

In 2020, Nepal made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government acceded to the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children. It also published the Report on Employment Relationship Survey in the Brick Industry in Nepal, which provides information on the prevalence of child labor, forced labor, and bonded labor in the brick production sector. In addition, the government drafted an action plan for the elimination of child labor to facilitate the implementation of the Second National Master Plan on the Elimination of Child Labor, which aims to abolish all forms of child labor by 2025 and the worst forms of child labor by 2022. However, children in Nepal are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in the production of bricks. Although the government made meaningful efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, it does not meet international standards for legal prohibitions against child trafficking and legal prohibitions against the use of children for illicit activities. In addition, the Department of Labor's budget, the number of labor inspectors, and available resources and training are insufficient for enforcing labor laws, including those related to child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Nepal are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in the production of bricks. (1-3) The government and the ILO are still analyzing the Nepal Labor Force Survey-III dataset to estimate child labor victim numbers. (4) Approximately 286,000 children were involved in work for pay, although the report noted that not all working children are in child labor. (4,5) The survey also incorporated the first forced labor module, and it reports that of the 34,338 individuals involved in forced labor, an estimated 17 percent are children. However, the survey does not report on all forms of child labor, including hazardous jobs. (4,5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Nepal. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	37.2 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	91.7
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	39.1
Primary Completion Rate (%)		120.4

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2019, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (6)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 5 (MICS 5), 2014. (7)

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	Farming, including harvesting caterpillar fungus (<i>yarsagumba</i>) (3,8,9)
Industry	Producing bricks (1,3,4,10-15)
	Quarrying, collecting, and breaking stones,† and quarrying and collecting sand (8,16)
	Construction,† activities unknown (3,4,17)
	Weaving carpet† (3,4,18)
	Producing embellished textiles (<i>zari</i>)† and embroidery (4,8)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Industry	Producing metal crafts† (8,19)
Services	Domestic work (4,20-23)
	Mechanical workshops for cars and motorbikes† (4)
	Working in transportation,† portering, and collecting recyclable waste (4,17)
	Working in hotels,† restaurants,† tea shops, and in entertainment,† including as dancers† (3,4,17,24)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,4,25)
	Forced labor in embellishing textiles (<i>zari</i>), weaving carpets,† and domestic work (3,4,16,18,21,25,26)
	Forced labor in agriculture, producing bricks, quarrying, and breaking stones† (3,4,8,15,27)
	Use in illicit activities, including the cultivation and trafficking of drugs (3,4)
	Forced begging (3,25,26)

† 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 are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, both within and outside Nepal, including to India, the Middle East, Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. (26,28,29) Traffickers promise families work and education opportunities for their children, but instead bring them to often under-resourced and unregistered orphanages in urban centers, where the children are subjected to forced labor and forced begging on the streets. In addition, there are reports that some orphanages keep children in destitute and unsanitary conditions to attract charitable donations from foreigners. (3,25,26)

Many children in Nepal are engaged in the production of bricks, which exposes them to hazardous working conditions, including carrying heavy loads, using dangerous machinery, and working in extreme heat. (1,3,30) According to the Report on Employment Relationship Survey in the Brick Industry in Nepal, conducted by the ILO, UNICEF, and the Central Bureau of Statistics of Nepal, there are an estimated 17,738 child laborers in the brick kilns of Nepal, with 15,400 of these children engaged in hazardous work. (15,31)

Due to COVID-19 pandemic-related national lockdowns, most of the industries in which children would work remained closed. However, bonded labor in agriculture, domestic work, and in brick kilns continued to exist. (4,23,32) Furthermore, although quantitative data are unavailable, the media, civil society, and NGOs report that the pandemic led to an increase in the number of children working in agriculture and domestic work, and on the streets. (4)

Carpet factories are considered to be in the formal sector, but many of the subcontractors working in the informal sector use child labor further down the supply chain. Although NGOs believe that the number of children involved in producing carpets continued to decrease, there were no data available to verify this claim. (16)

Last year, as the government increased the number of raids in the entertainment sector, the number of children working in this sector decreased; and with an increased awareness of child labor, research found a decrease in child labor across all sectors. (16) However, due to the pandemic-related national lockdown, the entertainment sector was closed for more than 10 months and remained closed at the end of the reporting period. No prevalence data are available to determine whether pandemic-related lockdowns affected child labor in this sector. (4)

