

In 2021, Ethiopia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, the government established a new National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2021–2025). The Ministry of Labor and Skills, together with the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions and Confederation of Ethiopian Employers Federation also launched the Decent Work Country Program (2021–2025). In addition, the government significantly increased the operating budget of the labor inspectorate. However, children in Ethiopia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced labor in domestic work and in commercial sexual exploitation. The law in Ethiopia does not include free basic education or a compulsory age for education, leaving children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor. Social programs to address child labor have also not sufficiently targeted sectors with high incidences of child labor.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Ethiopia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in forced labor in domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation. (1-3) According to the results of the 2015 Ethiopia National Child Labor Survey published in 2018, almost 16 million children from the ages of 5 to 17 were engaged in child labor. A majority of these children were found in the regions of Oromia, Amhara, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR). (4) The Ethiopian Central Statistics Agency (CSA) did not collect data on child labor during the reporting period. However, the CSA, UNICEF Ethiopia, and the Center for Evaluation and Development published a report entitled "Child Labor Analysis in Ethiopia 2020." (5,6) The report supplemented CSA's 2015 Ethiopia National Child Labor Survey with new data on hard-to-reach children working in urban areas, including information about children engaged in domestic service and other work in the services sector. (5,6) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Ethiopia.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	7 to 14	41.5 (10,202,669)
Attending School (%)	7 to 14	73.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	30.8
Primary Completion Rate (%)		68.1

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2020, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022. (7)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Socio Economic Survey (ESS 3), 2015–2016. (8)

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	Planting and harvesting apples, bananas, coffee, cotton, <i>khat</i> , and sesame (3,4,9-13)
	Herding livestock, including cattle (3,14)
	Fishing (4)
Industry	Mining gold [†] and quarrying [†] (4,15)
	Construction, [†] including carrying heavy loads and digging (3,4,10)
	Repairing motor vehicles and motorcycles (4)
	Producing handicrafts, including pottery and traditional handwoven textiles (4)
Services	Domestic work (3,4,9,10,16)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Unpaid household services, including carrying heavy loads of water and firewood (3,4,16)
	Street work, including shoe shining, assisting taxi drivers, vending, portering, and begging (4,5)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,5,10,17-19)
	Forced labor in domestic work, herding, street vending, construction, and traditional weaving of handwoven textiles (5,19-22)
	Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict (3,5,15)

† 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.

Ethiopia is a source and destination country for child trafficking, both transnational and domestic. Ethiopian children voluntarily travel to Amhara, a region bordering a key irregular migration route to Europe, to harvest sesame. (12,13,19,23) This sector is allegedly linked to overland smuggling networks, with children earning enough to fund passage to Europe via North Africa. (12,13,23) Many others journey through Djibouti en route to Persian Gulf states, where they are often intercepted, repatriated, and later routed to a transition center in Addis Ababa. (12) Somaliland intercepts between 50 and 100 children a week, many under the age of 13, traveling from Amhara and Oromia to the Middle East. (12) Children who begin as voluntary migrants may be forced into commercial sexual exploitation or become victims of forced labor. (3,17,18)

Research on child trafficking victims from SNNPR and Oromia indicates that 85 percent were rescued from or escaped domestic work, while two-thirds of them suffered exploitation and abuse. While 55 percent of the surveyed children were sent to Addis Ababa by family, another 11 percent were actively exploited by brokers within their communities. (22) The children surveyed were mostly from families that continue to play a role in financing and coercing their children to go abroad or to urban areas to look for work. (17,21,24) Trusted community members, known as *manamasas*, recruit and groom vulnerable youth on behalf of local and international human trafficking syndicates. (18,25) Traffickers also exploit children from rural areas surrounding Addis Ababa and other regions of the country for forced labor in the weaving industry, street vending, construction, and domestic work. (18,21) In addition, traffickers exploit Ethiopian girls in commercial sex and domestic servitude in neighboring countries. (18) Moreover, children in Oromia and Amhara reportedly harvest and sell *khat*, a stimulant to which they may become addicted due to bodily contact with the plants’ excretions during harvest. (3,10,12) The plant releases two highly addictive central nervous system stimulants (cathinone and cathine) whose acute and long-term neurological effects include *khat*-induced psychosis. (11,12)

