

In 2015, Suriname made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government provided training to criminal law enforcement officers and raised awareness on human trafficking. However, children in Suriname continue to engage in child labor in mining and in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation. Existing social programs are insufficient to address child labor, including its worst forms. Additionally, Suriname has not raised the compulsory education age to extend to the minimum age for employment and does not collect or publish data on child labor inspections and violations.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Suriname are engaged in child labor, including in mining. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking.(1-11) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Suriname.

Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	6.4 (6,671)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	95.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	6.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		93.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2014, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(12)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children’s Work Project’s analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 4, 2010.(13)

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	Harvesting crops,* applying pesticides,*† carrying heavy loads*† (1, 3, 8)
Industry	Mining, particularly gold mining (1-6, 8, 10, 11, 14)
Services	Street work, including vending (1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 15)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-3, 5-11, 16, 17)

* 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.

Children in Suriname, predominantly boys, work in small-scale gold mines carrying heavy loads and risking exposure to mercury, excessive noise, extreme heat, and collapsing sand walls.(4, 8, 14) Children from Suriname, Guyana, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation in Suriname, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, including in informal mining camps in the country’s remote interior.(1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 15-17)

Although primary school enrollment rates are above 90 percent for boys and girls in Suriname, these rates drop to close to 52 percent for males and 63 percent for females at the secondary school level.(18)




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II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Suriname has ratified most key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	
ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
 UN CRC	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The Government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Article 17 of the Labor Code (1, 3-6, 19, 20)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 20 of the Labor Code (1, 3-5, 19, 20)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Articles 2 and 3 of the Decree on Hazardous Labor; Articles 20 and 21 of the Labor Code (20-22)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 15 of the Constitution; Articles 253 and 307 of the Penal Code (6, 19, 23)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 307 and 334 of the Penal Code (6, 19)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 298, 306, and 334 of the Penal Code (1, 3, 5, 6, 19)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 9 of the Legal Status of Military Personnel Act (24, 25)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	12	Article 39 of the Constitution; Article 20 of the Law on Basic Education (4, 6, 23, 26)
Free Public Education	Yes		Articles 38 and 39 of the Constitution (23)

* No conscription (24)

Article 20 of the Law on Basic Education requires children to attend school until they are at least age 12.(26) This leaves children between ages 12 and 14 particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, as they are no longer required to attend school but are not yet legally permitted to work.(1, 4) Although the Constitution guarantees free public education for all citizens, sources indicate that some children born in Suriname are not entitled to citizenship and remain ineligible to receive free public education. (23, 27, 28) The Penal Code established penalties for the production and trafficking of drugs but does not appear to specifically prohibit the use, procurement, and offering of a child in the production and trafficking of drugs.(19)

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, Technology, and Environment (MLTE)/ Department of Labor Inspections	Enforce laws related to child labor in the formal sector.(4, 5, 11)
Ministry of Justice and Police	Enforce criminal laws related to child labor. Monitor and enforce child labor laws in the informal sector, including on the streets.(3, 5, 6, 11) The Youth Affairs Police covers law enforcement involving children under age 18 and is jointly responsible for child labor-related crimes.(3, 5) The Police Trafficking in Persons Unit investigates reports and allegations of trafficking in persons and forced sexual exploitation nationwide, including cases involving children.(5, 6)
Prosecutor's Office	Investigate and prosecute human trafficking cases.(8)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2015, labor law enforcement agencies in Suriname 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 (29)	Unknown (8)
Number of Labor Inspectors	66 (29)	Unknown (8)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (29)	Yes (8)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (30)	Unknown (8)
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (8)	Unknown (8)
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (30)	Unknown (8)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown* (29)	Unknown* (8)
■ Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown* (8)	Unknown* (8)
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown* (8)	Unknown* (8)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (8)	Unknown* (8)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown*	Unknown* (8)
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown*	Unknown* (8)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (8)	Yes (8)
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	No (8)	No (8)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (8)	Yes (8)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (8)	Yes (8)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	No (8)	No (8)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	No (8)	No (8)

*The Government does not make this information publicly available.

The Government of Suriname does not collect or publish data on child labor inspections and violations. Labor inspections are mainly conducted near coastal areas and do not provide adequate coverage to ensure the enforcement of labor laws, particularly in agricultural areas, fisheries, and in the country's interior, which is difficult to reach or monitor.(9, 30)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in Suriname 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	Yes (8)	Yes (8)
■ Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (8)	Yes (8)
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (8)	Yes (8)
Number of Investigations	15 (31)	7 (9)
Number of Violations Found	13 (31)	Unknown (8)

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

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	27 (31)	7 (9)
Number of Convictions	10 (31)	0 (9)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	No (31)	No (8)

