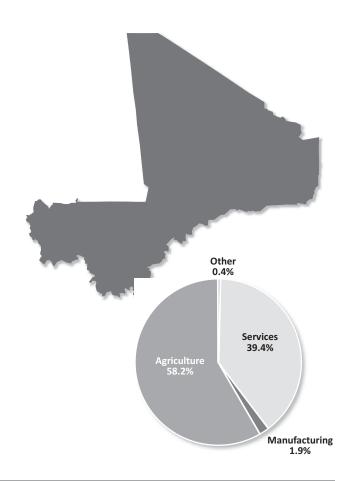
Mali

In 2010, the Government of Mali created an official committee for coordinating national child labor policy. However, children continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, especially in agriculture and domestic service. The laws in place to combat the worst forms of child labor are not harmonized, and gaps and inconsistencies in these laws make children vulnerable to exploitation.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	65.8*
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	44.8
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	20.5

^{*} Population of working children: 2,396,273



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Mali are engaged in the worst forms of child labor,³⁶⁵⁷ many of them in agriculture and domestic service.³⁶⁵⁸ Children as young as age 4 work in agriculture, specifically in the production of rice and cotton.³⁶⁵⁹ By age 10, some children work with chemical fertilizers and dangerous tools. Children in agriculture are also exposed to pesticides and are prone to injury and fatigue due to long hours and exposure to the environment.³⁶⁶⁰ Children involved in domestic service work long hours, receive low and irregular pay and may be subject to physical or sexual abuse.³⁶⁶¹

The commercial sexual exploitation of children remains a problem in Mali, especially for girls, who work as vendors in hotels, restaurants, bars and mines. Some children, including street children, work as porters, vendors or garbage scavengers. Children working on the streets

may be exposed to multiple dangers including severe weather, vehicle accidents and criminal elements.³⁶⁶⁴

Children work in quarries, and children as young as age 5 are engaged in mining.³⁶⁶⁵ In small-scale gold mines, children are involved in all mining activities, including extracting material from underground passages.³⁶⁶⁶ They also treat gold with mercury and work long hours in unhealthy and dangerous conditions, risking injury, asphyxia and exposure to diseases. In mining, children perform work that surpasses their physical and mental capabilities.³⁶⁶⁷

Forced child labor in Mali is found in mining, agriculture, domestic service and the informal economy. Mali Children, especially of the Tamachek community, continue to be subject to hereditary slavery in Northern Mali. These children may be forced to work as domestic or agricultural laborers. Additionally, children, primarily of

Songhai ethnicity, work in debt bondage in the northern salt mines of Taudenni. 3670

In Mali, it is traditional practice to send boys, called *talibes*, to Koranic teachers to receive education, which may include vocational training or apprenticeship.³⁶⁷¹ While some boys receive lessons, many, some as young as age 7, are forced by their teachers to beg on the streets or to work in fields and surrender the money they have earned. These children may be punished if they do not remit enough money to their teachers.³⁶⁷²

Mali is a source, transit and destination country for children trafficked for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.³⁶⁷³ Children are trafficked internally for domestic service, gold mining, begging and work in agriculture, including rice fields. 3674 Malian children are trafficked to Senegal and Guinea for forced labor in gold mines.³⁶⁷⁵ Malian children are also trafficked to Côte d'Ivoire to work as domestic servants and for labor on plantations, especially on cotton and cocoa farms. 3676 Likewise, Malian boys are trafficked to Mauritania for forced begging, while Malian girls are trafficked there for domestic service and prostitution.³⁶⁷⁷ Boys from other countries, such as Niger, Guinea and Burkina Faso are trafficked to Mali for forced begging. 3678 Thousands of girls from Nigeria are trafficked to Mali for forced prostitution.³⁶⁷⁹

Access to education is a critical component in preventing the economic exploitation of children. In Mali, access to education is hindered by a lack of teachers, transportation, school materials, and school infrastructure. Additionally, corporal punishment and the sexual exploitation of students is commonplace in schools. This impedes children's ability to remain in school. See

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for work at 14, although children under age 14 may work

with the approval of the Minister of Labor. 3683 The minimum age for hazardous work, including hazardous work in agriculture, is 18. Restrictions, such as night work and work in places such as underground mines and night clubs, are also in place for children under age 16. 3684 The Labor Code only applies to the formal sector, leaving children working in the informal sector, such as domestic service and non-contractual agricultural work without legal protection. 3685

MION	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	15
	Free Public Education	Yes

In 2009, the Government of Mali issued a decree to the Labor Code with an updated list of hazardous work. 3686 This list does not include domestic service or work performed outside the formal sector. Moreover, the Labor Code and the decree are not harmonized. Whereas the decree provides a list of establishments, such as mines, in which children under age 18 may not be employed, the Labor Code only limits the hours when a child may be employed in such work; it does not prohibit work in those specific places. 3687 Both the code and the decree allow children ages 16 and older to partake in some hazardous activities. 3688 Nonetheless the decree bans the

employment of any child under age 18 in any work that presents dangers or harms the morality of the child. It is unclear whether the decree or the Labor Code takes precedence.³⁶⁸⁹

