

In 2015, Uzbekistan made efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, but was also complicit in the use of forced child labor. While the Government participated in an ILO-led Third Party Monitoring exercise that covered ten regions of Uzbekistan, conducted its own Coordination Council-led monitoring of the remaining regions, and carried out a national campaign to raise awareness of the prohibition on forced child labor in the cotton harvest, Uzbekistan is receiving an assessment of no advancement because some local officials continued to mobilize children to pick cotton in multiple regions of the country, including children studying at colleges in numerous districts of the Jizzakh and Khorezm regions. The Government also

maintained policies in the cotton sector that mandate regional harvest quotas and set crop prices at levels that create incentives for local administrators to forcibly mobilize labor, creating an ongoing risk of forced child labor. Children in Uzbekistan are engaged in harvesting cotton and cultivating silk cocoons. There is an overall lack of current data on child labor in Uzbekistan and existing social programs are insufficient to fully address the extent of the known child labor problem. The Feedback Mechanism for reporting labor violations in the cotton harvest did not become operational until mid-way through the harvest and was sometimes inaccessible to callers, indicating flaws in the system for receiving and processing child labor complaints. In addition, members of civil society who attempted to conduct independent monitoring of child labor in the cotton harvest reported experiencing surveillance, intimidation, and detention by the local government authorities.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

There is a lack of current data on child labor in Uzbekistan. To date, the Government has not conducted a national survey on child labor. However, while evidence from independent sources shows that progress was made towards eliminating forced child labor in the 2015 cotton harvest, some local officials continued to mobilize children to pick cotton, in contravention of the national government's official prohibition.(1-10) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Uzbekistan.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	4.3 (244,095)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	84.1
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	5.0
Primary Completion Rate (%)		95.7

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2015.(11)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 3, 2006.(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	Cultivating* and harvesting cotton† (1-10, 13-23)
	Cultivating silk cocoons* (16, 24-26)
Services	Street vending and street begging* (21, 27, 28)
	Collecting scrap metal* (10, 29-32)

Uzbekistan

NO ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT COMPLICIT IN FORCED CHILD LABOR

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Commercial sexual exploitation sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (22, 33)
	Forced labor in cultivating* and harvesting cotton (1, 2, 4-10, 15-17, 21, 22, 34-40)
	Forced labor in collecting scrap metal* (10, 29-32)
	Forced labor in cultivation of silk cocoons* (16, 24-26)

* Evidence of this activity is limited and/or the extent of the problem is unknown.

† 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.

Reports of the forced mobilization of children continued in the cotton sector in 2015, although occurrences were less numerous and confined to a smaller geographic area compared with the previous year. While monitoring exercises conducted by the ILO and the Coordination Council on Child Labor Issues (Coordination Council) did not find widespread evidence of forced child labor, multiple reports from credible, independent sources documented the mobilization of children by local government officials in more than an isolated incident.

In 2015, neither the ILO-led Third Party Monitoring (TPM) nor the Coordination Council-led monitoring found evidence of a systematic use of child labor for the cotton harvest.(41, 42) While a few children were found in the fields by TPM and Coordination Council monitors, these children did not appear to have been forcibly mobilized. However, there were indications that the TPM and Coordination Council did not identify the full scope of child labor violations that occurred.(41, 42) The TPM report states that monitors were unable to verify the ages of an unknown number of young people, presumed to be children, who ran away before monitors could verify their ages.(42) There were also reports that the presence of government officials on each monitoring team prevented them from speaking candidly about labor violations.(10, 42) TPM visits were unannounced and the location of each monitoring visit was intended to be known only by the ILO representative leading each monitoring team. However, reports that students, teachers, and medical workers participating in the harvest were moved from field to field to avoid ILO monitors and that cotton pickers were coached on how to respond to questions from monitors suggest that local officials may have known about monitoring visits in advance.(10, 42) In addition, while independent observers of the harvest confirm that there was no evidence of a centrally-coordinated, forced mobilization of children in 2015, observers identified a number of mobilizations of children for the harvest by local government officials, which were not captured by the TPM or Coordination Council monitoring.(5, 6, 10, 23, 43, 44)

