

Togo

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

The Government of Togo has been a member of ILO-IPEC since 2000. In March 1999, the government formulated a National Action Plan against child trafficking that focuses on gathering information, raising awareness at the community level and taking steps to enhance its institutional capabilities to combat trafficking.³⁵⁴⁵ Togo is one of nine countries participating in a regional project sponsored by ILO-IPEC and funded by USDOL to combat the trafficking of children in West and Central Africa.³⁵⁴⁶ As a member of ECOWAS, Togo has committed itself to repatriate victims of trafficking and provide them with necessary social services, and to establish policies and programs to combat and prevent human trafficking.³⁵⁴⁷ In June 2002, the Government of Togo signed an agreement with the U.S. Government to support the implementation of an education project that focuses on child trafficking victims.³⁵⁴⁸ It has also collaborated with other ECOWAS member states to draft an action plan that identifies criminal justice interventions to be undertaken in the years 2002 and 2003 against trafficking in persons.³⁵⁴⁹

In mid-2002, Togo began creating village-based vigilance committees that work to raise awareness of child trafficking in rural areas.³⁵⁵⁰ In 2000, the government, in collaboration with UNICEF and NGOs, conducted awareness raising campaigns on forced labor and trafficking.³⁵⁵¹ The Government of Togo is working with the Global Program against Trafficking in Human Beings of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime to strengthen anti-trafficking efforts for women and children. UNODC is providing technical assistance in areas such as research and law enforcement training.³⁵⁵²

³⁵⁴⁵ ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Trafficking of Children for Labour Exploitation in West and Central Africa (Phase II)*, executive summary, Geneva, 1999.

³⁵⁴⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁴⁷ ECOWAS, "Declaration on the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons" (paper presented at the Twenty-Fifth Ordinary Session of Authority of Heads of State and Government, Dakar, December 20-21, 2001).

³⁵⁴⁸ Togolese Ministry of Social Affairs, Letter of Intent between the U.S. Department of Labor and the Togolese Ministry of Social Affairs regarding the USDOL Child Labor Education Initiative, June 18, 2002.

³⁵⁴⁹ ECOWAS Executive Secretariat, *ECOWAS Initial Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons (2002-2003)*, Economic Community of West African States, Dakar, December 2001.

³⁵⁵⁰ Republic of Togo, "Les Etats-Unis se mobilisent contre le trafic des enfants au Togo," June 25, 2002, [cited December 18, 2002]; available from <http://www.republicoftogo.com/completenews.php?idnews=02265&flag=3>.

³⁵⁵¹ Creative Associates International Inc., *Child Labor Country Briefs: Togo*, [online] January 22, 2002 [cited August 23, 2002]; available from <http://209.135.227.32/childlaborbriefs/DashBoard2/default.asp>.

³⁵⁵² UN Office on Drugs and Crime, *Pilot Projects*, [online] [cited February 19, 2003]; available from http://www.odccp.org/odccp/trafficking_projects.html.

In June 2002, the U.S. State Department's Africa Bureau announced its West Africa Regional Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons, which includes Togo. As part of this strategy, U.S. missions in the region will focus U.S. Government resources on prosecuting traffickers, protecting and repatriating victims, and preventing new trafficking incidents through improved coordination among U.S. Government donors, greater coordination with international donors, engagement with and funding of regional and international organizations, and direct funding for host government or local NGOs.³⁵⁵³

Togo's education goals are to make education more accessible, raise the quality and relevance of the curriculum, and strengthen vocational and non-formal education.³⁵⁵⁴ The government adopted a national education plan in 1995 that emphasizes meeting basic educational needs, improving the management of the education system and adapting the curriculum to the socio-economic environment.³⁵⁵⁵ A World Bank-funded project, implemented in 1996, focuses on increasing the number of qualified teachers and administrators, improving enrollment and retention rates, and making education more relevant to local needs.³⁵⁵⁶ The World Bank also supports programs designed to support the construction and repair of schools and the provision of textbooks to primary schools.³⁵⁵⁷ UNICEF is assisting Togo to raise the low attendance rates among girls through parent and teacher trainings.³⁵⁵⁸

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, the ILO estimated that 26.8 percent of children ages 10 to 14 years in Togo were working.³⁵⁵⁹ Children are found working mainly in the informal sector, particularly in agriculture and petty trading.³⁵⁶⁰ Many children work as child domestics, some as young as 7 years old.³⁵⁶¹

³⁵⁵³ U.S. Embassy- Abuja, *unclassified telegram no. 1809*, June 2002.

