

## Niger

<i>Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor</i>	
Percent of children 5-14 estimated as working in 2000:	66.2% <sup>3114</sup>
Minimum age for admission to work:	14 <sup>3115</sup>
Age to which education is compulsory:	7-12 <sup>3116</sup>
Free public education:	Yes <sup>3117</sup>
Gross primary enrollment rate in 2004:	45% <sup>3118</sup>
Net primary enrollment rate in 2004:	39% <sup>3119</sup>
Percent of children 5-14 attending school in 2000:	31.1% <sup>3120</sup>
As of 2003, percent of primary school entrants likely to reach grade 5:	74% <sup>3121</sup>
Ratified Convention 138:	12/4/1978 <sup>3122</sup>
Ratified Convention 182:	10/23/2000 <sup>3123</sup>
ILO-IPEC Participating Country:	Yes, associated <sup>3124</sup>

### Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, approximately 71.8 percent of boys and 60.6 percent of girls ages 5 to 14 were working in Niger.<sup>3125</sup> Children work in the agricultural, commercial, and artisanal sectors often in family businesses.<sup>3126</sup> Children in rural areas work on family farms, gathering water or firewood, pounding grain, tending animals, or working in rice fields.<sup>3127</sup> Children work in hazardous conditions in mines and quarries breaking rock; transporting heavy loads in head-pans; washing and processing gold, which may expose children to mercury; and crushing and hoisting ore.<sup>3128</sup>

<sup>3114</sup> UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*, March 1, 2007.

<sup>3115</sup> International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), *Internationally Recognised Core Labour Standards in Niger and Senegal*, ICFTU, Geneva, September 24, 2003; available from <http://www.icftu.org/www/pdf/nigersenegalclsreport.pdf>.

<sup>3116</sup> UNESCO, "Regional Overview: Sub-Saharan Africa," in *Global Monitoring Report 2003/4: Gender and Education for All*, Paris, 2004; available from [http://www.unesco.org/education/efa\\_report/zoom\\_regions\\_pdf/ssafrica.pdf](http://www.unesco.org/education/efa_report/zoom_regions_pdf/ssafrica.pdf).

<sup>3117</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Niger," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2006*, Washington, DC, March 6, 2007; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78750.htm>.

<sup>3118</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Gross Enrolment Ratio. Primary. Total*, accessed December 20, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.

<sup>3119</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Net Enrolment Rate. Primary. Total*, accessed December 20, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org>.

<sup>3120</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Survival Rate to Grade 5. Total*, accessed December 18, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org>.

<sup>3121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3122</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, accessed October 23, 2006; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.

<sup>3123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3124</sup> ILO-IPEC, *IPEC Action Against Child Labour: Highlights 2006*, Geneva, October 2006; available from [http://www.ilo.org/iloroot/docstore/ipecc/prod/eng/20070228\\_Implementationreport\\_en\\_Web.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/iloroot/docstore/ipecc/prod/eng/20070228_Implementationreport_en_Web.pdf).

<sup>3125</sup> UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

<sup>3126</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Niger," Section 6d.

<sup>3127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3128</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor in Mining in West Africa*, project document, Geneva, September 30, 2005, 2.

Children also perform domestic work, guard cars, shine shoes, and work as porters.<sup>3129</sup> Some boys, whose parents send them from rural areas to cities to attend Koranic schools, are forced by their schoolmasters or *marabouts* to beg on the streets or do manual labor.<sup>3130</sup>

Traditional forms of caste-based servitude, including of children, still exist in isolated parts of Niger.<sup>3131</sup> Children's caste standing often determines the sort of work in which they engage. Depending on the region, children may be involved in agricultural work; cattle rearing; domestic service; or leather, wood, or iron working.<sup>3132</sup>

Niger serves as a source, transit, and destination country for children trafficked for forced labor, including commercial sexual exploitation and domestic service. Children are trafficked internally to work in mines, manual labor, and domestic service, as well as for commercial sexual exploitation and begging.<sup>3133</sup> Some children are trafficked to Niger for exploitive labor from Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo. Children are trafficked from Niger to North Africa, Europe, and the Middle East for sexual exploitation and domestic service.<sup>3134</sup>

### **Child Labor Laws and Enforcement**

The law sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years. Children 12 to 14 may work with special authorization for only 2 hours per day or 4 hours during school vacations. Children 14 to 18 may not work for more than 4.5 hours per day and are restricted to certain types of employment.<sup>3135</sup> The law also requires that employers guarantee minimum sanitary working conditions for children.<sup>3136</sup>

The Labor Code prohibits forced and bonded labor, except for work by legally convicted prisoners.<sup>3137</sup> Nigerien law also outlaws all forms of slavery and provides for a prison sentence

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<sup>3129</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Examen des rapports présentés par les états parties en application de l'article 44 de la convention, rapports initiaux devant être soumis en 1992, Niger*, CRC/C/3/Add.29/Rev. 1, Geneva, October 2001, para. 381.

<sup>3130</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Niger," Section 5. See also U.S. Embassy- Niamey, *reporting*, January 3, 2007.

