Senegal

The Government of Senegal continues to participate in several large scale programs to combat the worst forms of child labor. There appears to be little inspection or enforcement activity, however, and children remain engaged in begging and dangerous work in agriculture, fishing, and mining.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>5-14 yrs.</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending School</td>
<td>5-14 yrs.</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combining Work and School</td>
<td>7-14 yrs.</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Senegal are exploited in the worst forms of child labor. Many working children are engaged in agriculture and fishing, which puts them at risk of occupational dangers. Children’s work in agriculture may involve unhealthy and unsafe activities, such as the use of potentially dangerous machinery and tools, carrying of heavy loads, and the application of harmful pesticides. Fishing in Senegal potentially exposes children to explosives, which are commonly used to kill large amounts of fish.

Children also work as domestic servants in Senegal, where they may be exposed to long hours of work and physical and sexual exploitation by their employer. Some girls in Senegal begin work as domestic servants as young as age 6.

Children mine gold and salt. They also work in rock quarries. They are exposed to unsafe and unhealthy working conditions such as carrying heavy loads, sifting through dirt using mercury to attract precious metals, and working without protective gear.

Other dangerous work performed by children takes place in the construction industry, at automobile repair shops, in metal and wood work, and at dumpsites.

Child prostitution occurs in Dakar, in tourist areas, and in other urban areas. Children are recruited or trafficked into prostitution by pimps and private brothel and hotel owners. Some children are prostituted by their parents. In addition, children displaced from the South of Senegal, where a 22 year rebellion has taken place often migrate to Dakar and Ziguinchor for prostitution, providing sexual services.
The practice of sending boys to Koranic teachers to receive education, which may include a vocational or apprenticeship component, is a tradition in Senegal. These boys, called talibes, are sometimes forced by their teachers, to beg on the streets for food or money and to surrender their earnings. Talibes are often trafficked from rural areas to major cities within Senegal, as well as from The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, and Guinea. Senegalese children are also trafficked to The Gambia and Mauritania for forced begging by religious teachers. Many of these children beg in dangerous and unhealthy conditions, are physically abused, and are known to work from 6 a.m. until after dark. Although evidence is limited, there is reason to believe that talibes in the Casamance region are used to gather cashews and mangos, and to harvest oranges. These children are exposed long working hours and to land mines left in the fields from a 27 year conflict in the region. In Thies, talibes collect garbage from homes, sometimes carrying very heavy loads.

Other forms of trafficking in addition to trafficking of boys for forced begging occur in Senegal. Girls are trafficked to Senegal for the purpose of forced begging on behalf of the blind. These girls work in difficult conditions, and may be vulnerable to abuse. Young girls are trafficked from villages in Fatick, Louga, Kaolack, Kolda, Ziguichor, Thies, Saint Louis, and Djourbel to urban centers for domestic service, and are trafficked to many of the same cities for commercial sexual exploitation. Girls are also trafficked to neighboring countries, Europe and the Middle East for sexual exploitation and from Liberia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria into Senegal for the same purpose.

**Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for employment, including apprenticeships, at 15. Arrêté ministériel no 3750 and 3751 prohibit children from working in hazardous conditions and identify circumstances in which children under age 18 cannot work or can only work under certain conditions. An exception within these laws allows boys under age 16 to work in underground mines and quarries if they are doing “light work.” Arrêté ministériel no 3749 prohibits activities considered to be worst forms of child labor and includes, among others, forced labor, slavery, prostitution, begging for a third party, drug trafficking, scavenging garbage, slaughtering animals, work with dangerous products, and work that imperils the health, safety, or morality of children.

Senegalese laws require children to attend school through age 12, while the minimum age for children to work is 15. This standard makes children ages 13 to 15 particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor as they are not required to be in school and are below the minimum age for work.

The Constitution bans forced labor. Military recruits must be age 18 or older.

