

In 2014, Pakistan made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Federal Government continued to fund and participate in programs to combat child labor, including its worst forms. The Sindh Provincial Government operationalized the Sindh Child Protection Authority and approved the Sindh Education Sector Plan. The Balochistan Provincial Government enacted legislation mandating free and compulsory education for children ages 5 to 16. However, children in Pakistan engage in child labor in agriculture and in the worst forms of child labor, including bonded labor. Provincial Governments have not established a minimum working age, and the federal minimum age for hazardous work falls short of international standards. Not all of Pakistan's provinces prohibit human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities. Provincial Governments do not have the resources necessary to enforce laws prohibiting child labor, including its worst forms.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Pakistan are engaged in child labor, including in agriculture. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including bonded labor.(1, 2) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Pakistan.

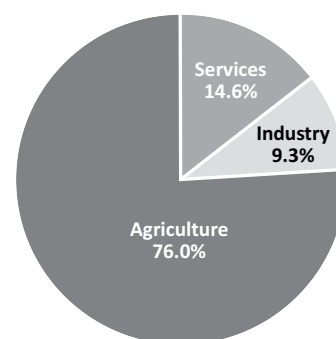
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10-14 yrs.	13.0 (2,449,480)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	72.3
Combining Work and School (%)	10-14 yrs.	1.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		71.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(3)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from LFS Survey, 2010-2011.(4)

Figure 1. Working Children by Sector, Ages 10-14



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 harvesting cotton,* wheat,* dates,* and sugarcane* (2, 5-8)
	Fishing,* including deep-sea fishing* and activities unknown (9-11)
	Harvesting and processing shrimp* (10, 11)
Industry	Manufacturing glass bangles,† surgical instruments, and palm leaf mats* (6, 8, 12)
	Weaving carpets,† tanning leather, stitching soccer balls,* and weaving cloth using power looms*† (2, 8, 11-15)
	Producing bricks, mining coal, and crushing stones* (5, 6, 8, 16-18)
Services	Domestic work (16, 19, 20)
	Working in hotels,* restaurants,* tea stalls,* and transportation* (5-7, 16, 20, 21)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Scavenging garbage* (6, 13)
	Automobile repair,* welding,* carpentry in small workshops,* and construction,*† activities unknown (6, 11 16, 21)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced labor in brick making, carpet weaving, agriculture,* manufacturing glass bangles,* and mining coal (1, 2, 22-24)
	Forced domestic work sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (1, 25)
	Commercial sexual exploitation as a result of human trafficking* (1, 26)
	Forced begging sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (1, 27)
	Used in smuggling small arms* and drugs* (28, 29)
	Used in armed conflict as a result of forced recruitment* (30)

* 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.

A national child labor survey has not been conducted since 1996 and the lack of recent data hampers the Federal and Provincial Governments’ ability to accurately assess the scope and prevalence of child labor.(30) Some children work as bonded laborers in the production in bricks, carpet weaving, and in coal mines, typically as a result of Pakistan’s debt bondage system (*peshgis*) in which children are forced to work to pay off a family loan.(23, 24, 31) Children, especially girls, are victims of human trafficking and are placed in third-party homes as domestic workers.(1) Some child domestic workers are subjected to sexual assault and extreme abuse, including instances in which child domestic workers were killed by their employers.(25, 30, 32)

Boys are victims of human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation around hotels, truck stops, bus stations, and shrines in Pakistan.(1, 26) Girls are trafficked internationally into commercial sexual exploitation.(1) Children are sold or kidnapped and forced to beg in Pakistan. Disabled Pakistani children may be forced to beg in other countries, such as Iran.(33, 34) Children are used to smuggle drugs and small arms across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.(28, 29)




Non-state militant groups, such as pro-Taliban insurgents, force children to engage in espionage, armed conflict and suicide attacks. These children may be trafficked between Pakistan and Afghanistan and subjected to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse.(1, 30)

