

In 2016, Togo made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government significantly increased its number of labor inspectors for the third year in a row, identified 246 cases of child labor, and removed 23 children from hazardous child labor. The Government also created a National Domestic Workers' Trade Union that will combat child labor and protect domestic workers of legal working age. However, children in Togo perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. Children also engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. The Government has not devoted sufficient resources to combat child labor, and enforcement of laws related to child labor remains weak. In addition, Togo's social programs to combat the worst forms of child labor do not match the scope of the problem and rely largely on nongovernmental and international organizations for implementation.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Togo perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. Children also engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-9) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Togo.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (%)	5 to 14	29.6
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	86.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	29.5
Primary Completion Rate (%)		84.3

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2015, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016. (10)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Demographic and Health Survey, 2013–2014. (4)

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	Working in agriculture, including exposure to pesticides,† harvesting cotton, cocoa, and coffee (3, 6, 8, 11) Raising cattle† (3)
Industry	Working in quarries and sand mines, including excavating, crushing rocks, sifting gravel, and carrying heavy loads† (1, 3, 7, 12-14) Working in carpentry† and tailoring (15) Construction, activities unknown (1, 8, 11)
Services	Domestic work† (1, 4-9, 11, 13, 16, 17) Carrying heavy loads† and small-scale vending in markets (1, 3, 6-8, 11, 13, 17) Operating motorcycle taxis, auto and motorcycle repair (1, 11, 15) Garbage scavenging (1, 11)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced begging (3, 14) Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-3, 8, 13, 17) Forced labor in agriculture, including coffee, cocoa, and cotton; domestic work; quarries; and markets, including carrying heavy loads; each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2, 3, 9, 18, 19)

† 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.




Togo is a source and transit country for victims of human trafficking to neighboring countries, although the majority of child trafficking cases are domestic.(2, 8, 9, 16, 18, 20, 21) The customary practice of *confiage*, which involves sending a child to a relative or friend to attend school in a larger town or city, may place children at risk of exploitation by internal human trafficking.(3, 6, 8, 13, 17) Parents may be complicit in child trafficking as a result of *confiage*, and some traditional chiefs and leaders do not discourage the practice.(9, 22)

Although education is free and compulsory by law, parents are responsible for paying associated fees and buying uniforms and school supplies, which makes education prohibitive for many families.(23-25) Research also found that distance to school, birth registration requirements, and physical and sexual abuse in schools also posed barriers to education for some.(6, 11, 17, 24, 26, 27)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Togo 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	✓
 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	✓

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

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 150 of the Labor Code; Article 262 of the Children's Code; Article 881.1a of the Penal Code (28-30)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 6–12 of Order N° 1464 MTEFP/DGTLS Determining the Work Prohibited to Children (28, 31)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 6–12 of Order N° 1464 MTEFP/DGTLS Determining the Work Prohibited to Children; Articles 263–264 of the Children's Code; Articles 319.9 and 882 of the Penal Code; Article 151 of the Labor Code (28-31)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 4 and 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 264 and 411 of the Children's Code; Articles 150.3 and 151 of the Penal Code (28-30)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 2–6 of Law N° 2005-009 Suppressing Child Trafficking in Togo; Articles 264 and 411–414 of the Children's Code; Articles 150.3, 151, 317–323, and 882 of the Penal Code (28-30, 32)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 264, 276.f, and 387–390 of the Children's Code; Article 224 of the Penal Code (28-30)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 264, 276.i, and 405 of the Children's Code; Articles 317.7, 319.9, and 329.8 of the Penal Code (28-30)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes*	18	Article 426 of the Children's Code; Articles 146.14, 147.11, and 342 of the Penal Code (29, 30)
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Article 426 of the Children's Code; Article 42 of Law N° 2007-010 Regarding the General Statute of the Togolese Armed Forces (29, 33)
Non-state Compulsory	Yes	18	Article 426 of the Children's Code; Articles 146.14, 147.11, and 342 of the Penal Code (29, 30)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article 35 of the Constitution; Article 255 of the Children's Code (29, 34)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 35 of the Constitution (34)

*No Conscription (33)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5). However, gaps in labor law enforcement and criminal law enforcement remain and some enforcement information is not available.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Civil Service, Labor, and Administrative Reform (MOL)	Enforce all labor laws, including child labor laws.(8, 23) Through its Unit to Combat Child Labor (CELTE), withdraw children from child labor situations, raise awareness, and collect data.(3) Focal points within the inspectorate are located in each of the five regions to monitor child labor issues and raise awareness at the local level.(35)
Ministry of Justice and Government Relations	Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor and prosecute violations.(11) Through its Anti-Trafficking Cell, serve as a resource for law enforcement agencies combating child trafficking and collect information from prosecutors as part of Togo's annual report to ECOWAS.(20)
Ministry of Social Action, Promotion of Women and Literacy (MASPFA), Director General for the Protection of Children	Raise awareness of child labor issues, enforce laws against the worst forms of child labor, provide technical assistance, and lead government efforts to combat human trafficking.(8, 22, 36) Operate the Allo 1011 hotline for reporting child abuse, including child trafficking.(2, 6, 8, 22, 36, 37)
Ministry of Security's Child Protection Brigades	Investigate crimes involving child victims, including child trafficking. Present in all five regions of Togo and operate as part of the National Police.(11)
National Commission of Human Rights	Receive complaints of human rights abuses, including the violation of children's rights, and forward such complaints to the children's court.(38)

