Nigeria

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Child labor in Nigeria is prevalent, especially in the informal sectors. Children work on family and commercial farms and as domestic servants. They also work in fishing, mining, quarrying, the transportation industry, construction, and garment manufacturing.

Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor

| Percent of children 5-14 estimated as working in 2003: | Unavailable |
| Minimum age for admission to work: | 15 |
| Age to which education is compulsory: | 6-12 |
| Free public education: | Yes |
| Gross primary enrollment rate in 2004: | 99% |
| Net primary enrollment rate in 2004: | 60% |
| Percent of children 5-14 attending school: | Unavailable |
| As of 2003, percent of primary school entrants likely to reach grade 5: | 73% |
| Ratified Convention 138: | 10/2/2002 |
| Ratified Convention 182: | 10/2/2002 |
| ILO-IPEC participating country: | Yes, associated |

* In practice, must pay for school fees.

3160 Ibid.
3162 Ibid.
also work in carpentry, masonry, hairdressing, weaving, dyeing, tailoring, carving, and tannings. In urban areas, children work as street peddlers, shoe-shinners, load carriers, car washers, scavengers, and beggars.

Children in Nigeria are engaged in the drug trade. Commercial sexual exploitation of children is also common in many cities in Nigeria, including the Niger Delta regions of Port Harcourt, Bonny, and Akwa Ebom, and large cities, like Lagos. The Government of Nigeria reports children being subjected to forced labor and armed conflict.

Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking. Children are reported to be trafficked for involuntary domestic and agricultural labor as well as street peddling, within the country and to countries in West and Central Africa. Children from Benin and other West African countries are also trafficked to Nigeria for forced labor. Within the country, boys have been trafficked primarily to work as bonded laborers, street peddlers, and beggars, while girls have been trafficked for domestic service, street peddling, and commercial sexual exploitation.

### Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The law sets the minimum age for employment at 15 years, except for light agricultural, horticultural, or domestic work performed for the family. The minimum age for apprenticeships is 13 years. The law prohibits employing children under 15 years in any industrial undertaking. Children under 16 years are prohibited from working underground, on machines, at night, on public holidays, or in dangerous or immoral employment. Children under 16 are also prohibited from working more than 8 hours a day and cannot be required to work for

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3173 Ibid.


3176 Ibid., Articles 59-61.
more than 4 consecutive hours. The Federal Child’s Rights Act of 2003 provides criminal sanctions for violation of child labor laws. However, it is legally binding only in the Nigerian states where it has been adopted. Of Nigeria’s 36 states, only the Federal Capital Territory, Anambra, Ondo, Ogun, Oyo, Nasarawa, Ebonyi, and Cross River have adopted the law.

The law punishes with imprisonment for life the trafficking of persons under 18 with the intent to prostitute them. Inducing a person under 18 years into prostitution whether by force, deception, debt bondage, or with the victim’s consent is punishable by 10 years of imprisonment. The law also prohibits forced labor, trafficking in slaves, pornography, drug trafficking, and forced or compulsory recruitment into armed conflict of any person, including children. The law applies to all residents of Nigeria and to Nigerians who are convicted outside of Nigeria for trafficking-related offenses. It also provides for the rights of victims of trafficking, including the right to access health and social services while a temporary resident, protection of identity, and the right to press charges against the trafficker. Nigeria has no military conscription. Recruitment into the professional armed forces is on a voluntary basis. The minimum legal recruitment age is 18.

The responsibility of enforcing child labor laws rests with various ministries and agencies at the federal, state, and local levels. The Federal Ministry of Employment, Labor, and Productivity coordinates all efforts to combat child labor through its Inspectorate Department, which includes a Child Labor Unit. The law authorizes the Minister of Labor to regulate child domestic service. According to the U.S. Department of State, Nigerian federal government initiatives to stem the incidence of child labor have been ineffective, in particular as they have been unable to reach all state and local levels. Although the Ministry conducted inspections, the inspections focused on the formal business sector, where the incidence of child labor is not a significant problem. The Ministry of Labor has trained approximately 120 labor inspection

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3177 Ibid., Articles 59-60.
3179 Ibid.
3183 Government of Nigeria, Trafficking in Persons Act, Sections 14 and 25.,
3184 Ibid., Section 36.
3186 Gladys Makoju, Deputy Director, Education Sector Analysis, Interview with USDOL Consultant, March 29, 2005. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Nigeria," Section 6d.
3189 Ibid.
officers on child labor laws and has an additional 80 officers to perform inspections in high-risk areas such as agriculture, mining, and in the informal sector.\textsuperscript{3190}

Enforcement efforts regarding trafficking are the primary responsibility of the National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP).\textsuperscript{3191} The National Police Force (NPF) and the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) also have anti-trafficking units responsible for combating trafficking.\textsuperscript{3192} The NAPTIP, NPF, and NIS are improving coordination and record-keeping, and the number of trafficking cases investigated and prosecuted is reported to be increasing.\textsuperscript{3193} Between November 2005 and March 2006, NPF rescued 96 victims, NAPTIP rescued 21 victims, and NIS, operating at international borders, rescued 16 child laborers/trafficking victims.\textsuperscript{3194} Despite this, trafficking is reportedly on the rise, and NAPTIP lacks adequate resources to address all of the victims’ needs.\textsuperscript{3195} The Ministry of Labor and Productivity is reported to have repatriated 370 trafficked children.\textsuperscript{3196} At the state level, anti-trafficking police units have been established and staffed in states with the worst trafficking problems.\textsuperscript{3197}

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

The Government of Nigeria participated in a USD 6 million USDOL-funded regional project, which withdrew or prevented 1,017 children from hazardous work in the cocoa sector and closed in April 2006.\textsuperscript{3198} In addition, the USAID-supported Sustainable Tree Crops Program incorporates child labor issues into its program in Nigeria.\textsuperscript{3199} With funding from Canada, France and Norway, the UNODC Global Program against Trafficking in Human Beings provides technical assistance to the government to assess trends in human trafficking.\textsuperscript{3200} The Governments of Nigeria and Italy are collaborating on a separate UNODC project to reduce the trafficking of women and minors for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation between the two countries.\textsuperscript{3201}

\textsuperscript{3190} U.S. Embassy- Abuja, reporting, December 15, 2006, para 8b. See also Government of Nigeria, Efforts to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor, 3.
\textsuperscript{3192} Ibid. See also The Protection Project, 2005 Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons: Nigeria., 14.
\textsuperscript{3194} U.S. Embassy- Abuja, reporting, December 15, 2006, para 8b.
\textsuperscript{3195} U.S. Embassy- Abuja, reporting, March 14, 2007, para 1b.
\textsuperscript{3196} Government of Nigeria, Efforts to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor, 3.
\textsuperscript{3201} UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Programme of action against trafficking in minors and young women from Nigeria into Italy for the purpose of sexual exploitation, 2006 [cited October 20, 2006]; available from http://www.unodc.org/nigeria/en/humantrafficking.html.
In July 2006, Nigeria was 1 of 24 countries to adopt the Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, in West and Central Africa and the Joint Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in the West and Central African Regions.\textsuperscript{3202} As part of the Multilateral Cooperative Agreement, the governments agreed to put into place the child trafficking monitoring system developed by the U.S. Department of Labor-funded, ILO-IPEC LUTRENA project; to ensure that birth certificates and travel identity documents cannot easily be falsified or altered; to provide assistance to each other in the investigation, arrest and prosecution of trafficking offenders; to protect, rehabilitate, and reintegrate trafficking victims; and to improve educational systems, vocational training and apprenticeships.\textsuperscript{3203}
