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In 2019, Haiti made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, the National Tripartite Commission for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor made updates to the draft hazardous work list and draft National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor. However, children in Haiti perform dangerous tasks in agriculture and domestic work. Children are placed in orphanages where some are subsequently used for domestic work. Minimum age protections apply only to children with a formal employment contract, which does not comply with international standards requiring all children to be protected. In addition, Haiti lacks a clear, easily applicable minimum age for domestic work and a list of hazardous occupations prohibited to children. Also, labor inspectors are not authorized to assess penalties and social programs to combat child labor are insufficient to adequately address the extent of the problem.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Haiti perform dangerous tasks in agriculture and domestic work. (1-6) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Haiti. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	34.4 (815,993)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	92.4
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	34.9
Primary Completion Rate (%)		Unavailable

Primary Completion Rate was unavailable from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020. (7)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Enquête Mortalité, Morbidité et Utilisation des Services (EMMUS-V), 2012. (8)

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	Harvesting sugarcane, collecting cut sugarcane, grinding sugarcane, and clearing land for sugarcane production (1)
	Raising livestock (2,9)
	Capturing and processing fish (1,3,9,10)
Industry	Construction, including transport of construction materials such as sand and rocks (1,3,4,10)
	Producing metal crafts (11)
Services	Domestic work (5,12,13)
	Transporting and selling alcohol† and tobacco (3,9)
	Street work, including vending, begging, shining shoes, washing cars; and carrying water, firewood, goods, and luggage in public markets and bus stations (2-4,6,10)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced labor in domestic work, agriculture, street vending, and begging, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3-6,15,16)
	Use in illicit activities, including by criminal groups in drug trafficking (9,17)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4,6,10,18,19)

[†] 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.

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A 2015 study found that there were approximately 286,000 child domestic workers in Haiti, 207,000 of whom were lagging behind in school or had significantly lower school enrollment rates. (6,10,13,20) Some parents who are unable to care for their children send them to residential care centers or to relatives or strangers who are expected to provide the children with food, shelter, and schooling in exchange for household work. In practice, some of these children receive care and access to education, while many others become victims of labor exploitation and abuse. (4,5,12,21)

In addition, Haiti has over 750 orphanages that house over 25,000 children who may be vulnerable to human trafficking and child labor in lieu of attending school. (20) According to a Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor's Institute of Social Welfare and Research (IBESR) study, the majority of Haiti's orphanages fail to comply with government standards for care. There is evidence that some children in orphanages engage in child labor for domestic work and are prevented from attending school. (20,22-25) In the last 5 years, the government has closed 160 unaccredited orphanages, and is focusing instead on promoting child fostering to prevent child labor in institutions. (20,22-25)

Haitian children are victims of human trafficking internally and externally, primarily to the Dominican Republic, other Caribbean countries, South America, and the United States. NGOs have reported that children illegally crossing the Haiti-Dominican Republic border are often accompanied by adults paid to act as the children's parents or guardians until they reach the Dominican Republic. (3,10,14,26) Some of these children are re-united with relatives in the Dominican Republic, while others engage in commercial sexual exploitation, domestic work, agriculture, street vending, and begging. (3,6,10,27)

In 2019, the Government of the Dominican Republic continued involuntarily repatriating individuals with irregular migration status to Haiti, pursuant to Dominican law. (28,29) Some of these individuals, including children, are Dominican-born persons of Haitian descent. (30) Some of these repatriated children were residing in Haiti in camps near the Dominican Republic border, where schools and other basic services are not available. In addition, these children may not speak French or Haitian Creole, the languages of instruction in public Haitian schools. (4,16,31,32) These children, including those who have been deported to Haiti or who left voluntarily, are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. (6,32)

The Constitution of Haiti provides free and compulsory primary education. (33-35) However, public schools often charge fees for textbooks, uniforms, and school materials. Because private schools represent approximately 90 percent of existing schools, most Haitian children are enrolled in private schools that charge tuition and other fees, which make education prohibitive to many families. (2-4,36,37) In addition, many children in Haiti are not registered at birth, and unregistered children are not able to access social assistance services and educational programs provided by the government. (9)

Other children, especially in rural areas, do not attend school due to the lack of school infrastructure and limited availability of teachers. Out-of-school children are more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. (2,4,16) In addition, the Ministry of Education recommends that a child be between ages 11 and 13 when transitioning to secondary school. Overage children must integrate into a special group that attends school during the evening. (33,34,38) However, research did not find evidence that schools provide instruction during the evening for special groups. (39)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

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

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

	Convention	Ratification
WATER A	ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ATTO:	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	/

