

In 2020, Mozambique made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government passed a new 2020–2024 Five Year Plan, which emphasizes eliminating child labor, and published the number of labor inspectors for the first time since 2017. The government also enacted a new Penal Code, which includes prohibitions on human trafficking, child prostitution, and the use of children in pornography. In addition, Provincial and District National Reference Groups were trained on human trafficking laws, the identification and protection of victims, prevention of unsafe child migration and on how to report cases of human trafficking. However, children in Mozambique are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in dangerous tasks in the production of tobacco. In addition, the established minimum age for work is not in compliance with international labor standards because it does not extend to informal employment. Lastly, existing programs are insufficient to fully address the extent of the child labor problem in Mozambique.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Mozambique are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced domestic work. (1) Children also engage in dangerous tasks in the production of tobacco. (2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Mozambique.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	22.5 (1,526,560)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	69.5
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	22.4
Primary Completion Rate (%)		54.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2019, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (3)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 3 (MICS 3), 2008. (4)

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 coconuts, cotton,† sugarcane,† tea, tobacco,† and tomatoes (2,5)
	Fishing,† including preparing nets (2,6,7)
	Forestry,† activities unknown (2,6)
	Herding livestock, including cattle (2)
	Hunting, including small and wild animals (2,5)
Industry	Mining,† including gold and gemstones† (2,6,8,9)
	Construction,† including breaking stone† (2,6)
Services	Domestic work,† including childcare† (2,6,9)
	Street work, including car washing† and street vending (2,9,10)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,2,6,11)
	Forced labor in agriculture, domestic work, mining, and vending, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1)
	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, stealing, and assisting poachers in the illegal poaching industry (2)

† 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.

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Mozambican children, lured from rural areas with promises of work and educational opportunities, are subjected to forced domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation in urban areas in Mozambique and South Africa. Research indicates that Mozambican children are also trafficked to South Africa for forced labor in agriculture, mining, and street vending. (1,6,12) Research found that children in larger cities and along transit corridors are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation. During the reporting period the government did not publish any new data on child labor or the worst forms of child labor. (6) Research indicates that a U.S.-designated terrorist group in northern Mozambique used children as soldiers, cooks, and laborers. (7,13)

Although primary education is free through grade nine, families must provide school supplies and uniforms. (6,14) Barriers to education for children include lack of schools, classroom space, and trained teachers. Many students, particularly in rural areas, also face difficulties traveling long distances to get to school. (15,16) In addition, physical and sexual abuse is common in schools. Research found that some male teachers coerce female students into sex. (17) The government estimates that only 49 percent of children complete their primary education. A state of emergency was declared in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in the suspension of in-person learning and a shift to online learning, creating barriers for many children due to a lack of access to electricity, computers, or the Internet. (6,7) In-person instruction resumed in November in stages, with older students returning in the initial phase. (6) In 2020, more than 500,000 people were displaced due to increased terrorist-related violence in Cabo Delgado Province, further increasing education access barriers for some children due to a lack of schools in displaced communities. (6,7) Research indicates that, as a result of terrorist attacks, at least 626 schools have been destroyed in the province. (7)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Mozambique 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 Mozambique's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for work.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	No	15	Article 26 of the Labor Law; Article 4 of the Regulations on Domestic Work (18,19)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 23 of the Labor Law (19)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes	18	Hazardous Work List (20)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 5 and 10–11 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Articles 196 and 198 of the Penal Code (21,22)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 5 and 10–11 of the Trafficking in Persons Law (21)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 5 and 10–11 of the Trafficking in Persons Law; Articles 226–227 of the Penal Code (21,22)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 33 and 40 of the Law on Drugs (23)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Articles 2 and 23 of the Law on Military Service (24)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 2 of the Law on Military Service (24)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 5 and 10 of the Trafficking in Persons Law (21)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Article 41 of the Law of Basic Child Protection; Article 7 of the Law on the National System of Education (25,26)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 41 of the Law of Basic Child Protection; Article 7 of the Law on the National System of Education (25,26)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (25,26)

In 2020, the government enacted a new Penal Code (Law n. 24/2019), which includes prohibitions on child trafficking for the purposes of prostitution, use in pornography, and forced labor. (6,12,27) The new Penal Code also prohibits the exploitation of minors for prostitution and pornography, carrying heavier penalties for equivalent crimes involving adults. (12) The government continued to work with an international organization to review draft amendments to bring the 2008 anti-trafficking law in line with international standards. However, draft amendments were awaiting approval by various stakeholders for the second consecutive reporting period. (7) The updated legislation is expected to be considered by the Parliament in 2021. (12)