In November 2020, a conflict erupted in northern Tigray between government forces and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF); the conflict is ongoing. (26) By early December, more than 45,000 Ethiopians fleeing the war had crossed into Sudan, up to one-half of whom were children. (26) Hundreds of children crossed the border alone, leaving them vulnerable to labor exploitation and human trafficking. Moreover, unconfirmed reporting indicates the TPLF has recruited children, most of them teenagers, during the conflict. (5,15,26,27) There is also one report of authorities in the Borana Zone in southern Oromia forcibly conscripting youth to join the Ethiopian National Defense Force. (3)







Some women and girls have reportedly been forced by military elements to have sex in exchange for basic commodities, though the specific military elements remain unknown. (28,29) In addition, military blockades have disrupted emergency humanitarian aid distribution networks in Tigray. (28-30) As a result of the ongoing violence, some 2.3 million children in the region lack access to humanitarian assistance, and 1.3 million were unable to attend school. (5,31,32) In addition, 12,000 children who fled to Sudan to escape the conflict in Tigray had no access to education other than makeshift classrooms set up by NGOs operating across the border. (15,33) Precise figures are in dispute, although the UN and other humanitarian organizations estimate that 1.1 million children were displaced in 2020, 66 percent due to armed conflict. (10,31,32,34) Ethnic unrest was also recorded in Oromia, Amhara, and SNNPR, and research suggests the Oromo Liberation Army-Shane may have recruited child soldiers. (5,35)

Ethiopian authorities closed all secondary schools for one week in December so that pupils could harvest crops; some of these harvested crops were for those on the frontline of the civil war. More than 2 million pupils were already out of school due to the war. (36) With infrastructure for remote learning effectively non-existent, many children remained out of school for many months, and some have still not returned. These children are acutely vulnerable to exploitation and abuse, including child labor. (15,37) Armed conflicts and resulting humanitarian crises have also disrupted education in other parts of the country. Children in rural areas face additional barriers to education, including the distance they must travel to reach school; a lack of sanitation, which especially affects adolescent girls; sexual harassment; the requirement to pay for uniforms and supplies; and a lack of teachers. The Somali and Afar regions had the lowest rates of school attendance, with only 38.6 percent of school-age children enrolled in the Somali region and 50.2 percent enrolled in the Afar region. (4,5,38) Armed elements, including the TPLF and the Ethiopian National Defense Force, targeted schools in Tigray with rocket and artillery fire. Non-state armed groups in Tigray and the western part of Oromia also occupied schools for military purposes. (10,39,40) These factors increased children's risk of entering the workforce at a young age. (9,10,32,38)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Ethiopia 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 Ethiopia's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including free and compulsory education.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Articles 4.1, 89.1, 89.2, 89.3, and 185 of the Labor Proclamation 1156/2019 (41)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	No	18	Article 36.1(d) of the Constitution; Articles 89.3 and 89.4 of the Labor Proclamation 1156/2019 (41,42)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 89.3, 89.4, and 186.1 of the Labor Proclamation 1156/2019; Directive on Prohibited Occupations for Young Workers (41,43)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 18.3 of the Constitution; Article 596 of the Criminal Code; Articles 3.1, 3.2, and 4.1–4.3 of the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons Proclamation No. 1178-2020 (42,44,45)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 18.2 of the Constitution; Articles 597 and 635–637 of the Criminal Code; Articles 3.1–3.5 and 4.1 of the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons Proclamation No. 1178-2020 (42,44-46)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 634–636 of the Criminal Code; Articles 3.1–3.5 and 4.1 of the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons Proclamation No. 1178-2020 (44,45)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 525 of the Criminal Code; Articles 3.1–3.5 and 4.1 of the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Persons Proclamation No. 1178-2020 (44,45)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18‡	Article 270 of the Criminal Code (44)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		Articles 3.1, 3.2, and 4.1–4.3 of the Proclamation to Provide for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants (45)
Compulsory Education Age	No		
Free Public Education	No		

