

In 2020, Senegal made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. A government initiative to address the COVID-19 pandemic through the "Zero Children" program removed 5,130 children from the streets, many of whom were victims of forced begging. The National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons also finalized its National Action Plan for 2021–2023. In addition, the government created a new coordination mechanism that includes a National Unit for Coordination, Monitoring, and Follow Up of Emergency Protection of Children Against COVID-19. However, children in Senegal are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in gold mining. Hazardous work prohibitions do not include domestic work or street work, areas in which there is evidence of potential harm to child workers, and labor and criminal law enforcement agencies lack resources to adequately enforce child labor law. In addition, an overlap of mandated activities among mechanisms to coordinate efforts to address child labor creates confusion and obstructs effective collaboration.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Senegal are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in gold mining. (1-5) Table I provides key indicators on children's work and education in Senegal. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table I. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	22.3 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	53.0
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	13.9
Primary Completion Rate (%)		61.2

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 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS), 2015. (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	Herding cattle (8)
	Fishing, activities unknown (2,9)
	Farming, including the production of cotton, rice, peanuts, and mangoes (2,9)
Industry	Washing ore, crushing rocks, using mercury, and carrying heavy loads† while mining gold, iron, and salt, and quarrying rock (4,8)
	Welding and auto repair (9,10)
Services	Domestic work (1,2,5)
	Street work, including vending (1,2,9,5,11)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced domestic work, gold mining, fishing, and farming, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,12,4)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (10,13)
	Forced begging, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,2,9,5,14-18)

† 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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Children in Senegal are exploited in domestic servitude and forced labor in gold mines, and are victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation, particularly within the country. (1,9,14,19) Forced begging remains a significant problem in Senegal. It is a traditional practice to send boys to Koranic schools called *daaras*, at which students known as *talibés* receive a Koranic education from teachers known as *marabouts*; however, some *daaras* have corrupted the traditional practices, forcing many students to beg. (1-3,5,19-21) Corrupt *marabouts* take the *talibés*' earnings and beat those who fail to meet the daily quota. (2,9,20) Research found that this practice enriches *marabouts*, bringing in over \$10 million annually in Dakar alone. (22,23) *Talibés* at such institutions often live in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions, receive inadequate food and medical care, and are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse. (2,13,20) Children from rural areas in Senegal and neighboring countries are particularly vulnerable to this practice and are sometimes victims of human trafficking. (9,20,21,24)

Barriers to education exist that force some students to quit school, including school-related fees, a lack of birth registration documents, and shortages of both teachers and rural schools. Some girls reportedly quit school due to sexual harassment, including by teachers. (9,10,25,26)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Senegal 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 Senegal's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibition of military recruitment by non-state armed groups.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article L. 145 of the Labor Code; Article 6 of the Decree Establishing the Scale of Penalties for Violations of the Labor Code and Associated Rules for Application (27,28)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Article 1 of the Ministerial Order No. 3750 Determining the Types of Hazardous Work Prohibited for Children and Youth; Articles 1, 2, and 3 of the Ministerial Order No. 3751 Determining the Categories of Business and Work Prohibited to Children and Youth (29-31)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Ministerial Order No. 3750 Determining the Types of Hazardous Work Prohibited to Children and Youth; Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3751 Determining the Categories of Business and Work Prohibited to Children and Youth (29-31)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles L. 4 and L. 279 of the Labor Code; Articles 2 and 4 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Article 1 of the Law Concerning the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Similar Practices and the Protection of Victims (27,31,32)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 1 of the Law Concerning the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Similar Practices and the Protection of Victims (32)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor; Articles 323 and 324 of the Penal Code (31,33)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	No		Article 2 of the Ministerial Order No. 3749 Determining and Prohibiting the Worst Forms of Child Labor (31)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 19 of Law No. 2008-28 (34)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	16	Article 3 of Law No. 2004-37 (35)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 3 of Law No. 2004-37; Articles 21–22 of the Constitution (35,36)

* No conscription (8)

On January 2, 2019, the Ministerial Council endorsed draft legislation amending the Labor Code pertaining to the minimum age for admission to employment. The proposal would raise the minimum age for "light work" from age 12 to 13 and raise the basic minimum age for work from age 15 to 16. (9) It would also do away with certain exemptions that allow youth as young as age 16 to work in hazardous occupations. These proposed amendments have not yet come into force. (9) The government also drafted a revised law on human trafficking that aims to widen the law's use by prosecutors because it has seldom been applied in the past. (9)

