

In 2014, Uruguay made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government expanded the National Action Plan to End Child Labor in Garbage Scavenging to include a study of adolescent work in agriculture in rural areas and established the Office of Rural Employment within the Ministry of Labor to work directly with rural communities. The Ministry of Labor hired 20 additional labor inspectors and the Ministry of Interior held a series of workshops to train police, immigration officials, prosecutors, and judges on human trafficking issues. However, children in Uruguay continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor in garbage scavenging and commercial sexual exploitation. The Government does not collect or publish information on the number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions for labor and criminal law violations. Uruguay lacks a comprehensive national child labor policy, and programs to prevent and eliminate child labor are limited.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Uruguay are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in garbage scavenging and commercial sexual exploitation.(1-5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Uruguay.

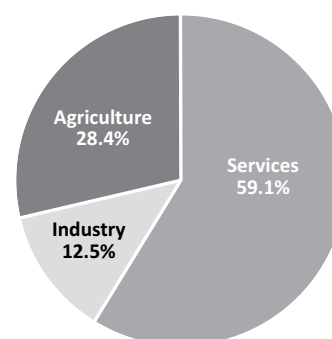
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	6.1(31,955)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	97.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	6.5
Primary Completion Rate (%)		104.3

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(6)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Encuesta Nacional de Trabajo Infantil (MTI), 2009.(7)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



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	Livestock raising, activities unknown† (1)
	Fishing,*† activities unknown (1, 3)
Industry	Construction work† in buildings and roads (1, 4, 5, 8)
	Manufacturing,† activities unknown (1, 4)
Services	Street work,*† including begging† and street vending*† (2-5, 9-11)
	Garbage scavenging† and recycling (5, 8, 9, 12, 13)
	Domestic work† (1-4)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced domestic work (1-4)
	Used in the production of child pornography* (10, 14, 15)
	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (10, 14, 15)

* 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.

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The 2009 National Child Labor Survey found that 11.6 percent of children between ages 5 and 17 were engaged in some form of economic activity, and of these children, 8.5 percent were engaged in work that was considered to be hazardous. Engagement in such work is more likely to occur in rural areas.(1) The Government has found that the number of children of Afro descent engaged in child labor is higher than that of children of other ethnic groups in Uruguay.(1, 16, 17) Children of Afro descent are more likely to be engaged in work that exposes them to harm.(16, 17) The Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) and the National Statistics Institute have estimated that approximately 20,000 children work with their parents in recycling activities derived from garbage collection and sorting in the streets and at home.(9, 13, 18) A March 2013 MIDES report revealed that children in 1,211 homes in Montevideo, where families sort garbage and recyclables, live in unsanitary and unhealthy conditions. More than 70 percent of these children live in chronic poverty.(5, 9) Children are found in commercial sexual exploitation, especially in tourist areas and near the borders of Uruguay with Argentina and Brazil. There are limited reports that minors engage in prostitution as a way to help provide income for their families.(2-4) Children are victims of internal sexual exploitation and there is evidence that they are also used in child pornography.(10, 14, 15, 18) The Government identified the provinces of Canelones, Cerro Largo, Colonia, Lavalleja, Maldonado, Paysandú, Rio Negro, Rocha, San Jose, Treinta y Tres, as well as the capital Montevideo, as the primary areas of recruitment for trafficking in persons victims.(19)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Uruguay 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).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 162 of the Code for Children and Adolescents (20)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 163 of the Code for Children and Adolescents; Article 93 of Decree No. 321/009 (20, 21)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Section A, Articles 1–7 of Resolution 1012/006 (22)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 7 and 53 of the Constitution; Article 78 of the Migration Law (23, 24)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 15 of the Code for Children and Adolescents; Article 81 of the Migration Law; Article 6 of the Commercial or Non-Commercial Sexual Violence Committed Against Children Law (20, 24, 25)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 15 of the Code for Children and Adolescents; Article 81 of the Migration Law; Articles 1–6 of the Commercial or Non-Commercial Sexual Violence Committed Against Children Law(20, 24, 25)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 1–6 of the Commercial or Non-Commercial Sexual Violence Committed Against Children Law; Article 59 of the Narcotics Law(25-27)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 4 of the Military Training Law (28)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	17	Article 7 of the General Education Law (18, 29, 30)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 71 of the Constitution; Articles 15–16 of the General Education Law (23, 29)

* No conscription (31)

