

In 2014, Colombia made a significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government passed Law 1719, which guarantees access to legal services for victims of commercial sexual exploitation and armed conflict; implemented Child Labor Pacts to assist in the formulation of child labor policies and laws and improve coordination between the Ministry of Labor and other government agencies; and launched the Network Against Child Labor campaign to unite 14 businesses in efforts to eliminate child labor in their supply chains. The Government also continued to participate in a project to combat child labor and improve workplace health and safety in mining. However, children in Colombia are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture and street work, and in the worst forms of child labor as they continue to be forcibly recruited by illegal non-state armed groups. Limited interagency coordination and inadequate resources hinder Government efforts to combat child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Colombia are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture and street work.(1, 2) Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in armed conflict, as they continue to be forcibly recruited by illegal non-state armed groups.(3, 4)

The 2014 National Household Survey, released in 2015, includes estimates of the number of working children in Colombia. The results show a small reduction in child labor, from 9.7 percent in 2013 to 9.3 percent in 2014.(5) However, the results do not disaggregate information on health, occupational safety, geographical areas, or sectors in which children work, particularly the priority sectors identified by the Government for child labor reduction such as coffee, sugarcane, and tobacco. Data are also not collected on child labor for hard-to-reach populations, including street children and children involved in illicit activities. Government survey data on working children include limited information on indigenous populations, and obtaining these data in these communities may be challenging due to the Government's political relationship with different indigenous groups.(6)

Several government officials in different departments of Colombia reported that due to a lack of training and resources, they have not updated the Ministry of Labor's (MOL) Information System for Identification, Registration, and Characterization of Child Labor (SIRITI) in the past three years. Therefore, comprehensive data on child labor available to the public is incomplete and outdated.(7-9) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Colombia.

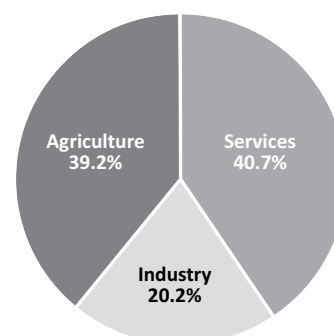
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	5.9 (514,092)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	93.2
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	5.9
Primary Completion Rate (%)		105.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(10)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from GEIH-MTI Survey, 2012.(11)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



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Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children's work by sector and activity.

Table 2. Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Production of coffee,† sugarcane,† cotton,*† and rice*† (12-15)
	Logging,*† activities unknown (12)
	Hunting and fishing,* activities unknown (2)
Industry	Mining coal,† emeralds,† gold,† gypsum,*† salt,*† talc*†, and clay to make bricks† (16-18)
	Construction,*† activities unknown (19)
Services	Street work,† including vending, begging, washing cars, and motorcycles (19-23)
	Garbage scavenging*† (19, 24, 25)
	Domestic work† (19, 23, 26, 27)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Working in retail establishments, hotels, and restaurants, activities unknown (2, 5)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (23, 28, 29)
	Used in the production of pornography (28)
	Production of coca, marijuana,* and poppies* (12, 22)
	Used in armed conflict, sometimes as a result of force, in illegal non-state armed groups, to perform intelligence and logistical activities, store and transport weapons, and engage in commercial sexual exploitation (3, 4, 30, 31)
	Used in illicit activities, including by gangs to commit homicides and traffic drugs (32)
	Illegal sale of gasoline*† (12)
	Forced begging* (29)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a) – (c) of ILO C. 182.

Indigenous and Afro-Colombian children are considered the most vulnerable children in Colombia and are engaged in the worst forms of child labor.(12, 23) There are an estimated 102 indigenous groups, of which 87 are recognized by the State and indigenous organizations, 12 are recognized only by indigenous organizations, and 3 are self-recognized.(33) Indigenous children in Colombia sometimes migrate temporarily to cities and work in street vending, garbage scavenging, construction, and commercial sexual exploitation.(19, 29) They are also sometimes trafficked to Peru to cultivate coca.(9, 19)

The commercial sexual exploitation of minors, especially females, is a problem in Colombia, primarily in the departments of Amazonas, Antioquia, Atlántico, Cundinamarca, Bolívar, Magdalena, and Valle Del Cauca.(34) Colombian government officials reported that school classmates, children's friends, gang members, school teachers, parents, local officials, hotel receptionists, and motorcycle taxi drivers sometimes recruit and use children for commercial sexual exploitation. Officials also reported that children's school classmates and other adults falsely recruit children to participate in musical performances and take vacations, but exploit those children in commercial sexual exploitation.(35, 36)