The Regulations on Domestic Work allow children ages 12 to 15 to perform domestic work with the permission of their legal guardian. (18) The Labor Law also states that children ages 12 to 15 may work under certain conditions defined by the Council of Ministers. (19) The minimum age of 12 for light work is not in compliance with international standards. (28,29) The government continues to accept public comments on a revision (drafted in 2018) to the country's Labor Law that would eliminate the exception for children as young as 12 to work, and which would raise the minimum working age to 15. (6,7,30,31)

The Labor Law's minimum age protections do not apply to children working outside of formal employment relationships. The Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security (MITESS), in collaboration with civil society, has reportedly developed new regulations to protect children working in the informal sector; however, the government has not reported on the implementation of these regulations. (19,26,29,32)

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 enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

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Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security (MITESS)	Enforces child labor laws and regulations. The labor inspectorate works with the National Police Force to enforce criminal law. (6,14) Monitors implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor. (6,14,33)
Ministry of Industry and Trade's General Inspectorate of Economic Activities	Enforces child labor laws and regulations related to business activities. (6,14)
National Police Force	Enforces all criminal laws, including those related to the worst forms of child labor. Through its seven-person National Criminal Investigation Service, located within the Ministry of the Interior, investigates and refers cases of human trafficking and violence against women and children to the Attorney General's Office. (6,14)
Attorney General's Office	Coordinates the government's efforts against human trafficking and child labor. (6,14)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Mozambique took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of MITESS that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including a lack of financial resources.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	Unknown (6)
Number of Labor Inspectors	Unknown	117 (6)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (14)	Yes (19)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (14)	Yes (6)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (14)	Yes (6)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (14)	Yes (6)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown	6,126 (6)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown	Unknown (6)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown (6)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown	Unknown (6)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown	Unknown (6)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (14)	Yes (6)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown	Unknown (6)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (14)	Yes (19)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (14)	Yes (6)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (14)	Yes (6)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (14)	Yes (6)

During the reporting period, Mozambique had 117 labor inspectors, a figure that had not been reported since 2017. MITESS conducted child labor training for 40 of its labor inspectors during the reporting period. (6) Research indicates that the number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Mozambique's workforce, which includes approximately 13 million workers. (14,34) According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 40,000 workers in less developed countries, Mozambique would employ about 325 labor inspectors. (34,35) Limited financial resources and limited resources such as fuel and vehicles may also hamper the labor inspectorate's ability to enforce child labor laws. (6,14) MITESS indicated that it conducted 6,126 inspections, discovered 9,141 labor violations and issued 1,931 corresponding fines and 7,210 warnings. The Ministry did not specify how many of these violations and fines were related to child labor infractions, and did not publish funding information. (6)

MITESS officials can refer victims of child labor to either the police or social workers from the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Action (MGCAS) for family assessments and potential placement of these children in

foster homes. (6) The government provided training for labor inspectors and social services providers regarding the increased risks of the pandemic on child labor. It provided training for the Child Help Line workers regarding the pandemic to enable them to provide better service and assistance to callers. (6) It also supported child labor and exploitation training for employers, and provided training for local community leaders on combating the worst forms of child labor. (6)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Mozambique took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including the absence of published criminal data related to child labor.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (14)	Yes (6)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (14)	Yes (6)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (14)	Yes (6)
Number of Investigations	Unknown	Unknown (6)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown	Unknown (6)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	Unknown (6)
Number of Convictions	Unknown	Unknown (6)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Unknown (6)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (14)	Yes (14)

In 2020, in support of the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor, the government conducted training for judges, prosecutors, police officers, criminal investigators, labor inspectors, NGO partners, and community leaders on the country's children rights legal framework, provided COVID-19 training to the Child Help Line, conducted outreach on World Day Against Child Labor, and produced and distributed 8,000 posters to demonstrate the dangers of child labor. The government conducted several awareness campaigns about the dangers of online recruitment, which could result in children being trafficked. (12) The government did not publish data on criminal law enforcement efforts. (6)

