

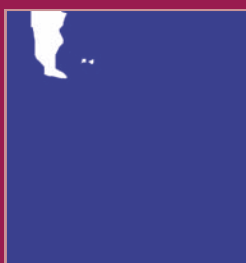
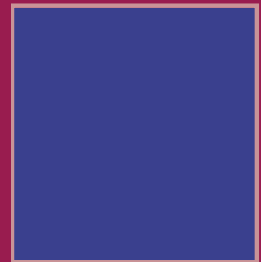
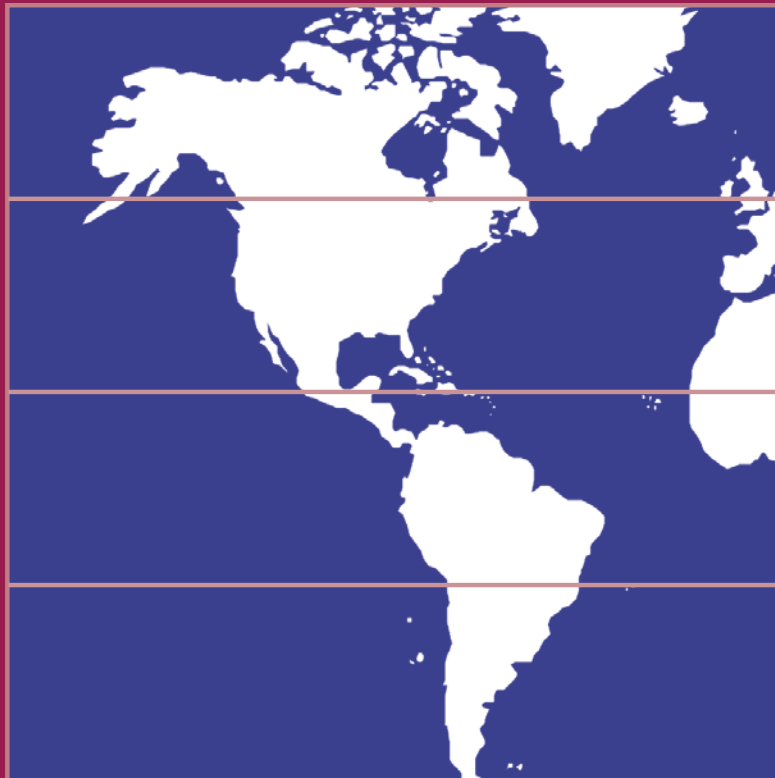
# Foreign Labor Trends

Côte d'Ivoire



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
<b>KEY LABOR INDICATORS.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>BACKGROUND .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION OF LABOR INSTITUTIONS.....</b>	<b>3</b>
GOVERNMENT .....	3
EMPLOYERS .....	4
TRADE UNIONS.....	4
<b>POLITICAL DYNAMICS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>THE ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>INVESTMENT .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SOCIAL SAFETY NET .....</b>	<b>6</b>
NATIONAL PENSIONS .....	7
WORKER'S COMPENSATION.....	7
MATERNITY BENEFITS AND FAMILY ALLOWANCES .....	7
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE .....	8
<b>WORKER RIGHTS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION.....	8
THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE AND BARGAIN COLLECTIVELY.....	9
PROHIBITION OF FORCED OR COMPULSORY LABOR.....	9
STATUS OF CHILD LABOR .....	9
NON-DISCRIMINATION .....	10
ACCEPTABLE WORK CONDITIONS.....	10
<b>DIRECTORY OF LABOR ORGANIZATIONS.....</b>	<b>12</b>

