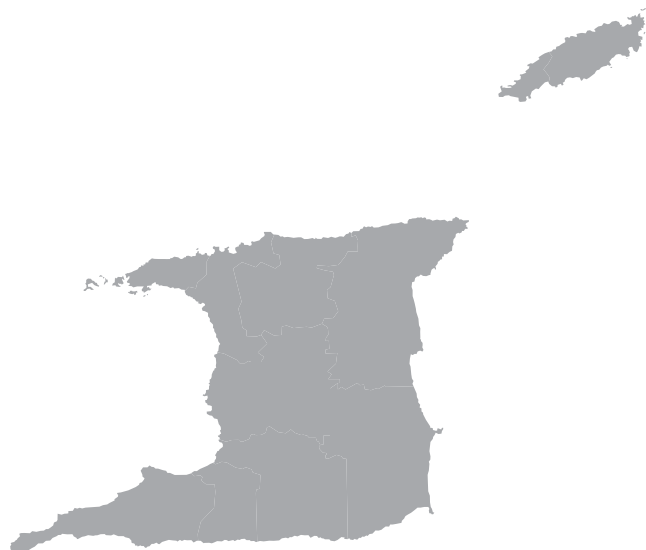


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In 2013, Trinidad and Tobago made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government established the Counter-Trafficking Unit to partner with the Police and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to prosecute traffickers, as well as to coordinate with government agencies and non-governmental organizations to ensure victim protection. The Government also signed a Strategic Plan with UNICEF to promote children's rights, education, and early childhood development. In addition, it adopted a National Youth Policy that seeks to incorporate youth as partners in national development and mainstream youth issues in national policies. However, while the prevalence is thought to be limited, children in Trinidad and Tobago are reported to engage in child labor in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation. The Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago, which is mandated to protect children's rights by the Children's Authority Act of 2000 and the Children's Authority (Amendment) Act of 2008, is still not fully operational. The Government also has yet to ratify a list of hazardous occupations prohibited to children.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

While the prevalence is thought to be limited, children in Trinidad and Tobago are reported to engage in child labor in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation.(1-4) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Trinidad and Tobago.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	3.0 (5,975)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	97.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	3.3
Primary Completion Rate (%)		91.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(5)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 3, 2014.(6)

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	Activities unknown* (1-3, 7)
Services	Domestic service* (7, 8)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (3, 4, 9) Used in drug trafficking as a result of human trafficking* (3)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.




‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a) – (c) of ILO C. 182.

A lack of data on the nature and prevalence of the worst forms of child labor precludes the development of policies and programs that address child labor issues, including in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation. While the Government has previously expressed interest in conducting a National Youth Activity Survey that would inform such policies and programs, it has yet to produce one.(10)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Trinidad and Tobago has ratified most key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. 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 not ratified the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.

The Government has established relevant laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Miscellaneous Provisions (Minimum Age for Admission to Employment) Act (11)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No		
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Constitution; Trafficking in Persons Act (12, 13)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Trafficking in Persons Act (13)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Sexual Offences Act; Children Act; Trafficking in Persons Act (13-16)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Children Act; Trafficking in Persons Act (13, 16)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		Defence Act (17)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Defence Act (17)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	12	Education Act (18)
Free Public Education	Yes		Education Act (18)

* No conscription or no standing military.

Trinidad and Tobago's Miscellaneous Provisions (Minimum Age for Admission to Employment) Act (2007) sets the minimum age for employment at 16.(11) However, current legislation does not establish a clear minimum age for hazardous work. There is also no list of hazardous occupations prohibited to children, even though the Government has reportedly been developing one since 2004.(19, 20)

In 2013, the Government implemented the 2011 Trafficking in Persons Act, which prohibits trafficking in persons, including children, for purposes of sexual or labor exploitation.(3, 9, 13). The Children Act, which is meant to replace the current Children Act of 1925, and which strengthens legislative frameworks that protect children's rights, was passed in 2012 but still requires "proclamation" by the President to take effect.(3)

