

In 2017, Togo made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The number of labor inspectors increased significantly for the fourth year in a row, and six additional inspectors are awaiting their appointment. The government also launched a new Safety Nets and Basic Services Project funded by the World Bank, provided cash transfers to 11,330 households through its National Fund for Inclusive Finance, and provided 42,317 children with school lunches. However, children in Togo engage in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in domestic work. The government has not devoted sufficient resources to combat child labor, and labor inspectors are not authorized to assess penalties. In addition, Togo's social programs to combat the worst forms of child labor do not match the scope of the problem and rely largely on nongovernmental and international organizations for implementation.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Togo engage in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in domestic work. (1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Togo.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	29.6
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	86.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	29.5
Primary Completion Rate (%)		82.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2015, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2018. (11)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Demographic and Health Survey, 2013–2014. (12)

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	Working in agriculture (13; 8; 14; 15)
Industry	Working in quarries and sand mines, including excavating, crushing rocks, sifting gravel, and carrying heavy loads† (16; 17; 18; 19; 15; 20; 21)
	Working in carpentry† and tailoring (22)
	Construction (16; 13; 23)
Services	Domestic work† (24; 17; 13; 4; 19; 25; 8; 14; 15; 20)
	Carrying heavy loads,† and small-scale vending in markets
	Work as motorcycle repairmen (16; 15; 20)
	Garbage scavenging (16; 15)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced begging (15; 21)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (16; 13; 19; 26; 27; 15; 21)
	Forced labor in agriculture, including coffee, cocoa, and cotton; domestic work; quarries; and markets, including carrying heavy loads; each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4; 28; 27; 21)

† 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.

Togo is a source and transit country for victims of human trafficking to neighboring countries, primarily for domestic work, work in agriculture, and commercial sexual exploitation. (13; 4; 25; 29; 30) Parents may be complicit in child trafficking as a result of

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confiage, which involves sending a child to a relative or friend to attend school in a larger town or city, a practice that may place children at risk of exploitation as a result of internal human trafficking. (3; 5; 10; 30; 4)

Although education is free and compulsory by law, parents are responsible for paying associated fees and buying uniforms and school supplies, which makes education prohibitive for many families. (31; 32; 33; 34) Research found that long distances to schools, as well as physical and sexual abuse in schools, also posed barriers to education for some children. (10; 32; 35; 36; 34; 37) During the reporting period, some children may have been kept home from school or sent to stay with relatives in other towns to avoid ongoing political protests in the cities. (38)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Togo has ratified all 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's laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 150 of the Labor Code; Article 262 of the Children's Code; Article 881.1a of the Penal Code (39; 40; 41)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 6–12 of Ministerial Order N° 1464 Determining the Work Prohibited to Children (39; 42)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 6–12 of Ministerial Order N° 1464 Determining the Work Prohibited to Children; Articles 263–264 of the Children's Code; Articles 319.9 and 882 of the Penal Code; Article 151 of the Labor Code (39; 40; 41; 42)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 4 and 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 264 and 411 of the Children's Code; Articles 150.3 and 151 of the Penal Code (39; 40; 41)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 2–6 of Law N° 2005-009 Suppressing Child Trafficking in Togo; Articles 264 and 411–414 of the Children's Code; Articles 150.3, 151, 317–323, and 882 of the Penal Code (39; 40; 41; 43)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 264, 276.f, and 387–390 of the Children's Code; Article 224 of the Penal Code (39; 40; 41)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 264, 276.i, and 405 of the Children's Code; Articles 317.7, 319.9, and 329.8 of the Penal Code (39; 40; 41)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment			
State Compulsory	Yes*	18	Article 426 of the Children's Code; Articles 146.14, 147.11, and 342 of the Penal Code (40; 41)
State Voluntary	Yes	18	Article 426 of the Children's Code; Article 42 of Law N° 2007-010 Regarding the General Statute of the Togolese Armed Forces (40; 44)

