

Côte d'Ivoire

The Government of Côte d'Ivoire strengthened its laws and policies to combat the worst forms of child labor, including by adopting the Trafficking and Worst Forms of Child Labor Law and signing the Declaration of Joint Action to Support Implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol. However, by November 2010, a political crisis that resulted in violence across the country negatively impacted efforts to reduce the worst forms of child labor. Social programs remain too limited to assist all children engaged in the worst forms of child labor. Children continue to engage in dangerous work, including in agriculture and specifically on cocoa farms, sometimes under conditions of forced labor.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

| Children | Age | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Working | 5-14 yrs. | 39.8 |
| Attending School | 5-14 yrs. | 53.6 |
| Combining Work and School | 7-14 yrs. | 24.3 |



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,¹⁵⁹³ many of them in agriculture and particularly in the production of cocoa.¹⁵⁹⁴ Children also labor in the production of grains, vegetables and coffee and reportedly work in bananas, cotton, palm, papaya, pineapples, rice and rubber farming.¹⁵⁹⁵ Children's work in agriculture in Côte d'Ivoire involves harmful activities such as using dangerous tools and carrying heavy loads.¹⁵⁹⁶ In the cocoa sector alone, 50.6 percent, or an estimated 414,778 children, report injuries from "hazardous activities" according to a report by Tulane University.¹⁵⁹⁷

Ivorian girls, from as young as age 8, work as domestic servants, which often requires working 12 to 14 hours per day. Some of these girls are subject to mistreatment, including beatings and sexual abuse.¹⁵⁹⁸ In urban centers, especially

Abidjan, children are employed as street vendors and porters and risk injury from carrying too heavy loads and from vehicle accidents.¹⁵⁹⁹

Children work long hours in mining, particularly gold mining. Children, often under age 10, transport heavy buckets of extracted material for washing.¹⁶⁰⁰ Boys also work in pits, hoisting up material. Mining children have wounds and scars from their work on their legs and arms, and their hands are damaged by the chemicals used to wash extracted material in order to find gold.¹⁶⁰¹

Trafficking of children within Côte d'Ivoire's borders is a problem; according to a Government study in Côte d'Ivoire, 82 percent of trafficking victims are children trafficked internally.¹⁶⁰² Boys are trafficked for agricultural labor (e.g., on cocoa plantations) and to work in the service sector.¹⁶⁰³ Children, often girls between ages 9 and 15, are trafficked to the south (especially Abidjan) to work as domestic servants.¹⁶⁰⁴ Girls are also lured into

commercial sexual exploitation with promises of work in bars and restaurants. Many of these girls are ages 15 to 16, but some are as young as age 10.¹⁶⁰⁵


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. They are brought from those countries and from Guinea for labor in the mining sector and from Benin for work in construction.¹⁶⁰⁶ Girls from Ghana, Togo, Benin and Nigeria are trafficked to Côte d’Ivoire for domestic labor, street vending and commercial sexual exploitation.¹⁶⁰⁷

During the reporting period, Côte d’Ivoire experienced a serious political crisis that included violence by armed forces, leading to at least 3,000 deaths.¹⁶⁰⁸ According to a report of the United Nations Human Rights Council, children were forced to work as soldiers by both militias and armed groups throughout this period.¹⁶⁰⁹ Children were trained, armed and used to enforce road blocks, guard soldiers’ quarters and even engage in combat. Some were captured by armed forces and forced to serve as cooks and helpers.¹⁶¹⁰ Violence, including gunfire and mortar attacks in certain neighborhoods, also led to school closures, as did teacher boycotts in other areas.¹⁶¹¹ The crisis drove up food prices and forced an estimated 1 million people to flee their homes to escape the violence.¹⁶¹² These factors placed many children at new or greater risk of involvement in the worst forms of child labor.