Some children, particularly girls, face barriers to accessing education due to a lack of sanitation facilities, geographic distance, costs associated with schooling, household chores, and a lack of parental support. (16,33) In Nepal, 32.4 percent of schools lack separate toilet facilities for girls, which can deter them from attending school, especially when they are menstruating. (2,34) The government has introduced free sanitary napkins in all schools across the country to encourage girls to attend their classes. (16) Barriers for attending school for school-age boys include pressure to find employment, migration to work outside Nepal, and issues with drugs and alcohol. Children with disabilities face additional barriers to accessing education, including denial of school admission. (16)




The government allows Bhutanese refugee students in grades 9–12 to attend local public schools at no cost, but enrollment remains restricted for younger children. UNHCR provides parallel free education at lower grades to refugees in the two remaining refugee camps in the country. (4,35) Most Tibetan refugees who live in the country, particularly those who arrived after 1990 or turned 16 after 1995, do not have documentation, nor do their descendant children. Even those with acknowledged refugee status have no legal rights beyond the ability to remain in the country. (35,36) Nevertheless, the government allowed NGOs to provide primary- and secondary-level schooling to Tibetans living in the country. (35) In addition, more than 700 refugees and asylum seekers from Pakistan, Burma, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Somalia, Iran, Iraq, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are not recognized as having the status of refugees, but the government allows UNHCR to provide some education, health, and livelihood services to them. These refugees lack legal access to public education, as well as the right to work. (3,4,35) Child refugees who cannot legally access public education and those of legal age to work but who are not authorized to do so, are more susceptible to being exploited in the worst forms of child labor.

Due to pandemic-related school closings, online learning opportunities are limited for many children who do not have access to a personal computer or Internet connection. This situation has increased the risk of children being diverted from education to child labor, especially in rural and high mountain areas, where local resources are inadequate. (4) Furthermore, as schools reopen, families with economic hardship due to the pandemic may deprioritize education to meet basic needs, which may lead children to be at an increased risk of engaging in child labor when work is available. (37)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Nepal 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	✓

During the reporting period, the Government of Nepal ratified the Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons. (4)

The government has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Nepal's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibition of child trafficking and the prohibition of using children in illicit activities that are consistent with international standards.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	14	Section 3 of the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (38)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No	17	Section 3 of the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (38)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Schedule I of the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act (38)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Section 4 of the Bonded Labor (Prohibition) Act; Section 4 of the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act; Sections 2–4 and 15 of the Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act; Section 4 of the Labor Act (38-41)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Sections 3–4 and 15 of the Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act (41)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 66(3)(d) of the Act Relating to Children 2018; Sections 3, 4, and 15 of the Human Trafficking and Transportation Control Act; Sections 16(2) and 16(3) of the Children’s Act (41-43)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Section 16 of the Children’s Act (43)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Section 7 of the Military Service Regulation 2069 (44)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		Article 39 of the Constitution (45)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	14	Article 31 of the Constitution; Section 6 of the Free and Compulsory Education Act (33,45)
Free Public Education	Yes		Section 16D of the Education Act; Section 20 of the Free and Compulsory Education Act (33,45,46)

* No conscription (45,47)

The minimum age for hazardous work is not consistent with international standards because it does not prohibit children age 17 from engaging in hazardous work. (38) Furthermore, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not include brickmaking, a sector in which there is evidence that work involves carrying heavy loads and being exposed to hazardous substances. (15,38,48) However, Nepal's National Master Plan on Child Labor (2018–2028) has identified children working in brick kilns as targeted groups for hazardous occupation. (49)

Laws related to child trafficking are insufficient because they do not clearly criminalize recruitment, harboring, receipt, or transportation in the absence of force, fraud, or coercion. (41,50) However, with accession to the Palermo Protocol, the Government of Nepal will be required to align its legal framework for human trafficking with international standards, including broadening its definition of human trafficking and better addressing child trafficking. (4) In addition, the legal framework prohibiting the use of children in illicit activities is insufficient, because it does not prohibit the use of children in the production of drugs. (51)

