

In 2019, Cameroon made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government supported a new 6 year project to address child labor in the production of cocoa and continued to support programs that provide services to vulnerable street children. In addition, unlike in previous years, the government published information on labor inspectorate funding. However, children in Cameroon engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in cocoa production. The government has not acceded to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography. In addition, it has not prohibited the use of children in illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs. Furthermore, the law does not criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Cameroon engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in cocoa production. (1-3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Cameroon.

Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	43.7 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	80.0
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	42.4
Primary Completion Rate (%)		64.5

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2018, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020. (4)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization’s analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 5 (MICS 5), 2014. (5)

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	Production of bananas, cocoa, palm oil, onions, and tea, including handling pesticides, using machetes, clearing fields, climbing trees, and lifting heavy loads† (6-10)
	Raising livestock (9-11)
	Fishing (9-13)
Industry	Working in artisanal gold mines† and gravel quarries,† transporting heavy loads† of sand or gravel, breaking stones, and digging or standing in stagnant water to extract minerals (3,9,10,13-15)
	Construction, including carrying heavy loads† of water, concrete, cement, and bricks (7,10,14)
Services	Domestic work (7-11,14,16)
	Working in restaurants and as phone booth operators (8-11)
	Working in transportation (7-11)
	Street work, including carrying heavy luggage and selling bush meat,† vending, and begging (8-11,14,17-21)
	Voluntarily recruited children used in hostilities by state-armed groups (8,10)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,8-10,14,22,23)
	Recruitment of children by Boko Haram, a non-state armed group, for use in armed conflict, including as suicide bombers and concubines (9,10,24)

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Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity (Cont.)

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Forced labor in agriculture in the production of cocoa, cotton, onions, and tea; fishing; livestock raising; domestic work; spare parts shops; in artisanal gold mines and gravel quarries; street vending; and construction, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,9,10,14,23,25)
	Forced begging as <i>talibés</i> in Koranic schools (3,7,10)

† 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.

Cameroon is a source, transit, and destination country for child trafficking from neighboring countries in Central and West Africa. (3,7,19) Due to increased awareness among parents of the risks associated with entrusting children to intermediaries who often promise to take children to urban centers to pursue education or an improved living arrangement, some perpetrators of human trafficking have resorted to kidnapping children. (3) The ongoing crisis in the Anglophone regions has contributed to a dramatic increase in underage prostitution and the number of teenage pregnancies, especially in areas with significant numbers of IDPs. (10) In Cameroon, Boko Haram uses boys as child soldiers, and girls as forced suicide bombers and sex slaves. (9)

A crisis in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest Regions that began in 2016 as mass protests by lawyers and teachers has since evolved into an armed separatist conflict. The crisis has resulted in more than 2,000 persons killed, more than 44,000 refugees, and more than 500,000 IDPs. Armed separatist groups have called for and violently enforced boycotts of schools in the Northwest and Southwest Regions leading to long-term disruptions of education for children. (8,26) In the Far North Region, terrorist activity by Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa have also disrupted children’s schooling. The disruption of children’s access to education places children at high risk of becoming victims of exploitation and child labor. (27,28) In 2019, in the Far North region, Boko Haram, which our report identifies as a non-state armed group, recruited and used 71 children in their operations. Of these 71 children, 49 were abducted. (24) Boko Haram also continues to forcibly recruit Cameroonian children as porters, cooks, and scouts. Boko Haram also used girls as forced suicide bombers and sex slaves and boys as child soldiers. (10,24)

Some community neighborhood watch groups, known as Vigilance Committees, may also have used and recruited children as young as age 12 in operations against Boko Haram, although there is no evidence of the government providing material support to these specific groups. Research also indicated government security forces recruited and used a minor to gather intelligence in the country’s Anglophone regions during the reporting period. (10) During the year, Anglophone separatist attacks on the education sector in the Southwest and Northwest Regions continued to disrupt the normal operation of schools and, in October 2019, more than 90 percent of primary and secondary-aged students were out of school in the Northwest, with only 10 percent of teachers reporting to work. In November, school attendance rose to 38.5 percent as schools in urban areas began to reopen. (29,30) Children in refugee or IDP camps are particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation and may have a particularly difficult time accessing education due to a lack of school infrastructure, teachers, and resources to pay for school-related expenses. (11,31)

