

In 2011, Côte d'Ivoire made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The first half of the reporting period was marked by a violent political crisis. Reports claimed that children were used by armed forces on all sides of the conflict, including as guides, cooks, and guards; and that some children were also reported carrying arms. During this crisis and its aftermath, public services, including those related to enforcement and social protection, were in abeyance. Post-crisis, however, the Government took important steps to reduce the worst forms of child labor. These steps included ratifying the *Optional Protocols on Children in Armed Conflict and the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography*; strengthening its list of hazardous activities prohibited to children; and launching both a new national monitoring committee and a new joint ministerial committee to coordinate efforts on reducing the worst forms of child labor. On March 28, 2012, Côte d'Ivoire also launched a new, updated national plan focused on children that targets trafficking, exploitation and child labor. Despite these steps forward, Côte d'Ivoire still lacks any compulsory education requirement. Social programming is insufficient and gaps remain in the enforcement of laws. Throughout the reporting period, children continued to engage in hazardous work in agriculture. Such work occurred particularly on cocoa farms, sometimes under conditions of forced labor.

Statistics on Working Children and Education

| Children | Age | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Working | 5-14 yrs. | 39.8 (2,181,894) |
| Attending School | 5-14 yrs. | 53.6 |
| Combining Work and School | 7-14 yrs. | 24.3 |
| Primary Completion Rate | | 58.6 |

Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from MICS3 Survey, 2006.(2)

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Côte d'Ivoire are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, many of them in hazardous work in agriculture and particularly in the production of cocoa.(3-8) Children



also labor in the production of grains, vegetables and coffee; they also reportedly work in banana, cotton, palm, papaya, pineapple, rice and rubber farming.(8-12) Children working in agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire may use dangerous tools and carry heavy loads.(3, 9) In the cocoa sector alone, 50.6 percent or an estimated 414,778 children report injuries from dangerous activities according to a report by Tulane University that assessed data collected during the 2008-2009 harvest season.(3, 4) A government report released in 2010 estimated that over 30,000 children are found in conditions of forced labor in rural areas.(13, 14)

Ivorian girls as young as age 9 work as domestic servants, often working 12 to 14 hours per day. Some of these girls are subject to mistreatment, including beatings and sexual abuse.(9, 15, 16) In urban centers, especially in Abidjan, there are thousands of street children. Children, including some street children, are employed as street vendors and shoe-shiners.(16, 17) These children may risk injury from carrying heavy loads and from vehicle accidents.(18) Some children are also engaged in prostitution.(9, 17) Others perform dangerous work in mining, particularly in gold and diamond mining, although evidence of this is limited.(8, 10, 19)

Trafficking of children within Côte d'Ivoire's borders is a problem. Boys are trafficked for agricultural labor (e.g., on cocoa plantations) and to work in the service sector.(11, 12, 20, 21) Children, often girls, are trafficked to work as domestic servants.(9, 22) Girls are also trafficked into

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commercial sexual exploitation after being promised work in bars and restaurants. Many of these girls are ages 15 to 16, but some are as young as age 10.(19, 23-25)

Children from neighboring countries are also trafficked into Côte d'Ivoire. In particular, boys are trafficked to Côte d'Ivoire from Ghana, Mali and Burkina Faso for agricultural labor, especially in cocoa production.(11, 20, 26) They are brought from those countries and from Guinea for labor in the mining sector, and from Benin for work in construction. Girls from Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria nations are trafficked to Côte d'Ivoire for domestic labor, street vending and commercial sexual exploitation.(11, 19, 23)

During the first half of the reporting period, Côte d'Ivoire experienced a serious political crisis. Ensuing violence led to at least 3,000 deaths.(27-29) During this period, there were reports that children were used by armed forces on all sides of the conflict, including as guides, cooks and guards. Some children were also seen carrying arms, almost exclusively manning checkpoints.(11, 30-33) During the crisis, UNICEF and UNOCI attempted to verify these reports, but they were unable to access the area.(33) However, the UN Secretary General noted in a report released on June 11, 2012 that at least 37 cases of children were recruited and used by all forces to the conflict, including for the manning of checkpoints.(34, 35) Côte d'Ivoire's social sector, which was seriously neglected for over 10 years, tumbled further as a result of the post-electoral violence in the first part of 2011.(36) Violence, including gunfire and mortar attacks in certain neighborhoods, led to school closures during the crisis. Teacher boycotts in other areas also resulted in school closures.(37, 38) The crisis left schools destroyed, drove up food prices and forced an estimated 1 million people to flee their homes.(38-40) As late as November 2011, many schools remained closed, especially in the western region of the country, and numerous children remain displaced.(41) However, since the creation of the new Government, the situation has begun to improve with the return of many public services across the country. For example, courthouses that were closed began reopening in October and the national police received new vehicles to replace some of those destroyed during the conflict.(16, 42)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code sets the minimum age of employment at 14.(6, 43) Children under age 18 are restricted from certain types of work in the agricultural, mining, transportation, commerce and artisanal sectors.(6, 44, 45) In agriculture, this

