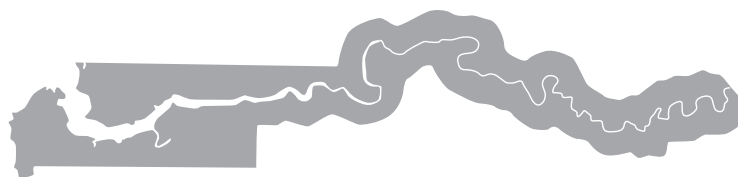


In 2014, The Gambia made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Government's Ministry of Education continued the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) initiative that provided subsidies to marabouts to support discontinuing the marabouts' practice of forcing students to beg in the streets. In addition, The Gambia Tourism Board (GTB) co-funded the installation of an electronic billboard at Banjul International Airport to warn visitors of the penalties of engaging in child sex tourism. The GTB also held five seminars on child sex tourism for 190 law enforcement officers, tourism industry operators, and members of the public. However, children in The Gambia continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor in street work and commercial sexual exploitation. Gaps in the legal framework persist, such as between compulsory education and minimum working ages. In addition, child labor laws are not effectively enforced, and existing social programs are not sufficient to meet the need.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in The Gambia are engaged in child labor, including in domestic work. Children are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation.(1-3) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in The Gambia.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	36.4 (180,954)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	65.7
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	29.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		70.3

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(4)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from MICS3 Survey, 2005-2006.(5)

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 protecting crops by chasing animals (1, 6)
Industry	Working in carpentry,* masonry,* sewing,* plumbing,*and in metal welding workshops*†(1)
	Domestic work* (1)
	Street work,* including vending* (1, 3)
Services	Scavenging for scrap metal and jewelry at dump sites*(3, 6)
	Taxi and bus attendants*(1)
	Auto mechanics*† (1, 3)
	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-3, 7)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced begging by Koranic teachers* (6, 8-10)
	Forced labor in domestic work and street vending each sometimes as a result of human trafficking* (1, 7, 10)

* 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.

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In The Gambia, it is a common practice to send boys to receive education from Koranic teachers called *marabouts*. Some Koranic students, or *almudus*, are forced by their teachers to beg in the streets for money and food or to do street vending.(1, 8, 10) Some reports indicate that cases of begging forced on *almudus* by *marabouts* have decreased as a result of increased enforcement and a government cash transfer program.(1, 2, 7) However, evidence suggests that instead of requiring *almudus* to beg, many *marabouts* now force students to sell items on the street. *Almudus* in rural areas also work for long hours doing farm work.(1) In addition, the commercial sexual exploitation of children is a serious problem in The Gambia. Children are exploited in brothels and motels in tourist areas.(1, 11, 12)




Children, mostly girls, are trafficked within The Gambia for domestic work and commercial sexual exploitation, including in the tourism industry. Children of both sexes are trafficked to neighboring countries such as Senegal, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, and Benin, where they are subject to commercial sexual exploitation, domestic work, and forced street vending.(1, 7, 10) Children are trafficked from other West African nations, including Ghana and Senegal, to The Gambia for commercial sexual exploitation.(7, 9, 10, 13)

Article 30 of the Constitution mandates free compulsory education; however, families are often required to buy books and uniforms for their children as well as contribute to the school fund, which is used to fund certain activities in the school.(2, 14, 15) The Government consistently waived school fees for girls in order to increase their enrollment.(2, 8)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

The Gambia 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	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	16	Article 43 of the Children's Act(16)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 44 of the Children's Act; Article 46 of the Labor Act(16, 17)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Articles 44-45 of the Children's Act(16)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 20 of the Constitution; Article 41 of the Children's Act(15, 16)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Articles 30 390 of the Children's Act; Articles 28 and 56 of the Trafficking in Persons Act; Article 13 of the Tourism Offenses Act (16, 18, 19)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 26, 27, 29-31, 32, and 34 of the Children's Act; Articles 7-9 of the Tourism Offenses Act; (16, 19)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Articles 31, 36, and 37 of the Children's Act (16)

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

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Article 59 of the Children's Act (1, 16)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	12	Article 30 of the Constitution (15)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 30 of the Constitution; Article 18 of the Children's Act (15, 16)

*No conscription (20)

In The Gambia children are required to attend school only until the age of 12 at which point they are permitted under Sections 51 of the Children's Act to work as an apprentice in the informal sector. This standard makes children ages 13 to 15 that are not engaged in apprenticeships in the informal sector, particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor as they are not required to be in school but are not legally permitted to work either.(2, 15, 21) However, under Section 43 of the Children's Act children at age 16 are permitted to do light work; light work means work that does not jeopardize the health or safety of the child and does not interfere with school attendance.(16) Although The Gambia has laws that criminalize the use and solicitation of children for sexual intercourse, in November 2014, President Jammeh declared the government would impose the death penalty for the crime of raping a child, which should take effect September 2015.(22)