Labor Law Enforcement

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

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown* (39)	Unknown* (11)
Number of Labor Inspectors	109 (39)	167 (11)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (28)	No (11)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (39)	Yes (11)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown* (39)	Unknown* (11)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown* (39)	Unknown* (11)

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown* (39)	Unknown* (11)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown* (39)	246 (11)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown* (39)	Unknown* (11)
Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown* (39)	Unknown* (11)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Yes (11)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (28)	Yes (11)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (2, 36, 39)	Yes (11)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (2, 36)	Yes (11)

* The Government does not publish this information.

The Labor Code makes labor inspectors responsible for reconciliation and arbitration in collective disputes, which may detract from their primary duties of conducting inspections and enforcing the Labor Code.(28, 40) Although the number of labor inspectors has grown significantly over the past three years, NGOs and the Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Administrative Reform (MOL) believe that the current number of labor inspectors is still insufficient.(23, 39)

The MOL also acknowledges that it lacks resources for transportation, which hinders its ability to conduct investigations, particularly outside Lomé and the regional capitals. In addition, inspections are primarily focused on the formal sector in urban areas, which excludes the majority of working children.(11, 14, 23) During the reporting period, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Cell identified 246 children in child labor and removed 23 children from hazardous working conditions.(11) Although the Allo 1011 hotline received more than 40,000 calls in 2016, it is unknown how many cases of child labor were identified as a result of these calls.(37, 39)

Criminal Law Enforcement

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

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

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2015	2016
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Yes (14)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (20, 39)	Unknown (11)
Number of Investigations	Unknown* (39)	Unknown* (11)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown* (39)	50 (25)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (19)	Unknown (11)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (19)	Unknown (11)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (2)	Yes (11)

* The Government does not publish this information.

Inspectors and law enforcement officials often lack the necessary skills and resources to effectively enforce the law, including transportation.(11) Research also indicates that some law enforcement officials in regional offices do not have copies of existing child labor laws, and high turnover results in gaps of knowledge and enforcement capacity.(3, 14, 15) It is rare for cases involving child trafficking to be heard in court because prosecutors often have difficulty gathering evidence. Judges may be reluctant to impose fines or prison sentences for parents due to a fear of perpetuating the poverty that originally led them to violate child trafficking laws.(2, 6, 22) Although the Ministry of Justice investigated 101 individuals for human trafficking and found 60 individuals guilty, it is not known how many of these cases were related to children.(41)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee for the Prohibition and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (CDN)	Coordinate and oversee all government efforts to combat child labor, including the approval of all action plans for the abolition of child labor.(8, 14) Raise awareness, promote child labor legislation, and collect data.(3) Led by CELTE, the CDN includes 13 ministries, NGOs, and private sector organizations combating child labor.
Anti-Trafficking in Persons Cell (formerly CNARSEVT)	Coordinate government efforts to combat human trafficking, including by rescuing and referring victims to shelters for social services and reintegration.(2, 8, 11, 14) Compile statistics on human trafficking and serve as the point of contact for repatriated child victims.(22) Comprises representatives from five ministries and chaired by MOL's Committee for Social Reintegration of Children.(11, 14) In 2016, expanded its scope to include adults and changed its name from the National Committee for the Reception and Social Reinsertion of Trafficked Children.(22)
Local Vigilance Committees	Raise awareness at the community level through Child Protection Committees and Local Committees Against Child Trafficking located throughout Togo. Committees identify child victims or children at risk and share information on human trafficking trends and prevention efforts with the MASPFA, which enforces laws regarding child labor.(8, 22)

Although the 2007 Children's Code provided for a coordinating body to implement the Children's Code and oversee the promotion and protection of children's rights in Togo, including by strengthening the legal framework, it has yet to be created.(29) Although some Local Vigilance Committees were very active during the reporting period, those that lacked regular engagement with the Government were less effective.(22) Research was unable to determine whether any coordinating bodies met in 2016 or whether they carried out any activities.(14)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Employment Policy (2013–2017)	Aims to eliminate child labor, build the capacity of the labor inspectorate, and increase vocational training and apprenticeship opportunities in support of the Decent Work Program.(13, 42, 43) Includes a pilot cash transfer program for 8,000 vulnerable children.(42) The accompanying Strategic Plan on Youth Employment (PSNEJ) aims to reduce children's early entry into the labor force by retaining them in school and improving the employability of older youth and their access to funding.(13, 43, 44)
Strategy to Increase Growth and Promote Employment (SCAPE) (2013–2017)	Serves as the primary national anti-poverty plan, which includes components on child labor and education.(8, 45)
Social Protection Policy of 2012	Aims to improve the employability of youth ages 15 to 17, prevent children from entering the labor force before the minimum working age, and promote decent work for youth. Aligned with SCAPE.(13)
Bilateral and Multilateral Agreements to Combat Child Trafficking	Quadripartite agreement among the Governments of Benin, Ghana, Niger, and Togo that works to prevent child trafficking along the countries' shared borders and facilitate the repatriation of trafficked children and the extradition of traffickers. Multilateral accords for West and Central Africa promote cooperation among regional states to combat child trafficking.(8, 19, 20) In 2016, funded and facilitated the repatriation of 99 Togolese victims of child trafficking from Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, and Nigeria, an increase of 79 repatriations from the 20 repatriated in 2015.(19)