As it has done since 2009, the Uzbek-German Forum for Human Rights coordinated efforts by 22 local human rights advocates, farmers, teachers, and other community members to observe and report on labor practices across six cotton-growing regions.(10) Both Uzbek-German Forum-affiliated monitors and other independent observers reported on multiple incidents of local government officials mobilizing children for cotton harvesting and cultivation. Regional government officials in Jizzakh reportedly mobilized students ages 16 to 17 from seven districts, and students ages 15 to 17 from rural areas throughout the region, to harvest cotton.(8, 10, 23) One school in the Jizzakh region reportedly also mobilized students ages 14 to 16 to weed cotton fields at the direction of district government officials.(7) In the Khorezm region, students ages 15 to 17 were reportedly mobilized to pick cotton and were required to sign a statement that they were participating voluntarily.(8, 23) In the Kashkadarya region, officials from at least one school and one college reportedly mobilized students ages 15-17.(45) In the Andijan region, officials at one elementary school reportedly mobilized all students, ages 6 to 14, although parents were able to take the place of younger students.(45) In the Bukhara region, students ages 16 to 17 were reportedly required to sign statements verifying their willingness to voluntarily participate in the cotton harvest, although it is unclear if these children were mobilized.(4) In addition, an unknown number of 17-year-old students were included in class-wide mobilizations of third-course college and lyceum students, a majority of whom are 18.(9)

The Uzbek-German Forum also reported an unprecedented level of harassment of independent monitors during the reporting period.(10) Credible sources have documented that at least four human rights advocates attempting to monitor the 2015 harvest were hampered by intimidation, harassment, detention, and arrest by authorities, as well as physical violence and damage to personal property.(6, 8, 10, 46-48)

The TPM found a high risk of forced labor in the 2015 harvest and noted in its monitoring report that forced labor is more widespread than the monitoring process alone suggests.(42) As in 2014, sources reported that the lack of systematic mobilization of

children in the 2015 harvest was offset by compulsory mobilization of adult labor, especially healthcare workers, teachers, and adult students.(10, 49, 50)

Despite the widespread mobilization of teachers, sources indicate that for the majority of the harvest period, most local administrators kept primary schools (for students ages 6 to 15) open, although in many cases the mobilization of teachers disrupted class schedules.(6, 9, 10, 42) Due to the mobilization of teachers, many children under 15 experienced shorter school days, larger class sizes, and occasional days of canceled classes. The TPM reported that some colleges were closed for the harvest, leaving children ages 15 to 17 without access to education during these closures.(10, 42, 45) This negatively impacted the quality of education for children studying at these institutions and left children who were not in school more vulnerable to participation in the cotton harvest.




Limited evidence suggests that children in Uzbekistan are also involved in the cultivation of silk cocoons, the protective casing silkworms spin around themselves before undergoing metamorphosis, which is processed to produce silk thread. The Government imposes a silk cocoon production quota on farmers, who face fines or the loss of their farming land and intimidation by local authorities if they do not meet the quota or do not agree to cultivate silk cocoons.(16, 24, 26) Because some adults are reportedly unable to meet mandatory silk cocoon quotas without the participation of their children, these government policies contribute to forced child labor in silk cocoon cultivation.(16, 24-26) Because silkworms are cultivated in May, the month of final exams in the Uzbek school system, this work reportedly disrupts some children's school attendance.(24) Due to the intensive care required to cultivate silkworms, the work also requires some children to work late at night and early in the morning.(16, 24, 25)

Additionally, there were reports in 2015 that children in at least two regions of Uzbekistan were required to collect and submit a quota of scrap metal determined by the school, or to submit an equivalent monetary payment, in order to continue attending classes.(29-32) Sources report children often did not attend school while gathering scrap metal to meet quotas set between 33 and 110 pounds.(31, 32)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Uzbekistan 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, including its worst forms (Table 4).