Although Decree N° 2001/041 on the Organization of Public Schools guarantees free education in Cameroon, costs associated with education may be prohibitive to some families, who are required to pay for uniforms, books, and other school-related fees. (25,31,32) In addition, a lack of schools and teachers in rural areas, the absence of potable water and sanitation facilities, and long distances to schools hinder access to education. (11,25,33,34)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Cameroon has ratified most 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	✓

In December 2019, the parliament passed a law authorizing the President of the Republic to ratify the UNCRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, which Cameroon signed on October 5, 2001. (10)

The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Cameroon's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibition of using children in illicit activities and the establishment of a compulsory education age that is consistent with the minimum age for work.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Article 2 of Order N° 017 on Child Labor; Section 86 of the Labor Code (35,36)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 9–23 of Order N° 017 on Child Labor; Section 86 of the Labor Code (35,36)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 9–23 of Order N° 017 on Child Labor (36)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Sections 2–6 of the Law Relating to the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Slavery; Articles 11, 342-1 and 352-353 of the Penal Code; and Section 2 of the Labor Code (35,37,38)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Sections 2 and 4–6 of the Law Relating to the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Slavery; Articles 11, 342-1 and 352–354 of the Penal Code (37,38)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 294 and 344–347 of the Penal Code; Articles 76 and 81–82 of the Law on Cybersecurity and Cybercriminality (37,39)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 12 of the Decree Concerning the Status of Non-Defense Military Personnel; Article 2a of the Decree Establishing the Conditions for Admission to Military Training Schools for Officers (40,41)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes*		Article 12 of the Decree Concerning the Status of Non-Defense Military Personnel; Article 2a of the Decree Establishing the Conditions for Admission to Military Training Schools for Officers (40,41)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	No	12‡	Preamble of the Constitution; Articles 9 and 16 of the Law Orienting the Education System (42,43)
Free Public Education	No		Articles 46 (2), 47, and 48 of the Decree on the Organization of Public Schools (44)

* No conscription (45)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (46)

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Children in Cameroon are only required to attend six years of primary school, which typically concludes at age 12. This standard makes most children ages 13 through 14 vulnerable to child labor as they are not required to attend school but are not legally permitted to work. In addition, there is no free basic education for children in Cameroon as established by law, increasing the risk of children's involvement in child labor. (40,41) Human trafficking provisions remain discordant with international standards, as they require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking, and individuals ages 16 to 18 are not considered children. (37,38) In addition, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children under age 18 are not comprehensive, as work at dangerous heights is not prohibited. (16,36)

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 operations of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MINTSS) that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MINTSS)	Leads efforts to enforce all labor laws, including those related to child labor; promotes decent working conditions, and leads the National Committee to Combat Child Labor (CNLCCTE) and the labor inspectorate. (12,47)
Ministry of Justice (MOJ)	Prosecutes cases referred by the General Delegate for National Security (DGSN) or the Ministry of Defense's National Gendarmerie (SED), and contributes to investigations as appropriate. (48)
Ministry of Social Affairs (MINAS)	Leads efforts to combat human trafficking. Provides social services through its National Referral System. (11,12,49,50) Through its Minors Brigade, supports local police in their investigations of child trafficking and the use of children in hazardous work. Uses other programs to help identify, reintegrate, and educate street children. (50,51)
General Delegate for National Security (DGSN)	Enforces laws against the worst forms of child labor and investigates violations in urban areas. (48) Through its Special Vice Squad, investigates cases of human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and other forms of abuse against women and children. (16,48) Refers cases to MOJ or Ministry of Defense for investigation by SED. (52)
Ministry of Defense's National Gendarmerie (SED)	Investigates cases of child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation in both urban and rural areas before referring cases to MOJ for prosecution. (52) Operates two toll-free numbers, 1501 and 113, for the reporting of human rights abuses, including trafficking in persons. (50)

Although it does not play a direct role in enforcement, Cameroon's National Commission on Human Rights and Freedoms advises government ministries on the enforcement of laws related to child labor and advocates for sanctions as appropriate. (11,51) Local representatives from the Ministry of Territorial Administration may settle child labor disputes or refer the case to the Ministry of Defense's National Gendarmerie, the General Delegate for National Security (DGSN), or the Ministry of Justice for further investigation and prosecution. (52) Article 109 of the Labor Code empowers inspectors to take direct legal action before the court against people infringing on the provisions of the labor law. (10)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2019, labor law enforcement agencies in Cameroon took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of MINTSS that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including financial resource allocation.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (8)	\$1.2 Million (10)
Number of Labor Inspectors	286 (8)	300 (10)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (8)	Yes (10)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (8)	Yes (10)

