

Côte d'Ivoire

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

UNICEF estimated that 40.3 percent of children ages 5 to 14 years were working in Côte d'Ivoire in 2000.¹¹⁸⁷ The disparity between rural and urban areas is significant: 56.8 percent of rural children ages 5 to 14 were working, compared to only 22.5 percent of urban children in this age group.¹¹⁸⁸ The majority of working children are found in the informal sector,¹¹⁸⁹ including in agriculture, family-operated artisanal gold and diamond mines, fishing, and domestic work.¹¹⁹⁰ Some children working as domestics are subject to mistreatment, including sexual abuse.¹¹⁹¹ Children also shine shoes, run errands, watch and wash cars, sell food in street restaurants, and work as vendors or in sweatshop conditions in small workshops.¹¹⁹² Children have been found working in small businesses, tailor and beauty shops, and manufacturing and repair shops.¹¹⁹³ There are also large numbers of street children in the country, particularly in Abidjan.¹¹⁹⁴

Children are also found working in prostitution.¹¹⁹⁵ National armed forces and rebel groups are reported to recruit or use children in situations of armed conflict, sometimes on a forced basis.¹¹⁹⁶ Rebel forces are also

¹¹⁸⁷ 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 Côte d'Ivoire, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2*, Abidjan, 2000, [cited August 23, 2004]; available from <http://www.ucw-project.org/resources/>. See also Government of Côte d'Ivoire, *Enquête à Indicateurs Multiples - MICS2000: Rapport Final*, UNICEF Statistics, Abidjan, December 2000, 48.

¹¹⁸⁸ Government of Côte d'Ivoire, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2*.

¹¹⁸⁹ U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 3470*, October 2001.

¹¹⁹⁰ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Washington, D.C., February 25, 2004, Section 6d; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2003/27723.htm>. See also U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 2046*, August, 2003.

¹¹⁹¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 5.

¹¹⁹² *Ibid.*, Section 6d.

¹¹⁹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, Section 5.

¹¹⁹⁵ Children work in prostitution rings run by criminal networks, and also on an occasional basis. Children who work as occasional prostitutes also tend to work as street vendors, guards, or domestic servants, and many of the girl prostitutes in Abidjan are Nigerian. See ECPAT International, *Ivory Coast*, in ECPAT International, [database online] n.d. [cited May 17, 2004]; available from http://www.ecpat.net/eng/Ecpat_inter/projects/monitoring/online_database/countries.asp?arrCountryID=83&CountryProfile=facts,affiliation,humanrights&CSEC=Overview,Prostitution,Pronography,trafficking&Implement=Coordination_cooperation,Prevention,Protection,Recovery,ChildParticipation&Nationalplans=National_plans_of_action&orgWorkCSEC=orgWorkCSEC&DisplayBy=optDisplayCountry. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 6f.

¹¹⁹⁶ United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Rights of the Child: Annual Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict*, Olara Otunnu, E/CN.4/2004/70, January 28, 2004, 11. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 5.

reported to actively recruit child soldiers from refugee camps and other areas in the western part of the country.¹¹⁹⁷

Côte d'Ivoire is a source and destination country for trafficked children.¹¹⁹⁸ Children are trafficked into the country from Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania and Togo to work as domestic servants, farm laborers, and indentured servants, and for sexual exploitation. There are also reports of Malian boys working on farms and plantations in Côte d'Ivoire under conditions of indentured servitude. Children have been trafficked out of Côte d'Ivoire to other countries in Africa as well as to Europe and the Middle East. Children are also trafficked from all parts of the country into Abidjan and other areas in the south for domestic service.¹¹⁹⁹

A study by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) on children working in the cocoa sector revealed that in Côte d'Ivoire most children work alongside their families.¹²⁰⁰ Children are involved in hazardous tasks that include spraying pesticides without protection, using machetes to clear undergrowth and carrying heavy loads.¹²⁰¹ Approximately one-third of children ages 6 to 17 years who live in cocoa-producing households have never attended school.¹²⁰² A minority of the children working in the cocoa sector in Côte d'Ivoire are engaged in full time work.¹²⁰³ Most of these children come from outside the country's cocoa zone, either from other regions of Côte d'Ivoire or from countries such as Burkina Faso.¹²⁰⁴

Primary education in Côte d'Ivoire is not compulsory.¹²⁰⁵ Primary education is tuition free, and primary and secondary school students no longer have to wear uniforms.¹²⁰⁶ However, some students must still pay

¹¹⁹⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 5. See also Human Rights Watch, *Trapped Between Two Wars: Violence Against Civilians in Western Côte d'Ivoire*, New York, August 2003, 36; available from <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2003/cotedivoire0803/cotedivoire0803.pdf>.