While education is free and compulsory through age 16, access to education is still limited. High rates of teacher absenteeism, inadequate facilities, and corporal punishment may deter children from attending school.(30) In conflict zones, military operations often disrupt school attendance and damage infrastructure.(35) Armed groups and extremist groups regularly attack schools, disrupting children’s access to education.(36)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Pakistan has ratified most 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	Related Entity	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Federal	No		
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Federal	Yes	14	Sections 2 and 3 of the Employment of Children Act (37)
	Punjab	Yes	14	Sections 2 and 3 of the Government of Punjab Employment of Children Act (38)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Federal	Yes		Parts I and II of the Schedule of the Employment of Children Act (37)
	Punjab	Yes		Parts 1 and 2 of the Schedule of the Government of Punjab Employment of Children Act (38)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Federal	Yes		Section 4 of the Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act; Section 374 of the Penal Code; Article 11 of the Pakistan Constitution (39-41)
	Punjab	Yes		Section 4 of the Punjab Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act (42)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Federal	Yes		Section 3 of the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance; Sections 366A, 366B, 367, 370, and 371 of the Penal Code; Sections 17-23 of the Emigration Ordinance (40, 43, 44)
	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Yes		Section 52 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act (45)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Federal	Yes		Sections 366A, 366B, 371A, and 371B of the Penal Code (40)
	Punjab	Yes		Section 40 of the Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act (46)
	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Yes		Sections 48 and 50 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act (45)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Federal	No		
	Punjab	Yes		Section 36 of the Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children Act (46)
	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Yes		Sections 35, 38, and 45 of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act (45)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	Federal	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Federal	Yes	18	Section 3 of the National Service Ordinance (47)
Compulsory Education Age	Federal	Yes	16	Section 3 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (48)
	Sindh	Yes	16	Section 3(1) of the Sindh Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (49)
	Balochistan	Yes	16	Section 3 of the Balochistan Compulsory Education Act (50)
Free Public Education	Federal	Yes		Section 3 of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act (48)
	Sindh	Yes		Section 3(1) of the Sindh Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act (49)
	Balochistan	Yes		Section 2(f) of the Balochistan Compulsory Education Act (50)

* No conscription (47)

The 18th Amendment to the Pakistan Constitution devolves all child welfare and labor issues from the Federal Government to the four Provincial Governments. Until each province repeals or adopts a replacement law, federal laws on child protection and bonded labor are in force.⁽³⁰⁾ Pakistan's federal and provincial laws are not completely consistent with international standards regarding child labor, including the worst forms of child labor. The federal law does not establish a national minimum age for employment, which may increase the likelihood that very young children engage in activities that jeopardize their health and safety. The federal

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law for the minimum age for hazardous work is also not consistent with international standards and may jeopardize the health and safety of young people ages 14 through 17.(51) Punjab is the only province to have passed a law on the minimum age, but it replicates the federal law. Each of Pakistan's provinces has drafted legislation that prohibits work for children under age 14, and hazardous work for children under age 18; however, legislation in each province has been pending ratification since 2012.(52)

Pakistan's labor laws do not extend to workers in domestic service, a sector in which many children work. Domestic work is also not covered by the list of hazardous occupations or processes prohibited for children.(29) Pakistan's labor laws do not extend to workplaces with fewer than 10 persons employed and in agricultural work.(53, 54)

While the federal Penal Code prohibits kidnapping and abduction, the federal Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance does not specifically prohibit internal human trafficking. In 2013, the Federal Government drafted anti-trafficking legislation that would address both internal and transnational trafficking, with a focus on crimes against women and children; however, it has yet to be introduced into the National Assembly.(1) The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act prohibits child trafficking but similarly restricts its definition to international trafficking.(45)

Pakistan's federal laws do not specifically prohibit child pornography; however, the Penal Code outlaws the circulation or production of any obscene books, drawings, representations, or other objects.(40, 55) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is the only province to have enacted a law prohibiting child pornography.(45) Federal law also does not specifically prohibit the use of children in illicit activities. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces have enacted legislation prohibiting the use of children in illicit activities, including begging.(45, 46)

