

In 2014, the Dominican Republic made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Despite new initiatives to address child labor, the Dominican Republic is receiving this assessment because certain children remain at increased vulnerability to labor exploitation due to limitations on educational opportunities related to the interpretation and implementation of Dominican law and policies on the right to education.



During the reporting period, the Government passed a new Penal Code that increases penalties for the commercial sexual exploitation of children and ratified the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict. In addition, the Government signed the Protocol for the Protection of Children’s and Adolescents’ Rights in Child Labor, which aims to eliminate child labor and increase school attendance. The Government also expanded educational programs and signed the Education Pact, a plan to reform the education system by improving teacher training, building more schools, and increasing attendance. However, children in the Dominican Republic are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and in commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Due to misinterpretations and misapplications of Dominican law and policies on the right to education, school officials do not permit some children, particularly those of Haitian descent, to enroll in primary and secondary education without birth certificates or other identifying documentation. These incorrectly-applied provisions prevent or discourage children not entitled to Dominican documents, or unable to obtain documents from their countries of nationality, from enrolling in or completing school. In addition, difficulties in the implementation of a naturalization law passed in May 2014 have hindered the acquisition of both Haitian and Dominican identity documents under that law, adding to difficulties labor inspectors and employers have in verifying affected children’s ages for work.

I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in the Dominican Republic are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking.(1-4) The 2009–2010 National Multipurpose Household Survey, published in 2011, found that although the overall prevalence of child labor has decreased in the last decade, the prevalence of child labor in agriculture has increased.(5, 6) In 2014, the Government, with partial funding from UNICEF, collected data for a new National Multipurpose Household Survey that will generate updated information about child labor. The Government has indicated that it will publish the results of the Survey in 2015.(4) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in the Dominican Republic.

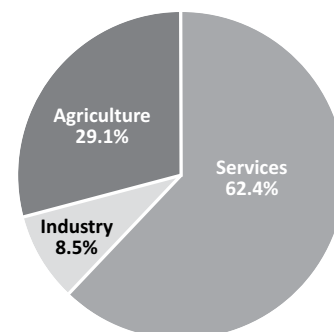
Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10-14 yrs.	5.3 (54,850)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	96.1
Combining Work and School (%)	10-14 yrs.	4.8
Primary Completion Rate (%)		90.3

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(7)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis of statistics from Encuesta Nacional de Hogares de Propósitos Múltiples (ENHOGAR) Survey, 2011.(8)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14



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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	Harvesting sugarcane,† collecting cut cane,† planting sugarcane,† and clearing land for sugarcane production (2, 3, 9-14)
	Producing coffee, rice, tomatoes, beans,* corn,* garlic,* onions,* and potatoes* (4, 6, 15-18)
Industry	Producing baked goods (bread, cakes, and pastries) (5)
	Mining† for larimar* (a blue stone often used for jewelry) (5, 19)
	Construction,† activities unknown (5, 20)
Services	Street vending,† shining shoes, and washing car windows (4, 9, 17)
	Working in restaurants, bars,† cantinas,† and coffee shops (5)
	Working in woodworking shops* and auto repair shops* (4)
	Scavenging in landfills (4, 21, 22)
	Domestic service in third-party homes (5, 9, 17, 23)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced domestic service sometimes as a result of human trafficking (17, 24)
	Forced labor in agriculture and begging each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1, 17, 24-27)
	Forced labor in waste picking,* shining shoes,* and washing car windows* (4)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1, 4, 13, 17, 28, 29)
	Use of children in illicit activities, including illegal sales at border areas and drug trafficking sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1, 4, 30, 31)

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

† Determined by national law or regulation as hazardous and, as such, relevant to Article 3(d) of ILO C. 182.

