

* Because of extremely limited information, a determination was made that USDOL would publish full reports on 9 countries and 18 territories, including the country or territory covered here, once every 5 years. For this reason, this report includes shortened profiles for these countries and territories, containing only new information published during the reporting period. For extended profiles on these countries and territories, please see *The Department of Labor's 2005 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*. The next

extended profiles on these countries and territories should appear in *The Department of Labor's 2010 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*.

¹¹³³ For statistical data not cited here, see the Data Sources and Definitions section.

Dominican Republic

<i>Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor</i> ¹¹³⁴	
Population, children, 10-14 years, 2005:	1,035,151
Working children, 10-14 years (%), 2005:	5.8
Working boys, 10-14 years (%), 2005:	9.0
Working girls, 10-14 years (%), 2005:	2.7
Working children by sector, 10-14 years (%), 2005:	
- Agriculture	18.5
- Manufacturing	9.8
- Services	57.5
- Other	14.2
Minimum age for work:	14
Compulsory education age:	14
Free public education:	Yes
Gross primary enrollment rate (%), 2007:	106.8
Net primary enrollment rate (%), 2007:	82.4
School attendance, children 5-14 years (%), 2005:	96.3
Survival rate to grade 5 (%), 2005:	68.4
ILO Convention 138:	6/15/1999
ILO Convention 182:	11/15/2000
CRC:	6/11/1991
CRCOPAC:	No
CRCOPSC:	12/6/2006*
Palermo:	2/5/2008
ILO-IPEC participating country:	Yes

*Accession

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Most work performed by children in the Dominican Republic is in the informal sector.¹¹³⁵ In urban areas, children work primarily in

services, construction, transportation, and tourism; in rural areas, children work mostly in agriculture.¹¹³⁶ Children work in the production of coffee, rice, sugarcane, tomatoes, potatoes, and garlic where they are exposed to pesticides, sharp tools, heavy machinery, harsh conditions, and long hours.¹¹³⁷ Children have been reported mining for larimar stones as they can fit into small spaces and mine faster than adults.¹¹³⁸ Children also work as domestic servants.¹¹³⁹ The Ministry of Education has indicated that in areas where the incidence of child labor is high, only about half the children attend school.¹¹⁴⁰

Migrants from Haiti, including children, work in agriculture and construction; Haitian children plant and cut sugarcane.¹¹⁴¹ Many Haitian adults and children live in sugarcane worker villages referred to as "bateyes," which lack adequate housing conditions, access to medical services, and other basic needs, and are rife with exploitive child labor.¹¹⁴² Dominican-born children from parents of Haitian descent are regularly denied citizenship or legal identity documents which preclude access to education beyond the fourth grade, formal sectors jobs, and other basic rights.¹¹⁴³

The commercial sexual exploitation of children is a problem, especially in tourist locations and major urban areas. Dominican Government officials have stated that economic need contributes to child prostitution.¹¹⁴⁴ The Dominican Republic is a source and destination country for the trafficking of children for commercial sexual exploitation.¹¹⁴⁵ Children are

also trafficked internally from rural to tourist areas.¹¹⁴⁶ Some Haitian children who are trafficked to the Dominican Republic work in domestic service, sex tourism, and agriculture and often live in poor conditions.¹¹⁴⁷ It has been reported that children, particularly Haitian children, are sometimes “adopted” by families who register them as their own and provide some form of payment to the birthparents. Such children are often exploited as domestic workers or as workers in family businesses.¹¹⁴⁸

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The legal minimum age for employment in the Dominican Republic is 14 years; however, the Secretary of Labor (SET) may authorize individual permits to those younger than 14 years to work as actors or characters in public shows, radio, television, or movies.¹¹⁴⁹ Work must not interfere with a minor’s education.¹¹⁵⁰ Children under 16 years may not work for more than 6 hours a day and must have a medical certification; children 16 years of age cannot work at night or more than 12 consecutive hours.¹¹⁵¹ Special authorization is needed for minors to work in itinerant sales.¹¹⁵² Girls 14 to 16 years are prohibited from working as messengers and delivering merchandise.¹¹⁵³

