

In 2013, São Tomé and Príncipe made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Government agencies developed a list of hazardous activities along with a plan of action to raise awareness on the worst forms of child labor; however the plan is still under review. Children in São Tomé and Príncipe are engaged in child labor in domestic service and street work. The Government continued to fund social programs for families with vulnerable children, but current government programs do not target all sectors in which child labor occurs.



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I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in São Tomé and Príncipe engage in child labor in domestic service and in street work.(1-8) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in São Tomé and Príncipe.

Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5-14 yrs.	15.4 (6,218)
Attending School (%)	5-14 yrs.	68.8
Combining Work and School (%)	7-14 yrs.	13.7
Primary Completion Rate (%)		104.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2013, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2014.(9)

Source for all other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from Multiple Cluster Survey 2, 2000.(10)



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	Activities unknown* (8)
	Fishing,* activities unknown (1, 8)
Industry	Carpentry, woodworking (1, 2, 8)
Services	Domestic service (1-8)
	Street work, including begging (1-3, 8)
Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡	Commercial sexual exploitation* (11)

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

‡ Child labor understood as the worst forms of child labor *per se* under Article 3(a) – (c) of ILO C. 182.

On the island of São Tomé, some children who work in domestic service are as part of a *Mina Quia*, the cultural practice of sending a child to work in another family's home. Limited evidence suggests that many children who work in a *Mina Quia* are victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence.(8) However, many children still attend school while in a *Mina Quia*.(8)




II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

São Tomé and Príncipe has ratified most key international conventions concerning child labor (Table 3).

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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 relevant 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	14	Law on Individual Labor Contracts; Law 6/92 (8, 12)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	18	Law on Individual Labor Contracts, Law 6/92 (8, 12)
List of Hazardous Occupations Prohibited for Children	No		
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Constitution; Penal Code (3, 13-15)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	Yes		Penal Code (15)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	No		Penal Code (15)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Penal Code (15)
Minimum Age for Compulsory Military Recruitment	N/A*		
Minimum Age for Voluntary Military Service	Yes	17	Constitution (16, 17)
Compulsory Education Age	Yes	15	Basic Education System Law (6, 7)
Free Public Education	Yes		Constitution; Basic Education System Law (8, 13)

* No conscription or no standing military.

The Government does not have a hazardous list of occupations; however, during 2012–2013, a government team developed a list of hazardous activities along with a plan of action to raise awareness on the worst forms of child labor. The Government is reviewing this proposed list and continues to work towards final approval.(18)

The Penal Code does not protect children ages 14 to 18 from commercial sexual exploitation.(11, 16, 19) It does prohibit a person from engaging in a sexual act with a child younger than 14 as well as directing a child younger than 14 to engage in a sexual act.(14) The Penal Code also explicitly penalizes engaging in or facilitating sexual acts with a child under 14 for profit or gain.(14)

While the compulsory education age in São Tomé and Príncipe is 15 years old, limited evidence suggests that some schools do not provide education through grade six.(11) Children who stop attending school before reaching the minimum age for employment are especially vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, as they are not in school but may not legally work either.

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 Health and Social Affairs' Department of Labor Inspection (MSSA)	Enforce labor laws, including those regarding child labor; members are from other government agencies, including immigration officials, the police, tax administration officials, social workers, and members of the social security administration.(1, 5-7) Department of Labor Inspection receives complaints about regarding the worst forms of child labor.(5)
Ministry of Justice and Public Administration Affairs	Enforce criminal laws related to the worst forms of child labor.(6, 7)
Immigration, Police, Tax Administration, Social Work, Social Security, and others	Address child labor issues in ad hoc inspections teams from listed agencies.(18)

In 2013, research could not determine whether law enforcement agencies in São Tomé and Príncipe took actions to combat child labor, including its worst forms.