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Meets International Standards: Yes/No	Age	Legislation
Non-state	Yes	18	Article 426 of the Children's Code; Articles 146.14, 147.11, and 342 of the Penal Code (40; 41)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article 35 of the Constitution; Article 255 of the Children's Code (40; 45)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 35 of the Constitution (45)

* No conscription (44)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Civil Service, Labor, and Administrative Reform (MOL) that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Civil Service, Labor, and Administrative Reform (MOL)	Enforce all labor laws, including child labor laws. (13; 31) Through its Unit to Combat Child Labor (CELTE), withdraw children from child labor situations, raise awareness, and collect data. (46) Focal points within the inspectorate are located in each of the five regions to monitor child labor issues and raise awareness at the local level. (47)
Ministry of Justice and Government Relations	Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor, and prosecute violations. (23)
Ministry of Social Action, Promotion of Women and Literacy (MASPFA), Director General for the Protection of Children	Raise awareness of child labor issues, enforce laws against the worst forms of child labor, provide technical assistance, and lead government efforts to combat human trafficking. (13; 48; 20) Operate the Allo 1011 hotline for reporting child abuse, including child trafficking. (13; 48; 49; 50; 27; 20) In 2017, piloted foster family program through an NGO with 27 initial families. (20)
Ministry of Security's Division of Drugs, Morals, and Pimping	Investigate crimes involving child victims, including child trafficking. In all five regions of Togo, operate as part of the National Police. (51)

In 2017, the National Domestic Workers' Trade Union submitted a set of specifications to the government, including advocating better protections for domestic workers, issuance of birth certificates for all domestic workers, and ratification of ILO C. 189, Domestic Workers Convention. (46)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2017, labor law enforcement agencies in Togo took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of MOL that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including conducting inspections in all relevant sectors.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown* (52)	Unknown* (23)
Number of Labor Inspectors	167 (52)	191 (23)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (39)	No (39)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (52)	Yes (23)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown* (52)	500 (23)
Number Conducted at Worksites	Unknown* (52)	Unknown* (23)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	246 (52)	66 (23)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties were Imposed	Unknown* (52)	0 (23)

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that were Collected	Unknown* (52)	N/A
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (52)	Yes (23)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown* (23)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (39)	Yes (39)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Unknown	Yes (23)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (52)	Yes (23)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (52)	Yes (23)

* The government does not publish this information.

The number of labor inspectors has increased significantly for the fourth year in a row, and six additional inspectors are awaiting their appointment. Unlike previous years, MOL had adequate resources and vehicles to conduct site visits outside the main cities. (23) However, MOL reported that the current number of labor inspectors is still insufficient to pursue cases of child labor, which primarily occurs in the informal sector. (31; 23) In addition, the Labor Code makes labor inspectors responsible for reconciliation and arbitration in collective disputes, which may detract from their primary duties of conducting inspections and enforcing the Labor Code. (39; 53)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2017, criminal law enforcement agencies in Togo took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including training for criminal investigators and prosecution.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2016	2017
Training for Investigators		
Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (54)	Yes (54)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (52)	No (23)
Number of Investigations	Unknown* (52)	Unknown* (23)
Number of Violations Found	50 (55)	3 (23)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (52)	Unknown* (23)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (52)	Unknown* (23)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (52)	Yes (23)

* The government does not publish this information.

Investigators lacked financial and physical resources to adequately enforce the law, and the Ministry of Justice was unable to offer refresher courses on child trafficking to magistrates, judges, and police inspectors during the reporting period due to a lack of funding. (7; 56) Research also indicates that poor record keeping, a shortage of physical copies of existing child labor laws throughout the country, and high turnover results in gaps of knowledge and enforcement capacity. (57; 58; 56) Cases involving child trafficking may be settled outside of court due to difficulties gathering evidence, and judges may be reluctant to impose fines or prison sentences for parents due to a fear of perpetuating the poverty that originally led them to violate child trafficking laws. (27; 21)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8). However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including efforts to address all forms of child labor.

