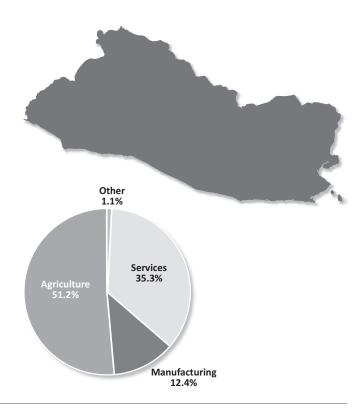
El Salvador

The Government of El Salvador strengthened its legal and policy frameworks to combat child labor, including by enacting the Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (LEPINA). It also developed a Roadmap to Make El Salvador Free of Child Labor and the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The worst forms of child labor continue to exist in agriculture, fishing, and domestic service.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	10.2%
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	80.4%
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	10.2%



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children are exploited in the worst forms of child labor, 1665 many of them in agriculture. Children who work in agriculture are exposed to the elements, toxic substances, long hours of work, and physical injuries; they often use machetes and sharp knives to perform their tasks. 1666 According to the 2008 School Registration Census, more than 15,000 children in El Salvador harvest sugarcane and coffee. Children who work in sugarcane perform activities such as cutting, planting, picking, and carrying heavy loads. 1667 The Census also estimates that more than 2,800 children are involved in fishing and mollusk harvesting. They fish for morralla (small fish) and lobster, and harvest oysters, freshwater snails, and shellfish. 1668 These children are exposed to polluted water, insects, skin diseases, physical injuries, and may work up to 13 hours, sometimes at night. They do not use oxygen tanks while diving.1669

Children are also involved in dangerous labor in urban areas, where they produce fireworks and scavenge garbage, risking dismemberment, burns, and exposure to dangerous substances. ¹⁶⁷⁰ Children work as domestic servants in third-party homes; more than 16,000 children are estimated to be engaged in domestic service. ¹⁶⁷¹ According to a recent study, 15 percent of domestic workers started work before

the age of 15. Children also work as street vendors, where they may be vulnerable to sexual abuse or street accidents.¹⁶⁷²

Children are also subjected to commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking. Many victims of commercial sexual exploitation are girls between ages 15 and 17. Children are trafficked internally and internationally, some for commercial sexual exploitation, with children from poor communities at greater risk. 1674

Children are also recruited into illegal gangs to perform illicit activities related to the arms and drug trade. There are reports that these children are recruited into gang activity while at school. 1675

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Labor Code and the Constitution set the minimum age for work at 14 and the minimum age for hazardous work at 18. The Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (LEPINA) establishes 16 as the minimum age for domestic service. The However, the Labor Code specifies fines of less than \$60 for violations of labor laws, including child labor laws, a penalty which the ILO deems to be insufficient to act as a deterrent. The service of the protection of the labor laws and the labor laws are deterrent.

The National Plan for the Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2006-2009) lists sugarcane, fireworks, commercial sexual exploitation, fishing and mollusk extraction, garbage scavenging, domestic work, and the sale of illicit drugs as worst forms of child labor. However, this list does not address all the sectors in which children work under dangerous conditions, particularly in agriculture. 1680

The commercial sexual exploitation of children, including pornography, and human trafficking are prohibited under El Salvador's Penal Code. 1681

During the reporting period, the Government of El Salvador undertook a number of legislative initiatives to improve protection for children engaged in exploitative child labor. The Constitution was amended to increase the compulsory education age to 17. The Government approved the Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (LEPINA), which establishes the legal framework for the protection of children's rights, including protection from child labor and trafficking. ¹⁶⁸²

The Penal Code established prison terms of 10 to 15 years for the recruitment of children into illegal armed groups and the use of children for illicit activities. 1683

ST. T.	C138, Minimum Age	✓
ATTORY	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	17
	Free Public Education	Yes

