



# MONGOLIA

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2023, Mongolia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government reorganized and renewed the mandate of the National Committee for Children and increased the number of child rights inspectors from 13 to 41. The Law on Education also went into effect during the reporting period, which has a new section on the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools. However, although Mongolia’s revised Labor Law legalized unannounced labor inspections that can result in sanctions, confusion remains amongst inspectors on whether unannounced inspections are permitted, which may impede the enforcement of child labor laws. Mongolia’s minimum age for work provisions also do not meet international standards because they do not provide penalties for violations of these provisions. In addition, the law prohibits only children younger than 8 years old from racing horses, which is far below 18 years old, the minimum age for hazardous work.

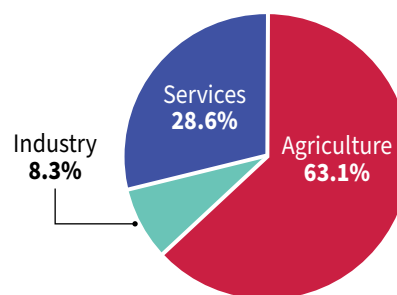


## PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

### Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent of Population
Working	5 to 14	20.7% (147,850)
Boys		24.3%
Girls		16.9%
Urban		14.7%
Rural		34.9%
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	43.5% (60,101)
Boys		51.9%
Girls		34.4%
Urban		35.1%
Rural		59.3%
Attending School	5 to 14	86.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	24.2%

### Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Children in Mongolia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging and commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in dangerous tasks in horse jockeying and in the agricultural sector.

### Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity



#### Agriculture

Engaged in animal husbandry,† including herding.†



#### Industry

Construction,† and mining† of goods such as coal† and gold.



#### Services

Working in restaurants/canteens,† bars,† and food processing facilities.† Scavenging in garbage dumpsites, street work, begging, handling freight,† and ticket-taking for public transportation.† Domestic work and horse jockeying.†



#### Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡

Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Forced labor in begging, stealing, construction, mining, horse jockeying, animal husbandry, and contortionist work.

† 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 Mongolia's implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

### **Legal Framework**

Establish legal penalties for violations of minimum age restrictions.

Prohibit children under age 18 from horse racing at all times of the year.

Allow unannounced inspections by addressing legal inconsistencies between the Law on State Inspection that requires notice before inspections and the Revised Labor Law that allows for unannounced inspections.

### **Enforcement**

Train labor inspectors on evidence collection and provisions in the revised Labor Law.

Increase the number of labor inspectors from 66 to 87 to provide adequate coverage of approximately 1.3 million workers.

Establish a functional, formalized mechanism for referrals between enforcement authorities and social services.

Allow anti-trafficking police and prosecutors to work with one another and ensure that evidence related to human trafficking cases is collected to support investigations.

Provide adequate funding for law enforcement agencies.

Conduct unannounced inspections and impose penalties for violations found.

Ensure that child trafficking victims are not fined, arrested, detained, or charged with crimes and administrative offenses as a result of having been subjected to human trafficking.

Train police officers and government officials on criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor, including the Child Protection Law and the Law on Petty Offenses, and on procedural checklists used to identify human trafficking victims, to ensure that child labor offenses are prosecuted fully, convicted traffickers are appropriately punished, and police discontinue the practice of detaining child victims.

Publish criminal law enforcement data, including the number of prosecutions and convictions, and whether penalties are imposed for violations relating to the worst forms of child labor.

### **Coordination**

Create formal guidelines and referral procedures for the Multidisciplinary Task Force.

### **Government Policies**

Implement a policy to address child labor in all its forms.

### **Social Programs**

Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem and ensure that they are sufficiently funded and staffed.

Increase the number of schools to help eliminate overcrowding, increase the number of trained teachers, ensure that appropriate technology is available to all students, and provide infrastructure to allow full accessibility options for children with disabilities.

Increase the length of stay available for children in shelter homes.

Ensure that all government-run and -funded shelter homes separate children from adults, are provided proper oversight so children are protected from sexual abuse and are accessible to children with disabilities.



