

In 2015, Colombia made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government launched the National Development Plan for 2014-2018 which outlines Colombia's strategy to promote inclusive economic growth, in particular through improving access to quality education and lengthening the school day. For the first time, the Government's budget for education exceeded all other areas of the national budget, including defense, and registered a 7.5 percent increase over the amount allocated in 2014. The Ministry of Labor also signed one-year agreements with the National Federation of Coffee Growers and the Federation of Cargo Transporters and Logistics to prevent and eliminate child labor in the coffee and transport sectors, respectively. However, children in Colombia are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in street work and in commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking. The Government does not employ a sufficient number of labor inspectors to adequately enforce child labor laws across the country, and challenges in coordination on child labor issues remain.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Colombia are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in street work and in commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking.(1-3) In 2015, the Government published some results from the 2014 National Household Survey, which include estimates of the percentage of working children ages 5 to 17.(4) However, the results do not disaggregate information on health, occupational safety, or sectors in which children work, particularly the priority sectors identified by the Government for child labor reduction such as coffee and sugarcane. The Government does not appear to conduct research on child labor for hard-to-reach populations, including children engaged in street work and involved in illicit activities. Government survey data on working children also include limited information on indigenous populations.(5)

Several government officials in different departments of Colombia reported that due to a lack of training and resources, they have not updated the Ministry of Labor's (MOL) Information System for Identification, Registration, and Characterization of Child Labor (SIRITI) in the past three years. Therefore, comprehensive data on child labor available to the public is incomplete and outdated.(6-8) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Colombia.

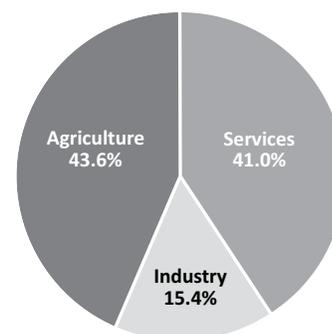
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	4.6 (392,515)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	94.7
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	4.8
Primary Completion Rate (%)		100.6

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2014, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(9)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from the Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares, Módulo de Trabajo Infantil (GEIH-MTI) Survey, 2015.(10)

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



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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	Production of coffee,† cotton,*† rice,*† sugarcane,† and unrefined brown sugar (<i>panela</i>)*† (11-16)
	Hunting*† and fishing,*† activities unknown (17)
Industry	Mining coal,† emeralds,† gold,† and clay to make bricks† (15, 18-21)
	Construction,*† activities unknown (22)
Services	Street work,† including vending, begging, and guarding or washing cars and motorcycles (1, 2, 23-26)
	Recycling*† and garbage scavenging*† (2, 27)
	Selling imported gasoline*† (11, 15)
	Domestic work† (15, 28)
	Working in retail establishments, hotels, and restaurants, activities unknown (4, 17)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3, 24, 29-31)
	Use in the production of pornography (2, 29)
	Use in armed conflict, sometimes as a result of force, in illegal armed groups, to perform intelligence and logistical activities, store and transport weapons, and engage in commercial sexual exploitation (32-35)
	Use in illicit activities, including in the production of marijuana* and poppies*, in the production of coca (stimulant plant) sometimes as a result of human trafficking, in forced begging, and by gangs to commit homicides and traffic drugs (2, 3, 11, 15, 25, 30, 36-38)

* 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.

Reports indicate that in the cities of Cali and Medellin, numerous children work on the streets.(1, 23) Reports also indicate that many children ages 10 to 17 are engaged in domestic service in third-party homes. These children may work up to 60 hours per week with little to no pay, access to school, or health benefits.(39, 40) In the city of Cartagena, children, many of whom are Afro-Colombian, sell fruits and handicrafts and offer services to tourists. Individuals occasionally purchase children's goods and services in exchange for sexual acts. In addition, government officials in Cartagena reported that children sell food and carry heavy loads in urban markets, beginning work as early as 3 am.(8, 41)