The Child Protection Code provides protection for children under age 18.³⁶⁹⁰ The Penal Code establishes criminal penalties.³⁶⁹¹ The Child Protection Code identifies begging as a form of economic exploitation of children, and the Penal Code provides for punishment of this activity.³⁶⁹² However, the Penal Code does not always provide consistent and adequate penalties for some of the prohibitions enumerated in the Child Protection Code. For example, although the Child Protection Code prohibits children under age 18 from participating in armed forces, the Penal Code only provides penalties for those recruiting and enlisting children under age 15.³⁶⁹³

The Penal Code prohibits the trafficking of children. The Penal Code also forbids the debauching of children, including third party involvement in prostitution (pimping) or sexual slavery. However, inciting a child into prostitution is an offense only applicable to girls, not boys. Furthermore, provisions of the Penal Code are not applied to prostitution cases without proof of pimping. The Penal Code also makes the child criminally liable for their involvement in prostitution. He prostitution.

Although the Penal Code bans slavery, no penalties are outlined for the offense. Forced labor is prohibited under the Labor Code. However, the punishment for forced labor is only a fine and/or imprisonment for a period of 15 days to 6 months. 700

The Constitution provides for free and compulsory education.³⁷⁰¹ Education is compulsory for 9 years, beginning at age 6.³⁷⁰² All children, including refugee children, have the right to education.³⁷⁰³ Although the Constitution guarantees free education, parents are still expected to pay school fees for registration, books and materials. These

costs may deter families from sending their children to school.³⁷⁰⁴

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and **Enforcement**

In 2010, the National Unit to Fight Against Child Labor, led by the Ministry of Labor, Civil Service and State Reform, was named the official coordinating body for child labor policy. This committee, comprised of various Government agencies, civil society groups, professional organizations and trade unions, has overarching responsibility for coordinating the Government of Mali's efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor.³⁷⁰⁵ During the reporting period, the Ministry of Justice was named the lead agency for the nation's anti-trafficking committee. The committee is comprised of 13 ministries and civil society groups and is responsible for promoting anti-trafficking partnerships, establishing a data collection system and creating a national plan of action.3706

Child labor laws are enforced by the Ministry of Labor, Civil Service and State Reform. 3707 Mechanisms are in place to coordinate enforcement efforts between ministries and to report child labor violations.³⁷⁰⁸ The Ministry employs 50 labor inspectors.³⁷⁰⁹ Labor inspectors receive and investigate complaints and perform unannounced labor inspections in the formal labor sector.³⁷¹⁰ During the reporting period, labor inspectors received trainings on hazardous child labor in-country and at a training center in Cameroon.³⁷¹¹ The number of inspections carried out during the reporting period is unknown. However, evidence indicates inspections are used as an education tool rather than to enforce laws with penalties. If a business shows a good-faith effort to improve workplace conditions, sanctions are not applied.3712 Additionally, since labor inspectors only inspect the formal sector, work performed by children in the informal sector, such as non-contractual agricultural work remains unmonitored.3713

The Ministries of Justice, Promotion of Women and Children, Internal Security and Social Security work together to enforce laws pertaining to all worst forms of child labor.³⁷¹⁴ The Ministry of Internal Security, through its Morals Brigade of the National Police, is the principal agency enforcing laws relating to the commercial sexual exploitation of children.³⁷¹⁵ The morals brigade employs fewer than 50 officers.³⁷¹⁶ Officers regularly receive training, including on the worst forms of child labor.³⁷¹⁷ However, the morals brigade is not large enough to cover the whole country.³⁷¹⁸ Additionally, there is no mechanism for reporting complaints related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children.³⁷¹⁹ Although the morals brigade was created to handle criminal affairs involving children, the main police force has no explicit obligation to turn children's cases over to the morals brigade. As a result, many children's issues are handled by the general police force that has no training on children's affairs.³⁷²⁰

The Ministry for the Advancement of Women, Children and the Family (MPWCF) is the lead agency for combating trafficking. Although no formal system exists for identifying victims of trafficking, the MPWCF, in collaboration with foreign governments, NGOs and the Ministries of Justice, Internal Security and Labor and Civil Services, coordinates the repatriation of trafficking victims.³⁷²¹ During the reporting period, the MPCFW repatriated 13 children who were trafficked into Mali and 33 Malian children who were trafficked out of Mali. 3722 Twelve traffickingrelated convictions were handed down during the reporting period. Offenders received between one and 15 years imprisonment for a combination of charges related to abduction, rape, trafficking and murder.3723

