

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Côte d'Ivoire made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government increased the Ministry of Education's budget by 13 percent, or \$240 million, leading to an increase in the number of teachers and classrooms available for students, and launched a new action plan to address human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants. The Ministry of Employment and Social Protection also created 111 departmental child labor monitoring committees and 304 committees at the village level across the country.

However, the government does not have a mechanism to assess civil penalties for labor law violations, and the lack of financial resources and personnel may have hindered labor law enforcement efforts. In addition, accessibility issues for students make it difficult for them to attend school, making them more susceptible to child labor.



PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	25.6% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	70.1%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	21.8%

Children in Côte d'Ivoire are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced labor in the harvesting of cocoa and coffee.

Overview of Children's Work by Sector and Activity



Agriculture

Production of cocoa and coffee, including burning† and clearing fields,† cutting down trees,† applying chemical fertilizers,† spraying pesticides,† and using sharp tools to break pods,† and transporting heavy loads† of water and pods. Also used in fishing, including deep sea diving† and repairing and hauling nets.



Industry

Mining,† including crushing and transporting stones, blasting rocks, digging, and sieving. Also used in construction† and manufacturing, including repairing automobiles.



Services

Domestic work, carrying goods,† street vending, and work in restaurants and in transportation.



Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Forced mining, carpentry, domestic work, street vending, and agriculture, including in the production of cocoa and coffee, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking; commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Also used in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, and in commercial sexual exploitation and begging as *talibés* by Koranic teachers, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking.

† 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.



SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Côte d'Ivoire's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Legal Framework

Establish by law free public education.

Enforcement

Establish a mechanism to assess penalties for child labor violations.

Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)

Ensure that the labor inspectorate receives sufficient funding to conduct inspections throughout the country, including in the informal sector.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 344 to 624 to ensure adequate coverage of the labor force of approximately 9.4 million workers.

Ensure that criminal law enforcement agencies, including the Anti-Trafficking Unit, receive the resources and personnel needed to adequately enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor.

Government Policies

Finalize and publish the national action plan to address child labor.

Social Programs

Improve access to education by increasing transportation options, the number of teachers, textbooks, sanitation facilities, and classrooms; as well as increasing the number of schools in rural areas; ensuring that schools are free of physical and sexual abuse; and increasing children’s access to birth registration and identity documents.

Expand existing programs, including the child labor monitoring and remediation system, and institute new ones aimed at addressing the full scope of the child labor problem in Côte d’Ivoire, including outside the cocoa sector.

Ensure that survivors of the worst forms of child labor are able to access social services throughout the country.

Publish disaggregated child labor data, including information on gender disparities, schooling, and sectoral work.



CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Due to recent security issues in both Mali and Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire has had a surge of refugees, of which an estimated 59 percent are children. Children are also brought to Côte d’Ivoire from those countries for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor, including in begging, cocoa production, and artisanal mining. Children from Côte d’Ivoire are also subjected to human trafficking for forced labor in domestic work within the country and North Africa.



BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

During the reporting period, the Ivorian government increased the Ministry of Education’s budget by 13 percent, or \$240 million, which increased the number of teachers and classrooms available for students. Despite these efforts, there remains a shortage of teachers. In addition, poor school infrastructure, insufficient classroom space, the lack of transportation systems in rural areas, and inadequate sanitation facilities have negatively impacted children’s ability to attend school. Further, roughly one in four girls in Côte d’Ivoire do not attend primary school. Research also suggests that some students are physically and sexually abused at school, which may deter some students from attending school. Although the education laws provide for free education, students are often required to pay for textbooks and uniforms, which may be prohibitive to some families. In addition, birth registration or identity documents are required for students to take entrance exams for secondary school, posing a barrier to continued education beyond the primary level.



LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Côte d’Ivoire has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, Côte d’Ivoire’s laws do not meet the international standard for free public education.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, 16 Years		Article 23.2 of the Labor Code; Article 16 of the Constitution

Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, 18 Years		Article 4 of the Prohibitions of Hazardous Work List
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 5–11 of the Prohibitions of Hazardous Work List; Articles 6 and 19 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Article 5 of the Constitution; Articles 4, 6, 7, 8, 11–14, and 20–23 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law; Article 3 of the Labor Code
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 5 of the Constitution; Articles 11, 12, 20–22, and 26 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law; Article 370 of the Penal Code; Articles 4.4 and 6 of the Law on Combatting Trafficking of Persons
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 8, 9, 15, and 24–29 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law; Articles 4.4 and 6 of the Law on Combatting Trafficking of Persons
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Articles 4 and 30 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, 18 Years		Article 56.4 of the Armed Forces Code; Articles 7, 8, and 18 of the Law Determining the Conditions for Entering the Military
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	*	Article 56.4 of the Armed Forces Code
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Articles 4 and 31 of the Prohibition of Trafficking and the Worst Forms of Child Labor Law
Compulsory Education Age, 16 Years		Article 10 of the Constitution; Article 2.1 of the Law on Education
Free Public Education		Article 2 of the Law on Education

*Country has no conscription

Côte d'Ivoire does not meet the international standard for free public education because the law allows for charging of fees, including school registration fees.



ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Côte d'Ivoire took actions to address child labor. However, a lack of funding and inspections in sectors at high risk for child labor may have hindered enforcement efforts.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Ministry of Employment and Social Protection: Drafts and enforces labor laws, including those related to child labor. The Anti-Trafficking Unit, a Sub-Directorate, and the Ministry of Women, Family, and Children provides support to survivors of child trafficking and other forms of child labor.

Ministry of the Interior and Security: Through its Anti-Trafficking Unit, investigates crimes related to child trafficking and provides survivors with rehabilitation support. Through its Vice Squads (*Brigades Mondaine*), investigates crimes related to commercial sexual exploitation and refers cases for prosecution to the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights. Through its Unit for Combating Transnational

Organized Crime, supports the UN Office on Drugs and Crime’s West African Coast Initiative, which aims to improve cross-border cooperation to address human trafficking crimes. In May 2023, the Anti-Trafficking Unit arrested 4 child traffickers at Dikodougou, in the north part of the country, and rescued 13 minors between the ages of 13 and 16 years old.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	N/A
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Yes	Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Yes

In 2023, **368** labor inspectors conducted **9,536** worksite inspections, finding **0** child labor violations. The government also conducted **1,250** investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, initiated **1,005** prosecutions, and convicted **603** perpetrators.



COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Côte d’Ivoire established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

National Monitoring Committee on Actions to Combat Trafficking, Exploitation, and Child Labor (CNS): Supervises, monitors, and evaluates all government activities related to child labor and child trafficking, including making policy recommendations and harmonizing laws with international conventions. Also oversees the country’s child labor monitoring and remediation system (*Système d’Observation et de Suivi du Travail des Enfants en Côte d’Ivoire* [SOSTECI]), which enables communities to collect and analyze statistical data on the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, 111 departmental SOSTECI committees and 304 SOSTECI village committees were created across the country. In addition, chairs the Interministerial Committee for the Fight against Trafficking, Exploitation, and Child Labor (CIM), and provides medical and social assistance to survivors of child labor and trafficking. In 2023, CNS launched the “Together to act on the root causes of child labor in Nawa” (ENACTE) project with funding from the EU. The project is implemented by ILO, the International Organization for Migration, and UNICEF, and aims to address child labor by providing children with access to education and basic social services and offering children above the minimum working age and their parents with decent work opportunities.

Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Côte d’Ivoire established policies related to child labor. However, the primary policy to address child labor, including its worst forms, expired at the end of 2023.

National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking, Exploitation, and Child Labor (2019–2023): Implemented by CNS and CIM, aimed to significantly reduce the number of children engaged in the worst forms of child labor by drawing on best practices and building on lessons learned from the implementation of previous national action plans. Priorities included increasing efforts to mobilize resources at the national level, reinforcing regional cooperation and public-private partnerships, and incorporating worst forms of child labor considerations into national and sector-specific programming.

National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking:† Implemented by the Ministry of Social Cohesion, Solidarity, and the Fight Against Poverty, the new action plan focuses on addressing human trafficking and the illicit trafficking of migrants. Strategies from this plan include coordinating at the regional and national levels, providing additional protection and care for survivors, and improving the legal proceedings in the court system.

Labor Inspection Strategy (2019–2023): Through the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection, with assistance from ILO, aimed to enable the government to ensure the application of legal provisions for the improvement of working conditions and the removal of children from work through the inspection of worksites, the provision of counseling, and monitoring. In 2023, labor inspectors participated in capacity building seminars to learn how to better work with members of local communities to address the worst forms of child labor.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

Coordination, Policies, and Programs (Cont.)

<p>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</p> <p>Côte d'Ivoire funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, these social programs are inadequate to address the problem in all sectors and in all states where child labor has been identified, including in the cocoa sector.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire.</i> <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p>ACCEL AFRICA:[†] Co-funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, under the name “Accelerate action for the elimination of child labor in Africa’s supply chains” (<i>Accélérer l’action pour l’élimination du travail des enfants dans les chaînes d’approvisionnement en Afrique</i>, or ACCEL AFRICA). UNICEF and ILO representatives shared best practices with project participants in order to strengthen interagency efforts to address child labor. In 2023, the project expanded health care coverage to eight cocoa farming communities.</p> <p>World Bank-Funded Projects: Aim to improve access to education and provide poverty relief. Include the Productive Social Safety Net (2015–2024), which has supported 227,000 participant households (representing 1,342,128 individuals). In addition, the project’s Unique Social Registry currently counts 315,925 poor and vulnerable individuals as project participants, and the Registry is being used to monitor efforts to increase timely digital payments to participants.</p> <p>Projects in the Cocoa Sector: Aim to increase sustainability in the cocoa sector, improve farmer livelihoods, increase access to education opportunities for children, and address the worst forms of child labor in cocoa-growing areas. While private industry continued to implement the Cocoa and Forests Initiative during the reporting period, the scope of existing programs, including in cocoa, is insufficient to fully address the extent of the child labor problem in Côte d'Ivoire. The industry-funded NORC report released in October 2020 found that programs like the child labor monitoring and remediation system, access to quality to education, and programs to increase farmer yields and household income need to be scaled and expanded to impact more families.</p>
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For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit dol.gov/ILABprojects
 For references, please visit dol.gov/ChildLaborReports