Although the Constitution prohibits the recruitment of children by non-state armed groups, there is no specific legislation penalizing this practice. (33,45,47)

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.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Department of Labor (DOL), Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security (MoLESS)	Enforces labor laws, including those involving child labor. (4)
Nepal Police, Women, Children and Senior Citizen Service Directorate	Investigates crimes involving women and children, including human trafficking. Operates under the direct supervision of the Women, Children and Senior Citizens Service Directorate in all 77 districts. (52) Assists in children's rescue, rehabilitation, and coordination for arrest of perpetrators in cases of the worst forms of child labor. In cases of hazardous child labor, coordinates with and hands over cases to DOL. (4)
Ministry of Land Reform and Management	Enforces laws that prohibit bonded labor in agriculture. (2)
Monitoring Action Committees, Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens (MWCSC)	Investigate reports of commercial sexual exploitation at the district level, including the exploitation of children in the adult entertainment sector. (24)

During the reporting period, Nepal established its first labor court to address labor-related issues under the 2017 Labor Act, including child labor issues in certain circumstances. (53)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Nepal took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Department of Labor (DOL) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including human resource allocation.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$3,100† (16)	\$3,400‡ (4)
Number of Labor Inspectors	14† (16)	10 (4)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (16)	Yes (40)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (16)	Yes (4)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (16)	N/A (4)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (16)	Yes (4)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	1,258† (16)	1,421 (4)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (16)	1,421 (4)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (16)	15 (4)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (16)	15 (4)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (16)	15 (4)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (16)	Yes (4)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (16)	Yes (4)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (40)	Yes (40)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (16)	Yes (4,54)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (16)	Yes (4)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (16)	Yes (4)

† Data are from July 2018 to July 2019.

‡ Funding is for July 2020 to July 2021.

Under a new Constitutional provision and Nepal's transition to federalism, the provincial governments have been given more authority, including the task of overseeing child labor monitoring and inspection and maintaining data and documentation on inspections. (4,40) During the reporting period, the government issued the "Procedure on Establishment and Operation of Information and Records Center" for local levels, which aims to establish information centers at each local government. Once implemented, this procedure will play a key role in tracking child labor data. (55,56)

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Also during the reporting period, DOL increased its budget for inspections focused specifically on child labor from \$3,000 during Nepali fiscal year 2019/2020 (mid-July 2019 to mid-July 2020) to \$3,400 during fiscal year 2020/2021, although both DOL officials and NGO representatives continued to report that resource insufficiency is a challenge. DOL also increased its number of labor inspections, as factories outside Kathmandu were operating and inspections were performed following pandemic health protocols. (4) According to Nepal's annual State of Children report, 79 children were rescued from child labor, including 10 children under age 10. (4) Although DOL reported that penalties were issued in 15 cases of violation of labor laws, DOL did not provide data on the amount or nature of the penalties. NGOs stated that the fines and employer-paid compensation outlined in the Child Labor (Prohibition and Regulation) Act were not adequate as deterrents to child labor violations. (2,4)

In addition, research found that DOL does not take meaningful action against perpetrators of child labor and its worst forms, despite having the authority to do so. Cases are often resolved through negotiations, and DOL encourages mediation over prosecution, resulting in mild punishments for perpetrators. (4,16,50) In addition, business owners are known to put pressure on labor inspectors to settle disputes outside court. Furthermore, DOL officials and NGOs stated that officials are sometimes paid not to move child labor cases forward, or parents are given nominal compensation to abandon cases. (4)

The government has also confirmed that it calls on NGOs to assist with official inspections, because it lacks funding and resources, and to increase transparency. (4) The government and NGOs state that most child labor occurs in the informal sector, including in companies with fewer than 10 employees and those that are not registered with the government. (4,19) However, the government conducted most of its labor inspections in the formal sector. (57) Although the government claims to monitor companies regularly, NGOs report that due to resource limitations, enforcement agencies respond only to child labor complaints. (4)

Furthermore, the number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Nepal's workforce, which includes more than 16.8 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Nepal would employ about 1,120 inspectors. (58,59) Although the total number of labor inspector positions is 15, only 10 positions are filled currently. (4) DOL noted that the number of inspectors was still inadequate and limited the government's abilities to deal with child labor issues, particularly at the local levels. (4,16,60)