The commercial sexual exploitation of children, especially girls, is a problem in Colombia, primarily in the departments of Atlántico, Bogotá, Bolívar, Magdalena, and Valle Del Cauca.(42) Colombian government officials reported that gang members, parents, hotel receptionists, and motorcycle taxi drivers sometimes recruit and use children for commercial sexual exploitation.(41, 43) Research indicates that in the Triple-Border region (Colombia, Peru, and Brazil), young Colombian girls and boys often enter Tabatinga, Brazil, by foot and Santa Rosa, Peru, by canoe, where they engage in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities.(6, 44) Boys in the city of Leticia, Amazonas, also engage in commercial sexual exploitation, where perpetrators pay them less than \$1 to perform sexual acts.(43) In other cities such as Cartagena, children are used by gang members to commit homicides and may be forced to engage in commercial sexual exploitation.(41)

In 2015, criminal gangs and illegal armed groups, including the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC-EP) and the National Liberation Army (ELN), continued to forcibly recruit children into their ranks. The UN reported that there were 289 cases of child recruitment and use by these and other groups.(45) Children were used by the FARC-EP, ELN, and criminal groups as combatants, coca-pickers, and in commercial sexual exploitation.(35, 45) During the reporting period, the FARC-EP, in peace negotiations with the Government since 2012, stated publicly that they would no longer recruit children under the age of 15 and would release all recruits under age 15 from their service. In February 2016, the FARC-EP announced that they would stop recruiting children under age 18.(2, 35, 46) Although the Colombian Ombudsman's Office for Human Rights reported that, as of December 2015, the FARC-EP had not set a date for the release of their associated children, government reports indicate that such recruitment by the FARC-EP had decreased throughout 2015.(2, 47)

Reports indicate that criminal gangs, many of whose members were previously associated with the paramilitary non-state United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), sometimes use bullying as a strategy to recruit children from schools into their operations, which include drug and arms trafficking, extortion, and the commission of homicides.(38, 48, 49)

In 2015, the Government's budget for education exceeded, for the first time, all other areas of the national budget, including defense, and registered a 7.5 percent increase over the amount allocated in 2014.(50-52) However, in Colombia, access to education is hindered by the internal armed conflict and sometimes impassable routes and long distances between children's homes and schools in rural areas.(53-55) In 2015, there were multiple cases of schools damaged in the cross-fire as a result of confrontations between illegal armed groups and the Colombian Armed Forces.(45) Access to education is also often difficult for children from ethnic groups who may not speak Spanish as a first language. There are 68 native languages in Colombia; a 2014 report from a Colombian NGO indicates that more than 80 percent of ethnic groups in the country do not have access to a culturally and linguistically relevant education.(56) Indigenous and Afro-Colombian children are considered the most vulnerable children in Colombia and are engaged in the worst forms of child labor.(24, 37) The 2012 National School Desertion Survey for children enrolled in primary and secondary school identified child labor as one of the primary causes of school desertion in the Caribbean and Pacific regions of Colombia.(57)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Colombia 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 of Colombia 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 35 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence (58)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 117 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence (58)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Resolution 3597 (59)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 17 of the Constitution; Articles 141–141B and 188A–188C of the Penal Code; Article 5 of Resolution 3597 (59-61)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 17 of the Constitution; Articles 188A–188C of the Penal Code; Article 5 of Resolution 3597 (59-61)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 213–219B of the Penal Code (61)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 162, 188D, and 344 of the Penal Code; Article 5 of Resolution 3597 (59, 61)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 13 of Law 418; Article 2 of Law 548 (62, 63)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 13 of Law 418; Article 2 of Law 548 (62, 63)

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

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	18	Decision C-376/10 of the Colombian Constitutional Court (64, 65)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 1 of Decree 4807 (65)

In 2014, the Government issued the Victims Assistance Decree, which aims to regulate the procedures of government entities responsible for protecting and providing assistance to victims of human trafficking. It also addresses victims' access to services, protection, and assistance through interagency coordination and partnerships with civil society members.(66) However, the law stipulates that human trafficking victims must file an official complaint against their trafficker within 5 days of receiving services in order to receive medium-term assistance, which includes additional medical, psychological, and legal assistance as well as educational services and economic support.(3, 32, 66, 67) The limited time allowance and the requirement to file an official complaint may prevent human trafficking victims from receiving sufficient assistance beyond any emergency services provided.

