

# Djibouti

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

The Government of Djibouti supported several small programs to encourage children to attend school, including the Ministry of Labor's "War on Poverty."<sup>746</sup> UNICEF and WFP are also supporting education initiatives for children.<sup>747</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under the age of 15 in Djibouti are unavailable. Information on the incidence of children's work is limited, although reports indicate that child labor exists, primarily in informal economic activities.<sup>748</sup> In rural areas, children perform unpaid labor on family farms, and in urban areas, children often work in small-scale family businesses, trade, catering or craft sectors, or as domestic servants.<sup>749</sup> Children displaced from Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia seeking work in Djibouti's cities where they beg as street children.<sup>750</sup> Child prostitution reportedly is increasing, particularly among street children in the capital city.<sup>751</sup>

Education is free and compulsory between the ages of 6 and 12.<sup>752</sup> Although education is free, there are additional expenses (e.g., transportation and books) that might prohibit poorer

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<sup>746</sup> U.S. Embassy—Djibouti, unclassified telegram no. 1503, Section 6d, August 2000 [hereinafter unclassified telegram 1503].

<sup>747</sup> Ibid.

<sup>748</sup> Unclassified telegram 1503. 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 of States Parties Due in 1993, Addendum, Djibouti*, CRC/C/8/Add.39 (Geneva, August 3, 1998) [hereinafter *Initial Reports of States Parties*], paras. 144, 145.

<sup>749</sup> *Initial Reports of States Parties* at paras. 144, 145.

<sup>750</sup> *The Effective Abolition of Child Labour: Djibouti*, Review of Annual Reports Under the Follow-Up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, GB.277/3/2 (Geneva, March 2000) [hereinafter *Effective Abolition of Child Labour*]. See also "Djibouti: Drought and Economic Refugees Overburden Capital," [hereinafter "Djibouti: Drought and Economic Refugees Overburden Capital"], IRIN News Service, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, September 5, 2001, at <http://www.irinnews.org> on 11/28/01.

<sup>751</sup> "Child Prostitution," ECPAT International Database: Djibouti, at [http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat\\_inter/projects/monitoring/online\\_database/](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/) on 11/28/01. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding Observations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child: Djibouti*, CRC/C/15/Add.131 (Geneva, June 28, 2000). See also "Djibouti: Drought and Economic Refugees Overburden Capital".

<sup>752</sup> *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2000 – Djibouti* (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=665>. See also Youth at the UN, *Country Profiles on the Situation of Youth: Djibouti*, at <http://www.esa.un.org/socdev/unyin/countrya.asp?countrycode=dj> on 11/28/01.

families from sending their children to school.<sup>753</sup> In 1996, the gross primary enrollment rate was 38.6 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 31.7 percent.<sup>754</sup> Both gross and net enrollment rates are lower for girls than for boys.<sup>755</sup> Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for Djibouti. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.<sup>756</sup>

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

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years.<sup>757</sup> Night work is prohibited for children under the age of 16, and the hours and conditions of work by children are regulated.<sup>758</sup> Forced labor is also prohibited.<sup>759</sup> The Penal Code criminalizes prostitution.<sup>760</sup> There is no authority within the Government of Djibouti responsible for investigating violations of child labor laws, although the national labor inspectors are required to report infractions as they occur.<sup>761</sup> No incidents of child labor violations have been brought before the judicial system to date.<sup>762</sup> Djibouti has not ratified ILO Convention 138 or ILO Convention 182.<sup>763</sup>

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<sup>753</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 5.

<sup>754</sup> *World Development Indicators 2001* (Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2001) [CD-ROM].

<sup>755</sup> *Ibid.* In 1996, the gross primary enrollment rate was 32.6 percent for girls and 44.5 percent for boys. The net primary enrollment rate was 27.3 percent for girls and 36.2 percent for boys.

<sup>756</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see *Introduction* to this report.

<sup>757</sup> The government is currently drafting a new Labor Code that will raise the minimum age for employment from age 14 to 16. See *Effective Abolition of Child Labour*.

<sup>758</sup> *Initial Reports of States Parties* at para. 25.

<sup>759</sup> *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6c.

<sup>760</sup> "Protection," ECPAT International Database: Djibouti, at [http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat\\_inter/projects/monitoring/online\\_database/](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/) on 11/28/01.

<sup>761</sup> Unclassified telegram 1503.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.* There is reported to be a shortage of labor inspectors, which may contribute to the lack of reported child labor violations. See also *Country Reports 2000* at Section 6d.

<sup>763</sup> ILOLEX database: Djibouti at <http://www.ilolex.ch> on 11/29/01.