

In 2019, Colombia made a significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Labor launched a virtual training campus for labor inspectors, including a Fundamental Rights at Work course with modules on child labor, and trained local officials on its Comprehensive Child Labor Information System. In an effort to address the education and health of the increased Venezuelan refugee population, the government passed Law 1997 that granted birthright citizenship to children born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents during the period January 1, 2015 - September 16, 2021. The Ministry of the Interior also collaborated with civil society organizations to evaluate the government's anti-trafficking in persons strategy. In addition, the government expanded the Eyes Everywhere anti-commercial sexual exploitation campaign. However, children in Colombia engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. In addition, the government does not employ a sufficient number of labor inspectors.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Colombia engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and illicit activities, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1,2) The government publishes annual statistics on children's work from its National Household Survey. (3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Colombia.

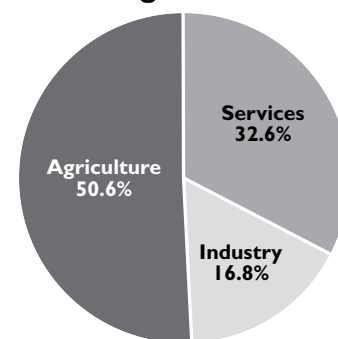
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	3.2 (267,924)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	94.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	3.0
Primary Completion Rate (%)		106.5

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

Source for all other data: International Labor Organizations' analysis of statistics from Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares, Módulo de Trabajo Infantil (GEIH-MTI), 2018. (5)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



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 coffee,† sugarcane,† cocoa, pome and stone fruits, grapes, and unrefined brown sugar (panela)† (1-6)
	Animal husbandry,† hunting,† and fishing†, including conch and crab harvesting (1,3-8)
Industry	Mining coal,† emeralds,† gold,† tungsten,† coltan,† and clay† (1,3,4,9,10)
	Producing bricks† (3,10)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Industry	Construction, [†] activities unknown (11)
	Cutting and transporting lumber, [†] and creating artisanal woodwork such as handicrafts and decorative items (1,4,12,13)
	Processing shrimp and langoustines [†] (4)
Services	Street work, [†] including vending and helping shoppers carry bags in urban markets, [†] begging, [†] guarding or washing cars and motorcycles, [†] and selling massages and hair-braiding to tourists in beach areas (1,4,14-24)
	Recycling [†] and garbage scavenging [†] (1,16,25,26)
	Domestic work, [†] including caring for children, [†] cooking, gardening, and shopping for the home (1-4,27)
	Working in retail establishments, hotels, and restaurants (1,3,4,7, 28)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor [‡]	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,4,14,21,29-33)
	Use in the production of pornography (1,4,5,21,29,34)
	Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict (1,21,35,36)
	Use in illicit activities by illegal armed groups and criminal organizations to commit homicides and traffic drugs, including in forced begging; and in the production of marijuana and coca (stimulant plant), each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,4,5,14,21,35-37)

[†] 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.

Commercial sexual exploitation of children occurs more often in private homes rented online than in commercial establishments. (10) Some child victims of commercial sexual exploitation are allegedly recruited in schools by other students, and, in some cases, prostitution ring members conduct surveillance around schools in search of girls. (10,36) Indigenous women and children, as well as Venezuelan refugees, are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation. (36,39) Young girls suffer commercial sexual exploitation along the highway between Medellín and Bogotá. (10,34) In mining areas, trafficking of children for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation is widespread. (6,10,26,41) Reports also indicate that criminal gangs and dissident groups recruit Colombian and Venezuelan children as young as age 12 to produce and traffic drugs and commit homicides and extortion. (38,42,43)




Reports indicate that the forced recruitment and use of minors in Colombia by illegal armed groups, including *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) dissidents and the National Liberation Army, as well as non-ideological criminal organizations such as the Gulf Clan, continued in 2019. (10,26,39,44,45) Children are recruited to perform intelligence and logistical activities, store and transport weapons, and are exploited in commercial sex. (6,7,26,39,46)