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's (MOL) Inspection, Monitoring, Control, and Territorial Management Department	Receive complaints of labor law violations and conduct labor inspections, including inspections to verify labor conditions for adolescent workers and compliance with other child labor provisions. Operate the Integrated Registration and Information System for Child Labor (SIRITI), a child labor monitoring system that identifies children engaged in or at risk of child labor.(2, 68) Oversee the Internal Working Group on Child Labor Eradication, which includes inspectors who focus on the eradication of child labor by carrying out prevention activities, conducting child labor inspections, and compiling data on child labor.(69)
Ministry of the Interior (MOI)	Operate a hotline through its Anti-Trafficking in Persons Operations Center to report and track cases of human trafficking, coordinate investigations, and facilitate access to social services for victims.(70)
National Police	Investigate cases of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking.(68)
Colombian Institute for Family Well-Being (ICBF)	Receive complaints regarding child labor; operate hotlines to report cases of child labor, including its worst forms; and provide social services to children engaged in or at risk of child labor.(2, 71, 72) Operate 40 mobile units to coordinate government actions to protect children's rights, including with respect to child labor. Partner with civil society organizations to operate an Internet hotline to combat child commercial sexual exploitation and pornography.(71, 72)
Attorney General's Office (AGO)	Investigate and prosecute cases of child recruitment for armed conflict, commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, and human trafficking.(2, 58) Oversee the Articulation Group for Combatting Trafficking in Persons, which focuses on investigation and prosecution of international human trafficking and other related crimes. This group includes four prosecutors from specialized directorates in the AGO.(32)
Office of the Ombudsman	Promote the rights of children and adolescents and monitor policies related to children's human rights. Operate an early warning system to prevent the recruitment of children by illegal armed groups.(58)
Ministry of Health and Social Protection	Provide health services to victims of sexual violence, including child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking.(73)
National Training Service (SENA)	Collect fines imposed by the MOL for labor law violations.(74)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2015, labor law enforcement agencies in Colombia took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspectors	726 (75)	827 (2)
Number of Child Labor Dedicated Inspectors	10 (2)	14 (2)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (75, 76)	Yes (2, 76)

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Yes (2)
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (75)	Yes (2)
Number of Labor Inspections	9,724 (77)	8,108 (77)
■ Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	5 (75)	11 (2)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	5 (75)	11 (2)
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (75)	Yes (2)
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	No (2)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (75)	Yes (2)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (75)	Yes (2)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (75)	Yes (2)

The Government reported that labor inspectors lacked sufficient resources to carry out their duties in 2015.(2, 6, 7) In 2015, the MOL reported that the labor inspectorate has the budget to employ 904 labor inspectors consistent with commitments under the 2011 Colombian Action Plan Related to Labor Rights. However, the MOL employed only 827 inspectors during the reporting period.(2) The Government reported that this number of inspectors is inadequate to enforce labor laws across the country.(2) According to the ILO's recommendation of one inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Colombia should employ roughly 1,622 inspectors in order to adequately enforce labor laws throughout the country.(78-80)

For 2015, the Government reported that all labor inspectors, including those in regional offices and child labor dedicated inspectors, received training on child labor law enforcement issues. Trainings were provided on the worst forms of child labor as defined and addressed through Resolution 3597 and ILO Conventions 138 and 182.(2) In addition, the MOL coordinated trainings for regional labor inspectors that addressed human trafficking and labor exploitation, including with regard to labor migration and migrant worker rights. Regional labor inspectors received additional trainings on assisting human trafficking survivors.(35)

The MOL reported that from January to September 2015, it carried out 1,819 inspections of the working conditions of the 2,684 children between the ages of 15 and 17 authorized to work during that period.(2) Research could not determine the breakdown of inspections by geographic department or by sector for 2015.(2) In Colombia, labor inspections may be unannounced; however, research could not determine the number of inspections related to child labor that were unannounced in 2015. MOL inspections of private homes, family farms, and brothels require authorization from the Attorney General's Office (AGO); inspections of brothels also include the participation of the Police.(2) Reports indicate that inspections of private homes and family farms are often done only in response to complaints.(2)

As a result of its 1,819 inspections, the MOL reported 11 violations of the Code of Childhood and Adolescence that resulted in penalties, with 14 potential violations still under investigation at the end of November 2015. The MOL also reported that 199 work permits for adolescents were revoked as a result of its inspections.(2) However, research could not determine the causes for these revocations, or whether the affected adolescents were removed from work and received services.