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
Department of Social Welfare (DSW)	Combat forced child labor and coordinate the handling of trafficking victims, working closely with social welfare officers in police units.(1, 7) Monitor, through the operation of 5 Neighborhood Watch Groups, suspected cases of child abuse or child sexual exploitation in urban areas near tourist sites such as resorts. Operate a 24-hour hotline to address human trafficking and maintain a database of persons suspected of pedophilia or child trafficking in collaboration with the GTB. Maintain an electronic database that contains information on cases related to child protection, including those involving labor and human trafficking violations.(10, 11)
Child Protection Alliance (CPA)	Promote child rights and child protection.(13, 23, 24) Raise awareness about child exploitation and build capacity for prevention and protection. Include government departments, civil society organizations, UN agencies, NGOs, child and youth organizations, and bilateral institutions.(13)
Gambia Tourism Board (GTB)	Combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children in tourist areas.(1) Maintain a database of persons suspected of pedophilia or child trafficking in collaboration with the DSW.(11, 25)
Tourism Security Unit (TSU)	Prevent unaccompanied children from entering tourist areas and patrol tourist areas for child labor violations and criminal violations, such as commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. Has a dedicated child protection division.(1, 7, 25)
Gambia Police Force's Child Welfare Unit	Oversee all situations involving children.(24) Work with the DSW, the CPA, and other agencies and non-governmental organizations to assess and identify children engaged in the worst forms of child labor.(3)
Community Child Protection Committees (CCPCs)	Raise awareness and report cases of labor issues, including child labor, to the authorities. DSW currently operates 66 CCPCs in the country.(3, 7, 10, 26)
Neighborhood Watch Groups	Monitor for cases of child exploitation. Five existing groups established by DSW in urban areas near tourist resorts.(7) DSW provides members with allowances and cell phone credit.(7)

Law enforcement agencies in The Gambia took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, the Department of Labor, under the Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment (MOTRIE) employed 4 labor inspectors to enforce all labor laws, including those related to child labor. This number of inspectors is insufficient for the size of the population.(6) A source indicated that inadequate transportation and fuel posed a challenge for inspectors.(1)

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Children found during labor inspections are referred to the Department of Social Welfare (DSW). The Department of Labor reported it did not receive any child labor complaints during the year.(1, 6) Early in 2014, the Government tripled the budget for the DSW's child protection efforts.(7)The Department of Labor carried out unannounced inspections two or three days per week. However, the Government did not make labor inspection data accessible to the public, including the total number of inspections, sectors where inspections were conducted, notification system for inspections, type and quality of inspections, violations found, citations issued, and the severity of penalties applied.(1, 6)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2014, the Gambia Tourism Board (GTB) co-funded the installation of an electronic billboard at Banjul International Airport to warn visitors of the penalties of engaging in child sex tourism. In addition, the GTB held five seminars on child sex tourism to 190 law enforcement officers, tourism industry operators, and members of the public.(10) The Gambia Tourism Board (GTB) trained 4 police officers and 32 individuals on human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. (6) In 2014, research found no information on DSW's and the Gambia Police Force's child protection and human trafficking awareness trainings or seminars for police, immigration officers and social workers.(6)

In 2014, the Government reported investigating one human trafficking case. The Government reported there were no human trafficking prosecutions or convictions during the year.(10) Research found no information about the number of investigators responsible for enforcing criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor. (10)

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
Department of Social Welfare (DSW)	Coordinate government efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor. Headed by a Director and assisted by social welfare officers.(1)
National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAATIP)	Coordinate, administer, and monitor the implementation of the Trafficking in Persons Act and sharing information among law enforcement agencies. Convene monthly meetings of the National TIP Taskforce.(1, 7, 25)

The National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons' (NAATIP) budget for the year was \$33,000.(1, 10) This amount was sufficient to cover salaries and administrative costs, but not enough to cover the costs of training NAATIP and law enforcement officials.(1, 7) In addition, the Agency does not have its own vehicles and must rely on the Ministry of Justice.(1, 24) The Agency is developing a database to monitor human trafficking and hired a data officer to gather and compile information from all organizations involved in anti-trafficking efforts; however, data was not available during the reporting period. NAATIP investigators lack specialized training on the worst forms of child labor.(1)NAATIP officials visited several border posts and trained police, immigration, and customs officials and community leaders on human trafficking issues.(10)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Employment Strategy (2010–2014)	Aims to eliminate child labor through awareness raising, promotion of primary education, implementation of ILO Convention 182, and collection and analysis of child labor data.(27)
Code of Conduct of the Gambia Tourism Authority for the Protection of Children (year?)	Seeks to raise awareness within the tourism industry and among tourists of commercial sexual exploitation of children.(1, 28) At the beginning of the peak tourism season, new hotel staff were trained on the Code.(1)
National TIP Action Plan (2012–2016)	Aims to combat human trafficking. Initially drafted by the Ministry of Justice and recently updated by NAATIP. NAATIP is responsible for implementation.(7)

