

# Egypt

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

An estimated 5.9 percent of children ages 6 to 14 were counted as working in Egypt in 1998. Approximately 3.7 percent of all boys 6 to 14 were working compared to 8.2 percent of girls in the same age group.<sup>1598</sup>

Rural children and children from poor or female-headed households account for the overwhelming majority of working children.<sup>1599</sup> A large proportion of working children are found in family businesses and in the agricultural sector. In agriculture, children are known to work long hours in dusty environments, without masks or respirators, and receive little or no training on safety precautions for work with toxic pesticides.<sup>1600</sup> Children are found working in a number of hazardous sectors, including leather tanneries, pottery kilns, glassworks, blacksmith, metal and copper workshops, battery and carpentry shops, mining and quarrying, carpet weaving, auto repair workshops, and textile and plastics factories.<sup>1601</sup> Child labor is one of many problems associated with poverty. In 1999, the most recent year for which data are available, 3.1 percent of the population in Egypt were living on less than USD 1 a day.<sup>1602</sup>

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<sup>1598</sup> UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*, October 7, 2005. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms, such as the use of children in the illegal drug trade, prostitution, pornography, and trafficking. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section. Such statistics and information may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Data Sources and Definitions" section of this report.

<sup>1599</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2004: Egypt*, Washington, DC, February 28, 2005, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41720.htm>. See also ILO-IPEC, *Gender, Education and Child Labour in Egypt*, prepared by Kawther Abu Gazaleh, Lamia Bulbul, and Suadad Najium, 2004, 18-21; available from [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/publ/download/gender\\_edu\\_egypt\\_2004\\_en.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/publ/download/gender_edu_egypt_2004_en.pdf). See also UNDP - Egypt and Ministry of Planning, *Millennium Development Goals, Second Country Report: Egypt*, prepared by Public Administration Research Center, 2004, 12; available from <http://www.un.org/eg/Documents/MDGREnglish.pdf>.

<sup>1600</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Egypt*, Section 6d. See also ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), "Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), Egypt (ratification: 1999)" (paper presented at the 75th Session, Geneva, 2004); available from <http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/>. See also ILO-IPEC, *Elimination of Child Labor in Egypt*, prepared by Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF) and American Solidarity Center in Cairo, May 2004, 23-25. See also U.S. Embassy-Cairo official, email communication to USDOL official, August 17, 2006.

<sup>1601</sup> ILO-IPEC official, email communication to USDOL official, January 7, 2002, U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, October 11, 2001. See also Tonia Rifaey, Mahmoud M. Murtada, and Mohamed Abd el-Azeem, "Urban Children and Poverty: Child Labor and Family Dynamics- Case Studies in Old Cairo" (paper presented at the Children and the City Conference, Amman, Jordan, December 11-13, 2002); available from <http://www.araburban.org/childcity/Papers/English/ToniaRifaey.pdf>. See also F. Curtale and et al., "Anaemia among Young Male Workers in Alexandria, Egypt," *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 6 5/6 (September-November 2000); available from [www.emro.who.int/Publications/EMHJ/0605/20.htm](http://www.emro.who.int/Publications/EMHJ/0605/20.htm). See also ILO-IPEC, *Elimination of Child Labor in Egypt*, 15-22.

<sup>1602</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2005* [CD-ROM], Washington, DC, 2005.

Reports indicate a widespread practice of poor rural families making arrangements to send daughters to cities to work as domestic servants in the homes of wealthy citizens.<sup>1603</sup> Urban areas are also host to large numbers of street children who have left their homes in the country-side to find work and who often to flee hostile conditions at home.<sup>1604</sup> Street children work shining shoes, collecting rubbish, begging, cleaning and directing cars into parking spaces, and selling food and trinkets.<sup>1605</sup> Street children are particularly vulnerable to becoming involved in illicit activities, including stealing, smuggling, pornography, and prostitution.<sup>1606</sup> The commercial sexual exploitation of children may be under-acknowledged given that Egyptian cities (Alexandria and Cairo, in particular) are reported destinations for sex tourism.<sup>1607</sup> Egypt is a country of transit for child trafficking, particularly for underage girls from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, who are trafficked into Israel and parts of Europe for forced labor and sexual exploitation.<sup>1608</sup>

