

Ghana

The Government of Ghana continues to develop policies and social programs to address the worst forms of child labor, particularly in the cocoa sector. However, these programs have reached only a small fraction of the vulnerable children in that sector. Children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor on farms, in mines, and in fishing, some in conditions of forced labor. Significant gaps remain in the enforcement of child labor laws and remediation through social programs.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	43.5%
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	83.1%
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	18.1%



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Ghana are found in the worst forms of child labor,²⁰⁰¹ many of them in agriculture. In the cocoa sector, some children report injuries sustained while using machetes, carrying heavy loads, clearing land, and burning vegetation.²⁰⁰² According to a recent survey by Tulane University, an estimated 48.6 percent of children (over 269,000 children) engaged in the cocoa sector work in contravention of minimum age and hour standards.²⁰⁰³ Only 3.2 percent of children working in Ghana's cocoa sector report benefitting from intervention projects.²⁰⁰⁴ Although evidence is limited, there is reason to believe that the worst forms of child labor are used in the production of cashews, cassava, cotton, maize, rice, plantains, spinach, tomatoes, yams, mudfish, silverfish, catfish, latesfish, electric fish, and diamonds.²⁰⁰⁵ These children may face health and safety risks from working long hours, using potentially dangerous tools and performing arduous tasks.

Children in Ghana also herd livestock for long hours and engage in dangerous domestic chores, such as fetching firewood, which requires them to carry heavy loads.²⁰⁰⁶

Children, often those between the ages of 12 and 15, work in domestic service, mostly in the Ashanti and Greater Accra Regions of Ghana.²⁰⁰⁷ They work long hours and may be at risk of physical and sexual abuse. In urban areas such as Accra and Kumasi, girls as young as 6 transport heavy loads on their heads. These *kayaye* often live on the streets, exposed to physical hazards from vehicular traffic and inclement weather.²⁰⁰⁸ Children in Ghana are also subject to commercial sexual exploitation. This is especially true in Accra and the tourist destinations of Elmina and Cape Coast.²⁰⁰⁹

Children work in quarrying and small-scale mining, including extracting, transporting, and processing.²⁰¹⁰ They are also engaged in diamond and small-scale gold mines, known as "galamsey."²⁰¹¹ These mines use poisonous chemicals that pollute water sources and may result in illness and death. Children working in mines also risk injury or death as a result of collapsing pit mines.²⁰¹²

On Lake Volta, the fishing industry employs many children in hazardous labor, such as deep diving to untangle fishing nets.²⁰¹³ Children are trafficked to Lake Volta for this purpose and are known to engage in

fishing for tilapia and reportedly many other types of fish.²⁰¹⁴ Girls also work as domestic servants, street and market vendors, and porters in fishing villages along Lake Volta.²⁰¹⁵

The practice of sending children to Koranic teachers to receive education, which may include a vocational or apprenticeship component, is a tradition in Ghana.²⁰¹⁶ While some children receive lessons, some are forced to beg and surrender the money that they have earned.²⁰¹⁷ In addition, some children are involved in *Trokosi*, a religious practice indigenous to the southern Volta region, which involves pledging children to atone for family members' sins by assisting with prayers and the upkeep of religious shrines. The period of atonement for *trokosis* can last from a few months to 3 years.²⁰¹⁸ According to the Government of Ghana, *Trokosi* constitutes forced or ritual servitude, which is banned under the law.²⁰¹⁹






Ghana is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. Trafficking occurs most frequently within the country, and the majority of victims are children.²⁰²⁰ Within Ghana, children are trafficked for forced labor in fishing (mostly boys trafficked from the Central and Western Regions to the Volta region), agriculture, portering, begging, street vending, domestic labor (mostly girls trafficked from the north and east to Accra and Kumasi), sexual exploitation and sex tourism.²⁰²¹ Ghanaian children are also trafficked to neighboring countries in West Africa for labor exploitation, mostly to Côte d'Ivoire, Togo, Nigeria, the Gambia, Burkina Faso, and Gabon.²⁰²²