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

Children in the Dominican Republic are exploited in commercial sexual exploitation, particularly in touristic locations and major urban areas.(17, 24, 27, 32) There are also incidences of children being trafficked within the country, as well as from Haiti, for commercial sexual exploitation.(24, 32) Although evidence is limited, some reports indicate that children have been forced to engage in waste picking, shining shoes, and washing car windows, where they are sometimes forced to meet earnings quotas. Reports also indicate that children involved in these activities have turned to commercial sexual exploitation to satisfy these quotas when they are unable to meet them.(4, 33)

Haitian migration to the Dominican Republic is a longstanding phenomenon. Although estimates vary, approximately 900,000 to 1.2 million Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent live in the Dominican Republic.(20, 24, 34-36) Many Haitians and Dominicans of Haitian descent, including children, live in communities known as *bateyes* that traditionally have housed sugarcane workers and often lack adequate housing, medical services, and other basic services.(3, 17, 19, 34, 37) Some children work in sugarcane production, often alongside their parents.(2, 3, 9-14) The porous border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic has enabled children, accompanied or not, to be trafficked into the Dominican Republic without coming to the attention of authorities.(24, 38, 39) Some Haitian children who are trafficked to the Dominican Republic are forced to work in agriculture, domestic service, or begging.(24-26, 40)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Dominican Republic has ratified all 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	✓

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

Convention	Ratification
 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	✓

In October 2014, the Government of the Dominican Republic ratified the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.(41)

The Government has established 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	14	Article 245 of the Labor Code; Article 40 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (42, 43)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Resolution on Hazardous Work for Persons under Age 18; Article 251 of the Labor Code (42, 44)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Articles 1-3 of the Resolution on Hazardous Work for Persons under Age 18 (44)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Trafficking in Persons and Migrant Smuggling; Articles 40-41 of the Constitution (45, 46)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 1, 2, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Trafficking in Persons and Migrant Smuggling; Articles 25 and 409 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents; Article 41 of the Constitution (43, 45, 46)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 25 and 409-411 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents; Articles 192-195 of the Penal Code; Article 24 of the Law on Technological Crime (43, 47, 48)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 85 of the Law on Drugs and Controlled Substances (49)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		Articles 96-97 and 231-232 of the Organic Armed Forces Law; Article 75 of the Constitution (46, 50)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18†	Articles 96-97 of the Organic Armed Forces Law (50)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	18	Article 63 of the Constitution; Articles 33, 35, 37, and 40 of the Organic Law of Education; Articles 45-46 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (43, 46, 51)
Free Public Education	Yes	18	Article 63 of the Constitution; Articles 33, 35, 37, and 40 of the Organic Law of Education; Ministry of Education Circular No. 18 of 2011; Articles 45-46 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (43, 46, 51, 52)

* Articles 96 and 231-232 of the Organic Armed Forces Law (No. 139-13) state that there is no conscription in peacetime and that compulsory military recruitment may be authorized in situations of national defense or emergency. However, it is unclear whether Dominican law establishes a minimum age for compulsory military recruitment in these situations.(50)

† The minimum age for voluntary military service is 18. However, children ages 16 to 18 may enlist with parental consent.(50)

In December 2014, the Government passed a new Penal Code that, among other provisions, increases penalties for the commercial sexual exploitation of children to 10 to 20 years of imprisonment, and in aggravated circumstances to 20 to 30 years of imprisonment. The new Penal Code will enter into force one year following its publication in the National Gazette.(4, 48)

Article 2 of the Resolution on Hazardous Work for Persons under Age 18 specifies activities that the Government deems hazardous to children and prohibits them for children under age 18. Article 3 of the same Resolution allows children ages 16 to 18 to engage

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in some of these activities, for example in the use of industrial machines, as part of vocational training programs, and only when they are properly trained, supervised, and protected.(44) Despite these protections, Article 251 of the Labor Code sets the general minimum age for hazardous work at 16.(42) The ILO has called upon the Government to amend the Labor Code to ensure that children ages 16 to 18 who are permitted to engage in hazardous activities in exceptional cases are fully protected.(53)

Children of parents with irregular migration status are particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation due to a lack of identity documents.(17, 54, 55) Article 18 of the 2010 Constitution stipulates that children born in the Dominican Republic are entitled to Dominican citizenship if one of their parents is a Dominican citizen. Children born in the Dominican Republic to parents who are both foreign diplomats, “in transit” persons, or who are in the country illegally are not entitled to Dominican citizenship.(46) The 2010 Constitution relies on the definition of “in transit” persons established in Article 36 of the 2004 General Law on Migration, which was upheld by the Supreme Court of Justice in 2005. In Article 36 of the 2004 General Law on Migration, “in transit” persons are those who are “nonresidents” and include, among others, contracted foreign labor migrants.(17, 46, 56) Article 68 of the 2011 Regulations for the Application of the General Law on Migration clarified that, in addition to nonresidents, “in transit” status also applies to any foreigner who resides or has resided in Dominican territory without regular migration status.(57)