<sup>3131</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Niger," Section 6c, U.S. Embassy- Niamey, *reporting*, August 26, 2005. See also Anti-Slavery International & Association Timidira, *Slavery in Niger: Historical, Legal and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Galy Kadir Abdelkader (London: Anti-Slavery International, 2004), 14, 82; available from <http://www.antislavery.org/homepage/resources/publication.htm>.

<sup>3132</sup> U.S. Embassy- Niamey, E-mail communication to USDOL official, July 31, 2006.

<sup>3133</sup> U.S. Embassy- Niamey, *reporting Jan 3, 2007*, U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Niger," Section 6c.

<sup>3134</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Niger," Section 6c. See also U.S. Department of State, "Niger (Tier 2)," in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006*, Washington, DC, June 5, 2006; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65989.htm>.

<sup>3135</sup> International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), *Core Labour Standards in Niger and Senegal*, 6.

<sup>3136</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Niger," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2005*, Washington, DC, March 8, 2006, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61585.htm>, U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Niger." See also U.S. Embassy- Niamey, *reporting Jan 3, 2007*.

<sup>3137</sup> International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), *Core Labour Standards in Niger and Senegal*, 8. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Niger," Section 6d.

of 30 years for violations.<sup>3138</sup> There are no laws against trafficking. The law criminalizes the procurement or incitement of a minor for the purpose of prostitution, and establishes fines and prison terms of 2 to 5 years for violations.<sup>3139</sup> Nigerien law also punishes the parents of minors or any person encouraging minors to beg and who profit from their begging by 6 months to 1 year of imprisonment.<sup>3140</sup> The minimum age for conscription into the military is 18.<sup>3141</sup>

The Ministry of Labor is charged with enforcing labor laws, but has very limited resources to do so.<sup>3142</sup> The Ministry of Labor had approximately 30 inspectors deployed nationwide who are responsible for enforcing all elements of the Labor Code, including investigating cases of child labor.<sup>3143</sup>

The Ministers of Interior, Justice, and the Promotion of Women and Protection of Children share the responsibility for combating trafficking in persons.<sup>3144</sup>

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

The Ministry of Labor continued its work with ILO-IPEC and UNICEF on a program to determine the extent of the country's child labor problem.<sup>3145</sup> The Ministry of Mines is cooperating in a USDOL-funded USD 3 million regional project implemented by ILO-IPEC to withdraw 1,500 children from artisanal gold mining and prevent 2,500 children from exploitive work in two mining areas in Niger and Burkina Faso.<sup>3146</sup>

The Government of Niger is also participating in a USDOL-funded, USD 2 million Child Labor Education Initiative project implemented by Catholic Relief Services to combat child labor through education. This 4-year project targets 3,200 children from exploitive work in industries such as mining; it also aims to limit children's exposure to agricultural work, cattle-breeding activities, and domestic service.<sup>3147</sup> The government participates in a regional ILO-IPEC project funded by France to combat child labor in Francophone Africa.<sup>3148</sup>

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<sup>3138</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Niger: Slavery - an unbroken chain", IRINnews.org, [online], March 21, 2005 [cited October 23, 2006]; available from [http://www.irinnews.org/S\\_report.asp?ReportID=46200&SelectRegion=West\\_Africa](http://www.irinnews.org/S_report.asp?ReportID=46200&SelectRegion=West_Africa). See also Amnesty International, *Niger Human Rights Concerns*, [online] [cited October 23, 2006]; available from <http://www.amnestyusa.org/countries/niger/index.do>.

<sup>3139</sup> Government of Niger, *Criminal Code: Chapter VIII- Offenses Against Public Morals*, (Previously online from The Protection Project Legal Library), Articles 292-294. See also U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006: Niger."

<sup>3140</sup> U.S. Embassy- Niamey, *reporting Jan 3, 2007*.

<sup>3141</sup> U.S. Embassy- Niamey, E-mail communication to USDOL official, October 04, 2005.

<sup>3142</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2005: Niger," Section 6d.

<sup>3143</sup> U.S. Embassy- Niamey, E-mail communication dated July 31, 2006, U.S. Embassy- Niamey, *reporting Jan 3, 2007*.

<sup>3144</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Niger," Section 5.

<sup>3145</sup> *Ibid.*, Section 6d.

<sup>3146</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Regional Mining, project document*, 36.

<sup>3147</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, *Combating Exploitive Child Labor through Education in Niger*, project document, 2007, 20.

<sup>3148</sup> ILO-IPEC Geneva official, E-mail communication USDOL official, November 16, 2006.

In July 2006, Niger 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.<sup>3149</sup> 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.<sup>3150</sup>

The government worked with UNICEF and local NGOs to prevent trafficking. Efforts included the training of police and border security officers to identify victims of trafficking,<sup>3151</sup> and facilitating the rehabilitation and repatriation of rescued children. The police also worked with local truckers' unions to organize homeward transportation for trafficking victims.<sup>3152</sup>

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<sup>3149</sup> ECOWAS and ECASS, *Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, in West and Central Africa*, Abuja, July 7, 2006.

<sup>3150</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Trafficking of Children for Labour Exploitation in West and Central Africa (LUTRENA)*, technical progress report, Washington, DC, September 1, 2006.

<sup>3151</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Niger," Section 5.

<sup>3152</sup> U.S. Embassy - Niamey, *reporting*, January 10, 2007.