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Children's Act sets the minimum age for employment at 15. The Act also prohibits persons under 18 from engaging in hazardous labor, which includes work in mines or quarries; at sea; in bars, hotels, and entertainment venues likely to expose children to immoral behavior; in manufacturing that involves chemicals; in places that operate machinery; or in any job that involves carrying heavy loads.²⁰²³ The Children's Act applies to employment in both the formal and informal sectors. Labor inspections in formal enterprises are conducted by district labor officers. In the informal sector, the District Assembly and the District Social Welfare Officer has

the authority to investigate and report findings to the police to take appropriate action.²⁰²⁴

The Government of Ghana, in collaboration with the ILO, has also developed a list of worst forms of child labor occupations that includes domestic labor, *kayaye* and other urban informal activities.²⁰²⁵ The Hazardous Child Labor Activity Framework for the Cocoa Sector defines certain activities as hazardous and prohibits them for children under the age of 18. Hazardous activities for the cocoa sector include clearing forest and/or felling trees, burning bushes, applying chemicals and chemical fertilizer, carrying heavy loads beyond a permissible weight, using machetes and long cutlasses for weeding, harvesting overhead cocoa pods with harvesting hook, and working on the farm for more than three hours per day or more than 18 hours per week.²⁰²⁶

	C138, Minimum Age	No
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	No
	Minimum Age for Work	15
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	14
	Free Public Education	Yes

The Ghana Constitution prohibits forced labor, slavery, and servitude and states that every child has the right to be protected from engaging in work that constitutes a threat to child's health, education and development.²⁰²⁷ According to the Criminal Code, ritual servitude is illegal in Ghana.²⁰²⁸ The Criminal Code also prohibits persons with custody, charge, or care of a child under 16 from encouraging or causing that child to become involved in prostitution.²⁰²⁹ The Criminal Code stipulates that it is illegal to procure

any person under 21 “not being a prostitute or of known immoral character.”²⁰³⁰ This provision makes criminal punishment dependent on a judgment of the child’s moral standing, which may make enforcement more difficult and leave some victims of child sexual exploitation without protection. It is in contradiction of the Children’s Act, which calls for the best interest of the child to be given primary consideration in any child-related matter.²⁰³¹

The Human Trafficking Act prohibits forced prostitution of children under 18 and contains specific provisions against trafficking in persons, including trafficking children under 18, providing another person for trafficking, and using a trafficked person.²⁰³² The Human Trafficking Act also provides for the rescue, temporary shelter and care, counseling, family tracing and rehabilitation of victims of trafficking.²⁰³³ The minimum age for military recruitment is 18 years, and there is no conscription.²⁰³⁴

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare’s (MESW) Child Labor Unit (CLU) is responsible for overseeing activities to combat child labor. Combating child labor in the cocoa sector and implementing the Harkin-Engel Protocol (the “Protocol”) falls under the direction of the National Program for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Cocoa (NPECLC).²⁰³⁵ The NPECLC is a program of the MESW, in collaboration with Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD) and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.²⁰³⁶ The MESW has not implemented all agreements related to the Protocol, including establishing transparent child labor monitoring and certification systems throughout the cocoa growing region by the end of 2010.²⁰³⁷ However the NPECLC began to pilot a cocoa child labor monitoring system (CCLMS) in cocoa-growing regions, with the aim to scale up to 47 cocoa-growing districts by 2011 and all 70 cocoa-growing districts by 2012.²⁰³⁸ In November 2010, the MESW consolidated the existing child labor monitoring systems of NPECLC and the CLU into the new Ghana Child Labor Monitoring System (GCLMS).²⁰³⁹ The Government also undertook a supplemental study and published a revised certification report on child labor in the cocoa sector in December 2009 that is

representative of the entire cocoa growing region. The Government has not made the data from the surveys available to the public. In 2010, the Government agreed that the child labor surveys in the cocoa sector should be conducted every 5 years.²⁰⁴⁰ The Government of Ghana also continued to participate in the International Cocoa Verification Board (ICVB) that was convened to improve data gathering and which assessed government surveys on child labor in the cocoa sector and suggested methodological improvements.²⁰⁴¹ The Government of Ghana is also participating in a national child labor survey funded by USDOL (2009 to 2012).²⁰⁴²

The MESW is responsible for enforcing child labor laws.²⁰⁴³ Labor inspectors and other officials at the district level are responsible for conducting annual workplace inspections and investigating allegations of violations. While inspectors conducted investigations in the formal sector during the reporting period, there were no inspections in the informal sector.²⁰⁴⁴

