In 2011, Ghana made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, the Government ratified ILO Convention 138 concerning the Minimum Age for Admission to Employment. Ghana also tested its harmonized Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS) in one cocoa-growing community and trained 335 community monitors and data collectors in preparation for the expansion of this system into 60 communities. Additionally, Ghana continued to provide services to children through programs to reduce the worst forms of child labor in cocoa-producing regions and fishing villages. However, gaps remain in the enforcement of laws addressing the worst forms of child labor. Children continue to be engaged in the worst forms of child labor, especially in dangerous activities in the agriculture and fishing industries.

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	43.5 (2,731,596)
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	83.1
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	39.8
Primary Completion Rate		94.0

Sources:
Primary completion rate: *Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2012.(1)*
All other data: *Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from MICS3 Survey, 2006.(2)*

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst forms of Child Labor

Children in Ghana are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, many of them in agriculture and fishing.(3-5) Children working in agriculture may use dangerous tools and carry heavy loads.(3, 5) In the cocoa sector alone, 54 percent or an estimated 538,297 children have reported injuries from hazardous activities according to a USDOL-funded report by Tulane University.(5, 6)

In Ghana, thousands of children work in the fishing sector, including in deep-sea fishing, lagoon fishing and lake fishing. These children risk injuries and even death while performing tasks such as diving to untangle fishing nets.(4, 7, 8) Children are trafficked to Lake Volta for this purpose and are known to fish for tilapia and other types of fish, which reportedly include mudfish, silverfish, catfish, latesfish and electric fish.(9-12)

The Ada District is one of a number of sending communities for Lake Volta's fishing industry. In Ada and other sending communities, families give their children (typically young boys) to traffickers in exchange for a small sum of money and a promise of employment for the child.(4, 13-15)

Children, particularly in the Ashanti and Greater Accra regions, work in domestic service. They work long hours at risk of physical and sexual abuse.(16-19) Many of these children have never been to school or have dropped out.(16, 17, 19) Children, mostly girls, work as porters in urban areas, beginning as young as age 6. These children, referred to as *kayayes*, are at risk of injury from transporting heavy loads and from vehicle accidents.(3, 20-22) Children who live on the streets, as well as other children, are also subject to commercial sexual exploitation.(17, 18, 23)

Children, especially boys, herd cattle, risking injury and even death from snakebites, as well as wasp and scorpion stings. They report being beaten by cattle owners or farmers and being unable to attend school because of their work.(4, 24)

Children work in quarrying and small-scale mining, in mines including gold and reportedly diamond mines.(17, 25, 26) These children risk injury from flying shards when they are

crushing rocks and from lifting heavy loads when extracting ore. Such children also risk death from the collapse of pit mines.(27-30) Some of these children may be subject to debt bondage.(17) Although evidence is limited, children are also reportedly engaged in the worst forms of child labor in salt production.(4, 31)

In addition, some children in the Volta region are involved in *Trokosi*, a form of religious servitude that can last from a few months to 3 years. This practice requires children to atone for their family members' sins by assisting with prayers and maintaining religious shrines for priests, elders or the owners of the shrines.(3, 18, 20)

Ghana is a source, transit and destination country for the trafficking of children for commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor.(32) According to the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs' National Database on Human Trafficking, 70 percent of the trafficking in Ghana was domestic in 2010, and 78 percent of the victims were children between ages 4 and 16.(33) Within Ghana, children are trafficked across rural areas, or from rural to urban areas, to work in fishing, agriculture, portering, begging, street vending, domestic labor and commercial sexual exploitation.(12, 32) Ghanaian children are also trafficked to neighboring countries in West Africa for labor exploitation.(32, 34)

Although access to free education is mandated by law, it is hindered by a shortage of classrooms and by schools without teachers or materials. For some children, attending school is practically impossible, as their villages are located many miles away from the nearest school, and there is no form of public transportation.(29, 35-38) Not all children have the mandatory uniform and some children without uniforms may be turned away from school.(17, 39) Children, especially girls, also reported being sexually assaulted and harassed by teachers.(17)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Children's Act sets the minimum age for employment at 15 and explicitly applies it to both the formal and informal sector. This Act prohibits children younger than age 18 from engaging in certain activities deemed hazardous, including work in mines or quarries, and at sea or in venues likely to expose children to immoral behavior.(40) In addition, Ghana has issued a Hazardous Child Labor Activity Framework for the Cocoa Sector, which defines certain activities as hazardous and prohibits children younger than age 18 from engaging in them. Such activities include felling trees, burning bushes, applying chemicals, carrying overly heavy loads, using machetes for weeding, harvesting with a hook, and working on a farm for more than 3 hours per day or more than 18 hours per week.(6) The Government of Ghana has also developed a list of worst forms of child labor occupations that includes domestic labor, working as *kayayes* and other urban informal work activities.(41)

	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	15
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	15
	Free Public Education	Yes

Education is free, and although the law does not make school mandatory until a particular age, it does require 11 years of school.(37, 40) Even if a child starts school at age 4, upon completing 11 years of schooling, that child would be 15—the minimum age for employment.

