

In 2022, Cabo Verde made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The General Legal Framework for the Protection of Children and Adolescents was approved by legislators during the reporting period. The Framework contains provisions addressing forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation and formalizes procedures for addressing situations in which children or adolescents are in danger. The government also reported its first worst forms of child labor conviction in recent years, imposing a 10-year sentence against an individual for the commercial sexual exploitation of a 14-year-old child. Additionally, the government began working on a new National Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Persons, and the Cabo Verdean Institute for Children and Adolescents and the National Statistics Institute conducted a survey on children, which included statistics on child labor. However, children in Cabo Verde are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. Although Cabo Verde made efforts in all relevant areas during the reporting period, laws prohibiting forced labor are not sufficient as they do not criminalize practices similar to slavery or debt bondage and forced or compulsory labor. In addition, coordination among law enforcement agencies is limited and social programs to assist children involved in agriculture and domestic work are not sufficient to address the scope of the problem.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Table 1 provides key indicators on children’s work and education in Cabo Verde.

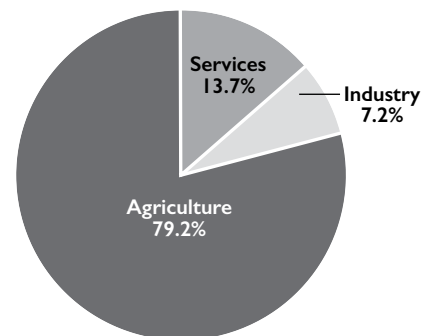
Table 1. Statistics on Children’s Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10 to 14	3.2 (2,392)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	90.1
Combining Work and School (%)	10 to 14	1.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		100.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2019, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2023. (1)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization’s analysis of statistics from Inquérito as Despesas e Receitas Familiares (HHS), 2001–2002. (2)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14



Based on a review of available information, Table 2 provides an overview of children’s work by sector and activity.

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Agriculture	Farming, including carrying heavy loads† (3-7)
	Raising livestock (8)
	Artisanal fishing in small boats† (7-9)
Industry	Construction, including sand extraction (5,9)
Services	Domestic work (3-7)
	Street work, including vending, garbage scavenging,† car washing, and begging (5,7,9-11)

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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 (3,12-15)
	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking (8,11)

† 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.

During the reporting period, the Cabo Verdean Institute for Children and Adolescents (ICCA) and the National Statistics Institute conducted a survey on children, including child labor, slated for release in 2023. (16)




Commercial sexual exploitation of boys and girls occurs in the tourism industry in Cabo Verde, and research indicates that the islands of Sal and Boa Vista have the highest incidence of commercial sexual exploitation of children. (8,11-14) In addition, anecdotal reports indicate that children may have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation on the islands of Brava, Santiago, Fogo, and São Vicente. (11)

According to the ICCA, not all students with special needs or children in remote areas of Cabo Verde have equal access to education. In some areas, children must travel long distances through mountainous topography to reach secondary schools. (16)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Cabo Verde 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 Cabo Verde's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibition of forced labor.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 261 of the Labor Code (17)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 264 of the Labor Code; Article 133 of the Civil Code (17,18)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		National List of Dangerous Work for Children (19)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	No		Article 14 of Chapter 3 of the Labor Code; Articles 271 and 271-A of the Penal Code (17,20,21)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 149 and 271-A of the Penal Code (20)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 144, 145, 148–150, and 271-A of the Penal Code (20)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 8 of the Drug Trafficking Law (22)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	17	Article 31 of the Military Service Law (23)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Article 2 of the Military Service Law (23)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Article 268-C of the Penal Code (20)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15‡	Articles 13 and 20 of the Education Law (24)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 14 of the Education Law (24)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (25)

The General Legal Framework for the Protection of Children and Adolescents was approved by legislators during the reporting period, although additional steps must occur for it to enter into effect. The Framework contains provisions addressing forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation and formalizes procedures for addressing situations in which children or adolescents are in danger. (16,26)