## KEY LABOR INDICATORS

### Côte d'Ivoire 2002

<u>INDICATOR</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>% CHANGE</u>
1. Per capita GDP current prices (US\$) <sup>1</sup>	711.54	587.50	-17.4
2. —, (FCFA, 000)	438.1	418.3	-4.5
3. Population, total (millions) <sup>2</sup>	15.6	16.0	2.6
4. —, major ethnic groups (%)			
Akan	42.1	42.1	0.0
Voltaics	17.6	17.6	0.0
Northern Mandes	16.5	16.5	0.0
Krou	11.0	11.0	0.0
Southern Mandes	10.0	10.0	0.0
8. —, in major urban areas (millions)			
Abidjan	3.126	3.126	0.0
Bouake	.613	.613	0.0
Daloa	.524	.524	0.0
Korhogo	.453	.453	0.0
9. Birth rate (per thousand population) <sup>3</sup>	41.76	40.78	-2.3
10. Life expectancy at birth, total	46.05	45.15	-2.0
11. —, male	44.48	43.72	-1.7
12. —, female	47.67	46.63	-2.2
13. Adult literacy rate (%)	48.50	48.50	0.0
14. Labor force, civilian, total (millions)	n/a	6.07	~
15. —, male (millions)	n/a	3.04	~
16. —, female (millions)	n/a	1.49	~
17. Employment, civilian, total (millions)	n/a	4.53	~
18. —, in industry (millions)	n/a	0.48	~
19. —, in export industries	n/a	0.31	~
20. —, in agriculture (millions)	n/a	3.29	~
21. —, in services (millions)	n/a	0.35	~
—, government services (millions)	n/a	0.10	~
—, informal sector	n/a	1.25	~
22. Unemployment rate (% , official)	n/a	4.9	~
23. Underemployment rate (%)	n/a	n/a	~

<sup>1</sup> *World Development Indicators 2002* (Washington, DC: World Bank Group, 2002) (<http://www.worldbank.org>). These figures were calculated by taking the gross domestic product (GDP) (current US\$) and dividing by the total population. However, the *The World Factbook 2001* places Côte d'Ivoire's GDP per capita-purchasing power parity at US\$1600 in 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Estimates of Côte d'Ivoire explicitly take into account the effects of excess mortality due to AIDS; this can result in lower life expectancy, higher infant mortality and death rates, lower population and growth rates, and changes in distribution of population by age and sex than would otherwise be expected.

<sup>3</sup> *The World Factbook 1999 and 2000*, (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency).

## Côte d'Ivoire 2002

<u>INDICATOR</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>% CHANGE</u>
24. Labor productivity, manufacturing (% change)	n/a	n/a	~
25. Work-related accidents and illnesses	n/a	n/a	~
26. Days lost from industrial disputes (000)	n/a	n/a	~
27. Minimum monthly wage rate (FCFA)	n/a	36,607	~
28. —, (US\$)	n/a	51.42	~
29. Average daily earnings by major industry (FCFA)	n/a	7,321	~
30. Hourly compensation costs for production workers in manufacturing (FCFA)	n/a	915	~
31. —, (US\$)	n/a	1.29	~
32. Hourly compensation costs for laborers (US\$)	n/a	1.31	~
33. —, clerical (US\$)	n/a	0.57	~
34. —, mechanic (US\$)	n/a	0.19	~
35. —, commercial assistant (US\$)	n/a	0.79	~
36. Supplementary benefits as % of manufacturing earnings	n/a	n/a	~
37. Average hours worked per week <sup>4</sup>	n/a	n/a	~
38. Unionization of labor (%)	n/a	n/a	~
39. Average personal income per year at current prices (US\$)	n/a	4,404	~
40. Average disposable income after taxes and withholding (US\$)	n/a	n/a	~
41. Percent of population beneath poverty level <sup>5</sup>	n/a	33.6	~
42. Consumer price index (%) <sup>6</sup>	2.5	2.5	0.0

n/a = not available

Exchange rate: US\$ 1=711.98 Financiere Communauté Africaine Franc (FCFA) (2000) and US\$1.00=615.70 FCFA (1999)

Sources: EIU Country Report (2000), AGEPE 2000 Report (Ministry of Labor) La Côte d'Ivoire en Chiffres (Ministry of Economy & Finances, Ins Censur, African Social and Economic Trends 2000/2001), *The World Factbook*, and *World Development Indicators 2002*.

<sup>4</sup> The nominal workweek is 40 hours.

<sup>5</sup> The percentage of population below poverty is 33.6 percent in 2000, compared to 10 percent in 1985. Indeed, 10 percent of the wealthiest people have revenues 12 times higher than that of the 10 percent poorest, and 20 percent of the wealthy own 48 percent of total revenue. Côte d'Ivoire is ranked 154 of 174 countries in the human development index.

<sup>6</sup> *The World Factbook 2000 and 2001* (Washington, DC: Central Intelligence Agency).