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code sets the minimum age of employment at 14.¹⁶¹³ Côte d’Ivoire’s Hazardous Labor List defines and prohibits hazardous activities for children under 18 working in agriculture, mining, transportation, commerce and artisanal. For example, in agriculture, this list includes applying chemicals and carrying heavy

loads; in mining, children are prohibited from crushing stone and working underground.¹⁶¹⁴ Ivorian law further defines hazardous child labor as any type of labor that endangers the health or development of the child and establishes penalties for those who subject a child to such work, including the child’s parents.¹⁶¹⁵

| | | |
|---|--|----|
|  | C138, Minimum Age | ✓ |
| | C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor | ✓ |
|  | CRC | ✓ |
| | CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict | No |
| | CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography | No |
|  | 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 | No |

Education is not compulsory by law and is not free.¹⁶¹⁶ The absence of any educational requirement undermines the fight against the worst forms of child labor. For some parents, paying for education is a barrier to sending their children to school.¹⁶¹⁷

The Ivorian Constitution prohibits forced labor and slavery.¹⁶¹⁸ 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. 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 as well.¹⁶¹⁹ This law also prohibits all forms of prostitution, the use of children for illicit purposes and the

involvement of children in armed conflict.¹⁶²⁰ The minimum age for both voluntary and compulsory recruitment into the military is 18.¹⁶²¹

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

Three government entities are responsible for monitoring the worst forms of child labor and coordinating efforts to address the problem. In 2010, the Autonomous Agency for the Fight against Child Labor was created under the Ministry of Labor and Public Service to coordinate, monitor and plan actions to combat the worst forms of child labor.¹⁶²² The National Committee for the Fight against Trafficking and Child Exploitation led by the Ministry of Family and Social Affairs is also charged with coordinating and monitoring actions to protect children against economic and sexual exploitation, especially involving trafficking.¹⁶²³ Additionally, a national steering committee, which did not actually meet in 2010, is tasked with monitoring activities related to child labor.¹⁶²⁴ Research was unable to identify information about coordination between these government entities.

The Ministry of Labor is responsible for enforcing labor laws and employs approximately 200 labor inspectors for this purpose. Labor inspectors may conduct surprise inspections of any establishment and require medical examinations of children to ensure that their work does not exceed their physical capacity.¹⁶²⁵ Although the number of labor inspectors has been steadily increasing since 2006, a lack of sufficient funding and resources, such as vehicles and funding for fuel, limit their inspections mainly to formal sector enterprises.¹⁶²⁶ For example, no labor inspections are carried out in agriculture.¹⁶²⁷ 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.

The Cocoa Child Labor Task Force (SSTE) reports directly to the prime minister's office and

is responsible for coordinating efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor in the cocoa sector related to the Harkin-Engel Protocol.¹⁶²⁸ But, the SSTE has not implemented all agreements related to this protocol, including establishing a transparent child labor monitoring and certification system for the cocoa-growing region by the end of 2010.¹⁶²⁹

Research suggests a lack of information sharing and coordination between the SSTE and the Ministry of Labor, which hampers their effectiveness in combating the worst forms of child labor.¹⁶³⁰

The Ministry of Interior's national police has an anti-trafficking unit with five police officers and two social workers, which investigates cases of child trafficking.¹⁶³¹ Statistics, however, are not systematically collected on the number of children rescued, offenders prosecuted or sentences issued for trafficking or for any of the worst forms of child labor. This lack of data collection makes it impossible to assess efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor and hinders efforts by the Government to deploy its resources effectively.¹⁶³²

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In 2007, Côte d'Ivoire adopted the National Action Plan on Child Labor and Trafficking. Its objectives include 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.¹⁶³³ The plan calls for reducing the worst forms of child labor by 50 percent in 3 years and strengthening and expanding the Government's Child Labor Monitoring System.¹⁶³⁴ The target of reducing the worst forms of child labor by 50 percent was not actually achieved and according to a report on Government activities in the cocoa sector, activities under the Plan need to be expanded and funding increased for it to effectively reach vulnerable children throughout the country.¹⁶³⁵