The Adolescent Labor Division within the Institute for Adolescents and Children (INAU) grants minors between ages 13 and 15 permission to engage in light work. However, the Government of Uruguay has not drafted a list of what occupations constitute light work, or specified regulations governing the hours and conditions for light work.(12, 20) The Code for Children and Adolescents establishes a general prohibition against hazardous work for children under 18 and Decree No. 321 identifies the agricultural sector as hazardous and prohibits children under age 18 from working in this sector. While Decree No. 321 stipulates penalties for violations related to underage work in agriculture, research did not find penalties for violations related to other hazardous occupations prohibited for children by Resolution 1012/006.(21, 22)

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 and Social Security (MTSS)	Monitor overall enforcement of labor laws and compliance with labor regulations, and issue penalties for violations. Responsible for the legal protection of workers, including identifying locations and conditions in which child labor may occur.(5, 9, 32-34) Inspection Unit is responsible for inspections to address violations of the law. Inspectors refer child labor cases to the Institute for Adolescents and Children (INAU).(5, 9, 12, 32, 33)
Ministry of Social Development (MIDES) INAU	Lead agency responsible for children's issues in Uruguay. Assist all children, including those employed within the informal sector.(2, 35) Enforce and implement policies to prevent child labor and provide training on child labor issues.(34) Evaluate permit requests and grant work permits, ensuring that children under age 18 are not employed in hazardous work. Support child welfare and protection, and coordinate services for children found in child labor.(5, 9, 34, 36) Work with the MTSS and the National Insurance Bank to investigate child labor complaints, and with the Ministry of Interior (MOI) to prosecute cases when legal violations are found. (37) The responsibilities of INAU's Department of Child Labor include (1) preventing and monitoring the participation of minors in work activities that might adversely affect welfare and development; (2) monitoring work conditions and environment, as well as legislation on minors; (3) investigating all accidents and complaints of irregularities at the national level; and (4) proposing amendments and regulations of current legislation regarding child labor.(38)
Ministry of the Interior	Investigate all organized crimes, including child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation of children, and use of children in narcotics operations. Gather evidence for a judge to make a ruling.(3, 15, 37, 39) Children identified as victims of the worst forms of child labor through MOI investigations can be placed under the protection or custody of INAU.(3, 39)
Specialized Court for Organized Crime	Mandate police investigations for cases related to organized crime. Operated by two judges and two public prosecutors.(3, 15, 18, 39, 40)

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

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, INAU employed 10 inspectors, the same number as in 2013. Two are in Artigas, one in Flores, one in Lavalleja, and six in Montevideo.(9, 12) There are 150 Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS) inspectors who conduct investigations and assess penalties associated with labor violations, including child labor; this is an increase from 130 in 2013.(9, 12) Labor inspectors did not receive child labor-specific training in 2014.(18) Although research did not find information on INAU's 2014 budget, the Government has stated that training and resources are adequate to enforce child labor laws.(12, 18)

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Labor inspectors may conduct unannounced inspections in all sectors of the labor market, including on private farms and in homes. (12) When the MTSS receives a complaint regarding child labor via its hotline or by other means, it shares this information with INAU, which then investigates and assists the children who might be affected. The MTSS classifies hotline complaints under child labor only if the phrase is specifically mentioned, which may result in the misclassification of child labor cases.(3) INAU also operates a hotline to receive complaints about child labor, but it does not keep current statistics on reported cases. The medical staff of the National Insurance Bank may report possible violations, resulting in labor accidents, to the judiciary for further investigation. (37) Research did not find information on the number of labor inspections conducted in 2014. INAU's 2013 annual report indicates that it received 44 complaints of child labor violations and conducted a total of 4,046 inspections, compared to 3,200 in 2012.(8) The high number of inspections that each inspector carries out may compromise the effectiveness of the inspections. In addition, INAU conducts the majority of its inspections in the capital of Montevideo, despite evidence from the National Child Labor Survey indicating that most child labor occurs in rural areas.(3, 9) In 2014, the MTSS created the Office of Rural Employment to work directly with rural communities. The MTSS also began developing an employers' guide in which it will outline appropriate hiring practices and work activities for adolescents older than age 15.(12)

When MTSS or INAU inspections identify child labor law violations, each agency may carry out investigations and apply sanctions according to its legal mandate; for cases in which criminal laws may have been violated, the MTSS or INAU may report those cases to the judiciary for further investigation.(37) INAU's Adolescent Labor Division does not record how many penalties or citations for child labor law violations were issued or how many children were removed or assisted as a result of inspections.(12)

