

Eritrea

<i>Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor</i>	
Percent of children 5-14 estimated as working:	Unavailable
Minimum age of work:	14 ¹⁵⁶⁴
Age to which education is compulsory:	Grade 7 ¹⁵⁶⁵
Free public education:	Yes ^{1566*}
Gross primary enrollment rate in 2002:	63% ¹⁵⁶⁷
Net primary enrollment rate in 2002:	45% ¹⁵⁶⁸
Percent of children 5-14 attending school:	Unavailable
As of 2001, percent of primary school entrants likely to reach grade 5:	86% ¹⁵⁶⁹
Ratified Convention 138:	2/22/2000 ¹⁵⁷⁰
Ratified Convention 182:	No ¹⁵⁷¹
ILO-IPEC participating country:	No ¹⁵⁷²
* Must pay for school supplies and related items.	

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In Eritrea, children work on the street, in the agricultural sector, and as domestic servants.¹⁵⁷³ Children living in rural areas often work in family businesses, including subsistence farming, and engage in such activities as fetching firewood and water, and herding livestock. Children are expected to work from about age 5 by looking after livestock and working in the fields.¹⁵⁷⁴ For children working in urban areas street vending is typical, however this is not widely prevalent.¹⁵⁷⁵ Many underage apprentices work in shops and workshops such as garages or metal workshops in towns.¹⁵⁷⁶

¹⁵⁶⁴ ILO Committee of Experts, *Direct Request, Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) Eritrea (ratification:2000)*, [online] 2004 [cited October 20, 2006]; available from <http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/index.cfm?lang=EN>.

¹⁵⁶⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Eritrea," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2006* Washington, DC, March 6, 2007, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006>.

¹⁵⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶⁷ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Gross Enrolment Ratio. Primary. Total*, accessed December 20, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.

¹⁵⁶⁸ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Net Enrolment Ratio. Primary. Total*, accessed December 20, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.

¹⁵⁶⁹ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Survival Rates to Grade 5. Total*, accessed December 18, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/>.

¹⁵⁷⁰ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, accessed October 20, 2006; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.

¹⁵⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷² ILO, *IPEC Action Against Child Labour: Highlights 2006*, Geneva, February 2007; available from <http://www.ilo.org/iloroot/public/english/standards/ipec/doc-view.cfm?id=3159>.

¹⁵⁷³ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 44 of the Convention, Concluding Observations: Eritrea*, CRC/C/15/Add.204, United Nations, Geneva, June 6, 2003, para 55; available from [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/CRC.C.15.Add.204.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/CRC.C.15.Add.204.En?OpenDocument). See also ILO Committee of Experts, *Direct Request, Minimum Age Convention*.

¹⁵⁷⁴ ILO Committee of Experts, *Direct Request, Minimum Age Convention*.

¹⁵⁷⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Eritrea," Section 6d.

¹⁵⁷⁶ ILO Committee of Experts, *Direct Request, Minimum Age Convention*.

Children are reportedly involved in prostitution.¹⁵⁷⁷ However, specific data on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Eritrea is lacking.¹⁵⁷⁸

Although the law prohibits recruitment of children under 18 into the armed forces, concerns exist regarding the training and recruiting of children for military service.¹⁵⁷⁹ The government requires all secondary school students to complete their final year of education at a location adjacent to the Sawa military training facility in order to graduate, regardless of age.¹⁵⁸⁰ In addition to not qualifying for graduation, students who do not attend this final year of secondary education cannot sit for examinations to be eligible for advanced education.¹⁵⁸¹ There is concern that this school is under the authority of the military; at least one official stated that the students are considered members of the armed forces.¹⁵⁸² According to the U.S. Department of State, students attend the Sawa military training camp and undergo military training during their final year of secondary school.¹⁵⁸³

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

Eritrean law sets the minimum age of employment and apprenticeship at 14 years.¹⁵⁸⁴ Young persons between 14 and 18 may not work between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m. or more than 7 hours per day.¹⁵⁸⁵ Children under 18 years are not permitted to work jobs that have been specified as dangerous or unhealthy, including jobs that involve heavy lifting, contact with toxic chemicals, underground work, commercial sexual exploitation, the transport industry, dangerous machines, or exposure to electrical hazards.¹⁵⁸⁶

The recruitment of children under 18 years into the armed forces is prohibited.¹⁵⁸⁸ Child prostitution, pornography, and sexual exploitation are criminal offenses. Trafficking in persons is prohibited.¹⁵⁸⁹

¹⁵⁷⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Eritrea," Section 5.

