

In 2014, Morocco made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs established a mechanism to coordinate efforts to address child labor, conducted a study on the nature and extent of children labor on small farms, and supported significant efforts to combat child labor in the Marrakesh-Tensift-Al-Haouz region. However, children in Morocco are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and forced domestic work, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. The Government continues to delay approving legislation that would protect children employed in domestic work and the number of labor inspectors is insufficient to effectively enforce child labor laws.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Morocco are engaged in child labor, including in the raising livestock. Children in Morocco are also engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation and forced domestic work, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. The Moroccan High Commission for Planning's 2013 labor survey indicates a steady decline in the incidence of child labor over the last decade.(1-3) Child labor occurs in urban areas, although it is primarily a rural phenomenon and is concentrated in areas where education levels remain low, especially in four regions: Chaouia-Ouadigha, Doukkala-Abda, El Gharb-Chrarda-Beni Hssen, and Marrakech-Tensift-Al Haouz.(3) A 2014 study found that child labor is prevalent on small farms throughout Morocco.(4) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Morocco.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	10-14 yrs.	4.5 (150,178)
Attending School (%)	6-14 yrs.	82.9
Combining Work and School (%)	10-14 yrs.	0.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		98.9

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2012, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(5)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Enquête sur la Population et la Santé Familiale, 2003-2004.(6)

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	Planting and harvesting argan,* grain,* olives,* vegetables,* and fruit* (4)
	Herding goats,* cattle* and sheep* (4)
	Farming, including raising goats, cattle and sheep for the production of fertilizer* and cattle for the production of milk* and butter* (1, 4, 7, 8)
	Fishing†* (1, 3, 7)
	Forestry,*activities unknown (1, 7)
Industry	Construction,*activities unknown (13-15)
	Weaving textiles†* (1, 9)
	Production of artisanal crafts* (3, 7, 10)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Services	Domestic work (1, 3, 10-14)
	Maintenance and repair of motor vehicles (1, 15)
	Street peddling (1, 16)
	Metallurgy* (1, 17)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor†	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-3, 9, 14, 18-20)
	Forced domestic work, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1-3, 9, 11, 13, 20-23)
	Forced labor in the production of artisanal crafts and construction* (9)

* 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.




Children, primarily boys, are engaged in commercial sexual exploitation.(18, 19) This problem is most prevalent in popular sites such as Agadir, Marrakech, and Tangier, which attract tourists from the Persian Gulf and Europe.(19, 24)

Despite strong enrollment rates in the early years of primary school, school dropout rates remain a problem, with reports stating that as many as 65 percent of children had failed to complete the 9 years of compulsory schooling as of the most recently researched period, 2011–2012.(3, 25) During research conducted by Morocco’s High Commission for Planning in 2013, some children stated that they did not attend school because they were obligated to work in order to contribute to the family income. Children also drop out due to lack of adequate transportation and prohibitively expensive costs associated with attending school.(3, 4) Irrelevant school curricula, and lack of security in the school environment are also factors that cause children to drop out, thus increasing their vulnerability to child labor.(1, 26)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

Morocco 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 of Morocco 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	15	Article 143 of The New Labor Code of 2004 (27)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Article 147 of The New Labor Code of 2004 (27)
Prohibition of Hazardous Occupations or Activities for Children	Yes		Hazardous Child Labor List; Decree No. 2-10-183 (28)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Article 467 of The New Labor Code of 2004 (27)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Article 503 of the Penal Code (29)

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

Standard	Yes/No	Age	Related Legislation
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Hazardous Child Labor List; Decree No. 2-10-183 (28)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	18	Royal Decree of 9 June 1996 (30)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Law No. 04-00 (31)
Free Public Education	Yes		Law No. 04-00 (31)

* No conscription (30)

The minimum age protections in the Labor Code do not apply to children who are self-employed, or work in traditional artisan or handicraft sectors for businesses with less than five employees, or those who work in private farms and residences (including domestic work), leaving children vulnerable to exploitation.(9, 27, 32)

The Government continued for another year to refine a draft bill that would provide protections for child domestic workers. If passed, the law would prohibit the employment of underage children in domestic work and determine the working conditions, terms, and conditions for domestic work.(32) The continued failure to pass this bill puts children engaged in domestic work at risk of exploitative labor conditions.(1, 3, 33)

The Labor Code allows children under age 15 to perform certain types of agricultural work, and children ages 16 to 17 to perform agricultural work at night.(27) Local stakeholders and the ILO Committee of Experts report that the fine amounts set forth in the labor code for companies that employ children in hazardous work are inadequate to act as an effective deterrent.(32, 34)

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 Employment and Social Affairs' (MOESA) Child Labor Task Force	Enforce child labor laws and oversee programs on child labor. Employ labor inspectors in 51 sectors across Morocco; one inspector in each sector dedicated to child labor.(3, 9, 35, 36) Establish satellites in nine regional centers throughout the country to provide occupational health and safety services, administer social security, organize labor inspections and employment services.(3)
Ministry of the Interior	Enforce prohibitions on prostitution and other exploitative crimes involving minors as established in the Penal Code.(36)
Ministry of Justice and Liberties (MOJ)	Prosecute criminal offenses against children, such as commercial sexual exploitation and child trafficking.(35)
MOJ's Child Labor Units	Process cases involving women and children within the court system.(1) Comprises 88 units as of 2014.(20)

