>. See also Amnesty International, *Solomon Islands: A Forgotten Conflict*, [online] 2000 [cited February 10, 2004]; available from <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/Index/ASA430052000?OpenDocument&of=COUNTRIES\SOLOMON+ISLANDS>.

³⁶³⁵ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, 89.

³⁶³⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Solomon Islands*, Section 5. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, 90.

³⁶³⁷ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations: Solomon Islands*, CRC/C/15/Add.208, Geneva, July 2, 2003, 14; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/ccf51b3b3aa93c91c1256db90024ca4c?Opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/ccf51b3b3aa93c91c1256db90024ca4c?Opendocument).

³⁶³⁸ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004*.

³⁶³⁹ UN Committee Economic Social and Cultural Rights, *Review of the Implementation of CESCR: Solomon Islands*, E/C.12/1/Add.33, Geneva, May 1999, 23; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(symbol\)/E.C.12.1.Add.33.En?opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(symbol)/E.C.12.1.Add.33.En?opendocument).

³⁶⁴⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Solomon Islands*, Section 5.

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Act prohibits the employment of children below the age of 12. Children may participate in light agricultural or domestic labor if they are employed by, or in the company of their parents.³⁶⁴¹ Children under the age of 16 are prohibited from working in industry or on ships, except on approved training ships, and children under the age of 16 may not work underground in mines.³⁶⁴² The Constitution prohibits slavery and forced labor.³⁶⁴³ The procurement of girls under 18 years of age for the purposes of prostitution is prohibited under Part XVI of the Penal Code (“Offences Against Morality”).³⁶⁴⁴ The Penal Code, Part XXVI, “Offences Against Liberty,” provides for sanctions for the abduction of children.³⁶⁴⁵

The Labor Division of the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, and Industry is tasked with enforcing child labor laws,³⁶⁴⁶ but information of the effectiveness of this Division and other enforcement measures is not available.

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

The Government of the Solomon Islands has a National Youth Policy to address the welfare needs of youth ages 14 to 29, and also those of children below the age of 14 facing difficult situations.³⁶⁴⁷ There is weak government support for the National Advisory Committee on Children (NACC) and it has limited effectiveness in coordinating the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.³⁶⁴⁸

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments	
Ratified Convention 138	
Ratified Convention 182	
ILO-IPEC Member	
National Plan for Children (Youth Policy)	✓
National Child Labor Action Plan	
Sector Action Plan	

The UN Development Assistance Framework 2003-2007, which was based on the government’s Common Country Assessment, aims to improve access, quality and delivery of basic services, including basic education.³⁶⁴⁹ The country’s National Education Master Plan

³⁶⁴¹ Section 84 of the Labor Act, as cited in UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, 111.

³⁶⁴² *Ibid.*, 112.

³⁶⁴³ *Constitution of the Solomon Islands, 1978*, Chapter II, Article 6; available from http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/paclawmat/Solomon_Islands_legislation/Solomons_Constitution.html.

³⁶⁴⁴ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, 56.

³⁶⁴⁵ Section 246 of the Penal Code as cited in *Ibid.*, 55.

³⁶⁴⁶ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Solomon Islands*, Section 6d.

³⁶⁴⁷ UN, *Common Country Assessment: Solomon Islands*, previously online, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, 2002, 75; available from <http://www.undp.org.fj/CCAs.htm> [hard copy on file].

³⁶⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 76. See also Dr. Dennie Iniakwala, *Presentation of the National Initial CRC Implementation report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child*, Geneva, May 26, 2003, 3. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations: Solomon Islands*, 2.

³⁶⁴⁹ UN, *Solomon Islands: United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2003-2007)*, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, [online] 2002 [cited July 21 2003], Foreword, 11; available from http://www.undp.org.fj/documents/UNDAF_SOLIS_17%20JULY.doc.

1999-2010 also includes provisions to improve the quality, scope, and relevance of education.³⁶⁵⁰ The Ministry of Education has developed various training programs and services to equip primary and secondary school teachers and education administrators.³⁶⁵¹

³⁶⁵⁰ Mr. Johnson Moffat Ramoni, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports- Solomon Islands*, UNESCO, [online] [cited February 11, 2004]; available from http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/solomon_islands/rapport_3.html.

³⁶⁵¹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, 90.