In 2015, the Government increased resources, including office space, for the Police Trafficking in Persons Unit of Police.(9) However, according to the Prosecutor's Office, investigations are initiated only as a result of complaints filed and are limited by a lack of resources, especially for travel to the interior of the country.(29, 31) Law enforcement efforts are also limited by the lack of formal processes for victim referrals. When the Youth Affairs Police finds children working on the street, these children are sometimes registered and sent home without referrals to any relevant services.(5, 6, 31) Child trafficking victims may be referred to shelters operated by NGOs; however, there are no dedicated shelters for human trafficking victims in Suriname and some children were placed in juvenile detention facilities due to lack of space in existing shelters.(1, 3, 9, 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 Commission for the Elimination of Child Labor (NCECL)	Coordinate efforts to combat child labor, including by researching different forms of child labor, advising on policy related to combating child labor, and formulating an action plan.(6) Represent 11 members, including the Presidential Commission on Child and Adolescent Policy; labor unions; private sector entities; academic institutions; NGOs; the MLTE; and the ministries of Social Affairs, Education, Regional Development, and Justice and Police.(1, 3, 6)
Anti-Trafficking Working Group	Coordinate the Government's anti-trafficking efforts.(1, 3, 5, 6) Provide care to victims of trafficking through government-supported NGOs.(6, 33) Comprised of seven members, six from government agencies and one representing the NGO community. Initiatives include those that target the worst forms of child labor, such as the commercial sexual exploitation of children.(3, 5, 6) Inactive throughout most of the reporting period. In December, the Minister of Justice and Police reorganized and reactivated the group, designating the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and Police as the head.(8)

The National Commission for the Elimination of Child Labor (NCECL) mandate expired in January 2015 and has not been renewed. The NCECL has been inactive since 2014 and there are no current plans to reestablish the commission.(8)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Declaration of the Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labor (2014–2020)	Aims to increase regional cooperation to eradicate 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 Suriname at the ILO's 18th Regional Meeting of the Americas in Lima, Peru (October 2014).(34, 35)
Roadmap to Combat Human Trafficking in Suriname (2014–2018)	Outlines a policy to combat trafficking in persons through 2018.(29)

The Government of Suriname is in the initial stages of developing a new National Action Plan to eliminate child labor.(36) Research found no evidence that the Roadmap to Combat Human Trafficking in Suriname has been implemented.(8, 9)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

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

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Country-Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor (CLEAR) (2013–2017)	USDOL-funded capacity-building project implemented by the ILO in at least 10 countries to build the local and national capacity of the Government to address child labor. Aims to improve monitoring and enforcement of laws and policies related to child labor in Suriname; will implement a National Action Plan on the elimination of child labor and support a national child labor survey.(36, 37)
Child and Youth Hotlinet	Government-run hotline that provides confidential advice to children in need, including victims of the worst forms of child labor.(29) Calls during the reporting period included inquiries on the definition of human trafficking.(8)
Anti-Trafficking Hotlinet	Government-sponsored hotline through which citizens can provide information to the police about trafficking cases.(10, 16, 29)
Human Trafficking Awareness Program†	Government-funded anti-trafficking awareness campaign for press, radio, television, Internet, and social media. In 2015, activities included publishing awareness-raising ads in local newspapers.(6, 8, 26, 33)
Second Basic Education Improvement Program (2015–2040)*	\$20 million IDB, 25-year loan implemented by the Ministry of Education to develop curriculum and textbooks, provide teacher training, renovate classrooms, build housing for teachers in the interior, and build a center for teacher training and professional development. Will benefit 90,000 students and 6,500 teachers.(8, 38)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Suriname.

While the Government continues to support initiatives to eradicate child labor, existing social programs are insufficient to fully address the problem. In particular, Suriname lacks programs to assist children who are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation or who work in mining or agriculture.

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 Suriname (Table 11).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Establish penalties for the use, procurement, and offering of a child in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2015
	Increase the compulsory education age to at least 14, the minimum age for work.	2009 – 2015
	Ensure that all children, including children born to foreign-born parents, have access to free public education.	2015
Enforcement	Make information on labor law enforcement efforts publicly available, including the labor inspectorate's funding levels and training, as well as the number of labor inspectors, annual labor inspections conducted at worksites or by desk review, child labor violations identified, and penalties imposed and collected for child labor violations.	2012 – 2015
Enforcement	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by initiating targeted inspections based on the analysis of data related to risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents. Ensure that labor inspections are conducted in fisheries and in the interior of the country, particularly in mining and agricultural areas where child labor is likely to occur.	2015
	Establish a mechanism to receive child labor complaints.	2015
	Allocate sufficient funding to ensure that criminal law enforcement officers have the resources necessary to conduct investigations, particularly in the interior of the country and in informal mining areas.	2014 – 2015
	Create a formal mechanism to refer victims of child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking identified by labor or criminal law enforcement authorities to the appropriate social services.	2010 – 2015
Coordination	Reestablish the NCECL or another mechanism to coordinate government efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms.	2015
Government Policies	Develop and implement a National Action Plan on the elimination of child labor.	2015
	Strengthen efforts to prevent and eradicate the trafficking of children, including for commercial sexual exploitation, by implementing the Roadmap to Combat Human Trafficking (2014–2018).	2015

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Social Programs	Develop social programs to prevent and eradicate child labor in agriculture and mining and to improve secondary school attendance.	2015
	Develop appropriate social services and shelters to assist child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking.	2014 – 2015

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