In 2014, Balochistan became the second province to enact legislation mandating free and compulsory education for children ages 5 to 16.(50)

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
Provincial Labor Inspectors	Inspect industrial areas and markets to identify child labor violations, enforce provincial labor laws, and pursue legal action against employers.(56)
Provincial and Regional Police	Enforce violations of provincial and federal laws, including the Pakistan Penal Code and the Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act, concerning the worst forms of child labor. Refer children taken into custody to Child Protection Officers.(57)
District Vigilance Committees	Implement the Bonded Labor System (Abolition) Act and assist in rehabilitating bonded laborers.(58)
Anti-Trafficking Unit of the Federal Investigation Agency	Enforce transnational trafficking-related laws, particularly the Prevention and Control of Human Trafficking Ordinance. Cooperate with other governments on trafficking cases, operate a hotline for victims, and publish information on anti-trafficking efforts on its Web site.(59)
Child Protection Officers	Take into custody at-risk children, including those rescued from exploitative labor situations. Bring children taken into custody before the Child Protection Court or the appropriate authority. Established in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh provinces.(45, 46, 61)
Child Protection Courts	Determine protective custody for at-risk children, including those rescued from exploitative labor situations. Established in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces.(45, 46)

Research found no evidence that law enforcement agencies in Pakistan took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, the Provincial Governments conducted labor inspections, but research did not find information on the number and training of inspectors. Research also did not find information on the number of labor inspections, child labor violations, and penalties or citations issued. While information on labor inspections is reportedly collected, this information was not made public.

Although the Ministry for Inter-Provincial Coordination is responsible for overseeing the coordination of an annual report on labor inspections, there is no central authority that collects and publishes this information.(62)

There is a critical shortage of labor inspectors in the country; labor inspectors receive very little training and have insufficient resources to adequately inspect workplaces.(62) Provinces reportedly have a training center where labor inspectors receive training on child labor.(63) Labor inspections vary across Provincial Governments; in Punjab, inspections are regularly conducted, while in Sindh, inspectors are required to give advance notice to employers.(62) Fines and penalties are only infrequently assessed and are insufficient to deter employers from using child labor.(30)

Criminal Law Enforcement

The Government of Pakistan does not collect data on the number of criminal investigations, prosecutions, children assisted, or convictions of child traffickers and those using children in other exploitative forms of labor.(52) In 2014, the UNODC worked with the Federal Government to establish a research center at the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) headquarters, to be manned by FIA officers who will capture and analyze data to improve FIA's ability to track trafficking trends.(64)

In 2014, the Federal Government worked with international and NGOs to provide training on identifying human trafficking to law enforcement officials.(64) Law enforcement officials lack the necessary personnel, training, and equipment to confront the armed guards who often oversee bonded laborers.(22) These circumstances have hampered the effectiveness and enforcement of the Bonded Labor System Abolition Act; since its passage in 1992, there have been no convictions under the Act.(34) District Vigilance Committees have been established in Punjab, and cases of bonded labor have been reported by the local police. However, in other provinces, District Vigilance Committees may not be functioning.(63, 65)

Unlike other provinces, Balochistan does not have a referral process by which rescued children can be placed in protective custody and obtain rehabilitation services. Research did not find evidence that a referral mechanism exists between the provincial labor officers and the police.

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 6).

Table 6. Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
Federal and Provincial Child Labor Units	Advise Provincial Governments and coordinate reporting responsibilities on the implementation of child labor conventions.(66) Conduct research, build capacity, and coordinate anti-child labor activities.(29, 59)
Interagency Task Force	Coordinate the anti-human trafficking efforts of the Ministry of the Interior; intelligence and law enforcement agencies; the Ministry of Law, Justice, and Human Rights; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Support 13 anti-trafficking units that work with provincial- and district-level police officers to monitor and combat internal and transnational human trafficking.(64) Maintain an Integrated Border Management System.(67)
National Commission for Human Rights	Coordinate Pakistan's compliance with international treaty obligations, including those related to child labor.(29, 68)
Punjab Child Protection and Welfare Bureau	Coordinate the protection of destitute and neglected children by appointing child protection officers, supervising child protection units, and establishing child protection institutions and child protection courts.(46)
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission	Coordinate efforts to enhance the safety, welfare, and well-being of children, including by running programs for the prevention of exploitative child labor practices.(69)
Sindh Child Protection Authority	Coordinate efforts to ensure the rights of children in need of special protection, including child laborers, by establishing child protection units and appointing child protection officers.(61) Members include the provincial minister, two parliamentarians, lawyers, social activists, and representatives from departments that deal with children's issues. Became operational in 2014.(70)