The Human Trafficking Secretariat under the Ministry of Women and Children’s Affairs (MOWAC) coordinates trafficking activities. In addition, the Anti-Trafficking Unit of the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) of the Ghana Police Service is responsible for enforcing anti-trafficking laws.²⁰⁴⁵ During the reporting period, Ghanaian law enforcement participated in anti-trafficking training supported by ILO, IOM, INTERPOL and UNICEF.²⁰⁴⁶ The Government of Ghana established regional Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) in the Western, Central and Ashanti Regions to manage cases more effectively at the regional and district levels. The first regional unit was opened at Takoradi in November 2009 and a second at Kumasi in December 2009.²⁰⁴⁷ In addition, the AHTU created a website to promote trafficking awareness. The AHTU also maintains a hotline for reporting trafficking violations. The unit does not maintain records of the number of calls received.²⁰⁴⁸

The Ministry of Justice is responsible for prosecuting cases of human trafficking. During the reporting period, the Anti-Trafficking Unit closed a brothel known to engage in commercial sexual exploitation of children.²⁰⁴⁹ The Government collaborated with neighboring countries of Togo, Côte d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Nigeria, as well as international organizations, and increased efforts to prosecute and

convict a number of traffickers during the reporting year. However, the police report that they lack the resources to implement the trafficking law.²⁰⁵⁰

The Government of Ghana does not allocate sufficient funding for investigation, prosecution, and conviction of cases of child labor and child trafficking.²⁰⁵¹ Efforts to implement programs under relevant national plans to eliminate the worst forms of child labor are hampered by inadequate coordination among agencies.²⁰⁵² However, the reconstituted National Steering Committee on Child Labor is mandated to oversee the planning and implementation of programs targeting such exploitative activities.²⁰⁵³

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In 2006, the Government of Ghana adopted a five-year National Plan of Action (NPA) to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor, which aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in cocoa sector by 2011 and contribute to the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in all other sectors by 2015.²⁰⁵⁴

Ghana was 1 of 24 countries to adopt the Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons and the Joint Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children in West and Central African Regions. As part of this regional agreement, the Government of Ghana pledged to investigate and prosecute trafficking offenders and assist victims.²⁰⁵⁵

The Government's National Policy Guidelines on Orphans and Other Children Made Vulnerable by HIV/AIDS includes children engaged in the worst forms of child labor and street children as target groups.²⁰⁵⁶ Child labor concerns have also been mainstreamed into the following national development agendas and key documents: Millennium Development Goals (2015), United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2006-2010), Decent Work²⁰⁵⁷ Program (2006-2009), National Education Development Plan (2003-2015), and Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (2006-2009).²⁰⁵⁸ Although some steps have been taken to implement these policy frameworks and plans, concrete measures are still needed to realize their objectives.²⁰⁵⁹

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

In the past decade, the Government of Ghana has cooperated with international donors and organizations to implement programs to combat the worst forms of child labor. The Government has participated in two USDOL-funded regional projects to combat child labor in exploitative agriculture (e.g., cashews, coffee, and cocoa) and trafficking in West and Central Africa (which was subsequently funded by the Danish Government at \$6.19 million).²⁰⁶⁰ Ghana also participated in a \$4.75 million USDOL-funded project in support of the National Plan of Action to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Ghana, which ended in 2008.²⁰⁶¹

During the reporting period, the Government of Ghana funded a National School Feeding Program that provides school lunches to encourage school attendance and implemented an anti-poverty conditional cash transfer program, known as LEAP, which includes a child labor component.²⁰⁶²

Several programs continue to focus on child labor in the cocoa sector. The Government participates in the Joint Working Group (JWG) for the cocoa sector that was formed in July 2009 and includes members from the Governments of Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire, the cocoa industry, and civil society. The JWG has plans to establish common child labor indicators and remediation benchmarks but has yet to do so.²⁰⁶³

On September 13, 2010, the Governments of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana signed a Declaration of Joint Action to Support the Implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol, affirming their commitment to reducing the worst forms of child labor in the production of cocoa, including by supporting increased remediation efforts. The Declaration is accompanied by a Framework of Action to Support the Implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol that identifies key stakeholders including USDOL, the two Governments, and the international chocolate and cocoa industry, with which the Government will coordinate to enhance appropriate programming.²⁰⁶⁴

