

In 2015, the Solomon Islands made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government established a National Action Plan on Human Trafficking and People Smuggling and dedicated significant funding for its implementation. The government also formalized the Trafficking in Persons Advisory Committee to improve coordination of government efforts to address human trafficking, including the trafficking of children. In collaboration with Save the Children, the National Advisory Committee on Children launched a new program to protect children from involvement in commercial sexual exploitation. However, children in the Solomon Islands are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Gaps remain in the country's legal framework. Neither the minimum age for employment nor the minimum age for engagement in hazardous work meet international standards. In addition, education is not compulsory and laws do not adequately protect all children from engagement in commercial sexual exploitation. Resources for the enforcement of laws against child labor remain insufficient.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in the Solomon Islands are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1, 2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in the Solomon Islands. Data on some of these key indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		87.3

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2014, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(3)

Data were unavailable from Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis, 2015.(4)

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* and collecting* palm oil fruits on plantations* and sea cucumbers* (1, 5)
Industry	Alluvial mining* (1) Construction on roads and buildings,* including making bricks* (1)
Services	Domestic work* and work as cooks,* including in logging camps* and on fishing boats* (1, 2, 6) Scavenging for cans* and metal* in garbage dumpsites, streets, and streams* (1, 7) Selling cooked food and fruits* (6) Working in nightclubs,* casinos,* and motels* (1, 6)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2, 6-11) Use in the production of pornography* (2) Use in illicit activities, including in the cultivation* and trafficking of drugs* (1, 7, 9) Forced domestic work and forced work as cooks, including in logging camps and on fishing boats (2, 6, 11, 12)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor per se under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

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Both boys and girls are engaged in commercial sexual exploitation in areas near logging camps, near or aboard commercial fishing vessels, and in the capital city of Honiara.(2, 8, 10) There are reports that some family members put their minor children up for “informal adoption” in order to pay off debts or offer them in marriage to loggers and miners; subsequently, the children may be forced into domestic work or commercial sexual exploitation.(6, 11) Some logging or fishing workers engage male children in a practice known as *solair*, in which boys work as intermediaries to procure young girls for commercial sexual exploitation.(6)




Although the Government’s Fee Free Basic Education Policy provides free education for children in grades one through nine, additional school fees, uniform and book costs, and transportation limitations make it challenging for some children, particularly girls, to access education.(1, 2, 13)

There is no nationally representative data available on the prevalence and nature of child labor in the Solomon Islands.

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Solomon Islands has ratified some 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	12	Article 46 of the Labor Act (14)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	15	Article 47 of the Labor Act (14)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Articles 47–49 of the Labor Act (14)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 6 of the Constitution; Articles 251 and 256 of the Penal Code; Part 7 of the Immigration Act (15-17)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Part 7 of the Immigration Act (17)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 144, 149, 150, 173, and 174 of the Penal Code (16)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A†		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	N/A†		
Compulsory Education Age	No		
Free Public Education	No		

† No standing military (18)

The minimum age for work is not in compliance with international standards because the Labor Act permits children as young as age 12 to work.(14) In addition, the Solomon Islands lacks a comprehensive minimum age to prohibit all children under 18 from

involvement in hazardous work. According to the Labor Act, children under age 15 are prohibited from working in the industrial sector or on ships, and children under age 16 are prohibited from working in underground mines.(14) Male children between the ages of 16 and 18 may be permitted to work in mines, on ships, or during the night in industrial undertakings with a medical certificate or with specific written permission from the Commissioner of Labor.(14) While the law defines the hazardous activities prohibited for children in the industrial sector, it does not specify hazardous activities in the agricultural or service sectors, where there is evidence that children are employed.

Although the Immigration Act prohibits transnational trafficking in persons, laws in the Solomon Islands are not sufficient to address child trafficking, as domestic trafficking is not a criminal offense.(17, 19) In an effort to close this legal gap, the Solomon Islands Law Reform Commission has prepared an amendment to the Penal Code, but the parliament did not adopt it during the reporting period.(20)

Gaps in legislation leave some children vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation. The law does not criminally prohibit the use of children, the procuring of boys 15-17, or the offering of children 15-17 for prostitution. In addition, the law does not criminally prohibit the use, procurement, or offering of a child for the production of pornography or pornographic performances.(12, 16) While the law criminalizes the production, distribution, and possession of pornography, it does not contain heightened penalties for child pornography. Additionally, laws do not prohibit the use of children in illicit activities, such as in the production and trafficking of drugs.(16, 21)

The Solomon Islands has not established a legal compulsory age for education, which increases the risk of children’s involvement in child labor.

