

Botswana

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

Government efforts to address the worst forms of child labor in Botswana are in initial stages. In 2002, the Labor Department will work in consultation with the Central Statistics Office (CSO) with technical assistance from ILO-IPEC to conduct a national child labor survey to determine the extent and nature of child labor.²⁷⁸ Results from this survey will provide the basis for developing an action plan to implement ILO Convention 182.²⁷⁹ The Government of Botswana is also working in consultation with UNICEF to implement its National Program of Action for Children to reduce the incidence of HIV-related infant mortality, increase access to universal basic education, and improve the protection of children in vulnerable situations, among other goals.²⁸⁰

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 1999, the ILO estimated that 14.9 percent of children between the ages of 10 and 14 in Botswana were working.²⁸¹ In urban areas, children orphaned by HIV/AIDS allegedly engage in begging and prostitution.²⁸² In remote areas, young children reportedly work as cattle tenders, domestic servants, and babysitters.²⁸³

Children who are citizens of Botswana have access to seven years of free primary education, but it is not compulsory.²⁸⁴ In 1996, the gross primary enrollment rate was 107.8 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 81 percent.²⁸⁵ Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for Botswana. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.²⁸⁶

²⁷⁸ Unclassified telegram 3277, September 2001 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 3277].

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ UNICEF, *Preliminary Report: Botswana Multiple Indicator Survey 2001*, at http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/natlMICSrepz/Botswana/BotsMICS_preliminary.pdf.

²⁸¹ *World Development Indicators 2001* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001) [hereinafter *World Development Indicators 2001*] [CD-ROM].

²⁸² *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000—Botswana* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 2001) [hereinafter *Country Reports 2000*], Section 5, at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2000/af/index.cfm?docid=677>.

²⁸³ Ibid. at Section 6d.

²⁸⁴ Ibid. at Section 5. See also unclassified telegram 3277.

²⁸⁵ *World Development Indicators 2001*.

²⁸⁶ For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see *Introduction* to this report.

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Employment Act sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years, although children under 14 may work in family businesses. Children between 14 and 18 years are prohibited from working in hazardous conditions.²⁸⁷ The Adoption Act contains provisions to protect adopted children from being exploited as cheap labor.²⁸⁸ The Constitution prohibits forced or compulsory labor.²⁸⁹ Child prostitution and pornography are criminal offenses, and penalties apply to violations against children under the age of 16.²⁹⁰

The Ministry of Local Government, Lands, and Housing is the government agency that oversees the protection and welfare of children,²⁹¹ and the Commissioner of Labor is authorized to terminate unlawful employment of a child. Penalties for employers may include imprisonment up to 12 months, fines of 1500 Pula (USD 231), or a combination of both.²⁹² The Government of Botswana ratified ILO Convention 138 on June 5, 1997, and ratified ILO Convention 182 on January 3, 2000.²⁹³

²⁸⁷ Submission by Botswana for Designation as a Beneficiary Under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, 10.

²⁸⁸ *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.* at Section 6c.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.* at Section 5.

²⁹¹ Government of Botswana, Ministry of Local Government Lands and Housing, at http://www.gov/bw/government/ministry_of_local_government_land_and_housing.html.

²⁹² Unclassified telegram 3277. *See also* Currency conversion at <http://www.carosta.de/frames/convert.htm> on 1/29/02.

²⁹³ ILOLEX databases: Botswana at <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/cgi-lex/ratifce.pl?C138> and <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/cgi-lex/ratifce.pl?C182>.

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