

# Solomon Islands

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

The Solomon Islands 1997 Draft National Education Master Plan for 1999-2010 includes provisions to increase primary education enrollment and to increase the number of teachers over the same period.<sup>2292</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 1999, the ILO estimated that 25.1 percent of children in the Solomon Islands between the ages of 10 and 14 were working.<sup>2293</sup> Children under the age of 15, some as young as 11, reportedly work as prostitutes.<sup>2294</sup> In the conflict between the dominant Malatians and the Guadalcanalese, the militant Guadalcanalese Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM) has reportedly included about 100 child soldiers ages 12 to 17 in its ranks. According to Amnesty International, children between 12 and 17 made up at least a quarter of the IFM fighters manning roadblocks visited by its observers east of the town of Honiara in September 1999.<sup>2295</sup>

Education in the Solomon Islands is not compulsory and only 60 per cent of school-age children have access to primary education.<sup>2296</sup> From 1990 to 1994, the gross primary school enrollment rose from 84.5 percent to 96.6 percent.<sup>2297</sup> Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for the Solomon Islands. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.<sup>2298</sup> Efforts and plans made by the

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<sup>2292</sup> UNESCO, *The Education for All (EFA) Assessment 2000: Country Report—Solomon Islands* [hereinafter *EFA 2000*], at [http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/solomon\\_islands/rapport\\_1.html](http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/solomon_islands/rapport_1.html) on 11/27/01.

<sup>2293</sup> *World Development Indicators 2001* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001) [hereinafter *World Development Indicators 2001*] [CD-ROM].

<sup>2294</sup> PACNEWS/SIBC, "Pre-Teens Involved in Solomon Islands Prostitution," January 20, 1999, reprinted in *Pacific Islands Report*, cited in Global March Against Child Labor, "Worst Forms of Child Labor Data: Solomon Islands," at <http://www.globalmarch.org/worstformsreport/world/solomon-islands.htm> on 11/27/01.

<sup>2295</sup> Amnesty International, *Solomon Islands: A Forgotten Conflict*, September 2000, AI-index: ASA 43/005/2000, July 9, 2000, at <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/Index/ASA430052000?OpenDocument&of=COUNTRIES\SOLOMON+ISLANDS> on 11/27/01, p. 3.

<sup>2296</sup> UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, *Review of the Implementation of CERD: Solomon Islands, 5/14/99, E/C.12/1/Add.33, (Concluding Observations/Comments)* [hereinafter *Review of the Implementation of CERD: Solomon Islands*], at

[http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(symbol\)/E.C.12.1.Add.33.En?opendocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(symbol)/E.C.12.1.Add.33.En?opendocument) on 11/27/01.

<sup>2297</sup> *World Development Indicators 2001*.

<sup>2298</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see *Introduction* to this report.

Department of Education and Human Resource Development to expand educational facilities and increase enrollment have been hindered by a lack of government funding, misguided teacher training programs, poor coordination of programs, and a failure of the government to pay teachers.<sup>2299</sup> The percentage of the government's budget allocated to education was 9.7 percent in 1998, down from 13.2 percent in 1990.<sup>2300</sup>

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

Children under the age of 12 are prohibited from heavy work, but they may participate in light agricultural or domestic labor (work performed in the company of their parents).<sup>2301</sup> Children under the age of 15 are prohibited from working in industry or on ships, and children under the age of 18 may not work underground or in mines.<sup>2302</sup> The Constitution prohibits forced labor, including forced and bonded labor by children.<sup>2303</sup> The Labor Division of the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, and Industry is responsible for enforcing child labor laws.<sup>2304</sup> The Solomon Islands has not ratified ILO Convention 138 or ILO Convention 182.<sup>2305</sup>

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<sup>2299</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2300</sup> *EFA 2000.*

<sup>2301</sup> *Review of the Implementation of CERD: Solomon Islands.* See also *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Solomon Islands* (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/eap/index.cfm?docid=772>.

<sup>2302</sup> *Review of the Implementation of CERD: Solomon Islands.*

<sup>2303</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6c. See also *Review of the Implementation of CERD: Solomon Islands.*

<sup>2304</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d.

<sup>2305</sup> ILO, ILOLEX database: Solomon Islands, at <http://www.ilolex.ilo.org>.

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