

Dominican Republic

MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2019, the Dominican Republic made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Labor significantly increased the number of labor inspectors from 148 inspectors in 2018 to 205 inspectors in 2019. The Progressing with Solidarity program also supported over 300,000 households with school-aged children and the government expanded the Extended School Day program which covered over 75 percent of the nation's schoolchildren as of December 2019. However, children in the Dominican Republic 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 agriculture. Other gaps remain, including limited human and financial resources for the enforcement of child labor laws, especially with regards to preventing children from engaging in harmful work in the agricultural sector and commercial sexual exploitation. Labor inspectors also lack the authority to assess penalties for violations related to child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in the Dominican Republic engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-5) Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. (6-8) Table I provides key indicators on children's work and education in the Dominican Republic.

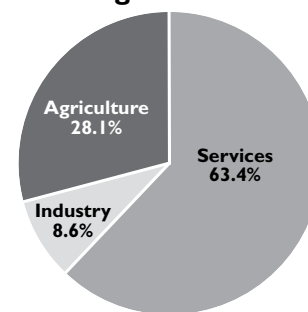
Table I. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10 to 14	2.1 (21,968)
Attending School (%)	10 to 14	98.4
Combining Work and School (%)	10 to 14	2.0
Primary Completion Rate (%)		93.1

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2018, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020. (9)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Encuesta Nacional de Fuerza de Trabajo (ENFT), 2014. (10)

Figure I. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14



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	Clearing land for sugarcane production, planting and harvesting sugarcane,† and collecting cut cane† (11-13)
	Producing coffee, cocoa, rice, tomatoes, bananas, beans, corn, garlic, onions, and potatoes (4,14-19)
	Fishing† (16,20)
Industry	Producing baked goods (6,17)
	Construction,† activities unknown (4,8)
Services	Street work, including vending,† shoe shining, begging, washing car windows, and transporting packages in markets (1,4,16,17,20-24)
	Working in beauty salons, restaurants, bars,† and coffee shops (6,25)
	Working in woodworking shops, auto repair shops, and welding shops (4,8,14,15,17,22)
	Scavenging in landfills (17,22,26)
	Domestic work (1,2,4,6,17,24)

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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 domestic work, agriculture, construction, street vending, and begging, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,4)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-4,13,27,28)
	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4,27)

† 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.

Children in the Dominican Republic are victims of commercial sexual exploitation, particularly in coastal, tourist locations. The porous border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic has allowed some Haitian children to be trafficked into the Dominican Republic, where they have been engaged in commercial sexual exploitation and forced to work in agriculture, domestic work, street vending, or begging. (1,2,13,22,27,29) Some children, including Haitian children and Dominican-born children of Haitian descent, work in agricultural production, often alongside their parents, and live in communities that frequently lack basic services, including schools. (11-13,21,30-32)

Many Dominican-born persons of Haitian descent, including children, continue to remain in undocumented status because of the 2013 Constitutional Tribunal Judgement. This judgment retroactively revised the Dominican Republic’s citizenship transmission laws, providing that children born to non-citizens in the Dominican Republic after 1929 are not citizens of the Dominican Republic. Many of those of Haitian descent affected by the Judgment were not able to obtain legal residency documents under Law 169-14 or the National Regularization Plan. (21) Up to December 2019, the last date for which information is available, approximately 26,000 of an estimated 135,000 Dominican-born individuals, most of which were of Haitian descent, affected by the 2013 Constitutional Tribunal judgement had citizenship reinstated. (21,33) The government also issued identity documentation, but not yet citizenship, to approximately 8,700 people who could prove they were born in the Dominican Republic prior to 2013 but had never registered their birth. (21,32,34-39) Some Dominican-born children of Haitian descent have been deported. (40) Children of undocumented migrant parents, many of Haitian descent, are particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation because they may lack birth or residency documents. This increases the likelihood that undocumented children may be denied access to education or may be engaged in child labor, including its worst forms, as labor inspectors may not be able to verify their ages. (1,4,5,26,27,30,41-42) In addition, Haitian children who remain in the Dominican Republic after their parents have been repatriated to Haiti due to their undocumented status are more vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. (30,43)







