

# Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

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

The UNDP, along with the Caribbean Development Bank, implements poverty reduction loan projects in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.<sup>2175</sup> UNICEF and other organizations participate in the poverty reduction strategy by implementing programs specifically aimed at improving economic activities for youth.<sup>2176</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in St. Vincent and the Grenadines are unavailable. Children are known to work in family-owned enterprises, particularly on commercial banana farms. Children usually leave school after the primary level and are frequently absorbed into the labor force to work as apprentices.<sup>2177</sup>

Education is neither compulsory nor free, although children are usually in school until the age of 15.<sup>2178</sup> In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 90.5 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 83.5 percent.<sup>2179</sup> Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for St.

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<sup>2175</sup> UNDP, *Poverty Strategies Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean*, at <http://www.undp.org/poverty/initiatives/> on 10/25/01. See also *Statement by the Governor for St. Vincent and the Grenadines*, by The Hon. Dr. Ralph Gonsalves at the 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Board of Governor's Meeting, Hyatt Regency, St. Lucia, May 22-23, 2001.

<sup>2176</sup> U.S. Embassy-Bridgetown, unclassified telegram no. 1758, September 2001 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 1758].

<sup>2177</sup> *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—St. Vincent and the Grenadines* (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/wha/index.cfm?docid=831>. See also *Internationally Recognized Core Labour Standards in the WTO Members of the Organization of East Caribbean States*, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (Geneva, 2001), at <http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=991212900&Language=EN> on 10/24/01.

<sup>2178</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5. See also Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Treaties and Reports to Treaty Bodies, "For the Record 1997: The UN Human Rights System," at <http://www.hri.ca/fortherecord1997/vol4/stvincent.htm> on 12/12/01.

<sup>2179</sup> UNESCO, *Education for All: Year 2000 Assessment* (Paris, 2000) [CD-ROM].

Vincent and the Grenadines. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.<sup>2180</sup> According to the government, cases in which children leave school before the age of 16 are investigated.<sup>2181</sup>

### Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The 1990 Employment of Women, Young Persons and Children's Act of 1990 sets the minimum age for employment at 16 years, although children may work as apprentices at age 15 as long as the employment is not dangerous to the children's life, health, or morals.<sup>2182</sup> The Constitution prohibits forced labor except when individuals are required to work to fulfill court sentences or military service obligations or to fill a need during a period of public emergency.<sup>2183</sup> According to the Criminal Code, causing, encouraging, or procuring a girl under 15 years of age for the purpose of engaging in prostitution is illegal.<sup>2184</sup> There are no laws that specifically address trafficking in persons.<sup>2185</sup>

The Ministry of Labor's inspection office is responsible for enforcing child labor legislation, and no violations have been reported through annual inspections. According to the Act of Offenses and Penalties, any person who employs a child in an industrial undertaking is liable to a fine of up to USD 250.<sup>2186</sup> St. Vincent and the Grenadines has not ratified ILO Convention 138 but did ratify ILO Convention 182 on December 4, 2001.<sup>2187</sup>

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<sup>2180</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see *Introduction* to this report.

<sup>2181</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

<sup>2182</sup> Unclassified telegram 1758.

<sup>2183</sup> Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Article 4, 1979, at <http://www.georgetown.edu/LatAmerPolitical/Constitutions/Vincent/stvincent.html> on 10/24/01.

<sup>2184</sup> Criminal Code, Chapter VIII, Articles 130, 131, in *Human Rights Reports: St. Vincent and the Grenadines*, Protection Project Database, at [www.protectionproject.org](http://www.protectionproject.org).

<sup>2185</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6f.

<sup>2186</sup> Unclassified telegram 1758. See also *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d.

<sup>2187</sup> ILO, ILOLEX database, at <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/newratframeE.htm> on 10/25/01.

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