Laws prohibiting forced labor are not sufficient because they do not criminalize practices similar to slavery, including debt bondage and forced or compulsory labor. (17,20) The Civil Code includes a list of light work activities that children aged 14 are allowed to perform; however, the law does not prescribe the number of hours per week permissible for light work, nor does it specify the conditions under which light work may be performed. (18,27,28)

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 & Activities
Inspectorate General of Labor (IGT)	Monitors and enforces child labor laws, working closely with the Cabo Verdean Institute for Children and Adolescents (ICCA). Overseen by the Ministry of Family, Inclusion, and Social Development. (5,6)
Attorney General's Office	Determines whether reported complaints or violations need further investigation and prepares cases for trial, including cases of the worst forms of child labor. (16)
National Police and Judicial Police	The National Police receives initial violation complaints, and the Judicial Police conducts criminal investigations as needed. (16)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2022, labor law enforcement agencies in Cabo Verde took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Inspectorate General of Labor (IGT) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including insufficient allocation of financial and human resources.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown	\$372,693 (16)
Number of Labor Inspectors	21 (5)	20 (16)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (29)	Yes (29)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	N/A	Yes (16)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	1,087 (5)	724 (16)

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Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor (Cont.)

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	1 (5)	0 (16)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	1 (5)	0 (16)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	1 (5)	0(16)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (5)	Yes (16)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (5)	Yes (16)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (29)	Yes (29)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (5)	Yes (16)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (5)	Yes (16)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (5)	Yes (16)

During the reporting period, IGT inspectors participated in a capacity-building program focused on addressing hazardous child labor, and a delegation from the IGT participated in a month-long training related to youth employment funded by the ILO. (16) Additionally, approximately 70 participants, many representing government institutions, attended a conference on international labor standards and Cabo Verdean labor law that was held as part of the ILO's Trade for Decent Work Project with the intent of strengthening the implementation of forced labor and child labor conventions. (30)

ICCA conducts informal inspections when it receives any allegations of child labor and keeps the Attorney General's Office informed whenever further investigative action is needed. All child labor cases found by IGT inspectors are referred to ICCA for care or for referral to social services providers. (5) From January to July 2022, ICCA registered six reported cases of child labor through its child protection hotline. (16)

The IGT reported that the number of labor inspectors is insufficient to cover the country's labor force. The IGT also reported that its budget is not sufficient to fulfill all of its operational needs. (16)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, criminal law enforcement agencies in Cabo Verde took actions to address child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including the government's limited capacity to collect anti-trafficking statistics and comprehensively report on law enforcement actions.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Training for Criminal Investigators Provided	Unknown	Yes (16)
Number of Investigations	Unknown	2 (16)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown	1 (30)
Number of Convictions	1 (31)	1 (30)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Yes (30)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (5)	Yes (16)

In 2022, the government reported its first worst forms of child labor conviction in recent years, imposing a 10-year sentence against an individual for the commercial sexual exploitation of a 14-year-old child. (16)

Reports indicate that the Judicial Police and the National Police often lack the necessary financial and human resources to conduct thorough investigations, including in cases of child labor. (30) The government's capacity to collect anti-trafficking statistics and to comprehensively report on law enforcement actions, along with the reportedly limited coordination among law enforcement agencies, due to struggles in sharing case information and updates, may hinder enforcement efforts. (8, 11) Reports also indicate that the judicial system is overburdened with a backlog of cases, which can contribute to a lack of protection for child victims of the worst forms of child labor, including children subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. (12,30,32)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR

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

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Activities
National Committee for Child Labor Prevention and Eradication in Cabo Verde	Coordinates the execution of the National Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and provides a functional mechanism for reciprocal referrals between law enforcement and social services. (16) Led by ICCA, with support from the Ministry of Family, Inclusion, and Social Development. (5,33) Active during the reporting period. (16)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

