In 2012, Nigeria made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The National Steering Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Nigeria appointed a committee to identify child labor involving hazardous work. The Government also supported the development of curriculum to increase the capacity of school teachers and managers who work with almajiri (children who are often forced into begging after being sent to study and live with Islamic scholars) through the Almajiri Education Program. Gaps remained in legislation, such as a minimum age that falls below international standards, and in social protection programs. In addition, the number of labor inspectors and inspections decreased during the period. Children in Nigeria continued to engage in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in domestic service and dangerous agricultural activities.

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	36.3 (1,894,046)
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	61.7
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	28.1
Primary Completion Rate		74.4

Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from MICS3 Survey, 2007.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Nigeria are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in domestic service and dangerous agricultural activities. (3-6) In rural areas, most children work in agriculture, producing crops, such as cassava and cocoa. Although evidence is limited, there are reports that children also produce tobacco. (3-9) Children working in agriculture may step on sharp objects, wound their hands and legs, and suffer from insect stings. (4) In particular, children engaged in work on cocoa plantations are exposed to pesticides, apply chemical fertilizers without protective gear, and sometimes work under conditions of forced labor. (8, 10, 11) Children, primarily boys, work in cattle herding. Children engaged in herding livestock may suffer injuries, such as being bitten, head butted, gored, or trampled by animals. (3, 6, 9, 12-14)



In urban areas, many children work as domestic servants. (3, 6, 15) Children employed as domestic servants are isolated in private homes and are susceptible to physical and sexual abuse, and forced labor. Children employed as domestics may also be required to work long hours and perform strenuous tasks without sufficient food or shelter. (16-19)

Both boys and girls engage in street-hawking, sometimes dropping out of school to work.(12, 20-22) Increasing numbers of children also engage in begging. (5, 6, 23-26)

Commercial sexual exploitation of children, especially girls, also occurs in some Nigerian port cities and refugee camps. (5, 6, 15, 29)

Children work in mines and quarries, producing gravel and granite. Such work puts children at risk of injury or death from exposure to dust, falling rocks, and carrying heavy loads.(9, 12, 20, 28, 30) Children also work breaking granite into gravel at various sites near Abuja.(31) Children reportedly work in artisanal gold mining, particularly in Zamfara State. Children working in artisanal gold mining are exposed to extremely toxic chemicals, including lead and mercury.(3, 32-35) Some of the children working in mines and quarries do so under conditions of forced labor.(36)

In northern Nigeria, many families send children, known as *almajiri*, from rural to urban areas to live with and receive a Koranic education from Islamic teachers. Some of these children receive lessons, but teachers often force them to beg on the streets and surrender the money that they collect; these children may go without adequate food or shelter.(6, 23, 37) Although evidence remains limited, information indicates that

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some *almajiri* in Nigeria may undergo deliberate scarring or injuries to arouse sympathy and thus encourage donations.(38) In December 2010, the Ministerial Committee on Madrasah Education estimated that Nigeria has about 9.5 million *almajiri*.(3, 6)

Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking.(15, 38, 39) Children in Nigeria are trafficked internally to work in domestic service, agriculture, street peddling, and begging.(8, 15, 29, 40) Children are also trafficked from Nigeria to work in the worst forms of child labor in Equatorial Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Saudi Arabia.(41-43) There are reports of Nigerian girls being trafficked to Italy for commercial sexual exploitation.(15)

Children from Benin, Ghana, and Togo are trafficked to Nigeria, where many are forced to work in granite mines.(15) Some children from the Central African Republic (CAR) are trafficked back and forth between CAR and Nigeria for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation (44) Boys from Niger are subjected to forced begging and forced labor in Nigeria.(45)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Nigeria has the authority to establish labor standards, though legislative power to protect children is reserved for its states.(46-49) The Labor Act sets the minimum age of employment at 13 and is in force in all 36 states of Nigeria. This minimum age is below that called for in international standards. Furthermore, the Labor Act permits children of any age to do light work alongside a family member in agriculture, horticulture, or domestic service, which likewise fails to meet international standards calling for a minimum age for light work of 12 in most cases.(50, 51)

The Federal 2003 Child Rights Act, which codifies the rights of children in Nigeria, must be implemented by each State in its specific territory.(49, 52) Prior to 2012, 24 of the 36 states had adopted the Child Rights Act; there have been no new adoptions during the reporting period. In total, 24 of the 36 states have adopted the Child Rights Act, all of which adopted the Act before the reporting period.(3) The Child Rights Act states that the provisions related to children in the Labor Act apply to children under the Child Rights Act, but also that the Child Rights Act supersedes any other legislation related to children. This language makes it unclear what minimum ages apply for certain types of work in the country. The Child Rights Act, for example, restricts children under the age of 18 from any work aside from light work for family members, while the Labor Act applies the same light work restriction only to children under the age of 12. (26, 53)