list includes applying chemicals and working with fertilizer; in mining, children are prohibited from crushing stone and working underground. Ivorian law further defines hazardous child labor as any type of labor that endangers the health or development of the child. The law establishes penalties for those who subject a child to such work, including the child's parents.(45, 46) In January 2012, Côte d'Ivoire updated its 2005 Hazardous Labor List to prohibit additional activities by children, including carrying heavy loads.(6, 44, 45) While Ivorian law explicitly applies to the informal sector, it does not extend to the self-employed, which may result in some children not benefiting from these measures.(6)

| | | |
|---|---|-----|
|  | C138, Minimum Age | ✓ |
| | 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 | 14 |
| | Minimum Age for Hazardous Work | 18 |
|  | Compulsory Education Age | No |
| | Free Public Education | Yes |

Education is not compulsory by law, although it is officially free.(6, 8) In practice, some parents are still required to pay fees for teachers' salaries and books.(7, 17) For some schools, birth certificates are also a requirement for continued enrollment. Since many children do not have birth certificates, they are consequently prevented from attending school.(8) Teachers also reportedly demanded sexual favors from students in exchange for grades or money.(8) The absence of a compulsory educational requirement, along with the requirement by some schools for birth certificates and school-related fees, decreases the likelihood of children attending school and may increase their vulnerability to exploitation.(6)

The Ivorian Constitution prohibits forced labor and slavery.(47) The Trafficking and Worst Forms of Child Labor Law extends this prohibition to include debt bondage or servitude and the sale or trafficking of children.(46) It calls for life imprisonment

when trafficking or the worst forms of child labor results in the death of a child and introduces other strict penalties. This law also prohibits all forms of prostitution, the use of children for illicit purposes and the involvement of children in armed conflict.(46) The minimum age for both voluntary and compulsory recruitment into the military is 18.(48)

On August 3, 2011, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire ratified the Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict, and on September 7, 2011, it ratified the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.(44, 49-52)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

For much of 2011, the mechanisms designed to coordinate and enforce laws related to the worst forms of child labor did not function due to the political crisis. Government offices, including police stations and courthouses, were destroyed along with vehicles and records.(16, 31, 53)

In November, Côte d'Ivoire reorganized its government structures, creating a new Joint Ministerial Committee to serve as a coordination mechanism for combating the worst forms of child labor. The new Joint Ministerial Committee on the Fight Against Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labor is chaired by the Minister of Labor with representatives from 13 Ministries, including the Ministry of Justice; the Ministry of Interior; the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Family, Women and Children; and the Ministry of Agriculture.(16, 51, 54) A new National Monitoring Committee for Actions to Fight against Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labor was also created in November, which will oversee the new Joint Ministerial Committee and which is presided by the First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire. Both of these structures are intended to meet at least on a monthly basis and will be funded through the national budget.(42, 51, 54) As part of the reorganization, the former coordinating mechanism, Child Labor Unit (SALTE), was dissolved as a separate unit, while the Cocoa Child Labor Task Force (formerly under the Prime Minister and responsible for implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol) will become part of the Ministry of Labor in 2012.(16)

The Ministry of Labor is responsible for enforcing labor laws and employs approximately 200 labor inspectors for this purpose. Twenty-five of these inspectors are focused on child labor.(16) Labor inspectors are trained to inspect all sectors and may conduct surprise inspections of any establishment.(43, 55) In order to ensure that work does not exceed the physical capacity of children, labor inspectors

may require medical examinations.(43) However, a lack of sufficient funding, including for vehicles and fuel, limits labor inspections. For example, no labor inspections are carried out in the agriculture sector.(55, 56) The lack of inspections across all sectors where children work, especially in agriculture, translates into a lack of enforcement of the laws designed to protect children from the worst forms of child labor. Due to the crisis in 2011, there are no statistics available for the number of labor inspections conducted, violations cited, or fines collected for 2010 or 2011.(16)

In late 2011, Côte d'Ivoire began organizing child protection committees.(57) These committees are intended to implement, at the community level, a national Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS), which will enable communities to monitor, report on and coordinate services for children in exploitative situations and supports the goals of the Harkin-Engel Protocol. The CLMS remained under design in 2011 and currently lacks the resources needed for its deployment.(3, 16, 58, 59)

