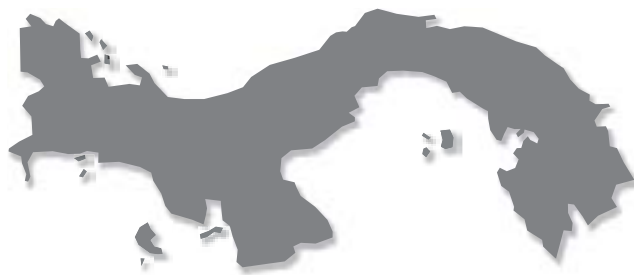


In 2019, Panama made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government implemented the Districts Free of Child Labor initiative through anti-child labor agreements with six municipalities. The government also made improvements to the Child Labor Monitoring System to streamline responses to cases of child labor from different agencies, and continued to expand labor inspector trainings and unannounced inspections. In addition, the Ministry of Labor implemented the Direct Government Action Program for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor, which includes a new national survey on child labor. However, children in Panama 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. Panamanian law allows minors under age 16 to engage in hazardous work within training facilities in violation of international standards. Moreover, the Ministry of Labor lacks the authority to collect fines for labor violations, limiting its capacity to enforce laws on the worst forms of child labor.



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

Children in Panama 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. (1-10) The Ministry of Labor (MITRADEL) collected data on child work, child labor, and the worst forms of child labor in 2018, but the study has yet to be published. (1) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Panama.

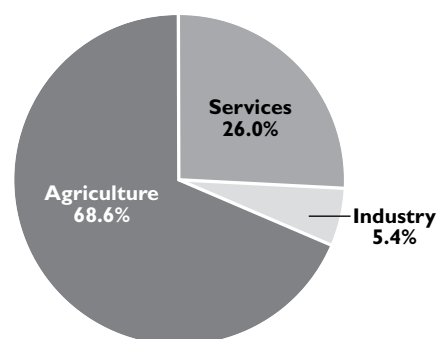
**Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education**

| Children                      | Age     | Percent      |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------------|
| Working (% and population)    | 5 to 14 | 4.7 (32,858) |
| Attending School (%)          | 5 to 14 | 94.9         |
| Combining Work and School (%) | 7 to 14 | 4.9          |
| Primary Completion Rate (%)   |         | 89.8         |

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 Encuesta de Trabajo Infantil (ETI), 2014. (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.

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

| Sector/Industry                         | Activity   |
|---|--|
| Agriculture                             | Production of beans, cereal grains, coffee, corn, melons, oilseeds, onions, pineapples, rice, and tomatoes (6,7,9,13-19) |
|   | Raising livestock, including cattle (2-4,6,9,20)   |
|   | Fishing,† including harvesting shellfish (2-5,9,20,21)   |
| Industry                                | Construction,† including mixing cement, painting, carpentry, and welding (1,2,4,5,22)                                    |
| Services                                | Domestic work† (2,4,5,9,19,20,23-25)   |
|   | Bagging in supermarkets (6,26)   |
|   | Street work,† including vending,† washing cars, shining shoes,† and collecting recyclables (1,5-7,9,18,20,21,27-30)      |
| Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡ | Forced domestic work (24,25,31)  |

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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† | Use in the production of pornography (5,9)   |
|   | Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (5,8,25,31) |
|   | Scavenging the ocean for metal and other items (6)                                     |

† 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 Panama are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation, mainly in tourist areas in Panama City and in beach communities. (6,7)







According to the results of Panama’s 2016 survey on child labor, the highest prevalence of child labor is in the agricultural sector in rural areas and autonomous indigenous areas, or *comarcas*. The *comarca* Ngäbe Buglé and the provinces of Panama and Bocas del Toro had the highest number of children engaged in child labor. (2)

Although the Panamanian Constitution recognizes the right to education without discrimination, indigenous children and those in rural and Afro-Panamanian communities face barriers to accessing education due to a lack of transportation, infrastructure, technology, and teachers, particularly in the *comarcas*. (1,5,9,32,33) Children of indigenous descent often travel significant distances to reach school and experience frequent interruptions in their education due to family migration to work in agriculture. (6,32,33)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Panama 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 Panama’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including hazardous work and light work.