The Ministry of Agriculture also 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.¹⁶³⁶

The Ministry of Family, Women and Social Affairs, which has within its responsibilities a focus on protecting children against trafficking and exploitation, developed a National Action Plan for the Child (2008–2012). This plan calls for training of officials on child labor related issues and more access to education for children.¹⁶³⁷ In 2010, the ministry also signed an order to strengthen the role that child protection committees play in keeping children from exploitation at local levels.¹⁶³⁸

Child labor concerns have been integrated in the following national development agendas and policy documents: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2009–2012), United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2009–2013), Decent Work Program (2008–2013) and National Education Development Plan (1998–2010).¹⁶³⁹

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

Since July 2009, the Government has been implementing its “Self Help Village” initiative to combat child labor in the cocoa sector by building schools and introducing child labor monitoring systems.¹⁶⁴⁰ This project continued in 2010, but the extent of its progress is unknown given the political crisis. Similarly, although the Government of Côte d’Ivoire participated in donor-funded programs during the reporting period, most efforts were suspended or curtailed because of the crisis in November and December.

The Government of Côte d’Ivoire participated in a 4-year, \$7.95 million regional project funded by USDOL in 2009. In Côte d’Ivoire, the project reduces the worst forms of child labor in domestic service and commercial agriculture (cocoa and coffee) and supports efforts to improve relevant national action plans.¹⁶⁴¹ In 2010, USDOL

augmented funding for this project by \$5 million to permit it to bolster livelihood services for the families of children rescued from the worst forms of child labor, among other activities.¹⁶⁴²

The Empowering Cocoa Households with Opportunities and Education Solutions (ECHOES) Project (2007–2011), funded by the World Cocoa Foundation and the cocoa industry, provided vocational agriculture education to school-age children and income-generating support to selected families during the reporting period. The 4-year, Phase II (2007–2011) Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP), funded by the same two partners plus USAID, raised awareness about preventing hazardous child labor.¹⁶⁴³ STCP has been operating in 15 districts, working with 20 cocoa cooperatives in the eastern region of Côte d’Ivoire.¹⁶⁴⁴

The International Cocoa Initiative rehabilitated schools in 70 communities, supported the assignment of new teachers in 18 communities and conducted awareness raising on child labor and trafficking.¹⁶⁴⁵

During the reporting period, the Government participated in a 4.5-year, USDOL-funded project, implemented by Tulane University, that involved oversight of the efforts of the international cocoa industry and the Governments of Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana to implement the Harkin-Engel Protocol.¹⁶⁴⁶ Tulane University’s research from 2009 indicated that only a small percentage of children working in the cocoa sector had benefitted from any interventions.¹⁶⁴⁷ Moreover, less than 3 percent of cocoa-growing communities have received remediation services, which leaves an estimated 3,608 communities in need.¹⁶⁴⁸

Reaffirming their commitment to more effectively combat the worst forms of child labor in cocoa production, the Governments of Côte d’Ivoire and Ghana signed a Declaration of Joint Action to Support the Implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol on September 13, 2010. Under

this declaration and its accompanying framework of action, the Government agreed to provide appropriate resources and coordinate with key stakeholders (including the international cocoa industry and USDOL) on efforts to reduce the worst forms of child labor in cocoa-producing areas.¹⁶⁴⁹

As part of the Declaration, USDOL 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 and by rescuing more than 5,000 children.¹⁶⁵⁰

Under the framework of action, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire also agreed that child labor surveys in the cocoa region should be conducted every 5 years.¹⁶⁵¹

Work also continued with social partners to help the Government counter the worst forms of child labor in domestic service and street vending. For the first half of the reporting period, an NGO, called Kindermissionswerk, worked with the International Catholic Bureau for the Dignity and Rights of Children (BICE) to provide educational, psychological and legal services to children found in domestic labor or street vending.¹⁶⁵²

Although the Government of Côte d'Ivoire has some programs to help children on cocoa farms, it still needs to increase social programs in order to reach the remaining 3,608 cocoa-growing communities.¹⁶⁵³ The Government also lacks social programs to address the needs of children working on other types of farms and mines, children forced to beg and children who are engaged in commercial sexual exploitation.