In 2016, the Government co-drafted a Charter on Maritime Security and Development in Africa that aims to combat transnational crime, including child trafficking.(46, 47) Although the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Cell recognizes the need to create a new national action plan to combat human trafficking, it has yet to do so.(14, 22) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement any policy during the reporting period, and only policy documents specific to labor and social protection include indicators related to child labor.(13) The Government has not included child labor elimination and prevention strategies in the Education Sector Plan (2010–2020).(48)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

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

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor[†]

Program	Description
Global Action Program on Child Labor Issues	USDOL-funded project implemented by the ILO in approximately 40 countries 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.(49) In 2016, established a National Domestic Workers' Trade Union that will combat child labor and protect domestic workers of legal working age.(50) Additional information is available on the USDOL Web site .
World Bank-Funded Programs	Projects that combat child labor by improving social safety nets for vulnerable families and increasing access to education. Includes Togo Community Development and Safety Nets Project (2012–2017), a \$14 million project that provided conditional cash transfers, school meals, and 346 primary school classrooms in the Kara and Savanes regions by the end of July 2016; Education and Institutional Strengthening Project 2 (2015–2018), a \$27.8 million project that revised course textbooks for grades 1 and 2, provided teacher training, identified recipients of school grants, and selected 80 sites for promoting girls' education; and the Cash Transfer Program for Vulnerable Children in Northern Togo (2013–2017), [†] a \$2.55 million project implemented by the MASPFA that provides conditional cash transfers in northern Togo.(51-55)
Plan International-Funded Projects	Projects that aim to support youth development. Includes Monitoring Children's Rights (2015–2018), a \$393,000 Plan Sweden-funded, 3-year MASPFA project in support of SCAPE that aims to strengthen the institutional capacity of these organizations to better protect children in Benin, Burkina Faso, and Togo; and Gender-Sensitive and Violence-Free Education, a 3.5-year project co-funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency that aims to reduce violence in schools by eliminating corporal punishment and promoting children's rights in the Central and Plateau regions.(27, 56-58)
Shelters for Vulnerable Children [†]	Two MOL- and MASPFA-funded centers that provide temporary shelter and services for victims, including those referred by the Allo 1011 hotline.(2, 19, 23, 36) Victims may be transferred to NGO-run shelters for longer term support.(19)
National Fund for Inclusive Finance [†]	Government program that provides loans of up to \$60 to women in rural areas of Northern Togo that aims to reduce the demand for income provided by engaging in child labor.(11, 59)
National Plan for Registering Births in Togo (2013–2017) [†]	Plan to increase documentation of births by simplifying the process, educating families on the importance of birth registration, and increasing accessibility to birth registration in rural areas.(14, 60) In 2016, distributed birth certificates with the assistance of Care International and a local NGO.(14)

[†] Program is funded by the Government of Togo.

[‡] The Government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms.(11, 60)

The scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, however, and the Government relies heavily on NGOs and international organizations for implementation.(6, 22) As a result, many of these interventions may not be sustainable over the long term.(11)

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 Togo (Table 11).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by authorizing the inspectorate to assess penalties.	2014 – 2016
	Ensure that both labor inspectors and investigators receive refresher courses.	2009 – 2016
	Publish information about the number and type of investigations conducted, penalties imposed and collected, prosecutions initiated, and convictions made.	2010 – 2016
	Increase the number of labor inspectors and ensure that they have sufficient resources, skills, and transportation to carry out their primary duties of inspection and monitoring labor laws throughout the country, including in the informal sector.	2009 – 2016
	Enforce penalties for labor violations according to the law.	2014 – 2016

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Coordination	Ensure that coordinating bodies are functional and are able to implement their mandates to combat child labor as intended.	2009 – 2016
Government Policies	Ensure that policies are implemented as intended and child labor indicators are included in all relevant policies.	2016
	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies in the Education Sector Plan.	2013 – 2016
Social Programs	Increase access to education by eliminating school-related fees; making additional efforts to provide all children with birth registration; ensuring that schools are free from sexual and physical violence; and increasing the number of schools, especially in rural areas.	2010 – 2016
	Ensure that social protection programs to combat the worst forms of child labor are sufficient to address the scope of the problem and promote the long-term sustainability of project initiatives.	2009 – 2016

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