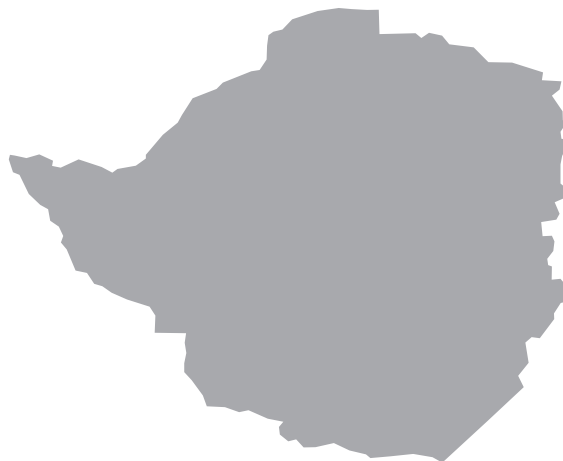


In 2018, Zimbabwe made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government continued to implement the Trafficking in Persons Action Plan, developed a national referral mechanism to assist victims of human trafficking, and established guidelines to improve coordination of anti-trafficking efforts. In addition, it increased budget allocations for the Basic Education Assistance Module and Harmonized Social Cash Transfer programs with the aim of reaching 500,000 vulnerable children and 60,000 households, respectively. However, children continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, mining, and tobacco production. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture. Law enforcement agencies lack resources to enforce child labor laws. In addition, gaps remain in the country's legal framework against child labor, such as the lack of free basic education, which increases children's vulnerability to child labor.



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Zimbabwe engage in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, mining, and tobacco production. Children also engage in child labor in agriculture. (1-5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Zimbabwe. 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	Unavailable
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	Unavailable
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	Unavailable
Primary Completion Rate (%)		88.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2013, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019. (6)

Data were unavailable from the International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics, 2019. (7)

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 the production of tea, cotton, tobacco, corn, and sugarcane (1,8-15)
	Fishing, including casting nets, hauling fish loads, and sorting fish (8-10,12,15)
	Forestry, such as dragging logs from felling sites and loading logs for transport (8,11,12)
	Cattle herding (8,12)
Industry	Mining gold and chrome, using dangerous chemicals such as cyanide and mercury, and extracting material from underground passages and quarries† (8,9,16,17)
Services	Street work, including vending and begging (8,10,11,15,18-20)
	Domestic work (2,8,11,12,15,21,22)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Use in illicit activities, including drug trafficking and gambling (9)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3-5,8,9,11,12,23-25)
	Working in agriculture, mining for the production of gold and chrome, and domestic work, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking(2,9,23)

† 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.

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A 2018 report on child labor and working conditions in tobacco production in Zimbabwe found that children ages 12 to 17 work on tobacco farms. Some children work on their family farms while others are hired as paid laborers to perform activities such as planting, weeding, harvesting, and grading tobacco. (26) A survey in gold mining areas found that children are hired as transporters by gold miners to carry ore in sacks and pan for gold. (27) Zimbabwean children living in border towns are trafficked to Botswana, South Africa, Mozambique, and Zambia, where they become victims of commercial sexual exploitation and forced labor in domestic work. Zimbabwean children, especially orphans, are sometimes lured by relatives with the promise of education or adoption, but instead are recruited to work within the country as domestic workers or forced to work in mining, drug smuggling, or other illegal activities. (2,28) In addition, the deterioration of Zimbabwe's economy, along with drought and cholera outbreaks, increase the vulnerability of children to labor exploitation. (29-31) An NGO conducted research that revealed that girls under age 18 engaged in commercial sex due to push factors, such as the breakdown of the family unit, poverty, and gender-based violence. (4,32)

Birth registration is derived from birth within the country, but many children, especially orphans and children living in rural areas, are not registered due to poverty and lack of awareness of the requirements. (9,24) Beginning in grade seven, children are unable to sit for exams without a birth registration, leading some to enter the workforce at a young age. (9,15) School fees are often prohibitively expensive and limit access to education. (10,33) According to the UN, children with disabilities, especially in rural areas, experience greater abuse, violence, stigma, and exclusion, and, therefore, have limited access to education. (24)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Zimbabwe 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 Zimbabwe's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including access to free public education.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Section 3 of the Labor Relations Amendment Act (34)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Section 11(4) of the Labor Relations Amendment Act (34)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Section 11(4) of the Labor Relations Amendment Act; Section 10A of the Children's Protection and Adoption Act (34,35)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Sections 54–55 of the Constitution; Section 4A of the Labor Relations Amendment Act (34,36)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Section 3 of the Trafficking in Persons Act (37)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Section 87 of the Criminal Law Act; Section 3 of the Sexual Offenses Act; Section 8(2) of the Children's Protection and Adoption Act; Section 3 of the Trafficking in Persons Act (35,37-39)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Section 156 of the Criminal Law Act; Section 10 of the Children's Protection and Adoption Act (9,35,39)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	16	Sections 5 and 10 of the National Service Act (40)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes		Section 9 of the National Service Act (40)
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	No		
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	12 <sup>‡</sup>	Section 5 of the Education Act (41)
Free Public Education	No		

