

In 2018, Togo made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government added a toll-free texting platform to its Allo 1011 hotline and made data available in real time through an online platform that is disaggregated by type. In addition, it signed a bilateral agreement with the Government of Gabon to increase cooperation in combating trafficking in persons and, with the support of the World Bank, provided 5.7 million school meals and constructed 80 new primary schools. However, children in Togo engage in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in domestic work. The government has not devoted sufficient resources to combat child labor, and labor inspectors are not authorized to assess penalties for child labor violations. In addition, the government does not collect and publish data related to its efforts to enforce child labor laws.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Togo engage in the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also engage in child labor in domestic work. (I-10) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Togo.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	29.6 (unavailable)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	86.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	29.5
Primary Completion Rate (%)		90.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2017, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019. (11)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Demographic and Health Survey, 2013–2014. (12)

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	Working in agriculture, including spraying pesticides (3,7,10,13) Production of charcoal† (10)
Industry	Working in quarries and sand mines, including excavating, crushing rocks, sifting gravel, and carrying heavy loads† (2,8,13-15) Working in tailoring (16) Construction (3,8,10)
Services	Domestic work† (1-4,6,7,13,15) Carrying heavy loads,† and small-scale vending in markets (10,12,17) Work as motorcycle repairmen (8,10,18,19) Garbage scavenging (8,10,18)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced begging (17,18) Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,8,9,13,15,20) Forced labor in agriculture, including coffee, cocoa, and cotton; domestic work; quarries; and markets, including carrying heavy loads; each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4,17,20)

† 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.

Togo is a source and transit country for victims of human trafficking to neighboring countries, primarily for domestic work, work in agriculture, and commercial sexual exploitation. (3,4,6,20-22) Parents may be complicit

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in child trafficking as a result of *confiage*, which involves sending a child to a relative or friend to attend school in a larger town or city, a practice that may place children at risk of exploitation as a result of internal human trafficking. (3-5,9,22,23)

Although education is free and compulsory by law, parents are responsible for paying associated fees and buying uniforms and school supplies, which makes education prohibitive for many families. (24-27) Research found that long distances to schools, as well as physical and sexual abuse in schools, also posed barriers to education for some children. (9,24,26-30)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Togo 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's laws and regulations are in line with relevant international standards (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 150 of the Labor Code; Article 262 of the Children's Code; Article 881.1a of the Penal Code (31-33)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 6–12 of Ministerial Order No. 1464 Determining the Work Prohibited to Children (31,34)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Articles 6–12 of Ministerial Order No. 1464 Determining the Work Prohibited to Children; Articles 263–264 of the Children's Code; Articles 319.9 and 882 of the Penal Code; Article 151 of the Labor Code (31-34)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 4 and 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 264 and 411 of the Children's Code; Articles 150.3 and 151 of the Penal Code (31-33)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 2–6 of Law No. 2005-009 Suppressing Child Trafficking in Togo; Articles 264 and 411–414 of the Children's Code; Articles 150.3, 151, 317–323, and 882 of the Penal Code (31-33,35)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 264, 276.f, and 387–390 of the Children's Code; Article 224 of the Penal Code (31-33)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 151 of the Labor Code; Articles 264, 276.i, and 405 of the Children's Code; Articles 317.7, 319.9, and 329.8 of the Penal Code (31-33)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 426 of the Children's Code; Article 42 of Law No. 2007-010 Regarding the General Statute of the Togolese Armed Forces (32,36)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	Yes*		Article 426 of the Children's Code; Articles 146.14, 147.11, and 342 of the Penal Code (32,33)

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

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Article 426 of the Children's Code; Articles 146.14, 147.11, and 342 of the Penal Code (32,33)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Article 35 of the Constitution; Article 255 of the Children's Code (32,37)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 35 of the Constitution (37)

* No conscription (36)

In 2018, trade unions continued to work with the government to harmonize domestic statutes with ILO C. 189 on Domestic Work. (38)