In Colombia, impassible roads, long distances between children’s homes and schools in rural areas, a lack of teachers, and continued violence and insecurity in parts of the country hinder access to education. (6,10,47) Indigenous and Afro-Colombian children in particular face difficulties in accessing education. (7,48) In several communities, classes were interrupted, sometimes for weeks at a time, because of illegal armed group activity in those areas. (47,48) Venezuelan children in Colombia who lack identity documents are provided temporary identification numbers, enabling them to access all aspects of education. (10,45,48) School resources in border towns were strained by the increased arrival of Venezuelan refugee students, a population that nearly doubled between 2018 and 2019. (49) Nationally, the government reported that as of October 2019, there were 206,138 Venezuelan children matriculated in Colombia’s education system. This represents a more than five-fold increase in matriculation compared to the 34,030 Venezuelan students enrolled at the end of 2018. (10)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Colombia 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). However, gaps exist in Colombia's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the difference in the minimum age for work and the compulsory education age.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 35 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence (38)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 117 of the Code on Childhood and Adolescence (38)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 3 of Resolution 1796 (39)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 17 of the Constitution; Articles 141 and 188A of the Penal Code (40,41)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 17 of the Constitution; Articles 188A–188C of the Penal Code (40,41)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 213–219B of the Penal Code (41)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 162, 188D, and 384 of the Penal Code (41)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 81 of Law 1861 (42)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 4 of Law 1861 (42)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Article 162 of the Penal Code; Article 20 of Law 1098; Article 14 of Law 418 (38,41,43)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	18	Decree 4807 of 2011 (44)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 1 of Decree 4807, Article 28 of the Child and Adolescent Code (38,44)

In September 2019, the government passed Law 1997 that granted birthright citizenship to children born in Colombia to Venezuelan parents, including those with irregular migration status, during the period January 1, 2015 - September 16, 2021. (10,57) This legislation was the result of a concerted effort by the Human Rights Ombudsman, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Civil Registry (*Registraduría*), and other agencies to facilitate access to education and healthcare for this vulnerable population. (10) Although Congress drafted a bill in 2018 that would revise the Penal Code to establish more comprehensive criminal provisions to protect children and adolescents from cyber commercial sexual exploitation, the bill was not approved during the reporting period. (58)

Challenges remain concerning the difference in the minimum age for work and the compulsory education age. As the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. (50)

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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 (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 Labor's (MOL) Inspection, Monitoring, Control, and Territorial Management Department	Receives complaints of labor law violations and conducts labor inspections, including inspections to verify labor conditions for adolescent workers and compliance with other child labor provisions. Oversees the Internal Working Group on Child Labor Eradication. (4,45) Operates the Comprehensive Child Labor Information System (SIRTI), a child labor monitoring system that identifies children engaged in or at risk of child labor. (4)
Active Search Team for Trafficking in Persons, Sexual Exploitation of Children, Girls, and Adolescents and Related Crimes (Bogotá)	Uses a proactive investigation model to identify the crimes of trafficking in persons and the sexual exploitation of children, girls, and adolescents in areas of Bogotá where they occur instead of waiting for victims to seek attention at the national level. Created in 2018 by the Bogotá Mayor's office. (21,46)
National Police	Investigate cases of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking and house the Child Protection Police unit. (4) Judicial police and the Technical Investigation Corps support the Attorney General's Office throughout the investigation process. (4)
Attorney General's Office	Investigates and prosecutes cases of child recruitment for armed conflict, commercial sexual exploitation, forced labor, and human trafficking, with support from the Office's Technical Investigation Unit, which also advises the Attorney General in the design of policies and strategies related to the role of judicial police investigators. (1,4,38) Oversees the Articulation Group for Combating Trafficking in Persons, which includes four prosecutors who focus on investigating and prosecuting cross-border human trafficking and other related crimes. (47)
National Training Service (SENA)	Collects fines imposed by MOL for labor law violations. (48)