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

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description & Activities
National Action Plan for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor	Prioritizes the eradication of child labor. Outlines specific objectives, including data collection, institutional capacity building, and enhancement of measures to prevent, protect, and remove children from involvement in child labor. (33) Activities were undertaken to implement this policy in 2022. (16)
National Plan to Prevent and Combat Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents (2022–2024)	Aims to prevent and eliminate the sexual exploitation of children by building on lessons learned from the previous plan, while ensuring coordination among institutions and organizations that work to prevent and address sexual violence against children and adolescents. Establishes five goals, including (1) the active participation of children and adolescents; (2) the development of preventive actions against sexual violence; (3) a network of specialized care by trained professionals; (4) combating impunity; and (5) strengthening the national, regional, and local entities focused on combating and eliminating sexual violence against children and adolescents, including commercial sexual exploitation. (34) In 2022, the government began preparations for the creation of a national committee to manage and monitor the National Plan to Prevent and Combat Sexual Violence Against Children and Adolescents and draft local plans. The committee will consist of representatives from ICCA, UNICEF, the Cabo Verdean NGO Platform, and the education, health, and public ministries. (16)
National Communication Strategy for the Prevention and Combat of Sexual Violence	Aims to coordinate public policies to protect children and adolescents against sexual violence, including commercial sexual exploitation. (34) Implemented during the reporting period in collaboration with UNICEF, ICCA, and the Ministry of Family, Inclusion and Social Development. (16)

In 2022, the government began developing a new national action plan on human trafficking to succeed the 2018–2021 plan, and while the new plan was not approved during the reporting period, a national drafting committee approved its goals and activities in December. (30)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2022, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating and preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including inadequate efforts to address the problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description & Activities
Child Labor Awareness Campaigns†	Government program implemented by ICCA and the National Committee for Child Labor Prevention and Eradication that conducts national awareness-raising campaigns on the worst forms of child labor. (5) During the reporting period, several awareness campaigns addressing the rights of children, including the prevention and elimination of child labor, were conducted on a national level with various governmental and NGO institutions. ICCA further reported that, in 2022, about 425 community activities were conducted on a variety of children's rights topics, including child labor. (35)
Help for At-Risk Children and Social Protection and Reintegration Centers†	ICCA-implemented program that provides education, health services, and professional training to vulnerable children and their families. (32) Operates six day centers for street children vulnerable to sexual and labor exploitation, including sex trafficking. Moreover, ICCA operates three additional centers for street children through its <i>Nós Kaza</i> center. (32) The government also operates five long-term social protection and reintegration centers that provide support and educational integration services to children who have experienced long-term trauma, including child trafficking. (36) Active in 2022. (16)

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

Program	Description & Activities
Child Emergency Centers†	ICCA-implemented program that operates two emergency centers for child victims of abuse and sexual exploitation on Santiago and São Vicente islands, operating 24/7. (33,36) Active in 2022. (16)

For information about USDOL's projects to address child labor around the world, visit <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/ilab/ilab-project-page-search>

† Program is funded by the Government of Cabo Verde.

Research indicates that awareness-raising efforts on human trafficking, including child sex tourism, remained insufficient on some of the nine inhabited islands. (11) Research also found that programs to assist children involved in agriculture and domestic work are not sufficient to address the scope of the problem.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Cabo Verde (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that laws prohibiting forced labor criminalize slavery and practices similar to slavery, including debt bondage and forced or compulsory labor.	2021 – 2022
	Prescribe by law the number of hours per week and conditions under which light work may be undertaken by children.	2015 – 2022
Enforcement	Ensure that the Inspectorate General of Labor is provided with an adequate budget to fulfill all its needs.	2021 – 2022
	Ensure that the number of labor inspectors is sufficient to address the scope of the problem.	2011 – 2022
	Ensure that criminal investigators receive sufficient financial and human resources to conduct thorough investigations, including investigations of child labor.	2014 – 2022
	Develop a system to compile and share comprehensive anti-trafficking in persons and victim identification data among criminal enforcement agencies to improve coordination efforts.	2018 – 2022
	Ensure that the judiciary has sufficient resources and personnel to allow cases to be prosecuted in a timely manner.	2019 – 2022
Social Programs	Ensure that students with special needs and children in remote areas have equal access to education, including by providing adequate transportation.	2020 – 2022
	Conduct awareness-raising activities on human trafficking, including child sex tourism, on all nine inhabited islands.	2018 – 2022
	Institute programs to address child labor in agriculture and domestic work.	2010 – 2022

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