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (8)	N/A (10)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (8)	Yes (10)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	2,000† (8)	6,100‡ (10)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (8)	6,100‡ (10)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (8)	0 (10)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	N/A (8)	N/A (10)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A (8)	N/A (10)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (8)	Yes (10)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (8)	Yes (10)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (8)	Yes (10)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (8)	Yes (10)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (8)	Yes (10)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (8)	Yes (10)

† Data are from January 1, 2018 to October 31, 2018. (8)

‡ Data are from January 1, 2019 to October 31, 2019. (10)

Although the government increased its number of labor inspectors from 2018, it is still insufficient for the size of Cameroon's workforce, which includes more than 9 million workers. (10,38,45,48,53) According to the ILO's technical advice of 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Cameroon would employ about 660 labor inspectors; currently they employ 300 labor inspectors. (45,47,48,53-55) Furthermore, inspectors are tasked with conciliation duties that may detract from time devoted to their primary duties; and labor inspections are not permitted to be conducted in the informal sector, which is where the majority of child labor occurs. (10,35,56,57-59) In general, the labor inspectorate lacked resources during the reporting period, and field inspectors in particular lacked transportation. However, the 2019 budget included funding to purchase vehicles for some divisions with heavy workloads; 7 out of 10 inspection brigade teams commandeered a vehicle, as did 5 of the 58 divisional inspection teams, with 5 additional vehicles ordered in 2019. (10,11)

Although the government has not created a formal mechanism for filing and responding to complaints about child labor, victims and/or their relatives can report directly to any of the institutions involved in child labor law enforcement, including the Ministry of Social Affairs, (MINAS), MINLSS, State Defense Secretariat (SED), or Ministry of Justice (MOJ). (8) The Ministry of Social Affairs, the International Criminal Police Organization, and DGSN all maintain hotlines for reporting the worst forms of child labor. Calls are routed to the National Referral System for assistance to victims. (14,16,25,31,60,61) However, the system has not been well publicized since it was established in 2013, leaving the public unaware of its existence, and some calls may go unanswered. (31,60) Research was unable to determine how many cases of child labor were identified because of complaints made to these hotlines.

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in Cameroon 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 collaboration between ministries.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (8)	Yes (10)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (8)	N/A (10)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (8)	Yes (10)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (8)	Unknown (10)

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Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (8)	Unknown (10)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (8)	Unknown (10)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (8)	Unknown (10)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (8)	Unknown (10)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (8)	Yes (10)

The government does not publicly release information on its labor and criminal law enforcement efforts. Criminal law enforcement agencies do not receive adequate funding or training to investigate the worst forms of child labor, and high staff turnover is a challenge. (3,8,11) Despite credible reports that children were involved in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, there is no evidence that the government investigated any of the cases. (10) As a result, NGOs play a critical role in bringing child trafficking cases to the government’s attention and providing services to victims. (3,8,52) No data was available for the reporting period on numbers of violations, prosecutions initiation, convictions, nor penalties in Cameroon. (8)

Border police continued efforts to ensure that children do not cross borders without being accompanied by a parent. Adults accompanying children must show proof of their relationship with the child by presenting the child’s identification documents. (9,62) The government continues to acknowledge that a lack of awareness of child trafficking issues may prevent citizens from reporting offenses to enforcement agencies and that children may be afraid to speak against perpetrators in court. (3) Although the government generally considers children to be victims rather than offenders, reports indicate that the government has held children as young as age 5 in detention facilities for prolonged periods due to suspicion of being affiliated with *Boko Haram*, or to prevent them from being recruited into *Boko Haram*. (51,63-69)