Labor Law Enforcement

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

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$2,400,000 (1)	\$2,200,000 (4)
Number of Labor Inspectors	867 (1)	791 (4)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (1)	N/A (4)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (1)	Yes (4)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown (1)	Unknown (4)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (1)	Unknown (4)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (1)	Unknown (4)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	12 (1)	12 (4)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (1)	Unknown (4)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (1)	Yes (4)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (1)	Yes (4)

In 2019, MOL held a series of eight workshops dedicated to training inspectors on updates to the inspectorate's electronic case management system. In total, 242 inspectors across the country received the training. (63) The MOL also launched a "Fundamental Rights at Work" training under its new virtual training campus in

June for labor inspectors that included several modules on child labor: effective elimination of child labor, legal definitions of child labor, national policy guidelines related to child labor and the commercial sexual exploitation of children, and the Comprehensive Child Labor Information System (SIRTI). (10)

In 2019, MOL reported that it conducted 4,622 preventive inspections and 3,079 reactive inspections. (10) It also conducted 824 inspections to verify the appropriate conditions of work, including occupational safety and health issues for minors of the legal minimum age who were authorized to work. (10) In 2019, MOL imposed 12 sanctions for child labor violations. Eight of these sanctions have been upheld following appeal, and four are under appeal. MOL did not report on whether the eight sanctions have been collected by the National Training Service (SENA), which is charged with collecting fines. (10)

However, reports indicate that resource allocation for labor law enforcement in rural areas, such as Amazonas and Vichada, was insufficient. (7,66) In some cases, inspectors carried out inspections in a small geographic area due to a lack of transportation resources to reach areas accessible only by boats or small planes.(1) In addition, the number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Colombia's workforce, which includes more than 25 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Colombia should employ about 1,645 inspectors. (7,66)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in Colombia 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 new employees and funding.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Unknown (1)	No (4)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (1)	N/A (4)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (1)	No (4)
Number of Investigations	4,333 (1)	2,883 (4)
Number of Violations Found	3,280 (1)	3,512 (4)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	607 (1)	764 (4)
Number of Convictions	673 (1)	378 (49)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (50,51)	Yes (49)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (1)	Yes (4)

In 2019, the government assisted 14 minors who were victims of human trafficking, one of whom was a victim of labor exploitation. (10,39) However, the government did not provide information on the total number of child victims who benefited from shelter or other forms of government-provided assistance. In August 2019, Colombia and Argentina held a new bilateral law enforcement meeting to coordinate actions and policies relating to trafficking in persons crimes. (39) In October 2019, the government participated in a Colombia-Ecuador bi-national workshop on trafficking in persons focused on prevention and victim care challenges of transnational human trafficking. (39) The Colombian Institute for Family Well-Being also trained 194 technical team members and administrative authorities on childcare services for trafficking victims in the high-risk areas of Santander, Amazonas, Córdoba, and Antioquia. (39) Although the government took action on crimes related to the commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking of children and collected data on these crimes, the Attorney General's Office reported that its case management system tracks criminal proceedings through conviction only and does not include sentencing. (10,66,67) In addition, although the Attorney General's Office publishes some information on emblematic criminal cases regarding trafficking in persons, including those involving children, it does not publish comprehensive, annual statistics on convictions and sentencing for cases involving the worst forms of child labor. (68)

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The government did not provide clear information on whether funding provided to criminal law enforcement agencies was sufficient. (6) In addition, civil society noted a lack of specific budget allocations by government institutions for addressing trafficking in persons. (26)