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

| Standard  | Meets International Standards | Age | Legislation   |
|---|-------------------------------|-----|---|
| Minimum Age for Work  | Yes                           | 14  | Article 70 of the Constitution; Articles 508–509 and 716 of the Family Code; Articles 117, 119, and 123 of the Labor Code (34-36)                     |
| Minimum Age for Hazardous Work  | No                            | 18  | Article 510 of the Family Code; Article 203 of the Penal Code; Article 4 of Executive Decree No. 19 of 2006; Article 118 of the Labor Code (24,34-37) |
| Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children | Yes                           |     | Articles 2, 2A, and 2B of Executive Decree No. 19 of 2006; Article 118 of the Labor Code (24,36,38)   |

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

| Standard  | Meets International Standards | Age | Legislation   |
|---|-------------------------------|-----|---|
| Prohibition of Forced Labor   | Yes                           |     | Articles 157–158, 205–208, and 456 of the Penal Code; Article 489 of the Family Code; Article 21 of the Constitution (34,35,38,39)          |
| Prohibition of Child Trafficking                                      | Yes                           |     | Articles 205–208 and 456 of the Penal Code; Article 489.17 of the Family Code; Article 63 of Law 79 on Human Trafficking (35,39,37)         |
| Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children             | Yes                           |     | Articles 179–187, 189–191, 202–203, 207, and 456 of the Penal Code; Article 63 of Law 79 on Human Trafficking (39,37)                       |
| Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities                   | Yes                           |     | Articles 318, 333, and 336 of the Penal Code; Article 489.16 of the Family Code; Article 2.16 of Executive Decree No. 19 of 2006 (35,38,37) |
| Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment                  | N/A†                          |     |   |
| Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military | N/A†                          |     |   |
| Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups         | Yes                           |     | Article 448 of the Penal Code (37)  |
| Compulsory Education Age  | Yes                           | 15  | Articles 34 and 45 of the Law on Education; Article 489 of the Family Code; Article 95 of the Constitution (34,35,40,41)                    |
| Free Public Education   | Yes                           |     | Articles 34 and 41 of the Law on Education; Article 95 of the Constitution (34,40,41)   |

† No standing military (34)

In 2018 and early 2019, MITRADEL drafted amendments to Decree No. 1 of 2016 to raise the current minimum age for hazardous work, occupations, and activities from age 14 to age 16 if the work is performed in a training facility, and to eliminate certain work exceptions for children ages 14 to 16. (1,42) Currently, Panama has a list of hazardous occupations prohibited for children under age 18, but it permits children to perform such work in training programs starting at age 14, in violation of international standards. (24)

Although the Constitution, Family Code, and Labor Code set the minimum age for employment at age 14, the Family Code and Labor Code specify exceptions for agricultural work. (34-36) Article 119 of the Labor Code allows children ages 12 to 15 to perform light work in agriculture if the work is outside of regular school hours. The Labor Code, however, does not define the kinds of activities children may perform as light work. (36)

### III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the operations of MITRADEL 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 (MITRADEL) | Enforces child labor laws through two directorates with direct authority over child labor matters: the Directorate Against Child Labor and for the Protection of Adolescent Workers (DIRETIPPAT), and the Labor Inspection Directorate. DIRETIPPAT is responsible for overseeing the enforcement of laws related to working children in the formal and informal sectors, planning and executing public policies, and carrying out education programs on child labor for employers, parents, and children. (25,43-45) DIRETIPPAT also manages the newly established Direct Government Action Program that seeks to prevent and eradicate child labor. Refers cases of children found in exploitative work to the Child and Adolescent Courts, or to the National Secretariat for Childhood, Adolescence, and Family (SENNIAF). (25) The Labor Inspection Directorate enforces the Labor Code in areas in which children may be working, particularly in the formal sector. (25) |
| Attorney General’s Office    | Investigates and prosecutes crimes of sexual exploitation. Investigations are initiated by the Judicial Investigative Directorate; cases are passed to the prosecutors. (25)   |