National law guarantees free public education, requires that all children attend school until age 18, and prohibits the exclusion of children from the educational system based on a lack of identity documents. (44-47) Parents are also instructed to obtain birth registration documents for their children and the Ministry of Education provides free legal services to help parents obtain identity documents. In addition, national policy allows undocumented children to enroll in school. (48) The Ministry of Education’s Office of Community Participation is the point of contact to handle school denial cases for children without identity documents and has reissued a directive to public schools noting all children must be allowed to attend school, regardless of their documentation. Parents may also appeal to the district government or the Ministry of Education’s regional office if their child is denied educational access. (19,34,35,48,49) In addition, during the reporting period, the Ministry of Education conducted public awareness-raising campaigns about school registration and the right to education for all children. Research did not identify cases of children without identity documents being denied access to education during the reporting period. (19,34,35,48,49) However, the Ministry of Education’s current Operations Manual of Public Education Centers incorrectly requires school administrators to request children to present identity documents to enroll in school. (50) Moreover, the Ministry of Education requires that students have a birth certificate on file to issue a high school diploma. As a result, children without identity documents are unable to prove that they have completed high school. (51,52)

Teacher shortages and a lack of school infrastructure create barriers to accessing education in the Dominican Republic. In addition, a high percentage of students drop out at the primary and secondary levels. (2,21,53-55) These issues particularly affect children living in rural areas and in communities predominantly of Haitian descent. Sources also indicate that some children of Haitian descent face discrimination by teachers and peers, travel long distances to schools, and are unable to afford school fees and supplies. (2,21,53-55)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Dominican Republic 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 has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in the Dominican Republic's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibition of military recruitment by non-state armed groups.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Article 245 of the Labor Code; Article 40 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (46,56) Article 56.1 of the Constitution (47)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Sections 1–2 of the Resolution on Hazardous Work for Persons Under Age 18; Article 251 of the Labor Code (31,56)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 1–3 of the Resolution on Hazardous Work for Persons Under Age 18 (31)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	No		Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Articles 25 and 409 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents; Articles 40–41 and 62.2 of the Constitution (46,57,58)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Articles 25 and 409 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents; Article 41 of the Constitution (46,57,58)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Articles 25 and 408–411 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents; Article 3 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Article 24 of the Law on Technological Crime; (46,57,59) Article 56.1 of the Constitution (47)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 85 of the Law on Drugs and Controlled Substances (60)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes*	18	Articles 26 and 96–97 of the Organic Armed Forces Law (61)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes*		Articles 96–97 and 231–232 of the Organic Armed Forces Law (61)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	14‡	Article 63 of the Constitution; Articles 33, 35, 37, and 40 of the Organic Law of Education (44,58)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 63 of the Constitution; Articles 33, 35, 37, and 40 of the Organic Law of Education; Ministry of Education Circular No. 18 of 2011; Articles 45–46 of the Code for the Protection of Children and Adolescents (44-46,58)

* No conscription (61)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (44,58)

Laws related to forced labor are not sufficient because they do not criminally prohibit forced labor except when it results from human trafficking. (46,57,58) In addition, the prohibition against child trafficking is insufficient because it requires threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking. (57) While the Code for the Protection of Boys, Girls and Adolescents criminally prohibits accepting, offering, or transferring children without requiring threats, the use of force, or coercion as an element, it does not criminally prohibit the recruitment or harboring of children. (46) The law does not sufficiently prohibit commercial sexual exploitation, as the procurement of children for commercial sexual exploitation is not criminally prohibited. (46,47,57,59).

