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RESPONSES TO INFORMATION REQUESTS (RIRs)

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The Board		20 February 2006
About the Board	BFA101075.FE	
Biographies		
Organization Chart	Burkina Faso: Child slavery in Burkina Faso, including boy domestic slaves; protection from the authorities and NGOs; possibility of emancipation, particularly when a young boy given to a family as a payment of a debt reaches the age of majority (2004-2006)	
Employment		
Legal and Policy		
References	Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa	
Publications		
Tribunal		
Refugee Protection Division	Many sources indicated that child forced labour is still a problem in Burkina Faso (<i>Country Reports 2004</i> 28 Feb. 2005, intro. and Sec. 5; AFP 5 Jan. 2006). <i>Country Reports 2004</i> reported that "security forces . . . intercepted 644 trafficked children in 2003," and that "trafficked children were subject to violence, sexual abuse, forced prostitution, and deprivation of food, shelter, schooling, and medical care" (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5). The same source also indicated that "organized child trafficking networks existed throughout the country," and that "one study identified eight networks in Ouagadougou and seven in Bobo-Dioulasso" (<i>Country Reports 2004</i> 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5). Between 2000 and 2003, "at least 2000 children are known to have been involved in the illegal trade in Burkina Faso" (United Nations 6 Apr. 2004). More recent information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.	
Immigration Division		
Immigration Appeal Division		
Decisions		
Forms		
Statistics		
Research		
Research Program	According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Burkinabe children are trafficked to Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Gabon and Nigeria; "most are destined for domestic work but others are bought for sex or to work in shops or on farms" (United Nations 5 Apr. 2004). Another source indicated that child slaves in Burkina Faso work on cocoa and cotton plantations or as "servants, market traders, child beggars and prostitutes" (AFP 5 Jan. 2006). The non-governmental organization (NGO) Save the Children stated that large numbers of children in Burkina Faso work in gold mines (17 Sept. 2004).	
National Documentation Packages		
Issue Papers and Country Fact Sheets		
Responses to Information Requests	Protection offered by the authorities and NGOs	
Recent Research		
Media Centre		
News	In May 2003, the National Assembly adopted an anti-trafficking law but, by the end of 2004, it had not been implemented (<i>Country Reports 2004</i> 28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5); in June 2005, it was still not being used (<i>Trafficking in Persons Report</i> 3 June 2005). The United States Department of State, in its 2005 <i>Trafficking in Persons Report</i> , gave special recognition to Burkina Faso for "'best practices' in implementing bilateral anti-trafficking accords" (9 June 2005). As a result of the bilateral anti-trafficking accords between Burkina Faso and Mali in 2004, Mali repatriated 20 children to Burkina Faso (United States Department of State 9 June 2005).	
Information Sheets		
Media Relations		
Transparency		
Completed Access to Information Requests		

Proactive Disclosure

In 1999, the Government of Burkina Faso committed to participating in the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC), which was developed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1992 (Burkina Faso n.d.). The basic aim of IPEC is to [ILO English version] "work towards the phased elimination of child labour by strengthening national capacities to address the problem and by promoting a worldwide movement against it" (ibid.). To do this, Project BKF/99/MO1/FRA on the abolition of child labour in Burkina Faso was launched (ibid.). The objectives of the project are to strengthen the organizational capacity of organizations addressing the problem of child labour, to reduce poverty, to decrease the school drop-out rate, to abolish the worst forms of child labour, to step up legal protection for child workers, and to lessen their workload (ibid.).

Another ILO project called the Action Programme Against Forced Labour and Trafficking in West Africa (LUTRENA) noted some accomplishments in Burkina Faso, such as a national awareness campaign, the reintegration of 80 children, the construction of three [translation] "transit centres," the creation of four management committees and five "provincial monitoring and surveillance committees" that have been successful in intercepting many children and in prosecuting three traffickers (*L'Observateur Paalga* 23-25 July 2004).

According to *Country Reports 2004*, the Burkinabe government helped organize seminars against child trafficking for customs officers (28 Feb. 2005, Sec. 5). However, according to the government's director general of social welfare, people working in child protection "lack clear focus and sometimes don't know how to get the best results from their efforts" (United Nations 6 Apr. 2004). Moreover, according to the *Trafficking in Persons Report*, the Government of Burkina Faso "struggles to implement a sufficient protection plan for trafficking victims," and "minimal support is provided for Burkinabe children" (3 June 2005). The same source indicated that "the government recognizes that trafficking is a problem, and has implemented some degree of prevention efforts in the country[; h]owever, lack of resources inhibits its ability to carryout any long-term anti-trafficking prevention campaign" (*Human Trafficking in Persons Report* 3 June 2005).