* Country has no conscription (44)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (5)

Not all Ethiopian laws related to child labor are in compliance with international standards. The types of hazardous work prohibited for children do not cover traditional weaving, an area of work in which there is evidence that children use dangerous machinery, equipment, and tools, and lift or transport heavy loads. (41,43) Moreover, Article 89.5 of the Labor Proclamation allows children ages 15 to 16 to engage in certain forms of hazardous work following the completion of a government-approved and inspected vocational training course. This contradicts ILO Convention 138, which prohibits hazardous work for all children under the age of 16. (41,47,48) The Government of Ethiopia notes that, in practice, children begin apprenticeships after the completion of 10th grade, typically at age 16 or 17. (49) The Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS) is currently revising the accompanying Directive on Prohibited Occupations for Young Workers; research has not determined whether this will extend further protections to young workers. (10,15) While Ethiopia has a policy encouraging public funding of primary education, its laws do not provide for free public education or a compulsory age for education. (5,45,50)

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
Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS)	Conducts labor inspections of formal worksites through its regional Bureaus of Labor and Skills. (10) Through its National Referral Mechanism, coordinates referrals of survivors to social services providers. (24) During the reporting period, regional and city administration labor inspection offices in Addis Ababa, Amhara, Oromia, and Sidama were equipped with basic safety and health monitoring equipment, received eight motorbikes for labor inspection visits, and were provided with hundreds of packages of basic hygiene/sanitation materials to prevent COVID-19 transmission during inspection activities. (3)
Ethiopian Federal Police Commission	Enforces criminal laws against the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. (10) Addresses child trafficking and assists vulnerable children through its Special Child Protection Units in Addis Ababa and other major cities. (10,19,20,51) Refers cases to the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MOWSA), which develops and implements programs to protect vulnerable children and monitor alleged violations of child protection laws, including the worst forms of child labor. (3) MOWSA also maintains rehabilitation centers and coordinates foster families for children rescued from the worst forms of child labor. (10)
Ministry of Justice	Prosecutes criminal violations of child labor laws, including through its Special Investigative Unit for Women and Children. (10)

The former Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLSA) was reconstituted as the Ministry of Labor and Skills (MOLS), and the former Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth (MOWCY) was also reconstituted as the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MOWSA). In addition, the Office of the Attorney General was reconstituted as the Ministry of Justice. (3)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2021, labor law enforcement agencies in Ethiopia took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of MOLS that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including financial and human resource allocation.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$153,000 (15)	\$2,524,544 (3)
Number of Labor Inspectors	621 (15)	537 (3)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (5,15,41)	Yes (41)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (15)	Yes (3)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (15)	Yes (3)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (15)	Yes (3)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	43,360 (15)	40,639 (3)
Number Conducted at Worksite	43,360 (15)	40,639 (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	3 (15)	Unknown (3)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (15)	Unknown (3)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (15)	Unknown (3)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (15)	Yes (3)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (15)	Yes (3)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (41)	Yes (41)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (15)	Yes (3)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (15)	Yes (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (15)	Yes (3)

In 2021, labor inspections were conducted in commercial agriculture, small and medium manufacturing industries, the services sector, and construction. However, labor inspections are often not conducted in the informal sector, and in some areas of the country, labor inspections were suspended due to conflict. (3) Data on violations are not aggregated at the national level, and the government did not publish the number of child labor violations identified as a result of these inspections. (2,3,7,10) Labor inspectors refer child labor violations to judicial authorities, who are able to assess penalties. (5,41) In addition, the number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Ethiopia's workforce, which includes 52.8 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 40,000 workers in less developed economies, Ethiopia would employ about 1,321 inspectors. (52)

Despite the increase in funding for the labor inspectorate in 2021, MOLS and other stakeholders report that a lack of resources and poor coordination among agencies hampered their ability to enforce child labor laws. (3)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2021, criminal law enforcement agencies in Ethiopia took actions to address child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including lack of collecting and publishing enforcement statistics.

