

*In 2016, São Tomé and Príncipe made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government approved a National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labor and National Policy on Child Protection. However, children in São Tomé and Príncipe perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. The types of hazardous work prohibited for children are not comprehensive, and the compulsory education age does not extend to the minimum age for work. Inadequate resources hamper law enforcement agencies' capacity to enforce child labor laws.*



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in São Tomé and Príncipe perform dangerous tasks in agriculture.(1)  
Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in São Tomé and Príncipe.

**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	22.6
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	89.2
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	24.9
Primary Completion Rate (%)		82.9



*Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2016, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016.(2)  
Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 5, 2014.(3)*

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	Farming, including weeding, fertilizing, and spraying plants (1, 4)
	Line and hook fishing (1)
Industry	Carpentry and woodworking (5)
	Construction (1)
Services	Domestic work (6)
	Working in shops and offices (1, 4)
	Working in restaurants and bars (1)
	Street work, including begging and selling goods (1, 5-7)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

São Tomé and Príncipe 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	

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**Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor (cont)**

Convention	Ratification
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The Government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4). However, gaps exist in São Tomé and Príncipe’s legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	14	Article 128 of the Legal Regime of Individual Employment Conditions (8)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 129 of the Legal Regime of Individual Employment Conditions (8)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 129 and 134 of the Legal Regime of Individual Employment Conditions (8)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 159, 160, and 181 of the Penal Code (9)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 160 and 181 of the Penal Code (9)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 179–182 of the Penal Code (9)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 279, 280, and 289 of the Penal Code (9)
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes	18	Article 1 of Decree-Law 3/83 (10)
State Voluntary	Yes	17	Legislation title unknown (11, 12)
Non-state Compulsory	No		
Compulsory Education Age	No	12 <sup>‡</sup>	Article 6(1) of the Basic Education System Law (13, 14)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 6(1) of the Basic Education System Law (14)

‡ Age calculated based on available information

The law’s minimum age protections do not apply to children working outside of a formal labor relationship, such as children who are self-employed.(8, 13)

The law prohibits children under age 18 from engaging in heavy work carried out in unhealthy or dangerous conditions. It also prohibits underground and night work; however, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover agriculture, an area of work where there is evidence of exposure to hazardous substances, agents, and processes.(8)The gap between the end of compulsory education and the minimum age for work leaves children ages 12 and 13 vulnerable to child labor, including its worst forms, because they are not in school, but they also may not legally work.

### 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). However, gaps in labor law and criminal law enforcement remain and some enforcement information is not available.

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	Enforce labor laws, including child labor.(15)
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights	Enforce criminal laws against the worst forms of child labor.(15)

## *Labor Law Enforcement*

In 2016, labor law enforcement agencies in São Tomé and Príncipe took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	13 (4)	13 (15)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (4)	No (15)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	N/A (15)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (4)	No (15)
Number of Labor Inspections	70 (4)	65 (15)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown	0 (15)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	0 (4)	0 (15)
Number of Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (4)	Yes (15)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (4)	Yes (15)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (4)	Yes (15)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (4)	Yes (15)

In 2016, enforcement of child labor laws was limited due to the lack of resources for inspections.(15)

Children found by the Department of Labor Inspection are referred to the Department of Social Protection in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs for counseling and integration services.(15, 16)

## *Criminal Law Enforcement*

In 2016, criminal law enforcement agencies in São Tomé and Príncipe took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Yes (17)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Investigations	1 (4)	1 (15)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	0 (15)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	0 (4)	0 (15)
Number of Convictions	0 (4)	0 (15)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (4)	Yes (15)

Children found by Ministry of Justice and Human Rights officials are also referred to the Department of Social Protection in the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs for counseling and integration services.(15, 16)

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### 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 8).

**Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Anti-Child Labor Committee	Lead efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.(18) Led by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs.(17) In 2016, conducted child labor awareness campaigns in two targeted districts.(15)
Department of Social Protection and Solidarity, Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	Carry out support programs for families to ensure that children attend school. Administer the Social Integration Assistance program, which provides funds to the Disadvantaged Mothers program ( <i>Mães Carenciadas</i> ). (19)

### V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labor†	Guides the Government’s efforts to combat child labor.(15)
National Policy on Child Protection†	Defines the framework for carrying out efforts to prevent all forms of violence against children.(20)
National Poverty Reduction Strategy (2012–2016)	Outlines social protection strategies to combat the worst forms of child labor. Aims to ensure that all children complete basic education by 2016.(21)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the National Poverty Reduction Strategy during the reporting period.(17)

### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2016, the Government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Decent Work Country Program (2013–2016)	Government program in collaboration with the ILO that aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor through legislative action and strategic programs.(22)
Support Centers†	Three Government-funded centers, run by NGOs, operate in areas with high concentrations of poor families, orphans, and street children. Provide household stipends to keep children in school and teach income-generating skills.(15, 23)
Disadvantaged Mothers Program ( <i>Mães Carenciadas</i> )†	Government program that provides funds to female-led households to encourage basic education for children. Scholarships are given to children from low-income households to assist in continuing their studies.(19)

† Program is funded by the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe.

Research found no evidence of programs designed to specifically address children engaged in agriculture.

### 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 São Tomé and Príncipe (Table 11).

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.	2014 – 2016
	Ensure that all children are protected by law, including children who are self-employed.	2015 – 2016

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the types of hazardous work prohibited for children are comprehensive.	2009 – 2016
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016
	Establish a compulsory education age that is equal to or higher than the minimum age for employment.	2014 – 2016
Enforcement	Publish information regarding the labor inspectorate’s funding, the type of labor inspections conducted, and refresher training for criminal law enforcement officials.	2014 – 2016
	Authorize the inspectorate to assess penalties.	2015 – 2016
	Provide inspectors and investigators with adequate training; equip labor inspectors with the necessary resources to conduct inspections.	2009 – 2016
Government Policies	Ensure the National Poverty Reduction Strategy is implemented.	2016
Social Programs	Implement programs that specifically target children engaged in agriculture.	2010 – 2016

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