

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

The Government of Papua New Guinea has established a “National Child Protection Service” to raise awareness about commercial sexual exploitation of children.<sup>3397</sup> The government’s National Education Plan (NEP) 1995 to 2002<sup>3398</sup> promoted reforms of the country’s educational system, including universal access to 3 years of elementary education, completion of 6 years of primary school, and an increase in the number of students who continue into secondary school.<sup>3399</sup> The plan also aimed to improve equity in enrollments between boys and girls and urban and rural inhabitants, as well as improve the quality of education.<sup>3400</sup> Information on the results of the plan, however, are not available at this time. In 2002, UNICEF pledged to support efforts to increase the enrollment of girls in the country.<sup>3401</sup>

AusAID has provided support for Papua New Guinea’s education reform efforts through various projects since 1996, and is currently supporting basic education projects that aim to improve teacher training, develop and distribute new curriculum, provide educational materials, and provide youth with vocational training.<sup>3402</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2001, the ILO estimated that 16.8 percent of children ages 10 to 14 years in Papua New Guinea were working.<sup>3403</sup> Children work in family subsistence agriculture and family businesses.<sup>3404</sup> Although it is not reported to

<sup>3397</sup> ECPAT International, *Papua New Guinea*, ECPAT, [database online] 2003 [cited July 10, 2003]; 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). In 1998, the service co-sponsored a conference on the sexual exploitation of children, including through sex tourism. See ECPAT International, “Papua New Guinea,” in *1997-1998 Moving to Action*, no date; available from [http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat\\_inter/Publication/Other/English/Html\\_page/2nd\\_a4a/countries/PapuaNG.htm](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/Publication/Other/English/Html_page/2nd_a4a/countries/PapuaNG.htm). See also Fiji Women’s Crisis Center, “PNG meeting looks at child sexual abuse,” *Pacific Women’s Network Against Violence Against Women*, July 1998; available from [http://www.fijiwomen.com/newsletters/regional/archives/regional\\_42/png\\_meeting.htm](http://www.fijiwomen.com/newsletters/regional/archives/regional_42/png_meeting.htm).

<sup>3398</sup> Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), *Ecotech Action Plan: Papua New Guinea*, 2001; available from <http://www.apec-ecotech.org/>.

<sup>3399</sup> The National Education Plan was developed in 1995 and 1996. The plan covers all sectors of the formal education system and introduced a new grade-level structure, under which elementary school covers a preparatory year plus grades one and two (at the village level, in the local language), primary covers grades three through eight, and secondary school grades 9 through 12. See Voluntary Service Organization, *Education in Papua New Guinea*, [cited August 14, 2002], 11-13; available from <http://www.vso.org.uk/png/education.pdf>. See also ADB, *Country Operational Strategy Study: Papua New Guinea*, March 1999, 5; available from <http://www.adb.org/Documents/COSSs/png.pdf>. The plan was updated in 1999. See UNESCO, *World Data on Education 2001- Papua New Guinea*, 2001.

<sup>3400</sup> UNESCO, *World Data on Education 2001*.

<sup>3401</sup> ReliefWeb, *UNICEF to Pick Up Pace on Girls’ Education*, [online] December 3, 2002 [cited July 10, 2003]; available from <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/6686f45896f15dbc852567ae00530132/df71b272856cdd685256c84007773a3?OpenDocument>.

<sup>3402</sup> Australian Agency for International Development, *Papua New Guinea, Program Profiles 2001-2002*, 2002, 20-24; available from [http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/png/png\\_program\\_profiles\\_2001\\_02.pdf](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/png/png_program_profiles_2001_02.pdf).

<sup>3403</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2003.