## **BACKGROUND**

Prior to December 1999, members of a single political party, the Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), had occupied both the presidency and a majority of seats in the national legislature since independence in 1960. President Felix Houphouët-Boigny ruled Côte d'Ivoire from 1960 until his death in 1993. National Assembly President Henri Konan Bedie became President by constitutional succession and served out the remainder of Houphouët's term. While the major opposition parties staged an "active boycott" of the 1995 presidential election, both declining to participate and trying to interfere with the voting process, President Bedie easily won the election. In June 1998, the National Assembly enacted amendments to the Constitution that further increased the already preponderant power of the presidency but were widely criticized. Therefore, in December 1998, the President signed an agreement obliging him to rescind some of these powers in a second round of constitutional amendments. However, the National Assembly did nothing to curb presidential powers.

On December 24, 1999, Côte d'Ivoire experienced a bloodless coup d'etat, forcing President Bedie out of power. Brigadier General Robert Guei declared himself the new President, suspended the Constitution, dissolved the National Assembly, and formed the National Committee for Public Salvation (CNSP), which consisted of himself and eight military officers. General Guei initially claimed no interest in retaining power and pledged to rewrite the Constitution, clean up government corruption, and hold fair and transparent elections during the year. He formed a transitional government made up of CNSP members, as well as representatives of five political parties and civil society. All of the country's political parties pledged to support the new government. The CNSP created the Constitutional and Electoral Consultative Commission (CCCE), which included members of all major political parties, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and prominent members of civil society, to draft a new constitution. In May 2000, Guei reshuffled the cabinet, effectively ridding the Government of the Republican Rally (RDR), the party of rival presidential candidate and former Prime Minister Alassane Ouattara. Then, Guei made substantive changes to the draft constitution, including inserting language requiring that presidential candidates must have two Ivorian parents and must never have held the nationality of any other country. The citizens overwhelmingly approved the new Constitution in a referendum, and the Constitution was implemented on August 4, 2000.

On October 22, 2000, the presidential election was held between General Guei and Laurent Gbagbo of the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI). Mr. Ouattara was banned from the election on the grounds of supposed foreign parentage. The presidential election was marred by significant violence and irregularities, including a suspension of the vote count for several days. On October 26, the Supreme Court declared Mr. Gbagbo the victor with 53 percent of the vote. All major political parties are represented in the new Government, with the exception of the RDR, which decided not to accept ministerial posts in protest of Ouattara's exclusion.

## **DESCRIPTION OF LABOR INSTITUTIONS**

### **Government**

The Ministry of Labor, Civil Service, and Administrative Reform is the lead Ivorian government agency on labor issues. Professor Hubert Oulaye is the current Minister of Labor. The Ministry enforces the Constitution and Labor Code, which govern labor management relations, child labor, forced labor, wages and hours of work, and occupational safety and health. The Ministry

of Labor also is charged with the development and management of international cooperation on labor issues with the World Bank, UN agencies, bilateral donors such as the United States, and international NGOs. The Ministry of Labor actively participates in the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Additionally, Côte d'Ivoire is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which in December 2001 adopted measures to combat the problem of human trafficking in the region.

## **Employers**

Two organizations represent Côte d'Ivoire's business community with regards to labor relations management: the Ivorian Federation of Small and Average-sized Companies (FIPME) and the National Council of Employers (CNPI). FIPME is a smaller organization representing the interests of small and medium producers and is directed by an elected member of the federation, Mr. Jean Baptiste Amethier.

The CNPI is the dominant of the two employers' organizations. It was founded on December 4, 1993, following the dissolution of the Employers' Union of Côte d'Ivoire (UPACI) for structural and financial reasons. Only professional groups are allowed to become members of the CNPI. As of 1994, the CNPI had a membership of 10 professional groups, representing 374 companies from the banking, insurance, maritime, industrial, agricultural, automobile, petroleum, and import-export sectors. Mr. Diack Diawar is currently serving as the President of the CNPI's Executive Committee.

The CNPI is affiliated with the Employers' International Organization (OIE). The CNPI also is a statutory member of the tripartite Labor Advisory Commission and a founding member of the Permanent and Independent Dialogue Commission, both of which bring together employers and trade union confederations at the national level to negotiate on labor issues.