Research could not determine how many children the MOL's child labor monitoring system identified in child labor, or whether this monitoring data informed labor inspections. Research also could not determine the number of child labor complaints the ICBF received during the reporting period. Although the ICBF refers cases of apparent child labor violations to the MOL for further action, it is unclear whether the MOL conducts any follow-up, including whether labor inspectors use this information to target their inspections.(8, 72)

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In some departments of Colombia, inspectors only carry out inspections in a small fraction of the department. For example, in Amazonas, inspectors only conduct inspections in the capital of Leticia. Inspectors do not have the resources to carry out inspections in any other areas of the department, which are often only accessible by boat or small planes.(2)

In order to combat child labor in the mining sector, the ICBF requires its regional offices to coordinate with the MOL's regional offices and other government agencies. It also requires its regional offices to collaborate with labor inspectors in the periodic inspections of mines and quarries, provide social services to children found working in mining, and notify the relevant MOL authorities of any apparent child labor infractions that the ICBF identifies.(81) However, it is unclear whether such coordination occurs in practice.

Recent National Household Surveys have found that many adolescents work without permits, despite the requirement in the Code on Childhood and Adolescence that children between the ages of 15 and 17 obtain work authorization from the MOL.(5)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in Colombia took actions to combat the worst forms of child labor (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Training for Investigators		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
■ Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (32)	Yes (35)
Number of Investigations	157 (2)	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Convictions	Unknown	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (75)	Yes (2)

Judicial officials, attorneys, and judicial police participated in specialized trainings on human trafficking investigations and prosecutions, including through mock trials.(35) The AGO also reported circulating a memorandum to criminal law enforcement officials in March 2015 to improve the effectiveness of investigation strategies and to ensure the protection of children's rights.(2)

In 2015, the AGO reported that it employed 32 prosecutors who handled cases of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation, among other cases.(2) However, the total number of criminal law enforcement officials who enforced laws on the worst forms of child labor, including the number of National Police officers dedicated to this task, is unknown.

During the reporting period, the AGO received 1,415 reports of crimes related to the worst forms of child labor. The breakdown of these cases by type of crime involving the worst forms of child labor, and whether all 1,415 cases were investigated, is unknown.(2) In 2015, the AGO initiated 1,330 criminal proceedings for crimes against children, including 515 cases of the recruitment of minors for commercial sexual exploitation, 109 cases of commercial sexual exploitation, and 706 cases involving other violations of children's rights not related to the worst forms of child labor. Research could not determine how many of these 1,330 criminal proceedings pertained to cases that originated in 2015 versus in previous years, or how many child victims were involved in each.(2) For 2015, the number of investigations and prosecutions initiated by the AGO for cases involving the recruitment of children by illegal armed groups or involving the use of children in illicit activities by such groups, is unknown. However, the AGO confirmed 157 ongoing investigations of cases involving the recruitment of children by illegal armed groups that occurred in 2014.(2) Although research could not determine the exact number of convictions related to the worst forms of child labor that were reached in 2015, reports indicate that there were at least 30 such convictions.

In 2015, the National Police initiated nine human trafficking investigations, including six cases of transnational trafficking and three cases of domestic trafficking.(35) However, research could not determine whether these cases involved child victims. The AGO reported 135 human trafficking investigations and issued 71 warrants for criminal violations involving human trafficking.(35) The AGO also reported 42 convictions for crimes of human trafficking, including commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor,

which may include some of the 515 cases of child sexual exploitation.(35) However, research could not determine how many of these investigations, violations, and convictions involved child victims.