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

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2014, the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs (MOESA) employed 478 labor inspectors and coordinated with the ILO-IPEC to provide 80 inspectors and ministry staff with training on child labor.(3) However, enforcement of child labor laws remains weak due to an insufficient number of labor inspectors, systemic corruption, as well as a lack of financial resources.(3, 34) The number of inspectors is insufficient to effectively enforce child labor laws. Official procedures involved with processing child labor violations require the participation of several agencies per case, placing insurmountable administrative burdens on labor inspectors.(1)

During a meeting with USDOL representatives in 2014, MOESA officials confirmed that labor inspections are conducted unannounced and can be conducted in any place of business.(3, 37) However, current law prohibits labor inspectors from entering

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private farms and urban residences. Children, even as young as age 6, work in these spaces and are therefore not protected by current labor law.(4, 9)

MOESA reported that during the first trimester of 2014, inspectors identified 357 child laborers, 78 of whom were under age 15. Of these 78 children, 75 were removed from work, while 197 out of 357 children ages 15 to 17 were removed from hazardous work. Although the Government does not provide comprehensive information regarding the number of prosecutions and the amount of penalties, the MOJ reported having prosecuted 37 individuals for employing child domestic workers.(3, 20)

Morocco has a toll-free hotline for child victims of violence, but the number of calls related to child labor is unknown.

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2014 The Ministry of Justice and Liberties (MOJ) reported that in 2014, 153 cases of sexual exploitation of a minor for profit were investigated, and 5 cases of prostitution of a minor were investigated. However, the MOJ did not provide information on prosecutions, convictions, or sentencing.(20) The MOJ also reported that officials in law enforcement and judicial ministries had received training on enforcing criminal child labor law.(3)

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
MOESA's Office for the Fight Against Child Labor*	Coordinate policies and efforts to combat child labor.(3, 37) Provide guidance and limited funding to NGOs working against child labor.(1) Provided \$166,000 to NGOs in 2014.(3)
Ministry of Solidarity, Women, Family and Social Development (MSWFSD)	Coordinate the implementation of the National Plan of Action for Children (PANE) (2006–2015). Coordinate the Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children.(20) Establish continuity of child protection efforts, increase access to education, and eliminate child labor.(36, 38)
Inter-Ministerial Delegation for Human Rights	Establish policies that promote child protection.(3)
Ministry for Moroccans Resident Abroad and Migration Affairs	Coordinate efforts to reduce migrant vulnerability to child labor. Promote access to public education facilities for migrant children, decreasing their vulnerability to child labor and human trafficking.(3)
The National Observatory for Children's Rights	Register complaints related to child welfare and refer them to labor inspectorate units and law enforcement officials. Operate a toll-free hotline available to child victims of violence, including commercial sexual exploitation.(1) Operate 84 Child Reception Centers that provide services to child victims of violence, sexual abuse or neglect.(3, 36) These centers assisted 1,067 children in 2014.(39)
Ministry of National Education and Vocational Training (MONEVT)	Provide education and job training to former child workers, including former child domestic workers.(20)

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

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
MSWFSD's PANE (2006–2015)*	Establishes policies that promote children's health, protection, civic participation, and education. Supported by UNICEF.(3, 38)
MSWFSD's Integrated Public Policy on the Protection of Children	Promotes an interdisciplinary approach to analyze the scope of services that prohibit; prevent; and respond to abuse, exploitation, and violence against children. Designates MOESA as the coordinating body for the fight against child labor.(3, 20)
National Migration Strategy*	Establishes policies that promote human rights-based approach to migration. Facilitates integration of legal immigrants. Provides services, including expanding access to public education facilities for migrant children, thus decreasing their vulnerability to child labor and human trafficking.(1, 3, 20)
UNDAF (2012–2016)*	Promotes education, health, and socioeconomic development in an effort to alleviate poverty. Focuses on providing equal access to education for vulnerable children.(39, 40)