<sup>3404</sup> U. S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices-2002: Papua New Guinea*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18259pf.htm>. There have been reports that children work in the commercial agriculture sector, including on tea and coffee farms. See Pacific Islands Report, *Child Labor Claimed at PNG Highlands Tea and Coffee Plantations*, Post-Courier/PINA Nius Online, [online] 2000 [cited July 9, 2003]; available from <http://166.122.164.43/archive/2000/March/03-23-14.htm>.

be widespread, children are said to be involved in commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>3405</sup> Children fought with both government and opposition forces during the secessionist war during the 1990s.<sup>3406</sup>

Education is not compulsory or free in Papua New Guinea.<sup>3407</sup> In 1999, both the gross primary enrollment rate and the net primary enrollment rate were 83.8 percent.<sup>3408</sup> Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for Papua New Guinea. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.<sup>3409</sup> According to the most recent data, only 59 percent of children complete primary school, and many drop out after the first grade.<sup>3410</sup> Lack of access to schools reportedly leads to low enrollment levels in rural areas.<sup>3411</sup>

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Employment Act establishes the minimum age for employment at 18 years, but children ages 11 to 18 may work in family businesses with parental permission, medical clearance, and a work permit from the labor office.<sup>3412</sup> The Constitution prohibits forced labor.<sup>3413</sup> The Criminal Code prohibits procuring, luring, or abducting women or girls for sexual relations or for confinement in a brothel.<sup>3414</sup>

The Government of Papua New Guinea ratified ILO Convention 138 and ILO Convention 182 on June 2, 2000.<sup>3415</sup>

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<sup>3405</sup> ECPAT International, *Papua New Guinea*. The commercial sex sector, while still relatively undeveloped, is expanding, particularly in urban areas. See John C. Caldwell and Geetha Isaac-Toua, *AIDS in Papua New Guinea: Situation in the Pacific* (Canberra: National Centre for Epidemiology and Population Health of Australian National University, 2002), 104-11. There is very limited information on trafficking in Papua New Guinea. While it does not appear to be a problem (i.e. there was no evidence of trafficking during 2002), there is a concern that the country may be used as a route for trafficking to Australia. See also U. S. Department of State, *Country Reports 2002: Papua New Guinea*, Section 6f. Some sources suggest that lack of economic opportunities in Papua New Guinea leads youth to consider prostitution as a viable source of income. See ADB, *Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific: Relevance and Progress*, March 2003, 25; available from [http://www.adb.org/documents/books/MDG\\_Pacific/mdg.pdf#page=22](http://www.adb.org/documents/books/MDG_Pacific/mdg.pdf#page=22).

<sup>3406</sup> Children under 18 years of age fought in the ranks of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), and children as young as 13 and 14 years old were reportedly recruited. See Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Papua New Guinea," in *Global Report 2001*, [cited September 30, 2003]; available from <http://www.child-soldiers.org/cs/childsoldiers.nsf/Report/Global%20Report%202001%20GLOBAL%20REPORT%20CONTENTS?OpenDocument>. For information on children participating in the Papua New Guinea armed forces, see UNICEF, *Adult Wars, Child Soldiers: Voices of Children involved in armed conflict in the East Asia and Pacific Region*, 2001, 24; available from <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/documents/2002/unicef-childsoldiersasia.pdf>.

<sup>3407</sup> Voluntary Service Organization, *Education in Papua New Guinea*, 3. See also U. S. Department of State, *Country Reports 2002: Papua New Guinea*, Section 5.

<sup>3408</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003*.

<sup>3409</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

<sup>3410</sup> ADB, *Country Operational Strategy Study*, 5. See also Department of Education Reform Coordinator John Josephs, *EFA 2000 Assessment: Papua New Guinea*, UNESCO, Waigani, Papua New Guinea, 2000, Part II; available from [http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/papua\\_new\\_guinea/rapport\\_2.html](http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/papua_new_guinea/rapport_2.html).

<sup>3411</sup> ADB, *Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific*, 25.

<sup>3412</sup> Information on the enforcement of child labor legislation is not available. See U. S. Department of State, *Country Reports 2002: Papua New Guinea*, Section 6d.

<sup>3413</sup> *Constitution of the Independent State of New Guinea*; available from [http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/Paclawmat/PNG\\_legislation/Constitution.htm](http://www.vanuatu.usp.ac.fj/Paclawmat/PNG_legislation/Constitution.htm).

<sup>3414</sup> The section on abduction specifies that this applies to girls under the age of 18. See *Papua New Guinea Criminal Code*, as cited in The Protection Project Legal Library, [database online], Chapter 262, Sections 18-21; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/PapuaNewGuineaF.pdf>.

<sup>3415</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited July 10, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.