On September 23, 2013, the Dominican Constitutional Tribunal upheld the definition of “in transit” and ruled that children born in the Dominican Republic to any foreigners “in transit” (going back to 1929) are not considered Dominican nationals, impacting an estimated 200,000 individuals.(37, 58) The option of obtaining birth certificates from the countries from where their parents originated is not viable for many children born in the Dominican Republic, particularly if their parents are no longer citizens of, or have lost ties with, their countries of origin as a result of their long-established presence in the Dominican Republic or, as in the case of Haiti, the countries of origin have suffered natural disasters resulting in the destruction of birth records that would have demonstrated citizenship.(17)

In November 2013, President Danilo Medina issued a presidential decree to promulgate the National Regularization Plan for Foreigners as a mechanism to recognize, document, and regularize undocumented migrants in the Dominican Republic.(58) In May 2014, the Government passed a naturalization law (Law 169-14), which it began implementing in July 2014, to create a path to citizenship for the more than 200,000 individuals born in the Dominican Republic to “in transit” parents.(59-61) In August 2014, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (IACHR) found that Articles 6, 8, and 11 of Law 169-14 which regulate legal personhood and nationality in the Dominican Republic are incompatible with the Government’s duties under the American Convention on Human Rights; these duties include providing freedom against discrimination under the law based on race, color, or national origin, as well as the right to nationality in the state where one is born when the right to another nationality cannot be fulfilled. The IACHR has called upon the Government to take the necessary measures, both in law and in practice, to ensure that the residency status of “in transit” parents does not constitute a cause for the denial of Dominican nationality to children born in the Dominican Republic, and to develop a system to ensure that all persons born in the country are registered equally at birth.(32, 62-65)

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 (MT)	Lead government efforts to eliminate child labor; conduct labor inspections to identify and document offenses; and direct the Child Labor Unit (UTI) to investigate and reduce child labor, in part through the National Information System for Monitoring Child Labor (INFOSITI).(4, 9, 66-68) Implement the Ministry’s Institutional Strategic Plan (2013–2016), which outlines objectives to improve the number and quality of labor inspections overall, offer better service to workers, coordinate Labor Code reform, integrate the UTI into existing enforcement efforts, and provide improved vocational training for vulnerable populations, including children.(9)

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (cont)

Organization/Agency	Role
National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI)	Coordinate with the MT to protect children against labor exploitation and enforce labor laws.(9, 69) Promote policies to eradicate all forms of violence against children, including child labor, as well as improve the employability of young people.(66, 70) Receive victims of child labor through 43 municipal-level offices for psychological evaluation and refer them for services.(54, 69, 70) Run regional and municipal-level workshops on preventing and addressing the commercial sexual exploitation of children.(69)
Office of the Attorney General (AG)	Prosecute crimes involving children, including violations of child labor laws. Oversees the Special Prosecutor for Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking, which utilizes a team of specialized investigators to investigate the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents and other worst forms of child labor; violations may be communicated to the Specialized Prosecutor through a hotline.(4, 69)
Ministry of the Interior's National Police (PN), PN's Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Unit, and Directorate of Migration (DGM)	Enforce criminal laws, including those prohibiting and punishing the worst forms of child labor, and coordinate with the AG in the prosecution of perpetrators.(9)
Specialized Corps for Tourist Safety (CESTUR)	Prevent child sex abuse in touristic areas, rescue minors, and arrest and bring to justice child sex offenders. Overseen by the Ministry of Defense.(70) In 2014, CESTUR and UNICEF signed an accord to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the Dominican tourist industry through capacity building and training for prosecuting these crimes.(71)

The 2010 Constitution declares the eradication of child labor as a national priority.(46) National law guarantees free public education and requires that all children attend school until age 18.(46, 51) In addition, national law prohibits the exclusion of children from the educational system based on a lack of identifying documentation.(43, 52) However, in practice, some primary and secondary schools deny access to children who cannot present birth certificates or identifying documentation.(15, 34, 37, 72) This practice puts these children in precarious situations where they are more likely to work. In addition, some secondary schools may permit access without birth certificates but require such documentation for the national exams required to obtain high school diplomas.(72, 73) Without the opportunity to receive high school diplomas and, as a result, to pursue higher education and improve access to formal sector employment as adults, individuals without identity documents have less incentive to remain in school. This may increase the likelihood that they engage in child labor, including its worst forms.(17, 23, 24, 27, 36, 66, 72, 74-76) An estimated 13 percent of all children younger than age 15 have no birth documents.(17)