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 inconsistent coordination in human trafficking victim identification.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Inter-agency Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor and Protection of the Adolescent Worker (CIETI)	Coordinates efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor. Chaired by MOL, includes 13 government agencies and representatives from trade unions, business associations, and civil society organizations. (2) Oversees 32 department-level CIETIs throughout the country, each comprising municipal-level committees. (52) Held several sessions during the reporting period, including one in October to identify geographic “hot spots” with children active in child labor, including its worst forms. (53,54)
National Inter-agency Committee for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Commercial Sexual Exploitation	Coordinates and implements efforts to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Led by MOL and comprises 15 government agencies. (2) The government did not provide information on activities taken under this coordinating body in 2019 for inclusion in this report.
Colombian Institute for Family Well-Being (ICBF)	Operates Mobile Teams for Comprehensive Protection Child Labor (EMPIs) to coordinate government actions to protect children’s rights, including protection from child labor. Supports demobilized child soldiers by strengthening family networks and increasing access to health services, food, education, and shelter. (4,12) Serves as Administrator of the Fund Against Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents. (55) Processes child labor complaints, operates hotlines to report child labor cases, and provides social services to children engaged in or at risk of child labor. (1,4) ICBF also has a National System of Family Well-Being, which promotes inter-agency coordination to protect children’s rights including rights related to child labor, and designs, implements, monitors, and evaluates policies related to childhood and adolescence. (2,56) In 2019, the number of EMPIs under ICBF was reduced to 44 teams throughout the whole country, down from 58 reported in 2018. (57) The EMPIs increased the number of awareness-raising campaigns to prevent child labor in the Putumayo and Cartagena regions, where they provided services to migrant Venezuelan and Ecuadorian populations. (58,59)
Inter-agency Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons	Leads and coordinates efforts among government agencies to combat human trafficking. Created by Law 985, chaired by the Ministry of the Interior (MOI), and comprises 16 government entities and 6 permanent invitees, including private sector and international organizations. (25) During the reporting period, the committee conducted 20 anti-trafficking in person trainings. MOI met in both September and December with more than 35 civil society organizations to evaluate weaknesses and goals of the government’s national anti-trafficking strategy and establish indicators to measure performance under a forthcoming strategy, slated to run through 2022. (4,60,61,62) MOI also continued to lead the hotline that reports and tracks cases of human trafficking, and facilitated access to social services for victims. (36)
Inter-sectorial Commission for the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Children by Illegal Armed Groups (CIPRUNNA)	Coordinates efforts to prevent child recruitment by illegal armed groups, including for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. Created by Law 552 and led by the High Commissioner for Post-Conflict, Human Rights, and Security, comprises 23 entities, including the Attorney General’s Office and MOL as permanent members. (4,64-66) In 2019, the committee convened its member agencies for two technical-level meetings and one high-level meeting to formulate and approve updates to the Public Policy Guidelines for the Prevention of Recruitment, Use, and Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups or Organized Criminal Groups through Decree 1784. (4,66) In November, authorities approved Decree 2081 to strengthen existing legislation and create the inter-sectorial presidential advisory council focus on mitigating the forced recruitment of children by illegal armed groups. (62,67,68)

‡ The government has other coordinating mechanisms that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (81-83,85,86)

Research indicates there is inconsistent coordination in the areas of human trafficking victim identification and assistance, which may hinder anti-trafficking efforts. (26)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies that are consistent with relevant international standards on child labor (Table 9).