## **Trade Unions**

The most representative trade union confederation is the General Union of Workers of Côte d'Ivoire (UGTCI), which was created in 1962. The UGTCI has 231 affiliated trade unions, 9 regional unions, 30 local unions, and 9 trade union federations. It is present in both the private and public sectors, representing workers in education, agriculture, transportation, fishing, and the civil service. The UGTCI has close ties with the PDCI. Between 1962 to 1990, the UGTCI was the only authorized trade union confederation, and Secretary General Hyacinthe Adiko Niamkey still serves as a member of the PDCI's Political Bureau. The UGTCI is affiliated with several international organizations, such as the Organization of African Trade Unions (ONUSA), the Organization of West African Workers, and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU). In 1998, the Secretary General of UGTCI was elected President of ONUSA. The UGTCI also maintains good relationships with several African, French, Italian, German, Chinese, Japanese, and American trade unions.

The second most important confederation is the Federation of Autonomous Unions of Côte d'Ivoire (FESACI), which was created in 1992 on the initiative of the National University Researchers and Teachers' Union (SYNARES). Founded in 1968, SYNARES was one of only three independent unions that never affiliated with the UGTCI but, instead, helped to establish the major opposition political parties, including the current ruling party, the Ivorian Popular Front (FPI). In 1992, SYNARES Secretary General Marcel Ette became the first FESACI Secretary General and still holds the position today. FESACI currently has 30 affiliated trade unions and is considering 30 more applications. Among its affiliates are government employee

unions (teachers, customs officers, and civil servants) and private sector employee unions (electricity, transportation, private school teachers, and industrial plantations). The FESACI is not affiliated with any international organization.

The Dignite Labor Confederation was clandestinely created in 1988, but it was only following the intervention of the ILO in 1994, that Dignite was acknowledged by the Ivorian Government and authorized to carry out its activities. Dignite is headed by Secretary General Basile Mahan Gahe and currently has 186 affiliated trade unions and 20 central professional groups. Its unions represent employees in the food industry, transportation, agriculture, teaching, petroleum, textiles, cosmetic and chemical factories, pharmaceutical companies, wood processing, and waste management. Dignite is primarily present in the private and informal sectors, and a large number of its members are blue-collar workers. Dignite is affiliated with the World Confederation of Labor (CMT) and the Democratic Trade Union Organization of African Workers (ODSTA). Dignite also is a founding member of the World Federation of Workers of the Food Industry and Agricultural Sector (FEMTAA).

The fourth confederation of trade unions in Côte d'Ivoire, VIE, was created on January 28, 2000, on the initiative of 50 trade unions from the informal sector. VIE has not been very active since its creation and does not have much influence on union activity in Côte d'Ivoire. Mr. Meka Denis, a former President of the Wood Sector Employees Union, presides over VIE.

## **POLITICAL DYNAMICS**

In Côte d'Ivoire, neither employers nor labor unions have great influence on the political scene. Prior to 1990, SYNARES and SYNESCI (the secondary school teachers union) were the only independent unions in Côte d'Ivoire. As such, they represented the only legal opposition in the country and actively participated in political debate. Now that their fight has led to the reestablishment of a multi-party system, as well as more freedom of association, labor unions are expected to remain apolitical.

However, the unions do take part in the Permanent and Independent Dialogue Commission and the Labor Advisory Commission. The former is a bipartite structure created in 1995, to allow employers and confederations to meet and negotiate on labor issues, and the agreements reached within this commission are submitted to the tripartite Labor Advisory Commission. The two structures are represented across Côte d'Ivoire and are active in negotiating labor policy.

In addition, the trade union confederations customarily submit workers' grievances to the President and the Minister of Labor every May 1 (Labor Day). On May 1, 2001, the confederations asked the Government to do the following: ensure the security of people, property, and markets; revise the labor code; grant special status to labor inspectors to prevent corruption; cease abusive dismissals of workers; promote the role of women; protect workers from HIV/AIDS; integrate day laborers; eliminate subcontracting in companies; and revise the retirement age for civil servants.