Minors under 18 years are prohibited from dangerous work such as work involving hazardous substances, heavy or dangerous machinery, and heavy loads. Minors are also prohibited from night work, work on the street, work in gaming establishments, handling cadavers, various tasks involved in the production of sugarcane, and certain work at hotels. Some exceptions are made for apprenticeships and job training for those older than 16 years.¹¹⁵⁴

Forced labor is prohibited by law.¹¹⁵⁵ The Law Against Trafficking in Persons and Alien Smuggling establishes penalties of 15 to 20 years of imprisonment as well as fines for trafficking minors.¹¹⁵⁶ The Protection of Children and Adolescents Law establishes punishments of 20 to 30 years of incarceration and fines for the transfer of a child to someone else for the purposes of forced labor, commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution and pornography, or other

degrading activities, in exchange for compensation.¹¹⁵⁷ Perpetrators can receive a prison sentence of up to 10 years and fines for involvement in the commercial sexual exploitation of children; the sexual abuse of children under circumstances involving trafficking; or giving a son or daughter to another person in exchange for compensation.¹¹⁵⁸ Fines are established for transporting minors unaccompanied by their parents without authorization.¹¹⁵⁹ Promoting or assisting the trafficking of a minor to a foreigner is punishable by 4 to 6 years of imprisonment and fines.¹¹⁶⁰ Making, distributing, or publishing pornographic photographs of children is punishable by 2 to 4 years of incarceration and fines.¹¹⁶¹ The Technology Crime Law penalizes the purchase or possession of child pornography with 2 to 4 years in prison.¹¹⁶² Crimes involving drug trafficking carry increased penalties if minors were used to carry out the offense.¹¹⁶³ The minimum voluntary and compulsory recruitment age for military service is 16 years.¹¹⁶⁴

The SET, in coordination with the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI), is responsible for protecting minors against labor exploitation.¹¹⁶⁵ CONANI is supposed to receive a minimum of 2 percent of the national budget; however, this is not being met. According to USDOS, the Government has made some efforts to protect children, particularly from exploitive child labor.¹¹⁶⁶ The SET employs 203 labor inspectors who are trained to detect child labor; of those, 20 inspectors are dedicated to investigate child labor.¹¹⁶⁷ The national judicial sector has 33 district attorneys who address issues involving the worst forms of child labor.¹¹⁶⁸ The anti-trafficking unit of the Office of the Attorney General investigates and prosecutes trafficking crimes.¹¹⁶⁹ According to USDOS, the Dominican Republic lacks effective trafficking law enforcement and victim protection programs.¹¹⁷⁰

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of the Dominican Republic has both a National Plan to Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2006–2016) and an Action Plan for the Eradication of Abuse and

Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents.¹¹⁷¹ The Office of the First Lady coordinates the *Programa Progresando* (“Making Progress”) that offers opportunities for income generation to the parents of children at risk for commercial sexual exploitation.¹¹⁷² The country’s Agricultural Bank has included a clause in its loan agreements that prohibits the recipients from using child labor and guarantees that they send their children to school. Additionally, the Government provides breakfasts to 1,500 schools daily so that children will attend.¹¹⁷³

As a member of the Central American Parliament Commission on Women, Children, Youth, and Family, the Government is participating in a regional Plan to Support the Prevention and Elimination of Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents.¹¹⁷⁴ The Prevention Unit of the Department of Alien Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons, which collaborates with the Ministries of Labor and Education, conducts anti-trafficking seminars at schools across the country.¹¹⁷⁵ The Government supports measures to prevent trafficking, such as posting notices at the international airport regarding the penalties under Dominican law for the criminal offence of sexually exploiting children and adolescents.¹¹⁷⁶