The Constitution guarantees free and compulsory basic education for children ages 6 to 15 who are Egyptian citizens.<sup>1609</sup> Despite the constitutional guarantees to universal education, parents are increasingly responsible for both the direct and indirect costs of education. Egyptian law allows for public schools to charge fees for services, insurance, and equipment.<sup>1610</sup> In 2002, the gross primary enrollment rate was 97 percent and the net primary enrollment rate was 91 percent.<sup>1611</sup> Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect

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<sup>1603</sup> Child domestic workers are excluded from the protections of the labor code and are highly susceptible to physical and sexual abuse, harsh working conditions, and exploitation. See Karam Saber, *A Situational Analysis of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Egypt*, Land Centre for Human Rights (LCHR), March 2003, 10-11; available from [http://www.ecpat.net/eng/ecpat\\_inter/projects/monitoring/rabat/egypt.pdf](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/rabat/egypt.pdf). See also Dena Rashed, "Born an Adult," *Al-Ahram Weekly* (Cairo), June 19-25, 2003; available from <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/print/2003/643/fe2.htm>.

<sup>1604</sup> A survey of urban street children conducted by Human Rights Watch in 2002 found that in almost every case, the children were living and working on the street because of severe family crises. Their experiences as street children are also plagued with trauma as Egyptian police routinely arrest and detain them, often subjecting them to extreme forms of abuse. For a more detailed discussion, see Clarisa Bencomo, *Charged with Being Children: Egyptian Police Abuse of Children in Need of Protection*, Vol.15, No.1, Human Rights Watch (HRW), New York, February 2003, 9, para. 21d; available from <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/egypt0203/egypt0203.pdf>.

<sup>1605</sup> *Ibid.*, cover page, 9, 49.

<sup>1606</sup> *Ibid.*, 40. According to research conducted by Dr. Nicholas Ciccio at the American University of Cairo, more than 80 percent of the estimated 93,000 street children in Egypt are exploited sexually, mainly through prostitution and pornography. See ECPAT International, *Egypt*, in ECPAT International, [database online] [cited June 30, 2005]; available from [http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat\\_inter/projects/monitoring/online\\_database/index.asp](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/index.asp). Due in part to the extremely taboo nature of sexual issues in Egypt, particularly involving children, information on the extent of commercial sexual exploitation of children is limited. However, crime statistics in Egypt reveal that up to 92 children were prosecuted for child pornography in 2001. See Saber, *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Egypt*, 5-6.

<sup>1607</sup> The Egyptian Ministry of Social Affairs collaborated with UNICEF recently in a major research project, which highlighted that some poor suburbs in Cairo were major destinations for rich men from the Gulf States, specifically for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation of children. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Egypt*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27926.htm>. See also ECPAT International, *Egypt*. See also UNICEF, *Profiting from Abuse: An investigation into the sexual exploitation of our children*, New York, November 2001, 11; available from [http://www.unicef.org/publications/pub\\_profiting\\_en.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/publications/pub_profiting_en.pdf).

<sup>1608</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, Washington, DC, June 3, 2005; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/46613.htm>. See also U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, March 2, 2005.

<sup>1609</sup> *The Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt: Amendment Ratified on May 22, 1980*, (May 22), Articles 18 and 20; available from <http://www.sis.gov.eg/egyptinf/politics/parlament/html/constit.htm>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Egypt*, Section 5. See also UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), *Periodic Reports of States Parties due in 1999*, CERD/C/384/Add.3, prepared by Government of Egypt, pursuant to Article 9 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, April 11, 2001, paras. 308-310; available from <http://www.arabhumanrights.org/countries/egypt/cerd/cerd-c384-add3-01e.pdf>.

<sup>1610</sup> Bencomo, *Charged with Being Children*, 11. Indirect costs can include clothing or personal expenses and the increasingly felt need for private tutoring due to low educational quality. See ILO-IPEC, *Gender, Education and Child Labour in Egypt*, 49.