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

During the reporting period the National Plan to Combat Child Labor (2011-2020) was finalized

and submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval. The plan itself has not yet been adopted. The National Steering Committee on Child Labor, created in 1999, was charged with monitoring and directing the national action plan on child labor. This group involves 43 members from key ministers as well as NGOs and civil society members. Various projects have been designated to work on child labor policy, including the National Program Against Child Labor, the Project Against Child Trafficking, the Support Project for Timebound Program-Mali and the Project Against Child Labor Through Education. Through

Child labor concerns have been explicitly incorporated in the Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan (2007-2011) and the UN Development Assistance Framework (2008-2012). The framework addresses child protection, including support for children who are victims of trafficking. It also calls for increased access to social services, including education, for vulnerable children.³⁷²⁸ In addition, the 10-year Education Development Plan (2001-2011) focuses on providing quality access to education for all, with a specific focus on the inequalities between rural and urban areas.³⁷²⁹

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

The Government of Mali participated in a 4-year, \$3.5 million USDOL-funded Timebound preparatory project that integrated child labor issues into the national strategy framework to reduce poverty. The project increased data about child labor and demonstrated several successful pilot programs aimed at withdrawing or preventing the worst forms of child labor in agriculture, mining, domestic service, trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Mali also participated in two regional USDOL-funded projects, including a 4-year, \$7.95 million regional project, both of which assisted ECOWAS

member countries to combat the worst forms of child labor by strengthening and enforcing child labor laws and national action plans and by developing child labor monitoring systems.³⁷³²

Throughout the reporting period the Government of Mali participated in several projects to combat child labor and trafficking, including three regional projects: a 4-year, eight-country, \$5.3 million, French-funded project that contributed to the abolition of child labor in West Africa;³⁷³³ a 2-year, eight-country, \$2.8 million anti-trafficking project funded by Denmark; and a 4-year, \$5.1 million, four-country project funded by Spain.³⁷³⁴ The Government also participated in an IOM program that identified, returned and reintegrated minors identified as trafficking victims throughout the region.³⁷³⁵ Finally, Mali participated in a 4-year, \$14.7 million project funded by the European Commission to combat child labor through education in 11 countries globally.³⁷³⁶

USAID continued to provide ongoing assistance toward basic education in Mali. It provided \$36.2 million in 2010 to improve access to quality education.³⁷³⁷ Funding was used to improve instruction and the capacity of the Ministry of

Education and to aid in the decentralization of the Malian education system.³⁷³⁸ USAID also funded a 5-year, \$30 million project to support the Malian primary education system by providing interactive radio instruction for grades one through six. The project aims to reach nomadic populations and children with mild to moderate special needs.³⁷³⁹ Finally, USAID funded a 5-year, \$25 million project to provide basic education and training to out-of-school youth. The project provides basic literacy, numeracy and job skills training for youth, using mobile technology for hard to reach youth such as those working in agricultural activities.³⁷⁴⁰

During the reporting period, the Government conducted an anti-trafficking campaign. It also created a map of the nation's child rehabilitation centers.³⁷⁴¹ Although the Government of Mali does provide some housing and medical and psychosocial support, it has generally relied on NGOs and international organizations to provide social programs for vulnerable children.³⁷⁴² However, Mali does not have a system in place for transferring detained vulnerable children to NGOs.³⁷⁴³

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

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Ensure children under age 14 are not permitted to work.
- Harmonize the legislative framework for addressing the worst forms of child labor, including the Child Protection Code, the Penal Code, the Labor Code and the Hazardous Child Labor Decree.
- Criminalize and provide appropriate penalties for all worst forms of child labor, including slavery, forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.
- Ensure that both girls and boys are protected from prostitution and are not punished for being forced into it
- Amend the Labor Code to prohibit children under age 18 from working in all hazardous conditions.
- Adopt laws to ensure protections for all children working outside the formal sector, particularly in domestic service and noncontractual agricultural work.
- Ensure children's Constitutional right to a free education.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Develop and implement effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms for child labor inspections and investigations.
- Ensure the general police force and the morals brigade coordinate on the cases of minors.
- Implement a formal system to identify victims of trafficking.
- Ensure offenders of labor laws receive appropriate penalties for all offenses
- Strengthen measures to investigate, prosecute and convict individuals involved in the trafficking of children for sexual and labor exploitation, including by:
 - Providing sufficient funds so investigators are able to travel, transport victims to safety and arraign traffickers.
 - Increasing training for law enforcement officers, judges and prosecutors.
 - Introducing a mechanism, such as a hotline, for reporting such crimes.

IN THE AREA OF POLICIES:

- Enact the National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor.
- Take measures to ensure children have access to quality education and to ensure children's safety in schools.

IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Expand and improve programs to prevent children's involvement in exploitative child labor, including by developing and implementing effective model programs to withdraw children from the worst forms of child labor in agriculture and domestic service.
- Develop a system to transfer detained victims of trafficking to NGOs.

- Jata 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, 2005-2011. Data provided is from 2005. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working children, and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions" section of this report.
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