In addition, difficulties in the implementation of Law 169-14, including misunderstandings of information on the application process for identity documents, as well as costs associated with this process, for example to travel to government offices, have hindered the acquisition of identity documents, adding to difficulties labor inspectors and employers have in verifying affected children's ages for work.(77)

Law enforcement agencies in the Dominican Republic took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, the Ministry of Labor (MT) employed 176 labor inspectors, which is 31 fewer than the 207 inspectors employed in 2013.(69) Some reports indicate that this number of inspectors is inadequate to meet the need for inspections nationwide.(4) The Government reported that, during the reporting period, all of these inspectors received training on child labor, including hazardous child labor, and that this training was administered by the MT's Child Labor Unit (UTI).(69) The Government also reported that for 2014, approximately \$4.5 million was dedicated to the MT's Inspection Unit, and approximately \$142,000 was dedicated to the UTI.(4, 69) According to the MT, additional funding and resources would increase the efficiency and number of inspections.(4)

In 2014, the MT conducted a total of 78,886 labor inspections to verify compliance with labor laws, including child labor laws.(78) This number of inspections is less than the approximate total of 98,000 inspections conducted in 2013.(70) In 2014, each inspector conducted an average of 448 inspections for the year, which is less than the average of 473 inspections conducted by each inspector in 2013. This is nonetheless a high number of inspections conducted by each inspector, and it is unknown whether this high number affects the quality of such inspections. Some NGOs and labor unions have reported that inspections are not always

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conducted immediately after a request is made and that inspection reports often contain errors and contradictions.⁽⁴⁾ Reports also indicate that substandard labor inspection reports have hindered the ability of the Office of the Attorney General (AG) to pursue prosecutions on criminal matters involving child labor issues.⁽⁴⁾

The process developed by the MT for inspections to enforce labor laws includes a preliminary visit, during which inspectors inform employers of violations and establish a period for remediation, but do not issue fines. Upon expiration of the remediation period, inspectors then conduct a re-inspection to determine whether the violations have been rectified.^(42, 79, 80) If violations are found during re-inspection, the MT files an infraction report with the local office of the MT, who then transfers the infraction report to the relevant local court for adjudication.^(42, 79, 80) This two-tiered inspection process puts a strain on the inspectorate's limited human and financial resources and may not sufficiently deter employers from exploiting children in the workplace, particularly in remote rural areas where re-inspections are more difficult and less consistent. Furthermore, the lack of publicly available information on the results of inspections prevents a complete understanding of how effective this inspection system is in practice.

Although the 2008 General Inspection Protocol and the 2011 Inspection Protocol for Agriculture instruct inspectors to assess child labor violations by reviewing workers' identity documents and employers' records, making observations, and conducting interviews, the widespread lack of identity documents impedes both inspectors and employers from verifying the ages of workers and guaranteeing that children under age 18 are not participating in dangerous or unhealthy work.^(10, 15, 36, 79, 80) The MT has indicated that improvements are needed in how inspectors conduct interviews, ask follow-up questions, and use inspection data to strengthen the inspection system.⁽¹⁵⁾ Moreover, reports indicate that in some cases, Spanish-speaking inspectors working without translation assistance have been responsible for interviewing Creole-speaking workers with limited or no Spanish-language abilities, which has hindered the efficacy of those inspections.⁽⁴⁾

Of the 78,886 inspections conducted in 2014, 70,020 were conducted from January through November; of these, 58,535 were regular inspections, which were preventative and conducted unannounced, and 11,485 were special inspections, which were conducted in response to requests or complaints.^(4, 69, 78) In 2014, the Government reported a total of 416 children were found working in violation of the law, including in agriculture, markets, auto-repair shops, and wood-working shops, with 216 of these children found working in agriculture; research could not find the breakdown of where the remaining 200 children were found working in violation of the law.⁽⁴⁾ Research also did not find whether there were any sanctions issued or penalties assessed and collected for child labor violations during the reporting period.⁽⁴⁾ The MT reported that the 416 children found in child labor were removed from work and returned to their homes, where a subsequent visit from the MT informed parents of the dangers of child labor.^(4, 69) Research could not confirm whether the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI) or its municipal offices evaluated these rescued children, provided them with services, or coordinated their return to their homes.

