

Uzbekistan

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

An education reform program began in 1997 that includes provisions for increasing the length of compulsory education and improved pre-professional training.²⁶³⁶ UNICEF is implementing education sector projects that particularly benefit children with disabilities and aim to create safe school environments.²⁶³⁷

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, UNICEF estimated that 23.4 percent of children between the ages of 5 and 15 in Uzbekistan were working.²⁶³⁸ Children work in agriculture in rural areas, where large-scale, compulsory mobilization of children to help with cotton harvests has been reported.²⁶³⁹ Schools allegedly close in rural areas to allow for child labor during the cotton harvest.²⁶⁴⁰ Various nongovernmental organizations have reported that incidents of sexual exploitation of young women are increasing, although exact numbers are not available.²⁶⁴¹ Girls and young women are trafficked within Uzbekistan, and to Turkey, the Persian Gulf, and South Korea, for the purposes of sexual exploitation.²⁶⁴²

²⁶³⁶ UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, Republic of Uzbekistan, December 5, 2000 at http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/natlMICSrepz/Uzbekistan/UZBA_MICS_REPORT_Final%20%20.pdf on 1/4/02 at 11.

²⁶³⁷ UNICEF, *Sub-Regional Programme for Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Iran*, October 2001-March 2002, at <http://www.unicef.org/emerg/Country/Afghanistan/SubReg0110.htm> on 10/24/01.

²⁶³⁸ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2, 2000 as cited in Understanding Children's Work at www.ucw-project.org/resources/index.html on 1/4/02.

²⁶³⁹ There has been an increase in the number of street children in Tashkent and other cities, although there are no reports on their work in the informal sector. See *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Uzbekistan* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2001) [hereinafter *Country Reports 2000*], Section 6c, at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/eur/858.htm>. See also Ministry of Public Education letter regarding forced cotton-picking practices, August 30, 2000 [document on file], and UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child*, Uzbekistan, UN Document CRC/C/15/Add.168 (Geneva, October 12, 2001) [hereinafter *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child*], para. 63.

²⁶⁴⁰ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6c.

²⁶⁴¹ International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, *Women 2000: An Investigation into the Status of Women's Rights: Uzbekistan* (Vienna, 2000) [hereinafter *Women 2000*], 505-6. See also *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

²⁶⁴² *Women 2000* at 505-6. See also *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6f.

Education is compulsory for nine years.²⁶⁴³ In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 99.6 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 87.8 percent.²⁶⁴⁴ Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for Uzbekistan. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.²⁶⁴⁵ Declining enrollment and high dropout, repetition, and absenteeism rates in both primary and secondary schools have been reported.²⁶⁴⁶

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 16 years, although students at age 14 may perform light work after school hours in limited, non-hazardous occupations.²⁶⁴⁷ The Labor Code also prohibits children less than 18 years of age from working under unfavorable labor conditions and establishes limited work hours for minors.²⁶⁴⁸ The Constitution prohibits forced labor except when fulfilling a court sentence.²⁶⁴⁹ The Criminal Code prohibits the abduction and recruitment of children for the purposes of exploitation.²⁶⁵⁰ Prostitution is punishable under the Administrative Code.²⁶⁵¹ Uzbekistan has not ratified either ILO Convention 138 or ILO Convention 182.²⁶⁵²

²⁶⁴³ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5b.

²⁶⁴⁴ UNESCO, *Education for All: Year 2000 Assessment* (Paris, 2000) [CD-ROM].

²⁶⁴⁵ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see *Introduction* to this report.

²⁶⁴⁶ *Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child* at para. 57.

²⁶⁴⁷ With the consent of a parent or guardian, children may be admitted to employment at the age of 15. See UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties Due in 1996: Uzbekistan*, UN Document CRC/C/41/Add.8 (Geneva, February 19, 2001) [hereinafter *Initial Reports of States Parties*], para. 314.

²⁶⁴⁸ The government issued a list of jobs that fall into the category of "unfavorable labor conditions," which include drilling, chemical production, construction, and working underground. Children between 16 and 18 years of age may not work more than 36 hours a week, and children between 15 and 16 years of age (and school children between 14 and 16 years of age working during holidays) may not work more than 24 hours a week. See *Resolution of the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of Health Care on Approval of the List of Works with Unfavorable Labor Conditions* [document on file]. See also *Initial Reports of States Parties* at paras. 315, 318, and 324.

²⁶⁴⁹ Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, December 8, 1992, at <http://www.ecostan.org/Laws/uzb/uzbekistancon.html> on 10/24/01. See also *Country Reports 2000*.

²⁶⁵⁰ *Initial Reports of States Parties* at para. 150. Penalties vary depending on the crime, ranging from fines to imprisonment of up to 5 years. See Articles 135 and 137 of the Criminal Code, as cited in *Women 2000* at 505-6.

²⁶⁵¹ U.S. Embassy-Tashkent, unclassified telegram no. 3065, August 2000.

²⁶⁵² ILO, ILOLEX database: Uzbekistan, at <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/newratframeE.htm> on 10/24/01.

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