<sup>1611</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=51> (Gross and Net Enrolment Ratios, Primary; accessed December 2005).

actual school attendance. In 1998, 89 percent of children ages 6 to 14 years were attending school.<sup>1612</sup> As of 2001, 98 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5.<sup>1613</sup> A 2000 national survey of children ages 6 to 15 years found that 14 percent of girls were not currently attending school, compared to 8 percent of boys. Working children are predominantly school dropouts or have never been enrolled in school.<sup>1614</sup> The 2000 Egyptian Demographic and Health Survey of children ages 8 to 10 found that 3.4 percent of boys had never attended school, compared to 8.4 percent of girls in the same age group.<sup>1615</sup> Due to a significant investment in building and renovating primary schools in the 1990s, access to primary school education in Egypt is now nearly universal; however, concerns about the quality of education persist.<sup>1616</sup> Weaknesses in the education system that contribute to low school attendance among working children include the centralized educational structure, inadequate teacher incentives, a shortage of trained teachers, misallocation of resources, overcrowding, corporal punishment in schools, lack of participatory learning techniques, irrelevant curricula, and inadequate school infrastructure, such as sanitation facilities.<sup>1617</sup>

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

Article 99 of the Labor Law of 2003 prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years.<sup>1618</sup> The law also prohibits juveniles ages 14 to 17 from working more than 6 hours per day, requires at least a 1 hour break, and prohibits juveniles from working overtime, on holidays, more than 4 consecutive hours, or between the hours of 7:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.<sup>1619</sup> However, these provisions do not apply to children working in the agricultural sector, in small family enterprises, and domestic service.<sup>1620</sup> In addition, under decree by the governor and approval of the Minister of Education, Law No. 12 of 1996 allows for the employment of children ages 12 to 14 years in seasonal jobs that do not harm their health or impact their schooling,<sup>1621</sup> and children ages 12 to 18 may participate in certain types of apprenticeship training.<sup>1622</sup> There are ministerial decrees which complement the labor law, such as Decree No. 118 of 2003, which prohibits children below age 16 from working in 44 hazardous sectors, including agricultural activities

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<sup>1612</sup> UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

<sup>1613</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=55> (School life expectancy, % of repeaters, survival rates; accessed December 2005).

<sup>1614</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Committee on the Rights of the Child - NGO Alternative Report, CRC.26/Egypt*, prepared by NGO Coalition on the Rights of the Child, pursuant to Article 44 on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, January 2001, 24; available from [http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/CRC.26/egypt\\_ngo\\_report.pdf](http://www.crin.org/docs/resources/treaties/CRC.26/egypt_ngo_report.pdf). See also ILO-IPEC, *Gender, Education and Child Labour in Egypt*, 32-46.

<sup>1615</sup> American University in Cairo, *Egypt Demographic and Health Survey 2000 (EDHS)*, [online] 2000 [cited July 5, 2005]; available from [http://www.aucegypt.edu/src/girlseducation/statistics\\_edhs2000.htm](http://www.aucegypt.edu/src/girlseducation/statistics_edhs2000.htm).

<sup>1616</sup> UNICEF Egypt, *The Children: Primary school years*, UNICEF, [online] n.d. [cited June 30, 2005]; available from [http://www.unicef.org/egypt/children\\_152.html](http://www.unicef.org/egypt/children_152.html).

<sup>1617</sup> UNDP - Egypt and Planning, *MDGs Second Country Report: Egypt*, 20-21. See also UNDP - Egypt, *Egypt Human Development Report 2004: Choosing Decentralization for Good Governance*, prepared by Egypt Institute of National Planning, 2004, 69-70; available from <http://www.undp.org.eg/publications/HDP-2004-E%20.pdf>. See also ILO-IPEC, *Gender, Education and Child Labour in Egypt*, 43-45.

<sup>1618</sup> *Labour Law*, Law No. 12/2003, (April 7), Article 99. See also ILO-IPEC, *Gender, Education and Child Labour in Egypt*, 27.

<sup>1619</sup> *Labour Law*, Article 101.