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2014, the AG's Special Prosecutor for Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking employed six investigators to conduct investigations regarding the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation. Members of the National Police's (PN) Trafficking in Persons Unit also investigated the worst forms of child labor.⁽⁴⁾ The Government reported that, overall, there were 12 investigators dedicated to investigating human trafficking.⁽³³⁾ The Government also reported that the AG and CONANI received training on human trafficking issues, as well as provided training on these issues to public servants, attorneys, and civil society participants.^(4, 33) Reports indicate that criminal law enforcement agencies lack sufficient resources to effectively enforce laws on human trafficking.⁽³³⁾

For 2014, the number of criminal investigations conducted for the worst forms of child labor, the sectors and geographical areas where the investigations occurred, and the total number of children rescued is unknown. The AG reported on 12 investigations and prosecutions involving the worst forms of child labor; the AG pursued 6 cases of forced begging as a result of human trafficking that involved 20 minors, and 6 cases of commercial sexual exploitation, which in some cases involved other crimes, that involved 15 minors.^(4, 69) The AG reported 6 convictions that resulted from these 12 cases, including 1 conviction for the crime of forced begging that carried a sentence of 2 years of prison, and 3 convictions for the crime of commercial sexual exploitation that carried sentences of 3, 5, and 30 years of prison.^(4, 69)

Child trafficking victims rescued by the PN are referred to CONANI for services, including placement in NGO-run shelters.(33) The AG reported that, of the 12 cases mentioned, 5 children were placed under the care and protection of CONANI.(69)

Reports indicate that coordination between the MT and the AG has been limited and that not all criminal violations identified by the MT have been effectively investigated and prosecuted by the AG.(4, 9, 16)

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 to Eliminate Child Labor (CDN)	Develop and promote policies to combat child labor based on research, as well as coordinate child labor initiatives. Established through Decree 144-97; overseen by the MT; and is composed of Ministerial representatives, including from the UTI, labor union officials, private business leaders, and NGOs.(66, 67, 69) Coordinates efforts of the 48 Local and Municipal Committees that implement the CDN's efforts at the local level.(4, 66, 67, 69)
Inter-Institutional Commission Against Child Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation	Coordinate and implement actions to combat commercial sexual exploitation and child abuse. Led by CONANI and the MT, and includes representatives from various ministries, the National and Tourism Police, the AG, NGOs, and the Hotel and Restaurant Association, as well as representatives of UNICEF and the ILO as advisors.(4, 9, 70)
Inter-Agency Commission Against Trafficking in Persons (CITIM)	Coordinate government agencies in efforts to combat human trafficking by developing and implementing national plans to combat trafficking, collaborating with international organizations and NGOs on trafficking issues, developing training and education programs to address trafficking, examining legislative initiatives on trafficking issues, and collaborating in the production of reports on human trafficking.(33, 81) Led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and comprises 14 government agencies, including the Ministries of Labor, Education, Public Health, and Tourism, as well as the AG and other law enforcement agencies; created through Decree No. 575-07.(33, 81)
Social Policies Coordination Cabinet (GCPs)	Coordinate all social policies and conditional cash transfer programs, such as the Progressing with Solidarity Program. Led by the Vice President.(9, 66)
Local Committees for the Protection and Restitution of Children's Rights	Ensure that children's rights are not being violated; consists of community volunteers in 10 municipalities.(70)

In 2014, the National Steering Committee to Eliminate Child Labor (CDN) met every two months to coordinate government efforts to combat child labor.(4) It has been reported that the Local and Municipal Committees of the CDN face limitations in their coordination efforts due to a lack of resources.(15, 23)

During the reporting period, the Inter-Agency Commission Against Trafficking in Persons (CITIM) developed a protocol to detect, refer, and assist child and adolescent victims of trafficking for implementation in 2015. This protocol was developed in collaboration with the IOM.(33) However, some reports indicate that the CITIM did not convene all relevant agencies during the reporting period, and that its efforts were otherwise limited.(33)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of the Dominican Republic 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 to Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (PEN) (2006–2016)	Identifies the roles and responsibilities of government agencies and municipal representatives in eradicating the worst forms of child labor. Prioritizes prevention, protection, assistance, and the progressive eradication of the worst forms of child labor.(4, 67, 69, 82)
Action Plan for the Eradication of Abuse and the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents (2009–2014)	Identifies the roles and responsibilities of government agencies and municipal representatives to eradicate the commercial sexual exploitation of children, including through legislative strengthening.(9, 69)

