

# SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

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

The Government of São Tomé and Príncipe's Ministry of Education has created a program where fifth through eighth graders have access to agricultural training programs.<sup>3840</sup> The government is also working with the IMF, the World Bank and other organizations to improve equal access in the educational system and to enhance the quality of education.<sup>3841</sup> Through the program, primary schooling will be extended to the fifth and sixth grades (or 6 years) instead of ending at the fourth grade, and the quality of secondary education will be improved. In addition, the government is working to encourage enrollment for all children (particularly girls and children in disadvantaged areas); reduce repetition and dropout rates at the primary level; renovate existing schools and constructing new ones; encourage community participation; provide teacher training for primary and secondary teachers; provide materials to the most disadvantaged children; and strengthen institutional and managerial capacities in the field of education.<sup>3842</sup> The Government of São Tomé and Príncipe is also working under UNESCO's Education for All Initiative to strengthen its teacher-training program and to provide training for primary school inspectors,<sup>3843</sup> and is planning to use oil money from offshore reserves to improve education and health in the country.<sup>3844</sup>

World Food Program began a 4-year program in 2000 to provide a midday meal to over 30,000 children in primary schools and kindergartens to alleviate short-term hunger and maintain attendance rates.<sup>3845</sup> In conjunction with the government, UNICEF is implementing an education program that focuses on the improvement of education quality in general, and more specifically, increasing primary school access for children up to the sixth grade.<sup>3846</sup> The program includes building new primary school classrooms, strengthening teacher-training programs and providing additional school materials. In 1999, the government began a program which trains girls in life skills and languages with help from UNICEF.<sup>3847</sup> Also in 1999, UNICEF carried out an initial rapid assessment on working children in A. Grande and Caue.<sup>3848</sup>

<sup>3840</sup> UNESCO, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports: São Tomé and Príncipe*, prepared by Ministry of Education and Culture, pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution 52/84, 2000, Part II, Analytical Section, 7; available from [http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/saotome\\_principe/contents.html](http://www2.unesco.org/wef/countryreports/saotome_principe/contents.html).

<sup>3841</sup> The government intended to increase the gross primary school enrollment rate from 70 percent in 1999 to 90 percent by 2002, but no updated data is available. The longer-term goal of the government is to achieve universal enrollment by 2005. See World Bank, *Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for 2000-02*, Washington, D.C., April 6, 2000, para. 35 and 42; available from <http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/sao%20tome%20principe%20iprsp.pdf>.

<sup>3842</sup> The government also plans to develop technical and vocational training and promoting apprenticeship training. A more complete listing of government efforts can be found at *Ibid.*, para. 35-37. See also International Monetary Fund and International Development Association, *São Tomé and Príncipe: Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative- Decision Point Document*, December 5, 2000, 13 and 14; available from <http://www.imf.org/external/np/hipc/2000/stp/stpdp.pdf>. See also World Bank, *São Tomé and Príncipe- Social Sector Support Project*, no. PID11127, Washington, D.C., 2002 2002; available from [http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/04/19//000094946\\_02041804135555/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2002/04/19//000094946_02041804135555/Rendered/PDF/multi0page.pdf).

<sup>3843</sup> UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Report: São Tomé and Príncipe*, Part II, Analytical Section, 8.

<sup>3844</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks, "São Tomé and Príncipe: Oil Money for Health and Education", IRINnews.org, [online], June 2, 2003 [cited June 23, 2003]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=34461>.

<sup>3845</sup> WFP, *Projected 2003 Needs for WFP Projects and Operations: Country Brief: São Tomé and Príncipe*, 2003; available from [http://www.wfp.org/country\\_brief/index.asp?country=678](http://www.wfp.org/country_brief/index.asp?country=678).

<sup>3846</sup> UNICEF, *Education Programme*, [online] 2000 [cited June 24, 2003]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/saotome/educatio.htm>.

<sup>3847</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3848</sup> UNICEF, *UNICEF Publications in São Tomé and Príncipe*, 2000 [cited June 26, 2003]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/saotome/publicati.htm>.

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## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, UNICEF estimated that 19 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years in São Tomé and Príncipe were working; of those, approximately 2 percent were paid laborers, and another 6 percent participated in unremunerated work.<sup>3849</sup> Almost 5 percent of the working children within this age group perform domestic work for 4 or more hours per day,<sup>3850</sup> which may include carrying out domestic tasks such as cooking, collecting water and watching younger siblings for more than 4 hours per day.<sup>3851</sup> About 10 percent of children ages 5 to 14 work for their families in the streets, participate in agricultural labor on commercial farms or engage in activities in the informal sector. This percentage is highest in Príncipe (18 percent) and in the north (15 percent).<sup>3852</sup> Sometimes from an early age, children reportedly work in subsistence agriculture, on plantations, and in informal commerce.<sup>3853</sup> Children also work in auto mechanic shops, and in cabinetry and tailoring.<sup>3854</sup> Although education is compulsory through the sixth grade, many children work in the absence of available education beyond the fourth grade.<sup>3855</sup> There is little information about the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the country, but the government reportedly expects that, with the increase in tourism, the establishment of tax-free zones, oil exploration and increased migration to São Tomé, children are at risk of such exploitation.<sup>3856</sup>