The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Haiti's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for work and the age for compulsory education.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

	Meets		
Standard	International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	16	Article 340 of the Labor Code; Article 10 of the Law Organizing and Regulating Labor (40,41)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 333-334 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of the Act on the Prohibition and Elimination of All Forms of Abuse, Violence, Ill Treatment, or Inhumane Treatment Against Children (Act of 2003) (40,42)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	No		Articles 333–336 of the Labor Code (40)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	No		Article 4 of the Labor Code; Article 2 of the Act of 2003 (40,42)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 2 of the Act of 2003; Article 1.1.1 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law (42,43)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Act of 2003; Articles 279–281 of the Penal Code; Article 1.1.17 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law (38,42,43)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 72 of the Law on the Control and Suppression of Illicit Drug Trafficking; Article 2 of the Act of 2003 (42,44)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	No		
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 268 of the Constitution (33)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non- state Armed Groups	Yes		Article 70 of the Penal Code; Article 2 of the Act of 2003 (38,42)
Compulsory Education Age	No	15	Article 23 of the Decree on the Reorganization of the Haitian Education System (35)
Free Public Education	Yes		Articles 32.1 and 33 of the Constitution (33)

The Labor Code, which supplies the penalty for violations of the minimum age for work, applies only to workers who perform work under a formal employment agreement, which does not conform to international standards that require all children to be protected under the law establishing a minimum age for work. (2,39,40) Furthermore, as the minimum age for work is 16, children age 15 are vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to attend school but also are not yet legally permitted to work. (35,40)

In addition, it is unclear whether there is a minimum age for domestic work because the Act on the Prohibition and Elimination of All Forms of Abuse, Violence, Ill Treatment, or Inhumane Treatment Against Children of 2003 (Act of 2003) annulled Chapter 9 of the Labor Code, which set a minimum age for domestic work at age 12. (2,39,40,42)

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The Labor Code prohibits children under age 18 from working in establishments that sell alcohol and from working at night in industrial enterprises. (41) However, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover agriculture, an area of work in which children are exposed to hazardous substances and agents and to temperatures that can damage their health. (3,17,18,44-47) In 2019, Haiti's National Tripartite Commission for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor updated the draft hazardous work list to include agriculture and livestock, mines and quarries, construction, transportation, and domestic work, but the draft list remains unapproved by Parliament for the fifth consecutive year. Research indicates the list will be officially published once a government is ratified. (9,45) However, Haiti has been without a ratified government since March 2019. (9)

Laws related to forced labor are not sufficient, as forced labor is not criminally prohibited. The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law criminalizes trafficking for forced labor, including recruitment, transportation, and accommodation for that purpose, but does not independently criminalize forced labor. (43) Research could not find evidence of any other legal provision criminally prohibiting forced labor.

Although Haiti's Constitution establishes the age for compulsory military recruitment at age 18, and sources suggest recruitment materials set the minimum age for voluntary recruitment at age 18, research could not find evidence of a law that establishes the age for voluntary military recruitment. (9,48,49)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MAST) that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MAST)	Enforces laws related to child labor by receiving complaints, conducting investigations, and referring cases to juvenile courts. (41,50) MAST's Institute of Social Welfare and Research (IBESR) agents perform child protection inspections and are responsible for accrediting residential care centers. Develops and implements programs to raise awareness of child labor and provide social services to child victims of labor exploitation. (5,10,50)
Brigade for the Protection of Minors (BPM)	Investigates crimes of the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. Submits investigations to judicial authorities for criminal prosecutions and refers child victims to IBESR. (5) Housed under the Haitian National Police, the BPM maintains 24 offices around the country, including 4 offices along the Haiti-Dominican Republic border. (10,17)
POLIFRONT	Enforces Haiti's Customs Code and investigates transnational crimes, including child trafficking. Cooperates with the Dominican Republic Border Police. (51,52) The POLIFRONT operates at the border crossings of Ouanaminthe and Anse-a-Pitres, and reportedly plans to have a permanent presence in Malpasse and Belladere (the other two official border crossing points) by 2021. (17,51,53-55)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2019, labor law enforcement agencies in Haiti took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps in MAST's authority, including lack of authority to assess penalties, may hinder adequate labor law enforcement.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (17)	Unknown (9)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown (17)	Unknown (9)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (17,40)	No (9,40)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Unknown (17)	N/A (9)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	No (56)	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (17)	Yes (9)

