

Egypt

<i>Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor</i>	
Percent of children 5 -14 estimated as working in 2005:	6.7% ¹⁴⁵⁹
Minimum age of work:	14 ¹⁴⁶⁰
Age to which education is compulsory:	9 school years ¹⁴⁶¹
Free public education:	Yes ¹⁴⁶²
Gross primary enrollment rate in 2004:	101% ¹⁴⁶³
Net primary enrollment rate in 2004:	95% ¹⁴⁶⁴
Percent of children 6-14 attending school in 2005:	88.1% ¹⁴⁶⁵
As of 2003, percent of primary school entrants likely to reach grade 5:	99% ¹⁴⁶⁶
Ratified Convention 138:	6/9/1999 ¹⁴⁶⁷
Ratified Convention 182:	5/6/2002 ¹⁴⁶⁸
ILO-IPEC participating country:	Yes ¹⁴⁶⁹

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2005, approximately 9.5 percent of boys and 3.7 percent of girls ages 5 to 14 were working in Egypt.¹⁴⁷⁰ A large proportion of working children are found in the agricultural sector, where children are hired each year for the cotton harvest. Children are also found working on construction sites and in light industry.¹⁴⁷¹ Children work in a number of hazardous sectors,

¹⁴⁵⁹ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank Surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*, March 1, 2007.

¹⁴⁶⁰ Government of Egypt, *Labour Law*, Law No. 12/2003, (April 7), Article 99. See also ILO-IPEC, *Gender, Education and Child Labour in Egypt*, prepared by Kawther Abu Gazaleh, Lamia Bulbul, and Suadad Najium, 2004; available from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/publ/download/gender_edu_egypt_2004_en.pdf.

¹⁴⁶¹ Government of Egypt, *The Constitution of the Arab Republic of Egypt*, (May 22.), Article 18. See also U.S. Department of State, "Egypt," 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/2006/78851.htm>. 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>.

¹⁴⁶² Government of Egypt, *Constitution of Egypt*, Article 20. See also UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), *Periodic Reports of States Parties: Egypt*, para. 302.

¹⁴⁶³ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank Surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

¹⁴⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶⁹ ILO-IPEC, *IPEC Action Against Child Labor: Highlights 2006*, Geneva, October 2006, 29; available from http://www.ilo.org/iloroot/docstore/ipecc/prod/eng/20061019_Implementationreport_eng_Web.pdf.

¹⁴⁷⁰ UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank Surveys, *Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Rates*.

¹⁴⁷¹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Egypt," Section 6d. See also ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), "Comments made by the CEACR: Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138), Egypt (ratification: 1999)" (paper presented at the 75th Session, Geneva, 2002); available from <http://webfusion.ilo.org/public/db/standards/normes/appl/>. See also UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Egypt: Children of the Quarries*, [online] April 9, 2006 [cited October 22,

including leather tanning, pottery making, glassworks, blacksmithing, working metal and copper, battery repair and carpentry, mining and quarrying, carpet weaving, auto repair, and textile and plastics manufacturing.¹⁴⁷²

Reports indicate a widespread practice of poor rural families arranging to send their daughters to cities to work as domestic servants in the homes of wealthy citizens. Child domestic workers are excluded from the protections of the labor code and are highly susceptible to exploitation, including physical and sexual abuse as well as harsh working conditions.¹⁴⁷³ Urban areas are also host to large numbers of street children who have left their homes in the countryside to find work, and often to flee hostile conditions at home.¹⁴⁷⁴ Street children work shining shoes, collecting rubbish, begging, cleaning and directing cars into parking spaces, and selling food and trinkets.¹⁴⁷⁵ Street children are particularly vulnerable to becoming involved in illicit activities, including pornography and prostitution.¹⁴⁷⁶ In Egypt, children from rural areas are reportedly trafficked internally for agricultural work or domestic labor.¹⁴⁷⁷

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The law prohibits the employment of children under 14 years.¹⁴⁷⁸ The law also prohibits juveniles 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 7 p.m. and 7 a.m.¹⁴⁷⁹ However, these provisions do not apply to children working in the agricultural sector, small family enterprises, and domestic service.¹⁴⁸⁰ The law also allows the employment of children 12 to 14 years in seasonal jobs that do not harm their health or affect

2006]; available from

http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=52702&SelectRegion=Middle_East&SelectCountry=EGYPT.

¹⁴⁷² ILO-IPEC official, Email communication to USDOL official, January 7, 2002. See also U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, October 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>.

¹⁴⁷³ 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.

¹⁴⁷⁴ 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>.

¹⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, cover page, 9, 49.

¹⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 40. See also ECPAT International, *Egypt*, [database online] [cited October 22, 2006]; available from http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/index.asp. See also Saber, *Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Egypt*, 5-6.

¹⁴⁷⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Egypt (Tier 2 Watch List)," in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006*, Washington, DC, June 5, 2006; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/>.

¹⁴⁷⁸ Government of Egypt, *Labour Law*, Article 99. See also ILO-IPEC, *Gender, Education and Child Labour in Egypt*, 27.

¹⁴⁷⁹ Government of Egypt, *Labour Law*, Articles 98, 101.