Although labor inspectors periodically receive training on child labor laws and inspections, this training does not necessarily adhere to any formal schedule. (57) Due to the pandemic, webinars were held in place of in-person trainings. DOL officials mentioned that the training was insufficient and stressed the need for specialized training on child labor inspection and law enforcement. (4)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Nepal 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 allocating financial resources.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Unknown (16)	Unknown (4)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (16)	N/A (4)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (16)	Unknown (4)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (16)	Unknown (4)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (16)	Unknown (4)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (16)	Unknown (4)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (16)	Unknown (4)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (16)	Unknown (4)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (16)	Yes (4)

Once fully operational, the newly formed Anti-Trafficking in Persons Bureau within the Nepal Police, headed by a Senior Superintendent of Police, will assist in children's rescue, rehabilitation, and coordination for arrest of perpetrators. (16,24) The establishment of this bureau will allow the Government of Nepal to meet some of the obligations arising from the process of acceding to the Palermo Protocol. (24) In addition, the Nepal Police's Crime Investigation School conducts trainings for all levels of police personnel in juvenile justice, child rights, and laws relating to child labor issues. (4)

However, the government lacks both the human resource and financial capacity to enforce laws prohibiting crimes related to the worst forms of child labor, and it lacks the resources to maintain a centralized database of cases involving the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking. (4,9,19,61) The Nepal Police do, however, collect and disaggregate data related to human trafficking cases, and reported 75 victims of child trafficking in Nepali fiscal year 2019/2020 (mid-July 2019 to mid-July 2020). (4)

The government does not publicly release information on its criminal law enforcement efforts. (4)

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 efficacy in accomplishing mandates.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Child Labor Prevention and Occupational Safety Section, Labor Relations and Social Security Division, MoLESS	Formerly the Labor Relations, Child Labor Prevention, and Information Section. (62) Coordinates policymaking on child labor inspection guidelines and monitors implementation of guidelines. (63) Consists of an Under Secretary, one section officer, and one factory inspector. (62) Confers with MWCSC, the Central Child Welfare Board, the DOL, and District Labor Offices. (63) COVID-19 pandemic restrictions hindered the activities of the Child Labor Prevention and Occupational Safety Section during the reporting period. (64)
National Child Labor Elimination Committee	Provisioned by the National Master Plan to End Child Labor and chaired by the Secretary of MoLESS. (19) Under the Child Labor Act, provides recommendations to the government on necessary reforms in the existing child labor laws and policies; provides consultations to the government to make necessary arrangements for the health, safety, education, and occupational training of the children working in institutions; and monitors effective implementation of the policies and laws aimed at eliminating child labor. (38,65) Due to the pandemic, the group did not meet during the reporting period. (4)
National Network Against Child Labor	Coordinates the referral of children who are found in child labor to social services. Consists of District Labor Officers, District Women and Children Officers, officers from the Nepal Police Women and Children Service Centers, Chief District Officers, NGOs, and thousands of youth clubs. (66) Research was unable to determine whether the National Network Against Child Labor was active during the reporting period.
National Committee for Controlling Human Trafficking	Coordinates the implementation of anti-human trafficking laws, policies, and programs at the central, district, and local levels of government. Led by MWCSC and consists of government officials and NGO representatives. (3) During the reporting period, engaged in activities to ratify the Palermo Protocol; amended the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Regulation, 2007 to facilitate the transition to federalism; promulgated the Crime Offense (Victim Relief Fund) Rule; formed working committees to develop a new National Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons and amend the Human Trafficking and Transportation (Control) Act, 2007; and organized a series of awareness activities to commemorate National Day Against Human Trafficking. (54)
National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)	Coordinates with other ministries, carries out periodic reviews of relevant laws, and publishes the annual trafficking in persons report. (67) The Social Inclusion and Gender Equality Division of NHRC monitors and receives complaints on child rights violations and continues to collaborate with international organizations, NGOs, and other child rights organizations. (62) The pandemic has limited NHRC's activities during the reporting period, including the ability to publish its annual trafficking in persons report. However, NHRC has engaged with victims and anti-human trafficking NGOs in a limited manner. (54)

The Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security also leads an inter-agency working group against child labor headed by a Joint Secretary, which coordinates efforts against child labor with UN agencies and international organizations working on child rights and child protection. (54)

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V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including updating existing policies to better align with the constitutional transition to federalism.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Master Plan to End Child Labor (July 2018–July 2028)	Prioritizes ending the worst forms of child labor by 2022, and all forms of child labor by 2025. Established an annual monitoring evaluation and reporting system through which information will be made publicly available. (4,68) During the reporting period, the government has drafted an action plan for the elimination of child labor to facilitate the implementation of the National Master Plan to End Child Labor, which aims to abolish the worst forms of child labor by 2028. (23,69)
School Sector Development Plan (2016–2023)	Aims to expand access to education and provide alternative schooling and non-formal education to vulnerable populations, including children who are out of school and at risk of entering the worst forms of child labor. Overseen by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. (70) During the reporting period, the Government of Nepal conducted a review to assess progress and achievements of the program in its fourth year of implementation, looking specifically at the impact of the pandemic on school dropouts in Nepal. (71)
National Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2011–2022)	Promotes and protects the rights of human trafficking victims and survivors, and outlines policies for providing justice and punishing perpetrators. (65,72) During the reporting period, MWCSC formed a working committee to work on a new action plan, with the hopes of completion by August 2021. (3,54)

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (2,4)

The fifteenth National Plan of Nepal (2019/20–2023/2024) has incorporated ending child labor as one of its objectives, including making necessary legal provisions to end all forms of child labor and increasing the target number of inspections conducted for child labor in each Nepali fiscal year. (4,73) In addition, the Ministry of Women, Children, and Senior Citizens has formulated the Child Development Strategy, aimed at targeted programs for children, including the elimination of child labor. (4)

There is a need to update the National Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons so that it better aligns Nepal's anti-trafficking programming with the constitutional transition to federalism, as well as to better address forced labor. (24,26)

Nepal is a Pathfinder country under Alliance 8.7, which calls for the eradication of child labor by 2025, and forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking by 2030. (4,74)

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
Social Security Fund Program†	MoLESS program that helps support workers and their families through a tripartite contribution policy, an important initiative to help combat and prevent child labor. (19,75) In Nepali fiscal year 2019/2020, MoLESS included 143,912 workers and 9,218 employers under the social security scheme and issued social security identity cards to 78,921 workers and 2,127 employers. In addition, MoLESS also commemorated the National Day of Social Security and organized several outreach and publicity programs. (62)

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor (Cont.)

Program	Description
Helpline and Hotline Programs†	Child Helpline—1098 is a MWCSC- and Child Workers in Nepal-funded helpline operated by the Nepal Telecommunications Authority. (19) Responds to calls about missing children, child abuse, child labor, child trafficking, and child sexual abuse in 13 districts and municipalities in Nepal and in Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. (76,77) Provides rescue services, medical treatment, counseling, legal support, skills training, and shelter services. (24) National Center for Children at Risk—Hotline No. 104 is a hotline operated from Vrikutimandap, Kathmandu, which is jointly run by the Central Child Welfare Board and Nepal Police. (19,24) Per the Nepal Police, about four to five children on average are rescued from child labor every month from informal sectors, such as transportation, domestic help, tea shops, and restaurants, through the complaints received through the hotline. (50) "Hello Sarkar" is an initiative established by the Office of the Prime Minister. Receives child labor complaints from the public through a hotline, Facebook, and Twitter. (19) According to the government's State of Children report, 1,420 children were rescued through these helpline and hotline programs in the Nepali fiscal year 2019/2020. In addition, these helplines provided 8,744 children with social services. (4)
Support for Schools‡	MoLESS program that supports schools for children ages 5–16 who are at risk of working in the worst forms of child labor. Provides scholarships to cover associated schooling costs for children outside the Kathmandu Valley to attend a local public school, and works with local NGOs to verify that children are attending class. (9) This program was active during the reporting period. (62)
Hamro Samman ("Our Respect") (2017–2022)	USAID-funded project, implemented by Winrock International, to strengthen national and local efforts to counter trafficking in persons, improve civil society advocacy and engagement, and increase private sector partnerships to empower survivors and prevent trafficking of at-risk populations. (2,19,78) During the reporting period, 68 children who were victims of human trafficking were reported to have received shelter and psychosocial support from Hamro Samman. (4)
USDOL-Funded Projects	USDOL projects in Nepal focus on both forced labor and child labor, including eliminating child labor in its worst forms. These projects include <i>Sakriya</i> , a \$2.85 million project implemented by World Education, Inc., and <i>From Protocol to Practice: A Bridge to Global Action on Forced Labor (The Bridge Project)</i> , implemented in six countries by ILO. (79,80) Additional information is available on the USDOL website .

