

Dominican Republic

MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT REGRESSION IN PRACTICE THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

In 2022, the Dominican Republic made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Labor created the Protocol for Coordination and Internal Action to address situations of complaints or detection of child labor and its worst forms. In addition, several government agencies signed a cooperation agreement to implement a new transportation program that facilitates school access in hard-to-reach areas. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, the Dominican Republic is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because of a practice that delays advancement to eliminate child labor. Numerous reports indicate that school administrators have denied access to education to a significant number of children without identity or residency documents. Additionally, children without identity or residency documents, most of whom are of foreign origin or descent, are being prevented from receiving social services, including access to the government's poverty reduction and vocational training programs. Children in the Dominican Republic 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, including forced labor in the production of various crops. Significant enforcement gaps remain, including limited human and financial resources for labor and criminal enforcement agencies to conduct inspections, and the lack of authority for labor inspectors to directly assess penalties for labor law violations. In addition, the Dominican Republic's legal prohibitions related to trafficking are insufficient because they require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in the Dominican Republic. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	6.3 (Unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	96.4
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	9.2
Primary Completion Rate (%)		88.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2021, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2023. (1)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 6 (MICS 6), 2019. (2)

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	Clearing land for sugarcane production, planting and harvesting sugarcane,† and collecting cut cane† (3-5)
	Producing coffee, rice, tomatoes, bananas, beans, garlic, and other crops (6-13)
	Picking lemons (14)
	Cattle raising (13)
Industry	Producing baked goods (7)
	Construction,† activities unknown (6,15)
Services	Street work, including vending,† shoe shining, begging, washing car windows, and transporting packages in markets (6,9,12,15,16)
	Working in convenience store deliveries (16)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Working in woodworking shops, car washes, auto repair shops, and blacksmith workshops (6,12,16)
	Scavenging in landfills (13)
	Domestic work† (6,15)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced labor in domestic work, construction, street vending, begging, and agriculture, including in the production of bananas and other crops, sometimes as a result of trafficking (6,9,12,13,16,17)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (6,15,16,18)
	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (9,12,15,16)

† 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.

Most children working in the Dominican Republic do so in the informal sector, mainly on family farms in rural areas. (12,16) Officials from the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI) observed that Constanza and the southern part of the country have the highest incidences of child labor. (16) Children in the Dominican Republic are also victims of commercial sexual exploitation, principally in tourist locations, such as coastal resorts and major urban areas. (16,19) The porous border between Haiti and the Dominican Republic has allowed Haitian children to be trafficked into the Dominican Republic, where some are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation and forced to work in domestic work, street vending, begging, and forced labor in agricultural work producing bananas and other crops. (13,15,20,21) Some children also work in agricultural production, often alongside their parents, and live in communities that frequently lack basic services, including schools. (18)

Many Dominican-born persons of Haitian descent, including children, continue to remain in undocumented status because of a Constitutional Court decision in 2013 that retroactively revoked birthright citizenship of all persons born after 1929 to non-citizens in the Dominican Republic, almost all of whom were children of Haitian descent. (22,23) In general, children of undocumented parents are particularly vulnerable to labor exploitation because they may lack birth or residency documents. This increases the likelihood that these children may be denied access to education or engage in child labor, including its worst forms, in part because labor inspectors may not be able to verify their ages. (6,24,25) Despite education being free and compulsory until age 14, and the law prohibiting excluding children from school based on a lack of identity documents, numerous reports indicate that a significant number of children without identity documents were prevented from accessing education in 2022. (12,26,27) There were also reports that some schools require a list of extensive documentation in order to allow the enrollment of Haitian children. This documentation includes school transcripts or other proof of past enrollment in schools certified by several government ministries and entities, including some from the Haitian government, copies of notarized birth certificates, and official translations of required documents, if not in Spanish, which then need to be notarized by the Office of the Attorney General of the Dominican Republic. (13) As a result of these requirements, some children have been prevented from enrolling in school. There are also reports that some children of migrants, even those with legal permits to be in the country, have had difficulty accessing education, and that in some cases, the enrollment authorization process has taken up to 2 years. (13) Moreover, although the Ministry of Education's Office of Community Participation reissued a directive to public schools noting that all children must be allowed to attend school, regardless of their documentation, the Ministry of Education's current Operations Manual of Public Education Centers incorrectly requires school administrators to request children to present identity documents to enroll in school. (8,28,29) According to reports, this contradictory guidance has been used to explicitly deny migrant children and Dominican children lacking documentation access to schools. Moreover, while there is a process for caregivers to appeal cases of education denial, sources indicate that personnel responsible for managing the appeals process were not responsive. (13)