Research indicates that in the Triple-Border region (Colombia, Peru, and Brazil) of Colombia, young Colombian girls and boys often enter alone Tabatinga, Brazil by foot and Santa Rosa, Peru by canoe where they engage in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities. Children cannot return to Colombia at night, as canoe access to Colombia closes from 6 pm to 6 am every day.(7, 36) As a result, children are exploited in commercial sexual exploitation in Peru as they are unable to return to Colombia at night.(7, 36) Boys in the city of Leticia, Amazonas also engage in commercial sexual exploitation outside of hair salons, where perpetrators pay them less than \$1 to perform sexual acts.(35, 36) Data from cases from the Colombian Administrative Process for Reestablishing Rights indicate that from 2011 to 2013, there were 1,061 cases of commercial sexual exploitation of female adolescents and 113 cases of male adolescent victims.(37) In other cities such as Cartagena, children who are also gang members, are used by other gang members to commit homicides. If the children do not commit homicides, they are then forced to engage in commercial sexual exploitation.(32)

Research indicates that few child victims of commercial sexual exploitation file complaints with officials, and therefore, the scope of the problem is underestimated in the country. Some officials report that some children are intimidated and do not file complaints since many of their recruiters are children's classmates and friends.(38)

Children from the departments of Amazonas and Nariño frequently travel across the border to Peru to work in the cultivation of coca and illegal drug production. Sometimes these children are trafficked to perform these activities.(23, 35) A government official estimated that children were engaged in this activity during the reporting period, but no information is available on how many children were trafficked to perform this work.(23)

Reports indicate that in the cities of Cali and Medellín, numerous children work on the streets.(20, 21) A report also indicates that many children ages 10 to 17 are engaged in domestic service in third-party homes. These children may work up to 60 hours per week with little to no pay, access to school, or health benefits.(39, 40) In the beach areas of the city of Cartagena, children, many of whom are Afro-Colombians, sell fruits and handicrafts and offer services such as massages and hair braiding to tourists. Many times, individuals purchase the children's goods and services in exchange for sexual acts.(9, 32) In addition, government officials in Cartagena reported that children sell food and carry heavy loads in urban markets, beginning work as early as 3 am.(9, 32)




The Government of Colombia and the Armed Revolutionary Forces of Colombia (FARC) began peace negotiations in 2012. Despite a temporary halt in peace talks in November 2014, negotiations resumed in early December.(41-47) In 2014, 250 children were recruited by the FARC and the National Liberation Army (ELN).(31) The Colombian Institute for Family Well-Being (ICBF) reported that 277 children were separated from the FARC and ELN during the reporting period.(47) The peace negotiation does not address the continued recruitment of children into the ranks of the FARC. There is also evidence that illegal non-state armed groups use bullying as a strategy to recruit children from schools, and underage girls as couriers to collect extortion payments.(48-50)

In Colombia, access to education is hindered by the internal armed conflict and sometimes impassable routes and long distances between children's homes and schools in rural areas.(51-53) In 2014, the UN reported that there were 12 cases of schools damaged in the cross-fire as a result of confrontations between illegal non-state armed forces and the Colombian Armed Forces.(46) The 2012 National School Desertion Survey for children enrolled in primary and secondary school identified child labor as one of the primary causes of school desertion in the Caribbean and Pacific regions of Colombia.(54) Access to education is also a problem for children from different ethnic groups. There are 68 native languages in Colombia; a 2014 report from a Colombian NGO indicates that more than 80 percent of ethnic groups in the country do not have access to a culturally and linguistically relevant education.(55)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Colombia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention		Ratification
	ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
	ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	UN CRC	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

In May 2014, Colombia ratified ILO Convention 189, Concerning Decent Work for Domestic Workers.(56)

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The Government of Colombia has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 35 of the Code of Childhood and Adolescence (57)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 117 of the Code for Children and Adolescents (57)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Resolution 3597 of 2013 (58)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 17 of the Constitution; Article 141 of the Penal Code; Article 5 of Resolution 3597 of 2013 (58, 59)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 17 of the Constitution; Articles 188–188C of the Penal Code; Article 5 of Resolution 3597 (58-60)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 209 and 213–219-B of the Penal Code (60)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 162, 188D, and 344 of the Penal Code; Article 5 of Resolution 3597 (58, 60)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 13 of Law 418 of 1997; Article 2 of Law 548 of 1999 (61, 62)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 13 of Law 418 of 1997; Article 2 of Law 548 of 1999 (61, 62)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	18	Decision C-376/10 of the Colombian Constitutional Court (63, 64)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 1 of Decree 4807 of 2011 (64)