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 77 of the Labor Code; Article 20 of the Law on the Guarantees of the Rights of the Child; Article 49-1 of the Administrative Code (51-54)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Articles 241 and 245 of the Labor Code (53)

Uzbekistan

NO ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT COMPLICIT IN FORCED CHILD LABOR

Table 4. Laws and Regulations Related to Child Labor (cont)

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Decree on Adoption of the List of Occupations with Unfavorable Working Conditions to Which It Is Forbidden to Employ Persons Under Eighteen Years of Age; Decree on Approval of Provision on Requirements on Prohibition of Use of Minors' Labor (55, 56)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 37 of the Constitution; Article 7 of the Labor Code; Article 51 of the Administrative Code; Articles 135 and 138 of the Criminal Code (52-54, 57-60)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Article 14 of the Law on Guarantees of the Rights of the Child; Article 135 of the Criminal Code (52, 60)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 10 of the Law on Guarantees of the Rights of the Child; Articles 130 and 135 of the Criminal Code (52, 60)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Article 10 of the Law on Guarantees of the Rights of the Child; Articles 127, 270, 273, and 276 of the Criminal Code (52, 60)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Articles 4 and 46 of the Law on Universal Military Service (61, 62)
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 24 of the Law on Universal Military Service (62)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	18‡	Article 3 of the Law on Education (63)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 4 of the Law on Education; Article 41 of the Constitution (57, 63)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (63)

While the Law on Guarantees of the Rights of the Child requires that the State protect children from involvement in prostitution, the law does not criminally prohibit the use, procurement, or offering of children in prostitution or benefiting from a transaction involving the prostitution of a child.(52, 54, 60) In addition, although the production and distribution of child pornography are criminally prohibited, laws related to commercial sexual exploitation of children are not adequate, as possession of child pornography is not criminally prohibited.(60)

The Law on Education makes education compulsory for 12 years, beginning at age 6 or 7. As a result, children typically finish compulsory education at age 18.(63)

III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 5).

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Social Protection (Ministry of Labor)	Conduct labor inspections, including inspections for compliance with child labor laws.(64)
Ministry of Interior Office for Combating Trafficking	Investigate crimes related to child trafficking, which may then be prosecuted by the Prosecutor General's Office.(65)
Prosecutor General's Office	Prosecute criminal violations involving the worst forms of child labor, including human trafficking, forced labor, and commercial sexual exploitation.(65)
Ministry of Public Education, Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education, and Center for Secondary and Vocational Education	Monitor elementary through secondary school students to prevent forced child labor, including in cotton. Monitor employment of all graduates of all educational institutions for two years after graduation.(66, 67)
Women's Committee of Uzbekistan	Monitor school attendance through the academic year, especially during the cotton harvest. A total of 14 regional and 194 district branches of the Women's Committee are involved in monitoring school attendance.(66)

Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement (cont)

Organization/Agency	Role
Ministry of Labor and Social Protection Human Trafficking Hotlines	Receive reports of incidents of human trafficking and refer reports to the relevant agencies.(68)
Feedback Mechanism*	Raise awareness about the Government's efforts to enforce labor laws and receive complaints on the violation of worker rights and labor laws via two telephone hotlines – one Ministry of Labor hotline, which refers cases to the Labor Inspectorate and the Prosecutor General's Office, and one Federation of Trade Unions hotline, which focuses on mediation of individual worker rights complaints.(9) Established by the Coordination Council as part of World Bank efforts to prevent the use of child and forced labor in World Bank project areas.(9)

* Agency responsible for child labor enforcement was created during the reporting period.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2015, labor law enforcement agencies in Uzbekistan took action to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 6).

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Labor Inspectorate Funding	Unknown (67)	Unknown (9)
Number of Labor Inspectors	300 (67)	439 (69)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (69)	Yes (69)
Training for Labor Inspectors		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Unknown	Unknown
■ Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	N/A	N/A
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (67)	Yes (69)
Number of Labor Inspections	Unknown (67)	Unknown (9)
■ Number Conducted at Worksite	Unknown (67)	Unknown (9)
■ Number Conducted by Desk Reviews	Unknown (67)	Unknown (9)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	49 (67)	Unknown (9)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	19 (67)	7 (70)
■ Number of Penalties Imposed That Were Collected	Unknown (67)	Unknown
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (67)	Yes (9)
■ Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (67)	Yes (9)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (9)	Yes (9)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (9)	Yes (9)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (9)	Yes (9)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (9)	Yes (9)

