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## 2m Afghan children forced into labour

By Fahim Abid & Frozan Muradi

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Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) head on Saturday said people's access to justice has not improved and about two million children are forced into hard labour.



Seema Samar, who released a two-year report of the commission at a press conference in Kabul,

said the situation for children and access to justice has not improved. However, road conditions, health services and access to education have enhanced.

Samar referred to an AIHRC a survey in 27 provinces, indicating 57 percent of the interviewees were engaged in hard labour and 32 percent having an income of 50 afghanis (\$1.02) a day.

The report said most of the women remained deprived of their right to work. Currently 20 percent of government employees were women, while in 2006, the percentage was 22 and 31.2 in 2005, she recalled.

About 1.9 million children between 6 and 17 years are forced into in rigorous jobs, with 92 percent working 24 hours a week, she said, adding that more than half of the respondents were below the age of 15.

About 13.2 percent of the Afghan people below 15 entered marriages, the report said, showing the number of students had risen from 900,000 to 7 million and an eightfold increase in the number of teachers since 2001.

The report added 20 percent of the \$57 billion in foreign aid was used through the state budget. "Although the government has good achievements in areas of education, health, reconstruction and elections, it has a long way to go to meet people's expectations."

Also present at the press conference, Commissioner Farid Ahmadi said International Human Rights provided Afghans a good opportunity to criticise abuses, injustices and corruption.

He billed progress with regard to human rights over in the past decade as inadequate, saying that violence, self-immolation cases and denial of rights to children continued unabated.

Adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — a milestone in the conceptual evolution of how all humans should be treated — was approved by the United Nations General Assembly on Dec. 10, 1948.