Criminal law enforcement officials work with MGCAS and the National Reference Group for the Protection of Children and Combating Trafficking in Persons to coordinate referrals of children to social services providers. (14) Furthermore, MGCAS has a standard operating procedure (SOP) for handling victims of domestic abuse, including human trafficking victims. This procedure incorporates an intake form used nationwide by law enforcement officials, including border officials, to collect the necessary data from victims and ensure that they receive professional care and referrals to appropriate services. (28)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

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

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Reference Group for the Protection of Children and Combating Trafficking in Persons	Supports efforts to prevent human trafficking, and is the main coordinating body for combating trafficking in persons (TIP). The National Reference Group, led by the Attorney General, in partnership with local leaders and NGO stakeholders, hold regular meetings to discuss child labor issues. (6,12,36) Provincial-level groups coordinate regional efforts to combat human trafficking. (1) During the reporting period, the government conducted or engaged in a variety of in-person activities that provided training to front-line responders and law enforcement officials. IOM reported that the number of participants in the trainings it co-led with the government were reduced due to pandemic prevention measures. (7,12) In partnership with international organizations, the government trained provincial and district reference groups, including at least 250 officials throughout Cabo Delgado, Manica, Nampula, Sofala, and Zambezia provinces, on the anti-trafficking legal framework, victim identification, and investigation skills. At least four trainings focused on child protection or the legal framework of child trafficking. (7) Other training focused on standard operating procedures to improve identification of TIP during pandemics, natural disasters, and armed conflicts; the legal framework for human trafficking; TIP database; and the differences between human trafficking and smuggling. (7)
National Commission on Children's Rights	Oversees and reports on children's rights in Mozambique to the African Charter and other international bodies, and performs consultations and deliberations on national action plans and legislation. Led by the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Action (MGCAS). (6) Research indicates that while the National Commission on Children's Rights was active during the reporting period, research could not find activities that occurred. (7)
Ministry of the Interior's Women and Children's Victim Assistance Units	Provide services to children who have been victims of crimes, including human trafficking. Implement a government-funded program that includes 22 victim assistance units, which provide temporary shelter, food, limited counseling, and monitoring following reintegration, and operate countrywide through facilities in more than 215 police stations. (1) The Ministry of the Interior's Women and Children's Victim Assistance Units were active and provided capacity building training during the reporting period. (7)
Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Action (MGCAS)	The Ministry is part of the government's efforts to implement the National Action Plan for the Fight Against the Worst Forms of Child Labor. (6) Operates three shelters that provide support and reintegration services for human trafficking victims, including to victims of child trafficking. (32) Research indicates that while MGCAS was active during the reporting period, research could not find activities that occurred. (7)

During the reporting period, the government cooperated with UNICEF and IOM to update the SOPs for the provincial and district reference groups. The updated SOPs focused on improving service delivery and support for repatriated and reintegrated child trafficking victims, which will also improve case monitoring. (12) The Council of Ministers monitors the government's coordination efforts in addressing child labor, and each ministry has a designated point of contact for child issues. (7) Research did not find a coordination mechanism dedicated to addressing child labor beyond the scope of human trafficking.

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

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

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2017–2022)	Aims to map 70 percent of occurrences of the worst forms of child labor by province and activity, and to withdraw 20,000 children from the worst forms of child labor and enroll them in the Basic Social Subsidy program. (33) Mandates the coordination of several key government agencies, including the Attorney General's Office and the Office for Assistance to Families and Children Victims of Violence in the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Action, among others. The National Action Plan also created a multi-sector group comprising representatives from the government, civil society, unions, and employers in the formal and informal sectors to collaborate on issues identified in the plan. (6) In order to implement the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor during the reporting period, the government conducted training on the children rights legal framework, provided COVID-19 training to the Child Help Line, conducted outreach, and produced and distributed posters to demonstrate the dangers of child labor. (7)
2020–2024 Five Year Plan†	The government's recurring five-year plan, which includes goals to implement the policies related to child labor. Under Priority One and Strategic Objective Four, the Plan stresses “preventing and combating violence against children, including sexual abuse, forced marriages, kidnappings, and the trafficking and exploitation of child labor.” (6,37)

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (39)

