

# Burundi

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

Burundi is an associated country of ILO-IPEC.<sup>578</sup> In 1992, the government established the National Plan of Action for the Survival, Development and Protection of Rights of Children. Among the goals to be achieved by 2000, the National Plan sought to universalize education for children between 7 and 12 years of age, increase the net enrollment rate from 52 to 80 percent, reintegrate street children into the school system, and improve child protection services.<sup>579</sup> In 2000, the government's Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies of Burundi and UNICEF published a national evaluative survey on the Living Conditions of the Children and Women in Burundi, which included assessments of education and child labor.<sup>580</sup>

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has had projects in Burundi that reunite children with their parents, educate returnees, and provide education alternatives for adolescents.<sup>581</sup> In 2001 a four-year, USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC regional program designed to prevent the involvement of children in armed conflicts in Central Africa was initiated in Burundi.<sup>582</sup> The Ministry of Labor has provided strong support for these ongoing activities.<sup>583</sup> UNICEF signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Government of Burundi in October 2001 with the goal of developing a program to address the problem of child soldiers by engaging both the Burundian army and the rebels.<sup>584</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, UNICEF estimated that 32.2 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years in Burundi were working.<sup>585</sup> Approximately 79 percent of those children were active in domestic activities, such as

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<sup>578</sup> ILO-IPEC, *All About IPEC: Programme Countries*, [online] [cited August 22, 2002]; available from [http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/about/countries/t\\_country.htm](http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/about/countries/t_country.htm).

<sup>579</sup> UNICEF-Burundi, *Enquete Nationale d'Evaluation des Conditions de vie de l'Enfant et de la Femme au Burundi*, preliminary report, Burundi Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, December 2000.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*, 2, 5 and 12.

<sup>581</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Regional Programme on the Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflicts in Central Africa (Phase I: Identification of a Strategy for Concerted Action)*, project document, Geneva, July 2001.

<sup>582</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>583</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Regional Programme on the Prevention and Reintegration of Children Involved in Armed Conflicts in Central Africa (Phase I: Identification of a Strategy for Concerted Action)*, status report, Geneva, June 20, 2002.

<sup>584</sup> UNICEF, *Children Affected by Armed Conflict: UNICEF Actions*, advance copy, New York, May 2002.

<sup>585</sup> Children who are working in some capacity include children who have performed any paid or unpaid work for someone who is not a member of the household, who have performed more than four hours of housekeeping chores in the household, or who have performed other family work. UNICEF-Burundi, *Enquete Nationale d'Evaluation des Conditions de vie de l'Enfant et de la Femme au Burundi*, final report, Burundi Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, March 2001, 39 [cited January 2, 2002]; available from <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/newreports/burundi/burundi.pdf>.

tending to the sick, carrying water, and caring for children.<sup>586</sup> Slightly more than 2 percent of the children worked more than four hours per day.<sup>587</sup> Children work as soldiers in Burundi.<sup>588</sup> The most vulnerable elements of society, such as street children, are at high risk of exploitation by armed groups.<sup>589</sup>

Primary education in Burundi is compulsory for six years.<sup>590</sup> In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 51 percent (45.8 percent for girls and 56.2 percent for boys), and the net primary enrollment rate was 37.7 percent (34.3 percent for girls and 41.1 percent for boys).<sup>591</sup> Only 47 percent of school-age children regularly attend primary school (43.7 percent for girls and 50.5 percent for boys).<sup>592</sup> Enrollment and attendance have been adversely affected by the military conflict. In some high conflict areas many parents have been disinclined to send their children to school, and increasing numbers of teachers have refused to take the risks involved in traveling to work.<sup>593</sup>

## Child Labor Law and Enforcement

The minimum age for employment is 16 years, except in cases of light, non-hazardous work or apprenticeships, provided that the work is not dangerous to the health of the child and does not interfere with their normal childhood development or education.<sup>594</sup> The Labor Code amendment of 1993 calls for the inspection of work places in order to protect the health and welfare of children and adolescents.<sup>595</sup> Upon a first offence, violators may face a fine between 5,000 and 10,000 Burundi Francs (USD 6-12) and repeat offenders face fines ranging from 10,000 to 20,000 francs (USD 13-24).<sup>596</sup> Reliable information on enforcement of child labor laws is not available.

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<sup>586</sup> Ibid.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid., 5 and 39. See also UNICEF-Burundi, *Enquete Nationale d'Evaluation, preliminary report*, 12.

<sup>588</sup> The use of child soldiers in Burundi is widely recognized. See, for instance, U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Burundi*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, 70-72, Section 6c [cited November 7, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/af/8280.htm>.

<sup>589</sup> ILO-IPEC, *Regional Programme on the Prevention and Reintegration of Children, project document*, 5.

<sup>590</sup> UNESCO, *National Education Systems*, UNESCO Institute for Statistics, [database online] 1999 [cited August 22, 2002]; available from <http://www.unesco.org/education/information/wer/WEBtables/Ind4web.xls>.

<sup>591</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2002.

<sup>592</sup> UNICEF-Burundi, *Enquete Nationale d'Evaluation, final report*, 1.

<sup>593</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Summary Record of the 645th Meeting: Burundi*, CRC/C/SR.645, United Nations, Geneva, September 26, 2000, [cited January 2, 2003]; available from <http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Burundi*, 69-70, Section 5.

<sup>594</sup> Government of Burundi, *Decret loi no 1/037 du 7 juillet 1993 portant revision du Code du travail*, 1/037, (July 7, 1993), [cited January 2, 2003]; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/txt/t1>.

<sup>595</sup> Ibid., Articles 128 and 56.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid., Article 293. For currency conversion see FX Converter, [online] [cited August 13, 2002]; available from <http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic>.

The Government of Burundi ratified ILO Convention 138 on July 19, 2000 and Convention 182 on June 11, 2002.<sup>597</sup>

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<sup>597</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited October 3, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.