

# Tuvalu

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

In 2024, Tuvalu made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government’s Tuvalu Learning Project conducted studies to analyze student absenteeism and held trainings on child protection, violence at school, and disability inclusion. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources reinstated the interagency Tuvalu National Child Rights Observatory Group to lead coordination of the Tuvalu Child Well-being Framework. Additionally, the government continued the legislative process for the Childcare and Welfare Bill, which makes provisions for the rights, protection, and welfare of children in accordance with the principles and provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, despite these efforts, Tuvalu has not ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child’s Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict; the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography; or the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. Furthermore, Tuvalu’s laws do not meet international standards on identification of hazardous occupations or activities prohibited for children and on free public education.

## PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Statistics on Children’s Work and Education		
Children	Age	Percent and Population
Working	5 to 14	8.5% (Unavailable)
Hazardous Work by Children	15 to 17	Unavailable
Attending School	5 to 14	79.4%
Combining Work and School	7 to 14	8.9%

Although research is limited, there is evidence that children in Tuvalu engage in child labor in domestic work.

Overview of Children’s Work by Sector and Activity	
Services	Domestic work

## SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR

The suggested government actions below would close gaps USDOL has identified in Tuvalu’s implementation of its international commitments to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Area	Suggested Action
Legal Framework	Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.
	Ratify the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography.
	Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.
	Determine by national law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for all children, in consultation with employers’ and workers’ organizations.
	Establish by law free public education.
Enforcement	Publish labor law enforcement information, including labor inspectorate funding, number of labor inspections conducted at worksites, number of child labor violations found, number of child labor violations for which penalties were imposed, number of child labor penalties imposed that were collected, whether routine inspections were conducted, and whether unannounced inspections were conducted.
	Establish a mechanism to assess civil penalties for child labor violations.

Area	Suggested Action
	<p>Institutionalize training for labor inspectors, including training for new labor inspectors at the beginning of their employment.</p> <p>Strengthen the labor inspectorate by providing sufficient funding and resources to initiate targeted routine inspections based on analysis of data related to risk-prone sectors and patterns of serious incidents.</p> <p>Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts, including whether training was provided for criminal investigators, the number of investigations, the number of prosecutions initiated, the number of penalties imposed, and the number of convictions for violations related to the worst forms of child labor.</p> <p>Establish a digital tracking system for civil worst forms of child labor inspections.</p>
<b>Coordination</b>	Ensure that the Tuvalu National Child Rights Observatory Group remains active and has adequate resources to coordinate on the Tuvalu Child Well-being framework.
<b>Government Policies</b>	Adopt a national policy specifically focused on addressing child labor.
<b>Social Programs</b>	<p>Conduct a comprehensive study of children's activities to determine whether they are engaged in or at risk for involvement in child labor.</p> <p>Institute programs to address child labor in all sectors, including in domestic work.</p> <p>Eliminate barriers to basic education by ensuring that all schools are accessible for students with disabilities and that all children are protected from abuse and discrimination.</p>

## BARRIERS TO EDUCATION ACCESS

Despite efforts to carry out the government's Disability-Inclusive Education Policy, children with disabilities had lower school attendance rates at all levels than other children. Abuse and discrimination against persons with disabilities are widely believed to be common.

## LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Tuvalu has not ratified all key international conventions concerning child labor, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN CRC) Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict; the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography; or the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons. In addition, Tuvalu's laws do not meet international standards on identification of hazardous occupations or activities prohibited for children and on free public education.

Laws and Regulations on Child Labor			
Standard	Age	Meets International Standards	Legislation
<b>Minimum Age for Work</b>	15	✓	Article 42 of the Labor and Employment Relations Act
<b>Minimum Age for Hazardous Work</b>	18	✓	Article 44 of the Labor and Employment Relations Act
<b>Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children</b>		X	
<b>Prohibition of Slavery, Debt Bondage, and Forced Labor</b>		✓	Articles 3 and 68 of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act; Articles 46–48 of the Labor and Employment Relations Act; Article 249 of the Penal Code; Article 18 of the Constitution of Tuvalu
<b>Prohibition of Child Trafficking</b>		✓	Articles 3 and 68 of the Counter Terrorism and Transnational Organized Crime Act; Article 136 of the Penal Code
<b>Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children</b>		✓	Article 46 of the Labor and Employment Relations Act; Articles 136 and 140–143 of the Penal Code

