

In 2012, Kiribati made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government passed the Children, Young People, and Families Welfare System Policy, which prioritizes the protection of children from sexual exploitation and hazardous labor. The Government also engaged in initiatives to raise awareness about child protection issues, including commercial sexual exploitation of children, and the Kiribati Police Force partnered with the Ministry of Fisheries to monitor shorelines and intervene in cases involving girls engaged in commercial sexual exploitation aboard fishing vessels. However, Kiribati still faces legislative, enforcement, and programmatic gaps. The Government has not adopted a list of hazardous activities prohibited for children, and existing laws fail to fully protect children under 18 from all forms of commercial sexual exploitation. In addition, the Government did not directly or sufficiently address the exploitation of children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation through social programs. Children in Kiribati continue to be found in the worst forms of child labor, in particular in commercial sexual exploitation.

### Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate		112.0

#### Sources:

**Primary completion rate:** Data from 2008, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(1)

**All other data:** Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis.(2)

### Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Kiribati are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, in particular in commercial sexual exploitation. Girls as young as 14 are involved in commercial sexual exploitation both in establishments on land and aboard fishing vessels in Kiribati's waters. Crewmembers of foreign fishing vessels reportedly account for much of the demand for children in the commercial sex sector.(3-7)

There are reports of children working on the streets, but specific information on hazards is unknown.(5, 7)



### Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Employment Ordinance sets the minimum age for employment at 14, and the Employment (Amendment) Act 2008 sets the minimum age for hazardous work at 18.(8, 9) Kiribati has not developed a list of hazardous work activities prohibited for children but is commencing the process of drafting one.(5, 10)

### International Conventions and Selected Laws on Child Labor and Education

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	No
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	No
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	15
	Free Public Education	Yes

The Constitution, Penal Code, and Employment Ordinance proscribe all forms of forced labor.(7, 8, 11) Kiribati's 2005 Measures to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act, as amended in 2008, defines and criminalizes trafficking in persons, with more severe penalties for offenses

# Kiribati

involving children.(6) The Penal Code also prohibits the procurement of any girl under age 18 or any male, regardless of age, for prostitution. The Transnational Crimes Act prohibits the sale of children for prostitution.(11, 12) Although the Penal Code prohibits the use of children under 15 for illegal or immoral activities and outlaws pornography generally, it does not cover children ages 16 through 17 and lacks explicit prohibitions on child pornography and sex tourism.(5, 7)

A 2010 amendment to the foreign fishing license regulations holds ship captains accountable for unauthorized persons discovered on their vessels. The regulation has been used to protect women and girls from commercial sexual exploitation aboard foreign vessels.(6)

Two bills that would enhance child protection in Kiribati are currently being considered by Parliament. The Child, Young Persons, and Family Welfare Bill, which was endorsed by the Cabinet in late 2012, includes provisions to enhance protections and access to services for children in need of care, including those who have been harmed or are at risk of harm as a result of sexual exploitation or exploitative labor.(13) The Juvenile Bill addresses various forms of child exploitation, including commercial sexual exploitation and child labor. Neither bill was passed during the reporting period, but both are expected to be finalized and approved in 2013.(5, 14)

Kiribati has no regular military force.(15, 16)

The Education Ordinance makes schooling compulsory and free until age 15.(5, 17)

## Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Kiribati National Advisory Committee on Children (KNACC) comprises representatives from government agencies and NGOs. It is responsible for coordinating efforts to implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including with regard to the worst forms of child labor.(4, 5, 18) The Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs heads the multiagency committee.(5)

The Ministry of Labor and Human Resources Development (MOL) is responsible for enforcing labor laws, including those related to child labor.(3, 5) MOL does not have any dedicated labor inspectors. Instead, MOL's seven labor officers, six of whom are based in the capital city of Tarawa, are tasked with conducting inspections in addition to their other duties. The Ministry has suggested that the number of officers is insufficient to conduct inspections outside of Tarawa but

budget constraints prevent additional hiring.(3, 5) During the reporting period, MOL conducted inspections to look for violations, including those related to child labor.(5) However, information on the number of inspections conducted is not available. Further, the government does not keep records of child labor violations discovered, penalties and fines imposed for child labor violations, or the number of children assisted as a result of inspections.(5, 19)

