

In 2019, the Philippines made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The President signed Executive Order No. 92 institutionalizing the National Council Against Child Labor to help further implement the Philippines Program Against Child Labor Strategic Framework. The government also permanently closed nine establishments found to be in violation of child labor laws, and launched the 6-year #SaferKidsPH campaign, which aims to strengthen the investigation and prosecution of cases of online commercial sexual exploitation of children. Additionally, through new Republic Act No. 11310, the government institutionalized the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, which is a conditional cash transfer program that focuses on reducing child labor. However, children in the Philippines engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in armed conflict. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture and gold mining. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, it did not adequately protect children allegedly engaged in drug trafficking from inappropriate incarceration, penalties for crimes they were forced to commit, or physical harm. Additionally, research was unable to find evidence that the government investigated police officers accused of extrajudicial killings of children during anti-drug operations in 2019. The enforcement of child labor laws remains challenging, especially due to the limited number of inspectors, lack of resources for inspections, and inspectors' inability to assess penalties.



### I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in the Philippines engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in armed conflict. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture and gold mining. (1-3,4-7) The Survey on Children indicated that 3.2 million children ages 5 to 17 engage in child labor, of whom approximately 3 million engage in hazardous work. (10) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in the Philippines.

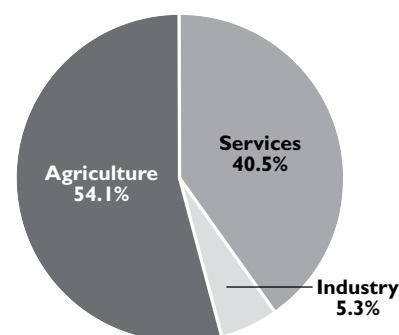
**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	7.5 (1,549,677)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	93.7
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	7.8
Primary Completion Rate (%)		108.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2017, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2020. (11)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Survey on Children (SIMPOC), 2011. (12)

**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.

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**Table 2. Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity**

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Production of sugarcane,† including growing, weeding,† harvesting,† cutting,† and carrying sugarcane bundles† (1-3,6,7,13-15)
	Growing bananas, coconuts, corn, rice, rubber, and tobacco (1,6,7,13,14,16)
	Hog farming (13,14)
	Production of palm oil, including harvesting,† hauling,† and loading palm oil fruits (1,13)
	Deep-sea fishing† (6,7,13,17)
Industry	Mining† and quarrying,† including for gold and nickel (1,4,6,7,17,18)
	Manufacturing pyrotechnics† (6,7,17,21)
	Construction,† activities unknown (6,7,22,23)
	Production of fashion accessories (6,7,21)
Services	Domestic work (6,7,14)
	Street work, including scavenging, selling flowers, and begging (3,6,7,24-26)
	Scavenging in dumpsites† and in rivers (17,27,28)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, including use in the production of pornography, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (6,7,26,29-33,34)
	Forced labor, including domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (7,29,34)
	Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict (6,7,35)
	Forced begging (6,7,26,36)
	Use in illicit activities, including in the distribution, procurement, and sale of drugs, including methamphetamine ( <i>shabu</i> ) (6,7,26,36-38)

† 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, primarily girls, are trafficked domestically from rural communities to urban centers and tourist destinations for the purpose of domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation. (31,32,34,39) Research indicates that the Philippines continues to be one of the top global Internet sources of online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC), which continues to be a highly profitable and growing sector. (33,34,40-42) Children are induced to perform sex acts at the direction of paying foreigners and local Filipinos, including family members, for live Internet broadcasts that usually take place in small Internet cafes, private homes, or windowless dungeon-like buildings commonly known as “cybersex dens.” (6,7,32-34,41-48) NGOs reported an increase in the number of sex tourists visiting the Philippines after first initiating contact with their victims online. (34) According to data from OSEC cases analyzed by the International Justice Mission Philippines, the median age of the victims at the time of rescue was 11 years. (6,32,34,49,50) In addition, according to 2019 data, the Philippines Department of Justice’s Office of Cybercrimes received more than 45,000 reports of online child abuse and cybercrimes from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children; research could not confirm the number of these reports that were confirmed cases of OSEC. (7)

During the reporting period, the government—led by the Anti-Money Laundering Council—conducted a study entitled “Child Pornography in the Philippines: Evaluation using Suspicious Transaction Reports (STR) Data from 2015 to 2018,” which revealed common red flag indicators in financial transactions that may be linked to OSEC. It also demonstrated an increase in child pornography cases from 2015 to 2018. (34)




Recruitment of child soldiers by non-government militias and terrorist organizations, predominately on the southern island of Mindanao, remains a concern. (6,7,33,34,41,35) In Marawi City, many children as young as age 7 were recruited, paid, and trained as fighters by the Maute Group, a terrorist organization linked to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Research also suggests that the New People’s Army, Abu Sayyaf Group, and the Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters continue to recruit children from schools for use as human shields, cooks, and fighters, while offering religious education and material incentives to join. (6,7,33,34) The Government of the Philippines continued to convene formal coordination meetings with the UN on incidents of grave violations against children, to facilitate appropriate responses to such situations. (7,34,51)