The Burkinabe Association for the Survival of Children (Association burkinabée pour la survie de l'enfance, ABSE) is a children's rights NGO in Burkina Faso (ABSE n.d.). In 2001, ABSE implemented a program against trafficking and the worst forms of child labour in Burkina Faso with the intent of improving the living and working conditions for girls and of increasing public awareness of child forced labour and its consequences, as well as children's legal rights (*ibid.*). According to ABSE, this program helped take 100 girl domestics from their workplace and place them in training centres, educated 100 other girl domestics, and improved the working conditions of 350 children in Ouagadougou working in [translation] "high-risk trades in the informal sector" (*ibid.*). The program was reduced the hours children work and prohibited the recruitment of children in the metal industry (*ibid.*).

Possibility of emancipation

According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), child slaves in West Africa are usually sold by their parents to traffickers who place "the children in 'employment' with a host family," where they are forced to "work off the debt they owe to the trafficker" (n.d.). The children receive no money for their labour-the trafficker collects all of their wages (BBC n.d.). It is nearly impossible for the children to work off their debt to the traffickers, and their families rarely have the means to buy them back (*ibid.*). Some child slaves manage to escape, but "the majority are unable to return to their families" (*ibid.*). No information regarding the possibility of emancipation when a young boy given to a family as a payment of a debt reaches the age of majority could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Agence France-Presse (AFP). 5 January 2006. "Cameroon Law to Tackle Child Slavery." (Factiva)

Association burkinabée pour la survie de l'enfance (ABSE). N.d. "Halte au travail et au trafic des enfants." <<http://www.abse.org/travail%20des%20enfants.html>> [Accessed 9 Feb. 2006]

British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). N.d. "Case Study: The Trafficking of Children in West Africa." <http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/features/ihavearightto/four_b/casestudy_art04.shtml> [Accessed 10 Feb. 2006]

Burkina Faso. N.d. Department of Labour, Employment and Youth. "Le programme national IPEC." <<http://www.emploi.gov.bf/projets/ipecc.html>> [Accessed 9 Feb. 2006]

Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2004. 28 February 2005. United States Department of State. <<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41590.htm>> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2006]

Freedom House. July 2005. "Burkina Faso." *Freedom in the World: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties*. <http://www.freedomhouse.org/inc/content/pubs/fiw/inc_country_detail.cfm?country=6705&pf> [Accessed 8 Feb. 2006]

L'Observateur Paalga [Ouagadougou]. 23-25 July 2004. Hamidou Ouédraogo. "Vers une seconde phase." <http://www.lobservateur.bf/articl_imprimer.php3?&sq=articl_imprimer&id_article=1314> [Accessed 10 Feb. 2006]

Save the Children. 17 September 2004. "Developing Alternatives to the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Mali and Burkina Faso." <http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/scuk_cache/scuk/cache/cmsattach/1862_child_labour_Mali_&_BF.pdf> [Accessed 9 Feb. 2006]

Trafficking in Persons Report. 3 June 2005. United States Department of State. <<http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2005/46613.htm>> [Accessed 14 Feb. 2006]

United Nations. 6 April 2004. Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN). "Burkina Faso: Government Tackles Rising Number of Abandoned Children." (AllAfrica/Factiva) <<http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=40435>>

Additional Sources Consulted

Oral sources: The Association burkinabée pour la survie de l'enfance (ABSE), the Brique Burkina and the Coalition au Burkina Faso pour les droits de l'enfant (COBUFADE) could not provide any information within the time constraints for this Response.

The general secretary of the Mouvement burkinabé des droits de l'homme et des peuples (MBDHP) could not provide any information within the time constraints for this Response.

Internet sites, including: African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; Amnesty International; Anti-Slavery International; Burkina

Faso's Department of Human Rights; Burkina Faso's Department of Justice; Burkina Faso's Department of Labour, Employment and Youth; Freedom House; Global March Against Child Labour; the Government of Burkina Faso; Human Rights Watch; HumanTrafficking.org; Institut international des droits de l'enfant; International Labour Organization; Save the Children; United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); World Organization Against Torture.

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