The Attorney General’s Office and the Ricky Martin Foundation sponsor an anti-trafficking hotline that serves as a resource for the prevention of trafficking.¹¹⁷⁷ Additionally, the Government trains officials posted overseas in how to recognize and assist Dominican nationals who are trafficking victims abroad.¹¹⁷⁸

The SET currently participates in the second phase of a USDOL-funded, 39-month, USD 2.7 million ILO-IPEC project to support the Government’s Timebound Program to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor. The project began in 2006 and aims to withdraw 2,900 children and prevent 2,200 children from exploitive labor.¹¹⁷⁹ In addition, the Government is part of a USDOL-funded 4-year USD 4 million project, implemented by DevTech Systems, Inc., in association with EDUCA and INTEC, that seeks to withdraw and prevent 8,500 children from exploitive labor by improving the quality of and access to basic and vocational education, and

working with public–private partnerships. This includes the development of corporate codes of conduct in sectors prone to the use of child labor.¹¹⁸⁰

The Government of the Dominican Republic participated in regional projects funded by USDOL, including a 7-year USD 8.8 million project implemented by ILO-IPEC which concluded in April 2009 and sought to combat commercial sexual exploitation through a variety of activities, including capacity building and legal reform. In addition, the project targeted 713 children for withdrawal and 657 children for prevention from commercial sexual exploitation in Central America.¹¹⁸¹ The Government also participated in the 4-year USD 5.7 million Child Labor Education Initiative regional project implemented by CARE that worked to strengthen the Government and civil society’s capacity to combat child labor through education and withdrew or prevented 4,105 children from exploitive child labor.¹¹⁸² The activities in the Dominican Republic for both of these regional projects, however, have focused on strengthening regional cooperation, legislation, policies, and institutions.¹¹⁸³

The Government of the Dominican Republic participated in a Phase III USD 3.3 million regional project to eradicate child labor in Latin America, funded by the Government of Spain and implemented by ILO-IPEC.¹¹⁸⁴ Additionally, an IOM project funded by USDOS supports government and NGO services, including medical assistance, counseling and reintegration services, for trafficking victims.¹¹⁸⁵

¹¹³⁴ For statistical data not cited here, see the Data Sources and Definitions section. For ratifications and ILO-IPEC membership, see the Introduction. For minimum age for admission to work, see Government of the Dominican Republic, *Código para el Sistema de Protección y los Derechos Fundamentales de los Niños, Niñas, y Adolescentes*, (August 2007), article 40; available from http://www.suprema.gov.do/codigos/Codigo_NNA.pdf. For age to which education is compulsory, see UNESCO, *Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2008: Literacy for Life*, Paris, 2008; available from <http://www.unesco.org/education/gmr2008/annexes>

/annex5.pdf. See also Government of the Dominican Republic, *Código para el Sistema de Protección y los Derechos Fundamentales de los Niños, Niñas, y Adolescentes*, articles 45 and 46. For free public education, see Government of the Dominican Republic, *Código para el Sistema de Protección y los Derechos Fundamentales de los Niños, Niñas, y Adolescentes*, articles 45 and 46.

¹¹³⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Dominican Republic," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2008*, Washington, DC, February 25, 2009; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/wha/119157.htm>.

¹¹³⁶ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding Observations: Dominican Republic*, submitted in response to U.S. Department of Labor Federal Register Notice (November 8, 2007) "Request for Information on Efforts by Certain Countries to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor", Geneva, February 11, 2008, para 80; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/english/newcountryframeE.htm>. See also U.S. Embassy- Santo Domingo, reporting, January 31, 2008.

¹¹³⁷ Glenn R. Smucker and Gerald F. Murray, *The Uses of Children: A Study of Trafficking in Haitian Children*, USAID/Haiti Mission, Port-au-Prince, 2004; available from http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNADF061.pdf. See also U.S. Embassy- Santo Domingo, reporting, January 31, 2008.

¹¹³⁸ U.S. Embassy- Santo Domingo, reporting, January 31, 2008.