In September 2018, as part of the draft law comment period, the government finalized and publicized a draft of the revamped Child Code, but it was still pending final approval at the end of the reporting period. (2,9,37) While the 2005 anti-trafficking law criminalizes forced begging, provisions in the Penal Code that allow the seeking of alms under certain conditions may have hampered the ability of law enforcement officials to distinguish between traditional alms-seeking and exploitation through forced begging. (21,31,38) Furthermore, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not include domestic work or street work, areas in which there is evidence of potential harm to child workers. (8,29-31) The light work provisions are not specific enough to prevent children from involvement in child labor because they do not limit the number of hours per week for light work, determine the activities in which light work may be permitted, or specify the conditions under which light work may be undertaken. The light work framework also does not meet international standards as it applies to children under the age of 13. (27,28) Because the minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, children may be encouraged to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. (27,28,35)

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, Social Dialogue, Professional Organizations, and Institutional Relations (MOL)	Enforces child labor laws through the Directorate General of Labor and Social Security and by using social security inspectors. (26)
Ministry of Women, Family, Gender, and Child Protection (MWFGCP)	Contributes to the creation and implementation of child protection policies and provides services to victims of exploitative child labor. Operates the Ginddi Center for vulnerable children and a toll-free child protection hotline through which the public can report child labor abuses. (14,15,21) In 2020, created a new program (Emergency Protection Project for Children in Street Situations) to address child victim identification during the pandemic, an undertaking that includes identification and tracking processes to follow the children and their whereabouts long term with the assistance of local community women's group's organizations. (9) Also created a new coordination mechanism that includes a National Unit for Coordination, Monitoring, and Follow Up of Emergency Protection of Children Against COVID-19 during the pandemic, established at the national level. (9)
Ministry of Justice (MOJ)	Prosecutes violations of child labor laws. (39) Through its Department of Correctional Education and Social Protection, helps develop draft texts in the field of social protection and juvenile delinquency; strengthens the capacity of stakeholders to care for children; and shares responsibility with MWFGCP to provide services to vulnerable children. (15,40) Does not train the gendarmerie or the police to identify child labor violations, nor are they required or expected to report such violations to MOL. (9)
Ministry of the Interior and Public Security	Oversees all law enforcement agencies, including police officials who investigate cases of human trafficking and forced child begging, and arrests perpetrators of the worst forms of child labor. (39,41,42) Houses the Children's Unit, located in Dakar, which employs three officers who specialize in child protection, victim identification, and reintegration. (15,41) Through its Children's Unit, receives assistance from the Vice Squad in child protection cases. (43) Through its Air and Border Police (<i>Police de l'air et des frontières</i>), focuses on migrant smuggling and transnational crimes. (44)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Senegal took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws, including an insufficient number of inspectors.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$203,100 (2)	Unknown (9)
Number of Labor Inspectors	68 (2)	68 (9)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (2)	Yes (27)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (2)	Yes (9)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (2)	N/A (9)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (2)	Yes (9)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown (2)	Unknown (9)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (2)	Unknown (9)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	0 (2)	0 (9)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	0 (2)	N/A (9)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	0 (2)	N/A (9)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (2)	Yes (9)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (2)	Yes (9)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (2)	Yes (27)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (2)	Yes (9)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	No (2)	No (9)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (2)	Yes (9)

The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Senegal's workforce, which includes over 6 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 40,000 workers in less developed economies, Senegal would employ about 175 labor inspectors. (45,46) Research indicates that the labor inspectorate has assigned only one inspector and one controller to child labor cases.

Despite many anecdotal reports of child labor, the Ministry of Labor, Social Dialogue, Professional Organizations, and Institutional Relations (MOL) did not formally report any cases of child labor during the reporting period. (9)

Anecdotal reports indicate that there is a lack of child labor law enforcement in the informal sector, in which most children are employed. This is especially true of the gold-mining sector, the lion's share of whose activities take place in the southeast of the country in the Kédougou region, far from the capital. (2, 14, 21, 47) Article L. 241 of the Labor Code grants inspectors the authority to assess penalties for all offenses; however, they typically do so only in the case of minor infractions, referring more serious violations to the courts. (27, 39) Courts may require violations to be resolved through conciliation at the labor inspectorate or refer cases to a tribunal for judgment. (39) The government did not provide information on its labor law enforcement funding, the number of labor inspections conducted, or the number of inspections conducted at worksites for inclusion in this report. (9)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Senegal took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal law enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including insufficient training for criminal investigators.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (2)	Yes (9)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (2)	N/A (9)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (2)	Yes (9)
Number of Investigations	9 (2)	Unknown (9)
Number of Violations Found	7 (2)	Unknown (9)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	7 (2)	3 (9)
Number of Convictions	2 (48)	3 (9)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (2)	Unknown (9)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (2)	Yes (9)

The government did not provide information on its criminal law enforcement efforts, including the number of investigations, the number of violations found, or the number of imposed penalties for violations related to the worst forms of child labor for inclusion in this report.