In 2014, the Government issued the Victims Assistance Decree, which aims to regulate the procedures for government entities responsible for protecting and providing assistance to victims of human trafficking. It also addresses victims' access to services, protection, and assistance through interagency coordination and partnerships with civil society members.(65) However, the law stipulates that human trafficking victims must file an official complaint against their trafficker within 5 days of initiating the immediate assistance program in order to receive extended assistance and services.(65) The limited time allowance and the requirement to file an official complaint may prevent victims from receiving sufficient assistance.

The Government also enacted Law 1719 of 2014, which guarantees access to legal services for victims of commercial sexual exploitation and armed conflict. Article 5 of Law 1719 stipulates that persons found guilty of using victims of armed conflict in commercial sexual exploitation may incur 160 to 324 months of imprisonment, and a fine of \$169,000 to \$380,000.(66) Article 6 of Law 1719 also stipulates penalties for perpetrators of trafficking in persons for commercial sexual exploitation of 156 to 276 months of imprisonment and a fine of \$203,000 to \$380,000.(66)

Colombian legislation relevant to the worst forms of child labor undergoes frequent changes. However, it is not clear whether those changes are effectively disseminated to the general public or to relevant groups including enforcement officials, employers, and civil society organizations.(67)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor (MOL) Inspection, Monitoring, Control, and Territorial Management Department	Receive complaints of labor law violations and conduct labor inspections, including inspections to verify labor conditions for adolescent workers and compliance with other child labor provisions. Operate a child labor monitoring system, independently of the labor inspection system, that identifies children engaged in or at risk of child labor.(68) In 2014, created the Internal Working Group on Child Labor Eradication with inspectors to focus on the eradication of child labor, including by carrying out prevention activities; conducting child labor inspections; and compiling data on child labor.(69)

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (cont)

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of the Interior (MOI)	Operate a hotline to report and track cases of human trafficking, coordinate investigations, and facilitate access to social services for victims.(70)
National Police	Investigate cases of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking.(22, 68)
Colombian Institute for Family Well-Being (ICBF)	Receive complaints regarding child labor, operate hotlines to report cases of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation, and provide social services to children engaged in or at risk of child labor. Operate 40 mobile units to coordinate government actions to protect children's rights, including with respect to child labor. Partner with civil society organizations to operate an Internet hotline to combat child commercial sexual exploitation and pornography.(71, 72)
Attorney General's Office	Investigate cases of child recruitment for armed conflict, commercial sexual exploitation, and human trafficking.(57) In 2014, the Articulation Group for Combatting Trafficking in Persons was created to focus on investigation and prosecution of international trafficking and other related crimes. The Group includes four prosecutors from specialized directorates in the Attorney General's Office.(4)
Office of the Ombudsman	Promote rights of children and adolescents and monitor policies related to children's human rights. Operate an early warning system to prevent the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.(57)
Ministry of Health and Social Protection	Provide health services to victims of sexual violence, including child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking.(73)
National Training Service (SENA)	Collect fines imposed by the MOL for labor law violations.(74)

Law enforcement agencies in Colombia took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Labor Law Enforcement

For 2014, the MOL reported that there are 904 inspector positions, with 726 filled during the reporting period; however, the MOL has also verbally reported other numbers that are lower. Given the size of the Colombian workforce, the number of inspectors per worker is inadequate.(47)

Some reports indicate that all inspectors received training in child labor issues during the reporting period; however, in departments such as Amazonas and Bolívar, regional MOL officials indicated that labor inspectors have not received training in child labor issues in the past several years.(7, 47) In 2014, labor inspectors conducted 1,527 inspections related to child labor.(47) As a result of these inspections, from January to November 2014, five child labor violations were found, some of which involved more than one child. The MOL removed 3 children and 87 adolescents from worksites that did not comply with labor laws; it also issued five sanctions for a total of approximately \$100,000.(47) The MOL did not report whether these children and adolescents were referred to any social services. In addition, the National Training Service did not report whether fines were collected for these or any child labor infractions.(47) Inspections are conducted reactively, through complaint mechanisms, and can also occur unannounced. Inspectors may also conduct follow-up inspections of past labor violations. However, data are not disaggregated on the number of unannounced and complaint-driven labor inspections.(47) Reports indicate that labor inspectors still lack the resources to fully carry out all their duties.(7, 8, 75)