Education is free and universal through the age of 14 and compulsory through the sixth grade; education after the sixth grade or after the age of 14, whichever comes first, is not free.<sup>3857</sup> In 1999, the gross primary enrollment rate was 70 percent.<sup>3858</sup> While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.<sup>3859</sup> Children in primary schools had a repetition rate of 31 percent and a dropout rate of 34 percent.<sup>3860</sup>

Class time is insufficient because of a triple shift system, which designates four hours for class time, so students attend between two and three hours of class time per day.<sup>3861</sup> In addition, the proportion of qualified primary

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<sup>3849</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. See Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2000 - São Tomé and Príncipe*, UNICEF, 2000, 64; available from <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/newreports/saotome/STPtables.pdf>.

<sup>3850</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3851</sup> Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, *Enquête de grappes à indicateurs multiples MICS: Rapport d'analyse*, UNICEF, July 14, 2000, 9; available from <http://www.childinfo.org/MICS2/newreports/saotome/SaoTome&Principe.PDF>.

<sup>3852</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3853</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2002: São Tomé and Príncipe*, Washington, D.C., March 31, 2003, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18222.htm>.

<sup>3854</sup> Ambrósio Quaresma, *Unicef quer conhecer a realidade de mão de obra infantil em S. Tomé e Príncipe*, UNICEF, [online] [cited June 24, 2003]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/saotome/trabalho.htm>.

<sup>3855</sup> UNICEF, *Education Programme*.

<sup>3856</sup> ECPAT International, *São Tomé and Príncipe*, in ECPAT International, [database online] 2002 [cited June 26, 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).

<sup>3857</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: São Tomé and Príncipe*, Section 5.

<sup>3858</sup> International Monetary Fund and International Development Association, *São Tomé and Príncipe: Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries*, 11. See also World Bank, *Sao Tome and Principe at a Glance*, September 23, 2002; available from [http://www.worldbank.org/data/countrydata/aag/stp\\_aag.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/data/countrydata/aag/stp_aag.pdf).

<sup>3859</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

<sup>3860</sup> International Monetary Fund and International Development Association, *São Tomé and Príncipe: Enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries*, 11, 12.

<sup>3861</sup> World Bank, *São Tomé and Príncipe- Social Sector Support*, 2.

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school teachers is declining.<sup>3862</sup> The educational system has a shortage of classrooms, insufficiently trained and underpaid teachers, inadequate textbooks and materials, high rates of repetition, poor educational planning and management, and a lack of community involvement in school management.<sup>3863</sup> Although access to the first year of school is universal, 78 percent of children who enter first grade reach fourth grade and 52 percent reach eighth grade.<sup>3864</sup> There is also a lack of coordination among government ministries on education issues<sup>3865</sup> and a lack of domestic financing for the school system, leaving the system highly dependent on foreign financing.<sup>3866</sup>

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The minimum age for admission to employment as established by national legislation is 14 years, or 18 years for dangerous jobs and jobs requiring heavy manual labor.<sup>3867</sup> The minimum age does not apply to family-owned or operated enterprises, home work, domestic services, self-employed work, family-owned or small-scale farms, and light work. It does apply to such areas as commercial agriculture and export processing zones.<sup>3868</sup> It is illegal for children under 18 years to work at night, except with permission from the Labor Ministry, or to work more than 7 hours per day and 35 hours per week.<sup>3869</sup> The Ministry of Justice and Labor is responsible for enforcing labor laws.<sup>3870</sup> The Penal Code addresses the commercial sexual exploitation of children although there have been few prosecutions.<sup>3871</sup> Forced and bonded labor, including by children, is prohibited and not known to exist.<sup>3872</sup>

The Government of São Tomé and Príncipe has not ratified either ILO Convention 138 or ILO Convention 182.<sup>3873</sup>

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<sup>3862</sup> From 48.8 percent in 1999-2000 to 44.7 percent in 2000-2001. See Ibid.

<sup>3863</sup> United Nations House, *São Tomé and Príncipe: Common Country Assessment*, [cited June 25, 2003]; available from <http://www.uns.st/uns/Summary.html>.

<sup>3864</sup> World Bank, *São Tomé and Príncipe- Social Sector Support*, 2.

<sup>3865</sup> UNESCO, *EFA 2000 Report: São Tomé and Príncipe*.

<sup>3866</sup> United Nations House, *São Tomé e Príncipe: Common Country Assessment*.

<sup>3867</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: São Tomé and Príncipe*, Section 6d. See also ILO, *Review of Annual Reports under the Follow-up to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work*, Geneva, March 2002, Part II.

<sup>3868</sup> ILO, *Review of Annual Reports*, Part II.

<sup>3869</sup> Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et de la Coopération, *Rapport Initial sur l'Application de la Convention sur les Droits de l'Enfant*, July, 2001, 16, 48.

<sup>3870</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: São Tomé and Príncipe*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, Sections 6d and 6e; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/af/8399.htm>.

<sup>3871</sup> ECPAT International, *São Tomé and Príncipe*.

<sup>3872</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: São Tomé and Príncipe*, Section 6c.

<sup>3873</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited June 23, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.