The most recent Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey, published in 2015 with 2013 data, indicated that 10.6 percent of all school-aged children did not attend school. (6,52) A more recent survey published in 2018 with 2017 data, the Annual Poverty Indicator Survey, estimated that of the 44 million school-aged children (ages 3 to 19), one-third were not enrolled in or attending school. The highest percentage of children not in school was in the newly formed Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). (7) In an effort to facilitate youth school attendance, the BARMM authorities provided the Ministry of Basic, Higher, and Technical Education the largest share of its budget for calendar year 2020. (7,41) In addition, the Department of Education made improving accessibility and resources for schools in geographically isolated, disadvantaged, and conflict-affected areas a top priority in 2019. (7) It identified nearly 7,200 schools (15 percent) as “Last Miles Schools,” an initiative launched in July 2019 to provide additional resources to needy schools. Schools meeting this criteria must: (a) be located more than 1 hour away from the town center, (b) be only accessible through difficult terrain, (c) have fewer than 4 classrooms, (d) have fewer than 100 students, (e) have indigenous students comprise more than 75 percent of the school’s population, or (f) have little or no educational equipment. (7)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Philippines has ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

**Table 3. Ratification of International Conventions on Child Labor**

Convention	Ratification
 ILO C. 138, Minimum Age	✓
ILO C. 182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
 UN CRC	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
 Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓

The government’s laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards (Table 4).

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 137 of the Labor Code as renumbered; Section 12 of the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act; Section 16 of the Act Instituting Policies for the Protection and Welfare of Domestic Workers (53-55)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 137 of the Labor Code as renumbered; Section 12-D of the Special Protection of Children Against Child Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act (54-56)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Department Order 149 and 149A on Guidelines in Assessing and Determining Hazardous Work in the Employment of Persons Below 18 Years of Age; Sections 12-D and 14 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act (6,56-58)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Sections 4–5 of the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act (56,59)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Sections 3(a), 4(k), 5, and 10 of the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act (56,59)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Section 11 of the Free Internet Access in Public Places Act; Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act; Section 4 of the Anti-Child Pornography Act; Section 4 of the Cybercrime Prevention Act (56,60-62)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act; Sections 5 and 8 of the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act (56,63)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Section 12 of the Providing for the Development, Administration, Organization, Training and Maintenance and Utilization of the Citizen Armed Forces of the Philippines, and for Other Purposes Act (64)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes*		Section 14 of the Providing for the Development, Administration, Organization, Training and Maintenance and Utilization of the Citizen Armed Forces of the Philippines, and for Other Purposes Act (64)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Sections 12-D and 16 of the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation, and Discrimination Act (56)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	18‡	Section 4 of the Enhanced Basic Education Act (65)
Free Public Education	Yes		Section 2 of the Philippine Constitution (66)

\* No conscription (64)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (65)

The minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education.

On January 10, 2019, President Duterte signed into law Republic Act No. 11188 (R.A. No. 11188), Special Protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict. (7,34,41,67) R.A. No. 11188 provides protection for children involved in and affected by armed conflict. (7,68,69) R.A. No. 11188 also requires that the Government of the Philippines take all feasible measures to prevent the recruitment, use, or displacement of children, or grave child rights' violations against children involved in armed conflict. (7,34,41,67-69) On June 4, 2019, the government enacted implementing rules and regulations for R.A. No. 11188. (34,35)

For a second year, the Government of the Philippines reportedly continued reviewing proposed amendments to R.A. No. 9231, that would: (a) increase the minimum age of employment from age 15 to age 16, (b) devolve the issuance of child work permits to local government units, (c) institute stricter working hours for children, (d) mandate that part of the money legally earned by children be set aside in a trust fund, (e) authorize the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to determine the types of non-hazardous agricultural employment or work that children ages 16 to 18 can perform, and (f) design a holistic intervention program for children working in the informal economy. It is unclear what progress was made in 2019 toward passing these amendments. (6,7)