The Ministry of the Interior’s (MOI) Anti-TIP Operations Center hotline received 3,625 calls during the reporting period. Also during the reporting period, the ICBF identified 39 human trafficking cases that involved children, of which 33 victims were girls and 6 were boys.(35) Research could not determine how many of these cases were referred for investigation and prosecution. Research indicates that few child victims of commercial sexual exploitation file complaints with officials, making the scope of the problem unknown. Some officials report that some children are afraid to file complaints because many of their recruiters are locally known individuals.(41)

The Government has acknowledged that it lacks adequate resources to effectively conduct investigations and prosecutions of cases of human trafficking and the worst forms of child labor. Furthermore, the Government has limited resources to assist victims.(2, 32)

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 8).

Table 8. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National System of Family Well-Being	Promote interagency coordination to protect children’s rights, including rights related to child labor. Design, implement, monitor, and evaluate policies that affect children from early childhood to adolescence.(82) Composed of the Offices of the President and Vice President, 15 government ministries, and other government agencies that address children’s rights and welfare. Overseen by the ICBF.(82)
Interagency Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (CIETI)	Coordinate efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor. Chaired by the MOL and includes 13 government agencies and representatives from trade unions, business associations, and civil society organizations.(83) Oversee 32 department-level CIETIs, each comprising municipal-level committees, throughout the country.(75) In 2015, CIETI coordinated efforts between the MOL and ICBF to define public policy strategies for 2016–2026, including efforts to address child labor. CIETI also provided technical assistance to 695 of its municipal-level committees to strengthen coordination among government agencies operating in each municipality.(2)
National Interagency Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Commercial Sexual Exploitation	Implement efforts to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Coordinated by the MOL; includes 11 government agencies and representatives from business associations, trade unions, and civil society organizations.(84, 85)
Interagency Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons (CICTP)	Lead and coordinate efforts among government agencies to combat human trafficking. Chaired by the MOI and includes 16 government agencies, including the MOL, ICBF, National Police, and the Special Administrative Unit for Migration in Colombia.(2) Created by Law 985.(2) In 2015, CICTP provided trainings on human trafficking issues to its departmental- and district-level committees, and developed indicators for monitoring and evaluating the provision of government services to victims. In addition, IOM and UNODC provided assistance to the Office of the Inspector General to evaluate government efforts in addressing human trafficking issues.(2) In May 2015, the Government issued Decree 1066, which provides the MOI with special funding for CICTP initiatives to combat human trafficking and provide assistance to victims. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with assistance from IOM, launched the second phase of a national campaign to prevent human trafficking.(35)
Interagency Committee for the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Children by Illegal Armed Groups	Coordinate efforts to prevent child recruitment by illegal armed groups, including for purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. Led by the Office of the Vice President and composed of more than 21 government agencies.(86, 87) Created by Law 552.(2)
Office of the Inspector General	Monitor the implementation of child labor laws and policies, including the National Strategy to Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor.(58)
Work Group to Assess Acceptable Activities for Adolescent Work in Coffee, Cotton, Sugar, and Rice	Coordinate with universities to research and assess types of activities that may be permitted for adolescents authorized to work in the coffee, cotton, sugar and rice sectors. Created in 2014 and composed of the Food and Agriculture Organization, ILO, Department of National Planning, National Department of Statistics, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, and the MOL.(75)

The 2013 evaluation of the National Strategy to Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2008–2015) indicates that the ICBF, CIETI, and the MOL demonstrated the highest rates of participation in coordination activities.(5) However, in 2015, regional government officials recognized that there is a need for increased coordination and information exchange between regional ICBF and MOL offices and the national headquarters to ensure the effective implementation of child labor policies.(6-8)