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

| Organization/Agency   | Role   |
|---|--|
| National Secretariat for Childhood, Adolescence, and Family (SENNIAF) | Conducts inspections to identify children and adolescents engaged in child labor, particularly in the informal sector. (4,25) Monitors and coordinates a network of government services to address the needs of vulnerable populations. (26) Runs shelters for victims of human trafficking, including minors. (46) In 2019, SENNIAF implemented a digital tool for the Child Labor Monitoring System that streamlines Panamanian institutions' collective response to child labor, and facilitates collaboration, the development of individualized care plans for victims of child labor, and monitoring of each entity's progress in completing its respective responsibilities associated with each individual case. (25,47) |
| Childhood and Adolescence Police                                      | Special body of the National Police. Assists, collaborates with, and coordinates with authorities and organizations to address the education, prevention, protection, and rehabilitation of children, including those in child labor. (48,49) Supports SENNIAF inspections in areas with high rates of child labor. (26)   |

### Labor Law Enforcement

In 2019, labor law enforcement agencies in Panama took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of MITRADEL that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including insufficient financial resources.

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

| Overview of Labor Law Enforcement  | 2018            | 2019             |
|--|-----------------|------------------|
| Labor Inspectorate Funding   | \$1,313,417 (1) | \$1,313,417 (25) |
| Number of Labor Inspectors   | 106 (1)         | 100 (25)         |
| Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties  | Yes (36,50)     | Yes (25,36)      |
| Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors  | Yes (1)         | Yes (25)         |
| Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor  | Yes (1)         | Yes (25)         |
| Refresher Courses Provided   | Yes (1)         | Yes (25)         |
| Number of Labor Inspections Conducted  | 938 (50)        | 945 (25)         |
| Number Conducted at Worksite   | 938 (50)        | 945 (25)         |
| Number of Child Labor Violations Found   | 14 (50)         | 10 (25)          |
| Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed                  | 6 (50)          | 10 (25)          |
| Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected                        | 6 (50)          | Unknown (25)     |
| Routine Inspections Conducted  | Yes (50)        | Yes (25)         |
| Routine Inspections Targeted   | Yes (50)        | Yes (25)         |
| Unannounced Inspections Permitted  | Yes (50)        | Yes (25)         |
| Unannounced Inspections Conducted  | Yes (50)        | Yes (25)         |
| Complaint Mechanism Exists   | Yes (1)         | Yes (25)         |
| Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services | Yes (1)         | Unknown (25)     |

In 2019, Panama had 100 labor inspectors, which is in line with the ILO's technical advice. However, only six inspectors received specialized training in child labor investigations, even though all inspectors must investigate and enforce child labor laws. (25) In addition to the labor inspections, with the help of Casa Esperanza (a local NGO), MITRADEL identified 1,497 cases of child labor. Of these cases, 1,444 children received care and services, scholarships, and academic follow-up for 3 consecutive years from the Direct Action Program for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and Casa Esperanza. (25) The Labor Inspectorate conducted 945 inspections, and encountered 10 child labor violations. (25)

As part of the Roadmap Towards the Elimination of Child Labor, in 2019, the Government of Panama continued to expand labor inspector trainings, unannounced inspections, and monitoring information systems. (25) MITRADEL and the National Secretariat for Childhood, Adolescence, and Family (SENNIAF) operate a secure 311 Complaint Line, a website, and social media platforms to receive complaints. In 2019, SENNIAF responded to 25 complaints filed through the 311 line and identified two child labor cases. (25) In addition, SENNIAF staff members received training on child labor laws in 2019. (25) SENNIAF indicated that although its agency does not have labor inspectors, four social workers from the child labor department were trained on the application of child labor laws. (25)

MITRADEL noted that the budget for the Directorate Against Child Labor and for the Protection of Adolescent Workers is insufficient to meet its staffing needs. Its budget has remained the same from 2018 to 2019. (1,25,32,51,52)

### **Criminal Law Enforcement**

In 2019, criminal law enforcement agencies in Panama took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, the government did not provide sufficient data on its criminal enforcement efforts, which limits the ability to assess their adequacy.