## **THE ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT**

The Ivorian economy is largely market-based and heavily dependent on the commercial agricultural sector. Most of the rural population remains dependent on smallholder cash crop production. Côte d'Ivoire is one of the world's largest producers and exporters of coffee and cocoa beans, representing 41 percent of the world's total production of cocoa. Forty-five

percent of the Ivorian economy depends on cocoa production and exports. Thus, the economy is highly sensitive to fluctuations of the international prices of these products. In March 2001, government and industry representatives from roughly 40 producer and consumer countries adopted a new international cocoa agreement, which should help stabilize the cocoa market, promote eco-friendly production, enhance incomes of poor growers, and address violations of the worst forms of child labor. This agreement is very beneficial to Côte d'Ivoire.

After several years of 6 to 7 percent annual economic growth following the 1994 currency devaluation, the real gross domestic product (GDP) grew only 1.6 percent in 1999, due to the reluctance of international donors to continue to provide assistance without government action to end corruption and to adhere to donor-mandated reforms. In 2000, the economic situation deteriorated further due to the political instability of the country and low prices for key exports, with the real GDP contracting -2.3 percent. In 2001, the estimated economic growth rate rose net zero due to the decrease in political violence and the resumption of foreign aid by France.

The industrial sector in Côte d'Ivoire produces food, beverages, wood products, automobiles, textiles, fertilizer, construction materials, and electricity, and also involved in oil refining. Between 1999 and 2000, industrial production sharply declined by 11 percent due to the political instability of the country.

In 2000, approximately 4.5 million out the 6.1 million Ivorian labor force were employed. The majority (3.3 million) were engaged in agricultural activities, while roughly 0.5 million worked in the industrial sector. In the same year, Côte d'Ivoire reported an unemployment rate of 4.9 percent.

## **INVESTMENT**

Côte d'Ivoire actively encourages foreign direct investment (FDI). In 1995, the National Assembly revised the Ivorian Investment Code to encourage large private sector investment in the economy. There are no significant limits on FDI, although investments from outside of the Franc Zone must be approved by the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The Government has established an Investment Promotion Center (CEPICI) to provide assistance to parties interested in starting businesses and investing in Côte d'Ivoire.

FDI currently accounts for 40 to 45 percent of total capital in Ivorian enterprises. France is the most important foreign investor, committing US\$46 million to Côte d'Ivoire in 1997. French investment accounts for one-quarter of total capital in Ivorian firms and over half of the total stock of foreign investment capital. U.S. companies invested US\$8.4 million in 1997, an increase from the previous year's level of US\$3.1 million. The largest U.S. investment is in the petroleum and gas sector, but U.S. multinationals have begun investing in local cocoa processing and in exporting raw cocoa beans.

## **SOCIAL SAFETY NET**

The social insurance system in Côte d'Ivoire covers national pensions, worker's compensation, maternity benefits, and family allowances. Private formal sector employees contribute 1.6 percent of their wages towards old-age benefits. Their employers are required to pay insurance premiums between 10.15 and 13.15 percent of payroll. Five percent of the employer's contribution goes toward family allowances, 2.4 percent for old-age benefits, 0.75 percent for



maternity benefits, and between 2 to 5 percent for worker's compensation depending on the risk in the industry.

## **National Pensions**

The national pension program consists of two government retirement funds, the General Retirement Fund for Civil Servants (CGRAE) and the National Social Welfare Fund (CNPS) for private sector employees and some agricultural workers. Individuals who contribute at least 10 years to the CNPS qualify to receive a pension at age 55. The CNPS pension equals 1.33 percent of the worker's average earnings multiplied by the years of coverage and periods of incapacity. Early retirees may begin receiving a pension at age 50, but payments are reduced by 5 percent for each year under age 55. A supplement equal to 10 percent of their pension is given to retirees for each child under age 16, up to a maximum of 30 percent. Although they have great difficulty doing it sometimes, the two national retirement funds still manage to pay out pensions on a monthly or quarterly basis.

## **Worker's Compensation**

The worker's compensation program covers employed persons, seamen, apprentices, members of cooperatives, and students at technical colleges. Coverage is also open to the self-employed. Workers receive 50 percent of their wages during the first 28 days of disability and then roughly 66 percent until recovery or until declared permanently disabled. Individuals with a partial permanent disability qualify for their average wages multiplied by the percentage of their disability. The permanently disabled are entitled to receive a pension equal to 100 percent of their salary, plus a constant-attendance supplement of 40 percent of their pension. Survivor pensions equal to 30 percent of the insured employee's earnings also are given to families, as well as a funeral grant covering the cost of burial.

