

# Botswana

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

The Government of Botswana has been implementing a 10-year National Program of Action for Children since 1997 that incorporates the seven major global goals identified at the 1990 U.N Summit for Children.<sup>429</sup> The Labor Department of Botswana is planning to work in consultation with the Central Statistics Office, with technical assistance from ILO-IPEC, to conduct a national child labor survey to determine the extent and nature of child labor.<sup>430</sup> Results from this survey will provide the basis for developing an action plan to implement ILO Convention 182.<sup>431</sup>

In 2000, the Government of Botswana signed a USD 3.4 million funding agreement with UNICEF to improve the situation of children in the country. The money is being used to serve pregnant children and children in remote areas by providing more learning facilities.<sup>432</sup> Additionally, UNICEF implements a girls' education program in Botswana aimed at improving the primary school curriculum, supporting the formulation of an early childhood care and education policy, developing pregnancy prevention policies and programs, and improving the boarding school environment at schools where boys and girls enrollment is low.<sup>433</sup>

## Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In 2000, the ILO estimated that 14.4 percent of children ages 10 to 14 years in Botswana were working.<sup>434</sup> In urban areas, increasing numbers of street children, many of them HIV/AIDS orphans, allegedly engage in begging and prostitution.<sup>435</sup> In remote areas, young children reportedly work as cattle tenders, domestic servants and babysitters.<sup>436</sup>

Primary education is free for seven years, but it is not compulsory.<sup>437</sup> In 1998, the gross primary enrollment rate was 105.5 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 80.7 percent. Total net

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<sup>429</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2001: Botswana*, Washington, D.C., March 4, 2002, 40-43, Section 5 [cited December 13, 2002]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2001/af/8265.htm>.

<sup>430</sup> U.S. Embassy- Gaborone, *unclassified telegram no. 3277*, September 2001.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>432</sup> Panafrican News Agency, *UNICEF Signs Child Protection Agreement With Botswana*, allAfrica.com, November 3, 2000 [cited October 10, 2002]; available from <http://allafrica.com/stories/200011030023.html>. For currency conversion see FX Converter, [online] [cited October 4, 2002]; available from <http://www.carosta.de/frames/convert.htm>.

<sup>433</sup> UNICEF, *Girls' Education in Botswana*, [online] [cited October 4, 2002]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/programme/girlseducation/action/highlights.htm>.

<sup>434</sup> World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002* [CD-ROM], Washington, D.C., 2002.

<sup>435</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Botswana*, 40-43, Section 5.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-44, Section 6d.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-43, Section 5. See also U.S. Embassy- Gaborone, *unclassified telegram no. 3277*.

and gross enrollment rates for girls and boys are relatively equal.<sup>438</sup> Primary school attendance rates are unavailable for Botswana. While enrollment rates indicate a level of commitment to education, they do not always reflect children's participation in school.<sup>439</sup>

## Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The minimum age for basic employment for children is 14 years, and 18 years for hazardous work.<sup>440</sup> However, family members may employ children under the age of 14 in family businesses.<sup>441</sup> Adopted children are protected from being exploited as cheap labor or coerced into prostitution by several laws.<sup>442</sup> The Constitution does not prohibit forced or compulsory labor of children, although there are no reports that such practices occur.<sup>443</sup> Child prostitution and pornography are criminal offenses, and penalties apply to violations involving children under the age of 16.<sup>444</sup> The law provides for a 10-year minimum sentence for "defilement" of persons under 16.<sup>445</sup>

The Social Welfare Department under the Ministry of Local Government, Lands, and Housing is the government agency that oversees the protection and welfare of children.<sup>446</sup> The Employment Act authorizes the Commissioner of Labor to investigate cases of child labor and to terminate unlawful employment of a child.<sup>447</sup> Child labor laws are enforced by the child welfare divisions of the district and municipal councils.<sup>448</sup> The highest penalty for unlawful child employment is imprisonment up to 12 months, a fine of 1500 Pula (USD 231), or a combination of both.<sup>449</sup>

The Government of Botswana ratified ILO Convention 138 on June 5, 1997, and ILO Convention 182 on January 3, 2000.<sup>450</sup>

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<sup>438</sup> In 1998, the net primary enrollment rate for boys was 79 percent and 82 percent for girls. The gross secondary enrollment rate for boys was 73 percent and 80 percent for girls. World Bank, *World Development Indicators 2002*.

<sup>439</sup> For a more detailed discussion on the relationship between education statistics and work, see the preface to this report.

<sup>440</sup> U.S. Embassy- Gaborone, *unclassified telegram no. 3277*.

<sup>441</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Botswana*, 43-44, Section 6d.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-44, Section 6c, d.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-44, Section 6c.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*, 40-43, Section 5.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>447</sup> U.S. Embassy- Gaborone, *unclassified telegram no. 3277*.

<sup>448</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2001: Botswana*, 43-44, Section 6d.

<sup>449</sup> U.S. Embassy- Gaborone, *unclassified telegram no. 3277*. For currency conversion see FX Converter, available from <http://www.carosta.de/frames/convert.htm>, [cited August 4, 2002].

<sup>450</sup> ILO, *Ratifications by Country*, in ILOLEX, [database online] [cited September 30, 2002]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newratframeE.htm>.