

# Vanuatu

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

In 1997, the Government of Vanuatu created a Comprehensive Reform Program (CRP) concentrating mainly on education. A major goal of the CRP program was to introduce a mandatory 10 years of compulsory education for all children by the year 2010.<sup>2653</sup> UNICEF is working with the Ministry of Health, other governmental departments, NGOs, and Pacific Island Regional Organizations to address the issues of early childhood education.<sup>2654</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children in Vanuatu under age 15 are unavailable, but there are no indications that abusive child labor exists, nor have there been any reports of bonded, forced, or compulsory labor involving children in the Pacific Island nation.<sup>2655</sup>

Access to school is very limited,<sup>2656</sup> and there is no regulation or constitutional guarantee mandating that education be either compulsory or free.<sup>2657</sup> In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 97.3 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 90.1 percent.<sup>2658</sup> Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for Vanuatu. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.<sup>2659</sup> The educational system is complicated by the use of two official languages and over one hundred vernaculars spread out over many islands.<sup>2660</sup> A 1999 report published by the UNDP stated that 24 percent of all primary school teachers in Vanuatu are untrained, and projections have been made that at the current high growth rate of school age children, primary school enrollment will double by the year 2010.<sup>2661</sup>

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<sup>2653</sup> "Broadening Opportunities for Education," Pacific Human Development Report, 1999 [hereinafter "Broadening Opportunities for Education"], at 44.

<sup>2654</sup> UNICEF, "Assistance to Pacific Island Countries," at [http://www.undp.org/fj/un/UNICEF/UNICEF\\_PIC.htm](http://www.undp.org/fj/un/UNICEF/UNICEF_PIC.htm).

<sup>2655</sup> *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Vanuatu* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2001) [hereinafter *Country Reports 2000*], Section 6d, at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/eap/index.cfm?docid=814>.

<sup>2656</sup> *Ibid.* at Section 5.

<sup>2657</sup> "The Situation of Youth," UN Country Profiles, Vanuatu, at <http://www.righttoeducation.org/unreports.unreport5prt3.html>.

<sup>2658</sup> UNESCO, *Education for All: Year 2000 Assessment* (Paris, 2000) [CD-ROM].

<sup>2659</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see *Introduction* to this report.

<sup>2660</sup> "Broadening Opportunities for Education" at 42.

<sup>2661</sup> *Ibid.* at 40, 45.

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

Under the Labor Code, children below the age of 12 are prohibited from working outside of family-owned operations involved in agricultural production. Children between the ages of 12 and 18 are restricted from working at night or in the shipping industry.<sup>2662</sup> Forced labor is also prohibited by law.<sup>2663</sup> Vanuatu is not a member of the ILO and has not ratified ILO Conventions on child labor.<sup>2664</sup>

<sup>2662</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at 6d.

<sup>2663</sup> *Ibid* at 6c.

<sup>2664</sup> ILO, Ratifications of Fundamental ILO Conventions, at <http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/st>.

*NOTE: Hard copies of all Web citations are on file.*

<sup>2665</sup> IPEC, "All About IPEC: Programme Countries," at [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/about/countries/t\\_country.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/about/countries/t_country.htm).

<sup>2666</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties Due in 1992*, supplementary report, addendum, Venezuela, UN Document CRC/C/3/add.59 (Geneva, 1999) [hereinafter *Initial Reports of States Parties*], 69-75.

<sup>2667</sup> Comisión Andina de Juristas, "España ayuda a Venezuela a erradicar trabajo infantil," March 22, 2000