According to reports, children without identity documents are unable to continue schooling beyond the 8th grade, when they are typically 13 years of age. (13) The Ministry of Education also requires that students have a birth certificate on file in order for them to receive a high school diploma or school transcript after graduation, leaving those children without identity documents unable to prove that they have completed high school or apply for tertiary or postsecondary. (16,28,30,31) Teacher and school infrastructure shortages also create

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barriers to accessing education in the Dominican Republic. (9) In addition, a high percentage of students drop out at the primary and secondary levels. These issues particularly affect children living in rural areas and in communities predominantly of Haitian descent. (12,32) Sources indicate that some children of Haitian descent face discrimination by teachers and peers, travel long distances to schools, and are unable to afford school fees. (12,32)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

The Dominican Republic 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 the Dominican Republic's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the prohibitions related to child trafficking, which are insufficient because they require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 245–247, and 249–253 of the Labor Code; Article 40 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents; Article 56.1 of the Constitution (26,33,34)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Sections 1 and 2 of the Resolution on Hazardous Work for Persons Under Age 18; Articles 251, 720, and 721 of the Labor Code (34,35)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 1–3 of the Resolution on Hazardous Work for Persons Under Age 18; Articles 246, 249, 252, and 253 of the Labor Code (34,35)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Articles 25 and 409 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents; Articles 40, 41, and 62.2 of the Constitution (26,33,36)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Articles 25, 406, and 409–411 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents; Article 41 of the Constitution (26,33,36)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 25 and 408–411 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents; Articles 1, 3, and 7 of the Law Against Migrant Smuggling and Trafficking in Persons; Article 24 of the Law on Technological Crime; Article 56.1 of the Constitution (26,33,36,37)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 85 of the Law on Drugs and Controlled Substances (38)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes*	18	Articles 26, 96, and 97 of the Organic Armed Forces Law (39)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes*		Articles 4, 96, 97, 231, and 232 of the Organic Armed Forces Law (39)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	14‡	Article 63 of the Constitution; Articles 33, 35, 37, and 40 of the Organic Law of Education (33,40)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 63 of the Constitution; Articles 33, 35, 37, and 40 of the Organic Law of Education; Ministry of Education Circular No. 18 of 2011; Articles 45 and 46 of the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents (26,33,40,41)

* Country has no conscription (39)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (33,40)

Prohibitions against child trafficking are insufficient because they require threats, the use of force, or coercion to be established for the crime of child trafficking under the 2003 Law on Human Smuggling and Trafficking (Law 137-03); and although the Code for the Protection System and Fundamental Rights of Boys, Girls, and Adolescents criminally prohibits accepting, offering, or transferring children without requiring threats, the use of force, or coercion as an element, it does not criminally prohibit the recruitment or harboring of children. (26,36)

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
Ministry of Labor (MT)	Leads efforts to eliminate child labor, conducts labor inspections, and oversees the Directorate of Policies for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor. Refers children found in exploitative conditions to social services, mainly the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI). (9)
Office of the Attorney General (AG)	Prosecutes crimes involving children, including criminal violations related to the commercial sexual exploitation of children and other worst forms of child labor. Oversees the Special Prosecutor for Migrant Smuggling and Human Trafficking, which receives notifications of alleged violations related to the worst forms of child labor through a hotline. (18,24,42)
National Police	Enforce criminal laws, including those prohibiting the worst forms of child labor, and coordinates with the AG in the prosecution of perpetrators, under the Ministry of Interior and Police. (43,44) Under direction of the National Police, the Tourist Police (POLITUR) detects and prevents child sex abuse and commercial sexual exploitation in tourist areas, coordinates with CONANI in the rescue of child victims, and arrests child sex offenders in tourist areas. (9,16,45)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2022, labor law enforcement agencies in the Dominican Republic took actions to address child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Labor (MT) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including the lack of authority of labor inspectors to assess penalties.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$4.4 million (16)	\$4.4 million (12)
Number of Labor Inspectors	212 (16)	208 (12)
Mechanism to Assess Civil Penalties	Yes (34)	Yes (34)
Training for Labor Inspectors Provided	Yes (16)	Yes (12)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted at Worksite	56,938 (16)	63,730 (12)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	45 (16)	18 (12)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (16)	3 (12)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (16)	3 (12)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (16)	Yes (12)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (16)	Yes (12)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (34)	Yes (34)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (16)	Yes (12)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (16)	Yes (12)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (16)	Yes (12)