¹⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, Article 103. See also ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), "CEACR Comments".

their schooling,¹⁴⁸¹ and children 12 to 18 may participate in certain types of apprenticeship training.¹⁴⁸² Children under 16 are prohibited from working in 44 hazardous industries, including agricultural activities involving the use of pesticides.¹⁴⁸³

Egyptian law does not specifically prohibit trafficking in persons;¹⁴⁸⁴ however, prohibitions exist against forced labor, rape, prostitution; traffickers may be prosecuted for the abduction of children.¹⁴⁸⁵ The law prohibits forced labor and makes it illegal for a person to entice or assist a male under 21 or a female of any age to depart the country to work in prostitution or other “immoral” activities. The law also prohibits the incitement of any person under 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 1 to 7 years.¹⁴⁸⁶ The minimum age for compulsory recruitment into the armed forces is 18 years. Children may enter the armed forces at 16 but may not engage in combat operations.¹⁴⁸⁷

The Child Labor Unit within the Ministry of Manpower and Migration (MOMM) coordinates investigations into reports of child labor violations and ensures enforcement of the laws pertaining to child labor. A separate unit within the MOMM is responsible for child labor inspections in the agricultural sector.¹⁴⁸⁸ The U.S. Department of State reports that enforcement in state-owned businesses is adequate, although enforcement in the private and informal sectors is lacking.¹⁴⁸⁹ There is a shortage of labor inspectors trained to identify in cases involving child labor and intervene in such cases. The U.S. Department of State reports that the Government of Egypt has made modest efforts to prosecute trafficking cases.¹⁴⁹⁰

¹⁴⁸¹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Egypt," Section 6d. See also 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".

¹⁴⁸² Government of Egypt, *Decree Concerning the Rules and Procedures Regulating Vocational Apprenticeship*, Decree No. 175 of 2003, (August 31), Articles 1-16.

¹⁴⁸³ Government of Egypt, *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. See also ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), "CEACR Comments".

¹⁴⁸⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006: Egypt."

¹⁴⁸⁵ U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, March 2, 2005. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Egypt," Section 5.

¹⁴⁸⁶ 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)*, October 22, 2006 [cited October 22, 2006]; 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. 134. For currency conversion, see Oanda.com, *FXConverter*, [online] [cited July 5, 2005]; available from <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>.

¹⁴⁸⁷ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Egypt," in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2004*, London, 2004; available from http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=942.

¹⁴⁸⁸ U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, August 18, 2003. See also ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR), "CEACR Comments".

¹⁴⁸⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Egypt," Section 6d.

¹⁴⁹⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006: Egypt."

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 activities to combat the worst forms of child labor, among other goals.¹⁴⁹¹ The NCCM is collaborating with the MOMM, the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF), ILO, UNICEF, and the Ministries of Social Affairs, Agriculture, Education, Health, and Interior to implement action programs to reduce child labor.¹⁴⁹² While the action programs began with technical support from ILO-IPEC, the NCCM, the ETUF, UNICEF, and the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center, the MOMM now operates the projects independently.¹⁴⁹³ With support from the EU and other donors, the NCCM is implementing a large-scale project addressing children's issues, with a focus on priority areas including child labor, street children, girls' education, and prevention of harmful practices against girls. The Egyptian Prime Minister earmarked 100 million Egyptian pounds (USD 17.5 million) in matching funds towards this initiative.¹⁴⁹⁴ 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.¹⁴⁹⁵ The Government of Egypt is supporting the USD 5.09 million USDOL-funded UN WFP project to combat exploitive child labor through education. The project aims to withdraw 4,300 children and prevent 6,000 children from exploitive labor.¹⁴⁹⁶

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 their employers and to educate them about relevant legislation and enforcement issues.¹⁴⁹⁷ 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.¹⁴⁹⁸ The MOMM and the Ministry of Agriculture are cooperating to prevent underage children from working in the cotton sector and to provide children working legally with the necessary protection while they engage in agricultural activities.¹⁴⁹⁹

¹⁴⁹¹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Egypt," Section 5, 6d.

¹⁴⁹² U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, September 1, 2004. See also U.S. Embassy - Cairo, *reporting*, Cairo, September 12, 2005. See also ILO-IPEC, *Gender, Education and Child Labour in Egypt*.

¹⁴⁹³ U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, September 1, 2004. See also UNICEF Egypt, *Child Protection, Working Children: Issues and Impact*, [online] [cited October 22, 2006]; available from http://www.unicef.org/egypt/protection_147.html.

¹⁴⁹⁴ U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, September 1, 2004. See also Ambassador Hussein El-Sadr, National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, interview with USDOL official, September 20, 2005.

¹⁴⁹⁵ U.S. Embassy- Cairo, *reporting*, March 2, 2005.

¹⁴⁹⁶ USDOL, *Combating Exploitive Child Labor through Education in Egypt*, ILAB Technical Cooperation Project Summary, Washington, DC.

¹⁴⁹⁷ U.S. Embassy - Cairo, *reporting*, September 12, 2005.

¹⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁹⁹ U.S. Embassy- Cairo official, personal communication to USDOL official, May 26, 2005.

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 Egyptian first lady), which aims to rehabilitate and reintegrate street children into society.¹⁵⁰⁰

¹⁵⁰⁰ UNICEF Egypt, *Working children: Issues and impact*.