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor (cont)

Policy	Description
Program for Accelerated Growth and Employment (2012–2015)	Calls for improved social protection for children and access to education, as well as to prevent child labor, including its worst forms.(3, 29)
UNDAF (2012–2016)	Promotes improved access to education and develop child labor policies.(30)
Education Policy (2004–2015)	Outlines goals to expand school infrastructure, increase school enrollment, and improve the quality of education.(31)
The Gambia and Senegal Trafficking MOU	Coordinates the two countries' efforts to address human trafficking through meetings, information sharing, improved laws, and prevention, protection, and assistance activities. Includes the participation of 6 UN agencies and aims to develop a National Social Protection Policy and Operational Plan. (7, 32) Signed in December 2013.(7, 32)

The Government signed an MOU in 2013 that established a partnership on social protection that will focus on integrating existing social protection mechanisms in the country that target vulnerable groups, such as child laborers.(42) This partnership also aims to develop a National Social Protection Policy and Operational Plan in 2014.(42) The Government also was in the process of developing a National Children's Policy and a National Plan of Action to Combat Sexual Exploitation of Children to follow the 2004 Plan. However, neither plan has been approved.(3)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of The Gambia funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor, including its worst forms (Table 8).

Table 8. Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Combating Child Sex Tourism Project	CPA project, funded by ECPAT Netherlands, to raise awareness about the commercial sexual exploitation of children and Tourism Offences Act among TSU, hoteliers, travel agencies, and other tourism stakeholders and provide them with Code of Conduct of the Gambia Tourism Authority for the Protection of Children.(33)
Street Children Center‡	DSW (with support from international organizations, foreign NGOs, and local businesses) drop-in center in Talinding Kunjang that provides medical care, food, and counseling to street children, including human trafficking victims and al mudus.(1, 7, 25, 26) Center tries to prevent the children from returning to begging. (8, 34) Government allocated \$11,500 for the functioning of the center and another \$6,666 for its renovation during the reporting period.(7, 35)
Conditional Cash Transfers to the Majaalis‡	Ministry of Education (with support from NGOs) conditional cash transfer program that gives marabouts approximately \$2.56 per month and food rations for each student on condition that they not force students to beg.(7) Ministry of Education provides teachers for English, mathematics, and science. Government reports that more than a thousand children are benefiting from program and plans to expand into more rural areas.(1, 35, 36)
Shelter for Trafficking Victims	DSW (with support from international organizations, foreign NGOs, and local businesses) 24-hour shelter in Bakoteh for victims of human trafficking, including children. Accommodates 48 people and provides guests with food, medical care, and counseling.(7) Over 1,000 children have received services since it opened in 2006.(7)
One-Stop Center	DSW (with the support of NGO partners) center, opened in 2013, that provides medical care, counseling, and legal services to human trafficking victims and victims of gender-based violence.(7)
Family Assistance Hotline‡	DSW 24-hour hotline through which trafficking victims may reach social welfare officers.(7)
Protect Project	USDOS-funded ChildFund project to develop national child protection system for prevention of and response to child trafficking in The Gambia. Has trained 120 government officials on child trafficking since its inception.(37)
Eliminating the Worst Forms of Child Labor in West Africa and Strengthening Sub-Regional Cooperation through ECOWAS I & II	USDOL-funded regional projects to assist ECOWAS to strengthen its role in combating the worst forms of child labor in the West Africa sub-region.(38, 39)
Children on the Move	DSW participates in 3-year, 12-country regional project, funded by a Swiss NGO, which provides services to child trafficking victims, including repatriation.(1, 7)

‡ Program is funded by the Government of The Gambia.

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Although The Gambia has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem and reach all children vulnerable to human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and work on the street. Furthermore, existing programs do not target children working in agriculture and domestic work.

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

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified in that would advance the elimination of child labor, including its worst forms, in The Gambia (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Adopt legislation that increases the age of compulsory education to 16 so that it is commensurate with the minimum age for work.	2010 – 2014
Enforcement	Provide sufficient staffing and financial resources for effective inspection and enforcement efforts.	2013 – 2014
	Establish a mechanism for public reporting on the number of child labor complaints, investigations, and prosecutions.	2012 – 2014
Coordination	Ensure the NAATIP is provided with adequate resources.	2012 – 2014
	Provide necessary specialized training for appropriate agency officials in the NAATIP.	2012 – 2014
Government Policies	Continue monitoring and evaluating the impact of the National Education Policy on child labor, including the average number of hours worked per child.	2010 – 2014
	Approve the National Children's Policy and the National Plan of Action to Combat Sexual Exploitation of Children.	2012 – 2014
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children working in agriculture to inform policies and programs.	2013 – 2014
	Expand existing programs to prevent child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and work on the street.	2010 – 2014
	Conduct research into children in agriculture and domestic work .	2009 – 2014
	Ensure that children can complete primary school by subsidizing or defraying the cost of books, uniforms, and other fees.	2010 – 2014

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