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

| Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement  | 2018     | 2019         |
|---|----------|--------------|
| Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators                                       | Yes (50) | Unknown (25) |
| Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor                        | Yes (50) | Unknown (25) |
| Refresher Courses Provided  | Yes (50) | Unknown (25) |
| Number of Investigations  | 333 (50) | Unknown (25) |
| Number of Violations Found  | Unknown  | Unknown (25) |
| Number of Prosecutions Initiated  | Unknown  | Unknown (25) |
| Number of Convictions   | Unknown  | Unknown (25) |
| Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor            | Unknown  | Unknown (25) |
| Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services | Yes (50) | Yes (47)     |

The government did not provide information on its criminal law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report.

In 2019, the Government of Panama conducted five investigations on forced labor or trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. (53)

Child labor training was provided to 47 National Commissions for the Prevention of Crimes of Sexual Exploitation (CONAPREDES) staff, as well as to 105 law enforcement officials, 55 prosecutors, and 21 members of the Maritime and Tourism Authorities. (1)

## **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 coordination among agencies.

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

| Coordinating Body  | Role & Description   |
|--|--|
| Committee for the Eradication of Child Labor and the Protection of Adolescent Workers (CETIPPAT) | A public-private institution that includes government, employers, workers, and NGOs that collaborate to combat child labor. (25) Coordinates various efforts to combat child labor. Led by the First Lady of Panama and includes MITRADEL, the ministries of Education, Health, and Agriculture, and representatives from civil society and organizations of workers and employers. (52) Conducts a National Child Labor Survey every 2 years. (6) |
| Subcommittee to Combat Child Labor   | Coordinates the Panamanian Institute for Sports and the Ministry of Education in their efforts to address child labor and its causes. Subcommittee of CETIPPAT. (7,32,45) In 2019, the subcommittees were located in Chiriquí, Veraguas, Herrera, Los Santos, Coclé, and Panama Oeste. (25)  |
| Provincial Coordination Mechanisms   | Identify and report cases of child labor at the local level to SENNIAF and coordinate with CETIPPAT at the national level. Established in Bocas del Toro, Colón, and Darién. In 2019, additional commissions were established in Chiriquí, Veraguas, Herrera, Los Santos, Coclé, and Panama Oeste. (1,9)   |

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

| Coordinating Body  | Role & Description   |
|--|--|
| National Commission for the Prevention of Crimes of Sexual Exploitation (CONAPREDES) | Coordinates, advises, studies, and implements public policies for the prevention and eradication of sexual exploitation. (52) Members include the Attorney General and the ministries of Labor, Education, Social Development, and Health. Refers cases of sexual exploitation to the Attorney General's Office. (52) In 2019, CONAPREDES hosted training sessions for the Ministry of Government, Public Ministry, Judicial Branch, and government security forces and police officials in key areas including Chiriquí, Panama, Veraguas, Herrera, Los Santos and Coclé, which benefited a total of 2,506 people. (25) According to CONAPREDES, in 2019 there were 331 victims of child sexual exploitation registered with the Public Ministry. Some of these cases involved child pornography and child sex tourism. (25) During the reporting year, CONAPREDES also carried out 49 sexual exploitation awareness workshops in communities with high social risk and for tourism operators, schools, universities and government institutions, which reached 4,213 people. (53,54) |

MITRADEL noted the need for increased coordination on efforts to address child labor, including within the Ministry of Labor, and with social service agencies and referral mechanisms. (32)