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 Labor (MT, as per its initials in Spanish) 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 (MT)	Leads efforts to eliminate child labor; conducts labor inspections, and oversees the Child Labor Directorate. Refers children found in exploitative conditions to social services, mainly the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI). (21,22,62,63)
Office of the Attorney General (AG)	Prosecutes crimes involving children, including criminal violations related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and other worst forms of child labor. Oversees the Special Prosecutor for Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking, which receives notifications of alleged violations related to the worst forms of child labor through a hotline. (5,13,27,64,65)
National Police's Trafficking in Persons Unit and the Directorate of Migration	Enforces criminal laws, including those prohibiting the worst forms of child labor, and coordinates with the AG in the prosecution of perpetrators. Under the Ministry of the Interior. (13,16,27,65) From 2018 to 2019, organized 10 workshops in 5 provinces and 3 municipalities. (66) In 2019, with support from external funding, the Ministry of Interior and the National Police signed an agreement with an NGO to promote awareness and prevent human trafficking at the community and provincial levels, including producing materials in Spanish and Creole to be used in Haina and San Cristóbal municipalities. (5)
Specialized Corps for Tourist Safety (CESTUR)	Prevents child sex abuse and commercial sexual exploitation in tourist areas, rescues child victims, and arrests and brings to justice child sex offenders. Overseen by the Ministry of Defense. (13)
Local Vigilance Committees	Prevent child labor at the local level by alerting law enforcement of activities linked to child labor, directing victims of child labor to social services, and working closely with the National Steering Committee to Eliminate Child Labor (CDN) to raise awareness of child labor. (18,67) In 2019, an additional 9 Local Vigilance Committees were created in high risk municipalities, for a total of 49 Local Vigilance Committees nationwide. (68-70)
National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI)	Develops and implements policies and programs to eradicate all forms of violence against children, including child labor, and improve the employability of young people. Coordinates with the MT to protect children against labor exploitation and enforce labor laws. (21,64)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2019, labor law enforcement agencies in the Dominican Republic took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, limitations on the MT's authority, including the authority to assess penalties, may hinder adequate labor law enforcement.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$4.8 million (71,72)	\$5.1 million (4)
Number of Labor Inspectors	148 (19)	205 (4,33)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (19,56)	No (4,56)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (19)	Yes (4)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (19)	N/A (4)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (19)	Yes (4)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	75,751 (71)	76,405 (4)
Number Conducted at Worksite	75,751 (71)	76,405 (4)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	31† (19)	30‡ (4)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	31† (19)	30‡ (4)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (19)	Unknown (4)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (19)	Yes (4)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (19)	Yes (4)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (19)	Yes (4)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (19)	Yes (4)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (19)	Yes (4)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (19)	Yes (4)

† Data are from January 1, 2018 to November 30, 2018. (19)

‡ Data are from January 1, 2019 to November 30, 2019. (4)

In 2019, for the first time during the sugarcane harvest season, labor inspectors were present and available to respond to questions at worker orientation sessions at all of the major employers in the industry. During the reporting period, the MT employed 205 full-time labor inspectors, which is a significant increase from 2018. (4) Even so, that number of labor inspectors is insufficient for the size of the Dominican Republic's workforce, which includes over 4.7 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, the Dominican Republic would employ about 315 labor inspectors. (73-75)

Labor inspectors are authorized to reinspect worksites to ensure violations are remedied. However, re-inspections occur less frequently and are more difficult and less consistent in remote rural areas. (56,76) In addition, evidence suggests that some inspection reports do not set a timeframe for the remediation of the violations identified. (77) The MT is not authorized to assess penalties. (19,56,72)

The 2008 General Inspection Protocol and the 2011 Inspection Protocol for Agriculture instruct inspectors to assess child labor violations by reviewing workers' identity documents and employers' records, making observations, and conducting interviews. (76) Yet, the MT indicated improvements could be made with respect to how inspectors conduct interviews, ask follow-up questions, and use inspection data to strengthen the inspection system, in order to ascertain the ages of workers and guarantee that children under the age of 18 are not participating in dangerous unhealthy work. Moreover, reports indicate in some cases, Spanish-speaking inspectors working without translation assistance have been responsible for interviewing Creole-speaking workers with limited or no Spanish-language abilities, which may have hindered those inspections. (16)