## **Maternity Benefits and Family Allowances**

After 3 months of insured employment, women workers and the wives of employees qualify for maternity benefits under Côte d'Ivoire's social insurance system. The women receive 100 percent of their wages, payable from 6 weeks before and 8 weeks after confinement. They are given to a lump-sum birth grant of 18,000 FCFA (US\$24.91) for the first 3 children, as well as a maternity allowance of 18,000 FCFA (US\$24.91) paid in 3 installments during the child's first year. The women also are entitled to payment of 100 percent of the costs of medical care provided in a public hospital or 5,000 FCFA (US\$ 6.92)<sup>7</sup> for care in a private clinic. In addition, all medical and pharmaceutical costs are to be reimbursed beginning after the third month of pregnancy.

Workers employed for 3 months and who are working 18 days or 120 hours per month qualify for a family allowance. The working parents receive 1,500 FCFA (US\$2.07) per month for each child under age 14 and for older children who are enrolled as an apprentice (age 18), a student (age 21), or are disabled (age 21). The Government limits the number of children who are eligible for the allowance to 6.

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<sup>7</sup> As of April 29, 2002, US\$1.00=722.47 FCFA.

## **Unemployment Insurance**

The Government no longer pays unemployment benefits, although workers and their employers are still obliged to pay the national tax. The Government has instead chosen to provide social funds to those who submit viable projects to start small businesses.

## **WORKER RIGHTS**

### **Freedom of Association**

The 2000 Ivorian Constitution and the Labor Code grant all citizens, with the exception of the police and military, the right to form or join unions. Registration of a new union requires three months. Only a small percentage of the workforce is organized, as most laborers work in the informal sector. Nonetheless, Côte d'Ivoire has approximately 1,000 trade unions and 4 major trade union confederations.

The right to strike is provided by the Constitution and by statute. The Labor Code requires a protracted series of negotiations and a 6-day notification period before a strike may take place, making legal strikes difficult to organize. However, strikes in both the public and private sector have become common since the December 1999 military coup, when workers seized upon the change in regimes to settle grievances over working conditions. In 2000, more than 80 labor-related conflicts occurred. At the beginning of the military regime, members of the military, including the National Committee for Public Salvation (CNSP), intervened directly in labor disputes, sometimes arresting and intimidating parties, but the CNSP ultimately allowed the Ministry of Labor to arbitrate the conflicts, as is customary in Côte d'Ivoire. In 2001, the Ministry of Labor arbitrated 20 labor-related conflicts.

In May 2001, Prime Minister Affi Nguessan met with union leaders and asked for a social truce in exchange for a promise of 10 years of happiness and prosperity. At the same time, Ivorians were confronted with several price increases. Prices of consumer goods and services rose with successive increases in the price of gasoline, and Sotra, the parastatal bus company, increased bus fares on express lines. The Government also increased the export duties on cocoa and coffee, reducing benefits to cocoa and coffee farmers and exporters. Ivorian workers reacted to the numerous price increases, promptly breaking the social truce. Labor continues to press their demands, increasingly turning to hunger strikes.

One long-standing dispute was resolved in 2001 after government mediation. In March 1997, over 300 African employees of the Abidjan Ship Repair and Industrial Work Enterprise (CARENA) went on strike, claiming that the shipbuilding company discriminated between European engineers, who were paid 8 million FCFA (US\$11,400) a month, and their African colleagues, who received 80,000 FCFA (\$114) per month. The strikers were immediately fired without severance pay and were replaced by temporary workers. Neither the CNSP's intervention nor the ILO's recommendations in favor of reinstatement of the dismissed workers resolved the conflict. However, following mediation by President Gbagbo and Minister of Labor Oulaye, an agreement was signed between CARENA and the dismissed workers on June 1, 2001. According to the terms of the agreement, CARENA will pay 450 million FCFA (US\$ 622,863) to 185 workers, and the case of 12 permanent contract workers will be resolved later. The dismissed workers will not, however, be reinstated, and the "apartheid salaries" that were the origin of the conflict still prevail.