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Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
Roadmap Towards the Elimination of Child Labor in the Dominican Republic	Outlines a plan to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2015 and all other types of child labor by 2020.(66, 83) Designates the roles of various government agencies and sets targets and indicators for each area of responsibility, specifically poverty reduction, health, education, institutional coordination, awareness raising, and information sharing. Adopted in 2010.(66, 69)
Protocol for the Protection of Children's and Adolescents' Rights in Child Labor†	Aims to eliminate child labor in favor of greater school attendance, in part through community workshops that seek to reach 300,000 children and adolescents on child protection issues. Includes a plan to evaluate the country's policy framework on the elimination of child labor as well as the country's compliance with international conventions on child labor.(4, 69)
National Action Plan Against Human Trafficking and the Smuggling of Migrants (2009–2014)	Aims to combat human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants through strategic objectives, including prevention, investigation and prosecution, and victim assistance and protection.(33, 84)
Education Pact (2014-2030)†	Seeks to reform the education system by building more and better-quality schools, improving teacher training, and increasing attendance and graduation rates through free early childhood education and enrolling more students in the Extended School Day Program.(85) Also seeks to provide support to families to keep their children out of child labor and enrolled in school. Signed in April 2014 by the President and nearly 200 academic, political, and educational organizations.(66, 76, 85)
National 10-Year Education Plan (2008–2018) (PDE)	Aims to increase access to education and improve attendance and graduation rates, in part to reduce child labor. Aims to improve both classroom space and time in school, as well as build strategies to address the needs of children who are behind in school because of work.(66, 86) Implemented by the Ministry of Education.(66)
National Development Plan 2030 (END)	Aims to reduce poverty and inequality, and includes policies and programs that encourage families to keep their children out of child labor and in school.(9, 66, 70) Includes the Quality Education for All plan that aims to provide universal education to all children through middle school, including students without identity documents and those with disabilities.(70)
National Plan on Gender Equality (2007–2017)*	Promotes occupational and educational opportunities for women and girls, seeks to remedy gender discrimination and violence, and promotes child care for working mothers so that children do not have to be in the workplace.(87)
Government Plan under President Medina (2012–2016)	Focuses on the development of 400,000 new jobs and includes the elimination of child labor, among other goals.(4, 9)
Declaration of the Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labor†	Aims to increase regional cooperation on eradicating child labor by 2020 through signatories' efforts to strengthen monitoring and coordination mechanisms, government programs, and South-South exchanges. Reaffirms commitments made in the Brasilia Declaration from the Third Global Conference on Child Labor (October 2013), and signed by the Dominican Republic at the ILO's 18th Regional Meeting of the Americas in Lima, Peru (October 2014).(88-90)

* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

Efforts to implement child labor elimination policies in the Dominican Republic have been slowed by an insufficient allocation of resources, including personnel.(91) In addition, reports indicate that the implementation of the Roadmap Towards the Elimination of Child Labor has also been hindered by a lack of coordination among participating government agencies.(9)

