

In 2021, Uzbekistan made significant advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government passed legislation which amended their law on commercial sexual exploitation of children to bring it into full compliance with international standards. The government amended the Code of Administrative Liability and the Criminal Code to increase punishments for forced labor and child labor, including its worst forms, and to create criminal liability for individuals who commit child labor violations. The government also undertook a survey to assess allegations of child labor in the silk industry and signed a new Decent Work Country Program for 2021–2025. Additionally, the government continued to raise awareness and enforce prohibitions against the use of child labor and forced labor in the cotton harvest. Research indicates that the use of forced labor in the cotton harvest has been eliminated outside of isolated incidents, largely as a result of government efforts to implement and enforce forced labor prohibitions. However, children in Uzbekistan 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 child labor in agriculture and public works. While the Government of Uzbekistan has made strong progress in addressing labor issues in the cotton harvest, there continue to be impediments to the operation of NGOs in addressing broader labor concerns. Human rights NGOs and civil society organizations, including those working on forced and child labor issues, are frequently denied official registration for bureaucratic reasons, sometimes for failing to meet registration requirements that had not been publicly specified.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Uzbekistan 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 child labor in agriculture and public works. (1-3) Uzbekistan has not carried out a national child labor survey to determine the prevalence of child labor in sectors other than cotton production. (2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Uzbekistan.

Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	4.3 (244,095)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	84.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	5.0
Primary Completion Rate (%)		106.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2020, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2022. (4)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization’s analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 3 (MICS 3), 2006. (5)

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	Harvesting silk cocoons; picking cotton; preparing land for crop planting (1,6,7)
Services	Street work, including vending, car washing, and begging (1,7-10)
	Collecting scrap metal (6,8)
	Public works, including refurbishing school grounds and facilities (1,2,6,11,12)
	Vending in markets (7)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-3,8,13)
	Forced labor in harvesting silk cocoons (6,13,14)
	Forced labor in construction, non-cotton agriculture, and cleaning parks, streets, and buildings (6,13)
	Illicit activities, including theft and the production or trafficking of drugs (1)

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a)–(c) of ILO C. 182.

Traffickers exploit Uzbek children in sex trafficking transnationally in the Middle East, Eurasia, and Asia. (13) Children are also vulnerable to internal trafficking for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. (3,12)







ILO monitors reported that prohibitions on child labor were generally upheld during the 2021 cotton harvest. However, ILO and civil society harvest monitors identified more cases of child labor than in recent years when only sporadic cases were identified. (1,15) In general, these children were 16 to 17 years old and accompanied by their parents. Civil society observers believe this increase in child labor cases is related to increased rural poverty. (1,15) Further, children in Uzbekistan sometimes participate in public works projects, including refurbishing school grounds and facilities. (1,2,6) Limited evidence suggests that in isolated cases, school officials may compel students to assist in harvesting silk cocoons, sometimes characterizing the work as traditional communal labor (*khashar*). (6,14)

In 2021, Uzbekistan received an influx of refugees from Afghanistan. While all children in Uzbekistan are entitled to free compulsory education regardless of ethnicity or immigration status, Afghan children who do not speak Uzbek or Russian struggle in Uzbekistan’s schools. (1) In addition, although there is free public education in Uzbekistan, schools may charge informal fees, which can make education inaccessible to children from low-income families. (1,2,10,16)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Uzbekistan 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 Uzbekistan’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including clarifying criminal penalties for the use of children in illicit activities.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	18	Articles 15, 77, and 242 of the Labor Code; Article 49 of the Administrative Code (17-19)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 241 and 245 of the Labor Code; Article 49-1 of the Administrative Code (18,19)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Decree on Adoption of the List of Occupations with Unfavorable Working Conditions to Which It Is Forbidden to Employ Persons Under Eighteen Years of Age; Decree on Approval of Provision on Requirements on Prohibition of Use of Minors' Labor (20,21)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 37 of the Constitution; Article 7 of the Labor Code; Article 51 of the Administrative Code; Articles 135 and 148(2) of the Criminal Code (18,19,22,23)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 3 of the Law on Combating Human Trafficking; Article 135 of the Criminal Code (23,24)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 128, 128(1), 130, 131, and 135 of the Criminal Code (23)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 10 of the Law on Guarantees of the Rights of the Child; Articles 56 and 127 of the Criminal Code (23,25)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 24 of the Law on Universal Military Service (26)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Articles 4 and 46 of the Law on Universal Military Service (26)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Articles 216(1) and 242 of the Criminal Code; Article 3 of the Law on Civil Organizations (23,27)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	18‡	Articles 4 and 9 of the Law on Education (16)
Free Public Education	Yes		Articles 4 and 5 of the Law on Education; Article 41 of the Constitution (16,22)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (16)