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Policy Guidelines to Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor and Protect the Adolescent Worker (2017–2027)	Aims to address child labor in the agriculture sector, develop child labor prevention strategies, improve the quality and coverage of child protection services, protect adolescent workers from hazardous work, create strategies to address child labor in domestic work, and establish evaluation and monitoring mechanisms to assess progress. (71) The policy also contains a Roadmap for the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labor in Mining and a cooperative agreement between the Ministry of Mining and Energy and ICBF to prevent child labor in mining. (72,73,74) Under the cooperative agreement, ICBF trained 1,003 officials in agencies in the National System of Family Welfare on the National Policy Guidelines to Prevent and Eradicate Child Labor and Protect the Adolescent Worker. (4) In 2019, ICBF also worked in partnership with MOL under these guidelines to build the capacity of local committees to prevent child labor (CIETIs) at the department and municipal levels, which resulted in the development of local action plans to combat child labor. (4) In addition, MOL held 75 technical workshops and trainings, which included capacity building related to the 2018 revision of the hazardous occupations prohibited to children. These workshops and trainings were attended by 1,320 CIETI and other officials, as well as civil society representatives, from 537 municipalities in 29 departments. (4) Under the Progressive Plan for the Social Protection and Defense of Rights for Rural Workers, the government conducted various outreach activities during the reporting period, including socializing the National Policy Guidelines to Eradicate and Prevent Child Labor and Protect the Adolescent Worker across 17 municipalities with workshops and radio and social media outreach. (4)
National Policy on Childhood and Adolescence (2018–2030)	Articulates multiple sub-policies on the worst forms of child labor, protection of adolescents, prevention and eradication of commercial sexual exploitation of children, and prevention of the recruitment and use of children by non-state armed groups. (1,75) Focuses on the comprehensive welfare and development of children and adolescents, recognizing them as rights-bearing subjects and integral to national development. (1,75) In 2019, under this policy, ICBF began implementing the Strategy for the Prevention of Specific Risks, which involved undertaking actions to prevent the recruitment and use of children for illicit activities and commercial sexual exploitation. (4)
National Strategy for the Prevention and Eradication of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (2018–2028)	National policy that guides Colombian government actions at the national, departmental, and municipal levels for the prevention of commercial sexual exploitation, victim assistance with a differential approach, and the strengthening of sentencing for abusers. (76) In 2019, the Ministry of Commerce and Tourism worked under this policy in collaboration with MOL, ICBF, National Colombia Police (CNP), and Colombian Migration to continue the “Eyes Everywhere” (“ <i>Ojos en Todas Partes</i> ”) campaign, including public messaging against child sex tourism in hotels and restaurants. (36) MOL and ICBF also directed public awareness campaigns in the Bogotá-Medellín corridor through the initiative “Let’s Stop This” (“ <i>Ponle Freno</i> ”). Government leaders conducted a number of engagements along this route with the hospitality and transport sectors as well as civil society organizations to raise awareness of child commercial sexual exploitation. (4,77)
National Strategy for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons	Aims to prevent human trafficking by raising awareness of the crime’s red flags, providing immediate assistance to victims, promoting inter-institutional collaboration, strengthening and developing international cooperation mechanisms, and creating a data-gathering mechanism. (78) Established by Decree No. 1036 in 2016 and led by the Inter-agency Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons. (79) The Inter-agency Committee approved the continued use of the 2016–2018 strategy while the next National Strategy (2018–2022) is in the development phase. (46) Throughout 2019, NGOs were an integral part of the process to design the next strategy. (36)
National Policy for the Prevention of Recruitment, Use, and Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents by Illegal Armed Groups or Organized Criminal Groups (2018–2028)†	Directs actions to prevent the recruitment and use of children by illegal non-state armed groups. Aims to address violence against children, including the worst forms of child labor, and improve inter-agency coordination. (80) The government also has a Roadmap for the Restoration of Rights, Assistance, and Reparation for Children and Adolescent Victims of the Armed Conflict that establishes protocols to assist child victims of armed conflict and is implemented through inter-institutional mechanisms in various departments. (3,81) In 2019, CIPRUNNA formulated and approved updates to this policy and formally changed its name. In May and October, member agencies trained 208 government officials across 17 municipalities on these updates. (4)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (6,98-100)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2019, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, civil society organizations agree that these programs remain insufficient to fully address child labor.