¹¹⁹⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 6f. See also U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2004: Côte d'Ivoire*, Washington, D.C., June 14, 2004; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2004/33189.htm>.

¹¹⁹⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 6f.

¹²⁰⁰ The Producer-Worker Survey revealed that 604,500 (96.7 percent) of the 625,100 children working in cocoa in Cote d'Ivoire had a kinship relation to the farmer. See International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, *Child Labor in the Cocoa Sector of West Africa: A synthesis of findings in Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria*, August 2002, 16.

¹²⁰¹ Approximately 200,000 children are involved in such tasks. See International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, *Summary of Findings from the Child Labor Surveys in the Cocoa Sector of West Africa: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Nigeria*, IITA, July 2002. See also USAID, *USAID and Labor Department Release Data from Collaborative Survey on Child Labor on Cocoa Farms in West Africa: W. African Governments and Global Chocolate Industry Working Jointly with U.S. to Combat Problem*, press release, Washington, D.C., July 26, 2002; available from http://www.usaid.gov/press/releases/2002/pr020726_2.html.

¹²⁰² International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, *Summary of Findings from the Child Labor Surveys in the Cocoa Sector of West Africa*.

¹²⁰³ The Producer-Worker survey found that 5,120 children were employed as full-time hired workers in cocoa in Côte d'Ivoire versus 61,600 adults. See International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, *Child Labor in the Cocoa Sector of West Africa: A synthesis of findings*, 12.

¹²⁰⁴ Of the children employed as full-time workers, 29 percent reported that they were not free to leave their place of employment should they wish to. See *Ibid.*, 12-13.

¹²⁰⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 5.

for books, fees, and school supplies.¹²⁰⁷ Schools in rebel-held areas in northern Côte d'Ivoire that were closed after the civil war broke out reopened in September 2004. However, after the resumption of armed conflict in November 2004, the Minister of National Education recalled all the administrative staff and refused to certify the examinations.¹²⁰⁸ Schools in government-controlled areas do not have the capacity to absorb the large numbers of displaced children from conflict zones.¹²⁰⁹

In 2001, the gross primary enrollment rate was 80.3 percent (92.3 percent for boys and 68.2 percent for girls), and the net primary enrollment rate was 62.6 percent (72.0 percent for boys and 53.1 percent for girls).¹²¹⁰ Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. A UNICEF study in 2000 estimated that 56.9 percent of Ivorian children ages 6 to 11 attended school.¹²¹¹ There is a disparity in primary school attendance between children in urban areas (66.5 percent) and rural areas (48.5 percent), as well as between boys (61.4 percent) and girls (51.8 percent).¹²¹² As of 1998, 69.1 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade 5.¹²¹³

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment at 14 years, even for apprenticeships, and requires that children under 18 get at least 12 consecutive hours of rest between work shifts, and prohibits them from working at night.¹²¹⁴ Decree No. 96-204 also prohibits night work by children ages 14 to 18 years, unless granted an exception by the Labor Inspectorate,¹²¹⁵ and Decree No. 67-265 sets the minimum age for hazardous work at 18 years.¹²¹⁶ The Minority Act requires parents or legal guardians to sign employment contracts on behalf of children under 16 years of age and to serve as witnesses to the signing for children

¹²⁰⁶ Ibid. See also Integrated Regional Information Networks, "COTE D IVOIRE: Funding needed urgently as schools resume", IRINnews.org, [online], October 6, 2003 [cited February 12, 2004]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=37034>.

¹²⁰⁷ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 5.

¹²⁰⁸ Lack of teachers, shortage of school supplies, and lost school records have been cited as challenges. See Integrated Regional Information Networks, "COTE D IVOIRE: Schools slow to reopen in the rebel-held north", IRINnews.org, [online], March 2, 2004 [cited March 3, 2004]. See also U.S. Embassy- Abidjan official, email communication to USDOL official, June 15, 2005.

¹²⁰⁹ Relief Web, "Côte d'Ivoire Crisis Devastating Children's Education", ReliefWeb, [online], December 11, 2003 [cited February 6, 2004]; available from <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf/s/96AB6336D490862FC1256DFD00547E95>.

¹²¹⁰ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2004.

¹²¹¹ Government of Côte d'Ivoire, *Enquête à Indicateurs Multiples - MICS2000: Rapport Final*, 27-28.

¹²¹² Ibid., 27.

¹²¹³ World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2004*.

¹²¹⁴ *Code du travail*, 1995, no. 95/15, Articles 22.2, 22.3 and 23.8; available from <http://natlex.ilo.org/txt/F95CIV01.htm>.

