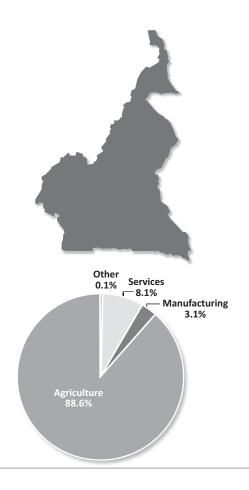
### Cameroon

The Government of Cameroon participates in projects to combat child labor on cocoa and coffee farms. However, the Government has not adopted comprehensive policies on the worst forms of child labor and there are significant gaps in enforcement of its child labor laws. This may contribute to children continuing to work in agriculture, especially in cocoa production.

#### Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	36.5%
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	80.4%
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	7.6%



# Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children are exploited in the worst forms of child labor in Cameroon, many of them working in agriculture, producing goods such as cocoa. Although evidence is limited, there is reason to believe that the worst forms of child labor are used in the production of bananas, coffee, palm oil, rubber and tea. Many children working on farms handle pesticides and sharp tools, till soil, and transport heavy loads. Children also raise livestock where they may risk injury and exposure to long hours and the elements.

Children, primarily girls, work as domestic servants, which may require them to work long hours and expose them to physical and sexual exploitation.<sup>891</sup> Other children work in mines and quarries, carrying sand and breaking stones with rudimentary tools.<sup>892</sup>

In the urban informal sector children carry luggage, sell goods such as cigarettes and water, and drive commercial motorcycles, usually without the proper license, causing frequent accidents. Children working on the streets may be exposed to multiple dangers including severe weather, vehicle accidents, and criminal elements.<sup>893</sup> To a lesser degree, some displaced or street children who live in cities such as Yaoundé and Douala transport drugs and risk being recruited into gangs.<sup>894</sup>

Children in Cameroon are also forced to beg. The practice of sending boys to Koranic teachers to receive education, which may include a vocational or apprenticeship component, is a tradition in Cameroon, especially in the northern region. While some boys receive lessons, others are forced by their teachers to beg and surrender the money that they have earned or perform manual labor, including in agriculture.

Girls are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation.<sup>897</sup> While evidence is limited, there is reason to believe that the worst forms of child labor are used in the production of pornography. Some children are exploited in commercial sex tourism in coastal towns such as Kribi and Limbe.<sup>898</sup> Hereditary servitude reportedly persists in northern regions of Cameroon as well.<sup>899</sup>

Child trafficking is also a problem. Most trafficking occurs internally with the highest rate in the northwest region. This may be linked to the customary practice of "confiage," which involves sending a child to a relative or friend for school.<sup>900</sup> Children are trafficked for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor as domestic servants and in restaurants, bars, and on tea plantations.901 Children are also trafficked to work on cocoa farms and on the streets.<sup>902</sup> Internationally, children are trafficked to Cameroon from Benin, Nigeria, Chad, Togo, the Central African Republic, Congo, and Niger, for forced labor in street vending, agriculture, fishing, and spare-parts shops. Cameroon also serves as a transit country for children trafficked between Gabon and Nigeria, and from Nigeria to Saudi Arabia.903

### Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code and Law No. 017 sets the minimum age for work at 14 and the minimum age for hazardous work at 18.904 The minimum age law does not extend to children working in non-industrial undertakings, such as agriculture, domestic service, and street vending, even though many children are known to work in these sectors.905 Children are not permitted to work underground, in restaurants, hotels, and bars, or in any job that exceeds their physical capacity or is longer than 8 hours a day in the industrial sector.906 However, hazardous activities prohibited to children omit work under water and at dangerous heights, activities often performed by children working in fishing or harvesting bananas.907

Children are required to attend school until age 11. This standard makes children ages 11 to 14 particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor as they are not required to be in school and are below the minimum age for work.<sup>908</sup>

The Constitution and Law No. 15 prohibit slavery and servitude and Law No. 15 provides penalties for those found to be in violation of the law. Law No. 15 also defines child trafficking and requires authorization from a parent before a child can travel. The Penal Code prohibits forced labor, slavery, trafficking, and procuring prostitutes or sharing the profits from another person's prostitution. However, Cameroon has not criminalized the use of children for illicit

activities or the production of pornography or pornographic performances, which are documented worst forms of child labor in Cameroon. Military service is not compulsory and the minimum age for voluntary recruitment is age 18. Children under age 18 years can participate in military service with parental consent.

Ser to	C138, Minimum Age	✓
ATTORY	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	<b>✓</b>
	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	<b>✓</b>
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	11
	Free Public Education	Yes

# Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

To coordinate efforts to combat child labor, the Government uses the inter-agency Consultative Committee to Implement the ILO-IPEC West Africa Cocoa/Commercial Agriculture Programme to Combat Hazardous and Exploitative Child Labour (WACAP) Project. The Committee was established under a previous project with ILO-IPEC titled the "West Africa Commercial Agriculture Project" and is composed of numerous ministries, the Secretariat of State of Defense, General Delegation for National Security, and the Customs Services for both seaports and airports. The Government has also established within the General Delegation for National Security a "vice squad," a special police unit designated to coordinate efforts to combat sex trafficking.914 The Consultative Committee to Implement the ILO-IPEC/ WACAP Project does not meet on a regular basis.915

The Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and the Ministry of Social Insurance lead efforts to enforce child labor laws. Their 58 labor inspectors check registered businesses only, whereas child labor is more common in unregistered enterprises, including agriculture. Enforcement efforts may therefore leave children unprotected.<sup>916</sup> Other agencies also play a role in child labor law enforcement, as well as in criminal law enforcement. The National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms is charged with investigating human rights abuses and the Minors Brigade is responsible for investigating the use of children in hazardous work and trafficking.917 The vice-squad also investigates the trafficking of children while the police, gendarmes (a military body charged with police duties among civilian populations), and border officials help combat the worst forms of child labor nationwide. 918 Reportedly, the above agencies routinely lack resources to conduct investigations. 919

The Cameroonian Government does not generally offer training directly to officials responsible for enforcing child labor laws. However, during the reporting period, the National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms and national and international NGOs provided specialized training on how to identify trafficking victims to some of its law enforcement officers. 920

At the time of reporting, the Government identified 26 child labor cases, was investigating 18 trafficking cases, and made eight arrests, primarily in the northwest region. Because of these enforcement efforts, 22 children were rescued from the worst forms of child labor. There is no available information on prosecutions or convictions in the child labor and trafficking cases. <sup>921</sup> In Cameroon, there is no complaint mechanism and child labor cases are reported informally. <sup>922</sup>

## Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

While a number of efforts are underway to develop a National Action Plan, Cameroon does not have a national policy framework to guide and coordinate efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor. 923 Policies such as the National Strategic Plan against Child Trafficking and Multilateral Cooperative Agreement on Trafficking in Persons in West and Central Africa may strengthen measures to combat trafficking; however, the Government of Cameroon has yet to ratify or officially approve these documents. 924

The Government has included child labor concerns in relevant development agendas and key social policy documents including the recently adopted National Policy Framework Document for the Full Development of the Young Child (2009), which charts needed action in health, education, and protection covering ten programs funded at approximately \$40 million. 925 Cameroon also included child labor concerns in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, although this policy does not have budgets or detailed action plans related to the worst forms of child labor. 926 The Government also continued to appoint Child Parliamentarians to provide recommendations on issues related to children, including child labor. 927

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

The majority of past government interventions to combat the worst forms of child labor targeted children working on cocoa farms and trafficking. In 2009, the Government continued to support efforts to eliminate the use of child labor on cocoa farms by participating in the four-year Phase II Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP), funded by USAID, the World Cocoa Foundation, and the international cocoa industry. The STCP is a public-private partnership that promotes sustainable tree crop systems including coffee, cocoa, and cashews, and contains a component to prevent and eliminate the worst forms of child labor on farms.

The Government also sustained past anti-trafficking efforts by implementing several new initiatives. For instance, Cameroon continued to implement their 2008-2012 cooperative agreement to protect and provide services to child trafficking victims.930 The Cameroonian Government also collaborated with the governments of Chad, Gabon, Nigeria, Togo, and Benin to fight trafficking by sharing information and broadcasting anti-trafficking information on government radio and television.931 In addition, by Decree no. 2001/109/PM, the Government mandated the creation of temporary centers for the rehabilitation of children victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation.932 The Government continued its ongoing program to provide shelter, psychosocial care, and other services to street children and trafficking victims in Maroua, Yaoundé, and Douala, and established civil

status centers in remote rural areas to help issue birth certificates to children to reduce their vulnerability to trafficking.<sup>933</sup>

Other trafficking initiatives include the USDOS-funded anti-child trafficking program to provide training to law enforcement officers, judges, social workers, shelter staff, and community leaders. <sup>934</sup> The Government's National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms conducted awareness-raising campaigns on human trafficking in partnership with local and international NGOs. The Committee for Justice and Peace of the Episcopal Conference of Cameroon and Catholic Relief Services provided anti-trafficking

training to law enforcement officers and magistrates, and it is implementing a 3-year action plan to prevent, protect, and reintegrate trafficking victims.<sup>935</sup>

The Government is also participating in other interventions to combat the worst forms of child labor including a four-year, USDOL-funded, \$3.7 million global project to collect data on child labor.<sup>936</sup>

Despite the initiatives described here, Cameroon's social programs are not adequate to tackle the scope of the problem and do not address all sectors where children work.

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

#### IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Amend the Labor Code to cover children working in non-industrial undertakings.
- Prohibit hazardous activities such as work under water and at dangerous heights.
- Enact legislation to prohibit the use, procuring, or offering of children for illicit activities and the use of children in the production of pornography or pornographic performances.
- Raise the age for compulsory education to 14, the established minimum age for work.

#### IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Ensure the Consultative Committee to Implement the ILO-IPEC/WACAP Project and General Delegation of National Security meet regularly.
- Increase the number of labor inspectors responsible for child labor and allocate more resources to the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor and the Ministry of Social Insurance.
- Establish a complaint mechanism for child labor violations.
- Gather and making publicly available information about child labor investigations and enforcement.

### IN THE AREA OF POLICIES:

- Develop and implement the National Action Plan against Child Labor.
- Ratify the Multilateral Cooperative Agreement on Trafficking in Persons in West and Central Africa and formally adopt and implement the National Strategic Plan against Child Trafficking.

#### IN THE AREA OF SOCIAL PROGRAMS:

 Develop social protection programs that assist children working in sectors such as agriculture and domestic service and expand existing programs.

- 888 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 on working children and school attendance are from 2007. Data on children combining working and schooling are from 2001. 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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