### 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 DOLE that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE): Bureau of Working Conditions (BWC) and Bureau of Workers with Special Concerns (BWSC)	<p><b>BWC</b> enforces child labor and child trafficking laws and regularly trains inspectors and regional personnel. (6,32,34,71) Inspects establishments and monitors compliance with labor laws in the formal sector. (71) Registers DOLE enforcement activities using the Labor Law Compliance System, a management information system. (72) During the reporting period, identified 16 establishments in violation of child labor laws, and subsequently closed 9 of the 16 establishments. In addition, in collaboration with the Department of the Interior and Local Government, hired 2,509 employees, including 301 project-based community facilitators, to supervise all profiling activities, conducted needs assessments, facilitated the provision of necessary services, and monitored the status of child laborers until they were withdrawn from child labor. (7) Also on-boarded 100 new labor inspectors during the reporting period. (7)</p> <p><b>BWSC</b> oversees the Profiling Child Laborers Initiative. (7,73) Mandated to develop policies, programs, and systems that champion the development and protection of disadvantaged workers, by contributing to their decent and productive employment. Provides advisory and technical assistance to the Labor Secretary and Regional Offices. (74) During the reporting period, BWSC continued to profile child laborers nationwide (excluding the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao), with regional DOLE offices profiling 85,582 child laborers as of June 2019. (75) Issued Administrative Order No. 579 on “Revised Guidelines on the Profiling of Child Laborers and Provision of Service to Remove Them from Child Labor.” (42) Also, participated in an advocacy campaign to bring awareness of child labor issues, provided multiple trainings to child profilers and community facilitators on how to encode information, and conducted an orientation program on the issuance of child labor permits to regional and local DOLE offices, as well as to a prominent television station (ABS-CBN). (7)</p>
Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)	<p>Rehabilitates and reintegrates child laborers. Coordinates regional Special Action Units, with at least one dedicated staff member per region to conduct rescue operations for child laborers, and cooperates with social workers to manage ongoing cases. (17) Maintains 16 Crisis Intervention Units to address human trafficking, operates 44 temporary or residential care facilities nationwide (including 24 specifically for child victims of human trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation), and maintains social media accounts to address cases of child abuse and support child abuse victims, including children exploited in hazardous labor. (17,32,34,36,51) Oversees and implements the Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons. (34) During the reporting period, provided assistance to 446 child laborers, including educational and livelihood assistance, birth registration, and counselling services. (7)</p>
Rescue the Child Laborers Quick Action Teams (Sagip Batang Manggagawa—SBM QAT)	<p>Detects, monitors, and rescues child laborers in hazardous, exploitative, or extremely abject working conditions. (6,7,36,76,67) An interagency, quick reaction mechanism that is chaired by DOLE-BWSC. During the reporting period, led 19 rescue operations and removed 44 child laborers from child labor, reflecting a 50 percent increase in operational activity from 2018. (34,42) Since its inception in 1993 through October 2019, rescued a total of 3,656 children from child labor. (42)</p>
Criminal Law Enforcement Agencies: Philippine National Police (PNP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA)	<p><b>PNP</b> investigates and prosecutes cases related to the worst forms of child labor. In the case of the Women and Children’s Protection Center (WCPC), enforces laws on child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children, and has 273 personnel nationwide. (34) During the reporting period, launched a hotline and textline exclusively for cases of online sexual exploitation of children. (34) In addition, conducted two separate trainings on the “Proper Handling of Children at Risk (CAR) and Children in Conflict with the Law (CICL)” reaching 202 police officers, and the “Investigation of Crimes against Women and Children” reaching 115 PNP and WCPC officers. (7,42)</p> <p><b>NBI</b> investigates and prosecutes child labor cases and operates a national Trafficking in Persons Task Force and a Task Force on the Protection of Children from Exploitation and Abuse. (6,77) Oversees the Anti-Human Trafficking Division (AHTRAD), which investigates trafficking and illegal recruitment nationwide. (34)</p> <p><b>PDEA</b> enforces the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act, maintains a national hotline for reporting cases of children used in illicit activities, and coordinates with the DSWD to assist during rescue operations. (6) Between January and September 2019, PDEA rescued 703 children during anti-drug operations nationwide. (7)</p>

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**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (Cont.)**

Organization/Agency	Role
Cybersecurity Law Enforcement Agencies: National Telecommunications Commission, Dept. of Justice—Office of Cybercrime, Philippines Internet Crimes Against Children Center (PICACC),* Dept. of Information and Communication Technology—Cybersecurity Bureau	<p><b>National Telecommunications Commission</b> enforces the Anti-Child Pornography Law. Coordinates with Internet Service Providers to block websites containing pornographic material involving children. (60,78)</p> <p><b>Department of Justice—Office of Cybercrime</b> receives CyberTips reports from the U.S.-based National Center for Missing and Exploited Children regarding potential online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) cases, conducts initial investigation into CyberTips, prioritizes cases, then sends cases to the PNP's Internet Crime Against Children Center for follow-up. (79) Comprises legal and investigative divisions. (79) During the reporting period, acted on 18 National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Priority CyberTipline Reports involving OSEC, which were sent to police for investigation. (34)</p> <p><b>Philippine Internet Crimes Against Children Center (PICACC)</b> aims to combat the online sexual exploitation of children. Comprises the PNPWCPC-Anti-Human Trafficking Division and NBI Anti-Human Trafficking Division, and aims to coordinate WCPC and NBI investigation of Internet crimes against children. (51,80) Coordinates international investigations with the United Kingdom's National Crimes Agency (UK NCA) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP). (33,34,47,80-82) Receives funding from the UK NCA, AFP, and the U.S. Government. (47,81) Launched in February 2019. (34)</p> <p><b>Department of Information and Communication Technology—Cybersecurity Bureau</b> provides preventative technological assistance to law enforcement and protects cybersecurity of Filipino citizens. (83) Oversees an anti-OSEC program comprising awareness-raising programs, computer software, website monitoring, cybersecurity, and a Visible Internet application, a form of artificial intelligence which allows for remote screen access. Shows an educational anti-OSEC video for communities, in collaboration with the Philippines Online Corporation. (83) Coordinates efforts with the Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography, and consults with telecommunications companies and civil society organizations to produce the National Cybersecurity Strategy. (62,83,84) During the reporting period, developed and implemented CyberSafePH, an awareness campaign and capacity-building program with a 3-year roadmap aimed at combating OSEC and cyberbullying. (34) The launch of an online hotline to report OSEC cases in collaboration with the National Computer Emergency Response Team remained pending in 2019. (75)</p>

\* Agency responsible for child labor enforcement was created during the reporting period.

A lack of resources, including staff, is an area of concern within law enforcement agencies because it impedes their ability to act quickly upon complaints of child labor, including OSEC, in both investigations and prosecutions. (34)

### Labor Law Enforcement

In 2019, labor law enforcement agencies in the Philippines took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of DOLE that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including a lack of authority to assess penalties.