Another long standing dispute concerns Ivorian civil servants and resulted in the December 1998 joint UGTICI-FESACI strike, their first such joint labor action. The strike paralyzed the

government. Therefore, the Government established the Equal Representation Commission in June 1999. The mission of the Commission is to study civil servants' unresolved grievances, particularly frozen salaries (effective since 1981), the cancellation of the requirement that civil servants retire after 30 years of service, and the granting of step increases accompanied with financial increases to civil servants. The Government of President Bedie restructured the civil servants' social security fund and promised that salaries would be unfrozen in March 2001. The salaries have remained frozen, and the same grievances were resubmitted on May 1, 2001.

### **The Right to Organize and Bargain Collectively**

The Constitution provides for collective bargaining, and the Labor Code grants all citizens, except the police and military, the right to bargain collectively. Collective bargaining agreements are in effect in many major business enterprises and sectors of civil service. Wages are either established in direct negotiations between unions and employers or are determined by the Ministry of Labor.

Labor inspectors are responsible for enforcing the law that prohibits anti-union discrimination. There have been no known prosecutions or convictions under this law. Neither have there been reports of anti-union discrimination.

### **Prohibition of Forced or Compulsory Labor**

Ivorian law prohibits forced or compulsory labor. However, the ILO has determined Decree No. 69-189 (issued under the Criminal Procedure Code) to be in nonconformity with ILO Convention 29 on forced labor. The decree places certain categories of prisoners at the disposal of private enterprises for work assignments. Due to a lack of funds to hire warden guards to supervise the inmates, the law often is not invoked.

The law does not prohibit the trafficking of persons, and children are regularly trafficked from neighboring countries and sold into forced labor. The Government is taking some steps to address these problems.

### **Status of Child Labor**

According to the Ivorian Labor Code, the minimum age for employment is 14 years, and children under 18 are prohibited from working more than 12 consecutive hours or at night, unless working as an apprentice. 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 between the ages of 16 and 18. Decree No. 96-193 restricts children from working in bars, hotels, pawnshops, and second-hand clothing stores. Child labor laws in Côte d'Ivoire apply to all sectors and industries, although the lack of government resources makes them difficult to enforce in the informal sector.

Since 1999, Côte d'Ivoire has prosecuted at least 22 traffickers and has repatriated over 3,000 foreign trafficked children. However, children still are reportedly trafficked from Côte d'Ivoire to African, European, and Middle Eastern countries. Children have also been trafficked within Côte d'Ivoire and from Mali, Benin, Burkino Faso, Ghana, and Togo to work as domestic servants, farm laborers, and indentured servants. These children are sometimes forced to work for owners of commercial farms harvesting cocoa, cotton, corn, rice, and pineapple. Other children

are forced to work in the country's gold and diamond mines or in sweatshop conditions in small workshops.

The Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Mali signed a bilateral agreement to curb the trafficking of Malian children into Côte d'Ivoire. Côte d'Ivoire has discussed similar agreement with Burkina Faso and Togo. Côte d'Ivoire is one of nine countries participating in a U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL)-funded regional project to combat the trafficking of children for exploitative labor in West and Central Africa by the ILO's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (ILO-IPEC). In July 2001, the National Committee for Combating Trafficking and Exploitation of Children was created by presidential decree. The Government has also undertaken several educational and training programs to discourage domestic trafficking and is now utilizing the police along the country's borders to stop international trafficking. In addition, the Government has agreed to various surveys and studies on child labor and labor conditions in the cocoa sector, and a national child labor survey is planned for 2002, to be undertaken with technical assistance from ILO-IPEC. In FY2002, USDOL intends to support an IPEC program to withdraw children from hazardous work in commercial agriculture (with a focus on the cocoa sector) and provide them with educational and other social services. A U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-supported Sustainable Tree Crops Program is also seeking to incorporate into its activities strategies aimed at addressing child labor in the cocoa sector, including through coordination with the USDOL-supported IPEC child labor program.

Primary education in Côte d'Ivoire is compulsory for children between the ages of 7 and 13, but many children still do not attend primary school, particularly in rural areas. Since 1998, the Government has tried to develop special technical and vocational programs for those expelled from school at an early age. Some new technical and vocational programs began operations in March and April 2001, and beginning in the 2001-2002 school year, tuition fees for primary school students are waived. However, parents must still pay annual and monthly fees and transportation costs for children enrolled in public secondary schools.