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V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Colombia has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Strategy to Prevent and Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2008–2015)	Provided Colombia's strategy to combat the worst forms of child labor in nine priority sectors: coffee, tobacco, sugarcane, mining, street work, garbage scavenging, sale of gasoline, commercial sexual exploitation, and the recruitment of children by illegal armed groups.(83)
National Policy to Prevent the Recruitment of Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups	Directs actions to prevent the recruitment and use of children by illegal armed groups. Calls for the Government to develop strategies to protect children from recruitment, address violence against children (including the worst forms of child labor), and improve interagency coordination.(88)
National Development Plan (2014–2018)†	Outlines Colombia's strategy to promote inclusive economic growth and national development. Priorities include improving access to quality education, lengthening the school day to 7 hours, and providing pre-school for children younger than age 5.(89) Prioritizes the respect and protection of rights for Colombia's indigenous and vulnerable populations. Launched in June 2015.(89)
10-Year National Plan for Children and Adolescents (2004–2015)	Aimed to increase children's access to social services and reduce the number of children engaged in child labor.(90)
Declaration of the Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labor (2014–2024)	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 Colombia at the ILO's 18th Regional Meeting of the Americas in Lima, Peru (October 2014).(91–93)
Fight Against Human Trafficking Agreement between the Government of Colombia and the Government of Argentina	Establishes a work plan between the governments of Colombia and Argentina to collaborate in the fight against human trafficking. Signed in 2014 and aims to prevent human trafficking and strengthen efforts to assist Colombian human trafficking victims found in forced labor in Argentina.(94)
Illegal Mining, Drug Trafficking, Inequality, and Poverty Elimination Agreement between the Governments of Colombia and Peru	Outlines 11 objectives to combat illegal mining, drug trafficking, inequality, and poverty in Colombia and Peru. Several objectives focus on child and adolescent labor protection, including identifying and assisting children and adolescents working in mining activities and in vulnerable situations.(95) In addition, establishes a roadmap to apply concepts from the Cooperation Agreement on the Exchange of Experiences and Good Practices regarding labor and labor relations, including child labor.(95) As part of the agreement, officials from both countries developed an information and coordination exchange to develop a Binational Peru–Colombia Child Labor Registration System.(95, 96)
Territorial Assistance Plan	Increases interinstitutional capacity to address child labor issues in regions and departments. Coordinates regional working groups in 17 departments to collaborate with the Interagency Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor on the implementation of public policies related to child labor and children's rights.(75) Provides training on child labor laws and policies in rural regional areas.(75)
Child Labor Pact (2014–2018)	Calls for the formulation of policies on the prevention and eradication of child labor and improved coordination between the MOL and other government agencies including the ICBF, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Social Protection, as well as the ILO and Colombia's National Association of Industries. Also calls for awareness-raising activities in capital cities and tourist destination to address forced child labor issues in priority sectors and for the provision of technical assistance to departments for training on services and laws related to combatting child labor.(75)
Memorandum of Understanding for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor in the Transport Sector (2015–2016)†	Aims to promote cooperation between the MOL and the Colombian Federation of Cargo Transporters and Logistics (COLFECAR) to design technical assistance projects and build capacity in the transport sector to prevent and combat child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children. (2, 97) Signed in October 2015 and expires in December 2016. Implemented jointly by the MOL and COLFECAR.(2, 97)
Memorandum of Understanding for the Prevention of Child Labor and the Promotion of Respect for Children's and Adolescents' Rights in the Production of Coffee (2015–2016)†	Aims to promote cooperation between the MOL and the National Federation of Coffee Growers (FEDECAFE) to prevent and eradicate child labor in the coffee sector.(2) Signed in December 2015 and expires in December 2016. Implemented jointly by the MOL and the FEDECAFE.(2)

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
XIX Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor†	Promotes decent work with social inclusion throughout the Americas. Held in Cancún, Mexico, participating countries adopted the Declaration of Cancún 2015, which aims in part to foster policies to eliminate labor exploitation, including child labor, and to promote education and vocational training for youth.(98, 99) Participating countries also adopted a Plan of Action that prioritizes the elimination of child labor, including through data collection, enforcement of labor laws, and the development of social protection policies for children and families.(98, 100)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

At the end of 2015, the National Strategy to Prevent and Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2008–2015) expired.(2) The Office of the Inspector General previously indicated that some of the country's departments and main cities had not adequately implemented the plan, or allocated sufficient funding for child labor initiatives.(101) Officials in some of the country's departments have correlated difficulties in implementing child labor policies to a lack of current reliable data available on child labor in their department. Regional government officials report that a lack of resources and training for updating the MOL's Integrated Registration and Information System for Child Labor (SIRITI) has contributed to this situation.(6-8) The Child Labor Pact, approved in 2014, aims to improve and broaden policies on child labor in the country's departments; however, research indicates that departmental government officials lack sufficient guidance to adequately perform this task.(75)