<sup>‡</sup> Age calculated based on available information (42)

Zimbabwean law does not mandate free basic education for children. (43) Lack of access to basic education may increase the risk of children's involvement in child labor. (9) In addition, children in Zimbabwe are required to attend school only up to age 12. This standard makes children ages 12 to 15 vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to attend school and not legally permitted to work. (42) To address this, in December 2018, the Cabinet approved an amendment to the Education Amendment Bill, which will guarantee free access to public education at the primary and secondary levels. The Bill was published in the Government Gazette in February 2019 and is under debate within Parliament. (44,45)

In May 2018, the Parliament approved an amendment to the Mines and Minerals Amendment Bill, which includes the revocation of a mining license if miners engage in the use of child labor. In September, the President rejected the amendment due to concerns raised by stakeholders. (46,47) As a result, the Parliament is conducting consultations to revise the proposed amendment. (47,48)

### 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 authority of the Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Welfare (MPSLSW) that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Public Service, Labor, and Social Welfare (MPSLSW)	Enforces labor and anti-trafficking laws and investigates labor-related complaints, including complaints involving child labor. Has a Department for Child Welfare and Probation Services responsible for child protection services, including investigating, intervening in, and reporting on child abuse cases. (9,11,28)
Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP)	Enforces laws related to the worst forms of child labor in conjunction with the MPSLSW and the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. (9) Addresses issues related to child labor and human trafficking through victim-friendly units in every district. Conducts transnational human trafficking investigations through an anti-trafficking desk at Zimbabwe's INTERPOL office. (9,28)
Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs	Oversees all courts, including labor courts. Addresses human trafficking and child victim cases through victim-friendly courts. (9)

#### Labor Law Enforcement

In 2018, labor law enforcement agencies in Zimbabwe took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the MPSLSW that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including lack of authority to assess penalties.

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (33)	Unknown (49)
Number of Labor Inspectors	120 (33)	Unknown (49)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (33)	No (49)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	N/A (33)	Unknown (49)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A (33)	Yes (50)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (33)	Unknown (49)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	Unknown (33)	Unknown (49)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (33)	Unknown (49)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (33)	Unknown (49)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (33)	Unknown (49)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (33)	Unknown (49)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (33)	Yes (49)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (33)	Unknown (49)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (33)	Yes (49)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (33)	Unknown (49)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (33)	Yes (49)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (33)	Yes (49)

The MPSLSW's inspectorate has assigned designated agents who conduct inspections in specific regions and labor inspectors who conduct inspections in all regions. (51) It is unclear whether designated agents conduct child labor investigations in the informal sector. Labor inspectors lack the authority to assess penalties, and inspectors also oversee arbitration and conciliation, which strains their capacity to conduct onsite investigations to combat child labor. (51)

The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Zimbabwe's workforce, which includes approximately 7.9 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in developing economies, Zimbabwe would employ about 527 labor inspectors. (52) Research indicates that the government continues to lack sufficient resources, mainly financial, to investigate child labor law violations. (8,53) The government did not provide information on its labor law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report.

### Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2018, criminal law enforcement agencies in Zimbabwe took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the MPSLSW that may hinder adequate criminal and labor law enforcement, including the publication of enforcement data.

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Unknown (33)	Unknown (28)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (33)	Unknown (28)
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown (33)	Unknown (28)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (33)	0 (28)
Number of Violations Found	4 (54)	0 (28)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (33)	2 (28)
Number of Convictions	Unknown (33)	2 (28)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown	Yes
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (33)	Yes (49)

In 2018, the government initiated two prosecutions related to human trafficking cases. Both cases included several children who were victims of human trafficking for labor and commercial sexual exploitation. (28) The

government also worked with IOM and other stakeholders to develop a national referral mechanism to identify and assist victims of human trafficking. (28) However, the government did not provide information on its criminal law enforcement training.

