

## Liberia

### *Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor*

Percent of children 5-14 estimated as working in 2000:	Unavailable
Minimum age for admission to work:	16 <sup>2505</sup>
Age to which education is compulsory:	16 <sup>2506</sup>
Free public education:	Yes <sup>2507*</sup>
Gross primary enrollment rate in 2000:	99% <sup>2508</sup>
Net primary enrollment rate in 2000:	66% <sup>2509</sup>
Percent of children 5-14 attending school in 2000:	Unavailable
Percent of primary school entrants likely to reach grade 5:	Unavailable
Ratified Convention 138:	No <sup>2510</sup>
Ratified Convention 182:	6/2/2003 <sup>2511</sup>
ILO-IPEC participating country:	No <sup>2512</sup>
*Must pay for school supplies and related items.	

### Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In rural areas, Liberian children work on family subsistence farms<sup>2513</sup> and rubber plantations.<sup>2514</sup> In urban areas, children work as market vendors or street hawkers.<sup>2515</sup> Children are also engaged in mining,<sup>2516</sup> rock crushing,<sup>2517</sup> fishing,<sup>2518</sup> and transporting loads of sand.<sup>2519</sup> Many children

<sup>2505</sup> Government of Liberia, *Labour Practices Law (Title 18 and 18A)*, (1956), Section 74. See also U.S. Department of State, "Liberia," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2006*

Washington, D.C., March 6, 2007, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78742.htm>.

<sup>2506</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Liberia," Section 5. See also UNESCO, *Liberia - Education system*, 2003; available from [http://www.unesco.org/iau/onlinedatabases/systems\\_data/lr.rtf](http://www.unesco.org/iau/onlinedatabases/systems_data/lr.rtf).

<sup>2507</sup> U.S. Embassy- Monrovia, *reporting*, December 15, 2006, para 1. See also Women's Commission for refugee women and children, *Help us Help Ourselves: Education in the Conflict to Post-Conflict Transition in Liberia*, New York, March 2006, 7; available from [http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/lr\\_ed.pdf](http://www.womenscommission.org/pdf/lr_ed.pdf).

<sup>2508</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Gross Enrolment Ratio. Primary. Total* accessed December 20, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org>.

<sup>2509</sup> UNESCO Institute for Statistics, *Net Enrolment Ratio. Primary. Total* accessed December 20, 2006; available from <http://stats.uis.unesco.org>.

<sup>2510</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*; accessed September 25, 2006; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/docs/declAFpr.htm>.

<sup>2511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2512</sup> ILO-IPEC, *IPEC action against child labour-highlights 2006*, Geneva, October, 2006; available from [http://www.ilo.org/iloroot/docstore/ipecc/prod/eng/20061019\\_Implementationreport\\_eng\\_Web.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/iloroot/docstore/ipecc/prod/eng/20061019_Implementationreport_eng_Web.pdf).

<sup>2513</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Liberia," Section 6d.

<sup>2514</sup> U.S. Embassy- Monrovia, *reporting, December 15, 2006*, para 2(e). See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, "Liberia: Rubber plantation workers strike over conditions, pay, child labour", IRINnews.org, [online], October 20, 2006; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=51654>.

<sup>2515</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Liberia," Section 6d.

<sup>2516</sup> Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization for Administration official, Interview with USDOL consultant, June 26, 2006.

<sup>2517</sup> Touching Humanity in Need of Kindness official, Interview with USDOL consultant, June 26, 2006.

<sup>2518</sup> International Rescue Committee official, Interview with USDOL consultant, June 26, 2006.

<sup>2519</sup> National Child Rights Observatory Group official, Interview with USDOL consultant, June 26, 2006.

are employed in domestic service<sup>2520</sup> and some are forced by adults to engage in begging and theft.<sup>2521</sup>

Child prostitution is an ongoing problem.<sup>2522</sup> There are some reports that girls are involved in prostitution to pay school fees and support their families.<sup>2523</sup> Liberia is a country of origin, and may be a transit or destination country for regionally trafficked children. Of the few recorded instances of trafficking, all but one occurred within Liberia's borders.<sup>2525</sup> Trafficked children are typically subjected to forced labor in the form of domestic service, agricultural labor, and street vending.<sup>2526</sup>

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

The law prohibits the employment of children under 16 during school hours.<sup>2527</sup> Children under 16, however, may work for wages if the employer can demonstrate that they are attending school regularly and have a basic education.<sup>2528</sup> The law states however that labor recruiters may hire children between 16 and 18 for occupations approved by the Ministry of Labor.<sup>2529</sup>

The law prohibits forced and bonded labor and slavery in Liberia.<sup>2530</sup> The law criminalizes human trafficking and establishes sentences for traffickers ranging from 1 year to life in prison.<sup>2531</sup> Liberian law also prohibits any person under 16 from enlisting in the armed forces.<sup>2532</sup>

The Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Justice have a mandate to monitor compliance with Liberia's labor laws, including child labor.<sup>2533</sup> According to the U.S. Department of State, the government lacks the resources to enforce existing labor laws.<sup>2534</sup>

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<sup>2520</sup> Ministry of Labor official, Interview with USDOL consultant, June 26, 2006. See also U.S. Embassy- Monrovia, *reporting, December 15, 2006*, para 2(e).

<sup>2521</sup> International Rescue Committee, *Countering Youth and Child Labour Through Education (CYCLE)*, draft project document, New York, May 2006, 10.

<sup>2522</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2523</sup> U.S. Embassy- Monrovia, *reporting, December 15, 2006*, para 2(e).

<sup>2525</sup> U.S. Embassy- Monrovia, E-mail communication to USDOL official, August 1, 2007.

<sup>2526</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Liberia (Special Case)," in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2006*, Washington, D.C., June 5, 2006; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2006/65991.htm>.

<sup>2527</sup> Government of Liberia, *Labour Practices Law (Title 18 and 18A)*, Section 74.

<sup>2528</sup> Ibid. See also International Rescue Committee, *Child Labor and Education in Liberia: Needs Assessment in Targeted Communities*, New York, June, 2006, 30.

<sup>2529</sup> Government of Liberia, *Labour Practices Law (Title 18 and 18A)*, Section 1506, para 11.

<sup>2530</sup> Government of Liberia, *Constitution of the Republic of Liberia*, (1847), Article 12; available from <http://www.embassyofliberia.org/theconstitution.pdf>. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Liberia," Section 6c.

<sup>2531</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Liberia," Section 5.

<sup>2532</sup> Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Child Soldiers Global Report 2004*, London, March 2004; available from [http://www.child-soldiers.org/document\\_get.php?id=966](http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=966).

<sup>2533</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Liberia," section 6d. See also Jerolinmek M. Piah, Interview, June 26, 2006.

<sup>2534</sup> U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2006: Liberia," Sections 5, 6d, and 6e.

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

In partnership with the Government of Liberia and with funding from USDOL, the International Rescue Committee is implementing a USD 6 million Child Labor Education Initiative project in Sierra Leone and Liberia. The project aims to withdraw a total of 8,243 children and prevent a total of 21,647 children from exploitive child labor by improving access to and quality of education.<sup>2535</sup>

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<sup>2535</sup> International Rescue Committee, *Countering Youth and Child Labour Through Education (CYCLE)*, 29.