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

Coordinating Body	Role and Description
National Steering Committee for the Prohibition and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (CDN)	Coordinate and oversee all government efforts to combat child labor, including the approval of all action plans for the abolition of child labor. (13; 15) Comprises representatives from 17 ministries and NGOs; MOL's CELTE serves as the permanent secretariat. (15)
MASPFA's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Cell (CNARSEVT)	Coordinate government efforts to combat human trafficking. (13; 30; 27) (13; 30; 27) Compile statistics on human trafficking and serve as the point of contact for repatriated child victims. (27) Comprises representatives from NGOs and six ministries, including MOL and MASPFA. (15)
Local Vigilance Committees	Raise awareness at the community level, identify child victims or children at risk, track returnees, and share information on human trafficking trends and prevention efforts with MASPFA's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Cell. (13; 27; 59) Some local vigilance committees were active during the reporting period. (23)

All coordinating bodies were active during the reporting period. (15)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including covering all worst forms of child labor.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor[‡]

Policy	Description
National Employment Policy (2013–2017)	Aims to eliminate child labor, build the capacity of the Labor Inspectorate, and increase vocational training and apprenticeship opportunities in support of the Decent Work Program. (19; 60; 61) Includes a pilot cash transfer program for 8,000 vulnerable children. (60) The accompanying Strategic Plan on Youth Employment (PSNEJ) aims to reduce children's early entry into the labor force by retaining them in school and improving the employability of older youth and their access to funding. (19; 61; 62)
Strategy to Increase Growth and Promote Employment (SCAPE) (2013–2017)	Serves as the primary national anti-poverty plan, which includes components on child labor and education. (13; 63)
National Policy of Social Protection	MASPFA policy that aims to improve social safety nets, strengthen mechanisms to combat the exploitation of children, and promote systematic birth registration. (64)
Multilateral Agreements to Combat Child Trafficking	Quadripartite agreement among the governments of Benin, Gabon, Ghana, and Togo that works to prevent child trafficking along the countries' shared borders. Multilateral accords for West and Central Africa promote cooperation among regional states to combat child trafficking. (13; 34; 27; 46)

[‡] The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (65)