## **Non-Discrimination**

Although the Constitution and the law prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, women occupy a subordinate role in society. There is considerable resistance among employers to hiring women, whom they consider less dependable because of potential pregnancy. Nonetheless, women in the formal sector are paid on an equal scale with men. Female employees also are entitled to receive 14 weeks of maternity benefits. In rural areas, women and men divide the labor, with men clearing the land and attending to cash crops like cocoa and coffee, while women grow vegetables and other staples and perform most menial household tasks.

Ivorian law requires the Government to educate and train persons with disabilities, to hire them or help them find jobs, and to adapt machines, tools, and work spaces for access and use by persons with disabilities. The law covers persons with physical, mental, visual, auditory, and cerebral motor disabilities. Although the Government is working to put these regulations into effect, there are few training and job assistance programs for persons with disabilities.

## **Acceptable Work Conditions**

The Government by decree determines monthly minimum wage rates, which were last adjusted in 1996. President Gbagbo promised an overall pay raise, as did General Guei; however, no such raises have been granted to date. The Government enforces minimum wage rates only for salaried workers employed by the government or registered with the social security office.

Minimum wages vary according to occupation, with the lowest set at approximately 36,607 FCFA (US\$50.67) per month for the industrial sector, which is insufficient to provide a decent standard of living for a worker and family. The majority of the labor force works in agriculture or in the informal sector where the minimum wage does not apply. According to a Labor Ministry survey, workers in agricultural and fishing sectors receive an average of 726,453 FCFA (US\$1,005.51) a year.

Through the Ministry of Labor, the Government enforces the Labor Code that governs the terms and conditions of service for wage earners and salaried workers and provides for occupational safety and health standards. Those employed in the formal sector generally are protected against unjust compensation, excessive hours, and arbitrary discharge from employment. The standard legal workweek is 40 hours, and the law requires overtime payment on a graduated scale for additional hours. The Labor Code provides for at least one 24-hour rest period per week.

Government labor inspectors can order employers to improve substandard conditions, and a labor court can levy fines if the employer fails to comply with the Labor Code. However, in the large informal sector of the economy involving both urban and rural workers, the government's occupational health and safety regulations are enforced erratically, if at all. The practice of labor inspectors accepting bribes is a growing problem, and observers believe that it is widespread. Workers in the formal sector have the right under the Labor Code to remove themselves from dangerous work situations without jeopardy to continued employment. However, workers in the informal sector ordinarily cannot remove themselves from such labor without risking the loss of their employment.

In 1998, 3,600 cases of labor-related accidents were reported. Most accidents occurred in the construction sector. Numerous labor-related accidents and diseases are due to the fact that workers are not well informed and depend on management to report accidents and health/safety problems that occur in their companies. Unfortunately, factory and company managers are reluctant to report accidents or health problems that occur in their companies because they do not want to spend money to improve working conditions.

The first Ivorian medical unit for labor-related accidents and diseases was created 12 years ago. Due to their very limited number at the Ministry of Labor, medical doctors responsible for health and safety can only visit companies once or twice a year. On many occasions, workers and their unions have had to invite doctors to come and analyze the working environment. According to Dignite, the doctors' recommendations are not implemented in most cases, and the Government does not compel the companies to improve working conditions.

# **DIRECTORY OF LABOR ORGANIZATIONS**

## **GOVERNMENT**

### **Ministry of Labor, Civil Service, and Administrative Reform**

Avenue du Dr. Crozet  
Plateau, Abidjan

Minister: Hubert Oulaye  
Director of Cabinet: Firmin Kouakou  
Chief of Cabinet; Dr. Benoqt Dahouo  
Director General for the Civil Service: Pornon Sanogo

### **Agency for the Study and Promotion of Employment (AGEPE)**

Director General: Maurice Zehia Kouadio

## **EMPLOYERS ORGANIZATION**

### **National Council of Employers (CNPI)**

President: Diack Diawar

### **Ivorian Federation of Small and Average-sized Companies (FIPME)**

President: Jean Baptiste Amethier

## **LABOR CONFEDERATIONS**

### **General Union of Workers of Côte d'Ivoire (UGTCI)**

Secretary General: Hyacinthe Adiko Niamkey

### **Federation of Autonomous Unions of Côte d'Ivoire (FESACI)**

Secretary General: Marcel Ette

### **Dignite Labor Confederation**

Secretary General: Basile Mahan Gahe

### **VIE Federation of Trade Unions**

Secretary General: Denis Meka

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