International Conventions and Selected Laws on Child Labor and Education

(and a set	C138, Minimum Age	1
UIO	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	1
	CRC	\checkmark
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	1
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	1
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	1
	Minimum Age for Work	13
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
众	Compulsory Education Age	15
SCHOOL	Free Public Education	Yes

The Labor Act forbids the employment of youth under the age of 18 in work that is dangerous to their health, safety, or morals. However, it allows children to participate in certain types of dangerous work by setting different age thresholds for various activities. (50) It prohibits youth under the age of 15 from working in industrial undertakings and youth under the age of 16 from working underground or with machines.(50) Additionally, the Labor Act does not apply to youth working in domestic service.(50) As a result, children are vulnerable to dangerous work in industrial undertakings, underground, with machines, and in domestic service. The Labor Act allows youth above the age of 16 to work at night in gold mining and the manufacturing of iron, steel, paper, raw sugar, and glass. (50) This standard may leave children who work at night in gold mining and the above manufacturing activities vulnerable to hazardous work. In addition, neither the Labor Act nor the Child Rights Act lays out a comprehensive list of hazardous activities prohibited to children.(51, 54) While the Child Rights Act appears to apply appropriate penalties for violating the hazardous labor provisions, the Labor Act's penalties may not be stiff enough to deter violations. (26, 50, 51)

States may also enact additional provisions to bolster protection for working children within their territory. Some states within Nigeria have taken such action and closed gaps in the law.(55) For example, the 2006 Abia State Child's Rights Law prohibits all children under age 18 from engaging in domestic service outside of the home or family environment.(56)

The Constitution of Nigeria prohibits forced labor, slavery, and servitude. (50, 57) The 2003 Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act applies throughout Nigeria and prohibits commercial sexual exploitation, pornography, drug trafficking, and trafficking for the purposes of forced or compulsory recruitment into armed conflict. Nigerian law punishes such offenses with fines and imprisonment. (3, 58)

The Child Rights Act prohibits the worst forms of child labor, including the forced labor of children and the use of children for commercial sexual exploitation and armed conflict. In addition, this law prohibits the use of children in street hawking and begging.(26) The Child Rights Act imposes strict penalties for abuses and creates family courts.(26, 59)

Some states that apply *Shari'a* (the moral code and religious law of Islam), however, treat children as offenders rather than victims. For example, the *Shari'a* Penal Code of the Zamfara State defines an offender as anyone who "does any obscene or indecent act in a private or public place, or acts or conducts himself/herself in an indecent manner."(54) Treating child victims of commercial sexual exploitation as offenders runs counter to internationally accepted standards for the treatment of such children.(54)

The minimum age for voluntary recruitment into the armed forces is age 18.(26, 60) There are no reports of children being used in the Government's armed forces; however, while evidence is limited, children as young as age 8 reportedly undergo recruitment into non-state armed groups particularly in areas in which security has deteriorated. There is no law to prohibit the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups.(61-63) Pervasive poverty, coupled with mass unemployment and a poor education system, has created an atmosphere in which youth are increasingly susceptible to participating in armed groups, including ethnic-based militia organizations, criminal gangs, extremist groups, and partisan political organizations, such as party "youth wings."(64-67)

The Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act (2004) provides for free and compulsory education for children until the age of 15.(68) The Federal Constitution (1999) also provides for free and compulsory primary education

"when practicable." However, the term "practicable" introduces ambiguity in the concept of free universal compulsory education, which does not yet fully exist in Nigeria. (3, 6, 57, 63) The Ministry of Labor and Productivity reports that only six states provide free education. As the laws providing for free and compulsory education are not systematically enforced, children are more likely to enter the worst forms of child labor. (63) Inadequate facilities and school fees may also deter enrollment. (3, 6)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The National Steering Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Nigeria serves as the country's mechanism for coordinating efforts to combat child labor. Represented on the Steering Committee are the Ministries of Labor and Productivity (MOLP), Women and Social Development, Mining and Metal Production, Agriculture, Foreign Affairs, and Education-along with other government bodies, such as the National Agency for the Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP) and the National Bureau of Statistics.(3) In addition to government representation, the Committee includes both a mix of faithbased organizations and NGOs that work on child labor issues, and the ILO-IPEC and UNICEF. The Committee met twice in 2012 and appointed a committee to identify hazardous work involving child labor.(3) NAPTIP is the agency responsible for coordinating efforts against trafficking and also chairs the National Task Force on Trafficking in Persons that considers issues of child labor and trafficking. NAPTIP and the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development coordinate social services for trafficked children and repatriation to their families.(3)