During the reporting period, the government amended the Criminal Code to close a gap in the law which previously failed to criminalize the users (clients) of prostitution involving children ages 16-17, and the law was signed by the President in December. In February 2021, the Government of Uzbekistan also amended the Code of Administrative Liability and the Criminal Code of Uzbekistan to increase punishments for forced labor and child labor, including its worst forms. (1,23,28) Any individual who forces a child to work has now committed a criminal act, whereas previously an initial child labor violation only resulted in a civil penalty. The Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations (MOELR) also drafted a new labor code which was approved by the lower house of Parliament. (1,28) The updated labor code, once enacted, will more clearly specify acceptable types of work that minors may perform. (1)

The law does not determine the activities or conditions in which children who have not yet completed their compulsory schooling may engage in light work, although the Labor Code establishes caps on the maximum number of work hours permitted for children ages 15 to 17. (16,17)

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 Employment and Labor Relations (MOELR)	Conducts labor inspections, including inspections for compliance with child labor laws. (10) Leads the National Sub-Commission on Combating Forced Labor. (29,30)
Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA)	Investigates crimes related to child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children, which may then be prosecuted by the Prosecutor General's Office. (10) Leads the National Sub-Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons. (29,30) Maintains a database on human trafficking crimes, including child trafficking crimes, which aggregates relevant information received from other government bodies, citizens' organizations, non-profit organizations, and civil society groups. (12)
Prosecutor General's Office	Prosecutes criminal violations involving the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. (10) Also provides oversight of some MOIA efforts to address the worst forms of child labor. (12)
Agency for Youth Affairs	Previously known as the Youth Union, monitors school attendance to ensure that students do not miss class during the cotton harvest. (1,9) Participates in monitoring efforts organized by the Federation of Trade Unions (FTUU) to monitor violations of labor laws during the annual cotton harvest. (31,32)
State Committee for Family and Women's Affairs	Previously known as the Ministry of Mahalla and Family Support, responsible for oversight of various policies related to gender equality and family welfare. Subsumed the Women's Committee of Uzbekistan. (1) This agency was renamed by Presidential Decree in March 2022. (33)
Human Trafficking Hotlines	Receive reports of incidents of human trafficking and refer reports to the relevant agencies. The MOIA-led National Sub-Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons administers one hotline, and an NGO maintains a second foreign donor-funded hotline. (3,13)
Feedback Mechanisms	Receive complaints on the violation of workers' rights and labor laws. MOELR can receive complaints, including on an anonymous basis, through a telephone hotline with a short, easy-to-remember number; a web portal; and a Telegram messenger bot. (34-38) Labor inspectors are required to investigate all complaints submitted to MOELR within 7 days. In 2021, labor inspectors investigated 148 complaints received through these channels. (1) FTUU also operates its own independent feedback mechanism, accessible online or over the phone, and a legal clinic that assists workers in remediating issues. In 2021, FTUU received 4,647 complaints. (1)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2021, labor law enforcement agencies in Uzbekistan took actions to address child labor. (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of MOELR that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including the reluctance of inspectors to conduct unannounced inspections other than on the basis of a complaint.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$142,000 (12)	\$150,000 (1)
Number of Labor Inspectors	344 (12)	344 (1)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (12,39)	Yes (12,39)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (10,12)	Yes (1)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (10,40)	Yes (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (10,12)	Yes (1)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	5,154 (12)	27,471 (1)
Number Conducted at Worksite	5,154 (12)	Unknown
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	2 (12)	6 (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	2 (12)	4 (1)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	2 (12)	4 (1)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (10)	Yes (1)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (10)	Yes (1)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (39)	Yes (39)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (10)	Yes (1)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (10,36)	Yes (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (10)	Yes (1)

The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Uzbekistan's workforce, which includes more than 13.9 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every