During the reporting period, the Government-supported Coordination Council conducted monitoring during the fall cotton harvest in the three provinces not subject to the ILO-led Third Party Monitoring (TPM) exercise. The ILO played a supporting role in the Coordination Council monitoring in 2015 by training monitors and advising on the methodology for monitoring.(71)

From September 14 to October 31, the remaining 10 of Uzbekistan's 13 provinces were covered by the-ILO-led TPM exercise for child labor and forced labor. The TPM was established in 2015 to monitor for child labor and assess the risk of forced labor in the cotton harvest in regions housing current World Bank projects.(42) The monitoring exercise included 10 monitoring teams, each consisting of 6 members. Each team included representatives from the ILO, the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy (MLSP), the Federation of Trade Unions, the Chamber of Commerce, the Women's Committee, and a government-accredited NGO.(42) Monitors conducted 1,100 site visits and 9,620 interviews, and identified seven children who were working in the cotton fields during the harvest in violation of Uzbekistan's labor laws.(42) Monitors did not identify any cases in which an entire school class was mobilized.(42)

Differences previously noted between monitoring results reported by the TPM and reporting by independent observers indicate that the current monitoring and enforcement does not sufficiently investigate, identify, and punish the range of reported violations. Among the reported violations not addressed by the TPM are the mobilization of entire classes of schoolchildren, the potential

Uzbekistan

NO ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT COMPLICIT IN FORCED CHILD LABOR

involvement of local or regional government authorities in such mobilization, and the use of children in weeding cotton fields, which takes place outside of the TPM time frame.(1, 7, 8)

In 2015, the Coordination Council established a Feedback Mechanism in cooperation with the MLSP and the Federation of Trade Unions, as part of the World Bank requirements to monitor for the use of child and forced labor in World Bank project areas. Under the auspices of the Feedback Mechanism, the Federation of Trade Unions and the MSLP each set up its own hotline to receive complaints.(42) The Coordination Council reported that the Feedback Mechanism received 207 complaints, close to 20 of which were related to the mobilization of children for the harvest.(72, 73) The Government did not confirm forced mobilization of children in any of these cases, but did subject two brigade leaders to administrative penalties for allowing children to participate in the harvest in their free time.(72, 73)

According to the ILO TPM report, the use of the Feedback Mechanism was low during the harvest, in part due to a lack of public awareness of the mechanism, as well as fear of reprisals for reporting a complaint among individuals who were aware of the mechanism's availability.(10, 42) Several individuals who provided information to the hotlines reported receiving pay cuts and facing intimidation as a result of making a complaint.(9) During the reporting period, Feedback Mechanism hotline numbers were displayed on materials distributed to raise awareness about the bans on child labor and forced labor.(9, 42) However, the Federation of Trade Unions maintained a number of pre-existing regional hotlines, in some cases causing confusion about which number complainants should call. Some individuals reported calling the central hotline, being referred to a regional hotline number, and then receiving no response when calling the regional hotline.(23) In addition, the Feedback Mechanism hotlines only became operational midway through the harvest and the MLSP hotline had limited hours of operation.(9)

In addition, according to the ILO's recommendation of one inspector for every 20,000 workers in transitioning economies, Uzbekistan's labor inspectorate should employ roughly 880 inspectors in order to adequately enforce labor laws throughout the country.(74-76)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2015, criminal law enforcement agencies in Uzbekistan took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2014	2015
Training for Investigators		
■ Initial Training for New Employees	Yes (67)	Yes (67)
■ Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A	N/A
■ Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (67)	Yes (70)
Number of Investigations	Unknown (67)	Unknown
Number of Violations Found	Unknown (67)	54 (70)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	Unknown (67)	Unknown
Number of Convictions	Unknown (67)	Unknown
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (67)	Yes (9)

In 2015, the Ministry of Interior investigated 696 human trafficking cases, prosecuted 344 criminal cases involving 496 trafficking victims, and issued convictions related to 320 cases of human trafficking. However, the Government did not provide disaggregated data on how many of these cases involved child victims.(70)