#### 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 the efficacy of coordination activities.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee to Address the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Addresses the worst forms of child labor. Chaired by the MPSLSW and includes the Ministries of Health and Child Care; Primary and Secondary Education; and Youth Development, Indigenization, and Empowerment. (55) Also includes international organizations and civil society groups, such as workers' and employers' organizations. (55) Research could not determine whether the committee met during the year. (49)
Ministry-Level Committee on Children's Issues	Coordinates government ministries' efforts related to children's issues, including child labor. Includes the MPSLSW and the Ministries of Education; Women's Affairs; and Youth Development, Indigenization, and Empowerment. (9,11,55) Research could not determine whether this body had activities in 2018.
Anti-Trafficking Inter-Ministerial Committee (ATIMC)	Coordinates actions to combat human trafficking, including the implementation of the Trafficking in Persons National Plan of Action. (8,56) The ATIMC met quarterly in 2018. (49)
National Coordinating Forum*	Promotes collaboration between government and non-government actors. Established in 2018 under guidelines of the Trafficking in Persons National Plan of Action (NAPLAC). (50)
National Task Force on Street Children	Outlines strategies to combat child labor, including feeding street children at drop-in centers, reuniting children with their families, and offering counseling sessions. Chaired by the MPSLSW and includes NGOs that work on street children's issues. (9,55) Also includes the Ministry of Home Affairs, represented by the ZRP. (33) The National Task Force on Street Children did not meet in 2018 due to a lack of resources. (49,57)
Child Protection Committees	Operate at the village, ward, district, provincial, and national levels to discuss issues affecting children, including child labor. (33) Representatives include ministries, civil society, local volunteers, and teachers. Report to the ministry-level Committee on Children's Issues. (33) In 2018, Child Protection Committees met on an irregular basis. (57)

\* Mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor was created during the reporting period.

In 2018, the government, in partnership with the Zimbabwe National Council for the Welfare of Children, published a child labor handbook that provides information on child labor laws. (49) However, government information on the efforts by coordinating bodies to address child labor is limited. In addition, a lack of resources prevented the National Task Force on Street Children and the Child Protection Committees from fully carrying out their mandates. (57)

#### 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 insufficient mainstreaming of child labor issues into relevant policies.

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor**

Policy	Description
National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor	Strengthens understanding of child labor issues and creates an entity to coordinate responses to the findings. Consists of three focus areas: (1) education assistance; (2) poverty assistance through a cash transfer scheme; and (3) health assistance. (9) Research indicates the government took no actions during the period to operationalize this policy. (49)
National Social Protection Framework (NSPF)	Aims to improve social protection system, including promoting decent work. (31) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement NSPF during the reporting period.

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor (Cont.)**

Policy	Description
Trafficking in Persons National Plan of Action (NAPLAC) (2016–2018)	Aimed to implement the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons through the development of strategies to combat human trafficking, with emphasis on prevention, protection, prosecution, and partnership. (49,58) In 2018, the government conducted awareness-raising activities, carried out a self evaluation of the NAPLAC, and adopted guidelines to set up the National Coordinating Forum to promote collaboration between government and non-government actors. (50)
Zimbabwe UN Development Assistance Framework (2016–2020)	Integrates child labor prevention strategies in the Education for All campaign headed by the UN. Promotes gender equality, reduction of HIV/AIDs prevalence, and allocates social resources to address child labor. (59) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement this policy during the reporting period.

In 2018, under a multi-nation migration project implemented by IOM with funding from the EU, one-time in-kind technical support was provided to the Government of Zimbabwe Trafficking in Persons Secretariat in the form of a public address system, office furniture, and stationary to help implement the Trafficking in Persons National Plan of Action (NAPLAC) and to begin establishing five Provincial Trafficking in Persons Task Forces in the provinces of Manicaland, Masvingo, Bulawayo, Mashonaland East, and Mashonaland Central. (60)

The National Social Protection Framework (NSPF) aims to provide strategies that address poverty and labor market interventions, among others, though the policy does not explicitly include child labor prevention and elimination measures. There is no indication that the government made efforts during 2018 to operationalize the NSFP. (31,33) Government information on policy efforts to address child labor has been limited.

## VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2018, the government funded and participated in programs that may contribute to the prevention or elimination of child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the adequacy of programs to address the full scope of the problem.