20,000 workers in transitioning economies, Uzbekistan would need to employ about 700 inspectors. (41,42) During the reporting period, the MELR's labor inspectorate carried out 27,471 labor inspections, and identified 19,967 labor violations, mostly related to workplace safety. However, the government did not disclose how many of these inspections took place on site or were targeted to high-risk sectors. (1) This represents a dramatic increase in labor inspections from 2020, in large part due to an increase in inspections during the cotton harvest—from around 3,000 in 2020 to over 13,000 in 2021. (28,43) The inspectorate continued to conduct targeted inspections in high risk sectors such as cotton and construction, and, in cooperation with the ILO, also undertook a survey to investigate allegations of forced labor and child labor in the silk sector. With regard to training, the government reported that 215 labor inspectors attended advanced training courses in 2021. (1) In June, the ILO also conducted online training courses on forced labor for employees of MOELR, the Prosecutor General's Office, and the labor inspectorate. In addition to labor inspectors employed by MOELR, local governments employ an additional 200 “assistant inspectors” who can participate in labor inspections but are not allowed to impose administrative fines, and the Federation of Trade Unions (FTUU) employs 33 labor monitors, who can refer potential violations to the labor inspectorate for investigation and imposition of penalties as appropriate. (1,12)

In accordance with legislation passed in 2020, fines imposed for labor violations were as high as \$2,000. MOELR identified six cases of child labor, all of which involved children working on refurbishing school facilities and grounds. (1) Four individuals were ultimately fined for these violations, and 31 children were removed from child labor. (1)

Labor inspectors are empowered to conduct self-initiated unannounced inspections in public-sector enterprises and, with permission from the Business Ombudsman, are authorized to conduct limited inspections at private-sector businesses. However, reports indicate that in practice, inspectors may be reticent to enter private businesses or homes on an unannounced basis and typically only do so in response to complaints. (1,2,10-12,36,44,45)

The government continued its commitment to monitor labor violations in the cotton harvest, with labor inspectors monitoring 13,419 farms and clusters during harvest season. These efforts identified 65 local officials who violated labor legislation, 5 of whom were prosecuted under Article 51 of the Code of Administrative Liability. (28) The government continued to support the ILO's Third-Party Monitoring of the cotton harvest, which in 2021 was largely implemented by a group of local activists. Local authorities also conducted large-scale publicity campaigns to raise public awareness of pickers' rights, distributing more than 800,000 flyers to residents of cotton-producing regions. (28) International observers assess that the Government of Uzbekistan has succeeded in eliminating systematic forced labor from the cotton harvest, though scattered instances of coercion persist. (15,28)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2021, criminal law enforcement agencies in Uzbekistan took actions to address child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA) that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including in investigation planning.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (12)	Yes (1)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (10)	Yes (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (10)	Yes (1)
Number of Investigations	12 (12)	9 (1)
Number of Violations Found	13 (12)	13 (1)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	8 (12)	9 (1)

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Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2020	2021
Number of Convictions	6 (12)	9 (1)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (12)	Yes (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (10)	Yes (1)

During the reporting period, the Academy of the MOIA graduated 120 cadets, all of whom received training on human trafficking, including modules on child labor. Additionally, 1,802 investigators received training on new laws related to trafficking in persons and child labor. (1) In 2021, law enforcement investigated 9 criminal cases involving 15 individuals suspected of procuring children for commercial sexual exploitation. Because of these investigations, 13 child victims were identified and referred to rehabilitation centers for services. (1) The investigation resulted in nine convictions: six individuals received prison sentences, one received a sentence of “restriction of freedom,” one was sentenced to correctional labor, and one received probation. (1)

Although criminal liability for repeat forced labor offenses was introduced in early 2020 under Criminal Code Article 148(2), monitoring reports note enforcement challenges that may have hampered the government's ability to initiate criminal prosecutions for forced labor offenses. (23,46) In addition, criminal enforcement agencies may face difficulties collecting sufficient evidence to prosecute complicit officials. (46) Limited reports suggest that MOIA investigations into potential cases involving the worst forms of child labor may not be thorough enough to detect violations or gather sufficient evidence to move forward with prosecution. (36,47)