Limited evidence suggests that coordination between the Department of Labor Inspection and other agencies is a significant challenge in São Tomé and Príncipe; however, there is a referral system for children to the Department of Social Services within the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs (MSSA).(18)

Labor Law Enforcement

The Department of Labor Inspection forms ad hoc teams for labor exploitation cases. The teams include 15 labor inspectors who work throughout the country.(18, 20) During the reporting period, no inspections were carried out involving child labor, and no complaints of child labor were received.(18)

In 2013, the Ministry of Justice and Public Administration Reforms received a budget of \$15.3 million; however, it is unknown how much of the budget was allocated for investigations.(18) The MSSA lacks basic equipment for conducting inspections and daily operations; it is housed in a single office, has outdated and malfunctioning computers, and does not have a vehicle.(5, 7)

Criminal Law Enforcement

No cases of child labor were found during the reporting period, therefore no penalties or citations were issued.(18)

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
Directorate of Social Protection and Solidarity	Carry out support programs for families to ensure children attend school and administer the Deprived Mothers program (<i>Mães Carenciadas</i>). Currently working on a draft of worst forms of child labor list.(8)

As of 2012 the Government was working to form a tripartite committee to combat child labor; however, it is unknown if this committee has been formed. In 2013, the Government organized workshops and seminars to raise awareness and coordinated efforts to advance a list of the worst forms of child labor.(21) A delegation from São Tomé and Príncipe led by the Minister of Health and Social Affairs and representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, labor unions, and NGOs participated in the third Global Conference on Child Labor in Brazil.(18)

V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

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

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Table 7. Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Action Plan and List of Worst Forms of Child Labor (TIP)	Includes a regulatory framework with public policies aimed at the eradication of child labor. Created from São Tomé and Príncipe 's South-South partnership with Brazil and the United States. (22) The National Action Plan and List of Worst Forms of Child Labor are currently awaiting approval and have not yet been implemented.(21)
Community of Portuguese-Speaking countries (PALOP)	São Tomé and Príncipe and other members of the Community of Portuguese-speaking countries have approved four target areas in which they will focus their efforts to combat child labor: the exchange of information and experiences, awareness-raising campaigns, use of statistical methodologies to collect child labor data, and technical cooperation and training.(23-25)

VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR

In 2013, the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe 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
Centers that provide shelter, education, and skills training*‡	Government-run centers with land, buildings, social work staff, and school stipends for approximately 250 at-risk children, including street children and orphans.(5-7, 26)
Disadvantaged Mothers Program (<i>Mães Carenciadas</i>)*‡	Government program that provides microcredit loans to families in need. Also offers subsidies for children of mothers who are heads of household to attend school up until 15 years of age, the compulsory age for basic education in São Tomé and Príncipe.(8)
XIV Government Program (<i>Programa do XIV Governo</i>)*	Government program that seeks to provide more training and educational opportunities, improve the quality of education, provide infrastructure for education and provide technical and professional training, all in basic and secondary education.(8)
Education for All Program*‡	Government program includes comprehensive data collection to better understand the current state of education in the country, teacher training, and a campaign to sensitize parents to the importance of education.(27)
Program for low-income families*‡	Program funded by UNICEF and the Governments of São Tomé and Príncipe to help poor mothers and help low-income families keep their children in school.(28)
Registry to document undocumented minors‡	Ministry of Justice and State Reform and UNICEF campaign to create a registry to document undocumented minors, allowing further inspection by the General Inspection of Labor in cases of child labor.(8)
Media campaign	Government media campaign against child labor, which continued throughout the reporting period.(3)

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

‡ Program is funded by the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe

The Government does not have programs that specifically target children domestic service and street work.

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 São Tomé and Príncipe (Table 9).

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Laws	Approve the draft list of hazardous occupations in which children younger than age 18 are prohibited from working.	2009 – 2013
	Amend the law to protect all children younger than age 18 from commercial sexual exploitation, including prostitution and pornography.	2009 – 2013
Enforcement	Address the resource needs of the MSSA to effectively conduct inspections and enforce child labor laws.	2009 – 2013
Coordination	Establish the tripartite committee to combat child labor to coordinate government efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor.	2010 – 2013

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Government Policies	Adopt the National Action Plan and List of Worst Forms of Child Labor to address the worst forms of child labor, particularly for children working in agriculture, domestic service, and commercial sexual exploitation.	2009 – 2013
Social Programs	Assess the impact of existing education programs and programs for low-income families on child labor.	2011 – 2013
	Ensure all children have access to schools.	2010 – 2013
	Conduct research to determine the activities carried out by children in agriculture, to inform policies and programs.	2013
	Develop new and expand existing programs to reach more children in the worst forms of child labor, particularly those in domestic service and street work.	2009 – 2013

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