DEPARTMENT FOR DRL/IL (CHRIS CAMILLO), AF/E, AF/RA, DRL/CRT

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS TO DOL/LAB (MARCIA EUGENIO)

NAIROBI FOR LABATT ANSKE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, EIND, ETRD, PHUM, SOCI, ET

SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA: DEPARTMENT OF LABOR CHILD LABOR STUDY

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REF: SECSTATE 100081

1. REFTEL REQUESTED INFORMATION ON THE TOPICS BELOW:

2. SPECIFIC GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INITIATIVES AIMED AT ELIMINATING ABUSIVE AND EXPLOITATIVE CHILD LABOR AND TRANSITIONING WORKING CHILDREN INTO EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS, AND WHERE AVAILABLE, THE RESULTS OF SUCH EFFORTS.


REVIEW AUTHORITY: Robert Strand, Senior Reviewer
NATIONAL LAWS INTO CONFORMITY WITH CRC AND ILO
CONVENTION NO. 138. THE RATIFICATION OF THE NEW ILO
CONVENTION NO. 182, CONCERNING THE ELIMINATION OF THE
WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR, IS BEING EXAMINED BY THE
GOVERNMENT. THE ILO AREA OFFICE IN ADDIS ABABA HAS BEEN
INFORMED BY THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS
(MOLSA) THAT THE GOVERNMENT WISHES TO RATIFY ILO
CONVENTION NO. 182 AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. UNICEF STAFF IN
ADDIS ABABA INFORM THE EMBASSY THAT GFDRE INTENDS TO
RATIFY OPTIONAL PROTOCOLS UNDER CRC REGARDING CHILD
SOLDIERS AND CHILD PROSTITUTION IN THE NEAR FUTURE. IN
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1988, THE PRIOR MARXIST REGIME DECIDED NOT TO JOIN THE
ILO INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM ON THE ELIMINATION OF CHILD
LABOR (IPEC) ON THE GROUNDS THAT ETHIOPIA DID NOT HAVE A
CHILD LABOR PROBLEM. THAT DECISION IS NOW BEING
REEXAMINED BY THE CURRENT GOVERNMENT.

IN SEPTEMBER 1999, A FORUM ON CHILD LABOR IN ETHIOPIA
(Forum) WAS CONVENED BY MOLSA, ILO AND UNICEF. THE
FORUM BROUGHT TOGETHER 81 REPRESENTATIVES OF FEDERAL
MINISTRIES AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, EMPLOYER’S
ORGANIZATIONS AND TRADE UNIONS, NON-GOVERNMENTAL AND
RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS, UN AGENCIES AND THE MEDIA, FOR
THE PURPOSE OF EXCHANGING EXPERIENCES AND INFORMATION ON
ACTIVITIES TO COMBAT CHILD LABOR IN THE COUNTRY. THE
PRIMARY GOAL OF THE FORUM IS THE ELIMINATION OF THE
WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR IN ETHIOPIA. THE FORUM HAS
DETERMINED THAT THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR HAVE
INCREASED IN RECENT YEARS, PARTICULARLY CHILD
PROSTITUTION AND USE OF UNDERAGE CHILDREN IN
AGRICULTURAL WORK WHERE THEY ARE EXPOSED TO PESTICIDES
AND INSECTICIDES. IN ADDITION, MANY YOUNG GIRLS ARE
EMPLOYED AS DOMESTIC SERVANTS, WORKING LONG HOURS FOR
LITTLE OR NO PAY, HAVE NO ACCESS TO EDUCATION, AND ARE
SUBJECT TO SEXUAL ABUSE. UNICEF HAS RECENTLY COMPLETED
A STUDY OF THE ESTIMATED 150,000 STREET CHILDREN IN
ETHIOPIA’S URBAN AREAS, SOME OF WHOM BECOME CHILD
PROSTITUTES, AND HAS DETERMINED THAT THEY HAVE LIMITED
SCHOOL ACCESS, LIMITED SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND FAMILY
SUPPORT.

INCREASING ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND DECREASING THE 77
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PERCENT ILLITERACY RATE ARE HIGH GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES.
IN 1999, FOR EXAMPLE, THE GOVERNMENT CONSTRUCTED 303 NEW
SCHOOLS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ADOPTED AN EDUCATIONAL
SECTOR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM TO INCREASE THE AVAILABILITY
OF TEXT BOOKS IN LOCAL LANGUAGES, BUILD NEW SCHOOLS,
TRAIN ADDITIONAL TEACHERS AND EXPAND VOCATIONAL
TRAINING. ILO OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD EMBOFF THAT FUNDS
AVAILABLE FROM DONOR COUNTRIES HAVE NOT BEEN FULLY
UTILIZED DUE TO LACK OF MANAGERIAL CAPABILITY AT THE
REGIONAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL.

THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE AN ALTERNATIVE BASIC
EDUCATION PLAN. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ADOPTED A THREE-
SHIFT SCHOOL DAY, WITH MORNING, AFTERNOON AND EVENING
SESSIONS AT ALL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS. THE
GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ACCREDIT NGO ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION
PROGRAMS, WHICH LIMITS THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF SUCH
PROGRAMS FOR STUDENTS. IN ADDITION, THE GOVERNMENT HAS
NO POLICY REGARDING EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT.