No information is available on how many children the MOL's Fundamental Labor Rights Monitoring system identified in child labor.(76) Research also did not uncover the number of child labor complaints that the ICBF received, nor how many children were provided with services.(72) Although the ICBF refers cases of apparent child labor violations to the MOL for further action, it is unclear whether the MOL conducts any follow-up, including whether labor inspectors use this information to target their inspections.(72)

In some departments of Colombia, inspectors only carry out inspections in a small fraction of the department. For example, in Amazonas, inspectors only conduct inspections in the municipality of Leticia. Inspectors do not have resources to carry out inspections in any other areas of the department, which are only accessible by canoe trips or by small, private planes.(7)

In order to combat child labor in the mining sector, the ICBF requires its regional offices to coordinate with the MOL's regional offices and other government agencies. It also requires its regional offices to collaborate with labor inspectors in the periodic inspections of mines and quarries, provide social services to children found working, and notify the relevant MOL authorities of any apparent child labor infractions that the ICBF identifies.(77) However, it is unclear whether such coordination occurs in practice.

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Recent National Household Surveys have found that many adolescents work without permits, despite a requirement that adolescent workers between 15 and 17 years old obtain a work permit. In 2012 and 2013, 5,753 and 2,193 work permits respectively, were issued to adolescents.(6) The Government has suggested that it needs to target inspections where adolescents are working.(6)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2014, the National Police had 657 officers, 53 police guards, and 57 referral officers dedicated to investigating crimes against children, including child labor and its worst forms. Agents carried out 1,753 investigations.(47) As a result of the investigations, child victims were assisted, but no information is available on the exact number of children.(47)

During the year, the National Police initiated nine trafficking investigations, which remain under investigation with the Attorney General's Office. Six of the cases were for transnational human trafficking for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and three were for internal human trafficking for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation involving 26 suspects.(4) No information is available on whether these cases involved minors.(4) The MOI's Anti-TIP Operations Center identified 74 victims of transnational human trafficking; 12 of the victims were minors.(4) No information is available on whether these transnational trafficking cases involved labor or commercial sexual exploitation, or on whether they were prosecuted or any convictions were made. The MOI's Human Trafficking Hotline received 6,043 calls in 2014, and Colombian authorities identified 62 victims of human trafficking, including at least 2 children.(4, 34) No information is available on whether the children were victims of commercial sexual exploitation or forced labor, or how many of these children received services.(4) The Government has acknowledged that it lacks adequate resources to effectively conduct investigations and prosecutions of human trafficking cases. Furthermore, the Government has limited resources to assist victims.(4)

The ICBF identified 108 cases of child commercial sexual exploitation in which 54 cases were related to child pornography. Research did not uncover whether these cases were a result of calls to a hotline.(70) No information is available about how many investigations, prosecutions, or convictions the Government conducted related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

In 2014, there were reports of 48 convictions for illegal forced recruitment in armed conflict and 7 convictions for commercial sexual exploitation. However, it is not clear if the convictions included children.(47) Research also did not uncover whether the convictions were a result of investigations carried out in 2014. Child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and illegal forced recruitment for armed conflict received assistance from the ICBF.(70) The Attorney General's Office reported 327 new cases of illegal forced recruitment during the reporting period, and 217 of these cases involved children.(4) The Ministry of Defense, in partnership with UNICEF, trained members of the Colombian Armed Forces on children's rights. As of April 2014, 25 battalions received training.(78, 79)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National System of Family Well-Being	Promote interagency coordination to protect children's rights, including related to child labor. Design, implement, monitor, and evaluate policies that affect children from early childhood to adolescence.(80)
Interagency Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (CIETI)	Coordinate efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor. Chaired by the MOL; includes 13 government agencies and representatives from trade unions, business associations, and civil society organizations.(81)
National Interagency Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Commercial Sexual Exploitation	Implement direct efforts to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Coordinated by the MOL; includes 11 government agencies and representatives from business associations, trade unions, and civil society organizations.(82, 83)
Interagency Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons	Lead efforts to combat human trafficking. Chaired by the MOI and includes 14 government agencies.(84) In 2014, the MOI presided over a committee meeting for the first time since the creation of the committee in 2005.(85)
Interagency Committee for the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Children by Illegal Armed Groups	Coordinate efforts to prevent child recruitment by non-state armed groups, including for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. Led by the Office of the Vice President and composed of more than 21 government agencies.(86, 87)

