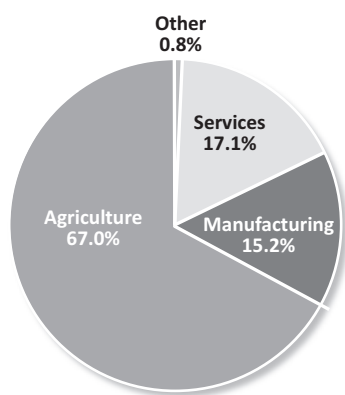


In 2012, Sri Lanka made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government conducted an island-wide survey to determine the number of out-of-school children at risk for child trafficking and launched a project to increase primary and secondary school attendance rates. In addition, the Government continued to raise awareness about child trafficking and child labor through social media and documentaries. However, the Government's coordinating mechanism for child labor was inactive and enforcement efforts were weak, due to funding shortages and lack of institutional capacity. Children continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in manufacturing and dangerous activities in agriculture.

### Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	9.2 (302,864)
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	97.8
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	10.4
Primary Completion Rate		100.8

### Working Children by Sector, Ages 7-14



#### Sources:

**Primary completion rate:** Data from 2010, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(1)

**All other data:** Understanding Children's Work Project's Analysis of statistics from CAS Survey 2008-2009.(2)

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

Children in Sri Lanka are engaged in dangerous activities in manufacturing and agriculture.(3-7) Children working in



agriculture may use dangerous tools, carry heavy loads, and apply harmful pesticides.(8, 9)

Children, predominantly boys, are exploited in prostitution in coastal areas as a part of sex tourism.(5, 7, 10-12) Children are also employed in domestic service, a largely unregulated and undocumented sector.(3, 5, 6, 13) Some child domestics are subject to physical, sexual, and emotional abuse; there are also reports of rural domestics in debt bondage living in third party households.(5, 10, 12) Children reportedly work in the mining, fishing, transport, and construction sectors.(4, 5, 13)

Children are trafficked internally for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor.(3, 10, 11) Children are also trafficked internally and abroad to work as domestic servants, primarily in Middle Eastern countries, which can leave them vulnerable to labor and sexual exploitation.(10, 14) Some child domestic workers trafficked to Colombo households are subjected to nonpayment of wages, and restrictions on their movement, along with the hazards discussed above.(3, 5, 10)

There are reports that children are subjected to bonded and forced labor on dry zone farming areas (tea estates). Although information is limited, there are reports that children are also subjected to bonded and forced labor in the fireworks and fish-drying industries.(5, 10)

Most children in Sri Lanka have access to basic education.(1) However, both the two-decade-long civil conflict and the 2004 tsunami devastated parts of the country, which has increased

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educational disparities in the affected areas.(15-17) In the former conflict and tsunami affected areas of the Northern and Eastern provinces, security issues, acute teacher shortages, and the charging of school fees remain a problem, primarily for children from poor families. In addition, thousands of school children remaining in Welfare Camps lack access to continuous and quality education.(18, 19)

There are reports of children working on the streets, but specific on hazards is unknown.(4-6, 13)

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

The Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children Act sets the minimum age for employment at 14 and the minimum age for employment in hazardous work at 18.(3-5, 20) The Government has a hazardous work activities list that includes the 51 occupations and/or working conditions in which child labor is most prevalent, with the exception of domestic service.(4)

## International Conventions and Selected Laws on Child Labor and Education

	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	No
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	15
	Free Public Education	Yes

Children under age 14 may engage in light work on family-run farms or as a part of their technical education, as long as their employment does not prevent them from attending school.(21)

The minimum age for voluntary recruitment in the armed forces is 18; there is no conscription into the military.(22) The

Penal Code criminalizes and prescribes penalties for individuals who engage children younger than age 18 in debt bondage, forced labor, slavery, armed conflict, or trafficking.(23) The Penal Code also criminalizes and prescribes penalties for individuals who engage children younger than age 18 in pornography and prostitution.(24, 25)

Education in Sri Lanka is compulsory and free until the age of 15.(6) However, there are cases where school fees are extracted from families.(18) In addition, many schools in areas with high rates of returnees from the conflict have insufficient classrooms and teachers, damaged infrastructure, and low school attendance due to the lack of adequate transport facilities.(26) Children unable to access school are particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.

## Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The National Steering Committee on Child Labor (NSC) coordinates the implementation of the Roadmap to End the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2011-2016), the Government's key mechanism for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.(6, 7, 27) Chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Labor and Labor Relations (MOLRR), the NSC includes representatives from key government agencies, employer and workers' organizations, the ILO, UNICEF, and other NGOs.(6) The NSC met for the first time in January 2012; research was unable to determine the meeting outcomes. Nonetheless, funding and administrative deficits rendered the NSC inactive over the reporting period.(6)

The National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) is an independent agency under the MOLRR's Women and Children's Affairs Division. It shares responsibility with the NSC for coordinating actions to protect children, including protecting them against the worst forms of child labor.(5, 6) This body's mandate includes formulating policies and enforcing laws on child abuse and exploitation, coordinating groups that combat child abuse and exploitation, and conducting research and mobilizing resources.(4, 28) The NCPA is mandated to assist children who are victims of physical and sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, and armed conflict.(28)

The Government of Sri Lanka addresses child trafficking through the National Anti-Trafficking Task Force's (NTF) National Action Plan. The NTF is charged with coordinating governmental ministries, departments, law enforcement and civil society anti-trafficking interventions; reviewing related legislation; and recommending legal and policy reforms on

the country's response to trafficking in persons.(6, 12, 29) In 2012, the NTF and Ministry of Child Development and Women's Affairs (MCDWA) established a center for victims of trafficking, engaged in monitoring child trafficking, and organized awareness-raising and training programs on child trafficking.(6, 12)

The NCPA and the Women and Children's Bureau of the Sri Lankan Police (WCBSLP) are the key agencies responsible for coordinating the efforts to combat child trafficking, forced child labor, the commercial sexual exploitation of children, and the involvement of children in illicit activities.(4, 6, 28) The NCPA's Police Unit employs approximately 40 officers responsible for investigating complaints. In addition, the NCPA has child protection officers based in district-level offices that focus on the prevention of child related crimes and victim protection.(6)

The NCPA and WCBSLP work closely with the MOLRR's Department of Labor (DOL), which has legal authority to enforce child labor laws.(5, 6) The DOL's labor inspectorate employs 453 labor officers to enforce all labor laws, including those related to child labor.(6) The DOL and its district-level offices have existing mechanisms in place for the public to use when filing complaints on child labor.(6)

The WCBSLP enforces laws on child labor, child trafficking, and commercial sexual exploitation of children. The WCBSLP has 45 officers and 43 branch operations throughout the country.(6) In the remaining police stations without WCBSLP representation, the officers in charge oversee functions of the division.(4, 6) Children found during inspections are referred to the Department of Probation and Child Care Services (DPCCS), under the MCDWA, by the court.(6) Under the direction of the DPCCS, case workers refer child laborers and children involved in commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking to psychosocial and protection services, including four shelters and two national training and counseling centers. These centers provide victims with medical, legal, psychosocial, life skills, and vocational skills training.(10, 12, 30)

Complaints on child labor, child commercial sexual exploitation, and child trafficking violations can be made via a hotline to the WCBSLP and the NCPA. Both the WCBSLP and the NCPA face a shortage of funds that affects their ability to carry out their mandate.(6)

During the reporting period, the DOL conducted more than 63,000 labor inspections and received 209 child labor complaints.(6) Eight children were removed or assisted as a result of the inspections. Among the complaints received

and filed by the DOL, eight violated the child labor law. The outcome of these cases is still pending.(6)

The NCPA carried out four investigations on reported cases of child trafficking during the reporting period. The outcome of these cases is still pending.(12) The Attorney General also filed indictments in two complaints related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children.(12) Information on the total number of child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation cases received by the NCPA during the reporting period was not available. The WCBSLP received 25 child trafficking complaints, but information on the number of violations incurred or cases filed was not available.(6)

The DOL conducted training of trainer programs for 80 labor enforcement officers and revised the handbook on labor laws to include hazardous labor regulations.(12) In addition, the DPCCS trained probation officers on the management of child abuse, child labor, and child trafficking cases.(12) Nonetheless, government officials maintain that DOL's capacity to enforce hazardous occupation regulations is weak; the officers need training on approaches to identifying children who are engaged in hazardous occupations.(6)

The Government of Sri Lanka acknowledges and is committed to investigating allegations of previous recruitment and the use of children in armed conflict by non-state armed forces. While some recruiters of child soldiers were killed during the conflict, research has found no evidence of prosecutions and convictions of living survivors who violated the law on children and armed conflict.(31-33)

The NCPA continues to investigate the whereabouts of missing children.(33) In addition, as of April 2012, the Family Tracing and Reunification Unit of the Northern province had registered 736 tracing applications from families of missing children since 2009, the majority of whom were recruited by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. Of these children, 139 have been matched and referred to the Unit; 42 have been reunited with their family.(33)

### **Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor**

The Government's child labor policy is the Roadmap to End the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2011-2016). The Roadmap specifies time bound goals, including developing and/or strengthening the management, coordination, implementation, resource mobilization, and reporting of programs that will lead to the elimination of the worst forms of child labor.(7) The Roadmap also provides district-level mainstreaming strategies

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to address specific sectors of child labor, including armed conflict, plantations, fisheries, and tourism. In addition, the Roadmap outlines strategies to include child labor issues within social protection and education goals.(7, 34)

The formation of the Roadmap's goal of child labor elimination by 2016 relied heavily on data from a 2008-2009 government survey on child labor that excluded the Northern province of Sri Lanka.(7) Although child labor rates in the rest of the country were low, the lack of recent child labor data on the Northern province could indicate a need to coordinate additional efforts prior to achieving the Roadmap's goal of complete elimination of the worst forms of child labor by 2016.