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Unknown (17)	Unknown (9)
Unknown (17)	Unknown (9)
Yes (17)	Yes (9)
No (17)	Yes (9)
Yes (45)	Yes (9)
Unknown (17)	Yes (9)
Yes (17)	Yes (9)
Yes (17)	Yes (9)
	Unknown (17) Unknown (17) Unknown (17) Unknown (17) Yes (17) No (17) Yes (45) Unknown (17) Yes (17)

In 2019, MAST allocated \$624,500 to the Institute of Social Welfare and Research (IBESR), which employed 103 agents throughout Haiti, in line with the budget and staff for 2018. UNICEF also supported staff salaries and costs of other services. (9,17,45) These agents included 48 child protection agents and approximately 20 social workers to handle child protection cases, including those involving child labor. (9,10,17,45) However, research indicates that the lack of sufficient resources, such as means of transportation, fuel, and appropriately equipped workplaces, hampered MAST's enforcement efforts, including IBESR's capacity to enforce child labor laws by conducting an adequate number of labor inspections. (3,9,17,57,58)

IBESR also manages the "1-3-3" hotline that receives complaints about situations requiring child protection. (10,14,59) However, the hotline functions exclusively in Port-au-Prince, leaving rural areas without a mechanism to receive child labor complaints. (16) The number of calls related to child labor received during 2019 is unknown.

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in Haiti took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including financial and human resources.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019	
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	No (17)	Yes (9)	
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (17)	N/A	
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (17)	Yes (9)	
Number of Investigations	834 (17)	744 (9)	
Number of Violations Found	345 (17)	284 (9)	
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	17 (17)	33 (9)	
Number of Convictions	17 (17)	l (9)	
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (17)	l (9)	
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (17)	Yes (9)	

In 2019, the Brigade for the Protection of Minors (BPM) investigated 744 cases of child trafficking, forced child labor, use of children in illicit activities, and commercial sexual exploitation of children, and reported 284 violations. In addition, the BPM reported that 33 defendants were prosecuted by the judicial system for forced labor of minors. (9) Despite these efforts, reports indicate that the BPM's number of agents is inadequate and lack of training, equipment, transportation, and funding hampers its ability to enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor. (3,10,14,53,60)

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In 2019, the POLIFRONT arrested 51 individuals in connection with 34 suspected cases of human trafficking, and has identified over 120 potential victims of human trafficking since its initial deployment in January 2018. One individual was convicted of human trafficking, and was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment and fined \$1,000. (55)

An informal referral mechanism between BPM, IBESR, and NGOs is in place to provide reintegration services to victims of the worst forms of child labor. (9,10,14) BPM also manages the "1-8-8" hotline that receives notifications of alleged violations related to the worst forms of child labor. (9,61) However, like the IBESR "1-3-3" hotline, the "1-8-8" hotline functions exclusively in Port-au-Prince, which makes reporting cases involving the worst forms of child labor more difficult in rural areas. (10,20)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8).

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Tripartite Commission for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Develops policies, approves programs, and coordinates, monitors, and evaluates efforts to combat child labor in Haiti. Chaired by MAST, includes representatives from IBESR, BPM, and local and international organizations. (62) During the reporting period, the National Tripartite Commission for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor met and made updates to the draft hazardous work list and the draft National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor. (9)
National Committee for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons (CNLTP)	Coordinates actions against human trafficking and provides protection and rehabilitation services to victims. Chaired by IBESR, includes representatives from MAST, BPM, and other ministries. (20,43,63) During the reporting period, the CNLTP helped to organize trafficking in persons trainings for journalists, immigration officials, and representatives from the Office of the Human Rights Ombudsman. In July 2019, members of the CNLTP and the USAID-funded Project BEST visited the Northeast Department on a fact-finding mission to learn about existing anti-trafficking efforts in the region and identify potential partners. (55) During the reporting period, CNLTP also collaborated with Project BEST to train 19 immigration officials on the profile of traffickers and potential victims. (55)
Child Protection Working Group	Implements, coordinates, and monitors efforts on child protection, including protection for child domestic workers. Chaired by IBESR, comprises non-governmental stakeholders and officials from various ministries. (64) Holds regular meetings between enforcement agencies (IBESR, BPM, and MAST) with the participation and technical support of UNICEF and other child protection partners. (9)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including implementation.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Child Protection Policy (2016–2020)	Aims to protect children from abuse, violence, and labor exploitation, and promotes improved access to education and livelihood services for vulnerable children, with a focus on domestic workers. Led by IBESR and supported by international donors. (65,66) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Child Protection Policy during the reporting period.
National Strategic Development Plan (2014–2019)	Highlighted the need to prohibit child labor to ensure sustained and equitable economic growth. Overseen by the Ministry of Planning and External Cooperation and the Ministry of Economy and Finance. (67) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Strategic Development Plan during the reporting period.