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor (cont)

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Office of the Inspector General	Monitor the implementation of child labor laws and policies, including the National Strategy to Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor.(57)

In 2014, the Government created a permanent group made up of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), ILO, Department of National Planning, National Department of Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, and MOL to coordinate with universities to research the types of labor that may be permitted for minors in the coffee, cotton, sugar, and rice sectors.(47)

During the reporting period, the National Interagency Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Commercial Sexual Exploitation conducted numerous outreach and training activities for a multitude of stakeholders, including government officials, children, and parents.(47)

The 2013 evaluation of the National Strategy to Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2008–2015) indicates that the ICBF, CIETI, and the MOL demonstrated the highest rates of participation in coordination activities.(6) However, regional Government officials recognize that there continues to be a lack of coordination and information exchange between regional ICBF and MOL offices and the national headquarters.(7-9)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Colombia has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Strategy to Prevent and Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2008–2015)	Lays out Colombia's strategy to combat the worst forms of child labor in nine priority sectors: coffee, tobacco, sugarcane, mining, street work, garbage scavenging, illegal sale of gasoline, commercial sexual exploitation, and recruitment of children by illegal non-state armed groups.(81, 88) In 2014, the Department of National Planning (DNP) published the results of the 2013 evaluation of the National Strategy to Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor, which highlights advances in training and awareness raising of child labor among government officials and society in general.(6)
National Policy to Prevent the Recruitment of Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups	Directs actions to prevent the recruitment and use of children by illegal non-state armed groups. Calls for the Government to develop strategies to protect children from recruitment, address violence against children (including the worst forms of child labor), and improve interagency coordination.(89)
National Development Plan (2010–2014)	Outlines Colombia's strategy to promote economic growth and social inclusion. Includes the goal of reducing the number of working children by 35 percent (from 1,768,153 to 1,149,300).(90) In December 2014, members of the DNP met with academic and industry stakeholders and drafted the National Development Plan for 2014–2018.(91, 92)
10-Year National Plan for Children and Adolescents (2004–2015)	Aims to increase children's access to social services and reduce the number of children engaged in child labor.(93)
National Strategy to End Extreme Poverty	Seeks to lift 1.4 million families out of extreme poverty by 2014 and includes combating child labor as a goal.(94, 95) By 2014, 3.8 million families were calculated to be in situations of extreme poverty, which is a reduction of 2 million families since the inception of the strategy.(96)
Declaration of the Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labor (2014–2024)†	Aims to increase regional cooperation on eradicating child labor by 2020 through signatories' efforts to strengthen monitoring and coordination mechanisms, government programs, and South-South exchanges. Reaffirms commitments made in the Brasilia Declaration from the Third Global Conference on Child Labor (October 2013), and signed by Colombia at the ILO's 18th Regional Meeting of the Americas in Lima, Peru (October 2014).(97–99)
Colombia Network Against Child Labor (<i>Red Colombia contra el Trabajo Infantil</i>)†	Forms collaboration between Colombian businesses, MOL, and the ICBF to eliminate child labor in supply chains. Initiated with 14 business in 2014, and aims to include 500 businesses in 2015.(100, 101)
Fight against Human Trafficking Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Government of Argentina†	Establishes a work plan between the governments of Colombia and Argentina to collaborate in the fight against human trafficking. Signed in July 2014, aims to prevent human trafficking and to strengthen efforts to assist Colombian human trafficking victims found in forced labor in Argentina.(102)