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Trinidad and Tobago has no compulsory military service and the minimum age for recruitment to the armed forces is 18. However, those who are willing to join between the ages of 16 and 18 may do so with written approval from a parent or guardian.(21)

The Education Act provides for free and compulsory schooling for children between the ages of 6 to 12.(3, 18, 20) This leaves children ages 12 through 15 vulnerable to child labor, as they are not required to be in school and are not legally permitted to work.(19, 20) The aforementioned Children Act seeks to amend the Education Act by raising the minimum age of compulsory education to 16, making it commensurate with the minimum age for work.(3, 20)

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

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (MLSME)	Monitor and enforce child labor laws, in part through the Labor Inspectorate Unit.(1, 2) Enforce hazardous labor laws through the Occupational Safety and Health Authority, and coordinate the enforcement of laws related to forced child labor in conjunction with the Ministry of the People and Social Development and the Ministry of National Security.(1, 3)
Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions	Oversee the enforcement of criminal laws in Trinidad and Tobago and lead the Criminal Law Department, which falls under the Ministry of the Attorney General.(22)
Trinidad and Tobago Police Service	Enforce criminal laws, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children and the involvement of children in illicit activities, in conjunction with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.(1, 2)
Counter-Trafficking Unit	Investigate trafficking cases.(3, 23) Partner with the Police and the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to prosecute traffickers, as well as coordinate with government agencies and NGOs to ensure victim protection.(2, 3) Established in January 2013 and forms part of the Ministry of National Security.(3)

Law enforcement agencies in Trinidad and Tobago took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2013, The Ministry of Labor and Small and Micro Enterprise Development (MLSME) employed 15 labor inspectors in its Labor Inspectorate Unit. These inspectors carried out 892 inspections of businesses and found no cases of child labor.(3) The MLSME reports that inspectors received ongoing training on child labor issues in 2013, and the ILO has reported that this training, as well as the number of inspections conducted, is adequate. Ministerial funding and resources are also believed to be sufficient for the scope of the problem.(3)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2013, the Counter-Trafficking Unit employed five investigators. While the Unit's investigators received training on the worst forms of child labor, it was reported that the Police Service were in need of additional training to improve inter-agency coordination.(3) The Government allocated an annual budget of \$950,000 for the operation of the Counter-Trafficking Unit, and the IOM reported that this budget was sufficient. The IOM also reported that the number of investigators was adequate.(3)

While the Counter-Trafficking Unit did not report any criminal child labor violations during the reporting period, the number of investigations related to the worst forms of child labor is unknown.(3) There are three ongoing investigations into suspected cases of child trafficking, with two involving the commercial sexual exploitation of children, and the third involving children being forced to sell drugs. None of the cases has confirmed specific victims. (3) During the reporting period, the Counter-Trafficking Unit and the IOM worked with NGO shelters to assess the services that are available to trafficking victims.(3)

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

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor	Coordinate Government efforts to combat child labor and oversee the development of national policies on child labor.(2, 20, 24)
National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons	Coordinate efforts to combat trafficking in persons and prosecute traffickers. Coordinate the provision of assistance to trafficked victims and develop national policies on trafficking.(3) Established by the Trafficking in Persons Act.(13)
Child Protection Task Force	Review policies and legislation on child protection issues and make recommendations on how public and private stakeholders can reduce risks to children's well-being. Tasked with making recommendations on how the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago can be made fully functional.(3)

In 2013, the Prime Minister convened the Child Protection Task Force, which had not been active in the previous reporting period, and mandated that it make recommendations on how the Government can reduce risks to children and provide protections for them.(3) It was reported that the Government did not convene the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons in 2013.(3) Evidence suggests that the National Steering Committee for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor was also inactive in 2013 given a governmental report that called for its re-establishment.(3, 20)

