Namibia

The Government of Namibia is implementing several programs to target children involved in trafficking. However, children continue work in harmful conditions in agriculture and domestic service. Significant gaps remain in the legal framework to provide protection from hazardous child labor, child prostitution, child trafficking and the use of children for illicit activities.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children are engaged in the worst forms of child labor in Namibia, 4132 primarily in domestic service and agriculture. 4133 Approximately half of all working children in Namibia are engaged in domestic service. 4134 Domestic servants work long hours for little to no pay and are exposed to physical, psychological and sexual abuse. 4135 Children's work in agriculture commonly involves dangerous activities such as using dangerous machinery and tools, carrying heavy loads and applying harmful pesticides. Children raise livestock and herd cattle in isolated areas. Reportedly, Namibian children also herd sheep. 4136

Children are engaged in charcoal production and they unload goods, including chemicals, for truck drivers. 4137 Children are also coerced by adults to commit crimes. 4138

Boys and girls as young as age 12 are engaged in prostitution. These children, including street children, engage in prostitution in the capital, coastal towns and along main transport routes. ⁴¹³⁹ Children subjected to prostitution are exploited by their families or are recruited or forced by other adults or older children. ⁴¹⁴⁰

Namibia is a source, destination and transit country for trafficked children. Children are trafficked within and to Namibia for many purposes, including domestic service, commercial sexual exploitation, agricultural labor, cattle herding and charcoal production. Anaibian children are trafficked to South Africa, Zambia and Angola for commercial sexual exploitation and work with livestock.

Access to education is a critical component in preventing the economic exploitation of children. Access to schooling in Namibia is inhibited by indirect school costs such as uniforms, books and boarding costs. Ala44 Another factor affecting access to education in Namibia is the issue of birth registration. Unable to prove citizenship, many unregistered Namibian children risk losing access to school.

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Act sets the minimum age for work at 14.4147 The Constitution sets the minimum age for hazardous work at 16 and prohibits children from employment that would interfere with their education or is likely to harm their physical health

or mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. The Government also maintains a list of hazardous work prohibited to children. The Labor Act specifically prohibits children under age 15 from working in any mine, industrial, or construction setting and from engaging in night work, unless authorized by the Minister of Labor. However, the Minister of Labor can identify special tasks in which children may enter hazardous work at age 14. In addition, the Labor Act applies only to contractual work. As a result, children performing non-contractual work would not be covered by these laws.

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	16
	Compulsory Education Age	14
	Free Public Education	Yes

The Constitution and Labor Act prohibit slavery and forced labor and provide penalties for violators. The Prevention of Organized Crime Act of 2004 prohibits and provides penalties for domestic and international trafficking in persons and the recruitment, harboring, transportation, transfer and receipt of persons for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor. The Government recently launched a public consultation on the Child Care and Protection Bill to address child trafficking, but the bill has yet to be adopted by the National Assembly.

The Combating of Immoral Practices Act, as amended in 2000, and the Children's Act of 1960, prohibit parents, guardians or those holding custody of a child from offering the child for prostitution. However, it does not prohibit other persons from doing so. Also Additionally, the law does not prohibit the recruitment, use or sale of a child in prostitution or benefiting from the proceeds of child prostitution. While children are not provided comprehensive protections from sexual exploitation, the act of rape is prohibited under the Combating Rape Act of 2000, and the economic exploitation of children is prohibited under the Constitution.

Namibia's ratification of the CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict prohibits conscription into the armed forces and sets the minimum age for voluntary military service at age 18.4159 The Constitution mandates free and compulsory education for all children until they have completed primary school or until age 16, whichever is sooner. 4160 Because free and compulsory education begins at age 7 and extends for seven years, education is compulsory through a minimum age of 14.4161 Although free education is guaranteed in the Constitution, the Education Act of 2001 authorizes schools to establish funds for school development to be paid by parents. 4162 School fees may impede access to education for vulnerable children. 4163