The Ministry of Interior's national police has an anti-trafficking unit, overseen by a police chief and staffed by four police officers and two social workers. This unit investigates cases of child trafficking.(16) New monitoring brigades established as part of the new National Monitoring Committee for Actions to Fight against Trafficking, Exploitation and Child Labor in 2011 also are responsible to investigate trafficking. These brigades, composed of security forces, are tasked with dismantling trafficking networks and rescuing exploited or trafficked children.(16) The ILO Committee of Experts observes that there is weak enforcement of the laws governing the worst forms of child labor, particularly trafficking, in Côte d'Ivoire.(19) In 2010 and 2011, statistics were not collected systematically; records related to the number of children rescued, offenders prosecuted, or sentences issued for trafficking and any of the worst forms of child labor may have been destroyed as a result of the crisis.(16)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Child labor concerns have been integrated in a number of national development agendas and policy documents, such as the PRSP (2009-2012), the UN Development Assistance Framework (2009-2013), the Decent Work Program (2008-2013) and the Medium Term Plan of Actions for Education.(60-63)

In June 2011, the new Minister of Labor announced that combating the worst forms of child labor was a priority, noting the need for stronger coordination, the capacity building of

stakeholders, the revisions to the Hazardous Works List and the awareness-raising activities about Côte d'Ivoire's legal framework.(44, 64) In 2007, Côte d'Ivoire adopted a National Action Plan on Child Labor and Trafficking that included the following objectives: supporting research, developing strategies to rescue children from the worst forms of child labor and putting in place a system to monitor child labor levels. This plan called for action over a 3-year period to reduce the worst forms of child labor by 50 percent.(65, 66) The ILO Committee of Experts found in 2011 that very few of the activities under this plan were implemented, partly due to a lack of financial resources, and the 50 percent reduction goal was not achieved.(19, 65-68) In 2011, when this plan expired, the Government worked with ILO-IPEC to update and launch a new national plan to reduce the worst forms of child labor.(44) On March 28, 2012, Côte d'Ivoire launched a national plan focused on children that targets trafficking, exploitation and child labor (2012-2014).(69, 70)

In 2011, Côte d'Ivoire affirmed its commitment to the 2010 Declaration of Joint Action to Support the Implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol (2010 Declaration) and its accompanying Framework of Action.(71-74) Under this Declaration, Côte d'Ivoire agreed to provide appropriate resources and coordinate with key stakeholders (including USDOL and the International Chocolate and Cocoa Industry) on the efforts to reduce the worst forms of child labor in cocoa-producing areas. As part of its commitments to this 2010 Declaration, Côte d'Ivoire is also taking steps to ensure that all project efforts implemented under the Framework align with its national action plans in order to promote coherence and sustainability.(72, 73)

Some Ivorian ministries maintain sector policies for combating the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Agriculture maintains a permanent program called Combating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Agriculture, which conducts awareness-raising campaigns and supports research on child labor in agriculture.(75) Likewise, the Ministry of Family, Women and Social Affairs is implementing actions under its National Action Plan for the Child (2008-2012). This plan calls for training of officials on issues related to child labor, increasing access to education, as well as conducting a campaign to increase the number of children with birth certificates.(65)

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

During the 2011 crisis, even as the number of vulnerable children rose, social programs were curtailed or

suspended.(31, 40) However, later in 2011, when the crisis ended, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire supported social programs aimed at reducing exploitative child labor and trafficking in several sectors.(16, 51, 66) In June 2011, as part of its World Day Against Child Labor awareness-raising events, the Government focused its message on ending the use of child soldiers and hazardous work by children in the cocoa sector.(44) In 2011, the Government also worked with development partners to increase awareness of child labor, including in mining; for example, in August, the First Lady of Côte d'Ivoire launched a television campaign against the worst forms of child labor.(76, 77) The First Lady also worked with other West African First Ladies, including the Malian First Lady, to reduce the trafficking of children from those countries into Côte d'Ivoire.(51, 78)

The Ministry of Family, Women and Children raised awareness of the worst forms of child labor, and, in conjunction with UNICEF and the Government of Belgium, implemented a project to decrease the worst forms of child labor and trafficking, by increasing the capacity of local child protection committees.(57) During the reporting period, this Ministry also established a center in Abidjan to receive trafficked children.(16)

To better assess the situation and provide for more targeted programming in the future, the Government carried out a national survey on the worst forms of child labor, including trafficking, from September to October 2011. Côte d'Ivoire also undertook an additional study to gather more specific information about child domestic labor.(74)

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire participated in a 4-year, \$7.95 million regional project funded by USDOL in 2009, which aims to reduce the worst forms of child labor in domestic service and commercial agriculture (cocoa and coffee), and supports the efforts to develop an updated national action plan. This project will provide education services to withdraw or prevent from the worst forms of child labor 3,100 children in agriculture and 1,350 children in domestic service.(22) In 2011, this project worked with communities to develop 10 child protection committees and helped over 500 children in the domestic service sector by providing education and counseling services.(44) In 2010, USDOL funded a \$5 million second phase of this regional project, providing livelihood services to the families of children rescued from the worst forms of child labor, among other activities. In Côte d'Ivoire, this second phase will reach over 1,000 children working in agriculture (cocoa) with services in education and at least 1,000 families with services to improve their livelihoods.(22, 79, 80)