During the reporting period, the Ministry of Education (MOE) began implementation of a National Education Sector Development Framework and Program (ESDFP) (2012-2016) to increase the equitable access, quality, and delivery of education.(6) In addition, the ESDFP aims to support accelerated learning and non-formal education for drop-outs from the formal education system.(6)

During the reporting period, the NTF developed a National Plan of Action on Anti-Human Trafficking. The NTF held several meetings with civil society stakeholders to discuss best practices on ways to better collaborate.(12)

## Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent Child Labor

The DPCCS conducted an island-wide study to identify children at risk of being trafficked. The study results found that 32,000 children were not attending school.(12) During the reporting period, the DPCCS sought measures to reintegrate the out-of-school youth revealed through the survey into school. In addition, they worked with NGOs to provide protection services, such as shelter, to child victims of commercial sexual exploitation.(5) The DPCCS is undergoing a study on the institutionalization of children subjected to human trafficking and child labor.(12)

During the reporting period, the NCPA ran an undercover operation in the Southern coastal region of the country to identify perpetrators and child victims of sex tourism. In addition, the NCPA collaborated with the Government's tourism police to conduct a national awareness raising program on child sex tourism that targeted travel guides, coastal communities near tourist destinations, and children.(5)

During the reporting period, the DOL conducted awareness programs on hazardous child labor island-wide for divisional

secretaries, labor officers, teachers, welfare officers, students, law enforcement officers; and residents and employers of plantations, exporting zones, and factories beyond export processing zones. (6, 12, 27) In addition, the Government sponsored an education and development exhibition, held in February 2012, which featured several films and documentaries on human trafficking. Approximately 500,000 people attended the exhibition.(12, 27) The Ministry of Justice and NTF continued to deliver media on safe migration and human trafficking through a docudrama, TV advertisement, and a poster developed through a 2011 U.S. Department of State project.(27, 29)

In June 2012, the World Bank launched a \$100 million education project, Transforming School Education, to support the ESDFP. This project aims to increase the age of primary and secondary education completion of children ages six through 16.(6) The project appoints school attendance committees to promote school enrollment and attendance and runs school nutrition and health programs.(6)

During the reporting period, the MOE continued its efforts to improve education for the children of plantation workers, who are vulnerable to dangerous forms of child labor such as domestic work in third party homes. The MOE conducted teacher training for plantation teachers; held supplementary classes for secondary school aged children; and took steps to improve math, science, and English skills of plantation school children.(6)

The Joint Plan for Assistance for Northern Province project (JPA) is a collaborative effort among the Government of Sri Lanka, UN agencies, and local and international NGOs. During the reporting period, the Government and its partners continued to strengthen resettlement and security efforts in the conflict-affected Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka by providing support services to the recently resettled in those areas.(26, 35) One JPA program supports education services, including a sponsorship program for children who lost one or both parents during the war, and vocational training for youth unable to complete their formal education. These programs have awarded educational assistance to more than 200 children in the Northern and Eastern provinces.(26) JPA also supports construction and infrastructure development in and around schools, such as the construction of water supply systems and toilets within schools in Jaffna and Kilinochchi, which benefitted more than 2,500 children during the reporting period.(26) The issue of whether these programs have an impact on child labor does not appear to have been addressed.

**Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Sri Lanka:**

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Create protections for children engaged in domestic service.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Ensure all children have access to free compulsory education, as called for by the law.	2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Provide additional funding for the NCPA to adequately carry out investigations on child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2011, 2012
	Prosecute individuals who have violated laws related to children's exploitation in the armed conflict.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Provide labor officers with training on approaches to identifying children engaged in hazardous occupations.	2012
	Provide adequate resources for the enforcement of child labor and child trafficking laws.	2012
	Provide adequate funding to coordinate planning for the Roadmap for the Elimination of Child Labor.	2012
Policies	Conduct a child labor assessment in the Northern Sri Lanka province and incorporate findings into the Roadmap.	2011, 2012
Social Programs	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on child labor.	2011, 2012

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