The authorities have had limited success in prosecuting cases related to forced begging due to a lack of governmental coordination, resource constraints, and lack of political support, particularly in rural areas. (14, 47, 49) Although police stations in Senegal are expected to report cases involving children to the Ministry of the Interior and Public Security's Children's Unit, research found no evidence that this occurs regularly. (50) Research indicates that training for criminal investigators was cursory and not sufficient to fully enforce existing laws protecting children against labor abuses. (2)

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 overlap of institutional mandates.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Committee Against Child Labor	Coordinates initiatives, policies, and partnerships with civil society organizations to address child labor. Chaired by MOL and includes representatives from three ministries, the police, and elected officials. (47) Did not meet in 2020, and has not been operational since 2012. (9)
National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (CNLTP)	Reports on human trafficking in Senegal, with a focus on women and children; coordinates the implementation of the National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings and other efforts to prevent human trafficking; prosecutes perpetrators; and protects victims. (14,47,51) Chaired by MOJ and employs five staff members. (41,47,51) During the reporting period, finalized its National Action Plan for 2021–2023. Was allocated \$113,422 (60 million FCFA) in 2020 by the government compared with \$30,246 (16 million FCFA) in 2019. (9,52)
Childhood Protection Unit (CAPE)	Coordinates government efforts related to child protection, including through the implementation of the National Strategy on Child Protection. (43,44,47,53,54) Contributes to the creation and implementation of child protection policies, and develops a national system for collecting and disseminating data on vulnerable children. Advocates on behalf of all entities working on issues related to child begging, violence against children, and child labor. (55) Research was unable to determine whether CAPE was active during the reporting period. (9) In April 2021, CAPE sponsored a workshop for various stakeholders on child digital literacy and protecting children against sexual exploitation online, especially during periods of school inactivity due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (52)
Trafficking in Persons Database (Systraite)	In October 2019, the Government of Senegal officially launched the country's first national trafficking in persons database, <i>Système de suivi de la traite</i> , or "Systraite." In 2020, piloted databases in five regions: Dakar, Saint Louis, Thies, Kedougou, and Tambacounda. (1,56,57) Launched in partnership with IOM and with funding from USDOS, they collected data on human trafficking victims, convictions, and perpetrators. (58) During the reporting period, judicial actors were trained on the Systraite system. Intended expansion of this program was delayed due to the pandemic-related issues. (3)
Daara Mapping	Used to identify where forced child begging occurs in Senegal. (12) In collaboration with local communities, USAID, foreign NGOs, UNODC, and the CNLTP, daara mapping has been taking place since 2014. (1,12) Research was unable to determine whether any daara mapping activities took place during the reporting period.

The government significantly increased funding to the National Task Force Against Trafficking in Persons (CNLTP) in 2020. However, overlap among the activities of the coordinating bodies due to duplicative institutional mandates creates confusion and obstructs effective collaboration and implementation of efforts. (14,19,47)

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 lack of a national policy to address child labor, including its worst forms.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (2018–2020)	Implemented by CNLTP, serves as a continuation of the preceding action plan and consists of four axes: prevention, protection and prosecution, capacity building, and research and evaluation. (14,47) During the reporting period, continued the 2018–2020 National Action Plan, with wide participation by both public and non-public entities. Continued to utilize international donors as the primary mechanism to provide training. (1)
National Strategy on Child Protection	Aims to establish an integrated national social protection system and specifically identifies the issue of child begging through an action plan with a recommended budget of \$18 million. (15) Implemented through Child Protection Committees, currently established in 24 prefectures, which refer victims to social services and assist law enforcement with reintegrating child trafficking victims. (15,41) Research was unable to determine whether there were activities related to this policy during the reporting period.

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (41)

Research was unable to determine whether any actions were undertaken in 2020 to renew the National Action Plan on the Prevention and Abolition of Child Labor in Senegal, which expired in 2016.