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

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Make education compulsory and establish a minimum compulsory education age that is consistent with the minimum age for admission to work.

IN THE AREA OF 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.
- Train labor inspectors, law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges to recognize exploited and trafficked children and to enforce laws to protect them.
- Take additional steps to improve coordination between the Ministry of Labor and SSTE and other relevant agencies responsible for agriculture, education, development, infrastructure, child exploitation, trafficking, social safety nets, employment and remediation.
- Systematically collect and make available data on incidences, prosecutions, sentences and referrals to remediation services for children rescued from the worst forms of child labor.
- Implement a transparent child labor monitoring and certification system for the cocoa-growing region, as developed under programs.

IN THE AREA OF POLICY:

- Provide sufficient funding and expand activities for effective implementation of national action plans to combat the worst forms of child labor.

IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Pilot and expand efforts to address the worst forms of child labor in forced begging, commercial sexual exploitation, domestic service and mining.
- Scale up and replicate successful projects throughout cocoa-growing regions, including by using the results of representative surveys of cocoa-growing areas conducted every 5 years to adjust the targeting of priority efforts.
- Expand and improve all programming related to the worst forms of child labor by:
 - Developing long-term sustainable child labor monitoring, certification and remediation models.
 - Augmenting social, education and livelihood programs; remediation activities; farmer training; and infrastructure improvements (e.g., welcome centers and schools).
 - Tracking project interventions and impact and making this information publicly available.
 - Replicate and expand throughout cocoa-growing areas successful projects to address exploitative child labor.

¹⁵⁹³ 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 provided are from 2006. 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. See also Yacouba Diallo, *Les activités des enfants en Afrique subsaharienne*:

Les enseignements des enquêtes sur le travail des enfants en Afrique de l'Ouest, Understanding Children's Work, Geneva, July 2006, 11; available from http://www.ucw-project.org/pdf/publications/STYacouba_SSA_act_enf.pdf.

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¹⁵⁹⁹ Save the Children, *Ca -la c'est difficile: l'exploitation des enfants en Cote d'Ivoire*, Abidjan, December 2009, 59.

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¹⁶⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 35-39, 44.

¹⁶⁰² Government of Cote d'Ivoire: Direction Generale du Travail, ILO-IPEC, and Institut National de la Statistique, *Enquete Nationale sur le Travail des Enfants*, 108.

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¹⁶⁰⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2009: Cote d'Ivoire."

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¹⁶⁴⁶ U.S. Department of Labor, *Uninterrupted Oversight of Public & Private Initiatives to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Cocoa Sector in Côte D'ivoire & Ghana*, Technical Cooperation Project Summary, 2010; available from http://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/sub-saharan_africa/WestAf_COCOA_II.htm. See also Tulane University, *Third Annual Report*, 1 and 16.

¹⁶⁴⁷ Tulane University, *Third Annual Report*, 64, 66, 78.

¹⁶⁴⁸ Tulane University, *Final Report*, 47.

¹⁶⁴⁹ Senator Harkin, Congressman Engel, USDOL, Government of Cote d'Ivoire, Government of Ghana, and International Cocoa and Chocolate Industry, *Declaration of Joint Action to Support Implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol* Abidjan, September 13, 2010; available from http://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/sub-saharan_africa/GhanaSignedDeclaration.pdf. See also Senator Harkin, Congressman Engel, USDOL, Government of Cote d'Ivoire, Government of Ghana, and International Cocoa and Chocolate Industry, *Framework of Action to Support Implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol*, Abidjan, September 13, 2010; available from http://www.dol.gov/ilab/projects/sub-saharan_africa/CocoaFrameworkAction.pdf.

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¹⁶⁵³ Tulane University, *Final Report*, 47.