## V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into relevant policies.

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor**

| Policy  | Description  |
|---|--|
| Roadmap Towards the Elimination of Child Labor (2016–2019)  | Aimed to eliminate all forms of child labor in Panama by 2020 by strengthening anti-poverty, health, and educational programs and policies. (55-57) In 2019, continued to expand labor inspector trainings, unannounced inspections, and monitoring information systems. Came to a close in 2019. (25)   |
| National Multisectoral Strategy for the Prevention of Violence Against Children and Adolescents (2018–2022)           | Aims to eliminate child labor and end the mistreatment, exploitation, trafficking, violence, and torture of children. Developed by the national government through the National Intersectoral Committee for the Prevention of Violence Against Children and Adolescents and SENNIAF, with technical support from UNICEF. (58,59)   |
| National Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adolescents | Aims to prevent and eliminate the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, including by providing services to victims, strengthening CONAPREDES, and raising awareness. Implemented by CONAPREDES, with support from the Public Ministry. (52,60) In 2019, with other institutions and NGOs including the Ministry of Education, Public Ministry, SENNIAF, Ministry of Social Development, Aldeas SOS, and Casa Esperanza, among others, CONAPREDES carried out 49 sexual exploitation awareness workshops as part of the National Action Plan. (53)  |
| National Plan Against Trafficking in Persons (2012–2022)  | Aims to combat human trafficking through prevention, victim assistance, and international cooperation. Includes provisions to protect child victims of human trafficking. (51,61) As part of the plan in 2018, the Government of Panama approved the Protocol for the Victim's Identification and Protection Unit to provide standard procedures to the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Commission Victim's Unit and to guarantee adequate standard of care for human trafficking victims. During the reporting period the TIP Commission included a victim identification form from the Protocol for the Victim's Identification and Protection Unit in all its trainings, particularly those targeted at law enforcement agencies such as the National Border Service, the National Police, the National Migration Service, and health workers. (10,53) |
| Districts Free of Child Labor   | Aims to establish cooperation agreements between MITRADEL and municipal councils to design and implement child labor eradication strategies. (9) Includes policies related to development and education projects that support poverty reduction. In 2019, implemented in six municipalities (Capira, San Miguelito, Panama, Tonosi, Agudulce, and Santiago). (25)  |

The Coordination Agreement on Labor Migration between the ministries of Labor of Costa Rica and Panama aims to strengthen dialogue on labor migration between the two countries, with an emphasis on indigenous Panamanian migrant workers, to ensure social protection of migrant workers and their families. The policy includes a bilateral technical committee to promote joint action to combat human trafficking, exchange information, and develop cooperative strategies and projects. (62) Although potentially a useful policy tool to combat child labor, child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