During the reporting period, the National Interagency Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons conducted training on identification of trafficking victims for law enforcement officials in cooperation with the OSCE. The OSCE also provided funding for a training on interagency cooperation on combatting trafficking among law enforcement and transportation officials.(70)

IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Coordination Council on Child Labor Issues (Coordination Council)	Coordinate efforts to address child labor issues, including monitoring of the cotton harvest.(13, 77) Comprised of representatives from the Federation of Trade Unions (which serves as its Chair); the Chamber of Commerce and Industry; the Ministries of Labor and Social Protection, Public Education, Foreign Affairs, Health, and Interior; the Employer's Union; the Women's Committee; the Center for Human Rights; the Board for Secondary and Vocational Education; and NGOs.(13, 67, 77) In 2015, the Coordination Council led child labor monitoring activities in three provinces, assisted in creating after-school activities to keep children out of the fields during the cotton harvest, and collaborated with the ILO on the implementation of the Decent Work Country Program.(9)
Interagency Working Group	Coordinate efforts to address labor rights issues, including child labor.(64, 78, 79) Report to the ILO on the Government's implementation of ratified conventions, and its efforts to prevent forced labor and protect working minors. Headed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection.(78-81)
National Interagency Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons	Oversee efforts to combat trafficking, including by improving interagency cooperation, raising public awareness, and drafting legislation.(70) Chaired by the Prosecutor General and includes representatives from other government entities, such as the Ministries of Labor and Social Protection, Interior, and Foreign Affairs, and the State Customs Committee.(65) In 2015, the Commission developed a handbook on human trafficking to help teachers provide students information on seeking safe and legal employment abroad.(70)
Local interagency committees	Monitor human trafficking at the provincial, regional, and municipal levels.(65)

Despite the existence of the Coordination Council, national prohibitions on child labor continued to be implemented inconsistently at the local level. This suggests the need for improved coordination between the national, regional, and district governments to ensure that local governments are both aware of and committed to implementing the laws and policies prohibiting child labor in cotton production and other sectors.(1-10, 13-22)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Uzbekistan has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 9).

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
Memorandum of Understanding Between the International Labor Organization and the Republic of Uzbekistan (2014–2016)	Establishes terms of agreement between the ILO and the Government on cooperation to implement a Decent Work Country Program in Uzbekistan from 2014-2016.(82) This agreement represents an important step toward implementation of recommendations of the ILO supervisory bodies, including utilizing ILO technical assistance and continuing to work with the ILO or other credible third parties to observe cotton harvests.(34, 83)
National Action Plan for the Application of ILO Conventions	Establishes a framework for implementing ILO Conventions 138 and 182 by coordinating the activities of ministries, departments and local government authorities. Also aims to strengthen cooperation with international and voluntary organizations on child labor.(9) Included a goal of updating the prohibitions of hazardous occupations for children in 2015, however an updated list had not been completed by the end of the reporting period.(84)
Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 132 on Additional Measures to Ensure the Implementation of ILO Conventions (2014–2016)	Establishes actions and efforts to be taken to address the worst forms of child labor and forced labor. Outlines additional activities to be implemented in 2014–2016 in response to ILO convention requirements, including awareness-raising, monitoring of the cotton harvest, legal reform, data collection, and activities on the worst forms of child labor targeting government ministries, international organizations, students, trade unions, and employers.(85) Ministry of Labor and Social Protection is charged with implementation.(67)
Plan of Measures regarding preparatory works aimed at provision of free hiring of pickers by farming enterprises through labor market facilities and non-admission of cases of child labor and forced labor during the cotton season (2015)†	Establishes a system for identifying and hiring unemployed individuals and other workers who may be interested in joining the harvest voluntarily and prohibits the engagement of teachers and healthcare workers. Prescribes an awareness-raising campaign to place other promotional materials explaining the prohibition of forced and child labor in health facilities, educational institutions, and government workplaces.(42, 86) Includes provisions for training of brigade leaders to improve pickers' awareness of ILO conventions and national legislation on working conditions in the cotton harvest. Encourages the recruitment of students over 18, and requires student lists be broken down by age to identify students over 18 who can legally be involved in cotton picking. Also requires the development of standing committees at the district level to systematically monitor students' school attendance, and of a text message notification system to track school attendance.(42, 86)

