

# Guinea

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

In 1990, the Government of Guinea initiated an education sector reform program to increase enrolment, particularly for girls, and to improve education services.<sup>1106</sup> The reform program is on going, and the government is continuing to commit funds for educational improvements.<sup>1107</sup> UNICEF and USAID are working with the government to implement youth programs and education initiatives. UNICEF is coordinating with the Ministries of Education and Social Affairs to provide refugee children and other war-affected youth with access to education,<sup>1108</sup> while USAID is assisting the Ministry of Education to implement its primary education reforms.<sup>1109</sup> UNICEF worked with the government's Children's Protection Division to compile a study on the situation of women and children in Guinea.<sup>1110</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 1999, the ILO estimated that 31.7 percent of children between the ages of 10 and 14 years in Guinea were working.<sup>1111</sup> Children begin working beside their parents at a young age, often at 7 years.<sup>1112</sup> The majority of child labor in Guinea takes place in the domestic or informal sectors, and includes such activities as subsistence farming, petty commerce, family work, fishing,

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<sup>1106</sup> Government of Guinea, Secteur de L'Education, at "[http://www.guinee.gov.gn/6\\_Politiques/education.htm](http://www.guinee.gov.gn/6_Politiques/education.htm)" [http://www.guinee.gov.gn/6\\_Politiques/education.htm](http://www.guinee.gov.gn/6_Politiques/education.htm) on 10/11/01. See also UNESCO, *The Education for All (EFA) 2000 Assessment: Country Reports—Guinea*, at [http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/guinea/rapport\\_1.html](http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/guinea/rapport_1.html) on 10/11/01.

<sup>1107</sup> U.S. Embassy-Conakry, unclassified telegram no. 2368, July 2001 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 2368].

<sup>1108</sup> UNICEF, *Donor Update: Guinea*, July 27, 2001, at <http://www.unicef.org/emerg/Guinea27Jul01.PDF> on 10/11/01.

<sup>1109</sup> USAID projects include an effort to boost female enrollment rates and a popular interactive radio program, among others. See "Education," USAID-Guinea, at <http://www.usaid.gov/gn/education/background/index.htm> on 10/11/01.

<sup>1110</sup> Unclassified telegram 2368.

<sup>1111</sup> *World Development Indicators 2001* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001) [hereinafter *World Development Indicators 2001*] [CD-ROM]. In 1997, the Ministry of Planning estimated that about 48 percent of children under the age of 15 were employed, accounting for approximately 20 percent of the total working population and 26 percent of agricultural workers. The Ministry of Planning estimates also suggested that child labor is much more prevalent in rural than urban areas. The Ministry estimated that in rural areas, approximately 66 percent of children between ages 7 and 14 and 91 percent between ages 15 and 19 were working. In urban areas, the numbers were approximately 19 percent and 50 percent, respectively. See *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Guinea* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2001) [hereinafter *Country Reports 2000*], Section 6d, at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/af/index.cfm?docid'806>.

<sup>1112</sup> Republique de Guinee, *Situation Des Enfants et Des Femmes, Programme De Cooperation 2002-2006* (UNICEF-Conakry, November 2000) [hereinafter *Programme De Cooperation*], 35.

and small-scale mining.<sup>1113</sup> Children also work in gold, diamond, granite and sand mines and as apprentices to mechanics, electricians, and plumbers, among others professions.<sup>1114</sup>

There are no statistical data available on the number of street children in Guinea, although children work in the streets selling cheap goods for traders, carrying baggage, or shining shoes.<sup>1115</sup> Child sexual exploitation occurs and is on the rise. Guinea is reported to be an origin and destination country for trafficking in persons for prostitution and illegal labor. Children are trafficked internationally to Senegal. Most victims of trafficking come from Mali and Benin. Internal trafficking occurs from rural to urban areas.<sup>1116</sup> Children may also serve in armed conflict, but the reports cannot be fully corroborated, because the Government of Guinea does not have a reliable birth registration system and children often do not know their exact ages.<sup>1117</sup>

Primary education is compulsory for 8 years.<sup>1118</sup> In 1997, the gross primary enrollment rate was 54.4 percent and the net primary enrollment rate was 41.8 percent.<sup>1119</sup> Enrollment remains substantially lower among girls than boys. In 1997, gross female enrollment was 40.7 percent, compared to 67.7 percent for boys.<sup>1120</sup> In 1999, primary school attendance was 40 percent.<sup>1121</sup> According to USAID, one girl attends school for every two boys.<sup>1122</sup> Children, particularly girls,

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<sup>1113</sup> U.S. Embassy— Conakry, unclassified telegram no. 1857, March 1998 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 1857]. See also *Programme De Cooperation* at 83.