From January through November 2019, the MT conducted 76,405 labor inspections, including 5,893 targeted child labor inspections in high-risk sectors, including agriculture, construction, and mining. The MT reported finding 30 child labor violations. (4) The MT also reported that 345 children and adolescents were identified

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through labor inspections in rural and urban areas and were removed from child labor and received social services. (5) Research indicates that inspections are not always conducted in a timely manner after requests are made. In addition, evidence suggests that inspection reports often contain errors and contradictions that undermine the credibility of these reports. (25,77,78) Reports also indicate that substandard labor inspections, incomplete labor inspection reports, and a lack of prosecutorial resources have hindered the ability of the Office of the Attorney General (AG) to pursue prosecutions on criminal matters involving child labor issues. (78)

A formal referral mechanism allows the MT to refer child labor victims found during labor inspections to the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI) for social services. (18-20)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in the Dominican Republic 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, such as the lack of publicly available enforcement information, coordination among agencies, as well as human and financial resources.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (19)	Yes (4)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (19)	N/A (4)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (19)	Yes (4)
Number of Investigations	10 (19,79)	Unknown (4)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (19)	0 (4)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (19)	0 (4)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (19)	Unknown (4)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (85)	Unknown (4)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (19)	Yes (4)

In 2019, the Government of the Dominican Republic collaborated with the International Justice Mission to investigate three sex trafficking cases involving minor victims. In addition, with financial support from the European Union, the National Institute of Migration commissioned four research projects on trafficking in persons. (5) The government also reported that it opened five investigations for commercial sexual exploitation of minors, and convicted three German citizens of commercial sexual exploitation of minors. (5) Despite this information, the total number of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions related to the worst forms of child labor is unknown. (5,19)

Reports indicate the capacity of enforcement agencies to identify, investigate, and prosecute criminal cases related to human trafficking is limited due to a lack of human and financial resources. (5,16,27,49) In addition, reports indicate coordination between the MT and the AG has been limited mainly due to a lack of an appropriate case tracking system. Reports also indicate that some cases referred to the AG by the MT are not subsequently investigated and prosecuted by the AG. (5,8,78,81) The government also reported two incidents in which investigators, assigned to the office of the Special Prosecutor for Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking, were accused of complicity or abuse of a victim in human trafficking crimes. Investigations were still ongoing during the reporting period. (5)

During the reporting period, the Inter-Agency Commission Against Trafficking in Persons (CITIM), UNICEF, CONANI, the AG, and the Dominican airport agency AERODOM, continued their campaign against sexual exploitation and abuse of minors at several airports in the country. Despite these efforts, reports indicate that CONANI does not have the resources, facilities, and institutional capacity to meet the demand for services nationwide. (1,2,5,7,79,82)

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 insufficient funding for key coordinating bodies to carry out their mandates.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee to Eliminate Child Labor (CDN)	Develops policies, approves programs, and coordinates, monitors, and evaluates efforts to combat child labor in the Dominican Republic. Overseen by the MT and comprising ministerial representatives, labor unions, private sector representatives, and NGOs. (21,22,63,83) Oversees system for referring children found during inspections to appropriate social services. (4) In 2019, participated in a World Day Against Child Labor with several other countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. (84)
Inter-Agency Commission Against Trafficking in Persons (CITIM)	Coordinates efforts to combat human trafficking and is responsible for developing and implementing national plans. Led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and comprises 14 government agencies, including the MT and law enforcement agencies. (27,72,86) In 2019, coordinated and led the consultation process with government agencies, NGOs, and international organizations for the modification of Law 137-03 that sanctions trafficking in persons. (5) Also collaborated with the AG, UNICEF, and the Dominican airport agency (AERODOM) to conduct an awareness-raising campaign in airports to educate the public about the penalties for crimes involving the commercial sexual exploitation of children. (87)
Social Policies Coordination Cabinet	Coordinates all social policies and conditional cash transfer programs, such as the Progressing with Solidarity (PROSOLI) program. Led by the Vice President. (16) In 2019, collaborated with Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab to track and study PROSOLI's program participants. (88)