<sup>1620</sup> *Ibid.*, Article 103. See also ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), "CEACR Comments".

<sup>1621</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Gender, Education and Child Labour in Egypt*, 28. See also ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), "CEACR Comments".

<sup>1622</sup> *Decree Concerning the Rules and Procedures Regulating Vocational Apprenticeship*, Decree No. 175 of 2003, (August 31), Articles 1-16.

involving the use of pesticides.<sup>1623</sup> Fines for the illegal employment of children range from 500 to 1,000 Egyptian pounds (about USD 87 to 174) per employee.<sup>1624</sup> Parents or guardians of a child who fails to enroll in or regularly attend a school are subject to a fine;<sup>1625</sup> however, fines are minimal (approximately USD 1.75) and the regulations are not effectively enforced.<sup>1626</sup>

Egyptian law does not specifically prohibit trafficking in persons;<sup>1627</sup> however, other parts of the criminal code that prohibit forced labor, rape, prostitution, and the abduction of children, may be used to prosecute traffickers.<sup>1628</sup> The Penal Code prohibits forced labor and makes it illegal for a person to entice or assist a male under the age of 21 or a female of any age to depart the country to work in prostitution or other “immoral” activities. The Penal Code also prohibits the incitement of any person under the age of 21 to commit any act of prostitution or “immorality,” including the use of children in the production, promotion or distribution of pornography. Violations of these laws are punishable with imprisonment for a period of 1 to 7 years and fines from 100 to 500 pounds (USD 17 to 87).<sup>1629</sup> The minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the armed forces is 18 years of age.<sup>1630</sup> Since 1999, the Government of Egypt has submitted to the ILO a list or an equivalent document identifying the types of work that it has determined are harmful to the health, safety or morals of children under Convention 182 or Convention 138.<sup>1631</sup>

The Ministry of Manpower and Migration (MOMM) is the government agency responsible for enforcing child labor laws.<sup>1632</sup> The Child Labor Unit within the MOMM coordinates investigations of reports of child labor violations and ensures enforcement of the laws pertaining to child labor, and a separate unit for child labor inspections within the agricultural sector has been established within the MOMM.<sup>1633</sup> Local trade unions report that in state-owned enterprises, enforcement is adequate, while enforcement in the private and informal sectors is inadequate.<sup>1634</sup> According to the U.S. Department of State, the recent

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<sup>1623</sup> Decree 118 specifically prohibits employment in cotton compressing, leather tanning, bars, auto repair shops, or with explosives and chemicals (including pesticides). The Decree identifies maximum allowable weights that male and female children are allowed to carry and stipulates that employers provide health care and meals for employed children and implement appropriate occupational health and safety measures in the work place. See *Decree Determining the System of Employing Children, and the Conditions, Terms and Cases in which They Are Employed as well as the Works, Vocations, and Industries in which it is Prohibited to Employ Them, According to the Different Stages of Age*, Decree No. 118 of 2003, (June 30), Articles 1-9. See also U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, August 18, 2003. Contrary to this law, seasonal work in agriculture is reportedly performed by children under 12 in state-run cooperatives. See ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), “CEACR Comments.”

<sup>1624</sup> Fines double if the violation is repeated. Violations of articles pertaining to occupational health and safety result in imprisonment for a period of at least 3 months and/or a fine of up to 10,000 pounds (USD 1,698). See U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, August 18, 2003. For the currency conversions, see Oanda.com, *FXConverter*, in *FXConverter*, [online] [cited July 5, 2005]; available from <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>.

<sup>1625</sup> UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), *Periodic Reports of States Parties: Egypt*, para. 307.

<sup>1626</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Gender, Education and Child Labour in Egypt*, 39.

<sup>1627</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*.

<sup>1628</sup> U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, March 2, 2005. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Egypt*, Section 5.