The Government of Ghana continues its cooperation with a 4.5 year, \$5.5 million USDOL funded project

implemented by Tulane University to oversee the efforts of the cocoa industry and the Governments of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in the cocoa sector.²⁰⁶⁵ Tulane University's research indicates that only a small percentage of children working in the cocoa sector have benefited from interventions to address these problems. Tulane reported that the total need for remediation is far greater than the assistance available for children in cocoa growing areas.²⁰⁶⁶

The Government also participates in the 4-year Phase II (2007-2011) Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP), funded by USAID, the World Cocoa Foundation, and the cocoa industry.²⁰⁶⁷ STCP is a public-private partnership that promotes sustainable tree crop systems and contains a child labor prevention component. The program trains farmers through farmer field schools and works with eight communities to develop cocoa cooperatives.²⁰⁶⁸

Ghana continues its engagement in the Empowering Cocoa Households with Opportunities and Education Solutions (ECHOES) Project (2007-2010), funded by the World Cocoa Foundation, USAID, and the cocoa industry at \$6 million.²⁰⁶⁹ The ECHOES project aims to provide vocational agriculture education to school-age children and out-of-school youth and to provide some families with income-generating support.²⁰⁷⁰ The Government also participates in projects funded by the International Cocoa Initiative (ICI) to combat child labor in the cocoa sector in 158 communities in three regions in Ghana. During the reporting period, ICI, together with COCOBOD, conducted sensitization activities and trainings to enhance awareness of child

labor and trafficking.²⁰⁷¹ ICI also provided support to community and school infrastructure activities.²⁰⁷²

Ghana participates in a 4-year, \$7.95 million regional project funded by USDOL that aims to assist member countries of the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) to combat the worst forms of child labor by strengthening and enforcing child labor laws, national action plans and policies.²⁰⁷³ In Ghana, the project targets cocoa, fishing, and mining and is assisting the Government in implementing a child labor monitoring system.²⁰⁷⁴

The Government also participated in an IOM-funded anti-trafficking project that rescued 684 child trafficking victims from exploitive child labor in fishing villages on Lake Volta and then rehabilitated, returned and reintegrated them into their original communities.²⁰⁷⁵ The project also provided alternative income generating opportunities and micro-credit support to families.²⁰⁷⁶ The Government continued to provide staff and in-kind support to an IOM-funded shelter in Medina that cares for children, including those trafficked for fishing. It also operates two facilities in Accra for poor children, including some who were victims of trafficking.²⁰⁷⁷ However the Government acknowledges that efforts to provide services to children exploited in the fishing sector are insufficient.²⁰⁷⁸

Research found no current program efforts to protect children engaged in nonagricultural work that is not regulated by the labor laws, such as domestic service and *kayaye* portering.

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

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Amend the Criminal Code to provide protections for all children from sexual exploitation, including those who have been exploited as prostitutes.
- Formally adopt the List of the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Monitor the worst forms of child labor in cocoa production through representative surveys of cocoa growing areas conducted every five years and made available to the public.
- Strengthen coordination among government agencies that are working on the issue of child labor, including agencies working on exploitative child labor in the cocoa sector.
- Allocate sufficient resources for enforcement (investigation, prosecution and convictions) of child labor and trafficking laws.

IN THE AREA OF POLICY:

- Increase efforts to achieve child labor objectives contained in the National Plan of Action.

IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Expand and improve programs to prevent children's involvement in exploitative child labor, including by:
 - Directly linking families with at-risk children to income augmentation programs, including the MESW's Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) program and the School Feeding Program (SFP) run by the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development; and
 - Scaling up and expanding effective CLMS to provide national coverage.
- Replicate and expand successful projects throughout cocoa growing regions.
- Expand efforts to address the worst forms of child labor, including in the fishing and mining sectors, as well as in domestic service and among kayayes (head porters).

²⁰⁰¹ Data provided in the chart at the beginning of this country report are based on UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, *Child Economic Activity, School Attendance, and Combined Working and Studying Rates*, 2005-2010. Data on working children and school attendance are from 2006. Data on children combining working and schooling are from 2000. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working children, and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions" section of this report.

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