The Constitution prohibits forced labor, slavery and servitude; it also states that every child has the right to be protected from engaging in work that constitutes a threat to children's health, education and development.(42)

According to the Criminal Code of 1998, ritual servitude is illegal in Ghana. The Government has interpreted the ritual servitude provision as applying to the religious servitude practice of *Trokosi*. The Criminal Code also prohibits persons with custody, charge or care of a child younger than age 16 from encouraging that child to become involved in prostitution.(43) The Criminal Code stipulates that it is illegal to procure any person younger than age 21 "not being a prostitute or of known immoral character." This provision makes criminal punishment dependent on a judgment of the child's moral standing, which may leave some child victims of commercial sexual exploitation unprotected.(43) This provision contradicts the Children's Act, which calls for the best interest

of the child to be given primary consideration in any child-related matter.(40) The law also fails to criminalize the client who uses children under age 18 for prostitution.(40, 43)

The Criminal Code does not specifically establish offenses related to pornography or pornographic performances by a child under age 18 but lays down provisions prohibiting the production, distribution or exhibition of obscene materials or performances in general.(43) Ghana has also not taken any measures to address the use, offering or procuring of a child for illicit activities.(20)

The Human Trafficking Act prohibits the trafficking of children younger than age 18, including for the purpose of sexual and labor exploitation. The consent of a child or a guardian cannot be used as a defense for prosecution under this Act, which also provides for the rescue and rehabilitation of trafficking victims.(44) The minimum age for military recruitment is 18, and there is no conscription.(45)

On June 6, 2011, Ghana ratified ILO Convention 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment.(46)

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The National Steering Committee on Child Labor (NSCCL) is mandated to oversee coordination, implementation and monitoring of programs targeting the worst forms of child labor.(47) The Child Labor Unit (CLU) of the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare (MESW) serves as the Secretariat of the NSCCL, but is unable to effectively fulfill this mandate because it lacks financial resources. The steering committee is composed of three subcommittees: one that focuses on awareness-raising efforts; one focused on education and skills training; and one focused on the efforts related to the worst forms of child labor in the cocoa, fishing and mining sectors.(47, 48) The NSCCL is required to meet at least four times per year, which it did in 2011. During the reporting period, the NSCCL actively supported the efforts to reduce the worst forms of child labor by coordinating across government agencies and with diverse social partners.(13, 21, 47, 48)

The CLU is responsible for overseeing the activities to combat child labor.(21, 38) Combating child labor in the cocoa sector, however, falls under the direction of the National Program for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in Cocoa (NPECLC). The NPECLC, an MESW program, operates in collaboration with the Ghana Cocoa Board and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning.(21, 38)

In 2011, NPECLC tested the Ghana Child Labor Monitoring System (GCLMS) in Kwaebibirem.(49) This system enables communities to monitor, report on and coordinate services for children in exploitative situations and supports the goals of the Harkin-Engel Protocol.(5, 13, 33, 49) The GCLMS will function through community protection committees. As of December 2011, the MESW reported that 500 such committees were active.(13, 21, 50) In 2011, in preparation for a larger pilot of the GCLMS, the MESW also trained more than 335 community monitors and data collectors from 60 communities.(13, 21, 50) However, due to a lack of sufficient funding in 2011, the wider pilot scheduled for September 2011 was delayed until March 2012, when it was launched in 30 cocoa-growing communities.(13, 51)

Labor inspectors from MESW are responsible for the enforcement of labor laws and can enter any type of workplace.(21, 52). According to the Government of Ghana, these 86 labor inspectors conducted 187 inspections in 2011.(21) No information was available on the number of child labor violations identified from these inspections. The ILO Committee of Experts has expressed concerns over the small number of inspections carried out.(53) The Government of Ghana acknowledges that the number of labor inspectors is insufficient and that these inspectors lack office facilities and funds for transportation or fuel.(21, 53)

In the informal sector, the District Assembly and the District Social Welfare Officer also have the authority to investigate and report findings to the police.(38) According to a study conducted in December 2010 by an independent government ombudsman from the Commission for Human Rights and Justice, 1,065 cases of child labor were reported in 2010.(54) Information about how these violations were handled, whether children were assisted as a result of inspections and whether penalties were applied is unavailable; no such study is available for 2011.