Uzbekistan

NO ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT COMPLICIT IN FORCED CHILD LABOR

Table 9. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
Action Plan on Improving Working Conditions, Employment, and Social Protection of Workers in Agriculture (2016–2018)†	Demonstrates the Government's commitment to increased mechanization of agriculture; improving conditions for hiring of workers in agriculture; strengthening the Feedback Mechanism and national monitoring to prevent child and forced labor; increasing provision of information and guidance in order to advance decent work; and social protection of workers in agriculture.(42, 87)
Cabinet of Ministers Order 909F†	Outlines steps to ensure decent working conditions in Uzbekistan, including by preventing child and forced labor. The order lays out the Government's intentions to improve monitoring and feedback mechanisms, as well as to continue working with the ILO and World Bank to develop informational materials and conduct public awareness campaigns about child and forced labor.(9)
National Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons (2015–2016)†	Includes activities to conduct public awareness-raising; assist and protect victims; and strengthen the capacity of government agencies and NGOs working on trafficking issues.(70) In 2015, over 83,000 awareness-raising activities were conducted under the auspices of the plan, and close to 3,000 banners were displayed in transportation areas.(70, 88)
Education Sector Plan (2013–2017)*	Defines a 5-year development strategy for the education sector and aims to ensure equal opportunities and quality education for all.(89)

* Child labor elimination and prevention strategies do not appear to have been integrated into this policy.

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

In 2015, the national Government maintained cotton production policies that mandate harvest quotas and set crop prices at levels that offer strong incentives for local administrators to mobilize forced labor, which creates an ongoing risk that children may be mobilized.(9, 42, 47)

Several positive efforts were taken during the reporting period based on the Plan of Measures adopted in July 2015. In cooperation with the World Bank, almost 53,000 posters and over 700 large banners were distributed throughout the country to raise awareness about national prohibitions on child and forced labor.(70) Regional governors, district and local-level officials, agency heads, and farmers received training on ILO Conventions.(70) The text message notification system to track school attendance was put in place in 10,000 elementary schools and 1,500 secondary schools in Tashkent and Namangan regions.(90) However, prohibitions on the mobilization of teachers for the cotton harvest included in the Plan of Measures were not enforced, which negatively impacted the quality of education and increased the vulnerability of children to participation in the cotton harvest.(10, 42, 45)

The Plan of Measures also required the maintenance of attendance registers for students and teachers, as well as lists of the ages of cotton pickers. Evidence indicates that this documentation was not always available or complete.(42)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2015, the Government of Uzbekistan funded and participated in programs that included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms. The Government has other programs that may have an impact on child labor, including its worst forms (Table 10).

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
After-School Programming	Ministry of Public Education-implemented program during the cotton harvest to provide extracurricular sports and hobbies for students in order to prevent child labor.(9, 77)
Support for the Decent Work Country Program in Uzbekistan	USDOL-funded \$6 million project awarded in December 2014 to the ILO to enhance the capacity of the Government and workers' and employers' representatives to prevent and reduce child and forced labor, and to promote decent work in Uzbekistan.(77, 91) In 2015 the project provided training and technical assistance to the Coordination Council monitors.(71)
Global Partnership for Education	Multilateral initiative to coordinate the efforts of developing countries, donors, international organizations, teachers, NGOs, and the private sector to secure universal access to quality education in developing countries.(92, 93) In 2014, the Partnership endorsed the Government's Education Sector Plan and awarded a \$50 million grant to Uzbekistan for its implementation in coordination with UNICEF and the World Bank. The program will promote child literacy and math skills; develop teachers' classroom skills; expand access to quality early childhood care and education in rural areas; raise the quality of secondary education; and increase the capacity of the Ministry of Public Education to monitor the education system.(92)

Table 10. Social Programs to Address Child Labor (cont)