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Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Unknown (5,15)	Unknown (3)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (5,15)	Unknown (3)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (5,15)	Unknown (3)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (5,15)	Unknown (3)
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (5,15)	Unknown (3)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (5,15)	Unknown (3)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (5,15)	Unknown (3)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (5,15)	Unknown (3)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (5)	Yes (3)

While the government did provide some criminal law enforcement data for inclusion in this report, it is unclear whether the data included child labor-related cases. (2,10,18,23) Enforcement efforts continued to focus on transnational human trafficking for the purpose of forced labor, to the detriment of internal human trafficking, including trafficking of children for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation. (18)

Ethiopian immigration and border patrol authorities refer human trafficking survivors to NGO-run shelters, in which victims are given first aid and assistance to return home. Although the shelters do not disaggregate data for children, NGOs reported that many of those receiving services were younger than age 18, some of whom may have been returning from the Persian Gulf States. (24)

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 lack of coordination between agencies.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committees	Includes the National Steering Committee on the Worst Forms of Child Labor, which coordinates activities on the worst forms of child labor. Members include MOLS, MOWSA, and the Ministry of Education. (2,17) Also includes the National Steering Committee Against Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children, which develops action plans and coordinates activities to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children. (17) During the reporting period, the Committee evaluated the 2019–2020 National Action Plan to eliminate child labor, and conducted visits and provided technical support to staff at project sites in the Amhara region for World Vision Ethiopia’s Partnership Against Child Exploitation (PACE). The Committee also printed the National Action Plan so that it could be disseminated to stakeholders. (3)
MOLS National Forum to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Addresses the worst forms of child labor at the national level. (2,5) Research was unable to determine whether the Forum was active during the reporting period.
National Anti-Human Trafficking and Smuggling Mechanisms	Responsible for the creation of policies and strategies for the prevention of smuggling and trafficking in persons and issuing directives. (22) Chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister; and includes representatives from the Federal Attorney General’s Office, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Peace, MOLS, the Refugees and Returnees Affairs Agency, MOWSA, the Commission of Job Creation, the Ministry of Health, the Federal Police Commission, the National Bank, the Ethiopian Central Statistics Agency, the National Intelligence and Security Services, regional governments, the Civil Societies Agency, and religious institutions. Also oversees 10 working groups that specialize in multiple anti-trafficking in persons sectors, including a Women and Children Support and Protection Working Group. (5,22) Research was unable to determine whether the coordinating body was active during the reporting period.
National and Regional Task Forces on Orphans and Vulnerable Children	Promote children’s rights; chaired by members of the federal government and state ministers and led by the MOWSA in all nine regional capitals and two city administrations. (53) Research was unable to determine whether task forces were active during the reporting period.

Limited committee budgets, overlapping mandates, and poor coordination between the committees and agencies hindered coordination efforts to address child labor at a national and regional level. (3,17,24)

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 implementation of policies to address child labor.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Education and Children's Policies	Promotes children's rights and aims to improve access to education. In the case of the National Children's Policy, facilitates access to quality primary and secondary education for out-of-school youth, including in rural areas, and provides measures against exploitation and human trafficking. (54) Regarding the Ethiopian Education Development Roadmap (2018–2030), aims to make education free and compulsory, while the Education and Training Policy prioritizes government support for education through grade 10, and the Pastoralist Area Education Strategy provides for alternative education in pastoralist communities. The National Technical & Vocational Education & Training Strategy also aims to improve access to vocational education for girls and out-of-school children. (38,55-58) The government has not included child labor elimination and prevention strategies in the Education Sector Development Roadmap, the National Technical & Vocational Education & Training Strategy, or the National Children's Policy. (56-58)
National Action Plan to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2021–2025)†	Includes guidelines on child labor identification, withdrawal, reintegration, and education. Overseen by the National Steering Committee on the Worst Forms of Child Labor. (2) As part of its efforts to draft the new National Action Plan (NAP), the government convened a consultative workshop for stakeholders in April 2021 from government ministries, the ILO, the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU), the Confederation of Ethiopian Employers Federation (CEEF), and other NGOs; held a review meeting with a small MOLS team on the NAP design process in May 2021; and launched the NAP in June 2021 at a workshop attended by about 50 participants. (3)