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
Illegal Mining, Drug Trafficking, Inequality, and Poverty Elimination Agreement between the Governments of Colombia Peru†	Outlines 11 objectives to combat issues of illegal mining, drug trafficking, inequality, and poverty in Colombia and Peru. Several objectives focus on child and adolescent labor protection, including identifying and assisting children and adolescents working in mining activities and in vulnerable situations.(103) In addition, establishes a roadmap to apply concepts from the Cooperation Agreement on the Exchange of Experiences and Good Practices regarding labor and labor relations, including child labor.(103) As part of the agreement, officials from both countries developed an information and coordination exchange to develop a Binational Peru-Colombia Child Labor Registration System.(103, 104)
Territorial Assistance Plan†	Increases interinstitutional capacity to address child labor issues in regions and departments. Coordinates regional working groups in 17 departments to collaborate with the Interagency Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor on the implementation of public policies related to child labor and children's rights.(47) Provides training on child labor laws and policies in distant regional areas.(47)
Child Labor Pacts (2014-2018)†	Calls for formulation and design of policies on the prevention and eradication of child labor and for improved coordination between the MOL and other government agencies such as the ICBF; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Health; as well as the ILO and Colombia's National Association of Industries. Also calls for awareness-raising activities in capital cities and tourist destination to address forced child labor issues in priority sectors and for provision of technical assistance to departments for training on services and laws related to combatting child labor.(47)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

A report from the Colombian Office of the Inspector General indicates that some of the country's departments and main cities have neither fully implemented the National Strategy to Prevent and Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor nor allocated funding for child labor initiatives.(105) Moreover, officials in some of the country's departments correlate difficulties in implementing child labor policies to the lack of current reliable data available on child labor in their department. Regional government officials report that a lack of resources and training on the updating of the MOL's SIRTÍ has contributed to this situation.(7-9) The Child Labor Pacts, approved in 2014, aim to address implementation and policies in the country's departments; however, research indicates that departmental government officials have no information on how to implement the Child Labor Pacts.(47)

During the reporting period, the National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2013–2018) remained in draft form. This strategy outlines the responsibilities of the Interagency Committee for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons, departmental committees, international organizations, civil society, and academia to address human trafficking.(4)

In September 2014, Colombia participated in the First Meeting of the Working Groups of the XVIII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor to foster continued dialogue and cooperation on labor issues throughout the Americas. Held in Bridgetown, Barbados, these discussions promoted the exchange of information on policies and programs that seek to formalize the informal sector, uphold workers' rights, and prevent and eliminate child labor.(106)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Colombia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating and preventing child labor, including its worst forms. The Government has other programs that may have an impact on child labor, including its worst forms. (Table 8)

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
More Families in Action (<i>Más Familias en Acción</i>)†	Development for Social Prosperity (DPS) conditional cash transfer program that seeks to combat poverty and build human capital. Implements specific strategies to prevent child labor in mining and fight teen pregnancy; supports poor families with disabled members; and improves child nutrition.(107) In 2014, served 2,676,386 families and 4,807,772 children and adolescents.(108) Also provided support to 100 percent of the homes (1,050 homes) in the indigenous community of Totoró.(109, 110)

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)

Program	Description
United Network program (<i>Red Unidos</i>)‡	National Agency to Combat Extreme Poverty program that coordinates actions to reduce inequality and end extreme poverty, including through access to education, health, and job training. Continued projects under agreement with the Telefónica Foundation to prevent child labor in eight cities.(95)
Healthy Generations (<i>Generaciones con Bienestar</i>)‡	Children's rights program by DPS and the Colombian Institute for Healthy Families that offers cultural and recreational activities to children ages 6 to 17 identified as vulnerable to child labor and recruitment by non-state armed groups.(109)
Thriving Cities for Children and Adolescents (<i>Ciudades Prósperas de los Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes</i>)‡	DPS and ICBF program that prevents child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation and the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.(109, 111)
Youth in Action (<i>Jóvenes en Acción</i>)*‡	DPS technical job training and conditional cash transfer program for vulnerable urban youth ages 16 to 24. In 2014, 152,370 youth benefitted from the program.(108, 109)
We are a Treasure (<i>Somos Tesoro Project</i>)	USDOL-funded, \$9 million, 4-year project to combat child labor and promote safe work in the mining sector, implemented by Pact, Inc., in partnership with the Alliance for Responsible Mining, Mi Sangre Foundation, and Fund for Environmental Action and Childhood. Works with the Government of Colombia to 1) strengthen national policies to combat child labor in the mining sector; 2) improve governmental capacity to identify and address violations of child labor and occupational safety and health laws in the sector; and 3) provide education and livelihood opportunities for households vulnerable to child labor in mining communities in the departments of Antioquia and Boyacá.(112) In 2014, initiated baseline studies to collect information in intervention areas on the prevalence of child labor, mining practices, institutional capacity to combat child labor, and attitudes toward child labor; aims to benefit more than 20,000 children and 10,000 households.(113)
National Household Survey‡	National Administrative Department of Statistics annual national household survey that includes questions on child labor.(1)
Decent Work Program‡	MOL project implemented by the ILO to promote decent work, including combating child labor, and social dialogue.(114, 115)
Education Assistance*‡	In 2014, the Government's budget for education was increased by 9.1 percent, from \$12.21 million to \$13.32 million.(116)
School Meals Program (<i>Programa de Alimentación Escolar [PAE]</i>)*‡	Ministry of Education program that provides meals to more than 4 million school children to increase school retention. In 2014, project members met to discuss objectives and strategies with different partners and institutions working on nutrition and food security policy.(117, 118)
Fund to Assist Children and After-School programs (<i>Foníñez</i>)*‡	Superintendency of Family Subsidy afterschool programs for children. Research did not uncover how many families participated in the program in 2014.(119)
I Have Rights (<i>Yo Tengo Derechos</i>)	Department of Atlántico child labor awareness raising program that actively searches for children who work or are at risk of working, and strengthens interagency coordination through a one-stop center to handle child labor cases.(120)
Ingruma Indigenous Training Center	ICBF and USAID social reintegration program for demobilized indigenous youth. Provides specialized services for indigenous youth who were victims of child soldiering.(121)
Child Labor in Mining Prevention Program	Secretariat of Mining and Office of Infancy, Adolescence, and Youth program in Antioquia that has provided 438 children with life skills training, legal and psychological support, and recreational activities to prevent and eradicate child labor in the mining sector.(122)