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 Civil Service, Labor, and Administrative Reform (MOL) that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Civil Service, Labor, and Administrative Reform (MOL)	Enforces all labor laws, including child labor laws. (3,27) Through its Unit to Combat Child Labor (CELTE), withdraws children from child labor situations, raises awareness, and collects data. (10) Focal points in the inspectorate are located in each of the five regions to monitor child labor issues and raise awareness at the local level. (39)
Ministry of Justice and Government Relations	Enforces criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor, and prosecutes violators. (10)
Ministry of Social Action, Promotion of Women and Literacy (MASPFA), Director General for the Protection of Children	Raises awareness of child labor issues, enforces laws against the worst forms of child labor, provides technical assistance, and leads government efforts to combat human trafficking. (3,19,40) Supports a network of 42 foster families in 4 regional capitals. (13) Operates the Allo 1011 hotline for reporting child abuse, including child trafficking. (3,13,20,41) In 2018, added a toll-free texting platform and made data available in real time through an online platform that disaggregates these data by type. (13,42) Between its launch in March and the end of 2018, identified at least six verified cases related to child trafficking through calls to the hotline, which were referred, as appropriate. (13,42) In 2018, received a \$300,000 budget allocation to conduct awareness-raising activities, reaching approximately 20,000 citizens in central Togo, which is the origin or destination for many victims of trafficking. (23)
Ministry of Security's Division of Drugs, Morals, and Pimping	Investigates crimes involving child victims, including child trafficking. In all five regions of Togo, operates as part of the National Police. (43)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2018, labor law enforcement agencies in Togo took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of MOL that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including conducting inspections in all relevant sectors.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (44)	\$77,193 (10)
Number of Labor Inspectors	131 (10)	131 (10)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	No (31)	No (31)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (44)	Yes (13)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	Unknown	Unknown
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	500 (44)	385 (10)
Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (44)	385 (10)

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

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	66 (44)	Unknown (10)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	0 (44)	Unknown (10)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	N/A	Unknown (10)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (44)	Yes (10)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Unknown (44)	Unknown (10)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (31)	Yes (31)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (44)	Yes (10)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (44)	Yes (13)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (44)	Yes (13)

In addition to the 131 labor inspectors, MOL also employs 60 tax and health inspectors who may report labor infractions. (10) MOL lacks sufficient resources for transportation, which may hinder its ability to conduct investigations, and reported a limited number of inspections at informal work sites, in which child labor primarily occurs. (10,27) In addition, the Labor Code makes labor inspectors responsible for reconciliation and arbitration in collective disputes, which may detract from their primary duties of conducting inspections and enforcing the Labor Code. (31,45)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2018, criminal law enforcement agencies in Togo took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including training for criminal investigators and prosecution planning.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2017	2018
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	Yes (44)	Yes (13)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
Refresher Courses Provided	No (44)	Yes (23)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (44)	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	3 (44)	118 (23)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (44)	Unknown
Number of Convictions	Unknown (44)	Unknown
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to The Worst Forms of Child Labor	Unknown (44)	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (44)	Yes (13)

Investigators lacked financial and physical resources to adequately enforce the law. Research also indicates that poor record keeping, a shortage of physical copies of existing child labor laws throughout the country, and high turnover result in gaps in knowledge and enforcement capacity. (44,46) Cases involving child trafficking may be settled outside of court due to difficulties gathering evidence, and judges may be reluctant to impose fines or prison sentences for parents due to a fear of perpetuating the poverty that originally led them to violate child trafficking laws. (17,20)

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 may hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including funding constraints.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee for the Prohibition and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor (CDN)	Coordinates and oversees all government efforts to combat child labor, including the approval of all action plans for the abolition of child labor. (3,13) Comprises representatives from 17 ministries and NGOs; MOL's CELTE serves as the permanent secretariat. (13)
MASPFA's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Cell	Coordinates government efforts to combat human trafficking. (3,20,22) Compiles statistics on human trafficking and serves as the point of contact for repatriated child victims. (20) Comprises representatives from NGOs and six ministries, including MOL and MASPFA. (13) Responded to tips from the Allo 1011 hotline with police on an ad hoc basis and met regularly during the reporting period. (20) The government allocated approximately \$20,000 for cash assistance to victims in 2018. (23)
Local Vigilance Committees	Overseen by CDN and composed of local government officials and community members. (13) Raise awareness at the community level, identify child victims or children at risk, track returnees, and share information on human trafficking trends and prevention efforts with MASPFA's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Cell. (3,20,23) Some local vigilance committees were active during the reporting period. (10)

All coordinating bodies were active during the reporting period, although the Government of Togo does not reliably disburse the allocated budget for the National Steering Committee for the Prohibition and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor, limiting its ability to combat child labor and support data collection efforts. (13)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that may hinder efforts to address child labor, including implementation.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Policy of Social Protection	MASPFA policy that aims to improve social safety nets, strengthen mechanisms to combat the exploitation of children, and promote systematic birth registration. (47)
Multilateral Agreements to Combat Child Trafficking	Quadripartite agreement among the governments of Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo that works to prevent child trafficking along the countries' shared borders. Multilateral accords for West and Central Africa promote cooperation among regional states to combat child trafficking. (3,20,26) In 2018, signed a bilateral agreement with the Government of Gabon to increase cooperation in combating trafficking in persons, returning victims to Togo, and prosecuting offenders. (48)
National Development Plan (2018–2022) [†]	Aims to improve economic growth, structurally transform the Togolese economy, and strengthen social protection and inclusion measures, including the implementation of a national biometric identification system. (23,49) In support of this, the government created a technical committee to reorganize the registry office to ensure that all births are recorded. (23)

[†] Policy was approved during the reporting period.