During the reporting period, the Government began drafting a national plan to prevent and eradicate child labor and protect adolescent workers. The Government also began drafting a national plan to prevent and eradicate the commercial sexual exploitation of children.(2) The drafting process for each plan involved a range of government agencies including the MOL, ICBF, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health and Social Protection, and the National Planning Department. The drafting process also included 15 regional workshops for local authorities to contribute to the policies, as well as a review of recommendations from the MOL, the National Planning Department, and the UN CRC on relevant subjects.(2) Both plans are slated to cover 2016-2026.(2)

In 2015, the National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons (2014–2018) remained in draft form. Reports indicate that this strategy outlines the responsibilities of the Interagency Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons (CICTP), departmental committees, international organizations, civil society, and academia to address human trafficking.(32, 35)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of Colombia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating and preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
More Families in Action (<i>Más Familias en Acción</i>)†	Development for Social Prosperity (DPS) conditional cash transfer program that seeks to combat poverty and build human capital. Implements strategies to prevent child labor in the mining sector and fight teen pregnancy; support poor families with disabled members; and improve child nutrition.(102, 103) In 2015, served 2,559,954 families and 4,557,375 children.(104)
United Network program (<i>Red Unidos</i>)†	DPS program that coordinates actions to reduce inequality and end extreme poverty, including through access to education, health, and job training. Continued projects under agreement with the Telefónica Foundation to prevent child labor in eight cities.(105, 106)
Healthy Generations (<i>Generaciones con Bienestar</i>)†	Children's rights program implemented by DPS and the Colombian Institute for Healthy Families that offers cultural and recreational activities to children ages 6 to 17 identified as vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.(107)
Youth in Action (<i>Jóvenes en Acción</i>)†	DPS technical job training and conditional cash transfer program for vulnerable urban youth ages 16 to 24. In 2015, 250,931 youth were provided benefits, an increase from 152,370 youth in 2014.(104, 107, 108)

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Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)

Program	Description
We Are a Treasure Project (<i>Somos Tesoro</i>)	USDOL-funded, \$9 million, 4-year project to combat child labor and promote safe work in the mining sector, implemented by Pact, Inc., in partnership with the Alliance for Responsible Mining, <i>Mi Sangre</i> Foundation, and Fund for Environmental Action and Childhood. Works with the Government of Colombia to (1) strengthen national policies to combat child labor in the mining sector; (2) improve governmental capacity to identify and address violations of child labor and occupational safety and health laws in the mining sector; and (3) provide education and livelihood opportunities for households vulnerable to child labor in mining communities in the departments of Antioquia and Boyacá.(109, 110) Aims to benefit more than 19,000 children and 9,000 households. In 2015, trained 600 artisanal and small-scale miners in occupational safety and health; raised awareness of child labor and working conditions in artisanal and small-scale mining; and provided educational and livelihood services to more than 6,000 children and 1,300 households.(111)
Colombia Network Against Child Labor (<i>Red Colombia contra el Trabajo Infantil</i>)	MOL-led public-private partnership that builds on the UN's Global Pact Initiative to create collaboration between Colombian businesses, the MOL, and the ICBF to eliminate child labor, including in supply chains. Initiated with 14 business in 2014.(112, 113) In 2015, expanded to incorporate 34 businesses.(114)
National Household Survey†	National Administrative Department of Statistics annual national household survey that includes questions on child labor.(115)
Decent Work Program†	MOL project implemented by the ILO to promote decent work, including combating child labor.(116, 117)
School Meals Program (<i>Programa de Alimentación Escolar [PAE]</i>)†	Ministry of Education program that provides meals to more than 4 million school children to increase school attendance and retention.(118-120)
Fund to Assist Children and After-School programs (<i>Foníñez</i>)†	Superintendency of Family subsidy programs for children in situations of extreme poverty.(121) For children from birth to 6 years, provides social protection services, and for children ages 7 to 17, provides after school activities.(122)
I Have Rights (<i>Yo Tengo Derechos</i>)	Department of Atlántico child labor awareness raising program that also strengthens interagency coordination through a one-stop center to handle child labor cases.(123)
Ingruma Indigenous Training Center	ICBF and USAID social reintegration program to provide indigenous youth who have been victims of child soldiering with specialized services.(124)
Child Labor in Mining Prevention Program	Secretariat of Mining and Office of Infancy, Adolescence, and Youth program in Antioquia that has provided 438 children with life skills training, legal and psychological support, and recreational activities to prevent and eradicate child labor in the mining sector.(125)
Campaign to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the tourism sector (<i>Ojos en Todas Partes</i>)*†	Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism public awareness campaign that aims to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the tourism sector. Implemented in coordination with the ICBF and the National Tourism Fund.(2, 126)
Education and Monitoring Program for the Eradication of Child Labor (2012 – 2015)	\$1.3 million, Government of Spain-funded, 2-year project implemented by ILO-IPEC that aims to strengthen public policies and government capacity to combat child labor in 19 countries in the Americas, including Colombia. Included the objective of developing information systems on the worst forms of child labor.(127)
Elimination of Child Labor in Latin America (Phase 4) (2011 – 2015)	\$4.5 million, Government of Spain-funded, 4-year project implemented by ILO-IPEC to combat child labor in 19 countries, including Colombia.(127)
Capacity-building project for the implementation of the National Strategy for the Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2015 – 2017)*	\$214,000, Government of Canada-funded, 2-year project to build the capacity of key institutions for the formulation and implementation of the National Strategy for Prevention and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Protection of Young Workers 2015 - 2025 (ENETI).(127)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Colombia.