<sup>1629</sup> Interpol, *Legislation of Interpol Member States on Sexual Offences against Children: Egypt, Law no. 10 of 1961, Articles 1-14, Penal Code no. 58 of 1937, Article 178, and Law no. 12 of 1996 (Child Law)*, as cited in Interpol national laws database, [database online] January 8, 2003 [cited June 30, 2005]; available from <http://www.interpol.org/Public/Children/SexualAbuse/NationalLaws/csaEgypt.asp>. See also UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), *Periodic Reports of States Parties: Egypt*, paras. 132-143. For currency conversion, see Oanda.com, *FXConverter*.

<sup>1630</sup> There are reports that a number of children ages 16 to 18 years are allowed to volunteer for administrative or maintenance work in the armed forces, but do not engage in any forms of military training or combat. See Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report 2004: Egypt*, London, November 17, 2004; available from [http://www.child-soldiers.org/document\\_get.php?id=942](http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=942).

<sup>1631</sup> ILO-IPEC official, email communication to USDOL official, November 14, 2005.

<sup>1632</sup> U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, August 18, 2003.

<sup>1633</sup> *Ibid.* See also ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), “CEACR Comments.”

<sup>1634</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Egypt*, Section 6d.

modifications in the Child Labor Law have not significantly improved children’s working conditions due to weak enforcement by the government.<sup>1635</sup> There is a shortage of labor inspectors trained to identify and intervene in cases involving child labor. However, in recent years, a number of cases involving enforcement of child labor and related infractions were reported by the local press, including arrests of individuals coercing street children to beg, steal and work in other informal activities, as well as individuals caught abusing child domestic workers. In most reported cases, children were removed from the work environment and legal action was taken against the employers who were found to be in violation of child labor laws or other prohibiting legislation. In cases where offenders have been prosecuted, the fines imposed were often as small as 20 pounds (USD 3.47) and had questionable deterrent effect.<sup>1636</sup> The Government of Egypt has made modest efforts to prosecute trafficking cases.<sup>1637</sup>

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

The Government’s National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM) continues to implement a national plan to increase educational opportunities for girls and combat the worst forms of child labor, among other goals.<sup>1638</sup> The NCCM is collaborating with the MOMM, Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), ILO, UNICEF, and the Ministries of Social Affairs, Agriculture, Education, Health, and Interior to implement action programs related to the plan’s objectives.<sup>1639</sup> While the action programs began with

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138	6/9/1999	✓
Ratified Convention 182	5/6/2002	✓
ILO-IPEC Member		✓
National Plan for Children		✓
National Child Labor Action Plan		✓
Sector Action Plan (Street Children)		✓

technical support from ILO-IPEC and the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center, the NCCM, ETUF, UNICEF, and MOMM now operate the projects independently.<sup>1640</sup> With support from the EU and other donors, the NCCM is implementing a large-scale project addressing children’s issues, with a focus on 7 priority areas, including child labor, street children, disabled children, early childhood education, drug abuse, girls’ education, and prevention of harmful practices against girls. The Egyptian Prime Minister has recently earmarked 100 million Egyptian pounds (USD 17.5 million) in matching funds towards this initiative.<sup>1641</sup> The NCCM is also implementing projects in the governorates of Sharkia, Menofia, Minya, and Damietta to shift working children into non-hazardous activities and gradually eliminate all forms of child labor.<sup>1642</sup>

<sup>1635</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1636</sup> Ibid. See also U.S. Embassy - Cairo, *reporting*, September 12, 2005.

<sup>1637</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*.

<sup>1638</sup> The national plan became effective in 2004. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Egypt*, Section 5.

<sup>1639</sup> The national strategy was incorporated into the government’s annual Economic and Social Plan and into the government’s 2002-2007 5-year plan. See U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, September 1, 2004. See also U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, September 12, 2005. See also ILO-IPEC, *Elimination of Child Labor in Egypt*. See also ILO-IPEC, *A Future Vision for the Alleviation and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour*, prepared by Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF) and American Center for International Labor Solidarity, 2004.

<sup>1640</sup> Upon the completion of MOMM’s collaboration with ILO-IPEC in March 2004, five governorates, including New Valley, Luxor, Aswan, North Sinai, and South Sinai, were declared by the government to be free of the worst forms of child labor. See U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, September 1, 2004. See also UNICEF Egypt, *Child Protection, Working Children: Issues and impact*, UNICEF, [online] n.d. [cited June 30, 2005]; available from [http://www.unicef.org/egypt/protection\\_147.html](http://www.unicef.org/egypt/protection_147.html).