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 the lack of resources to carry out mandates.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Committee to Combat Child Labor (CNLCTE)	Coordinates government efforts to combat child labor and proposes measures to harmonize Cameroon’s legal framework to international standards. Implements the National Plan of Action to Combat Child Labor and Trafficking in Children (PANETEC) which expired during the reporting period. (45,70,71) Led by MINTSS, includes representatives from 10 other ministries and government bodies. (47,70)
Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Trafficking in Persons	Coordinates government efforts to combat human trafficking. Chaired by the Secretary General of the Office of the Prime Minister; includes members of eight ministries, law enforcement personnel, civil society organizations, and NGOs. (3,31) Oversees Regional Taskforces on Trafficking in Persons in Northwest, Southwest, and Littoral Provinces. (3,72) On March 12, 2020, IMC hosted a meeting attended by multiple agencies, eight local NGOs, and four international organizations (UNICEF, ILO, IOM, and INTERPOL). A representative of MINAS highlighted some activities conducted since April 2019: supporting 6 trafficking in persons victims during the first half of 2019; conducting 2,864 informational sessions reaching approximately 397,447 people nationwide; starting a feasibility study for the construction of a shelter for human trafficking victims in Mfou, Center Region; identifying 443 street children and providing social and economic re-integration support to 354 of them; providing care to 305 unaccompanied children; and reuniting 24 other unaccompanied children with their families. (50)

A lack of resources and socio-political unrest in the Anglophone regions hampered government efforts to effectively coordinate to combat the worst forms of child labor. (21)

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 implementation.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
MOJ's National Action Plan for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Cameroon (2015–2019)	Strived to combat exploitative child labor by disseminating standard operating procedures for the National Referral System, raising awareness about how to identify and report cases of child trafficking, increasing punishments for offenders, and building the capacity of labor inspectors. (48,73,74) Aimed to improve access to education for vulnerable groups by increasing the number of teachers and classrooms, establishing a legal framework to regulate parent teacher associations, and increasing the rate of educational attainment for girls. (74) Research was unable to determine whether actions were taken by the committee during the reporting period.
Decent Work Country Program (2014–2020)	Incorporates child labor concerns into the national strategy for work. (6) In 2018, the government extended the program by 2 years. (8) Research was unable to determine whether actions were taken by the committee during the reporting period.

The government did not formulate any new relevant policies during the reporting period but reported that it had taken into account policies carried out by the Ministry of Decentralization and Local Development in the National Action Plan to Eliminate Child Labor (PANETEC), even though it had expired. (8, 10,51) The Trafficking in Persons Action Plan (2014–2019) did not receive dedicated funding; however, member ministries of the Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) used their ministry funds to carry out activities in support of the Action Plan. (52) The government has not included child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2010–2020) or the IMC's National Gender Policy Document (2011–2020). (75-77)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2019, 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
Project to Fight the Phenomenon of Street Children (Project 559)†	In conjunction with the National Employment Fund, this MINAS-funded program provides street children with health care, education, and psychosocial care and supports the reintegration of street children by providing vocational training opportunities. (11,32,46) MINAS provided holistic care to 1,026 refugee children in the East and Far North Regions, with support from development partners and Civil Society Organizations; provided psychosocial care to 10,405 IDP children as of July 31, 2019; secured school placements for 539 IDP children in the Center, Littoral and West Regions; helped issue and distribute 2267 birth certificates; and recovered 56 Bakas children (including 31 boys and 25 girls) from trafficking suspects and returned the children to their families in the East Region. (10)
Support Project in Quality Management for Cocoa and Coffee Production/Forever Chocolate (2019–2025)*†	Promotes labor standards in cocoa industry, including the fight against child labor in conjunction with environmental protection. Identifies children in cocoa farming and those who are at risk of joining cocoa farms, and facilitates their return to school. (10) Implemented by NGO association <i>Enfant Jeunesse Avenir</i> , in partnership with Cameroon Cacao Industrial Corporation, Cameroon's biggest cocoa processor. Government ministries, including the Ministry of Health, MINAS, the Ministry of Women Empowerment and the Family, MINTSS, and the Ministry of Basic Education, are key stakeholders in the program. (10) The project is implemented in cocoa production basins using the Farmer Field School Extension Approach and is aimed at training cocoa farmers to produce cocoa free of child labor using environmentally friendly techniques. (10) The government also established a National Cocoa Academy led by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. The training institute is also deployed in production basins with a view to popularizing good agricultural practices, including the prohibition of child labor on plantations. (10)
UNICEF Projects	Includes UNICEF Country Program (2018–2020), which prioritizes strengthening the child protection system to prevent violence and exploitation, especially sexual violence against girls. Provides financial and technical support to the government for the implementation of an inclusive birth registration project, with a particular focus on indigenous communities. (8) Services for Displaced or Refugee Children† is another UNICEF-funded program providing educational services to children affected by conflict, including: (8,10) CARE2, which offers accelerated education curriculums for children in refugee camps in the Far North; ETAPES, which establishes temporary schools and protection centers in Adamawa and East regions; and the Child Protection and Education Project, which works with Catholic Relief Services in the East to enroll and retain refugee children in schools. (78) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this program during the reporting period.

