

In 2016, Suriname made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government renewed the mandate of the Anti-Trafficking Working Group and raised awareness on human trafficking. However, children in Suriname perform dangerous tasks in mining. Children also engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation. Existing social programs are insufficient to address child labor, including its worst forms. Suriname has not increased the compulsory education age to extend 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 perform dangerous tasks in mining. Children also engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation.(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 to 14	6.4 (6,671)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	95.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	6.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		94.6

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2015, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2016.(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, 7) Fishing and forestry (11)
Industry	Mining, particularly gold mining (1-5, 7, 9-11, 14) Construction,† including carrying heavy loads† (1)
Services	Street work, including vending (1, 3-5, 7, 15) Domestic work (11)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1, 3-11, 16)

† 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.(2, 7, 10, 14) Children, including from Guyana, 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.(3-5, 8, 9, 11, 15-17)

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Although Suriname's net attendance ratio for primary school is 95 percent, it is only 59 percent for secondary school. Research indicates secondary school attendance in the interior is even lower, at 21 percent, with distance and transportation costs making it difficult for children to access schools.(1, 10, 18) Students from low income households, particularly in the interior, may be adversely impacted by the Government's September 2016 introduction of a school supplies fee to help cover operational costs of public primary and secondary schools. (1, 19)

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	✓

In August, the National Assembly approved Suriname's accession to ILO C. 138, Minimum Age, and the Ministry of Labor is drafting the ratification document.(1)

The Government has established laws and regulations related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Suriname's legal framework to adequately protect children from child labor.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Article 17 of the Labor Code (20)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 18 and 20 of the Labor Code (20)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 2 and 3 of the Decree on Hazardous Labor; Articles 20 and 21 of the Labor Code (20, 21)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 15 of the Constitution; Article 334 of the Penal Code (22, 23)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 307 and 334 of the Penal Code (23)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 293, 303, and 306 of the Penal Code (23)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	N/A*		
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Article 9 of the Legal Status of Military Personnel Act (24, 25)
Non-state Compulsory	No		
Compulsory Education Age	No	12	Article 39 of the Constitution; Article 20 of the Law on Basic Education (2, 5, 22, 26)
Free Public Education	Yes		Articles 38 and 39 of the Constitution (22)

* 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.(2) Although the Constitution guarantees free public education for all citizens, sources indicate that a small number of children born in Suriname to foreign parents before the September 2014 amendment to the Citizenship and Residency Law, granting citizenship to children of foreign born parents, remain ineligible to receive citizenship and free public education.(10, 22, 27, 28)

The Penal Code establishes penalties for the production and trafficking of drugs, but does not appear to specifically prohibit the use, procuring, and offering of a child in the production and trafficking of drugs.(23) Surinamese law does not prohibit non-state armed groups from recruiting children under age 18.

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). However, gaps in labor law and criminal law enforcement remain and some enforcement information is not available.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor	Enforce laws related to child labor in the formal sector.(2, 4)
Police	Enforce criminal laws related to child labor. Monitor and enforce child labor laws in the informal sector, including on the streets.(3-5) The Youth Affairs Police covers law enforcement involving children under age 18 and is jointly responsible for child labor-related crimes.(3, 4) The Police Trafficking in Persons Unit investigates reports and allegations of human trafficking and forced sexual exploitation nationwide, including cases involving children.(4, 5)
Prosecutor's Office	Investigate and prosecute human trafficking cases.(7)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2016, 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	2015	2016
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (7)	Unknown (1)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown (7)	73 (1)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (7)	Yes (1)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown (7)	Yes (1)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown (7)	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (7)	Yes (1)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown* (7)	Unknown* (1)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown* (7)	Unknown* (1)
Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown* (7)	Unknown* (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown* (7)	Unknown* (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown* (7)	Unknown* (1)
Number of Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown* (7)	Unknown* (1)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (7)	Yes (1)
Routine Inspections Targeted	No (7)	No (1)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (7)	Yes (1)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (7)	Yes (1)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (1)	Yes (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	No (7)	No (1)

* The Government does not publish this information.