Criminal Law Enforcement

The enforcement of criminal laws is mainly the responsibility of the Ministry of Interior (MOI) and INAU. In 2014, the MOI held a series of human trafficking workshops focused on identification and response, victim referral and assistance, and international commitments; these workshops were attended by local police, officials working on organized crime, and immigration officials.(41) The MOI also held a workshop for prosecutors and judges on international standards in human trafficking detection, investigation, and criminal prosecution.(41) INAU reported that investigators had received adequate training on the worst forms of child labor and had sufficient resources to carry out inspections.(12) However, no information is available on the amount of funding provided for investigations, the number of investigators employed, the number of investigations or prosecutions carried out, or the number of convictions obtained.(12) MIDES implements a database for tracking victim services, and the Attorney General's Office will pilot an electronic case management system in 2015 to collect national data from the judicial system.(18, 41) Generally, it takes 1 to 2 years to resolve a case involving the commercial sexual exploitation of children, and the same amount of time before penalties can be applied.(3, 39)

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 Committee for the Eradication of Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents (CONAPEES)	Implement actions to combat the sexual exploitation of children and adolescents.(2, 3) Develop public policies and a national plan of action with respect to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, taking into account Uruguay's existing norms and international commitments. Led by INAU and composed of representatives from several government agencies, NGOs, and UNICEF.(42)
Committee for the Eradication of Child Labor (CETI)	Coordinate efforts between law enforcement bureaus and NGOs to develop a plan of action for child laborers and their families.(35) Led by the MTSS and INAU, chaired by the Inspector General, and coordinated by the Sub-Inspector General of the MTSS. Composed of government agencies, industry representatives, labor groups, and NGOs; meets every two weeks.(2, 9, 42, 43)
Anti-Trafficking Interagency Committee	Coordinate Uruguay's anti-trafficking efforts; chaired by MIDES.(2, 3)

During the reporting period, the MTSS and INAU strengthened the existing mechanism for filing and responding to child labor complaints by improving coordination and information exchanges from their databases. Agencies that are part of the Committee for the Eradication of Child Labor notified INAU and referred cases to the appropriate services.(12, 18) The National Committee for

the Eradication of Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a conference on child trafficking for Women's Month.(19)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Uruguay has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Strategy for Childhood and Adolescence (2010–2030)*	Identifies goals to be achieved by 2030. Developed by government agencies, political parties, civil society, and private-sector organizations; recognized as a roadmap for policies on children.(2, 44)
CONAPEES National Plan for the Eradication of Commercial and Non-Commercial Child and Adolescent Exploitation	Works to eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Goals include strengthening victims' rights, improving protection measures for victims and witnesses, keeping children in school, reintegrating children who had previously left school, and developing alternative income strategies for families.(2, 3)
National Action Plan to End Child Labor in Garbage Scavenging	Seeks to combat child labor in garbage dumps through specific projects that involve education, health care, housing, and law enforcement agencies. Launched by CETI and implemented by government agencies, including the MTSS and MIDES.(5, 9) CETI members are finalizing a draft protocol of action for the detection and assistance of child laborers in garbage collection. During the reporting period, the plan was expanded to study child labor in rural areas to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in agriculture.(12)
MIDES Plan to Combat Child Labor (2010–2015)	Includes a range of programs intended to impact child labor. Major focus areas include social and labor inclusion, citizen participation, social and educational inclusion, awareness raising, and programs giving special benefits to youth and populations at risk.(12)
MERCOSUR United Against Child Labor Campaign	Develops public awareness about the need to combat child labor in MERCOSUR. Addresses child labor in agriculture, domestic work, and sexual exploitation, with particular emphasis on communities along country borders.(45)
Second Presidential Declaration on the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor in MERCOSUR (2012)	Promotes greater articulation among governmental agencies, levels of government, and civil society among MERCOSUR members.(46)
MERCOSUR Southern Child Initiative	Aims to defend the rights of children and adolescents in the region by raising awareness and seeking coordination among member states regarding the commercial sexual exploitation of children, child trafficking and pornography, child labor, and migrant labor by harmonizing country legal frameworks with international conventions affecting children and by exchanging best practices.(47)
Declaration of the Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labor (2014–2020)†	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 Uruguay at the ILO's 18th Regional Meeting of the Americas in Lima, Peru (October 2014). (48, 49)
Presidential Decree: Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents: Obligations of Tourism Operators (2013)	Requires tourism operators to raise awareness, take preventative actions, and report incidents of commercial sexual exploitation of children to the Ministry of Tourism and CONAPEES. In 2014, the Ministry of Tourism printed stickers reading "We are responsible companies that condemn the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents" for tourism operators to display on their premises.(19, 50)

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

† Policy was launched during the reporting period.