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$3,017,240 (6)	\$6,718,800 (7)
Number of Labor Inspectors	610 (6)	710 (7)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (6)	No (54)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (6)	Yes (7)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (6)	Yes (7)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (6)	Yes (7)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	58,091 (6)	70,298 (75)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (6)	Unknown (7)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (6)	Unknown (7)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (6)	Unknown (7)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (6)	Unknown (7)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (6)	Yes (7)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (6)	Yes (7)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (6)	Yes (7)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (6)	Yes (7)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (6)	Yes (7)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (6)	Yes (7)



During the reporting period, DOLE's budget more than doubled due to the approval of additional labor inspector positions and the need to further support regional labor inspectorate operations. (51)

In November 2019, DOLE issued Administrative Order No. 495 (A.O. No. 495) mandating that all regional offices suspend inspection activities during the holiday season – from November 14, 2019 through January 15, 2020 – except for: (a) complaint inspections, (b) occupational safety and health standards investigations, (c) technical safety inspections, and (d) inspection of any establishment or industry as directed by the DOLE Secretary. (7,51) Complaint-based and other special inspections, under which child labor inspections are categorized, were not affected. Routine inspections recommenced on January 15, 2020. (75)

During the reporting period, the Philippine Congress provided the Bureau of Working Conditions (BWC) with an additional \$560,400 in funding for additional trainings for labor inspectors, procurement of personal protective equipment, and additional supplies for enforcement activities. Despite this, enforcement of child labor laws remains challenging due to the lack of resources for inspections and the limited number of inspectors, especially in rural areas where many vendors are unregistered and highly mobile. (6,7,17,36,72) The BWC acknowledged that more specialized training on child labor is needed to enhance labor inspectors' ability to readily identify and act on child labor situations. (7)

The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of the Philippines's workforce, which includes approximately 42 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, the Philippines would employ about 2,852 labor inspectors. (6,85-87)

During the reporting period, the BWC exceeded its initial inspection target of 64,000 by more than 5,000. (7) DOLE's Department Order No. 131-B, Series of 2016 remains in effect, prioritizing the inspection of establishments and workplaces employing children. In addition, the DOLE Secretary identified the following additional priority industries for inspections: (a) construction, (b) manufacturing, (c) agriculture, (d) fishing, (e) Philippines Offshore Gaming Operations, (f) security agencies, and (g) hotels. (7)

Scheduling routine inspections is based on the national target set by the DOLE Central Office, with regional offices implementing their inspections based on factors such as prevailing industries and geographical areas. (6,7,73) Despite this, enforcement of child labor protections is not sufficient for children employed in the informal sector and in small- and medium-size enterprises, particularly in agriculture, due to DOLE's lack of capacity and resources. (6,7,41,88) The Rescue the Child Laborers Quick Action Teams (SBM QATs) are permitted to conduct unannounced compliance visits to video karaoke bars, massage parlors, sauna and bath houses, and farms, but they are not authorized to conduct visits to private homes to search for underage child domestic workers. (6,7,72)

The government did not provide information on its labor law enforcement efforts relating to the number of worksite inspections conducted, number of child labor violations found, number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed, and the number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected.

### **Criminal Law Enforcement**

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in the Philippines took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of criminal law enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including the ongoing government anti-drug campaign, which began in 2016, and did not ensure that children in the worst forms of child labor were protected from inappropriate incarceration, penalties, or physical harm. (41,89-92)

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**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2018	2019
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Unknown (6)	Yes (7)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	No (6)	Yes (7)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (6)	Yes (7)
Number of Investigations	124 (6)	116 (7)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (6)	305 (7)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (6)	54 (7)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (6)	34 (7)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (47)	Yes (7)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (6)	Yes (7)

The government continued its anti-drug campaign, which began in 2016, and did not adequately protect children allegedly engaged in drug trafficking from inappropriate incarceration, penalties, or physical harm. (89,90,93-98) The government attests that 2,799 minors were arrested between July 2016 and November 2019 during anti-drug operations nationwide, of whom 879 were arrested in 2019. (7,51) Of those, 1,556 were identified as drug pushers, 732 as possessors, 353 as users, 139 as drug den visitors, 10 as drug den employees, 7 as drug den maintainers, and 2 as drug cultivators. (7)

According to a leading children’s rights NGO, from January to July 2019, 13 children were victims of extrajudicial killings during law enforcement operations. (7,51) In addition, there were collateral deaths of children caught in the crossfire during police operations connected to the drug war, including a 3-year old whose father was the target. (7,92,99-105) Some high-level government officials suggested that killing suspected drug traffickers and users was necessary to wipe out drug-related crime, increasing the vulnerability of children being used in the drug trade. (92,93,103,106-108) The Philippine National Police (PNP) referred children involved in drug trafficking to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to receive shelter or rehabilitation programs through the Houses of Hope. (6,38) Research was unable to find evidence that the government investigated, prosecuted, or convicted police officers accused of killing children during anti-drug operations in 2019. (109-111)

During the reporting period, two women from Cebu province were given sentences of 21 and 26 years, respectively, for an OSEC crime. Both were arrested after attempting to offer to sexually abuse children online in exchange for money. (112,113)