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The Ministry of Labor noted there are insufficient labor inspectors to 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 and monitor. Labor inspections are mainly conducted near coastal areas, and the Government does not collect or publish data on child labor inspections and violations.(1, 8, 29) Labor inspectors are not authorized to monitor the informal sector.(10)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2016, 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	2015	2016
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (7)	Yes (1)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (7)	N/A (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (7)	Yes (1)
Number of Investigations	7 (8)	4 (30)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (7)	2 (30)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	7 (8)	1 (30)
Number of Convictions	0 (8)	2 (30)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	No (7)	No (1)

In 2016, the Police Trafficking in Persons Unit employed 14 investigators to respond to human trafficking cases. This number is inadequate and, 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.(1, 17, 31, 32) Law enforcement efforts are also limited by the lack of formal processes for victim referrals. When the Youth Affairs Police find children working on the street, these children are sometimes registered and sent home without referrals to any relevant services.(4, 5, 32) Although in 2016 the Government of Suriname opened a specialized shelter for women and girls who are victims of human trafficking and provided shelter, basic services, medical assistance, and counseling to one male child victim of human trafficking, overall the Government does not provide sufficient support to child victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.(3, 8, 16, 17)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Although the Government has established a coordination mechanism on human trafficking, research found no evidence of mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including all its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Anti-Trafficking Working Group	Coordinate the Government's anti- human trafficking efforts.(3-5) Provide care to victims of trafficking through government-supported NGOs.(5, 33) Comprised of seven members, six from government agencies and one representing the NGO community. Initiatives include organizations that target the worst forms of child labor, such as the commercial sexual exploitation of children.(3-5) The group's mandate was renewed in January 2016, and throughout the reporting period the group worked to raise awareness on identifying human trafficking cases and establish partnerships with NGOs to provide outreach to vulnerable groups.(1)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Roadmap to Combat Human Trafficking in Suriname (2014–2018)	Outlines a policy to combat human trafficking through 2018.(31)

The Government is in the initial stages of developing a new National Action Plan to eliminate child labor and will begin drafting it after results from the national child labor survey are available.(1, 34) Research found no evidence that the Roadmap to Combat Human Trafficking in Suriname has been implemented.(7, 8, 19)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2016, the Government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
<u>Country-Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor (CLEAR)</u> (2013–2017)	USDOL-funded capacity-building project implemented by the ILO in 11 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 (NCLS).(34) In 2016, trained 28 labor inspectors on child labor and signed an agreement to conduct the NCLS in early 2017.(1) For additional information about USDOL's work, please visit our Web site .
Child and Youth Hotline†	Government-run hotline provides confidential advice to children in need, including victims of the worst forms of child labor.(31) Receives approximately 80 calls per day.(17)
Anti-Trafficking Hotline†	Government-sponsored hotline through which citizens can provide information to the police about trafficking cases.(31)
Human Trafficking Awareness Program†	Government-funded anti-human trafficking awareness campaign for press, radio, television, Internet, and social media.(5, 7, 26, 33) During the reporting period, provided awareness training to some government officials and stakeholders that work in areas with potential human trafficking.(17)
Second Basic Education Improvement Program (2015–2040)	\$20 million IDB-funded, 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. Aims to benefit 90,000 students and 6,500 teachers.(7, 35)

† 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	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use, procuring, and offering of a child for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2015 – 2016
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under 18 into non-state armed groups.	2016
	Increase the compulsory education age to at least 14, the minimum age for work.	2009 – 2016
	Ensure that all children, including children of foreign-born parents, have access to free public education.	2015 – 2016
Enforcement	Make information on labor law enforcement efforts publicly available, including the labor inspectorate's funding levels, as well as the number of annual labor inspections conducted at worksites or by desk review, child labor violations identified, and penalties imposed and collected for child labor violations.	2012 – 2016
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by authorizing labor inspections in the informal sector and initiating targeted inspections based on the analysis of data related to risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents, such as in fisheries and in the interior of the country, particularly in mining and agricultural areas where child labor is likely to occur.	2015 – 2016

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	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 – 2016
	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 – 2016
Coordination	Establish a formal mechanism to coordinate government efforts to address child labor, including all its worst forms.	2015 – 2016
Government Policies	Develop and implement a National Action Plan on the elimination of child labor.	2015 – 2016
	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 – 2016
Social Programs	Develop social programs to prevent and eradicate child labor in agriculture and mining and to improve secondary school attendance, particularly in the interior.	2015 – 2016
	Strengthen social services and shelters to assist child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking.	2014 – 2016

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