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

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2014, the Government of Morocco 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
Promise Pathways: Reducing Child Labor Through Viable Paths in Education and Decent Work (2014–2017) [†]	\$5 million USDOL-funded, 4-year program to reduce child labor in Morocco by increasing access to education for 5,500 children and youth (ages 6 to 17) and by providing livelihood and other social services to 1,000 siblings, parents, and caregivers age 18 and older in the Marrakech-Tensift-Al-Haouz region. Conducts policy analysis and raises awareness on the hazards of child labor. Builds the capacity of relevant government and nongovernment stakeholders to better address the issue. Targets children engaged in the production of handicrafts, domestic work, and agriculture.(3, 41, 42)
Study on Children and Sexual Violence in Morocco [†]	Funded by the Government of France, a joint UNICEF and Human Rights Council of Morocco program that studied sexual violence against children in Morocco, including forced prostitution.(3, 18, 20)
Study on Children working on Small Farms in Morocco [†]	USDOL-funded, joint MOESA and ILO-IPEC program that analyzed the extent and nature of child labor on small farms in Morocco.(3, 4)
Anti-Trafficking in Persons Advocacy [†]	USDOS-funded, Government of Morocco and UNODC initiative that provided support for anti-human trafficking efforts. Led workshops to support anti-trafficking in persons legislation, including the prohibition on trafficking children.(3) Provided training to the MOI and the MOJ on legal frameworks, identification and assistance to victims, and investigative techniques.(3)
Rural Social Service Support [*]	Royal family-funded-Mohammed V Foundation for Solidarity program to provide funding to NGOs that improve living conditions for very low-income populations.(3)
National Vocational Programs [‡]	MONEVT program that provides education and training to at-risk youth; specific programs address factors that contribute to reduction of child labor.(1, 3)
"Tayssir," Conditional Cash Transfer Program ^{‡*}	2014–2015 budget of \$235 million, MONEVT program that provides direct cash transfers of between \$7 and \$16 a month, to qualifying families if the children meet school attendance criteria. Provides transportation and student housing through a program with Entraide Nationale.(3) Aims to increase school enrollment and reduce dropout rates, particularly in rural areas.(17, 36, 43, 44) Succeeded in reducing public school dropout rates among its beneficiaries by 68 percent and increasing school enrollment by 10 percent during the reporting period.(1, 3, 45, 46)
Child Protection Centers [‡]	Childhood Division of the Ministry of Youth and Sport program that provides social and educational services to minors referred by the courts. Serves victims of abuse, child laborers, and street children, among others. Aims to strengthen children's ties with their families and society.(47, 48)
Child Protection Units [‡]	Government program that provides temporary shelter for street children, including former child domestic workers. Offers medical, legal, and psychological services. Based in Casablanca, Essaouira, Marrakech, Meknès, and Tangier. An initiative of the PANE policy.(14, 36, 49)
Social Welfare Program [*]	UNDAF program that addresses education, including equal access to education, especially for vulnerable children. Also addresses health and socioeconomic development of children.(1)
National Initiative for Human Development Support Project Phase II (2011–2015) [*]	\$2 billion World Bank-funded, government program that increases access to basic services, such as schools; provides enhanced income-earning opportunities, such as microcredit for women; and supports improved civic participation to assure sustainability.(3, 20, 49–51)
Taking Action Against Child Domestic Work in Africa and the Union of Mediterranean Countries (2011–2015)	\$1.3 million Government of France-funded, 5-year project to combat child domestic labor.(52)

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

[†] Program was launched during the reporting period.

[‡] Program is funded by the Government of Morocco.

Although the Government of Morocco has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem.

NGOs that work with child laborers and at-risk children report having received only a small portion of their expected funding from the Government. They stressed that government support is not sufficient to carry out their activities, and most were required to rely on private and international donations.(1, 3) NGOs also reported that their government counterparts lack the necessary qualifications to effectively address child labor issues, especially in hospital and court units.(3, 25)

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There continue to be data gaps regarding the nature and extent of child labor in Morocco. While the Government expressed support to work with the ILO-IPEC to carry a national child labor survey, there have been insufficient efforts to begin implementation of the survey.(1, 3, 7)

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

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the continued prevention of child labor, including its worst forms, in Morocco (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Recommended
Legal Framework	Ensure that the law's minimum age provisions apply to all children.	2009 – 2014
	Amend legislation to increase the penalties for those who employ children under age 18 in hazardous work.	2012 – 2014
	Ensure that children ages 15 to 18 are protected from involvement in dangerous agricultural work.	2009 – 2014
	Ensure that laws prohibit child trafficking.	2014
Enforcement	Increase the number of labor inspectors responsible for enforcing laws related to child labor in order to provide adequate coverage of the workforce.	2012 – 2014
	Publish the number of calls related to child labor made to the toll-free hotline for child victims of violence.	2014
	Address issues of corruption affecting the labor inspectorate and increase financial resources.	2014
	Publish information on the number of prosecutions and the amount of penalties imposed for violations of child labor and criminal laws on the worst forms of child labor.	2012 – 2014
	Streamline child labor enforcement procedures among government agencies.	2013 – 2014
Government Policies	Take measures to ensure children's safety in schools and remove barriers to children's access to education.	2013 – 2014
	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into policies.	2014
Social Programs	Conduct research to determine the types of activities carried out by children working in farming, construction, and forestry to inform policies and programs.	2013 – 2014
	Conduct a comprehensive study of children's activities to determine whether they are engaged in or at risk of involvement in child labor.	2013 – 2014
	Expand existing programs so that they address the scope of the child labor problem.	2014
	Assess the impact that existing programs may have on child labor and institute programs to address the worst forms of child labor in domestic work and street peddling.	2013 – 2014
	Ensure Government staff who carry out work related to child labor are qualified.	2013 – 2014
	Ensure adequate funding for NGOs that carry out programs to combat child labor.	2014

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