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and **Enforcement**

In 2005, the Government established the Participatory Advisory Committee on Child Labor (PACC) to coordinate information on child labor. The PACC includes several government ministries, businesses, trade unions, and international organizations and is supposed to meet on a monthly basis. 4164 The PACC met six times during the reporting period. 4165 The Government also has an interministerial group that coordinates trafficking issues. The group includes the police, the Office of the Prosecutor General and the Ministries of Gender Equality and Child Welfare

(MGECW), Home Affairs and Immigration (MHAI) and Finance.⁴¹⁶⁶

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MLSW) is responsible for the enforcement of child labor laws, including forced labor. 4167 The MLSW Labor Inspectorate coordinates the enforcement of labor laws and works with a variety of Government agencies including the police, regional councils and the Ministries of Education, Gender Equality and Child Welfare to carry out inspections. 4168 The Labor Inspectorate employed 40 labor inspectors, all of whom received training on child labor during the reporting period. As of 2009, two inspectors based in Windhoek were dedicated solely to child labor inspections. 4169 Although the labor inspectorate budget is unknown, the MLSW lacks the vehicles and personnel necessary to conduct frequent inspections. 4170 The number of inspections conducted during the reporting period is unknown. However, the labor inspectorate identified five new cases of child labor during the reporting period and it followed up with all 111 cases of child labor identified through inspections during the previous reporting period.4171 Of the cases from the previous year, 100 offending employers were compliant with the inspectorate and no longer employ children. 4172 Of the remaining 11 noncompliant offenders, 9 have open, ongoing criminal cases against them. The status of the remaining two cases is unknown.⁴¹⁷³ Four children were returned to their families by social workers.4174

The MGECW and the Woman and Child Protection Unit, an interministerial organization operating within the Ministry of Safety and Security (but effectively run by the police), are respectively responsible for therapeutic counseling and enforcement of criminal laws regarding the worst forms of child labor, including trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. The Woman and Child Protection Unit employs 104 officers in 15 units around the country. The MGECW employs approximately 80 social workers throughout the country to provide

counseling and referral services to victims of trafficking. 4176 During the reporting period members of the MGEWC, the police and members of other ministries received training from the IOM on how to handle trafficking cases. 4177 The police also received training on how to handle child sex abuse cases. 4178 The number of investigations and prosecutions conducted for the worst forms of child labor during the reporting period is unknown, though there have been no trafficking related prosecutions or convictions to date. 4179

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The National Development Plan (2007-2012) includes as its objectives: to harmonize all laws and policies on child labor, to ensure that existing child labor laws are enforced and to expand the scope of inspections to include agriculture, domestic service and the informal economy. 4180 Child labor concerns are also included in the National Policy on Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC), the National Gender Policy (1997), the Education for All National Plan (2001-2015) and the Education and Training Sector Improvement Program (2006-2011). 4181 The impact of these policies on the worst forms of child labor is unknown.

A multi-stakeholder group led by the MGECW began drafting a national action plan on trafficking and gender-based violence. The plan was not completed during the reporting period. In addition, the Government currently participates in a USDOL-funded project that aims to create a stand-alone national action plan targeted specifically on the worst forms of child labor. 4182

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

The Government implemented several nationally sponsored initiatives to address the worst forms of child labor. For instance, the Government, in coordination with UNICEF, opened 21 hospital-

based birth registration facilities and 22 sub regional offices in rural areas. In an attempt to combat the trafficking of children, the MHAI has an office in the maternity ward at Katutura State Hospital to ensure that every child born receives a birth certificate. The Government runs a toll-free hotline, operated by the Namibian police, for reporting crimes, including child trafficking. The Government also has a database to record statistics on trafficking and child labor.

The Government maintained 15 women's and children's centers to assist victims of sexual assault. It is also currently rehabilitating 13 buildings to be used as shelters for victims of gender-based violence, trafficking and the worst forms of child labor. In addition, Namibia runs three "one-stop-shops" for victim protection. These facilities provide lodging and medical and psychosocial care for victims. The Government provides subsidies and funding to NGOs that assist victims of trafficking. It also provides scholarships and welfare programs for orphans, including those affected by HIV/AIDS.