³⁵⁵⁴ UNESCO, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports - Togo*, prepared by Permanent Secretary of the Higher Council of National Education of Togo, pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 52/84, [cited January 30, 2003]; available from http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/togo/rapport_1.html.

³⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵⁷ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Initial Reports of States Parties: Summary Record of the 422nd Meeting*, CRC/C/SR.422, prepared by Government of Togo, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, February 3, 1998, para. 13.

³⁵⁵⁸ UNICEF, *Costs of Education*, [online] [cited August 27, 2002]; available from http://www.unicefusa.org/girls_ed/cost.html.

³⁵⁵⁹ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2002.

³⁵⁶⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Togo*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, 704-06, Section 6d [cited December 18, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/af/8408.htm>.

³⁵⁶¹ One survey on child domestic workers in Togo found that 95.6 percent of the domestics working full time were between 7 and 17 years old. See ILO, *Child Domestic Workers*, [online] January 31, 1998 [cited August 27, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/action/36actaga/domestic.htm>. Another survey found that 16 percent of domestics were 10 years of age or younger. See ILO, *Child Labour: Targeting the Intolerable*, [online] January 31, 1998 [cited August 27, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/publ/clrep96.htm>.

In remote parts of the country, a form of bonded labor occurs in the traditional practice known as *trokosi*, where young girls become slaves to religious shrines for offenses allegedly committed by a member of their family.³⁵⁶² Abuse of the cultural practice of *Amegbonovei*, through which extended family relations help to place children (usually from rural areas) with families who agree to pay for the children's education or provide them with a salary in exchange for domestic work, also contributes to the incidence of child trafficking. Often the intermediaries who arrange the placements abuse the children and rape the girls. These children are also sometimes mistreated by the families with whom they are placed.³⁵⁶³

Apart from internal trafficking, children are trafficked from Togo to Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Nigeria, and other African countries, as well as to the Middle East, Asia and Europe, where they work in indentured or domestic servitude, as farm laborers or for commercial sexual exploitation.³⁵⁶⁴ According to government reports, approximately 350 Togolese children drowned in March 2001, when boats used for trafficking them from Nigeria to Gabon capsized.³⁵⁶⁵ Although there is no evidence of minors enlisted in the military, children under 18 are found doing menial work in military barracks.³⁵⁶⁶

Education is free and compulsory for six years.³⁵⁶⁷ In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 124.2 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 88.5 percent.³⁵⁶⁸ However, the gender disparity in net primary enrollment rates is significant: 98.6 percent of boys of primary school age versus only 78.3 percent of girls were enrolled in school.³⁵⁶⁹ The gross primary attendance rate for both sexes was 116.1 percent in 1998, and the net primary attendance rate was 69.5 percent.³⁵⁷⁰

³⁵⁶² U.S. Department of Labor, "Combating Child Trafficking in Togo through Education," *Federal Register* 67, no. 75 (April 22, 2002), 19257. See also Nirit Ben-Ari, *Liberating girls from 'trokosi'*, (Vol. 15 #4), Africa Recovery, [online] December 2001 [cited October 28, 2002]; available from <http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/geninfo/afrec/vol15no4/154troko.htm>.

³⁵⁶³ Suzanne Aho, Togo Ministry of Social Affairs, Protection Project Fact-Finding Mission, Lomé, Togo, August 2001, as cited in Protection Project, "Togo," in *Human Rights Reports on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, March 2002, 546-47 [cited December 18, 2002]; available from <http://www.protectionproject.com>.

³⁵⁶⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2001: Togo*, Washington, D.C., July 2002, [cited December 18, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2001/3928.htm>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Togo*, 704-06, Section 6f. In one month, January 1998, 199 trafficked children from the border between Togo and Benin were repatriated and returned to their families. See All Africa News Agency, *Child Peddling a Serious Problem in Togo and Benin*, captive.org, [online] March 23, 1998 [cited August 22, 2001]; available from <http://www.captive.org/Information/WorldBeat/Africa/articlesafrica1.htm>.

³⁵⁶⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Togo*, 704-06, Section 6f.