The Penal Code prohibits the procurement of a person into prostitution, or acting as an intermediary for prostitution. If the crime involves a minor younger than age 13, sentences are more severe. Law no 2005-06 prohibits all forms of trafficking and provides stringent penalties. The Penal Code forbids third party begging, unless the begging is done on behalf of a family member, blind person, or for collecting alms per religious tradition. The existence of these exceptions to the prohibition against third party begging provides a loophole that can be exploited by religious leaders and the blind who are using children for third party begging.
The MOL is responsible for enforcing child labor laws through the Labor Inspections Office and the use of social security inspectors. During the reporting period there were 67 inspectors and 80 controllers charged with carrying out labor inspections. Labor inspectors monitor and enforce minimum age and all other labor laws in the formal wage sector, which includes state-owned corporations, private enterprises, and cooperatives. If an incident of child labor is found during an inspection, the inspector informs the business owner that the child should be removed from work. If the child is not removed within the specified timeframe, the case is turned over to a local tribunal for adjudication. According to the MOL, there were no child labor violations in the formal wage sector in 2009. Labor inspectors reportedly lack transportation to undertake inspections. As this process does not penalize violators on their first offense, it may not deter employers from exploiting children in the workplace.

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The National Intersectoral Committee, chaired by the Ministry of Labor, coordinates efforts against child labor. The committee is comprised of employers’ organizations, 20 ministries, religious leaders, international agencies and governors from various regions. The Ministry of Labor (MOL) also has a Child Labor Unit to maintain a database for child labor, and assure monitoring and evaluation of child labor activities. However, the Unit has no budget, no office space, and the Unit’s work is carried out through part-time contributions of MOL staff whose primary responsibilities are elsewhere. The Ministry of Family coordinates another national committee against child labor. This duplication of efforts leads to problems with the coordination of efforts.

The Ministry of Justice leads anti-trafficking and child begging enforcement efforts in Senegal. Additionally, the Minors’ Brigade under the Interior Ministry Special Commissariat, and the local police and gendarmerie work to combat sex tourism. However, the Minors’ Brigade only has a presence in Dakar, while the commercial sexual exploitation of children is widespread throughout tourist areas outside of Dakar.

During the reporting period, a human trafficking network that sent girls from Senegal to Morocco for domestic work was dismantled. The alleged traffickers were released without charges. Two religious teachers were arrested for the abuse and forced begging of talibes. One was jailed and the other awaits trial. Although these arrests indicate positive steps towards addressing forced begging, the investigation into the issue of forced begging is lacking compared to the magnitude of the problem of exploited talibes.
Government Policies on Child Labor

The Government has been developing a national action plan on child labor since 2003. However, the plan has not yet been adopted by the Government of Senegal. The Government developed a National Action Plan on Trafficking in Persons which implements trafficking prevention and awareness campaigns, and aims to enhance law enforcement and victim protection. However, the action plan is still awaiting cabinet approval.

The Government has integrated child labor issues into several relevant development policies, including its United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2007-2011), the Ten-Year Education and Training Program (2000-2015), which aims to provide universal quality primary education to all children by 2015; the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2006-2010), which promotes better conditions for talibes and focuses on social protection and risk management for vulnerable groups, including children; and its National Social Protection Strategy (2005-2015), which classifies children as a specific vulnerable group and includes provisions for their protection against harmful practices, exploitation, and violence.

In 2006, the Government adopted the Multilateral Cooperative Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and the Joint Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, in West and Central African Regions. Commitments under the Multilateral Cooperative Agreement include investigation and prosecution of trafficking offenders; rehabilitation and reintegration of trafficking victims; and assisting fellow signatory countries to implement these measures.

During the reporting period, the Government adopted the Regional Policy on Protection and Assistance to Victims of Trafficking in Persons in West Africa under ECOWAS. This agreement explicitly targets, among others, victims of exploitative labor and hazardous child labor. The Policy identifies begging as a possible outcome of trafficking, reflecting the need to combat this growing problem with regional strategies.

Social Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

From 2003 to 2007, the Government participated in a USDOL funded project to implement the National Timebound Program to Combat Child Labor that withdrew and prevented children from exploitation in the worst forms of child labor in agriculture, fishing, and domestic work.