The MOLP is responsible for ensuring the enforcement of federal labor laws. The MOLP's Inspectorate Division employed about 500 inspectors during the reporting period, 100 fewer inspectors than in the previous year.(3) Labor inspectors are deployed across 36 regions as well as the Federal Capital Territory (including Abuja), and are responsible for investigating all labor law violations, including those related to child labor.(3, 5, 69) The number of inspectors employed appears to be inadequate to address child labor issues sufficiently, given the size of the country and the scope of the worst forms of child labor in the country. The 2012 budget allocated about \$29,000 to the MOLP for child labor inspections, but as of the end of the year, the Finance Ministry had not yet released the funds.(3) Training for inspectors was limited.(3)

During 2012, the Government of Nigeria conducted 7,840 labor inspections, 4,200 fewer inspections than in the previous year. The MOLP reported 500 labor violations in 2012, but did not have information on the number of child labor specific violations.(3) The Ministry rescued 25 children from child labor in Oyo State during the year. There is no information about whether these children received adequate services.(3) Labor inspectors do not possess a mandate to conduct inspections on seafaring vessels. Since children age 15 and older may work onboard these vessels, this leaves such children unprotected by the country's enforcement framework. (50, 70) In addition, rather than issuing citations upon discovery of labor infractions, MOLP sends letters of caution to employers encouraging them to resolve violations and then conducts follow-up inspections. It is unclear whether this system sufficiently encourages compliance with labor laws.(3, 63)

NAPTIP is responsible for enforcing anti-trafficking legislation and has an overall budget of about \$11.9 million, though the amount of funding received is unknown.(3) The last known training for NAPTIP officials occurred in May 2011. Both the MOLP and NAPTIP are supported by the Nigeria Police Force (NPF).(3) The NPF and the Nigerian Immigration Service have anti-trafficking units responsible for combating trafficking, while other agencies, such as the National Drug Enforcement Agency, help identify traffickers and their victims.(38, 71) NAPTIP reports that authorities turn over rescued children to state-level agencies.(3) In 2010, NAPTIP, through the support of the American Bar Association's Rule of Law Initiative, launched a database to connect its regional offices and improve its data collection.(38) NAPTIP reportedly used this database during 2012.(63)

During the reporting period, NAPTIP began 117 trafficking investigations and 17 prosecutions and made 25 convictions. The number of investigations represents a decrease from the previous year.(19) NAPTIP reported that 8 trafficking convictions involved children. There is no information available on the number of trafficking investigations that involved children and whether the trafficking convictions involving children resulted in offenders serving jail time or paying a fine.(3)

The NPF is responsible for enforcing all laws prohibiting forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.(3) However, the NPF is not trained on state laws and may not have knowledge of such laws that protect children from a particular worst form of child labor within a specific state. This limits the capacity of the NPF to enforce the laws protecting children from the worst forms of child labor.(47) Research did not uncover the number of child labor violations and resulting penalties issued by the Police during the reporting period.

States may also undertake other measures that aid in the enforcement of labor provisions. For example, Ondo State has established a child labor monitoring system in cocoa plantations.(71)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Nigeria, with support from ILO-IPEC, finished drafting a National Policy and National Plan of Action on the worst forms of child labor in late 2011. In 2012, consultations on the drafts were held in each of Nigeria's six geo-political zones.(3) The National Steering Committee on Child Labor adopted the policy and plan, but as of the writing of this report, the plans had yet to be presented to the Federal Executive Council for official adoption. (72) If adopted, the Policy would identify and assign roles to participating government law enforcement and agencies, trade unions, community organizations, and other groups.(3)

Nigeria conducted a national survey in 2008 to identify the prevalence and nature of child labor. The results from this survey have still not been made publicly available.(73, 74) Additionally, in 2011 the MOLP reportedly collected data on the prevalence of child labor from state governments. The collected data have not been made publicly available.(73) Moreover, it is unclear what methodology the Ministry used for data collection or how many state governments had participated in the survey.

During the reporting period, the Government of Nigeria had a National Plan of Action on Trafficking in Persons (2010-2012) to provide government entities and NGOs with a framework for coordinating anti-trafficking activities.(75) The Plan set forth NAPTIP's budget and programming costs through 2012.(76) In addition to the Plan, the Government has a National Policy on Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria (2008), which provides protection and rehabilitation services to trafficking victims.(77-79)

The Ministry of Education is responsible for implementing the National Framework for the Development and Integration of Almajiri Education in the Universal Basic Education Scheme, released in 2010. Under the framework, state governments regulate *almajiri* schools to address more effectively the challenges that the traditional Islamic Education Sector faces on itinerancy and begging.(80, 81) Also under the framework,

the Government announced plans to build about 400 schools for *almajiri* children by 2015.(82) By the end of 2012, 89 schools were built, including 18 schools with housing facilities.(63) In early 2012, the Almajiri Education Program developed a curriculum to increase the capacity of *almajiri* school teachers and managers throughout the country as well as a strategic plan of action to guide the Program.(81)