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Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Campaigns Against Child Labor†	ICBF-led campaigns to increase coordination among ICBF, Child Protection Police, MOL, and municipal authorities on child labor issues, and to promote education about the risks of hazardous work. (83) In 2019, the government began a campaign, “Working for the Children*,” to end child labor in shopping markets. (84) In November, program leaders began public awareness efforts in banana, grain, and fishing markets in the city of Barranquilla, where 180 children joined the program and were returned to school, and their parents were educated on child labor laws. (84) The ICBF produced extensive online resources to educate children on child labor, inform youth on their rights, and the general public on how to report child labor. (85) ICBF also continued the use of Mobile Teams for Comprehensive Protection Child Labor (EMPLs), which, between January and October 2019, conducted 1,389 day-long awareness-raising programs to prevent child labor in 176 municipalities across the country and identified 2,466 children engaged in child labor. (4,86) ICBF worked with families and local authorities to remove these children from child labor. (4) EMPLs also implemented the “One Hour Against Child Labor” program in 152 educational institutions nationwide to train teachers and students on child labor issues. (4)
Projects Addressing Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children‡	As part of the National Strategy for the Prevention of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, the Colombian government maintains an “Eyes Everywhere” (“Ojos en Todas Partes”) public awareness campaign, which aims to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children in the tourism sector. Led by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, and Tourism, and implemented in coordination with ICBF and the National Tourism Fund. (1,21,25,87) In 2019, the government expanded the “Eyes Everywhere” campaign to local municipalities in the Medellín-Bogotá corridor, raising awareness at the community level. (77)
Projects Addressing Trafficking in Persons‡	Eye on Trafficking aims to increase awareness of human trafficking among high school students, and School Environments in Coexistence and Peace focuses on identifying potential trafficking victims. (2) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ campaign, “Do Not Ignore Trafficking” (#AnteLaTrataNoSeHaga), is directed at border populations with limited access to digital platforms. (88) In May and October 2019, approximately 480 consulate officials were trained under this campaign. (36) As part of the “This is a Story” (#EsoEsCuento) campaign in 2019, the Attorney General’s office trained 360 Colombian migration officials, 100 airport officials, 140 police officers, and various other officials on trafficking in persons, including warning signs, sexual violence against minors and women, and how to address potential cases when found during the course of work. (36)
Model for Identification of Child Labor Risks	Pilot project led by ILO’s Regional Initiative: Latin America and the Caribbean Free of Child Labor. Aims to design a system that classifies territories according to their probability of risk for child labor and identifies the principal factors associated with this risk based on existing databases in participating countries. (89) Nearly every country in Latin America participates in the initiative. (90) In October 2019, ILO held a meeting in Lima on the regional initiative’s focal points, in which officials from the Colombian MOL spoke about the Child Labor Risk Identification Model as part of the country’s national plan for development. The government implemented the model throughout the reporting period. (91)
Development for Social Prosperity Programs‡	More Families in Action (<i>Más Familias en Acción</i>) uses a conditional cash transfer program to combat poverty and build human capital; United Network (<i>Red Unidos</i>) coordinates actions to reduce inequality and end extreme poverty; Healthy Generations (<i>Generaciones con Bienestar</i>) operates a children’s rights program offering cultural and recreational activities for children ages 6 to 17 identified as vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor; and Youth in Action (<i>Jóvenes en Acción</i>) provides technical job training and conditional cash transfers to vulnerable urban youth ages 16 to 24. (92-99) In 2019, under the Healthy Generations program, the government implemented a specialized line of programming to prevent child labor, identifying 90 municipalities for child labor prevention efforts, with participation of 25,363 children and adolescents. (4)
USDOL-Funded Projects	We Are a Treasure (<i>Somos Tesoro</i>), a \$11.25 million, 7-year project to combat child labor and promote safe work in the mining sector, implemented by PACT, Inc., in partnership with the Alliance for Responsible Mining, <i>Mi Sangre</i> Foundation, and the Fund for Environmental Action and Childhood; Preventing and Reducing Child Labor and Forced Labor in Palm Oil Supply Chains (<i>Palma Futuro</i>), a \$6 million project implemented by Partners of the Americas that works to improve the implementation of social compliance systems that promote acceptable conditions of work and the prevention and reduction of child and forced labor in palm oil supply chains; <i>Colombia Avanza</i> , a \$2 million Partners of the Americas project that focuses on building the capacity of civil society to more adequately combat child labor and other abuses in Colombia’s coffee sector; Cooperation on Fair, Free and Equitable Employment (COFFEE), a \$2 million project implemented by Verite to help businesses establish systems to prevent, detect, and eliminate child labor and other forms of exploitation from their supply chains; Building the Capacity of Civil Society to Combat Child Labor and Improve Working Conditions in Colombia (<i>Pilares</i>), a \$2 million project implemented by PACT that strengthens the capacity of civil society organizations to detect and address child labor and working conditions in gold mining; Measurement, Awareness-Raising, and Policy Engagement (MAP16) Project on Child Labor and Forced Labor, a \$2.4 million project implemented by the ILO that improves knowledge on these issues through data-driven techniques, strengthens policies and improves government capacity, and strengthens partnerships to accelerate progress. Continues to work with the Ministry of Labor on the Electronic Case Management System, virtual training campus for labor inspectors, and supporting strategic compliance planning, and strengthening fine collection; Equal Access to Quality Jobs for Women and Girls in Agriculture (EQUAL), a \$5 million project in support of the Women’s Global and Prosperity Initiative implemented by PACT. The project is aimed at reducing the risk of child labor, forced labor, and other violations of labor rights by empowering vulnerable women and girls working in the production of unrefined brown sugar (panela) and the cut flowers sector and promoting better understanding of labor rights; and Building a Generation of Safe and Healthy Workers, a \$11 million global project implemented by the ILO with Colombia as one of eight countries that works to promote the safety and health of young workers. Additional information is available on the USDOL website.