The International Justice Mission provided Video In-Depth Interview (VIDI) kits to the PNP’s Women and Children’s Protection Center (WCPC) to allow for an overall victim-centered approach during prosecution. The VIDI kits are an innovative case work approach to assisting child victims by reducing the number of forensic interviews and allowing them to avoid physically appearing before a court, thus helping to prevent re-traumatization. (34,51) During the reporting period, the use of VIDI kits protected 91 OSEC victims from appearing in court. (34)

### IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8).



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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Council Against Child Labor (NCACL)*	Formerly the National Child Labor Committee (NCLC) and reorganized after the signing of E.O. No. 92 in 2019. Chaired by DOLE and co-chaired by DSWD. (7,34,114-116) Expanded membership to include seven other government agencies, two members from managerial associations, two members from employee associations, and two members from NGOs working on child labor issues. (7,115) New members will be nominated and serve a 3-year term. (7) Coordinates national efforts to combat child labor and implements the Philippine Program Against Child Labor. (6,67,116,117) Promotes information-sharing at the national, regional, and provincial levels, and tasked with establishing and disseminating a child labor reporting mechanism for use by local and national authorities. (7,34) Held its first meeting in January 2020. (7) During the reporting period, prior to transitioning into the NCACL, the NCLC offered media training to members to improve awareness of child labor policies, celebrated World Day Against Trafficking through awareness campaigns targeting child labor in the agricultural sector, and held a roundtable discussion on proposed amendments to Republic Act (R.A.) No. 9231. (7)
Anti-Trafficking: Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) and Task Force Against Illegal Recruitment, Recruitment of Minor Workers, and Trafficking in Persons	<b>IACAT</b> oversees the 1343 Actionline emergency hotline for trafficking in person victims. (32,118) Coordinates, monitors, and oversees efforts to combat human trafficking, including child trafficking. Chaired by the Department of Justice and co-chaired by DSWD. (6,32-34,51,118) Composed of 11 government agencies and 3 NGOs. (34) Comprises 24 anti-human trafficking task forces, including 16 regional task forces and 8 interagency task forces in major seaports and airports. (17,51,72) During the reporting period, the government increased the budget to \$1.8 million, a 16 percent increase from 2018, with \$61,000 for the operations of the 1343 hotline. (34) In June and November 2019, collaborated with the U.S. Embassy-Manila and International Justice Mission, and provided a training for 132 prosecutors and investigators in combating OSEC. (119,120) In addition, during the reporting period, continued to identify and address gaps in implementation of the Prosecutor's Trafficking in Persons Case Management System (PTCMS), including securing missing information on archived and dismissed cases. (32,33,42) Hired administrative staff in the Regional Task Forces to work specifically on case monitoring and updating of PTCMS. (42) Through Regional Anti-Trafficking Task Forces, conducted 8 trainings specifically designed to train 221 law enforcement officers on how to properly handle OSEC and labor trafficking cases. (7) The <b>Task Force</b> addresses illegal recruitment, recruitment of minor workers, and trafficking in persons. Coordinates all DOLE programs and initiatives and is chaired by DOLE. (6) During the reporting period, created a technical working group to formulate the operational guidelines for the Task Force which will allow it to create standard operating guidelines in addressing reports, complaints, and information on illegal recruitment. Draft standard operating guidelines have been under review since 2018. (121)
Inter-Agency Council Against Child Pornography (IACACP)	Serves as the primary government coordinating mechanism to address child pornography. (6,7) Monitors and implements the Anti-Child Pornography Act (R.A. No. 9775). (7,122) Comprises 12 government agencies and 3 NGOs. (117) Chaired by DSWD. (123) During the reporting period, Guidelines on the Management of Compensation for Victim-Survivors of Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children – which were approved in 2018 but later retracted – continued to be edited and have not been fully implemented. (42)
Children Involved in Conflict: Inter-Agency Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC) and Inter-Agency Committee on Children in Situations of Armed Conflict (IAC-CSAC)	<b>CWC</b> initiates, promotes, and advocates policies and measures protecting children's rights. (6,7) Operates and maintains the Monitoring, Reporting and Response System (MRSS) for reporting incidents of children in armed conflict, including monitoring the six grave child rights violations. (34,121) Received 181 total reports from 2013 to 2019. (121) <b>IAC-CSAC</b> advocates protecting children and preventing the involvement of children in armed conflict. Chaired by the CWC. (34,72,76) Coordinates and monitors the implementation of the Children in Armed Conflict Program Framework. (51,124) Convenes quarterly. Ensures that international instruments, including the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, are referenced in discussions. (124) Formulates guidelines and develops programs – in coordination with concerned agencies – for the handling of children involved in armed conflict, and monitors or documents cases of capture, surrender, arrest, rescue or recovery by government forces. Works closely with applicable agencies in coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the enhanced CSAC program framework. (124) Conducts human rights training, advocacy and information campaigns, and capability building of local government units. Implements a monitoring, reporting, and response system for grave child rights' violations in situations of armed conflict. (124) In 2019, continued to develop an Advocacy and Communication Plan for children in armed conflict, whose drafting began in 2018. (121,124)
Juvenile Justice and Welfare Council	Leads community outreach and education efforts, through offices located throughout the country, to prevent the use of children in illicit activities, including drug trafficking. Manages livelihood, rehabilitation, food, and scholarship programming. (38) Overseen by DSWD. (125) During the reporting period, conducted five council meetings. Additionally, conducted profiling in 55 <i>Bahay Pag-asas</i> nationwide that highlighted areas of improvement, including program delivery and personnel compliance. (126) In May 2019, conducted the first Regional Juvenile Justice and Welfare Committee Summit with 271 participants, including Council members, and regional Juvenile Justice and Welfare Councils (JJWCs), as well as JJWC partners. (126)

\* Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.