In 2022, the MT reported that there were 390 children and adolescents removed from child labor as a result of labor inspectorate operations, and that 98 of those removed received follow-up social services. (12) The MT also conducted 18 training sessions for labor inspectors, with a combined total of 624 participants. (12) Despite these efforts, research indicates that the Dominican Republic does not have an adequate number of labor inspectors to carry out their mandated duties. (9,12,16,23,46-48) The MT also reported that its budget is insufficient for office maintenance, transportation, fuel, and other resources needed to carry out adequate inspections.

In 2022, the reported 63,730 worksite inspections conducted, represented approximately 307 worksite inspections per inspector, which is a high number of inspections per inspector and likely negatively impacted inspection quality. (12) While labor inspectors are authorized to re-inspect worksites to ensure that violations are remedied, re-inspections occur less frequently and are more difficult and less consistent in remote rural areas. (23,34) In addition, Labor inspectors do not have the authority to assess labor penalties; instead, they write infraction reports that are sent to prosecutors in the Office of the Attorney General (AG) for enforcement action if prosecutors determine it is necessary. The collection of civil penalties is also the responsibility of the judicial system. (9,12) The MT reports that it only has oversight of work situations within an employer-employee relationship, leaving children engaged in work in the informal sector outside the MT's purview. In such cases, CONANI is the agency with the authority and jurisdiction to intervene, though they lack the authority to issue sanctions. (12,16)

The Labor Inspection Manual instructs inspectors to assess child labor violations by reviewing workers' identity documents and employers' records, making observations, and conducting interviews. (49) However, MT officials have expressed that improvements could be made with respect to how inspectors conduct interviews, ask follow-up questions, and use inspection data to ascertain the ages of workers and guarantee that children under age 18 are not participating in dangerous or unhealthy work. Moreover, reports indicate that in some cases, Spanish-speaking inspectors working without translation assistance have been responsible for interviewing Creole-speaking workers with limited or no Spanish-language abilities, which may have hindered those inspections. (16) Research also indicates that inspections are not always conducted in a timely manner after complaints or requests for inspections are received. In addition, evidence suggests that inspection reports often contain errors and contradictions that undermine the credibility of these reports and a lack of prosecutorial resources have hindered the ability of the AG to pursue prosecutions on criminal matters involving child labor issues. (12,23,48) Furthermore, employees and unions complained that an insufficient number of inspections were taking place, and that there was a lack of follow-through on the inspections that were carried out. An example of these allegations are reports from longtime employees in the sugar sector indicating that they have never seen or spoken to labor inspectors. (12,48)

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Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2022, criminal law enforcement agencies in the Dominican Republic 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 insufficient allocation of financial resources.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2021	2022
Training for Criminal Investigators Provided	Yes (16)	Yes (12)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (16)	Unknown (12)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (16)	7 (12)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (16)	0 (12)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (16)	4 (12)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (16,43)	Yes (12)

The AG's Directorate for Children, Adolescents and Family (DINNAF) carried out several operations to rescue children and adolescents in streets and public spaces. This was done in coordination with CONANI, the MT, the National Police, and the Specialized Police for Children and Adolescents. (12) DINNAF also provided training to prosecutors on the commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents. (12) However, reports indicate that the capacity of enforcement agencies to identify, investigate, and prosecute criminal cases related to child trafficking is limited due to a lack of human and financial resources. (24,50,51) Reports indicate there is a lack of coordination between the MT and the AG, leading to some cases referred to the AG by the MT not being subsequently investigated and prosecuted by the AG. (23,24) Moreover, research finds that CONANI does not have the financial, material, or personnel resources, facilities, and institutional capacity to meet the demand for services nationwide. (13,24,52)