¹¹³⁹ IOM, *Panorama Sobre la Trata de Personas*, 2006, 89; available from <http://www.oim.org.co/modulos/contenido/default.asp?idmodulo=7&idlibro=115>.

¹¹⁴⁰ U.S. Embassy- Santo Domingo, reporting, January 31, 2008.

¹¹⁴¹ U.S. Department of State, "Dominican Republic (Tier 2 Watch List)," in *Trafficking in Persons Report-2008*, Washington, DC, June 4, 2008; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2008/>. See also IOM, *Americas: Assistance for Children Victims of Human Trafficking in Haiti*, [online] December 4, 2006 [cited February 23, 2009]; available from <http://www.iom.int/jahia/Jahia/featureArticleAM/cache/offonce?entryId=12185>. See also U.S. Embassy- Santo Domingo, reporting, January 31, 2008. See also ILO, *Trabajo Infantil en la Agricultura: Reflexiones sobre las legislaciones de América Central y República Dominicana*, 2007, 17. See also Glenn R. Smucker and Gerald F. Murray, *The Uses of Children*, 4.

¹¹⁴² IOM, *Americas: Assistance for Children Victims*. See also U.S. Embassy- Santo Domingo, reporting, March 2,

2006. See also Joe Johns, *CNN Anderson Cooper 360 Degrees: Invisible Chains: Sex, Work and Slavery [transcript]* (2007). See also Amnesty International, *Dominican Republic: A Life in Transit - The Plight of Haitian Migrants and Dominicans of Haitian Descent*, 2007; available from <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AMR27/001/2007/en/dom-AMR270012007en.html>. See also USDOL, *Trip Report of Site Visit by U.S. Department of Labor Officials to the Dominican Republic: January 13-16, 2008*, Washington, DC, January 2008. See also U.S. Embassy- Santo Domingo, reporting, January 31, 2008.

¹¹⁴³ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2008: Dominican Republic," section 2. See also U.S. Embassy- Santo Domingo, reporting, January 31, 2008. See also U.S. Embassy- Santo Domingo, reporting, December 7, 2007. See also U.S. Embassy- Santo Domingo, reporting, February 13, 2009. See also Amnesty International, *A Life in Transit*.

¹¹⁴⁴ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2008: Dominican Republic," section 5.

¹¹⁴⁵ The Protection Project, *2007 Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*, 2007; available from http://www.protectionproject.org/human_rights_reports/report_documents/dominican.doc. See also IOM, *Americas: Assistance for Children Victims*. See also U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2008: Dominican Republic."

¹¹⁴⁶ The Protection Project, *2007 Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*.

¹¹⁴⁷ UNICEF, *At a Glance: Haiti: Background*, [online] [cited March 1, 2009]; available from <http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/haiti.html>.

See also U.S. Department of State, "Haiti," in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2008*, Washington, DC, June 4, 2008; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2008/>. See also U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2008: Dominican Republic." See also IOM, *Americas: Assistance for Children Victims*. See also U.S. Embassy- Port-au-Prince, reporting, February 6, 2009.

¹¹⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2008: Haiti." See also ILO-IPEC, *Supporting the Timebound Programme for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Dominican Republic- Phase II (2006-2009)*, Project Document, Geneva, August 2006, 2-3.

¹¹⁴⁹ Government of the Dominican Republic, *Código de Trabajo de la República Dominicana 1992*, article 245; available from http://www.cinterfor.org.uy/public/spanish/region/ampro/cinterfor/temas/youth/eventos/rep_dom/ii/v/index.htm. See also Government of the Dominican Republic, *Código para el Sistema de Protección y los*

Derechos Fundamentales de los Niños, Niñas, y Adolescentes, article 40.

¹¹⁵⁰ Government of the Dominican Republic, *Código de Trabajo 1992*, article 254. See also Government of the Dominican Republic, *Código para el Sistema de Protección y los Derechos Fundamentales de los Niños, Niñas, y Adolescentes*, article 39.

¹¹⁵¹ Government of the Dominican Republic, *Código de Trabajo 1992*, articles 246-248.

