

Morocco

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

The Government of Morocco became a member of ILO-IPEC in 2000.²⁴¹⁹ The government launched its first program with ILO-IPEC in July 2001.²⁴²⁰ During that same year, ILO-IPEC identified a number of child labor projects to be implemented by local NGOs.²⁴²¹

In October 1999, the Government of Morocco established national and sectoral action plans to combat child labor, especially its worst forms.²⁴²² The national plan focuses on improving implementation and raising awareness of child labor laws, and improving basic education.²⁴²³ Sectoral plans target children in agriculture and herding, the industrial sector (carpets and stitching), metal and auto work, construction, hotel work, tourism, and food production, as well as children working in informal, domestic and other services.²⁴²⁴ The plan is based on a sample survey of working children in Morocco.²⁴²⁵ King Mohammed VI is highly supportive of efforts to combat child labor and promote education.²⁴²⁶ In 2000, the government began a pilot program focusing on girls who work as domestic servants to provide them with education, health care and recreation.²⁴²⁷ Another program in Casablanca established five centers to provide educational, health care and recreational services to girls identified as child maids.²⁴²⁸ Between February 1998 and April 2001, the Ministry of Labor held awareness-raising campaigns with labor and safety and health inspectors.²⁴²⁹ In April 2001, inspectors began their own child labor awareness raising and training sessions for employers.²⁴³⁰

²⁴¹⁹ ILO-IPEC, *All About IPEC: Programme Countries*, [online] [cited November 30, 2001]; available from http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/about/countries/t_country.htm.

²⁴²⁰ U.S. Embassy- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*, October 2002.

²⁴²¹ ILO-IPEC, *Avant-Projets: Programme IPEC/Maroc*, Morocco, October 2001.

²⁴²² U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*, October 2001. See also Kingdom of Morocco, *Plans national et sectoriels d'action de la lutte contre le travail des enfants au Maroc*, October 1999.

²⁴²³ Kingdom of Morocco, *Plans national et sectoriels d'action*, 5-6.

²⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*, 10-35.

²⁴²⁵ Kingdom of Morocco, *Le travail des enfants au Maroc. Diagnostic et propositions de plan national et de plans sectoriels d'action*, ILO, Rabat, October 1999.

²⁴²⁶ Nicolas Pelham, "Fine crafts from too-tiny hands. Morocco's new king launches jihad on rampant child labor," *The Christian Science Monitor*, January 11, 2001, [cited December 11, 2001]; available from <http://www.csmonitor.com/durable/2001/01/11/pls3.htm>.

²⁴²⁷ U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*.

²⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴²⁹ U.S. Embassy- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

²⁴³⁰ U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*.

The government also works with the National Observatory for Children's Rights,²⁴³¹ whose president is Princess Lalla Meryem. The Observatory has set up a children's parliament to enable children to express their views on their situations and problems.²⁴³² In May 2002, the Observatory participated in a round table with the Inter-Parliamentary Union and ILO-IPEC that produced a manual to raise awareness among parliamentarians of ILO Convention 182 and the worst forms of child labor.²⁴³³

The Ministry of National Education (MEN) and the Ministry of Labor continue to work with international organizations and local partners to increase school attendance. MEN has targeted 100 percent school enrollment at the primary level for the 2002-2003 school year.²⁴³⁴ In cooperation with the Ministry of Health and with the support of UNICEF, MEN also is pursuing a strategy to ensure basic education and healthcare for child workers.²⁴³⁵ In September 2000, authorities in the city of Fez began a program to open four centers for the protection of child handicraft workers, where children's rights education is provided to child workers, their families and employers.²⁴³⁶ The government has also supported two other important initiatives; it hosted the Arab African Forum against the Sexual Exploitation of Children and supported a national campaign by a local NGO, UNICEF and other donors against the employment of child maids and the promotion of education for all children.²⁴³⁷

The government has taken steps to improve the quality of primary education by reforming the curriculum, training and hiring more teachers, and assigning teachers to their hometowns to reduce absenteeism.²⁴³⁸ MEN is implementing a World Bank-funded program to strengthen institutional capacity, improve teaching quality and build or rehabilitate rural schools.²⁴³⁹ Yet the teacher-

²⁴³¹ Kingdom of Morocco, *Observatoire National des Droits de L'Enfant (National Observatory for Children's Rights)* [CD-ROM], 2001. See also Observatoire National des Droits de L'Enfant, [online] November 4, 2002 [cited December 16, 2002]; available from <http://www.onde.org.ma>.