Deficiencies in the national education system have also been identified as contributing to children's engagement in child labor, including its worst forms.(53, 76) The ILO has reported that the country is not likely to meet the Education for All goal of universal primary enrollment by 2015.(53) Despite this, in 2014 the Government's budget allocated 4 percent of the national GDP to primary and secondary education for the second year in a row; this is an increase from the 2.4 percent allocated in 2011.(66, 69) Plans for the increased budget include constructing 29,000 additional classrooms, extending school hours nationwide, providing school meals, improving teacher training, and raising the quality of education.(15, 23, 76, 92-96) While these plans have not yet been fully implemented, the Government reports that 10,017 new classrooms were created in 2014.(69)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of the Dominican Republic funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms. The Government has other programs that may have an impact on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Progressing with Solidarity (PROSOLI)‡	Government program that promotes the well-being of families living in extreme poverty through a comprehensive approach that includes subsidies and conditional cash transfers.(66, 69, 97) Aims to increase the number of students who attend school and to reduce child labor, including by informing parents about the effects of child labor and the benefits of education.(66, 70, 98, 99) In June 2013, the ILO and the Vice President of the Dominican Republic announced a project to withdraw 38,000 of the program's beneficiaries from child labor; this action supports the 2012 letter of agreement between the Vice President and the ILO to remove 100,000 children from exploitative work over a four-year period.(100-102) In 2014, the Government implemented this project through capacity-building initiatives and designed pilot strategies for eliminating child labor in the provinces with the highest incidence. Efforts in 2014 also included analyses of its child labor interventions and awareness programs to communicate the dangers of child labor and the benefits of education to program beneficiaries.(4, 69)
Education and Monitoring Program for the Eradication of Child Labor (2012–2014)	\$1.3 million Government of Spain-funded, 2-year project implemented by ILO-IPEC that aims to strengthen public policies and government capacity to combat child labor in 19 countries in Latin America, including the Dominican Republic. Includes the objective of developing information systems on the worst forms of child labor.(103)
Elimination of Child Labor in Latin America (Phase 4) (2011–2015)	\$4.5 million Government of Spain-funded, 4-year project implemented by ILO-IPEC to combat child labor in 19 countries, including the Dominican Republic.(103)
Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues Project	USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO in approximately 40 countries, including the Dominican Republic, to support the priorities of the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor by 2016 established by The Hague Global Child Labor Conference in 2010. Aims to build the capacity of the national government and develop strategic policies to address the elimination of child labor in the Dominican Republic and improve the evidence base on child labor through data collection and research.(104, 105)
Awareness-Raising Campaign on Child Labor†	MT and the Foundation for Peace and Democracy (FUNPADEM) public awareness-raising campaign to mobilize communities to report cases of child labor. Launched in January 2014.(70, 106)
Child Domestic Work Awareness-Raising Campaign	MT and ILO child labor eradication campaign launched in 2013 that supports reaching the goals outlined in the Roadmap for Achieving the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor by 2016, with an emphasis on the elimination of child domestic work.(70)
Line 700 Hotline‡	Office of the First Lady's free hotline to enable citizens to report cases of child labor, in addition to child abuse.(70)
Extended School Day Program (<i>Jornada Escolar Extendida</i>)‡	Ministry of Education program to extend school hours to a full day (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) in order to improve educational achievement and reduce child labor.(9, 15, 21, 107) In 2014, the Government continued to expand the program and reached more than 1,750 schools, with approximately 720,000 students receiving instruction.(4, 108)
Spaces for Growth and Homework Rooms (<i>Espacios para Crecer</i>)‡	Government after school programs that seek to prevent children from working by keeping them in a creative learning environment outside of normal classroom hours.(15, 23, 98, 109, 110)
Spaces for Hope (<i>Espacios de Esperanza</i>)*‡	Government early educational centers to promote integrated attention and positive stimulation to pre-school aged children. In 2014, the Government reported operating 71 Spaces for Hope around the country.(9, 70, 111)
Literacy Campaign (<i>Quisqueya Aprende Contigo</i>)*‡	Government literacy campaign instituted in 2013 to promote the importance of literacy and education among families, including youth.(9, 112, 113) In 2014, approximately 8,500 teachers were trained for literacy instruction with students ages 15 and older, and more than 52,000 people were integrated into the program.(4, 69)
Youth and Employment Project (<i>Proyecto de Emprendimiento Juvenil</i>)*	Government project supported by the Government of Chile that improves the employability of disadvantaged, at-risk youth through training and internship opportunities to promote entrepreneurial and job-related skills.(70, 98, 114) In 2014, 700 youth were enrolled in the program, and the project designed a training course on self-employment for youth and trained 25 training facilitators.(115)
At-Risk Youth Initiative*	USAID-funded project to protect youth from crime and promote access to education, including through participation in afterschool programs (Spaces for Growth) and other social services.(116)
Child Care Facilities (<i>Estancias Infantiles</i>)*‡	MT-supported child care facilities that provide comprehensive attention to children of adult workers who are under age 5. In 2014, the Government reported operating 115 child care facilities around the country.(70)
Presidential Microcredit Initiative*‡	Government program to provide microcredit to small businesses in the disadvantaged regions in order to increase employment and provide improved livelihoods for families.(9)

* 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 the Dominican Republic.