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Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor (Cont.)

Program	Description
United States Government Programs (non-DOL)	\$27 million U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, which improves literacy and nutrition in 265 primary schools. In 2019, USDA and the Government of Cameroon expanded the scope of the program which now benefits 148,986 children in the Adamawa, East, North, and Northwest regions. (8,10) Targeted schools have seen an increase of about 14 percent in school enrollment, including children previously in child marriage, farming, animal rearing, and mining. (8,10) USAID/Office of Transition (OTI) Initiatives also had a program to stabilize border communities impacted by crisis, and to counter the spread of violent extremism. USAID/OTI continued to work in the Far North Region, with a focus on promoting social reintegration of former <i>Boko Haram</i> fighters and an estimated budget of \$29.3 million in 2019. (10)
Cameroon Institute of Childhood (ICE) Rehabilitation Project (2017–2020)†	\$2.9 million project financed by MINAS and its partners to rehabilitate a center in Betamba, which serves children in conflict with the law and provides vocational training to area youth. (11) In 2019, the government continued to rehabilitate the center by installing a second dormitory along with masonry and mechanic workshops. (10)

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Cameroon.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (3,17)

Although the government has implemented programs to assist victims of child trafficking and children engaged in street work and domestic work, the scope of these programs is insufficient and does not fully address the extent of the problem in other sectors such as agriculture, mining, quarrying, and commercial sexual exploitation. (1,8,80) Government-run centers can temporarily house victims, but space is limited. (31,81,82)

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 Cameroon (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Accede to the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography.	2013 – 2019
	Ensure that laws prohibiting child trafficking do not require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be considered child trafficking, and that all children under age 18 are protected.	2015 – 2019
	Criminally prohibit the use of children for illicit activities, including in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2014 – 2019
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2019
	Establish a minimum age for compulsory education that is consistent with the minimum age for admission to work.	2009 – 2019
	Establish by law free basic public education.	2019
	Ensure that the hazardous occupations and activities prohibited for children are comprehensive and include work at dangerous heights.	2014 – 2019
Enforcement	Collect and publish comprehensive statistics on enforcement efforts, including labor inspectorate funding, the number of inspections conducted at worksites, and the number of criminal labor law violations found.	2009 – 2019
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2009 – 2019
	Ensure that the labor inspectorate and criminal law enforcement agencies receive an adequate amount of funding, training, and resources with which to conduct inspections and investigations.	2009 – 2019
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by conducting inspections in all sectors.	2013 – 2019
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate to legally allow inspections to be conducted in the informal sector.	2019
	Establish a formal institutional mechanism to investigate and address complaints related to allegations of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation.	2018 – 2019
	Ensure that all hotlines for reporting the worst forms of child labor are well publicized and operational, and that all calls are logged so that cases of child labor may be tracked for referral to law enforcement or social services providers.	2015 – 2019
	Raise awareness of child trafficking issues to encourage citizens to report offenses to enforcement agencies, and ensure that such cases are resolved within the judicial system.	2016 – 2019
	Cease the practices of detaining children for their alleged association with armed groups.	2015-2019

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Coordination	Ensure that existing coordinating mechanisms function effectively and receive sufficient resources to carry out their stated mandates.	2014 – 2019
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the Inter-Ministerial Committee's National Gender Policy Document.	2010 – 2019
Social Programs	Ensure that the number of schools and teachers, and potable water and sanitation facilities are adequate throughout the country.	2009 – 2019
	Ensure that social programs to address child labor are implemented in accordance with their mandates.	2018 – 2019
	Ensure that all children, regardless of refugee status, have access to education by eliminating school-related fees, and minimizing the disruption of teacher strikes. Ensure that schools are free from violence and not re-appropriated for other purposes.	2009 – 2019
	Expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem in Cameroon, and institute programs to address child labor in agriculture, mining, quarrying, and commercial sexual exploitation.	2009 – 2019
	Ensure that all government-run centers have sufficient space to accommodate victims of child trafficking and children engaged in street work and domestic work.	2016 – 2019

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