* The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Colombia.

Although the Government of Colombia has implemented programs to eliminate child labor in mining, the commercial sexual exploitation of children, and the recruitment of child soldiers, research found no evidence that it has carried out programs to assist children in sectors such as coffee, tobacco, sugarcane, garbage scavenging, and the illegal sale of gasoline.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Colombia (Table 9).

Colombia

SIGNIFICANT ADVANCEMENT

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Provide up-to-date information about changes in child labor laws to the general public and relevant groups, including enforcement officials, employers, and civil society organizations.	2009 – 2014
	Ensure that victims of human trafficking have sufficient time to, or are not required to, file official complaints against their traffickers to receive services beyond emergency care.	2014
Enforcement	<p>Strengthen monitoring and enforcement of laws related to child labor, including by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increasing the number of labor inspectors responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor in order to provide adequate coverage of the workforce. ■ Making information publicly available about child labor law enforcement efforts, such as the number and amount of fines imposed by the MOL and collected by SENA for child labor violations, as well as the number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions related to commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of children. ■ Using information from the child labor monitoring system to target labor inspections and taking enforcement actions to follow up on child labor cases reported by the ICBF. ■ Improving coordination between the ICBF and the MOL to enforce child labor laws in the mining sector. ■ Ensuring that labor inspectors have adequate resources to perform inspections and that inspectors receive training on child labor issues. ■ Providing disaggregated data on the number of unannounced and complaint-driven inspections. ■ Providing adequate resources to criminal law enforcement officials to conduct investigations and secure convictions for cases of commercial sexual exploitation of children and child trafficking. 	2009 – 2014
Coordination	Ensure that there is an exchange of information among coordinating bodies at the national and regional levels.	2012 – 2014
Government Policies	Encourage municipalities and departments—including through financial and technical assistance incentives—to implement the National Strategy to Prevent and Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor, with a focus on identified priority sectors.	2010 – 2014
Social Programs	Institute programs to address child labor and the worst forms of child labor in the identified priority sectors for child labor eradication and assess the impact that existing programs may have on child labor.	2012 – 2014
	Expand awareness-raising efforts to encourage filing of complaints against commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2014
	Ensure that all children identified by the MOL through inspections and its child labor monitoring system and child victims of commercial sexual exploitation receive appropriate social services.	2012 – 2014
	Expand efforts to improve access to education for all children, particularly for indigenous and Afro-Caribbean children, and for children in rural areas and in the Caribbean and Pacific regions.	2013 – 2014
	Ensure that children are protected from internal armed conflict while in school.	2013 – 2014
	Collect more disaggregated survey information about activities in which children and adolescents work—including information about health, occupational safety, and other risks—as well as about geographical areas and sectors where children work, particularly in priority sectors.	2010 – 2014
	Conduct studies on the worst forms of child labor about which information is currently lacking, including activities such as adolescent work, street work, recruitment of children by illegal non-state armed groups, and children's involvement in other illicit activities.	2009 – 2014

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