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A study commissioned by the IDB indicated that the Progressing with Solidarity (PROSOLI) program had increased school enrollment and attendance among beneficiaries.(98, 117) Another study indicated an increase in beneficiaries' abilities to read and write.(70) An evaluation conducted in the province of Montecristi showed a decline in child labor among program beneficiaries compared to a control group in the same province.(70) However, the PROSOLI program requires participants to present identification documents in order to access program benefits, which would limit the participation of those individuals lacking such documentation, many of whom are vulnerable to child labor.(15)

Despite the efforts described above, current programs do not appear to adequately address the extent of the worst forms of child labor in the Dominican Republic, particularly commercial sexual exploitation and harmful work in agricultural areas.(24) Furthermore, there are insufficient efforts to reduce the demand for child sex tourism. In addition, governmental assistance to trafficking victims is minimal and inadequate, with civil society organizations as the principal service providers assisting trafficking victims.(9, 24, 32, 33)

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 the Dominican Republic (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure the law establishes a minimum age for compulsory military recruitment in situations of national defense or emergency.	2014
	Amend the Labor Code to raise the general minimum age for hazardous work to 18 and ensure that children ages 16 to 18 who are permitted to engage in hazardous activities are fully protected by the law.	2014
Enforcement	Correctly interpret and apply the law to allow all children without birth certificates or other identifying documentation to enroll in primary and secondary education and complete schooling.	2011 – 2014
	Ensure that all children are able to obtain identity documents to reduce their vulnerability to labor exploitation.	2014
	Strengthen the enforcement of labor provisions that establish 14 as the minimum age for legal employment, limit the workday to 6 hours for children under 16, and eliminate dangerous and unhealthy work for children under 18 by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Determining whether the inspection ratio for each labor inspector is appropriate to ensure the appropriate quality and scope of inspections, and increasing the number of inspectors where necessary; ■ Allocating adequate resources for inspectors to conduct timely inspections; ■ Following the MT's 2008 General Inspection Protocol and 2011 Inspection Protocol for Agriculture when conducting inspections to improve the quality of information gathering, the use of inspection data, and to enable prosecution; and ■ Establishing a system to verify the age of young workers in order to protect children without birth certificates or other legal documentation from exploitation. 	2012 – 2014
	Ensure that the two-tiered inspection system does not restrict the MT's ability to enforce its laws prohibiting child labor.	2013 – 2014
	Ensure that labor inspectors are able to communicate with Creole-speaking workers, including those who may be underage, to adequately conduct inspections for child labor violations.	2014
	Publicly report on the mechanism by which the MT refers victims of child labor, including its worst forms, to the CONANI for services, as well as on the total number of children referred.	2014
	Publish statistics on labor inspections and criminal investigations conducted, including by type and by sector, violations identified, penalties imposed and collected, and prosecutions and convictions, for child labor violations, including its worst forms.	2009 – 2014
	Increase the resources that criminal investigators and prosecutors need to effectively enforce criminal laws on child labor.	2014
	Improve coordination between the MT and the AG to ensure violations are effectively investigated and prosecuted.	2013 – 2014

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Coordination	Ensure the CDN and its Local and Municipal Committees have sufficient resources to effectively coordinate efforts to address child labor.	2013 – 2014
	Ensure the CITIM regularly convenes all necessary agencies to effectively coordinate government efforts to address human trafficking issues.	2014
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the National Plan on Gender Equality.	2013 – 2014
	Allocate additional personnel and resources to support national plans and strategies to combat the worst forms of child labor, including the Roadmap Towards the Elimination of Child Labor.	2009 – 2014
	Address deficiencies in the educational system by meeting the Education for All goals and by continuing to increase enrollment, add classroom space, and improve teacher training.	2011 – 2014
Social Programs	Assess the impact that certain social and educational programs have on child labor.	2012 – 2014
	Eliminate the requirement that individuals present Dominican identity documents to participate in social programs intended to combat child labor, including in the PROSOLI program.	2012 – 2014
	Expand social protection programs and increase access to them by more impoverished families that rely on child labor, particularly in commercial sexual exploitation and agriculture.	2010 – 2014
	Increase awareness raising and other strategies to reduce child trafficking and the demand for child sex tourism, and increase provision of services to child trafficking victims.	2009 – 2014

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