

# Solomon Islands

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

The Government of the Solomon Islands is implementing a National Education Master Plan for 1999-2010 that includes provisions to improve the quality and relevance of education.<sup>3276</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, the ILO estimated that 24.2 percent of children ages 10 to 14 years in the Solomon Islands were working.<sup>3277</sup> There are reports of commercial sexual exploitation, but information on the extent of the problem is not available.<sup>3278</sup> In the 1998 conflict between the dominant Malatians and the Guadalcanalese, the militant Guadalcanalese Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM) reportedly included about 100 child soldiers aged 12 to 17 in its ranks.<sup>3279</sup>

Education in the Solomon Islands is not compulsory,<sup>3280</sup> and school fees are reported to be very high in relation to local income.<sup>3281</sup> In 1996, the gross primary enrollment rate was 96.9 percent.<sup>3282</sup> However, other education data show that only 60 percent of school-age children have access to primary education.<sup>3283</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

---

<sup>3276</sup> UNESCO, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports- Solomon Islands*, prepared by Department of Education and Human Resource Development, pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 52/84, 1999, [cited August 30, 2002]; available from [http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/solomon\\_islands/rapport\\_3.html](http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/solomon_islands/rapport_3.html).

<sup>3277</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2002.

<sup>3278</sup> ECPAT International, *Solomon Islands*, in ECPAT International, [database online] 2002 [cited August 30, 2002]; available from [http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat\\_inter/projects/monitoring/online\\_database/index.asp](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/index.asp). See also Global March Against Child Labor, *Worst Forms of Child Labour: Solomon Islands*, [online] [cited August 30, 2002]; available from <http://www.globalmarch.org/worstformsreport/world/solomon-islands.htm>.

<sup>3279</sup> 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. See Amnesty International, *Solomon Islands: A Forgotten Conflict*, [online] 2000 [cited August 28, 2002]; available from <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/Index/ASA430052000?OpenDocument&of=COUNTRIES\SOLOMON+ISLANDS>. There is currently a fragile peace in the country, as the new government, the Coalition for National Unity, Reconciliation and Peace, has sought to maintain order. See U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Solomon Islands*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, 1175-76, Introduction [cited December 17, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/eap/8376.htm>.

<sup>3280</sup> UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, *Review of the Implementation of CERD: Solomon Islands*, E/C.12/1/Add.33, Geneva, May 1999, [cited August 30, 2002]; available from [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).

<sup>3281</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Solomon Islands*, 1181-82, Section 5.

<sup>3282</sup> Net primary enrollment rates are unavailable for the Solomon Islands. See World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002*.

<sup>3283</sup> UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, *Review of the Implementation of CERD: Solomon Islands*.

reflect children's participation in school.<sup>3284</sup> The state of education is reported to have worsened in recent years, due to deteriorating infrastructure, a lack of financial resources, and a failure of the government to pay teachers.<sup>3285</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>3286</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>3287</sup> The Constitution prohibits slavery and forced labor.<sup>3288</sup> The procurement of girls under 18 years of age for the purposes of prostitution is prohibited under the Penal Code, and is punishable with a maximum penalty of two years imprisonment.<sup>3289</sup> There are no specific provisions criminalizing trafficking in persons.<sup>3290</sup>

The Labor Division of the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, and Industry is responsible for enforcing child labor laws,<sup>3291</sup> but information on the effectiveness of this division and other enforcement measures is not available.

The Government of the Solomon Islands has not ratified ILO Convention 138 or ILO Convention 182.<sup>3292</sup>

---

<sup>3284</sup> For a more detailed description on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

<sup>3285</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Solomon Islands*, 1181-82, Section 5.

<sup>3286</sup> *Ibid.*, 1182-83, Section 6d.

<sup>3287</sup> UN Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights, *Review of the Implementation of CERD: Solomon Islands*.

<sup>3288</sup> *Constitution of the Solomon Islands, 1978*, [cited August 30, 2002]; available from [http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/paclawmat/Solomon\\_Islands\\_legislation/Solomons\\_Constitution.html](http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/paclawmat/Solomon_Islands_legislation/Solomons_Constitution.html).

<sup>3289</sup> ECPAT International, *Solomon Islands*.

<sup>3290</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3291</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Solomon Islands*, 1182-83, Section 6d.

<sup>3292</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited December 17, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.