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

Program	Description
Phase III of the National Action Plan for Orphans and Vulnerable Children (2016–2020)	UNICEF Child Protection Fund (CPF) program, supported by the United Kingdom Department of International Development (DFID), that focuses on equity and access to quality education for children and provides child protection services. Provides cash assistance for families to keep children in school. (31,61,62) In 2018, CPF provided services to more than 40,000 children and began to conduct a Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey to collect child protection data. (63)
Harmonized Social Cash Transfer (HSCT)†	An unconditional cash transfer program that targets vulnerable children and families. In 2018, the government allocated \$11 million to the HSCT program, which is 10 percent more than in 2017. (31)
Stop Child Labor Program	Hivos (a Dutch NGO)-funded program that establishes child labor-free zones throughout the country. The program includes the MPSLSW, Coalition Against Child Labor in Zimbabwe, African Network for the Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect, Progressive Teachers Union of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe Teachers' Association, and the General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union. (12) Teachers, labor inspectors, police officers, and other stakeholders support this initiative by sending child laborers back to school. (64) Research was unable to determine whether activities were undertaken to implement the Stop Child Labor Program during the reporting period.
Basic Education Assistance Module (BEAM)†	Government program, with support by DFID, that provides basic financial assistance to families for education costs, such as tuition and examination fees. Aims to keep children in school and to enroll children who lack access to school as a result of economic hardship. (65) In 2018, the government allocated \$20 million to the BEAM project, which is 50 percent more than in 2017. (31)
Donor-Funded Programs	DREAMS, a President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief/USAID project that aims to reduce rates of HIV among adolescent girls and young women, including girls vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation, in Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. (66) In 2018, this initiative in Zimbabwe prioritized orphans and vulnerable children, including adolescent girls. (67) Zimbabwe Accountability and Artisanal Mining Program, a German state-owned, DFID bank-funded project that improves occupational safety and health standards in artisanal and small-scale gold mining and raises awareness of child labor among informal gold miners. (27) Zimbabwe Education Development Fund Phase II (2012–2019), a DFID bank-funded initiative implemented by UNICEF that promotes equitable and quality education. As of May 2018, this initiative has provided educational services to more than 2.5 million primary school children, most of them in the poorest areas, and 900,000 secondary school children; in addition, it has built 33 special schools for children with disabilities. (68)

† Program is funded by the Government of Zimbabwe.



In 2018, the Registrar General's office continued to implement a mobile birth registration program across the country to ensure that citizens receive identity documents, including birth certificates. (69) Every district in the country has mobile teams to support this program. (28) Although Zimbabwe has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, especially child labor in agriculture, mining, and commercial sexual exploitation.

An evaluation of the Harmonized Social Cash Transfer (HSCT) program, published in 2018, found that this program mitigated poverty, improved child protection outcomes, and helped families improve their food security. However, the program has limited coverage and funding. (70) Furthermore, HSCT participants do not automatically qualify for other social programs funded by the government or civil society organizations due to a lack of coordination at the local level. (70)

## 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 Zimbabwe (Table 11).

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.	2016 – 2018
	Ensure that the age up to which education is compulsory is the same as the minimum age for work.	2016 – 2018
	Approve the Education Amendment Bill that establishes free basic education for children through age 16.	2009 – 2018
Enforcement	Ensure that inspectors have sufficient capacity, training, and resources to conduct core inspection duties including child labor inspections.	2017 – 2018
	Authorize the labor inspectorate to assess penalties for labor law violations.	2017 – 2018
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2016 – 2018
	Ensure sufficient funding, human resources, and training for criminal law enforcement officials to enforce criminal labor laws.	2009 – 2018
	Publish information about the labor inspectorate's funding, number of inspectors, training for new employees, refresher courses provided, labor inspections conducted, labor inspections conducted at worksites, violations found, penalties imposed and collected, and routine and unannounced inspections.	2016 – 2018
	Publish information on the government's criminal law enforcement efforts relating to child labor, including the training system for criminal investigators conducted.	2015 – 2018
	Ensure that child labor committees are active and receive sufficient resources to address the worst forms of child labor.	2016 – 2018
Government Policies	Integrate child labor prevention and elimination measures in relevant policies, such as the National Social Protection Framework.	2017 – 2018
	Implement the National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor.	2010 – 2018
Social Programs	Publish data on the extent and nature of child labor to inform policies and programs.	2017 – 2018
	Ensure that children are registered at birth to facilitate their entrance into secondary school, including through expanding the work of the mobile registration teams.	2014 – 2018
	Ensure that children with disabilities have equal access to education.	2016 – 2018
	Expand the Harmonized Social Cash Transfer program and develop coordination mechanisms to improve implementation at the local level.	2018
	Expand existing social programs to address child labor, especially child labor in agriculture, commercial sexual exploitation, and mining.	2010 – 2018

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