The Children's Authority (Amendment) Act of 2008 contains provisions to empower the Children's Authority of Trinidad and Tobago. This body was conceived through legislative efforts in 2000 and was designed to enforce laws on children's welfare, promote the rights of children, and provide services for child protection.(1, 25-27) However, the Children's Authority has yet to become fully operational.(3)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Strategic Plan for Child Development, 2012-2016	Aims to develop comprehensive initiatives across governmental ministries to promote and protect children's rights, including the elimination of all forms of child labor. Participating ministries include the MLSME and the Ministry for Gender, Youth, and Child Development.(3)
National Strategy for Child Rights†	Seeks to strengthen mechanisms and structures for protecting children's rights.(3)
National Youth Policy†	Seeks to incorporate youth as partners in national development and mainstream youth issues in national policies.(3)
Trinidad and Tobago – UNICEF Strategic Plan†	Aims to improve the lives of children through five focus areas, including evidence-based policy making, the promotion of children's rights, child protection programming, and education and early childhood development. Ministry of Planning and Sustainable Development will coordinate the planning and implementation of initiatives in concert with the UN's 2012-2016 efforts in the Eastern Caribbean.(28)

† Policy was launched during the reporting period.

The Government has yet to produce an action plan to implement policies that call for the prevention and elimination of child labor.(20)

In November 2013, the Government participated in the XVIII Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor to foster continued dialogue and cooperation on labor issues throughout the Americas. The joint declaration of the Conference promotes social dialogue to address child labor and reaffirms country participants' commitment to work with civil society organizations to advance efforts toward the eradication of child labor.(29)

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VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

In 2013, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago funded programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
MLSME Programming‡	Aims to raise awareness about child labor and disseminate information on its negative effects through newspaper messages and its radio program "Labor Link."(2, 3)
Educational Programming*‡	Ministry of Education programs that encourage children to remain in school, including a school meal program that provides breakfast and lunch to children from low-income families; a book grant program; and a School Support Services Program that aids high-risk students with homework, counseling, and other services.(1-3)
Empowerment Social Strategies (PRESS ON) Initiative*‡	Ministry of the People and Social Development poverty reduction initiative that targets at-risk populations, including children, and which focuses on food security, youth training and skills development, and educational support.(3)
National Child Registry†	Government program to help provide an effective method for monitoring child welfare and development.(3)

* The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

† Program was launched during the reporting period.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

It is not clear whether additional programs to address child labor in agriculture or assist children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation are needed given the limited scope of these problems.

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 Trinidad and Tobago (Table 9).

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.	2013
	Clearly establish in the law a minimum age of 18 for hazardous work and establish a list of hazardous occupations prohibited to children.	2009 – 2013
	Enact the Children Act of 2012 to ensure legislative frameworks protecting the rights of children are strengthened.	2012 – 2013
	Raise the age of compulsory education to 16, the established minimum age for work, either through the enactment of the Children Act or in separate legislation.	2009 – 2013
Enforcement	Provide training to the Police Service to improve inter-agency coordination in combatting the worst forms of child labor.	2013
	Make publicly available the number of criminal investigations conducted regarding the worst forms of child labor.	2013
Coordination	Continue to operationalize the Child Protection Task Force, ensuring that it is able to provide protection and educational efforts against child labor.	2012 – 2013
	Ensure the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons convenes to continue coordinating efforts to combat trafficking in persons.	2013
	Ensure the National Steering Committee for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor actively coordinates governmental efforts to combat child labor.	2013
	Operationalize the Children's Authority, as mandated in the Children's Authority Act of 2008, to ensure it is able to implement its strategic objectives and enforce laws pertaining to children's welfare.	2012 – 2013
Government Policies	Adopt and implement a National Plan of Action Against Child Labor.	2011 – 2013
Social Programs	Conduct the National Youth Activity Survey to assess how best to address child labor in agriculture and the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation.	2011 – 2013
	Assess the impact that educational and poverty-reduction initiatives may have on reducing child labor.	2013
	Assess the need to implement programs to address child labor in agriculture and the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation.	2011 – 2013

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