¹¹⁵² *Ibid.*, article 249.

¹¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, article 252.

¹¹⁵⁴ Government of the Dominican Republic, *Resolución Sobre Trabajos Peligrosos e Insalubres para Personas Menores de 18 Años*, (August 13, 2004); available from <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/docs/SERIAL/69773/68796/F452892919/DOM69773.pdf>.

¹¹⁵⁵ The Protection Project, *2007 Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children*. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports-2008: Dominican Republic," section 6c.

¹¹⁵⁶ Government of the Dominican Republic, *Ley contra el Tráfico Ilicito de Migrantes y Trata de Personas*, (August 2003).

¹¹⁵⁷ Government of the Dominican Republic, *Código para el Sistema de Protección y los Derechos Fundamentales de los Niños, Niñas, y Adolescentes*, articles 25 and 409.

¹¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, articles 396, 404, 409, 410.

¹¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, articles 204 and 391.

¹¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, article 406.

¹¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, articles 26 and 411.

¹¹⁶² Government of the Dominican Republic, *Ley contra Crímenes y Delitos de Alta Tecnología*, (April 23, 2007), article 24. See also ILO-IPEC, *Supporting the Timebound Programme for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour in the Dominican Republic- Phase II (2006-2009)*, Technical Progress Report, Geneva, August 2007.

¹¹⁶³ Government of the Dominican Republic, *Law on Drugs and Controlled Substances in the Dominican Republic*, (May 30, 1988), article 85; available from <http://www.unifr.ch/derechopenal/ley.htm>.

¹¹⁶⁴ Government of the Dominican Republic, *Ley Orgánica de las Fuerzas Armadas de la República Dominicana*, Public Law Number 873, (1996), articles 30-31. See also Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, "Dominican Republic," in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2008*, London, 2008; available from <http://www.child-soldiers.org/regions/country?id=154>.

¹¹⁶⁵ Government of the Dominican Republic, *Código para el Sistema de Protección y los Derechos Fundamentales de los Niños, Niñas, y Adolescentes*, article 34.

¹¹⁶⁶ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2008: Dominican Republic," section 5.

¹¹⁶⁷ U.S. Embassy- Santo Domingo, *reporting, February 13, 2009*. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2008: Dominican Republic," section 6d.

¹¹⁶⁸ U.S. Embassy- Santo Domingo, *reporting, February 13, 2009*.

¹¹⁶⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2008: Dominican Republic," section 5.

¹¹⁷⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2008: Dominican Republic."

¹¹⁷¹ *Plan Estratégico Nacional para la erradicación de las peores formas de trabajo infantil en República Dominicana 2006-2016*, ILO, Santo Domingo, August 2006. See also Interinstitutional Commission Against the Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Girls Boys and Adolescents, *Plan de Acción de la República Dominicana Para Erradicar el Abuso y la Explotación Sexual Comercial de Niñas, Niños y Adolescentes*, ILO, Dominican Republic, January 2006; available from http://www.oit.org.pe/ipec/documentos/plan_nacional_esc.pdf.

¹¹⁷² DevTech Systems Inc., *Combating Child Labor Through Education*, Technical Progress Report, Arlington, Virginia, September 29, 2008.

¹¹⁷³ Government of the Dominican Republic, *Written communication*, submitted in response to U.S. Department of Labor Federal Register Notice (December 19, 2008) "Request for Information on Efforts by Certain Countries to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor", Santo Domingo, January 2009, 13.

¹¹⁷⁴ Comisión de la Mujer Niñez Juventud y Familia del Parlamento Centroamericano, *I Plan de Trabajo Regional de la Comisión para Apoyar la Prevención y Eliminación la Trata de Personas y la Explotación Sexual Comercial de Niños, Niñas y Adolescentes, 2008-2010*, 2008.

¹¹⁷⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2008: Dominican Republic," section 5.

¹¹⁷⁶ Government of the Dominican Republic, *Written communication*, 4.