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 of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Removal of Street Children (Retrait des enfants de la Rue)†	Funded and overseen by the government, removes children who are begging from the streets of Dakar and place them in government-run shelters or return them to their homes. (1,21,53,59) Provided \$715,000 in funding to MWFGCP to create a component to address the pandemic through the "Zero Children" program, which provided 500 <i>daaras</i> with 72,091 hygiene kits for students. This new component also removed 5,130 children from the streets, many of whom were victims of forced child begging. (9)
Daara Modernization Program†	\$18.5 million government-funded voluntary program implemented by Tostan and <i>La Rencontre Africaine pour la Défense des Droits d'Homme</i> that aims to regulate, inspect, and fund <i>daaras</i> and to eliminate forced begging. (49) During the reporting period, the government closed down numerous unsafe or unsanitary <i>daaras</i> . (9)
Ginddi Center†	Serves abused and vulnerable children, including runaway <i>talibés</i> , street children, and child trafficking victims. (15,26,47,49) Provides food, education, vocational training, family mediation, medical care, and psychological care in its shelter. (47,60) Supports a toll-free 24/7 hotline which receives reports of child trafficking cases from anonymous sources. During the reporting period, continued to support victims of child trafficking, including by housing them, and continued to operate its toll-free hotline. (3)
Centers to address child trafficking†	Provides monitoring, education, and rehabilitation and reintegration services for victims of child trafficking through MOJ-run transit houses in Dakar, Pikine, and Saint-Louis. (41) During the reporting period, the government continued to provide food and shelter through this program. (3)

† Program is funded by the Government of Senegal.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (61-63)

Although the Government of Senegal has implemented programs to address child trafficking and forced begging, research found no evidence that the government has carried out programs to assist children involved in domestic work, agriculture, or mining. (9) The Ginddi Center's child protection hotline was operational during the reporting period, but research was unable to determine how many children it served. In 2020, the Ginddi Center was reportedly overcrowded. (1)

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 Senegal (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law governing hazardous work prohibitions for children is comprehensive.	2016 – 2020
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2020
	Clarify the forced begging provisions in the Penal Code and the Law Concerning the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons to explicitly prohibit forced begging, including alms-seeking, under any circumstances.	2017 – 2020
	Ensure that the law's light work provisions are specific enough to prevent children's involvement in child labor.	2017 – 2020
	Raise the minimum age for work to the age up to that which education is compulsory.	2018 – 2020
	Raise the minimum age for light work to age 13.	2019 – 2020
Enforcement	Publish all relevant information on labor inspectorate funding and on the number of inspections conducted, including those conducted at worksites.	2013 – 2020
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice, provide adequate labor inspectorate funding, and ensure that cases of child labor are formally reported.	2010 – 2020
	Ensure that labor inspections and enforcement are carried out in the informal sector.	2014 – 2020
	Ensure that all violations are assessed a penalty, particularly in the most serious cases.	2019 – 2020
	Establish a mechanism to receive child labor complaints, and track cases of child labor for referral to law enforcement or social service providers.	2014 – 2020
	Track and publish Ginddi Center hotline call data to determine number of children served during the reporting period.	2019 – 2020
	Ensure that the gendarmerie and police are trained to identify and report child labor violations.	2020

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Ensure that training for criminal investigators adequately addresses issues related to the worst forms of child labor in Senegal.	2019 – 2020
	Publish criminal law enforcement data on the number of investigations, violations found, and imposed penalties on the worst forms of child labor.	2020
	Ensure that courts have sufficient resources and coordination to be able to successfully prosecute cases.	2019 – 2020
Coordination	Ensure that coordinating mechanisms on child labor are active and able to carry out their intended mandates by providing them with adequate resources, support, and mutually exclusive scopes of responsibility.	2010 – 2020
Government Policies	Ensure that policies are fully funded and implemented, and report on their activities.	2020
	Adopt a national policy to address child labor.	2016 – 2020
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to better inform policies and programs.	2019 – 2020
	Ensure that all children have access to education by eliminating school-related fees, building schools in rural areas, training additional teachers, providing all children with access to birth registration, and protecting children in schools from sexual abuse.	2011 – 2020
	Institute programs to address child labor in domestic work, agriculture, and mining, and ensure that adequate funding is available to support existing programs targeting the worst forms of child labor, including forced begging.	2010 – 2020

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