³⁵⁶⁶ Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Togo," in *Global Report 2001*, 2001, [cited May 22, 2001]; available from <http://www.child-soldiers.org/report2001/countries/togo.html>.

³⁵⁶⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Togo*, 704-06, Section 5. Katarina Toma_evski, *Preliminary Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education*, submitted in accordance with Commission on Human Rights Resolution 1998/33, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1998/12, UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights, Geneva, 1999.

³⁵⁶⁸ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002*.

³⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

³⁵⁷⁰ USAID, *Global Education Database 2000* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2000.

The education system has suffered from teacher shortages, lower educational quality in rural areas and high repetition and dropout rates.³⁵⁷¹ In the northern part of the country, 41 percent of the primary school teachers are remunerated by the parents compared with only 17 percent in Lomé, where incomes are substantially higher.³⁵⁷²

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code sets the minimum age of employment in any enterprise at 14 years and a minimum age of 18 years for certain industrial and technical jobs.³⁵⁷³ The Ministry of Labor enforces the law only in the urban, formal sector.³⁵⁷⁴ In 2002, the Government of Togo adopted a comprehensive Children's Code that provides a legal foundation for protecting children's rights.³⁵⁷⁵ In 2000, the government undertook efforts to revise the Apprenticeship Code, resulting in guidelines governing the length of the workday, working conditions and apprenticeship fees.³⁵⁷⁶ Togolese law does not specifically prohibit forced or bonded labor by children or trafficking in persons.³⁵⁷⁷ However, Article 78 of the Penal Code prohibits the corruption, abduction or transfer of children against the will of a child's guardian.³⁵⁷⁸ Foreign consulates based in Togo do not issue visas to minors without first consulting a social worker.³⁵⁷⁹ Articles 91 to 94 of the Penal Code prohibit the solicitation and procurement of minors.³⁵⁸⁰

In September 2001, 68 Togolese children who had been smuggled out of Togo were flown back from Cameroon after their boat wrecked off the coast of Cameroon,³⁵⁸¹ and between January and August 2001, the Togolese frontier police intercepted 35 children at the border.³⁵⁸² In total, 83

³⁵⁷¹ M. Egnonto Koffi-Tessio, *Human Resource Development for Poverty Reduction and Household Food Security: Situation of Education and Training in Togo*, University of Lome, Advanced School of Agronomy, Lome, 2000. See also World Bank, *Togo Country Assistance Evaluation*, no. 21410, Operations Evaluation Department, November 20, 2000, 5.

³⁵⁷² World Bank, *Togo Country Assistance Evaluation*, 5.

³⁵⁷³ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Togo*, 704-06, Section 6d.

³⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁷⁵ U.S. Embassy- Lome, *unclassified telegram no. 1247*, September 2002.

³⁵⁷⁶ Republic of Togo, *Rapport National de Fin de Décennie sur "Le Suivi du Sommet Mondial pour les Enfants"*, 16.

³⁵⁷⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Togo*, 704-06, Sections 6c and 6f.

³⁵⁷⁸ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Initial Reports: Summary Record of the 422nd Meeting: Togo*, 37.

³⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 35.

³⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, para. 37.

³⁵⁸¹ Republic of Togo, "68 child trafficking victims return to Lome," September 23, 2001, [cited August 23, 2002]; available from <http://www.republicoftogo.com/english/completeneews.php?idnews=00270&flag=1>.

³⁵⁸² Suzanne Aho, Togo Ministry of Social Affairs, Protection Project Fact-Finding Mission, Lomé, Togo, August 2001, as cited in Protection Project, "Togo," 545.

Togolese victims of child trafficking were repatriated during 2001.³⁵⁸³ From January 2000 to February 2001, the government prosecuted 50 traffickers, resulting in sentences ranging from six months to six years, and including deferments and amicable out-of-court settlements.³⁵⁸⁴

The Government of Togo ratified ILO Convention 138 on March 16, 1984, and ILO Convention 182 on September 19, 2000.³⁵⁸⁵

³⁵⁸³ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Togo*, 704-06, Section 6f.

³⁵⁸⁴ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Togo*, 704-06, Section 6f. See also William E. Fitzgerald, DCM, U.S. Embassy- Togo, electronic correspondence to USDOL official, August 28, 2002.

³⁵⁸⁵ ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited December 11, 2001]; available from <http://ilolex.ilo.ch:1567/english/newratframeE.htm>.