In 2019, the government resumed activities under the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons. (17,46,71)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2019, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the adequacy of efforts to address the problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Protecting the Working Conditions of People/ Proteje Kondisyon Travay Moun (2013–2019)	\$9.99 million USDOL-funded project implemented by Catholic Relief Services to provide services to households and children engaged in or at risk of engaging in child labor or other exploitative working conditions in agriculture. Concluded in March 2019. (72,73) The project reached roughly 7,343 children with educational services and 4,946 households to improve their livelihoods. In addition, the project supported the capacity of the Haitian Civil Registrar system to legally document more than 3,100 individuals. (74,75) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.
Government Child Shelter, Census, and National Child Protection Database†	Government program to support child protection. Through IBESR, implements the government's regulatory framework for residential care centers, such as orphanages and shelters, collects information on vulnerable children, and tracks them through the National Child Protection Database. (80) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this program during the reporting period.
Special Program of Free Education (PROSGATE)†	Replaced the National Free Education Program. (81,82) Aims to increase poor children's access to education. Includes school grants intended to eliminate school fees and for accelerated learning programs for students who are lagging in school. (83) In 2019, PROSGATE disbursed 16 million and 540,000 Gourdes in the departments of South, Southeast and Nippes to support school budgets. (84)
UNICEF Country Program (2017–2021)	\$24 million UNICEF-funded program supporting the government's efforts to improve education, health, social inclusion, and protection for children in Haiti. In 2019, provided 37,346 children with school supplies. (80,85-90)
Providing an Education of Quality in Haiti (2016–2022)	\$30 million World Bank-implemented program that aims to strengthen public management of the education sector, improve learning conditions, and increase enrollment of students in selected public and non-public primary schools. (91,92) As of June 2019, provided community education grants to 8,546 primary school students. (93)

[†] Program is funded by the Government of Haiti.

Despite IBESR's efforts to collect information for the National Child Protection Database, it does not fully capture all relevant information, including the number of displaced street children and children engaged in domestic work. Although Haiti has programs that target the worst forms of child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, particularly in domestic work, agriculture, and child trafficking. (10,95)

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Haiti (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that minimum age protections apply to all children, including those without formal employment contracts.	2014 – 2019
	Clarify the minimum age for work, including for domestic work.	2009 – 2019
	Adopt a list of hazardous occupations and activities, and ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive and include work in hazardous agricultural environments.	2009 – 2019
	Ensure the law criminally prohibits forced labor.	2019
	Ensure that the law establishes a minimum age for voluntary recruitment by the state military, at age 18 or at age 16, with safeguards for voluntariness.	2018 – 2019
	Establish by law a compulsory education age equal to the minimum age for work.	2017 – 2019
Enforcement	Publish information on labor inspectorate funding, the number of labor inspectors and whether labor inspectors received adequate training, the number and type of labor inspections, and violations and penalties related to child labor.	2013 – 2019
	Authorize the inspectorate to assess penalties.	2013 – 2019
	Ensure that the number of labor and criminal law enforcement agents, and training and resources for labor and criminal law enforcement agencies, are sufficient to adequately enforce laws related to child labor, including its worst forms.	2013 – 2019
	Establish penalties that are sufficient to serve as a deterrent for employing children in contravention of the Labor Code.	2009 – 2019

[‡] The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (79,94)

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Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Expand the hotlines operated by the Brigade for the Protection of Minors and the Institute of Social Welfare and Research to facilitate reporting of child exploitation cases in areas beyond Port-au-Prince, including in rural areas; publish information on the number of hotline calls related to child labor.	2013 – 2019
Government Policies	Ensure that policies to prevent or combat child labor are implemented, including the National Child Protection Policy and the National Strategic Development Plan.	2017 – 2019
Social Programs	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children by removing school-related fees in public schools; increase the number of schools and teachers, especially in rural areas and camps near the border with the Dominican Republic; ensure that public schools address language barriers; meet the specific educational needs of vulnerable populations, including recent arrivals from the Dominican Republic, unregistered children, and child domestic workers; and ensure that children who start their education late or repeat grades are allowed to transition to secondary school.	2009 – 2019
	Expand the National Child Protection Database, including by identifying displaced street children and children in domestic work.	2010 – 2019
	Expand existing social programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, particularly in domestic work, agriculture, and child trafficking.	2010 – 2019
	Ensure that all social programs are active and implemented, including the Government Child Shelter, Census, and National Child Protection Database.	2019

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