<sup>1114</sup> *Programme De Cooperation* at 84.

<sup>1115</sup> Unclassified telegram 2368. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Initial Reports Awaited From the States Parties for 1992, Addendum, Guinea*, CRC/C/3/Add. 48, June 17, 1997 [hereinafter *Initial Reports Awaited*], para. 117. See also “Trafficking,” ECPAT International Database: Guinea, at [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) on 12/18/01.

<sup>1116</sup> *Initial Reports Awaited* at para. 131. See also *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6f and *Programme De Cooperation* at 85. See also unclassified telegram 2368.

<sup>1117</sup> Military recruits often do not know their exact age or do not have documentation of their age, which makes it nearly impossible to monitor the use of children as soldiers. Because members of the armed forces go into combat if their unit is called, regardless of age, the State Department report notes that underage soldiers have undoubtedly been used in combatant groups. See U. S. Embassy - Conakry, unclassified telegram no. 2704, September 2001 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 2704].

<sup>1118</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 3.

<sup>1119</sup> *World Development Indicators 2001*.

<sup>1120</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1121</sup> *Schooling in Guinea, Findings from the GDHS-II 1999* (Conakry, Guinea: Ministère de l'Enseignement Pre-Universitaire et de l'Education Civique), January 2001, 17.

<sup>1122</sup> “Speaking Up For Girls’ Education,” USAID-Guinea, February 1, 2000, at <http://www.usaid.gov/gn/education/news/girls/index.htm> on 10/11/01.

are kept out of school in order to assist their parents with domestic work or agriculture.<sup>1123</sup> Government resources for education are limited, there are not enough school facilities to adequately serve the population of school-age children, and the availability of school supplies and equipment is poor.<sup>1124</sup>

### Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 16 years, although children under the age of 16 can work with the consent of a parent or guardian.<sup>1125</sup> Based on the Labor Code, apprentices may begin to work at 14 years of age, with the provision that workers and apprentices under the age of 18 are not permitted to work at night or work more than 12 consecutive hours.<sup>1126</sup> The Labor Code also prohibits forced or bonded labor and hazardous work by children under 18 years.<sup>1127</sup> The government has acknowledged that the implementation and enforcement of labor legislation remains weak.<sup>1128</sup> Guinea's Penal Code prohibits trafficking of persons, as well as the exploitation of vulnerable persons for unpaid or underpaid labor.<sup>1129</sup> The official age for voluntary recruitment or conscription into the armed forces is 18 years, although insufficient birth registration practices make the law difficult to enforce.<sup>1130</sup> Guinea has not ratified ILO Convention 138 or ILO Convention 182.<sup>1131</sup>

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<sup>1123</sup> *Programme De Cooperation* at 70.

<sup>1124</sup> *Ibid.* at 68.

<sup>1125</sup> Code du Travail de la Republique de Guinee (1988) [hereinafter Code du Travail], Article 5 (Republique de Guinee: Ministere des Affaires Sociales et De L'Emploi).

<sup>1126</sup> The penalty for an infraction of the law is a fine of 30,000 to 600,000 GFN (USD 16 to 315). *See* Code du Travail at Articles 13, 148, 149, 167. Currency conversion at <http://www.carosta.de/frames/convert.htm> on 1/29/02.

<sup>1127</sup> Section 187 of the Labor Code prohibits hazardous work, defined as any work likely to endanger the health, safety, or morals of children. The Ministry of Labor determines the exact jobs that are considered hazardous. Punishment for infractions of the law range from a fine to imprisonment of no more than 2 months. *See* Code du Travail at Articles 186, 187, 205.

<sup>1128</sup> *Initial Reports Awaited* at para. 119.

<sup>1129</sup> The penalty for trafficking is 5 to 10 years of imprisonment, and the penalty for exploitation is 6 months to 5 years of imprisonment and a fine. *See* unclassified telegram 2368.

<sup>1130</sup> Unclassified telegram 2704. *See also* Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report 2001: Guinea*, at [http://www.child-soldiers.org/report2001/global\\_report\\_contents.html](http://www.child-soldiers.org/report2001/global_report_contents.html) on 10/17/01.

<sup>1131</sup> ILOLEX database: Guinea at <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/> on 10/11/01.

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