Laws and Regulations on Child Labor			
Standard	Age	Meets International Standards	Legislation
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities		✓	Article 46 of the Labor and Employment Relations Act; Articles 141 and 142 of the Penal Code
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment		N/A†	
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military		N/A†	
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups		✓	Section 46 of the Labor and Employment Relations Act
Compulsory Education Age	15	✓	Article 3(1)(b) of the Compulsory Education Order
Free Public Education		X	Article 33 of the Education Act

† Country has no standing military

In 2024, Tuvalu's cabinet reviewed the Child Care and Welfare Bill, which would make provision for the rights, protection, and welfare of children in accordance with the UN CRC. However, the Government of Tuvalu has not specified, by national law or regulation, the types of hazardous work prohibited for children; previous provisions applied only to males under age 18 in the industrial, mining, and fishing sectors. Additionally, while education is free in practice for children ages 6 to 18, the Education Act allows the government to charge fees for education.

## ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

Enforcement agencies in Tuvalu took no documented actions to address child labor in 2024.

Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement
<b>Department of Labor:</b> Lead agency on labor issues, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Labor and Trade.
<b>Tuvalu Police Force:</b> Investigate and enforce criminal violations regarding child labor, child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities.

Enforcement Mechanisms and Efforts	
Has a Labor Inspectorate	Yes
Able to Assess Civil Penalties	No
Routinely Conducted Worksite Inspections	Unknown
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes
Has a Complaint Mechanism	Yes
Imposed Penalties for Child Labor Violations	Unknown
Conducted Criminal Investigations for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown
Imposed Penalties for Worst Forms of Child Labor Crimes	Unknown

In 2024, 4 labor inspectors conducted an **unknown** number of worksite inspections, finding an **unknown** number of child labor violations. It is **unknown** whether investigations into suspected cases of the worst forms of child labor were conducted, prosecutions were initiated, or perpetrators were convicted.

## COORDINATION, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Tuvalu established a mechanism to coordinate its efforts to address child labor.

### Key Mechanism to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

***Tuvalu National Child Rights Observatory Group:*** Interagency group that will function as the National Advisory Committee on the Rights of the Child that previously led the coordination of the Tuvalu Child Well-being framework. The Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development (MEHRD) began the process of reactivating the group, with support from UNICEF, during the reporting period.

Tuvalu established policies related to child labor. However, these policies do not cover all the forms of child labor, including domestic work and the informal sector.

### Key Policies Related to Child Labor

***UNICEF Child Protection-MEHRD Work Plan (2023–2027):*** The work plan includes baseline research into child protection and public relations activities, such as awareness raising and advocacy. Under the Plan, MEHRD hired one Child Protection Officer and two secondary school counselors during the reporting period. MEHRD also worked with other ministries to provide multisector foundational training for professionals working with children, including teachers, police, and counselors, to enhance their skills in working with children. It also hired a consultant to assess current child protection policies to fast-track issues.

† The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor.

Tuvalu participated in programs that may contribute to eliminating or preventing child labor, especially through education. However, these social programs are inadequate because they fail to address the problem in all sectors, including in domestic work.

### Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

***Tuvalu Learning Project (2020–2025):*** Prepares children entering first grade and increases the literacy of children in elementary school. Subcomponents include a study on student absenteeism, an analysis to understand why boys are dropping out of school more than girls, as well as trainings on child protection, violence against girls, and disability inclusion. The project was active during the reporting period and is implemented by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and funded by the World Bank.

***Tuvalu Australia Partnership for Quality Education (2022–2027):*** A 5-year initiative implemented during the reporting period that provided training to primary and secondary school teachers to strengthen their skills, with a focus on improving education quality for students, including those with disabilities. This program was active during the reporting period and supported an information and communications technology review for MEHRD to strengthen lesson delivery, teacher development, and education data management.

For references, please visit [dol.gov/ChildLaborReports](https://dol.gov/ChildLaborReports)