Research did not find evidence of the existence of a comprehensive policy aimed at combating the worst forms of child labor.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Uruguay 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
Pro-Child (Pro-Niño)‡	Telefónica Foundation-implemented program focused on prevention and eradication of child labor. Established in 2000 and has more than 10,000 active youth participants nationwide.(2, 51)
National Plan of Equality*‡	Institute for Social Security program that mandates that beneficiaries have their children attend school and receive medical services. Established the Family Allocations Program, a conditional cash transfer program to reduce national poverty levels and assist working families with their children, as well as families in need.(52-54)
MIDES Youth Affairs Bureau Programs‡	MIDES Youth Affairs Bureau implements three programs intended to impact the worst forms of child labor: (1) Participation, Citizenship, and Culture; (2) Education and Educational Integration; and (3) Training and Work.(12)
Southern Child Initiative/ MERCOSUR (Niño@ Sur)	MERCOSUR initiative that includes public campaigns against commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking, and child labor; mutual technical assistance in raising domestic legal frameworks to international standards on those issues; and the exchange of best practices related to victim protection and assistance.(55, 56)
Regional Action Group for the Americas (<i>Grupo de Acción Regional para las Américas</i>)	Regional program that conducts prevention and awareness-raising campaigns to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Latin America. Members include Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay, and Venezuela.(55, 57)
Regional Project to End Child Labor in Latin America (2011–2015)	\$4.5 million Government of Spain-funded, 3-year project implemented by ILO-IPEC to combat child labor.(58)
Education Program to End Child Labor (2012–2014)	\$1.3 million Government of Spain-funded, 2-year project implemented by ILO-IPEC that aimed to strengthen public policies and government capacity to combat child labor in 19 countries in the Americas, including Uruguay. Ended November 2014.(58)

* The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Uruguay.

Plans to address child labor in garbage scavenging, agriculture, and commercial sexual exploitation have been adopted, but programs to assist these children have not been established.(9, 12) Research did not find evidence of any existing or planned programs to assist working children in other sectors. While the Government has continued to fund and expand social programs to eliminate poverty and increase social inclusion in order to eliminate child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.(12) More programs are needed to reach those who are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in the agricultural sector and in commercial sexual exploitation.

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 Uruguay (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the laws governing light work identify the activities that children between ages 13 and 15 can undertake, and regulate the hours and conditions of the work to ensure that children are not exposed to hazardous labor.	2012 – 2014
	Ensure that the laws establish penalties for violations related to all hazardous occupations prohibited for children.	2010 – 2014
Enforcement	Provide more comprehensive guidelines for the MTSS hotline operators to allow proper classification of calls regarding child labor.	2011 – 2014
	Institute systematic recordkeeping of child labor cases at INAU.	2009 – 2014
	Employ sufficient labor inspectors who are responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor in order to provide adequate coverage of the workforce without compromising the quality of inspections.	2013 – 2014
	Increase the number of inspections in rural areas.	2011 – 2014
	Collect and make publicly available information on the number of investigations, prosecutions, citations, convictions, and applications of penalties for labor and criminal law violations, as well as the number of children assisted as a result of investigations.	2013 – 2014

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Collect and make publicly available information about the number of investigators responsible and the amount of funding provided for enforcing criminal laws on the worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2014
Government Policies	Assess the impact that existing policies have on reducing the worst forms of child labor.	2013 – 2014
	Integrate child labor prevention and elimination strategies into the National Strategy for Childhood and Adolescence.	2014
	Draft and adopt a comprehensive national policy to address the worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2014
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine the nature of activities carried out by children working with livestock, in fishing, in manufacturing, and in the informal sector in order to inform policies and programs.	2013 – 2014
	Assess the impact that the National Plan for Equality may have on child labor.	2011 – 2014
	Implement programs to provide assistance to child laborers, including those engaged in agricultural work, garbage scavenging, and commercial sexual exploitation.	2010 – 2014

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