

Morocco

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

In October 1999, the Government of Morocco established a national action plan to combat child labor, especially its worst forms.¹⁶⁹¹ Morocco became a member of ILO-IPEC in 2000.¹⁶⁹² The government is currently participating in an ILO-IPEC project to develop institutional capacity and provide direct support for combating child labor.¹⁶⁹³ In March 2001, the Ministry of Labor held awareness-raising and training sessions on child labor laws for 35 labor inspectors. Additional training is being provided for about 215 labor and occupational health and safety inspectors. In April 2001, inspectors began their own child labor awareness-raising and training sessions for employers.¹⁶⁹⁴ In 2000, the government produced a sectoral plan focusing on girls working as domestic servants and began a pilot program to provide them with education, health care, and recreation.¹⁶⁹⁵ Another program in Casablanca set up five centers to provide educational, health care, and recreational services to girls identified as child maids.¹⁶⁹⁶ The government has also established a National Observatory for Children's Rights, headed by Princess Lalla Meryem.¹⁶⁹⁷

The Ministry of Labor is working with the Ministry of National Education and local NGOs to eradicate child labor through public awareness campaigns and by increasing school attendance.¹⁶⁹⁸ The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and with the support of UNICEF, is pursuing a strategy to ensure basic education and healthcare for child workers.¹⁶⁹⁹ In September 2000, authorities in the city of Fez began a program to open four centers for the protection of child handicraft workers. Centers will provide children's rights education to child workers, their families and employers.¹⁷⁰⁰

¹⁶⁹¹ U.S. Consulate–Casablanca, unclassified telegram no. 1157, October 2001 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 1157]. See also Royaume du Maroc, *Plans National et Setoriels d'Action de la Lutte Contre le Travail des Enfants au Maroc* (October 1999).

¹⁶⁹² ILO-IPEC, "All About IPEC: Programme Countries," at http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/about/countries/t_country.htm on 11/30/01.

¹⁶⁹³ Unclassified telegram 1157.

¹⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹⁷ Royaume du Maroc, *Observatoire National des Droits de L'Enfant*, CD Rom.

¹⁶⁹⁸ U.S. Embassy–Casablanca, unclassified telegram no. 0761, July 2001 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 0761].

¹⁶⁹⁹ *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Morocco* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2001) [hereinafter *Country Reports 2000*], at Section 6d.

¹⁷⁰⁰ Ibid.

The government has taken steps to improve the quality of primary education in Morocco by reforming the curriculum, training teachers, hiring more teachers, and assigning teachers to serve in their hometowns to reduce teacher absenteeism.¹⁷⁰¹ The Ministry of National Education is implementing a World Bank-funded program to strengthen the Ministry's institutional capacity, improve teaching quality, and build or rehabilitate schools in rural regions.¹⁷⁰² The government has also instituted flexible school calendar policies and provided toilet facilities for children, especially girls, in an effort to encourage student attendance and retention.¹⁷⁰³ It is also developing pilot initiatives for out-of-school children under the Ministry of Education's Non-Formal Education Program.¹⁷⁰⁴ In 1996, public expenditure on education represented 5 percent of the GNP and 25 percent of total government expenditures.¹⁷⁰⁵

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 1999, the ILO estimated that 5.5 percent of children between the ages of 7 and 14 in Morocco were working.¹⁷⁰⁶ The majority of child labor is found in the agricultural sector.¹⁷⁰⁷ Boys and girls work as shepherds and are paid with cash or in kind.¹⁷⁰⁸ Children also work as weavers in the carpet industry; in small family-run workshops that produce ceramics, woodwork, and leather goods; and as mechanics, porters, tourist guides, street vendors, and beggars.¹⁷⁰⁹ Many children work as apprentices before they reach 12 years of age, particularly in the informal handicraft industry where they traditionally are not considered workers but trainees learning a skill or trade.¹⁷¹⁰

¹⁷⁰¹ Unclassified telegram 1157 and unclassified telegram 0761.

¹⁷⁰² World Bank, "Morocco: Education Reform Support Project," World Bank project information document at www.worldbank.org.

¹⁷⁰³ Unclassified telegram 0761.

¹⁷⁰⁴ Royaume du Maroc. Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale. "Éducation Non-Formelle: L'École de la Deuxième Chance." [n.d.]

¹⁷⁰⁵ *World Education Report 2000: The Right to Education, Towards Education for All throughout Life* (Geneva: UNESCO Publishing, 2000) [hereinafter *World Education Report 2000*], at 164.