## 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 their ability to reach the most vulnerable populations.

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

| Program  | Description  |
|--|--|
| USDOL-Funded Projects  | USDOL projects that aim to eliminate child labor, including its worst forms, through research, improved monitoring and enforcement, policy development, and awareness raising. These projects include Country Level Engagement and Assistance to Reduce Child Labor (CLEAR II), implemented by Winrock International and partners Verité and Lawyers Without Borders in seven countries; and Measurement, Awareness-Raising, and Policy Engagement (MAP 16), a \$22.4 million, 6 year project implemented by ILO in several countries. (63-66) In 2019, CLEAR II's Labor Inspectorate curriculum was endorsed by the Ministry of Labor. (67) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.   |
| Direct Government Action Program for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor†  | MITRADEL program implemented through the Institute for Training and Utilization of Human Resources that provides a network of social and economic services to child workers and children at risk of child labor. Services include the provision of food and scholarships, support for sports activities, and social monitoring. Includes a new national survey in 2019 of child labor to monitor socio-cultural labor norms as well as child labor rates. (7,25,68) In 2019, the government continued to support the plan, coordinated unannounced visits in the informal and agricultural sectors, and served 1,444 children. (25)  |
| SENNIAF programs† to identify, remove, and provide services to children engaged in the worst forms of child labor and commercial sexual exploitation | Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor identifies children engaged in the worst forms of child labor, removes them from exploitative situations, and connects them to a network of social and economic services offered by the government. (26) SENNIAC also developed a new case processing system to efficiently manage reports, which reduced report processing times. (1)<br><br>Prevention and Care for Child and Adolescent Victims of Sexual Violence† identifies children engaged in commercial sexual exploitation, removes them from exploitative situations, and provides them with social services. Conducts training workshops nationwide for professionals providing direct care to child and adolescent victims of sexual violence. (69) Research was unable to identify specific actions undertaken during the reporting period under this program. |
| Network of Opportunities†  | Ministry of Social Development program that provides conditional cash transfers to families in extreme poverty, conditioned on their children's participation in health and education services and the acquisition of a birth certificate. Offers training to project participants to improve income-generating opportunities. (71)  |
| <i>El Plan Colmena*</i>  | Launched in 2019, a new social program in districts located in Capira, Ciri de Los Sotos, Ciri Grande, Angela Chirú, El Cacao, La Trinidad, Ollas Arriba, and Santa Rosa. Seeks to identify the root causes of poverty and implement long-term local capacity building programs that achieve a poverty-free Panama. (25)   |

\* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Panama.

Although Panama has expanded programs that reach children in rural areas and from indigenous and Afro-Panamanian communities, reports indicate that the scope of these programs is insufficient, and these children remain vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. (53,72)

Despite policy efforts, the National Anti-Trafficking Commission acknowledges that funding for and availability of services for human trafficking victims remains insufficient to address the full scope of the problem. Furthermore, although child victims of trafficking are able to receive services from local NGOs, Panama lacks programs to specifically address the needs of this population. (10) Government officials have also noted that despite funds dedicated to the prevention of crimes against children, Panama lacks a specific mechanism to direct funds toward child sexual abuse victims. (73,74)

## 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 Panama (Table 11).

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**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

| Area                | Suggested Action  | Year(s) Suggested |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Legal Framework     | Establish regulations that define the types of activities that children between ages 12 and 14 can undertake as light work.   | 2009 – 2019       |
|                     | Ensure that the law protects children from hazardous work by establishing a minimum age of 18 for all children or by ensuring that children receive adequate training in the type of work being done and that the health, safety, and morals of children are protected in accordance with international standards if children age 16 or 17 are allowed to perform hazardous work. | 2013 – 2019       |
|                     | Raise the working age from 14 to 15, the compulsory education age, to comply with international standards.  | 2019              |
| Enforcement         | Collect and make available complete data on labor law enforcement efforts and criminal enforcement efforts related to the worst forms of child labor, such as the number of violations found, number of prosecutions initiated, penalties collected, whether reciprocal mechanisms exist, and number of convictions.  | 2018 – 2019       |
|                     | Allocate sufficient funding for the Directorate Against Child Labor and for the Protection of Adolescent Workers to meet its commitments for coordination, implementation, and monitoring related to child labor.   | 2014 – 2019       |
|                     | Ensure that all inspectors receive regular, specialized training on child labor issues.   | 2018 – 2019       |
| Coordination        | Increase coordination on efforts to address child labor, including within the Ministry of Labor, and with social services agencies and referral mechanisms.   | 2016 – 2019       |
| Government Policies | Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Coordination Agreement on Labor Migration between the ministries of Labor of Costa Rica and Panama.  | 2015 – 2019       |
| Social Programs     | Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children from rural areas and indigenous and Afro-Panamanian communities, by expanding existing programs, including school transportation.  | 2014 – 2019       |
|                     | Ensure that social programs to prevent and eradicate child labor are being implemented.   | 2018 – 2019       |
|                     | Establish programs and ensure sufficient funding to address the needs of human trafficking victims, including programs that provide services to child victims of human trafficking and sexual abuse.  | 2018 – 2019       |

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## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

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