

In 2015, Morocco, which currently administers most of the territory of Western Sahara, made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in Western Sahara. The Ministry of Moroccans Living Abroad and Migration Affairs drafted an anti-trafficking in persons law that is intended to be consistent with the Palermo Protocol, and the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs drafted a domestic worker law forbidding employment of domestic workers under the age of 16 and strictly limiting the employment of children between the ages of 16 and 18 for domestic work. The Government formally adopted the Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children, which incorporates the National Plan of Action for Children from 2006 to 2015. Although research is limited, there is evidence that children are engaged in child labor in Western Sahara, including in agriculture. The number of labor inspectors is insufficient to effectively enforce child labor laws. Although the Government of Morocco has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR




Although research is limited, there is evidence that children are engaged in child labor in Western Sahara, including in agriculture.(1) In general, research has not been conducted on the extent of child labor in Western Sahara, nor has research explored education levels. Data on key indicators on children’s work and education are not available from the sources used in this report.(2)

Commercial sexual exploitation of migrant girls occurs, especially in fishing villages and on fishing boats. Some children with disabilities beg in the streets.(3) Sahrawi children are vulnerable to child labor due to barriers limiting their ability to access educational opportunities.(4)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The territory of Western Sahara is currently subject to Moroccan laws.(5-8) The Popular Front for the Liberation of the *Saguia el-Hamra* and *Río de Oro* (Polisario Front), a Sahrawi national liberation movement, controls 15 percent of the territory; information on the laws applicable in this area is unavailable.(1, 6, 9) Morocco has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor, which extend to the areas in Western Sahara administered by the Government of Morocco (Table 1).

Table 1. 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	✓

The Government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 2).

Table 2. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 143 of the Labor Code (10)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 147 of the Labor Code (10)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Hazardous Child Labor List, Decree No. 2-10-183 (11)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 10 of the Labor Code (10)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		

Table 2. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 503 of the Penal Code (12)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Royal Decree of 9 June 1996 (13)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article 1 of Law No. 04-00 (14)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 1 of Law No. 04-00 (14)

* No conscription (13)

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

The Government of Morocco has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 3).

Table 3. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs (MOESA) Child Labor Task Force	Enforce child labor laws and oversee programs on child labor. Employ labor inspectors in 53 sectors across Morocco; one inspector in each sector dedicated to child labor.(1, 15, 16) Establish satellites in nine regional centers throughout the country to provide occupational health and safety services, administer social security, organize labor inspections, and provide employment services.(16)
Ministry of the Interior	Enforce prohibitions on prostitution and other exploitive crimes involving minors, as established in the Penal Code.(15, 17)
Ministry of Justice and Liberties	Prosecute criminal offenses against children, such as commercial sexual exploitation and child trafficking, and violations of labor laws.(15, 18) The Ministry's Child Labor Units process cases involving women and children in the court system.(19)

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

The Government of Morocco has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
MOESA, Office for the Fight Against Child Labor	Coordinate policies and efforts to combat child labor.(16, 20) Provide guidance and limited funding to NGOs working against child labor.(21)
Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family, and Social Development (MSWFSD)	Contributed to the drafting of the Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children. Responsible for coordinating the implementation of this policy.(15, 22) Establish continuity of child protection efforts, increase access to education, and eliminate child labor.(17, 23)
National Observatory for Children's Rights	Register complaints related to child welfare and refer them to labor inspectorate units and law enforcement officials. Operate a toll-free hotline available to child victims of violence, including commercial sexual exploitation.(21) Operate 96 Child Reception Centers that provide services to child victims of violence, sexual abuse or neglect.(8)
Inter-Ministerial Delegation for Human Rights	Establish policies that promote child protection and coordinate efforts against trafficking in persons.(15, 16) This special ministerial commission formalized in 2014 and chaired by the Head of Government, met in 2015 to formally adopt the Integrated Public Policy for the Protection of Children.(8, 15, 22)
Ministry of Moroccans Living Abroad and Migration Affairs	Coordinate efforts to reduce the migrant population's vulnerability to child labor. Promote access to public education facilities for migrant children in order to decrease their vulnerability to child labor and human trafficking.(16)
Ministry of National Educational and Vocational Training (MONEVT)	Provide education and job training to former child workers, including former child domestic workers.(15)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Morocco has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
MSWFSD Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children†	Promotes an interdisciplinary approach to respond to child exploitation, among other issues.(15, 16, 22) Includes the 2006–2015 National Plan of Action for Children.(8) The implementation of this policy in 2015 included coordination with Internet providers to protect children from sexual exploitation; a Ministry of Tourism communication strategy on child protection; and a mechanism to sensitize and educate tourism companies on the rights of children against all forms of exploitation, in line with the Moroccan Charter on Sex Tourism and based on the World Tourism Organization’s Global Code of Ethics.(8, 22)
National Migration Strategy*	Establishes policies that promote a human rights-based approach to migration. Facilitates the integration of legal immigrants. Provides services, including expanding access to public education facilities for migrant children, thereby decreasing their vulnerability to child labor and human trafficking.(16, 19, 21)
UNDAF (2012–2016)*	Promotes education, health, and socioeconomic development to alleviate poverty. Focuses on providing equal access to education for vulnerable children.(24, 25)

* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies to not appear to have been integrated in this policy.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of Morocco funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms, that extended to Western Sahara (Table 6).

Table 6. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
MOESA Partnerships with NGOs Working Against Child Labor*†	From January to November 2015, work with eight NGOs resulted in prevention efforts that reached 1,037 children, the removal of 1,069 children under age 15 from work and the distribution of education assistance to their families, the improvement of the work and living conditions of 1,067 children between ages 15 and 18, and the mobilization and capacity building of stakeholders in child labor prevention benefitting 9,672 persons.(8)
<i>Tayssir Conditional Cash Transfer Program†</i>	MONEVT program that provides direct cash transfers of \$7 to \$16 a month to qualifying families whose children meet school attendance criteria. Provides transportation and student housing through a program with Entraide Nationale.(16, 17) Aims to increase school enrollment and reduce dropout rates, particularly in rural areas.(17, 26-28) The program helped 828,400 students during the 2015–2016 school year with a budget of \$91.9 million, compared to \$86.4 million during 2014–2015 school year, an increase of 6 percent.(8, 22)
Social Welfare Program	UNDAF program that addresses education, including equal access to education, especially for vulnerable children. Also addresses children’s health and socioeconomic development.(21)
Rural Social Service Support†	Royal family-funded, Mohammed V Foundation for Solidarity program that provides funding to NGOs that improve living conditions of very low-income populations.(16)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Morocco.

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 Western Sahara (Table 7).

Table 7. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that laws prohibit child trafficking.	2014 – 2015
	Ensure that laws prohibit children from being used, procured, or offered for the production and trafficking of drugs.	2015
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the National Migration Strategy and UNDAF policies.	2014 – 2015

Table 7. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Social Programs	Conduct a comprehensive study of children's work activities to determine whether they are engaged in or at risk of being involved in child labor, and the number of child laborers.	2013 – 2015
	Remove barriers to Sahrawi children's ability to access educational opportunities.	2015

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