

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

The Government of the Solomon Islands formulated a National Youth Policy in 2000 to address the welfare needs of youth 14 to 29, and also those of children facing difficult situations below the age of 14.<sup>3995</sup> While a National Advisory Committee on Children was established in 1993, government efforts that focus on children have been hindered by a lack of resources and recent conflicts.<sup>3996</sup>

To date, a majority of government efforts have been focused on restoring peace and security in the country and providing basic social services to its citizens.<sup>3997</sup> With technical assistance from the UNDP, the Government of the Solomon Islands produced the *Solomon Islands Human Development Report* in 2002. This is a policy-oriented document that addresses various facets of human development such as education, labor, governance, and health.<sup>3998</sup> The government also worked in consultation with the United Nations to assess the country's national development through a Common Country Assessment.<sup>3999</sup> The CCA formed the basis for the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2003–2007, which was completed in 2002.<sup>4000</sup>

The country's National Education Master Plan 1999–2010 includes provisions to improve the quality, scope, and relevance of education.<sup>4001</sup> The Ministry of Education has developed various training programs and services to equip primary and secondary school teachers and education administrators.<sup>4002</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2001, the ILO estimated that 23.3 percent of children ages 10 to 14 years in the Solomon Islands were working.<sup>4003</sup> There are reports of commercial sexual exploitation, but information on the extent of the problem is not available.<sup>4004</sup> At times, about 100 children aged 12 to 17 reportedly fought in the ranks of militant Guadalcanese

<sup>3995</sup> UN, *Common Country Assessment: Solomon Islands*, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, [online] 2002 [cited July 21, 2003], 75; available from <http://www.undp.org.fj/documents/CCA%20SOI.pdf>.

<sup>3996</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>3997</sup> In an effort to lay the foundation for development, the Government of the Solomon Islands has been engaged in several exercises with organizations from different United Nations agencies to assess the situation of the country and devise policies needed to improve government and increase access to basic social services. UN, *Solomon Islands: United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2003-2007)*, Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, [online] 2002 [cited July 21, 2003], 2, 4–5; available from [http://www.undp.org.fj/documents/UNDAF\\_SOLIS\\_17%20JULY.doc](http://www.undp.org.fj/documents/UNDAF_SOLIS_17%20JULY.doc).

<sup>3998</sup> Government of the Solomon Islands, *Solomon Islands Human Development Report 2002: Building a Nation*, Mark Otter, [online] 2002 [cited July 21, 2003], Foreword, viii; available from [http://www.undp.org/hdro/docs/reports/national/Solomon/solomon\\_2002\\_vol\\_1\\_eng.pdf](http://www.undp.org/hdro/docs/reports/national/Solomon/solomon_2002_vol_1_eng.pdf).

<sup>3999</sup> UN, *United Nations Common Country Assessment: Solomon Islands*, Foreword, v.

<sup>4000</sup> UN, *Solomon Islands: United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2003-2007)*, Foreword, i.

<sup>4001</sup> Mr. Johnson Moffat Ramoni, *Education for All 2000 Assessment: Country Reports- Solomon Islands*, UNESCO, [online] [cited June 28, 2003], Part 3. Prospects; 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>4002</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, [online] July 12, 2002 [cited July 21, 2003], 90; available from [http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/CRC.C.51.Add.6.En?OpenDocument](http://www.unhcr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/CRC.C.51.Add.6.En?OpenDocument).

<sup>4003</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2003.

<sup>4004</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, 115. See also Global March Against Child Labor, *Worst Forms of Child Labour: Solomon Islands*, [online] [cited July 3, 2003]; available from <http://www.globalmarch.org/worstformsreport/world/solomon-islands.htm>.

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Isatabu Freedom Movement in the conflict that erupted in 1998 between the Malaitans and the Guadalcanese.<sup>4005</sup>

Education in the Solomon Islands is not compulsory,<sup>4006</sup> and school fees are reported to be very high in relation to income.<sup>4007</sup> In 1996, the gross primary enrollment rate was 96.9 percent.<sup>4008</sup> However, other education data show that only 60 percent of school-age children have access to primary education.<sup>4009</sup> Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for the Solomon Islands. The state of education is reported to have worsened in recent years, due to poor infrastructure, lack of financial resources, and irregular payment of teachers.<sup>4010</sup>

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

Section 84 of the Labour Act prohibits the employment of children below the age of 12, but children may participate in light agricultural or domestic labor either as an employee of, or as a worker in the company of, their parents.<sup>4011</sup> Children under the age of 15 are prohibited from working in industry or on ships, except on approved training ships, and children under the age of 16 may not work underground in mines.<sup>4012</sup> The Constitution prohibits slavery and forced labor.<sup>4013</sup> The procurement of girls under 18 years of age for the purposes of prostitution is prohibited under Part XVI of the Penal Code (“Offences Against Morality”).<sup>4014</sup> Section 246 of the Penal Code, Part XXVI, “Offences Against Liberty” provides for sanctions for the abduction of children.<sup>4015</sup>

The Labor Division of the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, and Industry is tasked with enforcing child labor laws,<sup>4016</sup> but information of 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>4017</sup>

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<sup>4005</sup> According to Amnesty International, children between 12 and 17 comprised at least a quarter of the IFM forces at roadblocks east of the town of Honiara in September 1999. See Amnesty International, *Solomon Islands: A Forgotten Conflict*, [online] 2000 [cited July 3, 2003], 3; available from <http://web.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/Index/ASA430052000?OpenDocument&of=COUNTRIES\SOLOMON+ISLANDS>. See also UN, *United Nations Common Country Assessment: Solomon Islands*, 76.

<sup>4006</sup> Government of the Solomon Islands, *Solomon Islands Human Development Report 2002: Building a Nation*, 46.

<sup>4007</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2002: Solomon Islands*, March 31, 2003 [cited April 2, 2003], Section 5; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2002/18264.htm>. See also UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, 90.

<sup>4008</sup> Net primary enrollment rates are unavailable for the Solomon Islands. See World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2003*.

<sup>4009</sup> UN Committee Economic Social and Cultural Rights, *Review of the Implementation of CERD: Solomon Islands*, E/C.12/1/Add.33, Geneva, May 1999, para. 23; 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>4010</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Solomon Islands*, Section 5.

<sup>4011</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, 111.

<sup>4012</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>4013</sup> *Constitution of the Solomon Islands, 1978*, Chapter II, Article 6; 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>4014</sup> UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Solomon Islands*, 56.

<sup>4015</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>4016</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2002: Solomon Islands*, Section 6d.

<sup>4017</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited October 15, 2003]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.