In 2012, the labor ministers of the 15 ECOWAS countries, including Nigeria, adopted a regional action plan on child labor, especially in its worst forms. The plan seeks to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in West Africa by 2015 and continue progress towards the total elimination of child labor.(83)

The Government of Nigeria ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), which entered into force on December 6, 2012.(84) The Convention prohibits armed groups from recruiting children, or otherwise permitting them to participate in conflict, and engaging in sexual slavery and trafficking, especially of women and children.(85)

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Nigeria continued to participate in several regional projects to combat the worst forms of child labor, including the regional \$7.95 million USDOL-funded ECOWAS Project (2009-2014). This Project has assisted ECOWAS member states to develop systems to help member countries, including Nigeria, reduce the worst forms of child labor.(86-88) During the reporting period, ECOWAS member countries adopted a Regional Action Plan on child labor.(83) As part of the ECOWAS Project, Nigeria also participated in the ILO-IPEC's Decent Work Country Program, which aims to increase opportunities for work and social protection for families. The Program includes strategies such as vocational training for youth that support the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.(86)

To assist with implementation of the Benin/Nigeria Anti-Trafficking Agreement, the Government continued to participate in the 3-year, USDOL-funded \$5 million regional ECOWAS II Project, which is active in 15 countries. In Nigeria, the project aims to withdraw and prevent 540 children from being trafficked from Benin to Nigeria for mining and associated activities around mining sites in Nigeria's Ogun and Oyo States and to provide livelihood alternatives to 118 households.(89)

In 2012, Nigeria participated in the USDOL-funded, 4-year Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues Project that is active in approximately 40 countries. In Nigeria, the project aims to build the capacity of the national government to implement the National Action Plan (NAP) in Nigeria. During the reporting period, the project supported four consultation workshops to review the draft NAP.(90-92) In addition, since 2007, the MOLP has worked to develop codes of conduct for various sectors, including mining, construction, and fishing. Research did not uncover additional information about the codes of conduct.(48, 80)

In 2011, the last date for which information is available, the Anambra, Lagos, and Ogun States supported efforts to ban children from street trading. As of 2012, the Bayelsa State's bill to ban children from street trading was awaiting approval in its State Assembly.(73, 93) *Terre des hommes*, along with other groups, is implementing a program to provide services to children exploited and trafficked between the Zakpota community in Benin and Nigeria's gravel quarries in Abeokuta.(94)

The Government continued to operate shelters for trafficking victims and to reunite or repatriate trafficked children. (3, 38, 73, 76) The Government, largely through NAPTIP, operated eight shelters for rescued children in regions across the country.(73, 80) In addition, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development operates four shelters across the country with the capacity to serve 240 children along with nonresidential drop-in centers, in which at-risk children can access social services.(3, 80) NGOs and states also run programs to address trafficking. NGOs support shelters to which government officials may send rescued children for longterm rehabilitation; however, because of a lack of resources, these shelters could only care for a very limited number of victims.(76, 95) While NAPTIP's Victims of Trafficking Trust Fund in 2010 remained in existence, no additional funds were added to or disbursed from the Fund in 2012.(3, 73)

Despite the various projects across Nigeria, the scale of such programs remained insufficient to reach all Nigerian children engaged in or vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, especially children engaged in begging, mining, domestic service, and agriculture.(3) NIGERIA

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Nigeria:

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Raise the minimum wage for regular work to at least 14, in accordance with international standards.	2012
	Amend and harmonize the Labor Act and Child Right's Act to ensure that provisions related to light work conform to international standards.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Publish a comprehensive list of hazardous activities prohibited to minors and ensure that children working in domestic service are protected.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Strengthen penalties for child labor violations in the Labor Act.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Ensure that those states applying Shari'a as the Penal Code do not penalize child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Adopt legislation to ensure all children under the age of 18 are prohibited from military recruitment, including by non-state armed groups.	2011, 2012
	Implement the constitutional provision and Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act, which establishes free and compulsory education.	2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Provide adequate resources and inspectors to effectively address issues of child labor.	2011, 2012
	Collect and make publicly available statistics on the number of: child labor violations and resulting penalties assessed, child labor inspections, and investigations conducted.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Ensure that child labor inspections occur on vessels and in all other sectors and locations in which child labor is prevalent.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Ensure that National Police Force is aware of the state laws addressing the worst forms of child labor.	2010, 2011, 2012
Policies	Adopt the draft National Policy and National Plan of Action on the worst forms of child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Publish statistics on the worst forms of child labor, including results from the 2008 national survey on child labor and data collected in 2011 on child labor.	2011, 2012
Social Programs	Establish and expand programs to provide services to children working in agriculture, begging, domestic service, and mining.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Provide adequate resources to shelters to ensure delivery of necessary services for trafficking victims.	2011, 2012

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