²⁴³² See Kingdom of Morocco, *Observatoire National des Droits de L'Enfant*. See also Arabic News, *Child labor statistics improve in Morocco*, (Economics), in ArabicNews.com, [online] June 19, 1999 [cited September 18, 2002]; available from <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Dailiy/Day/990619/1999061926.html>.

²⁴³³ The World of Parliaments: Quarterly Review, *Panel on Eliminating Worst Forms of Child Labour*, (Issue no. 6), [online] May 2002, 5 [cited December 16, 2002]; available from <http://www.ipu.org/news-e/6-5.htm>. See also "Eradiquer les pires formes de travail des enfants" (paper presented at the 107th Conference de l'Union Interparlementaire, Marrakech, March 17-23, 2002), [cited September 18, 2002]; available from http://www.majliss-announwab.ma/FRANCAIS/travail_enfant.html.

²⁴³⁴ U.S. Embassy- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

²⁴³⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2000: Morocco*, Washington, D.C., February 2001, Section 6d [cited November 30, 2001]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/nea/index.cfm?docid=804>.

²⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁴³⁷ *Ibid.*, Section 6f.

²⁴³⁸ U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*.

²⁴³⁹ World Bank, *Documents and Reports: Morocco - Education Reform Support Project*, project information document, PID10151, Rabat, March 6, 2001, [cited December 16, 2002]; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDS_IBank_Servlet?pcont=details&eid=000094946_01041102152241.

student ratio is still high with 52.5 students per class in urban schools and 38.2 in rural schools.²⁴⁴⁰ MEN also runs programs for out-of-school children under its Non-Formal Education Program.²⁴⁴¹ MEN contracts with over 40 local NGOs to provide non-formal education.²⁴⁴² In 1996, public expenditure on education represented 5 percent of GNP and 25 percent of total government expenditures.²⁴⁴³

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 1999, the ILO estimated that 5.5 percent of children ages 7 to 14 years in Morocco were working.²⁴⁴⁴ The majority of child labor is found in the agricultural sector.²⁴⁴⁵ Boys and girls work as shepherds and are paid with cash or in kind.²⁴⁴⁶ 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.²⁴⁴⁷ Many children

²⁴⁴⁰ U.S. Embassy- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

²⁴⁴¹ Kingdom of Morocco Ministry of National Education, *Education non-formelle: L'école de la deuxième chance*. The capacity of the non-formal system to address need is strained. Around 2 million Moroccan children under the age of 16 are not going to school, whereas the non-formal program of the Ministry of Education serves 35,000 children. See Arabic News, *Princess Chairs Closing Session of National Children's Rights Congress*, (Culture), in ArabicNews.com, [online] May 27, 1999 [cited September 18, 2002]; available from <http://www.arabicnews.com/ansub/Daily/Day/990527/1999052752.html>. The non-formal program, created in 1997 has served 113,545 children from ages 8-16 years. The Ministry of Labor's Social Affairs Directorate provides non-formal "Formation-Insertion" programs to older children and young adults. See U.S. Embassy- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

²⁴⁴² Kingdom of Morocco, Ministry of National Education, Non-Formal Education Directorate, and Partnership Division, *Liste des Associations Partenaires du M.E.N. dans le Programme d'Education Non-Formelle*, Rabat, October 19, 2001.

²⁴⁴³ UNESCO, *World Education Report 2000: The Right to Education, Towards Education for All throughout Life*, Geneva, 2000, 164.