Program	Description
School Assistance†	Ministry of Public Education program that provides winter clothes and other educational resources to needy families to support their school attendance.(9, 94)
Family Support Assistance†	Government of Uzbekistan program that provides an allowance to low-income families to be paid if their children continue their education up to age 18.(9, 94)
Child Protection Assistance	UNICEF program that engages with the Government of Uzbekistan to support the development of a national child protection system that will prevent and respond to children who are at risk of or have been subject to child abuse, exploitation, and violence.(95)
Child Rights Monitoring	UNICEF program that partners with local and regional governments, NGOs, and civil service training institutions to strengthen Uzbekistan's application and monitoring of obligations under the UN CRC.(96)
National Rehabilitation Center†	MLSP-operated shelter for trafficking victims that provides victims with medical, psychological, legal, and vocational training.(70, 97) In 2015, the Government allocated approximately \$156,000 to the Center.(70)
Awareness Raising of Labor Rights†	Effort undertaken in collaboration with the World Bank and the ILO to develop and disseminate posters and banners publicizing the government's prohibition of child labor in the cotton harvest, as well as to conduct seminars on the implementation of ILO Convention 182. In 2015, sources reported that awareness-raising materials were not distributed until the third week of the harvest or later.(9)
Human Trafficking is a Modern Issue†	National Interagency Commission to Combat Trafficking in Persons-led program, which carried out more than 61,500 awareness-raising activities that reached 4.1 million citizens, including 1 million children.(70, 88)
Cotton Harvesters†	Government program that rents harvesting machines to farmers to help reduce the need for human cotton pickers.(66, 67) Observers noted a limited number of harvesters were in use during the 2015 harvest.(9)

† Program is funded by the Government of Uzbekistan.

Although the Government has implemented programs to combat child labor in the cotton harvest and to address human trafficking, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in Uzbekistan (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Strengthen protections against the commercial sexual exploitation of children by criminally prohibiting the possession of child pornography, and use, procurement, offering, and benefitting from the sexual exploitation of a child for prostitution.	2015
Enforcement	Allow independent observers unrestricted access to monitor child labor during the cotton harvest through unannounced site visits, and punish officials who threaten or detain observers in order to suppress information about labor violations.	2014 – 2015
	Make information on the Labor Inspectorate funding, training for inspectors, number and quality of inspections conducted, number of child labor violations found, and number of penalties collected publicly available.	2015
	Ensure that the Feedback Mechanism and other mechanisms for receiving child labor complaints are operational and consistently answered year round, including for the full duration of the cotton harvest; are well-publicized and accessible to the public; have clear instructions about which hotline is appropriate to call; and do not carry any risk of penalty for individuals who make use of these mechanisms.	2015
	Increase the number of labor inspectors responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor in order to provide adequate coverage of the workforce.	2015
	Target labor and criminal inspections, including unannounced inspections, in areas where hazardous child labor is known to occur, especially in the cotton sector.	2011 – 2015
	Establish a comprehensive cotton harvest monitoring and enforcement system that investigates worker complaints and third-party reports of school closings and mobilization of children under age 18 to work in the cotton harvest or other forms of child labor, and applies penalties against responsible individuals, including local or regional government authorities (such as hokim or town mayors), who are involved in the mobilization of children.	2012 – 2015
	Publish disaggregated information on investigations, prosecutions and convictions related to the worst forms of child labor and trafficking of children.	2011 – 2015

Uzbekistan

NO ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT COMPLICIT IN FORCED CHILD LABOR

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Coordination	Increase coordination efforts directed at regional and district governments to ensure local governments are both aware of and committed to implementing the laws and policies prohibiting child labor in cotton production and other sectors.	2015
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Education Sector Plan.	2014 – 2015
	Revise policies that mandate cotton harvest quotas and set purchase prices below market value to help prevent forced involvement of children under age 18 in the cotton harvest.	2012 – 2015
	Enforce the prohibition on the involvement of teachers in the cotton harvest, in order to maintain education quality during the harvest and prevent students from becoming vulnerable to participation in the harvest.	2015
	Strengthen recordkeeping in educational institutions and maintain up-to-date records of cotton workers' ages on district lists.	2013 – 2015
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine the prevalence of child labor, including the nature and extent of children's involvement in silk cocoon cultivation and scrap metal collection.	2013 – 2015
	Expand programs to address the worst forms of child labor, with a particular focus on children involved in cotton production.	2009 – 2015

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