The Government of Colombia has implemented programs to eliminate child labor in mining, commercial sexual exploitation, armed conflict, and tourism. However, research found no evidence that it has carried out programs to assist children in sectors such as sugarcane and garbage scavenging.

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 Colombia (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that victims of human trafficking have sufficient time to, or are not required to, file official complaints against their traffickers to receive services beyond emergency care.	2014 – 2015
Enforcement	Ensure that labor inspectors have adequate resources to perform inspections, and publicly report on the level of funding for the labor inspectorate.	2009 – 2015
	Increase the number of labor inspectors responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor to provide adequate coverage of the workforce.	2009 – 2015
	Publicly report on child labor law enforcement efforts, including disaggregated data on the number of unannounced inspections and the number and amount of penalties collected for labor violations.	2009 – 2015
	Develop and implement a strategy of targeted inspections related to risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents.	2015
	Use information from the child labor monitoring system to target labor inspections and take enforcement actions to follow up on child labor cases reported by the ICBF.	2009 – 2015
	Improve coordination between the ICBF and the MOL to enforce child labor laws in the mining sector.	2009 – 2015
	Ensure that all adolescents who work in allowable activities have received legally required authorization from the MOL.	2015
	Make the number of criminal investigations, violations, prosecutions, and convictions related to the worst forms of child labor publicly available, including disaggregating data on each by type of violation, and ensure that all criminal child labor violations are reciprocally referred among relevant agencies to ensure adequate and coordinated prosecution of crimes and the provision of services.	2014 – 2015
	Expand efforts to encourage the filing of complaints against commercial sexual exploitation of children.	2014 – 2015
	Provide adequate resources to criminal law enforcement officials to enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor.	2014 – 2015
Coordination	Ensure that there is an exchange of information among coordinating bodies at the national and regional levels.	2012 – 2015
Government Policies	Ensure that departments and municipalities have sufficient resources and technical assistance incentives to adequately implement national policies to prevent and eliminate the worst forms of child labor, with a focus on identified priority sectors.	2010 – 2015
Social Programs	Collect and make publicly available information about activities in which children and adolescents work—including information about health, occupational safety, and other risks—as well as about geographical areas and sectors where children work, including street work, recruitment of children by illegal armed groups, children’s involvement in illicit activities, and other identified priority sectors.	2009 – 2015
	Ensure that children are protected from armed conflict while in school.	2013 – 2015
	Expand efforts to improve access to education for all children, particularly for indigenous and Afro-Caribbean children, and for children in rural areas and in the Caribbean and Pacific regions.	2013 – 2015
	Ensure that all children identified by the MOL in child labor receive appropriate social services.	2009 – 2015
	Institute programs to address child labor, including its worst forms, in the identified priority sectors for child labor eradication.	2012 – 2015

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