[‡] The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (29,50)

Research was unable to determine whether all policies were active during the reporting period. A National Plan of Action Against Child Labor is undergoing technical validation, but has yet to be adopted. (16,26) The Ministry of Social Action, Promotion of Women and Literacy's Anti-Trafficking in Persons Cell is working on a draft national action plan to combat human trafficking, and the Council of Ministers is reviewing a draft decree to create a coordinating body that would oversee its implementation. (23) The government has not included child labor elimination and prevention strategies in the Education Sector Plan (2010–2020). (51)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

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

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Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
World Bank-Funded Programs	Projects that combat child labor by improving social safety nets for vulnerable families and increasing access to education. Include Education and Institutional Strengthening Project 2 (2015–2019), a \$27.8 million project that aims to revise course textbooks for grades one through three, provide teacher training, identify recipients of school grants, and select 80 sites for promoting girls' education; and the Safety Nets and Basic Services Project (2017–2020), a \$29 million project implemented by MASPFA and the Ministry of Grassroots Development that aims to provide social safety nets to poor communities. (19,52-56) In 2018, provided 5.7 million school meals to nearly 50,000 students at 161 schools; transferred school grants to 1,650 primary schools, constructed 80 new primary schools, and distributed uniforms to 54,636 girls. (56,57)
National Fund for Inclusive Finance†	Government program administered by the State Secretariat to the Presidency of the Republic that provides loans of up to \$60 to women in rural areas of Northern Togo, aiming to reduce the demand for income provided by engaging in child labor. (10,13,58) In 2018, provided support to 9,000 rural families. (10)
Shelters for Vulnerable Children†	MASPFA-funded or government-supported centers that provide temporary shelter and services for victims, including those referred by the Allo 1011 hotline. (13,16,20,40,59) Victims may be transferred to independent NGO-run shelters for longer-term support. (19,20,59)
School Feeding Program†	Provides school lunches in rural areas to promote school enrollment, particularly for girls. (19,26,30,55) This program was active during the reporting period. (16)
Forum of Traditional and Religious Chiefs of Togo on the Harmful Social and Cultural Practices that Affect Children†	MASPFA-funded program that aims to eliminate traditional practices that may contribute to child trafficking by educating local leaders on child labor issues and the importance of education. (10) This program was active during the reporting period. (23)

† Program is funded by the Government of Togo

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (13,27,55)

Social programs focus on alleviating poverty and promoting education rather than targeting specific sectors of child labor, such as domestic work, and the government relies heavily on NGOs and international organizations for implementation. (10,46) A shortage of funds may hinder program implementation. (46) As a result, the scope of existing programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, including in commercial sexual exploitation and domestic work. Many of these interventions may not be sustainable over the long term.

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 Togo (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Publish information about the number of violations found, penalties imposed and collected, whether routine inspections targeted high-risk sectors, and data related to criminal law enforcement, including the number of investigations conducted, prosecutions initiated, and convictions made.	2010 – 2018
	Strengthen the labor inspectorate by authorizing the inspectorate to assess penalties.	2014 – 2018
	Ensure that labor inspectors receive refresher courses.	2009 – 2018
	Ensure that labor inspectors have the time and resources to carry out their primary duties of inspection and monitoring of labor laws throughout the country, including in the informal sector.	2009 – 2018
	Ensure that criminal investigators have sufficient financial and physical resources to adequately enforce criminal laws against child labor.	2017 – 2018
	Enforce penalties for labor violations according to the law.	2014 – 2018
Coordination	Provide coordinating bodies with sufficient resources to implement their mandates to combat child labor.	2009 – 2016; 2018
Government Policies	Ensure that policies are implemented as intended and that child labor indicators are included in all relevant policies.	2016 – 2018
	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Education Sector Plan.	2013 – 2018

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Social Programs	Increase access to education by eliminating school-related fees; ensuring that schools are free from sexual and physical violence; and increasing the number of schools, especially in rural areas.	2010 – 2018
	Ensure that social protection programs to combat child labor receive adequate funding, are sufficient to address the scope of the problem in all relevant sectors, and promote the long-term sustainability of project initiatives.	2009 – 2018

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