Evidence suggests that the Local and Municipal Committees of the National Steering Committee to Eliminate Child Labor (CDN) face limitations in their coordination efforts due to a lack of financial resources to adequately carry out their mandates. (19)

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 insufficient funding for implementation.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Strategic Plan to Eradicate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (PEN) (2006–2020)	Identifies the roles and responsibilities of government agencies and municipal representatives in eradicating the worst forms of child labor. Prioritizes prevention, protection, assistance, and the progressive eradication of the worst forms of child labor. (16,62,94) During the reporting period, the ILO supported MT to continue implementation of PEN. (4)
Roadmap Toward the Elimination of Child Labor in the Dominican Republic (2016–2020)	Aims to eliminate child labor by 2020 and sets targets and indicators for poverty reduction, health, education, institutional coordination, awareness raising, and information sharing. (2,20,63,95) During the reporting period, MT worked with other government ministries and the ILO to implement the roadmap. (4)
National Action Plan against Human Trafficking and Illicit Smuggling of Migrants (2017–2020)	Identifies the roles and responsibilities of government agencies in preventing and combating trafficking in persons and assisting trafficking victims. In 2019, CITIM began implementation of the plan. (5,19,86,87)
Education Pact (2014–2030)	Includes strategies to combat child labor and seeks to improve the quality of, and access to, primary and secondary education by increasing attendance and graduation rates and enrolling more students in the Extended School Day Program. (96,97) Implemented by the Ministry of Education and supported by the World Bank. In 2019, the plan was active and reportedly met or exceeded its targets for the year. (98)
National Development Strategy 2030	Aims to reduce poverty and inequality and includes programs that aim to combat child labor, provide universal education to all children, and expand access to secondary school, including for students without identity documents. Implemented by the Ministry of Economy. (20,53,99) During the reporting period, the government continued to dedicate 4 percent of GDP to education as indicated by the National Development Strategy. (4,19,100)

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

Insufficient allocation of resources has slowed efforts to fully implement key policies related to child labor, including conducting planned activities in a timely manner. (1,101)

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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, gaps exist in these social programs, including the adequacy of efforts to address the problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
USDOL-Funded Projects	USDOL-funded projects that aim to eliminate child labor include Project to Reduce Child Labor and Improve Working Conditions in Agriculture in the Dominican Republic (FORMITRA) (2017–2021), a \$5 million project implemented by the ILO to support the efforts of the Government of the Dominican Republic to address child labor and strengthen labor law enforcement in agriculture; and From Protocol to Practice: A Bridge to Global Action on Forced Labor (2015–2019), a global project implemented by the ILO to support global and national efforts to combat forced labor of adults and children under the 2014 ILO Protocol and supporting Recommendation to C. 29 on Forced Labor. In the Dominican Republic, aims to build the capacity of the MT to enforce laws and regulations related to forced labor and improve data management systems. (102-104) In 2019, FORMITRA began development of an Electronic System for Labor Inspection Case Management. (105) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.
Progressing with Solidarity (PROSOLI)†	Government program that provides conditional cash transfers to low-income families to increase children's school attendance and reduce child labor. (2,54,106,107) In 2019, PROSOLI's School Attendance and School Subsidy Incentives in 2019 supported 116,296 households with school-age children, while its School Progress through Study Incentives supported 191,273 households with school-age children. (108) Although previous reports indicated PROSOLI required program participants to present identity documentation to access program benefits, PROSOLI provides legal assistance to participants to obtain identity documentation. (19)
Extended School Day Program (<i>Jornada Escolar Extendida</i>)†	Ministry of Education program to extend school hours to a full day (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) to improve educational achievement and reduce child labor. (1,109) As of December 2019, the program covered over 75 percent of the nation's schoolchildren and is aiming to provide coverage nationwide by the end of 2020. (4,8,19,81)
Line 700 Hotline†	Office of the First Lady's free hotline to enable citizens to report cases of the worst forms of child labor. Active in 2019. (113,114)
UNICEF Country Program (2018–2022)	\$15.4 million UNICEF-funded program that supports the government's efforts to improve education, health, social inclusion, and protection for children in the Dominican Republic. Includes projects to increase birth registration rates and build the capacity of relevant government agencies to protect children, especially those without identity documents, from violence, sexual exploitation, and trafficking in persons. (2,54,115)