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In October 2019, the Government of the Philippines, in collaboration with the Government of Australia, UNICEF, Save the Children Philippines, and the Asia Foundation, launched the #SaferKidsPH campaign. This 6-year campaign aims to strengthen investigation and prosecution of OSEC cases in the country, promote safe online habits for children through awareness campaigns, and improve service delivery for OSEC survivors. (7) Led by the Inter-Agency Council Against Trafficking (IACAT) in conjunction with DSWD, the Department of Information and Communication Technology, and the Department of Education, the #SaferKidsPH campaign will partner with a coalition of government agencies, educational institutions, private companies, and local community members, including parents and children to combat OSEC. (7)

On the sidelines of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly, the Governments of the Philippines, Bahrain, and Nigeria hosted a high-level meeting on combating human trafficking in migration entitled, “Combating Trafficking in Migration Contexts: Best Practices, Challenges, and the Global Compact for Migration.” During the meeting, the Philippine government reiterated its solidarity in the fight against child trafficking, in particular, with fellow UN member states. (127) In November 2019, as part of the 4-year U.S.-Philippines Child Protection Compact Partnership, the two governments held talks related to progress being made in combating OSEC cases, including efforts to “provide comprehensive, trauma-informed care for child victims,” as well as to mark progress in “efforts to prosecute and convict child traffickers.” (128,129)

In May 2019, the Secretary of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) issued Memorandum Circular No. 2019-73, Profiling of Child Laborers, to provide guidelines on the roles of local government units (LGUs) in profiling child laborers. (7,34) The aim is to help LGUs provide all necessary interventions and remove children from child labor situations by: (a) identifying and profiling child laborers and their families, (b) assessing their needs, (c) conducting referrals, (d) providing all necessary services, and (e) monitoring the status of child laborers until they are removed from child labor situations. (7) In addition, as of December 2019, 38,811 barangays have established a Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC), which is tasked with handling concerns related to children. (34)

During its 41st session in 2019, the UN Human Rights Council approved a resolution put forth by Iceland requesting the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights produce a report on potential human rights abuses surrounding the anti-drug operations in the Philippines. (130,131) The report was released in June 2020. (131,132)

## 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
Philippine Program Against Child Labor Strategic Framework (2017–2022)	Aims to gradually reduce violence against children through consultations with government institutions, local and international NGOs, civil society organizations, faith-based groups, professional associations, academia, the private sector, parents, and children. (6,133) Aims to remove at least 630,000 children from child labor by 2022. (75,134) During the reporting period, held events during the nationwide celebration of the 2019 World Day Against Child Labor, including conducting a training on child labor for the Speakers Bureau and Writers Bureau, commencing the profiling of child laborers, and conducting four regular meetings with the former NCLC. (7) Implementation led by DOLE's BWSC. (75,135)

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor (Cont.)**

Policy	Description
Anti-Trafficking Policies: National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons (2017–2021) and Child Protection Compact Partnership (CPC) (2017–2021)	The <b>National Strategic Action Plan Against Trafficking in Persons (Third StratPlan)</b> aims to address labor trafficking and sex trafficking, including OSEC. (136) Chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Justice and co-chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Social Welfare and Development. Employs a multi-stakeholder approach to fight human trafficking. (137) Mandated to prevent and suppress trafficking, and ensure victim recovery, rehabilitation, and reintegration into society via four key result areas: 1. Prevention and Advocacy; 2. Protection, Recovery, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration; 3. Prosecution and Law Enforcement; and 4. Partnership and Networking. (137) Policy was implemented during the reporting period. (51) The <b>Child Protection Compact Partnership</b> , a plan jointly developed with USDOS, seeks to increase prevention efforts and protections for child victims of OSEC and labor trafficking, while holding perpetrators accountable. (118,138) Aims to improve the response to child trafficking, including live-streaming online of child sexual exploitation and child trafficking for labor purposes, by (1) increasing criminal investigations, prosecutions, and convictions; (2) strengthening the government's and civil society's capacities to identify and provide comprehensive services for victims; and (3) strengthening existing community-based mechanisms that identify and protect victims of child trafficking. (118,139,140) The government committed approximately \$800,000 for its implementation. (138,141) During the reporting period, provided additional specialized training, identification and protection of exploited children, and prosecution and conviction of traffickers. (51)
Philippine Development Plan (2017–2022)	Aims to build the socio-economic resilience of individuals and families by reducing their vulnerability to various risks and disasters; this includes the goal of universal social protection for all Filipinos. (5) Aims to reduce the number of children engaged in child labor by 30 percent or about 630,000 children. (117) Policy was implemented during the reporting period. (51)
National Strategic Framework for Plan Development for Children (Child 21) (2000–2025) and 3rd National Plan of Action for Children (2017–2022)	<b>Child 21</b> sets out broad goals for national government agencies, local governments, and NGOs to achieve improved quality of life for Filipino children by 2025. (142) Addresses concerns related to the worst forms of child labor under the section on children in need of special protection. (17) Chaired by the Council for the Welfare of Children. (6) Policy was implemented during the reporting period. (51) <b>3rd National Plan of Action for Children</b> strengthens strategies, policies, and programs for children to achieve Child 21's vision for Filipino children by 2025. (6,51,142,143) Policy was implemented during the reporting period. (7,51)
Philippine Plan of Action to End Violence Against Children (2017–2022)	Multi-sectoral plan to gradually reduce violence against children through consultations with government institutions, local and international NGOs, civil society organizations, faith-based groups, professional associations, academia, the private sector, and parents and children. (7,144) Consistent with Child 21 and the National Plan of Action for Children visions. Policy was implemented during the reporting period. (7)