## CHILDREN AT HIGHER RISK

Unaccompanied children and homeless children are more vulnerable to child labor in Mongolia. Mongolian girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation in communities near mining towns or are recruited through social media. Girls from Mongolia are also forced to work as contortionists, both domestically and in Turkey.



## BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Mongolian children encounter numerous education barriers due to an insufficient number of schools, overcrowding, a lack of trained teachers, and a lack of accessibility for children with disabilities. According to educators, infrastructure for children with disabilities is generally inadequate to allow full accessibility in schools, and there is a lack of educational facilities specifically designed for students with disabilities.






## LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Mongolia has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor. However, gaps exist in Mongolia’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor as children aged 8 and older can jockey horses, despite 18 years being the minimum age for hazardous work.

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work, <b>15 Years</b>		Articles 2, 3, 142.1, and 165 of the Revised Labor Law
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work, <b>18 Years</b>		Article 2-4 and 142.2 of the Revised Labor Law; Article 16.10 of the Criminal Code
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children		Articles 2 and 3 of the List of Jobs and Occupations Prohibited to Minors; Article 8 of the Law on the National Naadam Holiday
Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor		Articles 13.1, 16.4, and 16.10 of the Criminal Code; Articles 2, 3, 15, and 17 of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons; Article 7 of the Law on Labor; Article 7 of the Law on the Rights of the Child
Prohibition of Child Trafficking		Article 3 of the Law on Combating Trafficking in Persons; Article 13.1 of the Criminal Code
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children		Articles 12.3, 13.1, 16.8, 16.9, and 115 of the Criminal Code; Articles 8.1.3 and 10.2 of the Combating Pornography and Prostitution Act
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		Article 142.2 of the Revised Labor Law; Article 192 of the Criminal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment, <b>18 Years</b>		Article 12 of the Law on Military
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		Article 12 of the Law on Military

**Legal Framework for Child Labor (Cont.)**

Child Labor Laws and Regulations	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		Article 29 of the Criminal Code
Compulsory Education Age, <b>17 Years</b>		Articles 3, 10.2, and 40 of the Law on Education
Free Public Education		Article 16 of the Constitution of Mongolia; Article 38 of the Law on Education

The Government of Mongolia passed a new Law on Education in 2023, which includes a new section on the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools. Mongolia’s minimum age for work provisions do not meet international standards because they do not provide penalties for violations of these provisions. While Mongolian law allows for penalties for certain forms of child labor that are “detrimental”, there is no penalty for working under the minimum age in general. In addition, Mongolian law also only prohibits children younger than 8 years old from racing horses, which is far below 18 years old, the minimum age for hazardous work.



**ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR**

In 2023, labor and criminal law enforcement agencies in Mongolia took actions to address child labor. However, insufficient authority, training, unclear mandates, and a lack of funding for labor and criminal law enforcement agencies hindered enforcement efforts.

**Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

**Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (MLSP):** The Family, Child, and Youth Development Agency (FCYDA) within the MLSP oversees child protection issues, including child labor. They can identify and remove children working under hazardous conditions. FCYDA also runs a child safety complaint hotline and maintains a database that tracks the case status and social service needs of vulnerable children. In 2023, the FCYDA hired an additional 28 child rights inspectors, bringing the total number to 41. The Labor Inspectorate, which also sits within the MLSP, is responsible for labor inspections, including inspecting for violations of laws on child labor. Reporting indicates that inspectors often do not conduct unannounced inspections due to inconsistencies between the revised labor law and other legislation. Inspectors also lacked training on what labor inspection information to collect that would be useful to prosecutors.