† Program is funded by the Government of the Dominican Republic.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (14,115-117)

In 2019, in an effort to improve the national education system, the government allocated 4 percent of the national GDP in its budget for primary and secondary education for the seventh consecutive year. (1,2,4,8,20) Although the Dominican Republic has programs that target the worst forms of child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, particularly to address commercial sexual exploitation of children and harmful work in the agricultural sector. (1,2)

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 the Dominican Republic (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits forced labor.	2019
	Ensure that laws prohibiting child trafficking do not require threats, the use of force, or coercion as elements of the crime.	2019
	Ensure that the procurement of children for commercial sexual exploitation is criminally prohibited.	2019
	Criminally prohibit the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2019
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors in accordance with the ILO's technical advice to provide adequate coverage of the workforce, especially in remote rural areas.	2009 – 2019
	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties and ensure that they are severe enough to deter violations.	2015 – 2019

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Improve case tracking so that labor inspectors are able to promptly follow up on violation remediation to improve enforcement of laws prohibiting child labor and discourage the use of child labor by employers.	2012 – 2019
	Establish a system to verify the age of young workers to better protect children without birth certificates or other legal documentation from exploitation.	2012 – 2019
	Ensure that labor inspectors are able to communicate with Creole-speaking workers, including those who may be underage, to adequately conduct inspections for child labor violations.	2012 – 2019
	Improve training of inspectors to increase the quality of interviews with employers and workers, gather consistent documentation, conduct timely re-inspection to ensure compliance, and use inspection data to enable prosecution.	2012 – 2019
	Publish information on the number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected, and the number of criminal law enforcement investigations conducted, violations found, prosecutions initiated, and convictions secured.	2009 – 2019
	Increase the human and financial resources to ensure adequate criminal law enforcement related to child labor.	2009 – 2019
	Improve coordination and case tracking systems between the Ministry of Labor and the Office of the Attorney General to ensure that violations are adequately investigated and prosecuted.	2013 – 2019
	Ensure that government officials are not complicit in facilitating the worst forms of child labor and ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted in accordance with the law.	2019
	Ensure that the National Council for Children and Adolescents has sufficient resources and facilities to provide the necessary care for victims of child labor.	2015 – 2019
Coordination	Ensure that the Inter-Institutional Commission Against Child Abuse and Commercial Sexual Exploitation is active.	2019
	Ensure that the National Steering Committee to Eliminate Child Labor's Local and Municipal Committees have sufficient resources to effectively coordinate efforts to address child labor.	2013 – 2019
Government Policies	Ensure that appropriate funding exists to effectively implement and coordinate policies related to child labor.	2009 – 2019
Social Programs	Increase efforts to issue identity documents to all children to reduce their vulnerability to labor exploitation.	2011 – 2019
	Address the specific educational needs of vulnerable populations, including unaccompanied migrant children, children of parents who have been deported, and undocumented children.	2011 – 2019
	Increase school infrastructure and teacher availability, especially in rural areas, remove supply and school-related fees, and expand efforts to reduce discrimination in schools.	2011 – 2019
	Ensure that children without birth certificates or identity documents are not prevented from enrolling in schools, as permitted by Dominican law.	2017 – 2019
	Expand social protection programs, particularly for child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and harmful agricultural work.	2010 – 2019

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