While a National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons was drafted in 2019, it has not yet been approved. (7,12) The current National Action Plan for the Fight against the Worst Forms of Child Labor addresses geographic regions of concern (Tete, Manica, Maputo Province, and Maputo City), underlying reasons for child labor, and principal forms of child labor (mining, domestic employment, agricultural). (6)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2020, 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 adequacy to address the problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Basic Social Subsidy Program†	Government- and donor-funded program that provides financial subsidies to orphaned children living in poor and vulnerable households and child heads of households. Aims to improve secondary school attendance and reach more than 3.3 million direct program participants by 2024. (40,41) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Basic Social Subsidy Program during the reporting period.
Programs for Street Children‡	Government and civil society organizations operate 176 shelters that provide education, occupational training activities, and health and psychosocial care for street children. (42) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Programs for Street Children during the reporting period.
Child Talk Line (Linha Fala Criança)	An NGO-funded program that works with the government to run a hotline to receive complaints of child abuse, including those related to child labor and sexual exploitation. (6) During the reporting year, the line received 141,188 complaints, of which 43 were potentially related to child labor, and referred them to appropriate service providers. (7) During the reporting year, the Child Talk Line established an office in Manica Province in central Mozambique, expanding its ability to follow up on cases outside of Maputo and to better respond to callers in local languages in the central provinces. (6)
Memorandum of Understanding to Combat Child Labor in Tobacco Growing (2018–2021)	\$1.2 million, 3-year project funded by the Eliminating Child Labor in Tobacco Growing Foundation (ECLTG) focusing on education, awareness raising, institutional capacity building, and revision of the government's legal framework. Incorporates training for law enforcement officials. (43–45) During the reporting period, MITESS partnered with ECLTG to produce and disseminate educational materials to at-risk communities regarding preventing child labor and to conduct train-the-trainers and local-leaders training. (6)
Internet Watch Foundation Website	Internet portal, established by the government, in collaboration with Internet Watch Foundation, which receives anonymous reports on suspected cases of online commercial sexual exploitation of children, including in the production of pornography. (46–48) Research indicates that while the Internet Watch Foundation Website for Mozambique was active during the reporting period, research could not find activities that occurred. (7)

† Program is funded by the Government of Mozambique.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (49)

The government coordinated and facilitated a media outreach campaign to commemorate World Day Against Child Labor through the radio and television during the reporting period. (6) Although a draft report on the analysis of national child labor data from the Integrated Household Survey was completed in 2017, the government has yet to publish the study's findings. (50) In addition, research found no evidence that the government has carried out programs to assist children engaged in domestic work, and the scope of existing programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the child labor problem.

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 Mozambique (Table 11).

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Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that all children are protected under the law, including children working outside of formal employment relationships.	2015 – 2020
	Ensure that the minimum age for light work is in compliance with international labor standards.	2018 – 2020
Enforcement	Publish all data on labor law enforcement efforts, including the labor inspectorate's funding, number and type of labor inspections conducted, child labor violations found, and number of child labor penalties imposed and collected.	2009 – 2020
	Allocate sufficient resources for law enforcement agencies, including by increasing the number of labor inspectors to provide adequate coverage of the workforce, as per ILO technical advice.	2009 – 2020
	Provide labor inspectors with adequate training and financial resources and fuel and vehicles to ensure their capacity to enforce child labor laws.	2009 – 2020
	Disaggregate labor law enforcement data to publish clear data about child labor in all its forms.	2020
	Publish data on criminal law enforcement efforts, such as the number of investigations, violations found, prosecutions initiated, and convictions secured, and whether penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor were imposed.	2009 – 2020
Coordination	Establish coordinating mechanisms to combat all worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2020
	Ensure all coordinating bodies publish activities during the reporting period.	2020
Government Policies	Ensure that the government publishes yearly data on child labor and the worst forms of child labor.	2020
	Publish activities undertaken to implement the National Action Plan to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor during the reporting period.	2020
Social Programs	Take measures to ensure that all children have access to education by providing supplies, uniforms, and an adequate number of schools, classroom space, and trained teachers. Address barriers for children from rural areas. Take preventative steps to protect children from physical and sexual abuse in schools.	2010 – 2020
	Publish activities undertaken to implement the Basic Social Subsidy Program and Programs for Street Children during the reporting period.	2018 – 2020
	Publish the results of the child labor study and use the findings to inform policies and programs.	2015 – 2020
	Institute programs to address child labor in domestic work, and expand existing programs to address the scope of the child labor problem.	2010 – 2020

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