Among other activities implemented in 2011, this project organized a workshop identifying strategies to reduce the worst forms of child labor and helped support the development of a CLMS.(80)

Under the 2010 Declaration, USDOL also committed \$10 million to a new 4-year, regional project to reduce the worst forms of child labor in cocoa-producing areas in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana by providing direct services to communities. In Côte d'Ivoire, the project will rescue more than 2,500 children and provide livelihood assistance to at least 1,000 families.(7, 71, 72, 81) In 2011, this project worked with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire to harmonize its national CLMS.(58, 71) The International Chocolate and Cocoa Industry likewise committed \$2 million under the 2010 Declaration to a 4-year regional project in cocoa-producing areas in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana that is assisting the Governments of both countries with expanding their CLMSs and building the capacity of relevant stakeholders.(71, 72) In support of the 2010 Declaration's Framework of Action, Mars and Nestle also launched projects in Côte d'Ivoire to improve children's livelihoods and their access to education.(73, 82)

Since July 2009, the Government has been implementing its "Self-Help Village" Initiative to combat child labor in the cocoa sector' other activities include building schools and introducing CLMSs.(17, 77) Although actions were curtailed due to the crisis for the first half of 2011, beginning in June and as part of its commitment to the Declaration of Joint Action to Support the Implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol, the Government re-launched its Self-Help Village

Program.(71, 77, 83) In 2011, Côte d'Ivoire reached 10 new villages with awareness raising, education and other activities that are part of this Program.(16, 83)

The Empowering Cocoa Households with Opportunities and Education Solutions (ECHOES) Project (2007-2011), funded by the World Cocoa Foundation, the cocoa industry and USAID, worked to improve the livelihoods of parents and awarded 130 scholarships for 3 years of school-related expenses.(84) The 4-year, Phase II (2007-2011) Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP), funded by the same partners, raised awareness about preventing hazardous child labor; by December 2011, STCP had sensitized over 13,000 farmers on child labor in 15 districts, primarily in the Eastern Region of Côte d'Ivoire.(85)

In 2011, the Government tried to increase access to education by providing free preparatory classes, distributing text books and removing school uniform requirements.(6) Despite these efforts, many areas remain without access to any schools, thus increasing the risk of children of being engaged in the worst forms of child labor.(76)

Although the Government of Côte d'Ivoire has some programs to help children on cocoa farms, such social programs do not reach the 3,608 cocoa-growing communities reportedly in need of services.(3, 68) The Government also lacks sufficient programming to address the needs of children engaged in other types of agriculture; former child soldiers; street children; and children working in mines, domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation.

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Côte d'Ivoire:

| Area | Suggested Actions | Year(s) Action Recommended |
|------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Laws and Regulations | Make education compulsory and establish a minimum compulsory education age that is consistent with the minimum age for admission to work. | 2009, 2010, 2011 |
| | Ensure that the Labor Code extends existing protections to self-employed children. | 2011 |
| Coordination and Enforcement | Allocate sufficient resources to ensure inspections in sectors where the worst forms of child labor are most prevalent, and enforce relevant laws. | 2009, 2010, 2011 |
| | Systematically collect and make available data on child labor incidents, prosecutions, sentences and referrals to remediation services for children rescued from the worst forms of child labor. | 2010, 2011 |
| | Launch and expand the CLMS. | 2011 |

| Area | Suggested Actions | Year(s) Action Recommended |
|-----------------|--|----------------------------|
| Policies | Provide sufficient funding and expand activities for effective implementation of national action plans to combat the worst forms of child labor. | 2009, 2010, 2011 |
| Social Programs | Pilot and expand efforts to address the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation, domestic service, and mining. | 2010, 2011 |
| | Ensure that children used by armed forces during the crisis and street children receive appropriate remediation programming. | 2011 |
| | Implement a national campaign to increase birth certificates in order to remove the lack of one as an obstacle to children attending school and work with schools to abolish fees, especially those related to paying teachers' salaries. | 2011 |
| | Expand and improve all programming related to the worst forms of child labor by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing long-term sustainable child labor-monitoring and remediation models. • Augmenting social, education and livelihood programs; remediation; farmer training; and infrastructure improvements (e.g., schools). • Tracking project interventions and making this information publicly available. • Replicating and expanding throughout cocoa-growing areas successful project interventions to address exploitative child labor. | 2009, 2010, 2011 |

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