**Criminal Police Department (CPD):** Oversees several specialty units that enforce child labor laws including the Anti-Trafficking Unit and the Organized Crime Division, which identifies human trafficking victims and uses referrals to open criminal investigations into human trafficking and sexual exploitation cases. The Division for Combating Against Domestic Violence and Crimes Against Children comprises 10 officers who provide guidance to police units and protection services for survivors of child labor. The National Police Agency has assigned 53 police officers nationwide exclusively to mitigate crimes against children. Cybercrimes involving children are investigated by the Division to Combat Cyber Crimes. In 2023, the Anti-Trafficking Unit reported removing 11 child victims from exploitative situations and referring them to government- and NGO-run shelters and services. While the CPD has an 11-question risk assessment checklist to identify survivors of human trafficking, local police officers have not been trained to use this checklist to identify potential cases that should be referred to specialized investigators. There are concerns that many cases of child trafficking have been dropped at the district police level for this reason. Research indicates that lack of training for law enforcement officials on the Child Protection Law and the Criminal Code may enable perpetrators to evade punishment.

## Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts

Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes	Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes	Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	No
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	Unknown

In 2023, 66 labor inspectors conducted 2,887 worksite inspections, finding an unknown number of child labor violations. The government also conducted 27 investigations into suspected worst forms of child labor crimes, initiated an unknown number of prosecutions, and convicted an unknown number of perpetrators.



## COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

<p><b>Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor</b></p> <p>Mongolia established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor. However, the mechanism lacks formal guidelines and referral procedures to allow for criminal investigations or social services, which diminishes its coordination efforts.</p>	<p><b>National Committee for Children:</b> Established in 2018, functions as the overarching national coordinating body for child protection efforts. Headed by the Prime Minister, with the Minister of Labor and Social Protection serving as Deputy Head, and the head of the FCYDA serving as the Secretariat. Includes robust membership from relevant ministries, NGOs, and civil society organizations. In 2023, the Cabinet reorganized the structure and renewed the mandate of the Committee. The newly reorganized committee then met to adopt policy and procedural papers for the Revised Child Protection Law.</p>
<p><b>Key Policies Related to Child Labor</b></p> <p>Mongolia established a policy related to child labor. However, this policy does not address all forms of child labor, particularly in agriculture and horse jockeying.</p>	<p><b>Child Protection Compact Partnership (2020–2024):</b> \$5.5 million partnership among the Government of Mongolia, the United States Government, and NGOs. Consists of 18 governmental and non-governmental organizations to fund victim-centered, collaborative, and sustainable approaches to identify child trafficking victims. Created the Multidisciplinary Task Force under the National Sub-Council on Trafficking in Persons. Works with the Crime Prevention and Coordinating Council and National Sub-Council on Trafficking in Persons. In 2023, NGOs coordinated with the Ministry of Education to implement afterschool programs to help high school students recognize and help prevent forced child labor and sex trafficking in 40 high-risk schools. The District Governors and municipal FCYDA also deployed 200 volunteer community home visitors who engaged communities directly on the topics of child protection, domestic violence, ensuring child school attendance, health and welfare, human trafficking, and victim identification.</p>
<p><b>Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor</b></p> <p>Mongolia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. However, the programs lack sufficient funding and staffing to address the full scope of the problem.</p> <p><i>† Program is funded by the Government of Mongolia.</i>  <i>‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor.</i></p>	<p><b>Enabling Equity to Advance Learning (EQUAL) (2022–2025):</b> Supports children with disabilities in schools and improves school lunches and education. The Global Partnership for Education awarded this grant to the Ministry of Education. Reporting indicates this program was active during the reporting period.</p> <p><b>Children’s Money Program:</b> † Distributes a monthly stipend to vulnerable children under age 18 and aims to prevent child labor by offsetting costs related to food, school, and clothing. Operated by the General Agency for Social Welfare and Service, the General Agency for State Registration, and the Human Development Fund. Research indicates that economic challenges have rendered the program inadequate for covering basic needs of children from vulnerable groups, though the program was active during the reporting period.</p>

For information about USDOL’s projects to address child labor around the world, visit [dol.gov/ILABprojects](https://dol.gov/ILABprojects)  
 For references, please visit [dol.gov/ChildLaborReports](https://dol.gov/ChildLaborReports)