A National Plan of Action Against Child Labor is undergoing technical validation, but has yet to be adopted. (34) The Ministry of Social Action, Promotion of Women and Literacy's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Cell (CNARSEVT) intends to draft a new national action plan to combat human trafficking following the creation of the 2017 ECOWAS Trafficking in Persons Action Plan. (59) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement any policy during the reporting period, and only policy documents specific to labor and social protection include indicators related to child labor. (19) The government has not included child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Education Sector Plan (2010–2020). (66) At the IV Global Conference on the Sustained Eradication of Child Labor, the government pledged to incorporate child labor issues into its National Development Plan, which is currently being drafted. (67)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2017, the government funded and participated in programs that may contribute to preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
World Bank-Funded Programs	Projects that combat child labor by improving social safety nets for vulnerable families and increasing access to education. Includes Togo Community Development and Safety Nets Project (2012–2017), a \$26.1 million project that delivered 11,670,982 school meals and constructed 370 primary school classrooms in the Kara and Savanes regions; Cash Transfer Program for Vulnerable Children in Northern Togo (2013–2017),† a \$2.55 million project implemented by MASPFA that provided conditional cash transfers to 17,655 households in northern Togo; Education and Institutional Strengthening Project 2 (2015–2018), a \$27.8 million project that aims to revise course textbooks for grades 1 and 2, provide teacher training, identify recipients of school grants, and select 80 sites for promoting girls' education; and the Safety Nets and Basic Services Project (2017–2020),* a \$29 million project implemented by MASPFA and the Ministry of Grassroots Development that aims to provide social safety nets to poor communities. (68; 69; 70; 71; 72; 73; 20) By the end of 2017, the Education and Institutional Strengthening Project 2 distributed 599,231 textbooks, provided 1,650 school grants, and trained 14,549 teachers. (74)
Plan International-Funded Projects	Projects that aim to support youth development, including Monitoring Children's Rights (2015–2018), a \$393,000 Plan Sweden-funded, 3-year MASPFA project in support of SCAPE that aims to strengthen the institutional capacity of these organizations to better protect children in Benin, Burkina Faso, and Togo; and Gender-Sensitive and Violence-Free Education, a 3.5-year project co-funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency that aims to reduce violence in schools by eliminating corporal punishment and promoting children's rights in the Central and Plateau regions. (36; 75; 76; 77)
Shelters for Vulnerable Children†	MASPFA-funded center that provides temporary shelter and services for victims, including those referred by the Allo 1011 hotline. (31; 48; 50; 27; 20) Victims may be transferred to NGO-run shelters for longer-term support. (50; 27; 20)
National Fund for Inclusive Finance†	Government program administered by the State Secretariat to the Presidency of the Republic that provides loans of up to \$60 to women in rural areas of Northern Togo, aiming to reduce the demand for income provided by engaging in child labor. (78; 23) In 2017, provided cash transfers to 11,330 households in 93 villages. (79; 23)
National Plan for Registering Births in Togo (2013–2017)†	MASPFA, MOJ, and Ministry of Territorial Administration plan that aims to increase documentation of births by simplifying the process, educating families on the importance of birth registration, and increasing accessibility to birth registration in rural areas. (54; 80) In 2017, conducted outreach activities and worked with UNICEF and NGOs to deliver birth certificates in Kara and Savannes. (46; 20)
School Feeding Program†	Provides school lunches in rural areas to promote school enrollment, particularly for girls. (34; 20; 37) In 2017, provided food to 42,317 children at 143 schools. (79; 23)
Forum of Traditional and Religious Chiefs of Togo on the Harmful Social and Cultural Practices That Affect Children†	MASPFA-funded program that aims to eliminate traditional practices that may contribute to child trafficking by educating local leaders on child labor issues and the importance of education. (23)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Togo.

Social programs focus on poverty alleviation and promoting education rather than targeting specific sectors of child labor, such as domestic work, and the government relies heavily on NGOs and international organizations for implementation. (23; 59) A shortage of funds also hinders program implementation. (59) As a result, the scope of existing programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, and many of these interventions may not be sustainable over the long term.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Togo (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Publish information about the amount of funding the labor inspectorate receives, the number of inspections conducted at worksites, number of routine inspections targeted and data related to criminal law enforcement, including the number of investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, and convictions made.	2010 – 2017
	Strengthen the Labor Inspectorate by authorizing the inspectorate to assess penalties.	2014 – 2017

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Ensure that both labor inspectors and criminal investigators receive refresher courses, and ensure that all regional offices have copies of relevant laws related to child labor.	2009 – 2017
	Enforce penalties for labor violations according to the law.	2014 – 2017
	Increase the number of labor inspectors and ensure that they are able to carry out their primary duties of inspection and monitoring of labor laws throughout the country, including in the informal sector.	2009 – 2017
	Ensure that criminal investigators have sufficient financial and physical resources to effectively enforce criminal laws against child labor.	2017
Government Policies	Ensure that policies are implemented as intended and that child labor indicators are included in all relevant policies.	2016 – 2017
	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Education Sector Plan.	2013 – 2017
Social Programs	Increase access to education by eliminating school-related fees; ensuring that schools are free from sexual and physical violence; and increasing the number of schools, especially in rural areas.	2010 – 2017
	Ensure that social protection programs to combat child labor receive adequate funding, are sufficient to address the scope of the problem in all relevant sectors, and promote the long-term sustainability of project initiatives.	2009 – 2017

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