3. DOMESTIC EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN THE ENFORCEMENT OF
CHILD LABOR AND EDUCATION LAWS, AND CHANGES IN DOMESTIC
CHILD LABOR AND EDUCATION LAWS.

RESPONSE: CHILD LABOR IS AN ELEMENT ADDRESSED BY THE
FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN THAT WILL BE SUBMITTED TO THE

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ACTION DRL-02

INFO LOG-00 AF-00 AID-00 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 CTME-00
DODE-00 ITCE-00 WHA-00 SRPP-00 EAP-00 EB-00 ED-01
EXME-00 EUR-00 E-00 UTED-00 VC-00 FRB-00 HHS-01
H-01 SSA-01 TEDE-00 INR-00 IO-00 ITC-01 LAB-01
L-00 AC-01 NEA-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 OES-01 OIC-02
OMB-01 OPIC-01 PRS-00 ACE-00 P-00 SP-00 SSO-00
SS-00 STR-00 TRSE-00 USIE-00 SA-00 PRM-01 G-00
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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0428
INFO CHILD LABOR COLLECTIVE
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

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DRC/CRT

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NEWLY ELECTED FEDERAL PARLIAMENT IN JUNE 2000. THE
FORUM ON CHILD LABOR IN ETHIOPIA (FORUM) HAS IDENTIFIED
THE NEED FOR NEW LEGISLATION AND IMPROVED LAW
ENFORCEMENT TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF ETHIOPIAN CHILDREN.
A MAJOR WEAKNESS IN THE ENFORCEMENT OF CHILD LABOR AND
EDUCATION LAWS IS THE JUDICIARY. THE JUDICIARY,
PARTICULARLY AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL, LACKS SUFFICIENT
TRAINED STAFF AND FUNDS, AND IS LIMITED IN ITS ABILITY
TO PROVIDE ALL CITIZENS, ESPECIALLY CHILDREN, THE FULL
PROTECTION PROVIDED FOR IN THE CONSTITUTION. THE
GOVERNMENT HAS MADE SOME EFFORT TO ENFORCE PROVISIONS OF
THE LABOR LAW DEALING WITH CHILDREN WITHIN THE FORMAL
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR. HOWEVER, CHILD LABOR IS PERVERSIVE
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, ESPECIALLY IN THE INFORMAL
SECTOR AND ON AGRICULTURAL PLANTATIONS. ONE NGO, THE
FORUM ON STREET CHILDREN, HAS ESTABLISHED 10 CHILD
PROTECTION UNITS (CPUs) IN ADDIS ABABA POLICE STATIONS
TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN BY ASSISTING THEM WHEN
THEY BECOME VICTIMS OF CRIME AND ABUSE.

4. GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL PROGRAMS AIMED AT
PROMOTING CHILDREN ACCESS TO PRIMARY SCHOOLING IN
FORMAL AND INFORMAL SETTINGS TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY
AND RELEVANCE OF SCHOOLING FOR CHILDREN AND THEIR
FAMILIES.
RESPONSE: THE GOVERNMENT HAS ADOPTED A THREE-SHIFT
SYSTEM IN ALL PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO MAXIMIZE
UTILIZATION OF CLASSROOMS AND TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY
FOR WORKING CHILDREN TO ATTEND SCHOOL. THE FOLLOWING
NGO PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED BY UNICEF AS
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SUCCESSFULLY PROVIDING SCHOOLING IN BOTH FORMAL AND
INFORMAL SETTINGS FOR CHILDREN REQUIRING ALTERNATIVE
EDUCATION APPROACHES:

- ABBECH GOBENA ORPHANAGE AND SCHOOL, FOUNDED 1980,
  TARGETING ORPHANS AND DESITITUTE CHILDREN.

- ETHIO-SWEDISH CHILDREN AND YOUTH REHABILITATION AND
  PREVENTION PROJECT, FOUNDED 1993, TARGETING DESITITUTE
  AND ABANDONED CHILDREN.

- HOPE ENTERPRISES, FOUNDED 1971, TARGETING DESITITUTE,
  ORPHANED AND ABANDONED CHILDREN.

- MARY JOY AID THROUGH DEVELOPMENT, FOUNDED 1992,
  TARGETING CHILDREN LIVING ON THE STREET AND STREET
  WORKING CHILDREN.

- REDD BARNA-ETHIOPIA, FOUNDED 1969, TARGETING
  DESITITUTE CHILDREN, ORPHANS AND STREET WORKING CHILDREN.
5. THE AGGREGATE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PROVIDED ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION IS ONLY A FEW THOUSAND; THE NEED FOR SUCH PROGRAMS IS MUCH MUCH LARGER. AS A RESULT OF THE EFFORTS BY THE FORUM, PROSPECTS FOR ETHIOPIA TO RATIFY ILO CONVENTION 182 AND JOIN IPEC ARE MUCH IMPROVED.

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