¹²¹⁵ Decree No. 96-204, as cited in U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 3470*. Employers found in violation of the night work prohibition are punishable with imprisonment from 10 days to 2 months and/or a fine ranging from 2,000 FCFA (USD 3.67 to 131.98). For currency conversion see FX Converter, [online] n.d. [cited May 18, 2004]; available from <http://www.carosta.de/frames/convert.htm>.

¹²¹⁶ ILO, *The Effective Abolition of Child Labour*, 2001, 261.

between the ages of 16 and 18.¹²¹⁷ The Labor Inspectorate can require children to take a medical exam to ensure that the work for which they are hired does not exceed their physical capacity.¹²¹⁸ Decree No. 96-193 restricts children from working in certain places such as bars, hotels, pawnshops, and second-hand clothing stores.¹²¹⁹

The Labor Code prohibits forced or compulsory labor,¹²²⁰ and according to the Penal Code, persons convicted of procuring a prostitute under age 21 may be imprisoned for 2 to 10 years and fined 2,000,000 to 20,000,000 FCFA (USD 3,666 to 36,661).¹²²¹ The U.S. Department of State reported that minimum age laws are effectively enforced by the Ministry of Employment and Civil Service only in the civil service and in large multinational companies.¹²²² The child labor laws in Côte d'Ivoire apply to all sectors and industries in the country, although the lack of government resources makes them difficult to enforce in the informal sector.¹²²³

There is no law specifically prohibiting trafficking in persons, but the government prosecutes traffickers using laws against child kidnapping and forced labor.¹²²⁴ However, enforcement of child labor prohibitions is hindered by the lack of a regulatory and judicial framework.¹²²⁵

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

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire is one of nine countries participating in a USDOL-funded ILO-IPEC project to combat the trafficking of children for exploitative labor in West and Central Africa; the project began in July 2001 and is scheduled for completion in June 2007.¹²²⁶ Côte d'Ivoire also participates in a 3-

¹²¹⁷ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties Due in 1993, Addendum*, CRC/C/8/Add.41, prepared by Government of Côte d'Ivoire, pursuant to Article 44 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 2000, para. 85.

¹²¹⁸ If the child cannot perform the required tasks, the employer must move him/her to a suitable job, and if that is not possible, the contract must be cancelled. See *Code du travail*, 1995, Article 23.9.

¹²¹⁹ U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 3470*.

¹²²⁰ *Code du travail*, 1995, "Dispositions Générales", Article 3.

¹²²¹ *Penal Code*, Articles 335, 36; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/CoteDIvoire.pdf>. Currency conversion at FX Converter.

¹²²² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 6d.

¹²²³ U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 3470*. See also U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 1863*, August, 2004.

¹²²⁴ However, no traffickers were intercepted or convicted between March 2003 and March 2004. See U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Côte d'Ivoire*.

¹²²⁵ U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 1863*.

¹²²⁶ The USD 9.3 million regional child trafficking project covers Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, and Togo. See ILO-IPEC, *Combating the Trafficking of Children for Labour Exploitation in West and Central Africa (Phase II)*, project document, RAF/01/P53/USA, Geneva, April 2001, as amended. See also International Child Labor Program U.S. Department of Labor, *Combating Trafficking in Children for Labor Exploitation in West and Central Africa, Phases 1 & 2 (LUTRENA)*, project summary.

year ILO-IPEC program funded by USDOL and the Cocoa Global Issues Group that seeks to withdraw children from hazardous work in the cocoa sector and provide them with education and training alternatives, and in another USDOL-funded project aimed at addressing training and educational alternatives for children engaged in, or at risk of, harmful work.¹²²⁷

A decree establishing the National Steering Committee on Child Labour was adopted in March 2004, and the committee was launched on September 29, 2004.¹²²⁸ In August 2004, the government signed an order creating a Focal Unit in the Ministry of Labor that will be responsible for child labor issues,¹²²⁹ and in October, a list of hazardous tasks in the cocoa sector was produced.¹²³⁰

The Ministries of Employment and of Family, Women, and Children's Affairs cooperate with Malian authorities to combat child trafficking and to repatriate Malian children found in Côte d'Ivoire.¹²³¹ During the past year, security forces along with law enforcement and judiciary authorities have been trained on child trafficking and child labor,¹²³² and the government has worked with a German aid organization to repatriate Malian children who had been trafficked into the country for agricultural work.¹²³³ In March 2004, Côte d'Ivoire participated in a sub-regional workshop in Mali on child trafficking in West Africa.¹²³⁴ A national committee, comprised of representatives from the government, national and international organizations, and NGOs, also works to combat child trafficking.¹²³⁵ Also in March 2004, the government and UNDP launched three projects to disarm and demobilize former soldiers, including child soldiers.¹²³⁶