The MLSW conducted public awareness campaigns on child labor, using various media outlets including television, radio and

newspaper.4192 The Government also conducted outreach programs to educate parents about the dangers of trafficking, conducted a media campaign against trafficking and gender-based violence and incorporated trafficking related information into legal literacy programs. 4193 Namibia continued to participate in the 4-year, \$4.7 million, USDOL-funded regional project to support the implementation of national child labor action plans. The project has helped the Namibian Government to mainstream child labor issues into legislative and policy frameworks. 4194 It also aims to withdraw and prevent children in South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia from engaging in exploitative labor. 4195 In Namibia, the project will withdraw and prevent 2,100 children from the worst forms of child labor, particularly those engaged in hazardous work in agriculture and those involved in commercial sexual exploitation, with a special focus on children affected by HIV and AIDS.4196

While the Government implements programs to combat the worst forms of child labor, its efforts do not sufficiently target areas where the majority of children work such as domestic service and agriculture.

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

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Publish and implement the new list of hazardous child labor.
- Amend the Labor Act to prohibit the inclusion of children in hazardous work at age 14 with the Minister of Labor's permission and to set the minimum age for any such work at 18.
- Ensure that all working children are provided with protection from exploitation through the worst forms of child labor, including children performing noncontractual labor.
- Modify the Education Act to ensure all education is truly free, as mandated by the Constitution.
- Amend the Combating of Immoral Practices Act to prohibit any person offering a child, including male children, for prostitution and from recruiting, using, selling and benefiting from the proceeds of male and female child prostitution.
- Seek swift passage of the revisions to the Child Care and Protection Bill to better address child trafficking.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Provide appropriate resources to the Labor Inspectorate for enforcement.
- Publish data pertaining to the worst forms of child labor.
- Provide training to the Police's Women and Child Protection Unit on the worst forms of child labor to improve the likelihood of successful prosecutions and conviction of offenders.
- Ensure existing labor laws are appropriately applied to all offenders of child labor laws on their first offense.

IN THE AREA OF POLICY:

- Assess the impact existing policies have on the worst forms of child labor.
- Finish drafting and adopt the national action plan on trafficking and gender-based violence.
- 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 the worst forms of child labor, including by developing appropriate social protection programs for the withdrawal and prevention of children working in domestic service and agriculture.

⁴¹³² 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*, 2005-2011. Data provided are from 1999. 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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⁴¹³⁷ U.S. Embassy - Windhoek, *Reporting*, February 05, 2010, section 1 paragraph 2, section 2 paragraph 3. See also, ILO-IPEC, *Implementation Plan of the Programme Towards the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Namibia*, 2004-2007, Geneva, 2005, 8-9; available from http://www.ilo. org/ipecinfo/product/viewProduct.do?productId=4511. See also, U.S. Embassy - Windhoek, *Reporting*, January 18, 2008, paragraph 3. See also, U.S. Embassy- Windhoek official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, June 21, 2010. See also, U.S. Embassy - Windhoek, *Reporting, January 28*, 2011, paragraph 2.

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- 4190 Ibid., paragraph 40.
- ⁴¹⁹¹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2010: Namibia."
- $^{\rm 4192}$ U.S. Embassy Windhoek, *Reporting, January 28*, 2011, paragraph 9.
- ⁴¹⁹³ U.S. Embassy Windhoek, *Reporting, February 22, 2011*, paragraphs 7, 41.
- ⁴¹⁹⁴ ILO-IPEC, *TECL*, *Phase II*, *Project Document*, i, 2, 3, 5, 85. See also, ILO-IPEC, *Towards the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (TECL)*, *Phase II*, Technical Progress Report, September 2010, 6. See also, Shejavali, "Namibia receives funding to eliminate child labour".
- ⁴¹⁹⁵ ILO-IPEC, *TECL*, *Phase II*, *Project Document*, i, 2, 3, 5, 85. See also, ILO-IPEC, *TECL Phase II*, *Technical Progress Report (September 2010)*, 6. See also, Shejavali, "Namibia receives funding to eliminate child labour".
- ⁴¹⁹⁶ ILO-IPEC, TECL, Phase II, Project Document, 4.