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (58,146,147)

In September 2019, President Duterte signed Executive Order (E.O.) No.92 institutionalizing the National Council Against Child Labor to help further implement the Philippine Program Against Child Labor Strategic Framework. E.O. No.92 formally changed the name of the National Child Labor Committee to the National Council Against Child Labor. (7,34,41,114-148)

## 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 provision of adequate services for victims of child pornography.

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**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Anti-Child Labor Programs: Child Labor Prevention and Elimination Program†, Livelihood for Parents of Child Laborers (Kabuhayan para sa Magulang ng Batang Manggagawa)†, and Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (Conditional Cash Transfer Program)	<p><b>Child Labor Prevention and Elimination Program</b> is a DOLE anti-child labor program that implements local awareness-raising campaigns, institutes child labor-monitoring mechanisms, and requires neighborhoods to develop child labor elimination plans. (6) Includes a provision of livelihood assistance to parents of child laborers, <i>Sagip Batang Manggagawa</i>, and Project Angel Tree. (6,118) From July to December 2019, profiled a total of 188,577 child laborers and removed 623 children from child labor situations. (7,42) Project Angel Tree is a social service with local government agency benefactors, known as “angels,” who provide educational supplies to communities. (73,149) From January to October 2019, conducted 15 Project Angel Tree gift giving activities, providing school supplies, food packs, toiletries, and other donated items to 7,000 child laborers and children at risk. (42)</p> <p><b>Livelihood for Parents of Child Laborers</b> is a DOLE program that provides livelihood assistance to parents, guardians, or other family members of child laborers. Seeks to prevent and eliminate child labor by providing necessary materials to start a livelihood undertaking. (47) During the reporting period, provided starter kits or materials needed to begin earning money through legitimate means to 3,533 parents of child laborers. (42) To receive this assistance, beneficiaries must pledge to stop allowing children to engage in situations of child labor. (7)</p> <p><b>Conditional Cash Transfer Program</b> is a DSWD program that provides conditional grants, local awareness-raising campaigns, and child labor-monitoring mechanisms to assist poor families with children’s access to health care, adequate nutrition, and education. (6,7,150) Includes a child labor module within the sessions on family development for program participants. (6,36,151) Covers 1,627 cities and municipalities in 79 provinces in all 17 regions. (6,7,72) During the reporting period, raised awareness and combated the prevalence of child labor as being “socially acceptable.” Studies conducted by the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank indicated that this program has aided in child labor reduction efforts. (7,34)</p>
Strategic Helpdesks for Information, Education, Livelihood and Other Developmental Interventions (SHIELD) for Child Laborers†	<p>DSWD-led project implemented in 13 barangays in Catanauan, Labo, Jose Panganiban, Paracale, Kananga, and Ormoc City, with support from the ILO CARING Gold Mining Project. Currently in a 2-year pilot, with official program launch in 2020. (73) During the pilot, from July 2017 to September 2019, removed 407 children from child labor. (75) Comprises three components: (1) Child Labor Local Registry (CLLR); (2) Helpdesk and Convergence of Services; and (3) Advocacy, Organizing, and Capacity Building. (6,151) Focuses on areas with a high child labor incidence rate, with interventions based on data from the Child Labor Local Registry. (151) Focused particularly on eliminating the worst forms of child labor in the small-scale gold mining, deep sea fishing, and sugarcane industries. (6,7,67,152) During the reporting period, compiled profiles of child laborers in 15 barangays in Regions IV-A, V, VIII, and X, which will be used by the Philippine Statistical Development Program. (7,42) As of November 2019, reported having identified 596 child laborers needing assistance, and removing 380 from child labor situations. (7)</p>
Anti-Trafficking Programs: Recovery and Reintegration Program for Trafficked Persons (RRPTP)† and Strengthening Local Systems and Partnerships for More Effective and Sustainable Counter-Trafficking in Persons in the Philippines (Strength CTIP), 2019-2022	<p><b>RRPTP</b> is a DSWD and IACAT program that provides recovery and reintegration services to victims of human trafficking and raises awareness in vulnerable communities. Includes the National Referral System, which strengthens coordination among agencies providing services to human trafficking victims through the use of standard referral and reporting forms. (153) There are 149 referral networks established in 16 regions. (36) Program was active during the reporting period. (51,154)</p> <p><b>Strength CTIP</b> works in partnership with the Advocate for the Protection and Prevention of Abuse and Exploitation of Children (APPROACH) Consortium. Initiates and sustains counter trafficking in persons activities in selected project sites in Iloilo City, Dumaguete City, and Cebu province. (7) Designed to accommodate the needs of victims of human trafficking, specifically children subjected to commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. (7) Program was active during the reporting period. (51,155)</p>
Alternative Learning System Program†	<p>Department of Education program that offers non-formal education to out-of-school children, including child laborers and children displaced from military conflict, and opportunities to attain a certificate of education equivalency. (156) Enrolled 759,723 participants in 2019. (42)</p>
USDOL-Funded Projects	<p>USDOL projects in the Philippines that aim to eliminate child labor in its worst forms by improving the capacity of the national government, implementing the National Action Plan Against Child Labor, conducting research and data collection, developing strategic policies, drafting legislation, and supporting social services delivery for child domestic workers. Include: Against Child Exploitation (ACE) Project (2019-2023), a \$5 million project implemented by World Vision; BuildCA2P: Building Capacity, Awareness, Advocacy and Programs Project (2018-2022), a \$2.6 million project implemented by ChildFund International; SAFE Seas, implemented by Plan International USA; RICHES, implemented by the Grameen Foundation with the Philippines; Measurement, Awareness-Raising, and Policy Engagement (MAP16) Project on Child Labor and Forced Labor, implemented by ILO; CARING Gold Mining Project, implemented by ILO; Building the Capacity of the Philippines Labor Inspectorate, implemented by ILO; Building a Generation of Safe and Healthy Workers: SafeYouth@Work, implemented by ILO; and Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor (CLEAR), implemented by ILO. (157-165) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.</p>