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 repeatedly denying human rights NGOs from officially registering with the government.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labor (National Commission)	Coordinates state and local entities' efforts to address sex trafficking and forced labor; analyzes and monitors efficacy of government programs to address sex trafficking and forced labor; organizes international cooperation on efforts to address sex trafficking and forced labor; and provides legal and policy recommendations for improvement of government efforts in these areas. (29,30) Chaired by the National Rapporteur on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labor. (29) Comprises two sub-commissions to address sex trafficking and forced labor, respectively. MOIA heads the Sub-Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons and the Minister of Labor heads the Sub-Commission on Combating Forced Labor. (1,2,29,30) In 2021, the National Commission met four times to discuss progress in addressing trafficking in persons and forced labor under the 2019 roadmap. (1,28)
National Rapporteur on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labor (National Rapporteur)	Chairs the National Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labor. Reports annually to the President on sex trafficking and forced labor issues, government efforts to punish perpetrators, and services for survivors of sex trafficking and forced labor crimes. (29,30) Conducts public awareness-raising activities related to sex trafficking and forced labor. (30) In 2021, the National Rapporteur supported MOIA in signing a Road Map Action Plan for the implementation of the USAID Safe Migration in Central Asia program. (48)
Oliy Majlis Commissioner for Children's Rights†	Created in August 2021 by Presidential Decree No. UP-6275. Responsible for proposing measures to protect the rights of children. (1)
Local Commissions for Combating Human Trafficking and Forced Labor (Local Commissions)	Ensure timely and rigorous implementation of all laws and regulations, including those issued by the National Commission, related to sex trafficking and forced labor. (12,49) Local Commissions are chaired by the regional <i>hokim</i> (governor) and provide monthly reports to the National Commission. (49,50) Research was unable to determine whether actions were undertaken by the Local Commissions during the reporting period.

† Coordinating mechanism was created during the reporting period.

During the reporting period, the National Sub-Commission on Combating Trafficking in Persons worked with the UNODC to develop and release guidance on standard operating procedures (SOPs) for identifying victims of human trafficking. The SOPs were used as guidance for law enforcement agencies, ministries and

departments, and NGOs that are members of the National Commission on Combatting Trafficking in Persons and Forced Labor. (28) International organizations reported that the Sub-Commission's lack of a designated secretariat hampered communication with external stakeholders including NGOs and anti-trafficking in persons activists, which delayed action on activities to counter human trafficking. (36)

In 2021, the government continued to engage in dialogue with civil society stakeholders on child and forced labor issues. However, there were also continued reports that many human rights NGOs, including those working on forced and child labor issues, were repeatedly denied official registration, sometimes for failing to meet requirements that had not been publicly specified. (15,34,51,52)

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 implementation.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Memorandum of Understanding Between the ILO and the Republic of Uzbekistan (2021–2025) [†]	Establishes terms of agreement between ILO and the government on cooperation to implement the Decent Work Country Program in Uzbekistan. In 2021, the Government of Uzbekistan and ILO signed a new agreement for 2021–2025, focused on improving the framework for labor relations and creating better work opportunities for youth and other vulnerable groups. (1,53)
Action Plan on Implementing International Recommendations to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Establishes a work plan to address international recommendations to advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Uzbekistan. Aims to improve labor and criminal law enforcement, coordination, policies, and social programs related to the worst forms of child labor. (54) In 2021, the Action Plan was updated twice to call for implementation of recommendations from U.S. Government reports. (28)
Policies for Seasonal Cotton Harvest Workers	Establishes the minimum wages for cotton pickers and sets other guidelines with the goal of attracting voluntary labor to the annual harvest. (32,37,55) These policies continued to be implemented during the 2021 harvest, and wages continued to rise as the harvest progressed to compensate for lower earning potential in the end stages. (43)
Strategy for the Development of Agriculture in the Republic of Uzbekistan (2020–2030)	Calls for a reduction of the state's involvement in agriculture and enhances farmers' autonomy over what crops to grow. (56,57) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.

[†] Policy was approved during the reporting period.