¹⁷⁰⁶ According to the ILO, 514,694 children are working. See ILO, *Yearbook of Labour Statistics* (2000) (Geneva: ILO, 2000) Table 1A. In 1995, a survey conducted by the government of Morocco, in collaboration with the ILO-IPEC estimated that 6.5 percent of children under the age of 15 in Morocco were working. Royaume du Maroc et le Bureau International du Travail, *Le Travail des Enfants au Maroc: Diagnostic et Propositions de Plan National et de Plans Sectoriels d'Action* (Rabat, October 1999).

¹⁷⁰⁷ Unclassified telegram 1157.

¹⁷⁰⁸ Girls also feed and milk animals, fetch water, and collect firewood. See International Working Washington File Group on Child Labour, *Forgotten on the Pyjama Trail: A Case Study of Young Garment Workers in Méknès (Morocco) Dismissed from Their Jobs Following Foreign Media Attention* (International Working Group on Child Labour, 1998) [hereinafter *Forgotten on the Pyjama Trail*], 15. See also unclassified telegram 0761.

¹⁷⁰⁹ *Country Reports 2000*. See Nicolas Pelham, "Fine Crafts from Too-Tiny Hands," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 11, 2001, at www.csmonitor.com/durable/2001/01/11/pls3.htm. See, Section 6d, at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/nea/804.htm>. See also *Forgotten on the Pyjama Trail* at 15.

¹⁷¹⁰ A study of the artisan sector in the city of Fez found that 45 percent of workers were less than 15 years

In urban areas, girls can be found working as domestic servants, often in situations of “adoptive servitude,”¹⁷¹¹ whereby girls, often from rural areas, are trafficked, “sold” by their parents, or offered by orphanages and “adopted” by wealthy urban families to work in their homes.¹⁷¹² In urban areas, teenagers are reported to engage in prostitution.¹⁷¹³

Education is compulsory for six years, or between the ages of 7 and 13 years.¹⁷¹⁴ Primary education is free.¹⁷¹⁵ The government does not enforce the compulsory education law.¹⁷¹⁶ In 1996, the gross primary enrollment rate was 86 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 73.4 percent.¹⁷¹⁷ Girls attend school at a lower rate than boys, particularly in rural areas where household chores often prevent girls from attending school.¹⁷¹⁸ The percentage of students who entered primary school in 1995 and reached grade 2 was 92 percent, and the percentage that reached grade 5 was 75 percent.¹⁷¹⁹

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The minimum age of employment is 15 years. In January 2001, the adoption ILO Convention 138 led to a change in the minimum age from 12 to 15 years.¹⁷²⁰ The minimum age law applies to all sectors and includes apprentices and children working in family businesses. The minimum age for hazardous and night work is 18 years.¹⁷²¹ A royal decree prohibits forced or compulsory labor, which particularly affects children in “adoptive servitude.”¹⁷²²

of age, as cited in unclassified telegram 1157. See also *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d. See also *Forgotten on the Pyjama Trail* at 15.

¹⁷¹¹ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

¹⁷¹² Unclassified telegram 1157. See also *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5 and U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report*, July 2001, Morocco.

¹⁷¹³ Wafa Bennani, “Morocco Street Children,” excerpted from Reuters, September 24, 1996, at www.pangaea.org/street_children/africa/morocco.htm. See also *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

¹⁷¹⁴ *Country Profiles on the Situation of Youth: Morocco*, Youth at the United Nations, at <http://esa.un.org/socdev/unyin/country3b.asp?countrycode'ma>.

¹⁷¹⁵ Unclassified telegram 1157 and *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

¹⁷¹⁶ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

¹⁷¹⁷ The gross primary enrollment rate was 97.3 percent for boys and 74.2 percent for girls. The net primary enrollment rate was 82.6 percent for boys and 64.7 percent for girls. See *World Development Indicators 2001* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001).

¹⁷¹⁸ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

¹⁷¹⁹ *World Education Report 2000*, 144.

¹⁷²⁰ Unclassified telegram 1157.

¹⁷²¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷²² *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6c.

The Ministry of Labor is responsible for implementing and enforcing child labor laws and regulations.¹⁷²³ Legal remedies to enforce child labor laws include criminal penalties, civil fines, and withdrawal of licenses. However, the small number of labor inspectors and the lack of resources limit the application of these remedies, and they are generally insufficient to punish and deter violators.¹⁷²⁴ Morocco ratified ILO Convention 138 on January 6, 2000 and ILO Convention 182 on January 26, 2001.¹⁷²⁵

¹⁷²³ Unclassified telegram 1157. See also *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d.

¹⁷²⁴ Unclassified telegram 1157.

¹⁷²⁵ ILO, ILOLEX database, International Labour Standards, at <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/index.htm> on 11/30/01.

NOTE: Hard copies of all Web citations are on file.