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 Steering Committee to Eliminate Child Labor	Develops policies, approves programs, and coordinates, monitors, and evaluates efforts to address child labor in the Dominican Republic. Meets every two months, overseen by the MT, and comprises ministerial representatives, labor unions, private sector representatives, NGOs, more than 30 other institutions, and local steering committees in each province. (12,16,53) Oversees the system for referring children found during inspections to appropriate social services. (6) In 2022, President Abinader issued Decree No.431-22, which added new members to the committee and empowered it to include or exclude members and allies that the plenary considers necessary. MT also created the Protocol for Coordination and Internal Action to address situations of complaints or detection of child labor and its worst forms. (12,54,55)

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 a lack of implementation of a key national policy.

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Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description & Activities
Education Pact (2014–2030)	Includes strategies to address child labor and seeks to improve the quality of, and access to, primary and secondary education by increasing attendance and graduation rates and enrolling more students in the Extended School Day Program. (56) Implemented by the Ministry of Education and supported by the World Bank. (16,56) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken during the reporting period to implement the Education Pact.
National Development Strategy (2010–2030)	Aims to reduce poverty and inequality, and includes programs to address child labor, provide universal education to all children, and expand access to secondary school, including for students without identity documents. (57) During the reporting period, and for the tenth consecutive year, the government committed to allocating 4 percent of the nation's GDP to primary and secondary education as indicated by the National Development Strategy. Although, reporting indicates that in 2022 they actually allocated only 3.6 percent. The purpose of this continued funding is to improve the national education system. (6,9,16,58)

In February 2022, the government launched the Intervention Model for the Protection of Children and Adolescents in Street Situations and Mobility in Public Space, which seeks to rescue children and adolescents in street situations and the worst forms of child labor. (12,59) This model began in the National District with the creation of the Operational Technical Unit (UTO), which is a multidisciplinary and inter-institutional team specially formed to support vulnerable children. During the reporting period, 254 children and adolescents participated in 71 workshops organized by the UTO. (12,59) In addition, the Cabinet of Childhood and Adolescence, the Ministry of Education, and CONANI established the Padre Luis Rosario Center in April 2022 to provide comprehensive care and social and family reintegration services, including health and education services, to children and adolescents rescued from street situations and the worst forms of child labor. (12,60) Finally, in 2022, the Specialized Prosecutor's Office against the Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons (PETT) and the Puerto Plata prosecutor office signed an agreement with Puerto Plata School District I1-02 to deliver awareness-raising sessions on human trafficking in schools. (61)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2022, 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 efforts to address the problem in all sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description & Activities
<i>SUPERATE</i> †	Main poverty eradication strategy by the government that serves as the primary line of social protection actions. Focuses on social intervention through the integration of conditional cash transfers, socio-educational support, and links with other government programs and services. (62) Components of the strategy include: educational inclusion; health, food security, and support in emergencies; economic inclusion; and housing. (62) Addresses families in vulnerable situations, particularly low-income families, with one of its goals being to increase children's school attendance and reduce child labor. (62) In 2022, the government continued carrying out cash transfers, increased social assistance, and collaborated and joined efforts with NGOs and other entities to alleviate the hunger problem in the country through this program. (63-65) Furthermore, together with the Cabinet of Childhood and Adolescence and the National Council on Disability (CONADIS), <i>SUPERATE</i> presented the National Fund for Children and Adolescents with Disabilities with the aim of raising the quality of life of this sector of the population, as well as guaranteeing access to services and support to meet their basic needs. (66) Research indicates that <i>SUPERATE</i> is not available to families without documentation, including migrants and Dominicans who lack documentation. (13)
<i>Oportunidad 14–24</i> ‡	Aims at reintegrating high-risk and socially vulnerable adolescents and young people into technical or vocational education and training programs. Provides adolescents and young people between ages 14 and 24 who have limited resources access to technical professional training, scholarships, a monthly provision of raw food, and transportation to study centers. (67-70) In 2022, the government assisted 371 youths who participated and graduated from this program; this was the first cohort to graduate from the program. The youths completed studies in the areas of beauty, hospitality, pharmacy, information technology, multimedia, secretarial work, technical support, and sales. (71,72) Research indicates that individuals without documentation, including migrants and Dominicans who lack documentation, are ineligible to participate in <i>Oportunidad 14–24</i> . (13)
Extended School Day Program (<i>Jornada Escolar Extendida</i>)†	Ministry of Education program to extend school hours to a full day (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.) to improve educational achievement and reduce child labor. (73) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this program during the reporting period.