¹⁵⁷⁸ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports under Article 44 - Concluding Observations*, para 57.

¹⁵⁷⁹ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Eritrea," in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2004*, London, 2004.

¹⁵⁸⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Eritrea," Section 5. See also Amnesty International, *Eritrea: 'You Have No Right to Ask' - Government Resists Scrutiny on Human Rights*, AFR 64/003/2004, Amnesty International, London, May 2004.

¹⁵⁸¹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Eritrea," Section 5.

¹⁵⁸² Amnesty International, *You Have No Right to Ask*, 25. See also Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Global Report 2004." See also Human Rights Watch, *Essential Background: Overview of Human Rights Issues in Eritrea*, Human Rights Watch, Washington, D.C., January 2004; available from <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2004/01/21/eritre6987.htm>.

¹⁵⁸³ U.S. Embassy- Asmara, *reporting*, September 8, 2005.

¹⁵⁸⁴ ILO Committee of Experts, *Direct Request, Minimum Age Convention*. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Addendum: Eritrea*, CRC/C/41/Add.12, United Nations, Geneva, December 23, 2002, para 68, 422; available from [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/8a52da90a06e49e7c1256ce000307fc9/\\$FILE/G0246422.pdf](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/8a52da90a06e49e7c1256ce000307fc9/$FILE/G0246422.pdf). U.S. Embassy- Asmara, *reporting*, September 8, 2005.

¹⁵⁸⁵ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Addendum: Eritrea*, para 68.

¹⁵⁸⁶ *Ibid.* See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Eritrea," Section 6d.

¹⁵⁸⁸ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Addendum: Eritrea*, para 88.

¹⁵⁸⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Eritrea," Section 5.

The Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare (MLHW) is responsible for enforcing child labor laws, but according to the U.S. Department of State, inspections are infrequent¹⁵⁹⁰ because of the ministry's finite resources.¹⁵⁹¹ Legal remedies available to the labor ministry include criminal penalties, fines, and court orders.¹⁵⁹² As of 2004, the most recent year for which information is available, no labor inspection reports had referred to cases of child labor.¹⁵⁹³

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

The Government of Eritrea is implementing a national plan of action on child labor that primarily focuses on integrating or reintegrating children with families, communities, and schools as a means of preventing or rehabilitating children engaged in child labor.¹⁵⁹⁴ The MLHW works with children at-risk of entry into work by providing a small subsidy to their families to help with food and clothing, as well as counseling services to help children reintegrate into their nuclear or extended families.¹⁵⁹⁵ At-risk children are also enrolled or reenrolled at local schools, and the MLHW tracks their development through local committees or ministry employees.¹⁵⁹⁶ Additionally, the government provides school-aged street children with allowances to purchase uniforms and books necessary for school participation. Street children who are no longer of school age are provided with private vocational training designed to reintegrate them into the community.¹⁵⁹⁷

Through state media, the government routinely provides information on its strategy and obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and has focused on the issue of child labor, in particular commercial sexual exploitation, in awareness-raising campaigns for the general public.¹⁵⁹⁸ Officials charged with enforcing child labor laws have received training.¹⁵⁹⁹

¹⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., Section 6d. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties under Article 44 of the Convention, Initial reports of States parties due in 1996: Addendum, Eritrea*, CRC/C/41/Add.12, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, New York, December 23, 2002, para 422.

¹⁵⁹¹ U.S. Embassy- Asmara, *reporting, September 8, 2005*.

¹⁵⁹² Ibid.

¹⁵⁹³ ILO Committee of Experts, *Direct Request, Minimum Age Convention*.

¹⁵⁹⁴ U.S. Embassy- Asmara, *reporting, September 8, 2005*.

¹⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹⁷ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record of the 866th Meeting (Thirty-third Session) - Consideration of Reports of States Parties (Continued), Initial Report of Eritrea (Continued)*, CRC/C/SR.866, United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, New York, June 2, 2003, para 77. See also U.S. Embassy- Asmara, *reporting, September 8, 2005*.

¹⁵⁹⁸ U.S. Embassy- Asmara, *reporting, September 8, 2005*.

¹⁵⁹⁹ Ibid.