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Colombia.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (6,9,117-120,123,124)

In 2019, the National Police implemented “Open Your Eyes” (“*Abre Tus Ojos*”), a public awareness and child protection program to combat child labor and promote attendance in the educational system for children who may be involved in street work. (10) The Colombian Network Against Child Labor (*Red Colombia Contra el Trabajo Infantil*) also continued its work throughout the reporting period, including by collaborating with MOL on activities dedicated to the protection of legal adolescent work. (10) Despite these efforts, research indicates that existing social programs are insufficient to address the scope of the worst forms of child labor problem in Colombia. (10)

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 Colombia (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Raise the minimum age for work to the age up to which education is compulsory.	2018 – 2019
Enforcement	Ensure that all labor inspectors have sufficient resources, especially in rural areas, to perform inspections.	2009 – 2019
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO’s technical advice.	2009 – 2019
	Publish information on labor law enforcement efforts, including the number of inspections conducted, child labor violations found, and penalties imposed that were collected for child labor violations.	2009 – 2019
	Publish information on the number of child labor violations found, whether labor inspectors receive training on new laws and refresher courses, and whether new criminal investigators receive initial training.	2018 - 2019
	Ensure that criminal law enforcement officials have sufficient resources to enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor.	2014 – 2019
	Collect and publish data on penalties and sentencing for crimes related to the commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking of children.	2018 – 2019
Coordination	Ensure that criminal investigators of crimes related to the worst forms of child labor receive training.	2019
	Ensure that all coordinating working groups addressing child labor are active and accomplishing their mandates.	2019
	Ensure that government efforts on human trafficking victim identification and assistance are adequately coordinated between agencies.	2018 – 2019
Social Programs	Ensure that children are protected from armed conflict while at school.	2013 – 2019
	Expand efforts to improve access to education for all children, particularly for indigenous and Afro-Colombian children, including by improving transportation infrastructure, building more schools in rural areas, and increasing the number of teachers.	2013 – 2019

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