The Kiribati Police Force (KPF) is responsible for enforcement of criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor.(5) KPF has a specialized Domestic Violence and Sexual Offenses Unit, which is involved in cases of human trafficking and sexual exploitation of children.(5, 6) KPF partners with the Ministry of Fisheries to more rigorously monitor shorelines for unauthorized persons boarding fishing vessels and to intervene in cases involving girls engaged in commercial sexual exploitation.(6) However, information on the number of investigations, violations, and prosecutions related to the worst forms of child labor is not available.(5)

## Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In April 2012, Kiribati adopted the Children, Young People, and Families Welfare System Policy.(20, 21) One of the policy's primary objectives is to implement services to prevent the abuse, violence, neglect, and exploitation of children and young people, including in the forms of sexual abuse and hazardous labor.(21) The policy also details the responsibilities of various Government agencies and of civil society in achieving a stronger welfare system. The Social Welfare Division of the Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs is responsible for implementing the policy.(21)

Kiribati is a signatory to the 2010 Beijing Declaration on South-South Cooperation for Child Rights in the Asia Pacific Region. The Declaration commits signatories to advancing efforts to protect children's rights, including with regard to child labor, child trafficking, and child pornography.(22)

The Kiribati Country Program Action Plan, developed with UNICEF Pacific, provides the basis for the regional Child Protection Program (2008-2012). A key goal of the Child Protection Program is to reduce all forms of child exploitation in the Pacific Islands through enhanced legal protections and access to justice, well-informed and coordinated social protection services, and safe and healthy home and community environments.(18, 23) The question of whether these policies have an impact on child labor, specifically commercial sexual exploitation, does not appear to have been addressed.

## Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Ministry of Internal and Social Affairs operates a 24-hour hotline for children to report violations, request information, or obtain access to services.(3, 5) The Ministry also produces a weekly radio program and conducts workshops with community and educational leaders to address child protection issues, including commercial sexual exploitation of children.(6, 14) In addition, the Government collaborates with UNICEF to run programs to increase children's awareness about human rights issues in Kiribati.(5, 19)

The Kiribati Education Improvement Program, which will run through 2020, contributes to the Government's efforts

to provide greater protection and educational opportunities to children through policy and legislative review, workforce development, improvement of school curriculum, and infrastructure development in the education sector.(3, 24, 25) However, the question of whether the Education Improvement Program has an impact on child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

Despite these efforts, the Government does not have programs that sufficiently address commercial sexual exploitation of children, especially programs that offer targeted services to victims. In addition, research has not found any evidence that the Government has conducted an in-depth study on any worst forms of child labor.(5)

### Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Kiribati:

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Finalize and adopt the list of hazardous work activities.	2011, 2012
	Amend legislation to explicitly protect all children under 18 from child pornography and sex tourism.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Finalize and pass new child protection legislation.	2011, 2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Allocate sufficient resources to investigate and combat the worst forms of child labor.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Collect and make publicly available data on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• labor inspections and resulting violations, penalties, fines, and children served</li> <li>• criminal investigations, violations, and prosecutions related to the worst forms of child labor</li> </ul>	2012
Policies	Assess the impact that existing policies may have on child labor, specifically in the form of commercial sexual exploitation.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
Social Programs	Assess the impact the Education Improvement Program may have on child labor.	2012
	Implement programs to sufficiently address commercial sexual exploitation of children, including programs that provide targeted services to victims.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Conduct a comprehensive study of children's activities to determine the extent to which children are engaged in or are at risk of being engaged in the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