† Program is funded by the Government of Nepal.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (4)

The Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security, with support from international NGOs, passed the "Child Labor Free Declaration Procedures for the Local Governments" to identify and declare at least 25 local jurisdictions "child labor free" in the Nepali fiscal year 2020/2021. These guidelines incorporated several indicators, including a child labor survey and programs at the local level to eliminate child labor. (4) Through this measure, the government set up an Emergency Fund at the national and local levels to rescue and rehabilitate vulnerable children. (4)

Also during the reporting period, the Government of Nepal published the Report on Employment Relationship Survey in the Brick Industry in Nepal, which was conducted in 2019 in partnership with the ILO, UNICEF, and the Central Bureau of Statistics of Nepal. The survey is the first nationally representative research conducted in the brick industry, providing information on the prevalence of child labor, forced labor, and bonded labor in the brick production sector. (15)

However, gaps exist in these social programs, including programs that support child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and children working in the production of bricks.

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 Nepal (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 laws are in line with ILO C. 182 by raising the minimum age to 18 for entry into hazardous work.	2009 – 2020
	Ensure that the types of hazardous work prohibited for children are comprehensive and include sectors in which there is evidence of child labor, including brickmaking.	2015 – 2020
	Ensure that the legal framework comprehensively and criminally prohibits the trafficking of children without needing proof of the use of force, fraud, or coercion.	2015 – 2020
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the use of children in illicit activities, including the production of drugs.	2015 – 2020
	Ensure that the law criminally penalizes the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2020
Enforcement	Increase penalties to ensure sufficient deterrence of child labor law violations.	2015 – 2020
	Ensure that legal provisions against child labor are implemented and enforced against perpetrators.	2018 – 2020
	Ensure that the Department of Labor's budget is sufficient to adequately enforce child labor laws.	2016 – 2020
	Improve human resource capacity, including increasing the number of child labor inspections, especially in the informal sector.	2018 – 2020
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate, particularly at the local levels, by initiating routine targeted inspections in all sectors rather than performing inspections solely based on complaints received.	2017 – 2020
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2010 – 2020
	Institutionalize trainings for labor inspectors on laws related to child labor, including its worst forms.	2019 – 2020
	Publish data on criminal law enforcement actions, including whether new criminal investigators received initial training, refresher courses for investigators, and the number of investigations, violations, prosecutions, convictions, and penalties imposed for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.	2009 – 2020
	Provide additional resources to criminal law enforcement agencies so they are able to enforce laws prohibiting crimes related to the worst forms of child labor.	2011 – 2020
	Provide sufficient resources to create a centralized database to track and monitor cases of the worst forms of child labor, disaggregated by type of activity.	2009 – 2020
Coordination	Ensure that all coordinating bodies are active and able to carry out their intended mandates.	2020
Government Policies	Update the National Plan of Action on Combating Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children to better address forced labor and align it with anti-trafficking programming.	2018 – 2020
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on child labor and its worst forms, particularly regarding hazardous work.	2018 – 2020
	Conduct research to determine the types of activities carried out by children, including in the construction sector, to inform social policies and programs.	2019 – 2020
	Eliminate barriers to education, including the lack of sanitation facilities at schools, long distances to schools, fees associated with schooling, pressure to find employment, migration to work outside of Nepal, and issues with drugs and alcohol.	2013 – 2020
	Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children, including children with disabilities and refugee children.	2019 – 2020
	Create social programs that support child victims of commercial sexual exploitation and children working in the brick industry.	2018 – 2020

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