The Human Trafficking Secretariat under the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs coordinates anti-trafficking activities. In addition, the Anti-Trafficking Unit of the Criminal Investigation Division of the Ghana Police Service is responsible for enforcing anti-trafficking laws.(32, 38, 54) The Government of Ghana maintains regional Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) in nine regions as part of its enforcement efforts against trafficking.(24) In 2011, 232 AHTU investigators and prosecutors were trained in investigating trafficking in persons.(55) Following this training, the AHTU rescued 116 children in the Lake Volta area in a joint operation with INTERPOL.(21, 56)

During 2011, the AHTU prosecuted at least 19 cases of trafficking and assisted 671 children by rescuing them from trafficking or by providing rehabilitation services to them. Additionally, the Ghana Police Service rescued at least 3 children working in the cocoa area and 65 minors from prostitution.(21) Law enforcement also arrested 30 individuals in one child endangerment operation, resulting in 28 convictions.(21, 56) Ghana has been working on developing a database but at this time, no comprehensive statistics are maintained and there is no complete information about prosecutions or sentencing for convicted violators of the Trafficking Act. In addition, officials within the Government agree that law enforcement efforts are weakly coordinated.(15, 21, 54, 55)

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Ghana launched its National Plan of Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor in June 2011. The Plan, which was adopted in 2010, provides a comprehensive framework to significantly reduce the worst forms of child labor by 2015.(21, 38) As part of this Plan, MOUs were signed with 23 government agencies that establish the role of each agency in the fight to reduce the worst forms of child labor.(57)

The Government of Ghana also continued implementing its National Plan of Action to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor in the Cocoa Sector, which aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labor in this sector by 2011 and to contribute to the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in all other sectors by 2015.(21, 58)

In 2011, Ghana took steps to implement its commitment to the 2010 Declaration of Joint Action to Support the Implementation of the Harkin-Engel Protocol (2010 Declaration) with an accompanying Framework of Action.(13, 59, 60) Under the 2010 Declaration, Ghana agreed to provide appropriate resources and coordinate with key stakeholders (including USDOL and the International Chocolate and Cocoa Industry) on efforts to reduce the worst forms of child labor in cocoa-producing areas. As part of its commitments to this 2010 Declaration, Ghana is monitoring all project efforts implemented under the Framework to ensure alignment with its national action plans and to promote coherence and sustainability.(59, 60)

Child labor concerns have also been mainstreamed into the following national development agendas and key documents: Ghana's Medium-Term National Development Framework, the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (2010-2013), the National Social Protection Strategy, the National Education Development Plan (2003-2015), the National Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking: Trafficking in Persons Must End, and the Savannah Accelerated Development Program.(30, 36, 38, 55, 61)

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

The Government of Ghana continues to support and participate in social programs with diverse partners. Ghana operates a cash transfer program, called Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty, which makes monetary grants to households conditional upon the children not engaging in child labor and attending school.(20, 21, 35, 61) This program reached 45,000 households in 83 districts in 2011.(21)

As part of its commitment to the 2010 Declaration, the Government of Ghana continued its efforts to reduce the worst forms of child labor in cocoa-producing regions.(13, 59) In 2011, Ghana expended $1.2 million in resources related to such activities; of this amount, $960,000 supported GCLMS development and pre-testing. The remainder of the funding supported the efforts to provide remediation services to children who had been rescued from exploitative child labor in cocoa-growing areas.(13) However, as of 2010 more than two-thirds of the cocoa-growing communities (or 3,463) remained without any remediation activities. This means that many children continue to need service.(62) According to a 2009 USDOL-funded survey conducted by Tulane University, only 3.2 percent of children working in Ghana's cocoa sector reported receiving project interventions.(5)

Under the 2010 Declaration, USDOL also committed $10 million to a 4-year regional project to reduce the worst forms of child labor in cocoa-producing areas in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana by providing direct services to communities.(29, 59, 60) In Ghana, the project will rescue more than 2,500 children and provide livelihood assistance to at least 1,000 families.(24, 29) In 2011, this project worked with the Government on the pretest of its national CLMS and conducted education needs assessments in selected cocoa-growing districts.(24, 63) The International Chocolate and Cocoa Industry committed $2 million under the 2010 Declaration to a 4-year regional project in cocoa-producing areas in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana; this project is helping those governments expand the CLMS and build the capacity of relevant stakeholders. In support of the 2010 Declaration's Framework of Action, the Hershey Company and Kraft Foods also launched projects in Ghana

to improve the families' livelihoods and increase the children's access to education.(13, 59)