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The National Committee for the Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child Labor coordinates efforts to combat child labor and is chaired by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MTPS). Twelve government agencies are part of this committee, along with representatives from labor union organizations, the private sector, and NGOs. 1684 The National Roundtable to Combat the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children coordinates efforts to address the sexual exploitation of children. It includes the Attorney General's Office, the National Civilian Police (PNC), and the Legislative Assembly. 1685 The National Committee against Human Trafficking directs efforts to combat trafficking in persons. It is led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and includes 12 other government agencies.1686

In 2009, LEPINA established the National Committee for Children and Adolescents (CNNA) to develop policies for the protection of the rights of children. CNNA includes the Ministries of Public Security and Justice, Finance, Health, Education, Labor and Social Welfare (MTPS), the Ombudsman, the Association of Municipalities (COMURES), and four representatives from civil society organizations. 1687 The implementation of LEPINA has posed challenges for the Government. It realigns government agencies' existing roles and creates new institutional mechanisms that require human and material resources. 1688 LEPINA does not appoint a specific government agency to coordinate the CNNA, which could lead to a lack of coordination, accountability, and delays in decision-making. In addition, the CNNA does not include the Secretariats of Social Inclusion and Technical Secretariats, which coordinate government efforts to combat poverty and promote social inclusion.1689

MTPS, the Attorney General's Office, and the PNC are responsible for investigating cases of child labor. MTPS has a four-person unit that monitors child labor and provides information to the labor inspections unit, which subsequently carries out investigations. ¹⁶⁹⁰ MTPS has 159 labor inspectors who cover all types of labor violations. During the reporting period, MTPS performed more than 20,000 labor inspections, removed 107 children from exploitive child labor, and imposed 6 fines for child labor violations. ¹⁶⁹¹ However, it is not clear how many of the 20,000 labor inspections were related to child labor or how labor inspectors identified and removed children from working.

A 2009 ILO report on labor inspections in El Salvador states that the inspection process can entail multiple visits and require the Ministry of Economy and the Attorney General's Office to issue fines. As a result, penalizing violations can take up to six months. ¹⁶⁹²

The Attorney General's Office and the PNC enforce criminal violations of the worst forms of child labor and investigate cases of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. ¹⁶⁹³ Both agencies have special units for trafficking, including child trafficking. The PNC assists victims of trafficking, and provides training to enforcement officials. ¹⁶⁹⁴ The PNC also coordinates an emergency hotline that receives complaints about commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Forty-seven complaints of child pornography were received from January 2007 through September 2009. ¹⁶⁹⁵

During the reporting period, the Attorney General's Office set up a database to monitor cases of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking, including investigations, prosecutions, and convictions in cases of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. 1696 The Office investigated 72 cases of trafficking and prosecuted eight cases. Eight individuals were sentenced to between 4 and 8 years of prison. 1697 The Government also trained 77 enforcement officers to respond to child pornography cases and the International Organization for Migration trained police officers to better identify cases of human trafficking through the emergency hotline. 1698 However, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has reported that law enforcement officials do not receive adequate training and resources to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children, including child pornography.¹⁶⁹⁹

El Salvador gathers information on child labor through its National Household Survey. ¹⁷⁰⁰ In 2004, the Ministry of Education also incorporated child labor into its annual school registration census, and in 2007, the Ministry of Health included child labor in its health cards; they allow the Government to identify children who work. ¹⁷⁰¹ However the Government has not yet conducted in-depth research on hard-to-reach populations such as children involved in commercial sexual exploitation or illegal activities. ¹⁷⁰²

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

In November 2009, the Government of El Salvador adopted the Roadmap to Make El Salvador a Country Free of Child Labor and its Worst Forms (Roadmap),

establishing the policy framework to eliminate the worst forms of child labor by 2015 and child labor in general by 2020.¹⁷⁰³

To guide its anti-trafficking efforts, the Government established the National Policy to Combat Human Trafficking (2008-2012) and the Strategic Plan to Combat Human Trafficking (2008–2012). 1704

The Government included child labor in its National Decent Work Plan and the National Education Plan 2021. Total During the reporting period, the Government integrated child labor issues into the Policy for Inclusive Education (2009-2014) and the Social Education Plan (2009-2014), which seek to broaden access to education and promote social inclusion.