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138	2/7/2003	✓
Ratified Convention 182	2/7/2003	✓
ILO-IPEC Member		✓
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		
Sector Action Plan		

¹²²⁷ The ILO-IPEC project has been extended until January 2006. See International Child Labor Program U.S. Department of Labor, *West Africa Cocoa/Commercial Agriculture Program to Combat Hazardous and Exploitative Child Labor (WACAP)*, project summary. See also Winrock International, *Community-Based Innovations to Reduce Child Labor through Education (CIRCLE)*, project document, July 2002, 1, 20.

¹²²⁸ ILO-IPEC, *West Africa Cocoa/Commercial Agriculture Programme to Combat Hazardous and Exploitative Child Labour (WACAP)*, status report, Geneva, June 11, 2004, 2. See also Guy M'Bengue and Gérard Amangoua, Briefing by Delegation from Côte d'Ivoire, Meeting with USDOL officials, October 13, 2004.

¹²²⁹ Departmental Order No. 2004-8792 was signed on August 9, 2004. See ILO-IPEC, *West Africa Cocoa/Commercial Agriculture Programme to Combat Hazardous and Exploitative Child Labour (WACAP)*, technical progress report, Geneva, September 2004, 6.

¹²³⁰ M'Bengue and Amangoua, Briefing by Delegation from Côte d'Ivoire, October 13, 2004.

¹²³¹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 6f.

¹²³² ILO-IPEC, *Combating the trafficking in children for labour exploitation in West and Central Africa (LUTRENA/Phase II)*, status report, Geneva, June 1, 2004, 3. See also U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 1863*.

¹²³³ U.S. Department of State, *Trafficking in Persons Report: Côte d'Ivoire*.

¹²³⁴ U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 1863*.

¹²³⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 6f.

¹²³⁶ The initiatives total USD 8.5 million and include activities to refurbish demobilization centers, identify and profile ex-combatants, and provide the public with information about the process. See United Nations Development Programme, "UNDP helps demobilize Côte d'Ivoire fighters in support of peace process", UNDP - Newsfront, [online], March 15, 2004 [cited March 15, 2004]; available from http://www.undp.org/dpa/frontpagearchive/2004/march/15mar04/index_prfr.html.

With support from the ILO and the Ivoirian Cocoa and Coffee Regulatory Authority, the government is implementing a pilot project whose objectives include ensuring that children in cocoa production regions are in school, and establishing a system that certifies that cocoa exports are free of child labor.¹²³⁷

The government is implementing a National Development Plan for Education, which calls for universal primary school education by 2010.¹²³⁸ WFP works with the government to operate a system of school canteens throughout the country,¹²³⁹ and a permanent school-feeding program is being established using a 1.4 billion FCFA (USD 2.6 million) donation from Japan.¹²⁴⁰ The U.S. Department of Agriculture is also providing funds to support nutritious school meals for children.¹²⁴¹ UNICEF provides teaching supplies, constructs temporary classrooms for displaced populations, and trains teachers to provide psycho-social support and peace education.¹²⁴² UNICEF continues to collaborate with the Ministry of Education to design a curriculum that promotes a culture of peace and tolerance.¹²⁴³ In January 2004, the World Bank announced USD 57 million in emergency contributions to restore the country's war-ravaged schools.

¹²³⁷ The certification system is scheduled to go into effect on July 1, 2005. See U.S. Embassy- Abidjan, *unclassified telegram no. 1863*.

¹²³⁸ Government of Côte d'Ivoire, *Enquête à Indicateurs Multiples - MICS2000: Rapport Final*, 24.

¹²³⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2003: Côte d'Ivoire*, Section 5.

¹²⁴⁰ Integrated Regional Information Networks, "COTE D IVOIRE: Japan funds school feeding programme", IRINnews.org, [online], November 3, 2003 [cited February 12, 2004]; available from <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=37601>.

¹²⁴¹ U.S. Department of State, *U.S. Funds Will Provide School Meals in Latin America, Caribbean*, press release, Washington, D.C., August 17, 2004; available from <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2004&m=August&x=20040817152631AeneerG0.8231623&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html>.

¹²⁴² UNICEF, *At a glance: Côte d'Ivoire*, in UNICEF, [online] n.d. [cited March 25, 2004]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/cotedivoire.html>.

¹²⁴³ The curriculum currently reaches 24,000 primary school students in the south, but the government plans to extend the program to other parts of the country. See Relief Web, "Côte d'Ivoire Crisis Devastating Children's Education".