† Program is funded by the Government of the Philippines.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (168,169)

During the reporting period, President Duterte signed into law R.A. No. 11310, which institutionalized the *Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program* (4Ps), also referred to as the Conditional Cash Transfer Program. (7,34,170) R.A. No.11310 designated the 4Ps as the national poverty reduction strategy and human capital investment program, providing conditional cash transfer to poor households for a maximum period of up to 7 years to improve the health, nutrition, and educational needs of beneficiaries. (7,34,170)

R.A. No.11315, signed in April 2019, formally established the Community-Based Monitoring System, which is intended to collect, process, and validate disaggregated data used for planning, program implementation, and impact monitoring at the local level to raise Filipinos out of poverty; this includes data related to employment, income, and education. (7,34,171) Overseen by the Philippine Statistics Authority, data will be collected every 3 years by each city and municipality to create a baseline to enact poverty reduction programs. (7,34,171)

Although some specialized resources exist to assist victims of human trafficking, the Philippines lacked sufficient programs to care for and rehabilitate children who have been victims of online commercial sexual exploitation. (36) In addition, there are not adequate programs to provide insight on the impact of OSEC on child victims. (43,45,46,51)

Although the DSWD works in consultation with parents and community leaders to determine how best to assist children suspected of being involved in the drug trade, the DSWD does not have programs specifically designed to increase protections for or assistance to children engaged in drug trafficking to address their heightened vulnerability. (6)

The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA) continued to coordinate with the DSWD when dealing with children involved in drug trafficking. Upon PDEA turning over “rescued” children, DSWD transferred the children to juvenile detention centers, or “houses of hope” (*Bahay ng Pag-asa*), within 8 hours of the conclusion of their court proceedings. (6,7,95) In 2019, reports continued to surface that children in these detention centers are subjected to physical and emotional abuse, deprived of liberty, and forced into overcrowded and unhygienic cells. (41,95-98,172-175)

## 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 Philippines (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	Increase the overall number of law enforcement officials, including police and prosecutors, to ease the workload burden and allow for quicker action on cases involving the worst forms of child labor.	2019
	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties.	2015 – 2019
	Ensure that labor enforcement resources, including funding, are sufficient to enforce child labor protections for children employed in the informal sector, including agricultural work.	2017 – 2019
	Develop and provide specialized training for labor inspectors on identification of child labor.	2019
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO’s technical advice, and increase resources available to provide sufficient coverage of the workforce, particularly in rural areas where child labor is prevalent.	2014 – 2019
	Allow Rescue the Child Laborers Quick Action Teams to conduct unannounced compliance visits to private homes.	2018 – 2019
	Publish labor law enforcement information, including the number of labor inspections conducted at worksites, the number of child labor violations found, the number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed, and the number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected.	2015 – 2019
	Enhance efforts to prevent the inappropriate incarceration of, and violence against, children suspected to be engaged in the production and trafficking of drugs.	2017 – 2019
	Prosecute law enforcement officials and civilians responsible for the killing of children engaged in the drug trade.	2017 – 2019



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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Social Programs	Institute a program to address and combat the sexual abuse and exploitation of children in the production of child pornography, including live streaming.	2017 – 2019
	Provide specialized care and rehabilitative services for children who have been victimized through sexual abuse and exploitation through live streaming and in the production of child pornography by their families.	2017 – 2019
	Develop programs to increase protections for and provide assistance to children engaged in drug trafficking to address their heightened vulnerability.	2017 – 2019
	Ensure that <i>Bahay ng Pag-asa</i> child detention centers in the Philippines do not subject children to physical or emotional abuse, and that centers are provided with adequate resources to remedy overcrowding and unhygienic conditions.	2017 – 2019

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