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

The Government carried out initiatives to combat child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children and human trafficking, together with NGOs, international organizations, and the private sector.¹⁷⁰⁷

As part of the implementation of the National Plan for the Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2006-2009) and the Strategy to Combat Commercial Sexual Exploitation (2006-2009), the Government conducted campaigns to prevent child labor and funded after-school programs for children who worked or were at risk of working. The Salvadoran Institute for the Full Development of Children and Adolescents (ISNA) provided social services to street children and children who were victims of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. 1708 From January to September 2009, ISNA assisted more than 240 street children and 500 child victims of human trafficking. MTPS conducted awareness-raising campaigns to combat child labor. The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock raised awareness of child labor among irrigation associations and trained adolescents in nonhazardous agricultural activities. 1709

The Government has participated in several initiatives funded by USDOL, including efforts to combat child labor in fireworks production and mollusk harvesting.¹⁷¹⁰ In 2002, El Salvador was the first country in Latin America and the second in the world to launch a Timebound Program to eliminate child labor. This \$7.4 million, USDOL-funded program ended in September 2010, and it provided technical assistance to the Government in developing its legal and policy frameworks, rescued more than 48,000 children from exploitive labor, and raised awareness of child labor.¹⁷¹¹

Between 1999 and 2009, El Salvador also participated in three Central America regional projects with a total of \$20.5 million in funding from USDOL. The projects reduced child labor in coffee production, strengthened the capacity of the Government and civil society organizations to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children and child trafficking, and enhanced regional cooperation, legislation, policies, and institutions to reduce child labor through the provision of educational services.¹⁷¹²

During the reporting period, the Government participated in a \$8.4 million regional project to eradicate child labor in Latin America, funded by the Government of Spain. It partnered with the Spanish NGO Intervida to carry out a public campaign to combat child pornography.¹⁷¹³

To combat poverty, the Government of El Salvador has implemented social protection programs since 2005, including a conditional cash-transfer program, known as Solidarity Communities. This program supplements household income and provides basic social services to vulnerable families in the poorest municipalities. 1714 As of July 2010, almost 100,600 families have benefited from the program; and 98 percent of the children whose families participate in the program are currently enrolled in school.¹⁷¹⁵ In addition, in 2009 the Government approved an anti-crisis program that promotes job creation and establishes the Universal Social Protection System that includes the Solidarity Communities program, individual temporary income support, and vocational training programs aimed at youth and female head of households. 1716 The question of whether these programs have an impact on the worst forms of child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

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

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Increase fines for violations of child labor laws.
- Increase the minimum age for domestic service at 18.
- Develop a comprehensive list of hazardous occupations for children ages 15 to 17.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Develop mechanisms to coordinate activities and information between the National Committee for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (CNNA) and the National Committee for the Eradication of the Worst Forms of Child Labor.
- Implement the Law for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (LEPINA), including by-
 - Allocating adequate human and material resources in the national budget.
 - Providing technical assistance to government agencies so they can incorporate its provisions into their activities.
 - Bringing the Secretariats of Social Inclusion and Technical Secretariats into the National Committee for the Protection of Children and Adolescents.
- Systematically monitor child labor inspections, investigations, number of children rescued, social services
 offered, and sanctions for violations.
- Strengthen enforcement of child labor and other laws including by:
 - Simplifying the labor inspection process and the issuance of fines.
 - Giving police officers, and other officials, adequate tools, resources and training to combat commercial sexual exploitation of children.

IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Continue to carry out research on child labor and conduct studies on children involved in commercial sexual exploitation, domestic service, and illegal activities.
- Assess the impact that existing anti-poverty programs may have on addressing the worst forms of child labor.

loss 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 provided are from 2003. 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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