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 the Dominican Republic.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (67,74,75)

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In 2022, the Ministry of Education appointed 24,815 teachers and directors to public education centers throughout the country to fill vacancies in the education system. (12,54) In addition, the Ministry of Education, the National Institute of Land Transit and Transportation (INTRANT), and the Metropolitan Transportation Office signed an inter-institutional agreement to execute the School Transportation Program. The purpose of the program is to facilitate the mobility of students living in vulnerable areas who face difficulties in accessing the education system. The program began with a pilot in the provinces of Azua, San Cristóbal, Santo Domingo, and Monte Plata. (12,54)

Although the Dominican Republic has programs that target the worst forms of child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, particularly to address the commercial sexual exploitation of children and harmful work in the agricultural sector. (55) Furthermore, reports indicate that CONANI does not have specialized shelters for trafficking victims, and child victims of human trafficking who go to CONANI temporary homes until they are reunited with their families do not receive additional services. (16,55) Reports also indicate that most social programs require Dominican citizenship or documentation, and therefore Haitian children or those of Haitian descent, and even Dominican children who lack documentation, are not eligible to receive assistance from these programs. This greatly reduces the effectiveness of these programs to address child labor and its root causes. (13)

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 the Dominican Republic (Table I I).

Table I I. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that laws prohibiting child trafficking do not require threats, the use of force, or coercion as elements of the crime.	2019 – 2022
	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2022
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors from 208 to 329 to provide adequate coverage of the labor force of 4.9 million people, especially in remote rural areas.	2009 – 2022
	Ensure that the number of inspections conducted by each inspector is appropriate to guarantee the quality and scope of inspections.	2020 – 2022
	Improve case tracking so that labor inspectors are able to promptly follow up on violation remediation to improve enforcement of laws prohibiting child labor and discourage the use of child labor by employers.	2012 – 2022
	Establish a system to verify the age of young workers to better protect children without birth certificates or other legal documentation from exploitation.	2012 – 2022
	Ensure that labor inspectors interview workers, in a safe environment, and that they are able to communicate with Creole-speaking workers, including those who may be underage, to adequately conduct inspections for child labor violations.	2012 – 2022
	Improve training of inspectors on child labor and child trafficking to increase the quality of interviews with employers and workers, gather consistent documentation, conduct timely re-inspections to ensure compliance, and use inspection data to enable prosecution.	2012 – 2022
	Increase human and financial resources to ensure adequate criminal and labor law enforcement related to child labor.	2009 – 2022
	Improve coordination between the Ministry of Labor and the Office of the Attorney General to ensure that violations are adequately investigated, sanctioned, and prosecuted.	2013 – 2022
Government Policies	Provide legal authorization to allow labor inspectors to conduct inspections in the informal sector.	2021 – 2022
	Take steps to implement the policies related to child labor on an annual basis and publish information about these efforts.	2020 – 2022
Social Programs	Collect and publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2021 – 2022
	Increase efforts to issue identity documents to all children to reduce their vulnerability to labor exploitation.	2011 – 2022
	Address the specific educational needs of vulnerable populations, including migrant and undocumented children.	2011 – 2022
	Increase school infrastructure and teacher availability, especially in rural areas, remove supply and school-related fees, and expand efforts to reduce discrimination on the basis of national origin in schools.	2011 – 2022

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Social Programs	Ensure that children are not denied access to education based on their national or ethnic origin, immigration status, or lack of identity documents and update all Ministry of Education's school manuals to align with Dominican law guaranteeing that children without birth certificates or identity documents are able to enroll in schools and receive diplomas certifying school completion.	2017 – 2022
	Expand social protection programs, particularly for child survivors of commercial sexual exploitation, and agricultural labor exploitation and forced labor, and ensure that programs also provide services to vulnerable children without regular identity documents.	2010 – 2022
	Ensure that the National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI) has sufficient resources and facilities to provide the necessary care for survivors of child labor and child trafficking.	2015 – 2022
	Ensure that children without documentation, including Haitian children and other migrant children, are eligible to access social programs.	2022

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