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 Commerce, Industry, Labor, and Immigration (MOCILI)	Enforce child labor laws.(21) The Immigration Division within MOCILI leads efforts to combat human trafficking, including the trafficking of children.(20, 22)
Royal Solomon Islands Police	Enforce criminal laws against the worst forms of child labor, including forced child labor, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities.(12) Work in partnership with the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands on human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation cases.(21)
Trafficking in Persons Technical Investigation Team	Monitor and investigate cases of transnational human trafficking, specifically in the logging industry. Comprises representatives from the Immigration Division, the Royal Solomon Islands Police, Customs, and Forestry.(20)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2015, labor law enforcement agencies in the Solomon Islands did not take 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 (1)	Unknown (23)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown (1)	Unknown (23)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Unknown	Unknown (23)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown (1)	Unknown (23)
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Unknown (1)	Unknown (23)
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (1)	Unknown (23)

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Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (cont)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown (1)	Unknown (23)
■ Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (1)	Unknown (23)
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown (1)	Unknown (23)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (1)	Unknown (23)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (1)	Unknown (23)
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown (1)	Unknown (23)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Unknown	No (23)
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	N/A (23)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (14)	Yes (14)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Unknown (23)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Unknown	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Unknown	Unknown

Sources, including the Government, noted that inadequate resources and lack of technical capacity among enforcement agencies hinder meaningful enforcement of labor laws.(12, 23)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in the Solomon Islands 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	Unknown	Unknown (23)
■ Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown (23)
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Yes (20)
Number of Investigations	Unknown	Unknown (23)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown (23)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown (23)
Number of Convictions	Unknown	Unknown (23)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	No (19)	Yes (20)

In 2015, law enforcement officials participated in an anti-human trafficking training organized by the IOM and the Solomon Islands Immigration Division.(20) Also during the year, the Trafficking in Persons Advisory Committee and the Solomon Islands Immigration Division developed and published standard operating procedures (SOPs) on victim identification, protection, and referral. The SOPs provide guidance for law enforcement officials on how to communicate with victims of human trafficking and to ensure that they are referred to appropriate services.(20) Currently, the Immigration Division refers trafficking in persons victims to the National Disaster Management Office, the Solomon Islands Red Cross, or the IOM for assistance with temporary accommodation and other support services.(20)

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

Although the Government has established a coordination mechanism on trafficking in persons, research found no evidence of 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
Trafficking in Persons Advisory Committee (Under MOCILI)	Coordinate efforts to address human trafficking across the Government.(20) Chaired by the Immigration Division, the Committee comprises representatives from the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force; the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; and the ministries of Labor, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Justice, Customs, and Social Welfare, as well as various NGOs.(20, 24) In 2015, the Trafficking in Persons Advisory Committee finalized its terms of reference and was recognized as a formal entity. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labor, and Immigration allocated funding to support the Trafficking in Persons Advisory Committee's coordination efforts.(20)

The Government of the Solomon Islands has established the National Advisory Committee on Children to advise the Cabinet on general issues affecting children, coordinate the implementation of the UN CRC, and develop advocacy materials to promote the rights of children. Members of the Committee include the Social Welfare Division; the Ministry of Health and Medical Services; the Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children Affairs; and the Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development.(25) Research found no evidence that the Committee functions as a coordinating mechanism to specifically address child labor issues.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan on Human Trafficking and People Smuggling (2015–2020)†	Provides a framework for national anti–human trafficking efforts. In 2015, included a budget of \$36,770 for monitoring and inspection activities.(20)
National Children’s Policy with National Action Plan (2010–2015)	Committed the Government to substantially improving services and the legal framework for child protection over a 5-year period.(25) Objectives of the policy included ratifying the UN CRC Optional Protocols, raising the minimum age for employment to 18, achieving universal primary education, registering all births by 2015, and creating a mechanism for the coordination and enforcement of child protection laws and policies.(25)
Fee Free Basic Education Policy*	Aims to increase educational access by subsidizing school fees for grades one through nine.(26)
National Youth Policy (2010–2015)*	Developed a strategic action plan to address six key issues related to the well-being of youth in the Solomon Islands, including career development, participation in governance, youth and well-being, youth and peace building, youth and sustainable development, and youth mainstreaming.(1)
UNDAF for the Pacific Region (2013–2017)*	Promotes sustainable development and economic growth for vulnerable groups in 14 Pacific Island countries and territories: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.(27) In the Solomon Islands, aims to strengthen policy, legislation, and programs to protect children from exploitation and to improve access to education for children in remote areas.(28)

* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

In 2015, the Immigration Division hosted three capacity-building workshops to train members of the Trafficking in Persons Advisory Committee, service providers, and law enforcement officials on implementation of the newly endorsed National Action Plan on Human Trafficking and People Smuggling.(20)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of the Solomon Islands 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
Pacific Sub-Regional Child Labor and Trafficking Program	ILO-supported program that expands the work and lessons learned from its Tackling Child Labor Through Education (TACKLE) program in Fiji to Kiribati, Samoa, and the Solomon Islands.(7, 29) Activities include facilitating meetings, conducting research, raising awareness, providing trainings, and building government capacity to address child labor.(30) In April 2015, representatives from the Solomon Islands participated in the Sub-Regional Child Labor and Trafficking Forum, which brought together national policy makers from five countries to discuss best practices for addressing child labor and human trafficking issues.(7, 29)
Child Protection Program*	EU-funded program, implemented by Save the Children Solomon Islands in collaboration with the National Advisory Committee on Children, which aims to prevent and protect children from engagement in commercial sexual exploitation in Guadalcanal, Western Province, and Choiseul. Trains teachers and community educators to improve advocacy campaigns targeting children at risk of commercial sexual exploitation and educates parents and caregivers on the issue.(31, 32)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

In July 2015, the Solomon Islands participated in the ILO’s Sub-Regional Skills and Livelihood Training for Older Out-of-School Children in Child Labor or At Risk in the Pacific. The training focused on highlighting opportunities for skills development for

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children under age 18 who are at risk for child labor, as well as identifying opportunities for mainstreaming skills development initiatives into existing social programs.(33)

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 the Solomon Islands (Table 11).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ratify UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.	2014 – 2015
	Increase the minimum age for employment to 14 to comply with international standards.	2009 – 2015
	Ensure that the minimum age for hazardous work is 18 and ensure that the types of hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive.	2009 – 2015
	Ensure that legal provisions are enacted to comprehensively prohibit domestic child trafficking.	2014 – 2015
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use, procurement, and offering of all children under 18 for commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution and the production of pornography and pornographic performances.	2009 – 2015
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use, procurement, and offering of a child for illicit activities, including the production and trafficking of drugs.	2011 – 2015
	Establish by law an age up to which education is compulsory.	2009 – 2015
Enforcement	Make information publicly available on the enforcement of labor laws and criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor, including the number and training of labor inspectors and criminal investigators; the amount of funding for the labor inspectorate; the number and type of labor inspections conducted; the number of child labor violations found and the number of penalties imposed and collected; and the number of criminal investigations on the worst forms of child labor conducted, the number of violations found, the number of prosecutions initiated, and the number of convictions obtained.	2009 – 2015
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by initiating routine inspections rather than performing inspections solely based on complaints received.	2015
	Allocate funds to ensure that relevant agencies have the resources necessary to enforce laws relevant to the prevention and elimination of child labor, including its worst forms.	2009 – 2012, 2014 – 2015
	Establish a referral mechanism between labor authorities and social services providers to ensure that children engaged in child labor, including its worst forms, receive appropriate services.	2014 – 2015
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat child labor, including its worst forms.	2010 – 2015
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into existing policies.	2014 – 2015
Social Programs	Conduct research on child labor in the Solomon Islands to inform policy and program design.	2013 – 2015
	Establish programs to provide financial support for families with school-aged children who are unable to afford additional school expenses, including the cost of uniforms, textbooks, and transportation, and ensure that schools do not impose additional school fees on students for the mandated period of free education, as established by national policy.	2014 – 2015

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