The Government continues to operate its toll-free child protection hotline, which received 9,545 calls during the reporting period. The Government also runs the Ginndi Center, a shelter for destitute children. The Ginndi Center, in collaboration with the IOM, repatriated or reintegrated 223 child trafficking victims. The Government assisted 108 street children through their Open Center for Education (AEMO) office branch in Mbour and in partnership with UNICEF, started a pilot project in the departments of Guédiawaye and Ziguinchor focused on the social protection of street children.

In 2009, the Government carried out 43 micro-projects to sensitize the Senegalese people on the existence of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Law, and trained border security forces, journalists, and government agents on human trafficking issues.
The Government of Senegal currently participates in three multi-million dollar projects to eliminate the worst forms of child labor: a 4-year $5.1 million regional Spanish-funded project, a 2-year $2.8 million Denmark-funded project that targets trafficked children in West Africa, and a 3-year $1.78 million UN-funded project to ameliorate the conditions of at-risk children in Senegal.4422

The Government coordinates several programs targeting talibes, including projects which provide awareness raising, training for Koranic teachers, and shelter for talibes.4423 Two prominent efforts are two pilot projects which provide food and educational services to talibes, and an $8.0 million Japan-funded project to withdraw and prevent talibes from forced work.4394

The Government is currently participating in a 3 year $7.9 million USDOL-funded regional project designed to strengthen ECOWAS’ Child Policy and Strategic Plan of Action and develop programs focusing on child trafficking as it pertains to the strategic plan.4425

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

**IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:**
- Amend the law to prohibit all instances of children forced to beg.
- Amend the law to ensure that the minimum age for hazardous work, including admission to work in underground mines, quarries, and other mineral extraction plants is 18 years for both girls and boys.
- Raise the compulsory schooling age to align it with the minimum age for admission in employment

**IN THE AREA OF MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT:**
- Clarify responsibilities of key government agencies in coordinating efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor to avoid duplication of effort.
- Fund, staff and provide sufficient resources to the Child Labor Unit.
- Amend the enforcement process to allow for the prosecution of first-time offenders of child labor laws.
- Expand specialized police units such as the Minors Brigade and the police unit dedicated to sex tourism to extend outside of Dakar.
- Expand efforts to investigate forced begging and take action on abuses performed by religious teachers
- Consider the adequacy of existing inspection and enforcement activities, particularly with regard to coverage of those areas where child labor is most prevalent.

**IN AREA OF POLICIES:**
- Approve and adopt the National Action Plan for Trafficking in Persons.

**IN AREA OF PROGRAMS:**
- Expand existing social programs to target more children involved in or at risk of entering the worst forms of child labor.
The statistics in the chart to the left are based on UCW analysis of ILO SIMPOC, UNICEF MICS, and World Bank surveys, Child Economic Activity, School Attendance, and Combined Working and Studying Rates, 2005-2010. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. As a result, statistics on children’s work are reported in this chart, which may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on sources used, the definition of working children, and other indicators used in this report, please see the “Children’s Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions” section.


USAID, Study on the Practice of Trafficking in Persons in Senegal, 26.


USAID, Study on the Practice of Trafficking in Persons in Senegal, 21-23.

Ibid., 22-23.

Ibid., 22.


USAID, Study on the Practice of Trafficking in Persons in Senegal.


U.S. Embassy- Dakar, reporting, March 08, 2010.


USAID, Study on the Practice of Trafficking in Persons in Senegal, 34. See also, Government of Senegal, Code penal 1965.
USAID, Study on the Practice of Trafficking in Persons in Senegal.


U.S. Embassy - Dakar, reporting, March 10, 2010, para 2b and 2c.


U.S. Embassy - Dakar, reporting, March 10, 2010, 2C.

Ibid.

U.S. Embassy - Dakar, reporting, March 08, 2010, 26D.


Ibid.


U.S. Embassy-- Dakar, reporting, February 19, 2009, 27D.


Government of Senegal, Rapport Final, 66. See also Pereznetio, Social protection to tackle child poverty in Senegal, 2.


Ibid., 5-13.


U.S. Embassy - Dakar, reporting, March 10, 2010, para 2d.

Ibid., para 2d, 2f.


ILO-IPEC, E-mail Communication, July 17, 2010.