† 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. (59,60)

In 2019, Ethiopia became a Pathfinder country under Alliance 8.7. This involves accelerating progress toward achieving commitments under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 8.7, which calls for the eradication of child labor by 2025, and the elimination of forced labor, modern slavery, and human trafficking by 2030. (61) Despite Ethiopia's voluntary engagement as a Pathfinder country and its early efforts to implement SDG 8.7 on child labor during the previous two reporting periods, Ethiopia did not participate in the first meeting for Pathfinder countries in December 2021. Ethiopia was also one of two Pathfinder countries that did not submit the requested progress report on child labor for 2021. (3) It is unclear whether Ethiopia attended the second meeting for Pathfinder countries in February 2022. (3)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2020, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating 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
Government of Ethiopia Programs	In 2021, the Ministry of Education continued the Comprehensive, Inclusive Learning and Development–School Feeding Project (CHILD-SFP), a school feeding project benefiting 163,021 pre-primary and primary school students in 499 schools in 5 regional states: Oromia, Amhara, Sidama, Somali, and Afar. (15,62) The Global Partnership for Education, a USAID partner, provided \$21.4 million in funding for the school feeding project, which is implemented by Save the Children. During the reporting period, the project provided training to administrators at the districts' education offices, as well as to teachers in the target schools. (15,62) In addition, the government allocated \$48,223,349 (1.9 billion <i>birr</i>) to the same regions to feed 1.4 million students. (15) Separately, the government established an initiative to provide temporary shelter for destitute urban children. At the direction of Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, the government set aside two hectares of land in Akaki Kality Sub City; the Tewodros Ashenafi Foundation then provided \$634,357 (25 million <i>birr</i>) for the construction of a transitional shelter with a holding capacity of 2,000 children. (5) The Foundation handed over management of the facility to the Addis Ababa Bureau of Labor and Social Affairs in May 2020. (15) The shelter provides basic services, including psychosocial support, life skills, education, and training, to enable children's reintegration into society. The initiative is part of Ethiopia's national reform agenda. (5,15)

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

Program	Description
Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU)†*	In 2021, CETU partnered with the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions to launch the "Combating Modern Slavery in Ethiopia" project that looks to reduce the prevalence of children in slavery through prevention, restoration, and capacity strengthening. (3,63) During the reporting period, the project launched its first workshop, which sought to build a broad network of stakeholders to address child slavery. (3,63)
World Vision Programs	Includes Effective Approaches in Ending the Worst Forms of Child Labor (2019–2022), an international program designed to test and measure innovative approaches to reduce the worst forms of child labor, and which targets approximately 500,000 at-risk youth in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, and Ethiopia, including victims of child commercial sexual exploitation and child soldiering, and children engaged in hazardous work. The program's efforts are coordinated by World Vision, with funding by a consortium of NGOs and multilaterals, including UN Global Compact, the Global Compact UK, War Child UK, Thompson Reuters, and the private sector. (12,64,65) This program has supported 1,350 children engaged in the worst forms of child labor in Dera, Libo Kemekem, and Gondar Zuria districts of Amhara since 2020. (3)
World Bank-Funded Projects‡	The Ethiopia General Education Quality Improvement Program for Equity (GEQIP-E) (2017–2022)† is a \$300 million program that works with the Ministry of Education to improve education quality and access. (66–68) GEQIP-E works with the Ministry of Education to create budget lines for school grants and textbooks. (69,70) During the reporting period, the project hired a support staff specialist to focus on key aspects of the project which include: increasing school enrollment; distributing textbooks and other learning materials; assisting with refugee assistance within schools; and improving existing facilities. (68)
UNICEF-Funded Programs	UNICEF-funded programs to improve social safety nets and access to education. These programs include Child-to-Child and Accelerated School Readiness programs, which extend educational opportunities to internally displaced children, and the Integrated Safety Nets Program (2017–2023). (10) UNICEF, the Swedish International Development Agency, and MOLS also jointly fund the Urban Productive Safety Net Program, which aims to build upon efforts to address nutritional and educational outcomes in Amhara and Addis Ababa through cash transfers and linking participants to basic social services. (10,71) UNICEF educational services reached one in five vulnerable children in Ethiopia, providing them with early learning as well as informal and non-formal educational services. (6,31)
USDOL-Funded Project	Includes She Thrives: Reducing Child Labor in Ethiopia's Agricultural Sector using a Gender-Focused Approach (2020–2025), a \$5 million USDOL-funded, 4-year project implemented by Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere, Inc. to use a gender mainstreaming approach to address child labor in coffee production in Oromia and the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region. (72) Additional information is available on the USDOL website.

* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is co-funded by the Government of Ethiopia. (15)

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (3,73)

During the reporting period, MOLS, together with the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions (CETU) and Confederation of Ethiopian Employers Federations (CEEF), launched the Decent Work Country Program (DWCP, 2021–2025) for Ethiopia with support from the ILO in Addis Ababa. (3) Although the government participates in and implements several programs to address child labor, programs do not sufficiently target sectors with high incidences of child labor, such as agriculture and domestic work. (2) There is also a paucity throughout the country of rehabilitation and reintegration centers for victims of child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. (1,17) Moreover, both government and NGO-run shelters were unable to accept referrals of vulnerable children during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic because they had to create separate areas for newcomers to quarantine. (5)

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 Ethiopia (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Raise the minimum age at which children may enter hazardous work following vocational training from age 15 to age 16, in line with ILO C. 138.	2009 – 2021
	Ensure that the types of hazardous work prohibited for children are comprehensive, including hazardous tasks in traditional weaving.	2016 – 2021
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2020 – 2021
	Establish by law free basic education.	2012 – 2021
	Establish by law an age up to which education is compulsory that extends to the minimum age for employment.	2012 – 2021
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2015 – 2021
	Ensure that labor inspectors have sufficient resources to conduct inspections in all sectors and are able to coordinate adequately with other agencies.	2009 – 2021
	Ensure that both domestic and transnational child trafficking cases are investigated and punished.	2013 – 2021
	Gather, disaggregate, and publish information on the number of child labor violations found, penalties applied and collected, trainings done, the number of investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, and convictions obtained.	2009 – 2021
	Prosecute perpetrators of the worst forms of child labor, including recruitment of children into armed conflict, according to the law.	2021
Coordination	Clarify individual mandates for coordinating mechanisms charged with addressing child labor, and enhance intercommittee communication, coordination, and collaboration.	2015 – 2021
	Provide adequate funding to coordinating bodies so that they may effectively coordinate activities related to the worst forms of child labor.	2020 – 2021
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Education Sector Development Program, the National Technical & Vocational Education & Training Strategy, and the National Youth Policy.	2013 – 2021
	Publish activities undertaken to implement key policies related to child labor to address child labor during the reporting period.	2018 – 2021
	Ensure that Ethiopia fulfills its commitment as an Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder country.	2021
Social Programs	Increase access to education for all children by decreasing the distance to schools in rural areas, hiring additional teachers, constructing sanitation facilities, and eliminating school-related costs.	2010 – 2021
	Develop or expand social protection programs to address child labor, including in agriculture and domestic work.	2009 – 2021
	Ensure that social services necessary to prevent child labor, such as rehabilitation and reintegration centers, are available throughout the country.	2009 – 2021
	Take steps to ensure student safety while at school, including environments free from sexual harassment, and make efforts to prevent schools from being attacked and occupied by the Ethiopian National Defense Force and non-state armed groups.	2021

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