Balochistan is the only province that does not have a coordination mechanism to ensure the welfare and protection of children at the provincial level. A draft of the Balochistan Child Welfare and Protection Bill was approved in 2011, but it has yet to be passed by the Provincial Assembly.(71)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Government of Pakistan has established policies related to child labor, including its worst forms (Table 7).

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan for Children	Aims to prohibit, restrict, and regulate child labor with the eventual goal of its elimination.(72) Lays out 14 key strategies and actions, including harmonizing work among government agencies, NGOs, and donors; promoting research on child labor issues; developing nonformal education for child laborers; providing microcredit for families of child laborers; and conducting national surveys on child labor. Also addresses child trafficking and outlines key objectives for its elimination.(72)
National Education Policy	Focuses on increasing the literacy rate and providing livelihood skills to children, including those engaged in child labor. Aims to expand nonformal and vocational education programs to children, including child laborers.(73)
National Plan of Action to Accelerate Education-Related Millennium Development Goals (2013–2016)*	Aims to increase enrollment of out-of-school children in primary education, retain all children enrolled in school and ensure they complete their primary education, and improve the quality of primary education. Sets out province-level action plans to achieve these goals.(74)
National Action Plan for Combating Human Trafficking	Describes prevention, prosecution, and protection strategies for ending human trafficking, including child trafficking.(75)
One UN Program II (2013–2017)*	Identifies key strategic priority areas for UN development assistance, including increased access to social services and food security, development of sustainable livelihoods, and strengthened governance and social protections for excluded and vulnerable populations.(76)
Provincial Plans of Action to Combat Child Labor	Details how each province plans to revise child labor legislation, including by strengthening the capacity of labor inspectors, generating awareness of child labor, improving reporting, and computerizing labor inspection data.(63, 66)
Sindh and Punjab Provincial Plans of Action to Combat Bonded Labor	Details how the Sindh and Punjab Provinces plan to revise their bonded labor laws. Includes plans to strengthen the capacity of labor inspectors, generate awareness of bonded labor, improve reporting, and computerize labor inspection data.(63, 77)
Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) Child Protection Policy	Describes how FATA will promote and create a protective environment for all children. Includes actions to be taken toward the prevention and elimination of child labor.(78)
Balochistan Education Sector Plan (2013–2017)*	Seeks to increase the quality and relevance of school curriculum and increase inclusion of excluded communities and children in primary, secondary, and nonformal educational institutions.(79) In 2014, Balochistan Province was awarded \$34 million from the Global Partnership for Education to implement its State Action Plan.(80)
Punjab Reforms Road Map*	Aims to achieve 100 percent enrollment of all school-aged children, 100 percent retention of all enrolled children up to age 16, and free and compulsory education for all in the Punjab province.(81)
Sindh Education Sector Plan (2014–2018)*†	Aims to increase equitable access to education and improve the quality of the teachers and curriculum.(82) In 2014, the Sindh Provincial Government was awarded \$66 million from the Global Partnership for Education to implement the Plan.(83)
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Education Sector Plan (2010–2015)*	Sets out strategies to increase student enrollment, improve the quality of education, and improve school infrastructure and learning environments.(84)