In 2020, President Mirziyoyev formally abolished the practice of imposing state quotas for cotton production. (57-59) Under this quota system in previous harvests, local and regional officials were held responsible for mobilizing adequate labor to harvest a centrally determined amount of cotton, which observers reported was a root cause of forced labor and increased the risk of child labor. (60,61) International and civil society monitors observed that, in some areas, local governments continued to set harvest “targets” during the 2021 cotton harvest in apparent violation of the nationwide ban. (62) However, observers have noted that the 2021 cotton harvest was free of systemic forced labor organized by either local or central government officials. (15,43)

The central government adequately communicated through all branches of government that the use of forced labor in the 2021 cotton harvest would not be tolerated. The labor inspectorate monitored the harvest closely and responded to investigate every allegation of forced labor that was identified. (43) Some clusters are investing in mechanical harvesting equipment and methods, which reduce the need for manual labor during the harvest. Clusters have also taken a varied approach to recruiting seasonal laborers, with some clusters investing in implementation of fair recruitment practices. (34,46,63,64) ILO and civil society monitors found that in some districts, the adoption of these practices resulted in a significant decrease in labor exploitation. (34,46)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2021, 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 the inadequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

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Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Efforts to Prevent Child and Forced Labor in the Cotton Harvest†	Includes initiatives to raise awareness about the prohibition of child and forced labor in the cotton harvest. (63,65) In 2021, the government distributed thousands of informational flyers to residents in cotton-producing regions about pickers' rights and prohibitions on child labor and forced labor. (28)
National Rehabilitation Center†	MOELR-operated shelter that provides human trafficking survivors with emergency medical and social services and assists in social rehabilitation. (2,8,65) This center continued to provide services to survivors of the worst forms of child labor in 2021. (1)
Population Employment Facilitation Centers†	Local centers run by MOELR to connect the unemployed with job opportunities, including paid public work and seasonal agricultural work. Match job seekers with labor needs in the cotton harvest to reduce the risk of forced labor. (2,35) These centers continued to operate during the reporting period. (1)
From Protocol to Practice: A Bridge to Global Action on Forced Labor (The Bridge Project)	USDOL-funded global project implemented by ILO to support global and national efforts aimed at countering forced labor of adults and children under the 2014 ILO Protocol and supporting Recommendation to C.29 on Forced Labor. (66) In 2021, the project trained 14 directors of regional labor inspectorates on soft skills and interviewing techniques for forced labor investigations. Additional information is available on the USDOL website. (66)

† Program is funded by the Government of Uzbekistan.

In 2021, the government continued to refer children removed from child labor and human trafficking to social services in accordance with the new trafficking in persons law passed in 2020. (1) According to government data, the MOELR's Agency for External Labor Migration provided legal, financial, and social assistance to 323,620 labor migrants overseas, as well as entrepreneurship and vocational training to 23,878 returned labor migrants. (28)

Although there are programs to address child labor in the cotton sector, research did not find evidence of programs designed to address child labor in other sectors, such as public works and street work.

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 Uzbekistan (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law's light work provisions specify the activities and conditions in which children who have not yet completed their compulsory schooling may work.	2020 – 2021
Enforcement	Continue to increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2015 – 2021
	Share detailed information on whether labor inspections are taking place at work sites and target inspections to high-risk sectors.	2021
	Ensure that labor inspectors conduct self-initiated unannounced inspections in all sectors, including at private enterprises, even if no complaint has been filed.	2018 – 2021
	Thoroughly investigate all potential criminal cases involving the worst forms of child labor and, when sufficient evidence exists, refer violations for criminal prosecution.	2020 – 2021
	Remove barriers to investigating and prosecuting officials who may be complicit in child labor violations.	2021
Coordination	Ensure that the Local Commissions to Combat Trafficking in Persons meet and carry out their mandates to ensure timely and rigorous implementation of all laws and regulations, including those issued by the National Commission, related to sex trafficking and forced labor.	2021
	Designate standard mechanisms for communication between external stakeholders and national coordinating bodies to facilitate coordination of efforts to address forced labor and sex trafficking.	2020 – 2021
	Remove obstacles to the registration of NGOs monitoring child labor, forced labor, and other labor rights issues, including making all registration requirements public, and penalize officials who harass, intimidate, or abuse labor rights activists.	2017 – 2021
Government Policies	Ensure that activities are undertaken to implement local policies to protect cotton pickers and the Strategy for the Development of Agriculture in the Republic of Uzbekistan and publish information on activities implemented during the reporting period.	2021

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2013 – 2021
	Ensure educational access for children who do not speak Uzbek or Russian.	2021
	Ensure that schools do not charge informal fees to students or their families.	2019 – 2021
	Expand programs to address the worst forms of child labor in sectors other than cotton harvesting.	2009 – 2021

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