¹¹⁷⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report- 2008: Dominican Republic."

¹¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷⁹ ILO-IPEC, *Supporting the Timebound Programme - Phase II, Project Document*, vi and vii.

¹¹⁸⁰ DevTech Systems Inc., *Combating Exploitive Child Labor through Education II/Dominican Republic*, Initial Project Document, January 28, 2008, i, 7, 14, 17-18.

¹¹⁸¹ ILO-IPEC, "Stop the Exploitation" ("Alto a la explotación") *Contribution to the Prevention and Elimination of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic*, Project Document, RLA/02/P51-05/52/USA, San Jose, 2002, 2005, 1 and 63. See also ILO-IPEC, *Contribution to the Prevention and Elimination of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Central America, Panama and the Dominican Republic*, Project Addendum, Geneva, September 2005, 1 and 22.

¹¹⁸² CARE, *Primero Aprendo Project: Combating Exploitive Child Labor through Education in Central America and the*

Dominican Republic, Project Revision, April 19, 2007, 1-2. See also CARE, *Primerio Aprendo Project: Combating Exploitive Child Labor through Education in Central America and the Dominican Republic*, Project Revision, September 29, 2006.

¹¹⁸³ CARE, *Primerio Aprendo Project: Combating Exploitive Child Labor Through Education in Central America (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua) and the Dominican Republic*, Project Document, 2004, 5.

See also ILO-IPEC, *Elimination of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*, Project Addendum, 22-23.

¹¹⁸⁴ ILO-IPEC Geneva official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, December 18, 2008.

¹¹⁸⁵ U.S. Department of State, *U.S. Government Funds Obligated for Anti-Trafficking in Persons Projects, Fiscal Year 2007*, [online] February 2008 [cited February 11, 2009]; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/rpt/101295.htm>.

East Timor

*Selected Statistics and Indicators on Child Labor*¹¹⁸⁶

Population, children, 10-14 years, 2001:	100,087
Working children, 10-14 years (%), 2001:	85.2
Working boys, 10-14 years (%), 2001:	84.5
Working girls, 10-14 years (%), 2001:	85.9
Working children by sector, 10-14 years (%), 2001:	
- Agriculture	91.8
- Manufacturing	-
- Services	8.2
- Other	-
Minimum age for work:	15
Compulsory education age:	Not compulsory
Free public education:	Yes*
Gross primary enrollment rate (%), 2007:	90.9
Net primary enrollment rate (%), 2007:	63.0
School attendance, children 10-14 years (%), 2001:	86.3
Survival rate to grade 5 (%):	-
ILO Convention 138:	No
ILO Convention 182:	No
CRC:	4/16/2003**
CRCOPAC:	8/2/2004**
CRCOPSC:	4/16/2003**
Palermo:	No
ILO-IPEC participating country:	No

*Guaranteed by law, but no system has been established to ensure that education is available

**Accession

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

In East Timor, many children in rural areas work in agriculture, including on coffee farms.¹¹⁸⁷

Children are also engaged in domestic service, primarily for adoptive families and their relatives; a small percentage work for third parties. Most of these children work in return for school fees or shelter.¹¹⁸⁸ In urban areas, children are found working in the streets, selling a variety of items.¹¹⁸⁹

Throughout the country, children are found working in construction under hazardous conditions. In coastal areas, children work in fishing.¹¹⁹⁰ Children are commercially exploited for sexual purposes, including prostitution.¹¹⁹¹

There are reports of internal trafficking of girls from rural areas to the capital, Dili, for commercial sexual exploitation.¹¹⁹²

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The law sets the minimum age for employment at 15 years, although children working in vocational schools or in family-owned businesses are exempt.¹¹⁹³ It is illegal for children between 15 and 18 years to perform work that jeopardizes their health, safety, or morals. However, the law allows for light work for children older than 12 years.¹¹⁹⁴ According to USDOS, enforcement of the labor code is limited due to a lack of resources and capacity.¹¹⁹⁵