<sup>1641</sup> The project will be supported through a donor partnership fund of approximately 20 million euro (USD 23.9 million). See U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, September 1, 2004. See also Ambassador Hussein El-Sadr, interview with USDOL official, September 20, 2005.

<sup>1642</sup> These four governorates were found to have the highest rates of the worst forms of child labor in a national child labor survey conducted by the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) in 2001. See U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, September 1, 2004.

The NCCM and MOMM are also collaborating with other line ministries and NGOs to increase awareness of child labor and strengthen enforcement of existing laws. The NCCM and the Ministry of Interior are training police officers to raise awareness of child rights and best practices for dealing with at-risk children and youth. The NCCM and MOMM are also working with the Ministry of Information on awareness raising campaigns in all 26 governorates to highlight the negative impact of child labor on children, their families and employers and to educate them about relevant legislation and enforcement issues.<sup>1643</sup> The MOMM is collaborating with the Ministry of Education to identify governorates with high dropout rates and has increased child labor inspection in those areas.<sup>1644</sup> The MOMM and the Ministry of Agriculture are cooperating to prevent underage children from working in the cotton harvesting sector and to provide children working legally with the necessary protection while engaging in agricultural activities.<sup>1645</sup>

In June 2005, the NCCM and UNICEF jointly organized a 3-day conference in Cairo entitled "Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Regional Consultation on Violence against Children," at which Egypt's First Lady, Mrs. Suzanne Mubarak, announced the establishment of a national hotline to receive complaints of abused children, including child laborers.<sup>1646</sup> Following the conference, the NCCM also established a permanent committee to combat all forms of violence against children, which will have branches in all governorates and will include representatives from the Ministries of Interior, Social Affairs, Justice, Education and Health as well as representatives from civil society.<sup>1647</sup> Since 2003, the NCCM and UNICEF have also been implementing the National Strategy for the Protection and Rehabilitation of Street Children (also launched under the auspices of the First Lady), which aims to rehabilitate and reintegrate street children back into society.<sup>1648</sup>

The Government of Egypt has established a National Taskforce for Girls' Education to promote girls' education and eliminate gender disparities in the education system by the year 2015.<sup>1649</sup> In addition, the World Bank's Education Enhancement Program Project is working to ensure universal access to basic education, with an emphasis on girls, and to improve the quality of education.<sup>1650</sup> In February 2005, the World Bank also began supporting a USD 108 million Early Childhood Education Enhancement Project, which aims to increase access to and improve the quality of pre-primary education, and increase the capacity of the Ministry of Education to improve kindergarten programs.

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<sup>1643</sup> U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, September 12, 2005.

<sup>1644</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1645</sup> U.S. Embassy- Cairo official, personal communication, to USDOL official, May 26, 2005.

<sup>1646</sup> The National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), "Every Child Has the Right to be Protected from All Forms of Violence: Outcome document of the Regional Consultation" (paper presented at the The MENA Regional Consultation on Violence Against Children, Cairo, July 2005); available from <http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/docs/mena171005.doc>.

<sup>1647</sup> U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, September 12, 2005. See also U.S. Embassy- Cairo official, personal communication to USDOL official, May 26, 2005.

<sup>1648</sup> UNICEF Egypt, *Child Protection, Street Children: Issues and impact*, UNICEF, [online] n.d. [cited June 30, 2005]; available from [http://www.unicef.org/egypt/protection\\_144.html](http://www.unicef.org/egypt/protection_144.html).

<sup>1649</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Gender, Education and Child Labour in Egypt*, 54.

<sup>1650</sup> The project is slated for completion in August 2006. See World Bank, *Egypt Education Enhancement Project*, World Bank, [database online] June 30, 2005 [cited June 30, 2005]; available from <http://web.worldbank.org/external/projects/main?pagePK=104231&piPK=73230&theSitePK=40941&menuPK=228424&Projectid=P005169>.