²⁴⁴⁴ According to the ILO, 514,694 children are working. See ILO, *Yearbook of Labour Statistics (2000)*, Geneva, 2000, Table 1A. In 1995, a survey conducted by the Government of Morocco, in collaboration with ILO-IPEC estimated that 6.5 percent of children under the age of 15 in Morocco were working. Kingdom of Morocco, *Le travail des enfants au Maroc*. Government statistics indicate that child work declined by one percent in the 1999-2000, and by two percent in 2000-2001. See U.S. Embassy- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

²⁴⁴⁵ U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*. A Ministry of Finance and Planning labor force study by the Statistics Directorate concluded that nearly nine out of ten child workers are found in rural areas, and 84 percent of these are engaged in farm work. See U.S. Embassy- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

²⁴⁴⁶ 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 Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, 1998, 15.

²⁴⁴⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Morocco*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, 2222-26, Section 6d [cited December 27, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/nea/8277.htm>. See also Pelham, "Fine crafts from too-tiny hands." See also International Working Washington File Group on Child Labour, *Forgotten on the Pyjama Trail*, 15. UNICEF estimates that 5,000-10,000 children work in the artisan carpet industry, and it is estimated that more than 3,000 are producing carpets for export. A Ministry of Labor and ILO-IPEC investigation found that 98 percent of children in this sector are 12 years old, or younger. See U.S. Embassy- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

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.²⁴⁴⁸

In urban areas, girls can be found working as domestic servants, often in situations of unregulated “adoptive servitude”²⁴⁴⁹ 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.²⁴⁵⁰ In urban areas, teenagers are reported to engage in prostitution.²⁴⁵¹ A recent study on street children also found that they engage in diverse forms of work including selling cigarettes, begging, shining shoes, and other miscellaneous occupations.²⁴⁵²

Education is compulsory for six years, or between the ages of 7 and 13.²⁴⁵³ Primary education is free.²⁴⁵⁴ The government does not enforce the compulsory education law²⁴⁵⁵ however, and an estimated 80 percent of working children are not in school.²⁴⁵⁶ In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 97 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 79.5 percent.²⁴⁵⁷

²⁴⁴⁸ A study of the artisan sector in the city of Fez found that 45 percent of workers were less than 15 years of age, as cited in U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2000: Morocco*, Section 6d. See also International Working Washington File Group on Child Labour, *Forgotten on the Pyjama Trail*, 15. See also U.S. Embassy- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

²⁴⁴⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Morocco*, 2219-22, Section 5.

²⁴⁵⁰ U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2000: Morocco*, Section 5. See also U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2001: Morocco*, Washington, D.C., July 2001; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2001/3928.htm>. It is estimated that 45.4 percent of household employees under the age of 18 are ages 10 to 12, and 26.4 percent are under the age of 10. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Morocco*, 2219-22, Section 5. Over 80% of child maids are illiterate and from rural areas. A 2000 study by the Ministry of Planning funded by UNICEF estimates that there are approximately 13,000 girls under age 15 working as maids in Casablanca, while another put the total at 20,000 in other Moroccan major cities. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Morocco*, 2222-26, Section 6d. UNICEF estimates the average age of all child maids was less than 11 years old and work on average 67 hours per week. See U.S. Embassy- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

²⁴⁵¹ Wafa Bennani, “Morocco Street Children,” excerpted from Reuters, (Casablanca), September 24, 1996, [cited December 11, 2001]; available from www.pangaea.org/street_children/africa/morocco.htm. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2000: Morocco*, Section 5.

²⁴⁵² Kingdom of Morocco, Ministry in Charge of the Condition of Women, the Protection of the Family, Childhood, and the Integration of the Handicapped, *Synthèse d’une étude préliminaire sur les enfants de la rue*, Rabat, October 2001.

²⁴⁵³ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Morocco*, 2219-22, Section 5.

²⁴⁵⁴ U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*.