Ghana maintained its engagement with the Empowering Cocoa Households with Opportunities and Education Solutions Project (2007-2011), funded by the World Cocoa Foundation, USAID and the cocoa industry. This Project worked to improve livelihoods for parents, and by the end of 2011, had awarded 120 scholarships covering the costs of 3 years of school-related expenses.(64) The 4-year, Phase II (2007–2011) Sustainable Tree Crops Program, funded by the same partners, raised awareness about preventing hazardous child labor. By December 2011, this project had provided training to 8,247 farmers.(65)

The Government of Ghana also participated in a 4-year, $7.95 million regional project funded by USDOL, which is reducing the worst forms of child labor in fishing, mining and commercial agriculture (cocoa and coffee), and is supporting the efforts to develop an updated national action plan. This project will provide education services to more than 500 children working in agriculture, 2,274 children in fishing and 2,276 in mining, in order to withdraw them from or prevent them from entering the worst forms of child labor.(27) The project has already provided education services to 3,454 children in Ghana.(66) In 2010, USDOL funded a $5 million second phase for this regional project offering livelihood services for the families of children rescued from the worst forms of child labor. In Ghana, this second phase will provide education services to 1,000 children working in agriculture (cocoa) and livelihood services to 1,000 families.(67) In 2011, this project worked with the National Association of Teachers to launch a manual on child labor for educators.(68)

In 2011, Ghana maintained its participation, in a 4-year project partially funded by USDOL to conduct a national child labor survey. The information gathered will improve targeting for future social programs.(69)

In 2011, the Government also increased awareness about child labor, especially hazardous work. This included supporting community child protection committees that raised awareness about the worst forms of child labor at the community level.(13, 21)

Ghana continued to participate in an anti-trafficking project with IOM that rescued 20 child trafficking victims from exploitative child labor in fishing villages on Lake Volta. The project worked with the Department of Social Welfare to provide rescued children with psychological and rehabilitative services.(12, 70) In 2011, Ghana's Department of Social Welfare, with the support of community business organizations, also continued to provide rehabilitation and reintegration facilities for children working as *kayayes*.(20)

A USDOS-funded 3-year project launched in 2010, continues to work with Ghana to reduce the trafficking of children into domestic service through the provision of microcredit and training for families.(71)

The Government of Ghana continued a program to provide uniforms to needy children; it also worked with NGOs to provide school supplies. Ghana also continued to build schools and increased support to a National School Feeding Program, permitting it to reach 1 million pupils by December 2011.(21, 24, 72) Ghana's education framework includes a specific focus on increasing the number of trained teachers and improving vocational training in order to better retain students.(38) No assessment of the impact of these programs on reducing the worst forms of child labor has been identified.

The Government of Ghana acknowledges that the efforts to provide services to children exploited in domestic service and in the fishing sector are insufficient. In addition, research suggests that government efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor in the mining sector and among *kayayes* are not sufficient either to address the magnitude of the problem.(18, 27, 73)

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

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Amend the Criminal Code to provide protections from sexual exploitation for all children, including those who have been exploited as prostitutes.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Take measures to address the use, offering or procuring of a child for illicit activities.	2011

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Coordination and Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors and inspections; allocate adequate funding to support enforcement efforts; and collect appropriate statistics on investigation, prosecution and convictions of child labor and trafficking laws.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Strengthen coordination among law enforcement officials to enhance enforcement actions.	2009, 2011
	Strengthen the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare's Child Labor Unit so that it can fully carry out its mandate and serve as the Secretariat of the NSCCL.	2011
Social Programs	Expand and improve programs to prevent children's involvement in exploitative child labor, including scaling up and fully funding the GCLMS to allow for national coverage.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Link children engaging in or at risk of engaging in the worst forms of child labor with the appropriate social programs, such as the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty Program and the National School Feeding Program.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Throughout cocoa-growing regions, replicate and expand successful project interventions to address exploitative child labor.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Expand efforts to address the worst forms of child labor, including in the fishing and mining sectors, as well as in domestic service and among the *kayayes*.	2009, 2010, 2011
	Increase access to education by providing safe classrooms, teachers and materials.	2010, 2011
	Assess educational programs aimed at reducing the worst forms of child labor.	2011

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