## REFERENCES

1. UNESCO Institute for Statistics. *Gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary. Total*; accessed February 4, 2013; <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Pages/default.aspx?SPSLanguage=EN>. Data provided is the gross intake ratio to the last grade of primary school. This measure is a proxy measure for primary completion. For more information, please see the “Children’s Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section of this report.
2. UCW. *Analysis of Child Economic Activity and School Attendance Statistics from National Household or Child Labor Surveys*. February 5, 2013. Reliable statistical data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics on children’s work in general are reported in this chart, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the “Children’s Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section of this report.
3. U.S. Embassy- Suva. reporting, January 18, 2012.
4. U.S. Embassy- Suva. reporting, November 30, 2011.
5. U.S. Embassy- Suva. reporting, January 31, 2013.
6. U.S. Department of State. Kiribati In: *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2012*. Washington, DC; June 19, 2012; <http://www.state.gov/j/tip/rls/tiprpt/2012/index.htm>
7. U.S. Department of State. Kiribati. In: *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2012*. Washington, DC; April 19, 2013; <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm#wrapper>.
8. Government of the Republic of Kiribati. *Employment Ordinance*, (April 22, 1966); [http://www.paclii.org/ki/legis/consol\\_act/ea149/](http://www.paclii.org/ki/legis/consol_act/ea149/).
9. Government of the Republic of Kiribati. *Employment (Amendment) Act 2008*, (May 15, 2008); <http://www.parliament.gov.ki/act/2008/Employment%20%28Amendment%29%20Act%202008.pdf>.
10. ILO-IPEC. *Children in hazardous work: What we know, what we need to do*. Geneva, International Labor Organization; 2011. <http://bit.ly/lQnm8k>.
11. Government of the Republic of Kiribati. *Penal Code, PC66*, (October 18, 1965); [http://www.paclii.org/ki/legis/consol\\_act/pc66/](http://www.paclii.org/ki/legis/consol_act/pc66/).
12. U.S. Embassy- Suva official. E-mail communication to USDOL official. May 17, 2012.
13. Government of the Republic of Kiribati. *Children, Young People, and Families Bill (1st Draft)*, hard copy on file.
14. U.S. Embassy- Suva. reporting, February 14, 2013.
15. CIA. *The World Factbook: Kiribati*, CIA, [online] December 21, 2011 [cited February 2, 2012]; <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/kr.html>.
16. Child Soldiers International. *Appendix II: Data Summary Table on Recruitment Ages of National Armies*. In: *Louder Than Words: An Agenda for Action to End State Use of Child Soldiers*. London, UK; 2012; [http://www.child-soldiers.org/global\\_report\\_reader.php?id=562](http://www.child-soldiers.org/global_report_reader.php?id=562).
17. U.S. Embassy- Suva official. E-mail communication to USDOL official. March 22, 2010.
18. UNICEF Pacific. *Protect me with love and care: A Baseline Report for creating a future free from violence, abuse and exploitation of girls and boys in Kiribati*. Suva; October 2009. [http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/UNICEF\\_KIRIBATI\\_REPORT\\_Feb.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/pacificislands/UNICEF_KIRIBATI_REPORT_Feb.pdf).
19. U.S. Embassy- Suva official. E-mail communication to USDOL official. February 24, 2013.
20. U.S. Embassy- Suva official. E-mail communication to USDOL official. February 28, 2013.
21. Government of Republic of Kiribati. *Children, Young People, and Families Welfare Sytem Policy*. Tarawa; April 2012. hard copy on file.
22. UNICEF. *The Beijing Declaration on South-South Cooperation for Child Rights in the Asia Pacific Region*. New York; November 4-6, 2010. [www.unicef.org/eapro/Beijing\\_Declaration.docx](http://www.unicef.org/eapro/Beijing_Declaration.docx).
23. U.S. Embassy- Suva official. E-mail communication to USDOL official. May 2, 2011.
24. AusAID. *Kiribati-Australia Partnership for Development*, January 12, 2010 [cited February 2, 2012]; hard copy on file.
25. AusAID. *Kiribati Education Improvement Program - KEIP* [video]. Australia: AusAIDvideo; July 2, 2011, 9 min, 58 sec, [accessed February 2, 2012]; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1eGbsAEV2M>.