²⁴⁵⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Morocco*, 2219-22, Section 5. See also U.S. Embassy- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

²⁴⁵⁶ Kingdom of Morocco, *Plans national et sectoriels d’action*, 3.

²⁴⁵⁷ In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 106.8 percent for boys and 86.9 percent for girls. The net primary enrollment rate was 85.5 percent for boys and 73.2 percent for girls. See World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2001* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2001.

Attendance rates are not available for Morocco. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.²⁴⁵⁸ Morocco has low primary school retention rates and high dropout rates, particularly for rural girls who often do not complete primary school.²⁴⁵⁹ The percentage of students who entered primary school in 1995 and reached grade two was 92 percent, and the percentage that reached grade five was 75 percent.²⁴⁶⁰ In the 2000-2001 school year, the percentage of children in primary school increased by 4.8 percent.²⁴⁶¹

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

In January 2001, the adoption of ILO Convention 138 led to a change in the minimum age for employment from 12 to 15 years.²⁴⁶² The minimum age law applies to all sectors and includes apprentices and children who work in family businesses.²⁴⁶³ The minimum age for hazardous and night work is 16 years.²⁴⁶⁴ A royal decree prohibits forced or compulsory labor, which particularly affects children in "adoptive servitude."²⁴⁶⁵

The Ministry of Labor is responsible for implementing and enforcing child labor laws and regulations.²⁴⁶⁶ 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.²⁴⁶⁷ In May 2000, participants at a colloquium on legal protection for female workers urged the government to institute stronger legal measures to sanction employers who hire

²⁴⁵⁸ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

²⁴⁵⁹ U.S. Embassy- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

²⁴⁶⁰ UNESCO, *World Education Report 2000*, 144.

²⁴⁶¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Morocco*, 2219-22, Section 5.

²⁴⁶² U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*. The Ministry of Labor has summarized major legislation regarding child labor and international norms. See Kingdom of Morocco, *Les enfants au travail. Législation nationale et normes internationales*, Ministry of Labor, Department of Employment, Rabat, December 1997.

²⁴⁶³ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Morocco*, 2222-26, Section 6d.

²⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 2222-26, Section 6c. Adoptive servitude is difficult to monitor because it falls outside the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Labor. Courts can take action once two witnesses file a complaint, but few employers of child maids have been prosecuted. See U.S. Embassy- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1830*.

²⁴⁶⁶ U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Morocco*, 2222-26, Section 6d.

²⁴⁶⁷ U.S. Consulate- Casablanca, *unclassified telegram no. 1157*.

children for domestic labor at the ages of compulsory school attendance.²⁴⁶⁸ In March 2002 at the invitation of the Moroccan Parliament, participants at a meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Marrakech received guidance on tools that parliamentarians and legislators can use to implement at a local level principles contained in international legislation on child labor.²⁴⁶⁹

The Government of Morocco ratified ILO Convention 138 on January 6, 2000 and ILO Convention 182 on January 26, 2001.²⁴⁷⁰

²⁴⁶⁸ The colloquium was organized by groups associated with Amnesty International and the University Hassan 1er of Settat. See El Bayane, *Dignité et droits des bonne, Toute la société interpellée*, in lamarocaine.com, [online] May 23, 2000 [cited September 18, 2002]; available from <http://www.lamarocaine.com/news/news2000/news14.htm>. The Union of Moroccan Women has also demanded that authorities act to abolish child labor in the country after hearing disturbing testimony from parents and children of bonded domestic labor. See BBC World Service, *Moroccan call to end child labour*, BBC News, [online] May 28, 2000 [cited September 18, 2002]; available from <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/767182.stm>.

²⁴⁶⁹ ILO, *Note aux correspondants: L'OIT et l'Union interparlementaire en campagne contre les pires formes de travail des enfants*, [online] March 14, 2002 [cited September 18, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/french/bureau/inf/pr/2002/11.htm>.

²⁴⁷⁰ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited November 30, 2001]; available from <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/newratframeE.htm>.