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

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Pakistan funded and participated in programs that include 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 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
National Centers for Rehabilitation of Child Labor‡	Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal program that aims to remove children ages 5 to 14 from hazardous labor and provide them with education, clothing, and a stipend. Provides primary education to 19,574 students at 158 centers operating across the provinces.(11, 85)
Child Support Program*‡	Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal program that distributes conditional cash transfers to families living below the poverty line to send their children ages 5 to 16 to primary school. Approximately \$3 million has been disbursed.(86)
Benazir Bhutto Income Support Program‡	Federal Government scheme that provides financial assistance to underprivileged families and offers incentives for parents to keep their children in school and out of work.(30)
Decent Work Country Program (2010–2015)	ILO technical assistance program that includes strategies to reduce the worst forms of child labor by strengthening institutions and taking direct action to withdraw children from the workforce. Program also seeks to combat forced labor by strengthening law enforcement interventions in cases of internal human trafficking and bonded labor in the Sindh and Punjab Provinces.(87)
Sabawoon Rehabilitation Center‡	Pakistan Army center that rehabilitates children who were recruited and ideologically influenced by terrorist organizations and militant groups. Reintegrated more than 2,200 youth into society.(64)
Project to Combat the Worst Forms of Child Labor#	Punjab Provincial Child Labor Unit program that provides nonformal education and literacy services to children in the worst forms of child labor in four Punjab districts. Provides livelihood services to target families and improve working conditions.(88)
Elimination of Bonded Labor in Brick Kilns#	Punjab Provincial Government project that provided nonformal education, interest-free loans, national identity cards, and health services to assist bonded laborers. Established 200 nonformal education centers where 9,717 students were enrolled. Project completed in July 2014.(63, 89)
Education Voucher Scheme*#	Punjab Educational Foundation program that provides stipends to students from low-income areas to attend private schools.(11, 90)

*The impact of this program on child labor does not appear to have been studied.

‡ Program is funded by the Government of Pakistan.

Program is funded by the Provincial Government of Punjab.

The social programs of the Federal and Provincial Governments are insufficient to address the prevalence and scope of Pakistan's child labor problem. Existing programs also do not provide enough protection and rehabilitation services for bonded laborers and victims of human trafficking.(1) Government initiatives are needed to specifically target child domestic workers. Additional social programs are also necessary to raise awareness and provide assistance to children used by non-state militant groups to engage in armed conflict.(52)

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 Pakistan (Table 9).

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict and the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.	2013 – 2014
	Establish a minimum age for employment that is harmonized with the compulsory education age.	2009 – 2014
	Create comprehensive prohibitions against additional specific hazardous activities and clearly establish a minimum age of 18 for hazardous work.	2009 – 2014
	Ensure that relevant child labor laws and regulations apply equally to children working in all sectors, regardless of the size of the establishment.	2011 – 2014
	Ensure that the laws criminalize child pornography, internal child trafficking, and the use of children in illicit activities in all provinces.	2011 – 2014
Enforcement	Collect and publish enforcement data for child labor violations and criminal violations of laws prohibiting the worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2014
	Provide the funding necessary to adequately hire, train, and equip inspectors and investigators to enforce laws prohibiting the worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2014
	Allow labor inspectors in all provinces to conduct inspections at any time, without notice, and to assess penalties without restriction and interference.	2011 – 2014

Table 9. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor, Including its Worst Forms (cont)

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Ensure that fines and penalties are sufficient to deter employers from violating child labor laws.	2014
	Ensure that vigilance committees are established and active throughout Pakistan.	2013 – 2014
	Ensure that referral mechanisms exist among labor investigators, law enforcement officers, and child protection services in all provinces.	2014
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the education and development policies of the Federal and Provincial Governments.	2014
Social Programs	Ensure that all children have access to free and compulsory education as required by law.	2011 – 2014
	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on child labor.	2013 – 2014
	Increase the size and scope of government programs to reach children working in the worst forms of child labor, including domestic work, bonded child laborers, and victims of human trafficking.	2009 – 2014
	Implement programs to raise awareness of and provide assistance to children used by non-state militant groups to engage in armed conflict.	2011 – 2014
	Conduct child labor surveys at the federal and/or provincial levels.	2009 – 2014

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