

## MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT – EFFORTS MADE BUT REGRESSION IN PRACTICE THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT

In 2020, Uganda made minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. Uganda launched new policies to address the worst forms of child labor, including an action plan to combat trafficking in persons and a child protection policy that prioritizes the elimination of child labor. In partnership with international stakeholders, Uganda also began implementing the Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Supply Chains in Africa program, specifically targeting child labor in coffee and tea production. However, despite new initiatives to address child labor, Uganda is assessed as having made only minimal advancement because it continued a practice that delays advancement to eliminate child labor. The government failed to prosecute, convict, and sentence public officials, including police and immigration officers, who participate in or facilitate the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking. Children in Uganda are subjected to the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in gold mining. Gaps in the legal framework persist, including inadequate laws regulating the minimum age for employment and hazardous work. In addition, the lack of a centralized supervisory authority along with inadequate funding, training, and resources, hampered the capacity of law enforcement agencies to conduct child labor inspections and investigations. Finally, the government has not taken steps to implement its National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labor.



## I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Uganda are subjected to the worst forms of child labor in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-3) Children also perform dangerous tasks in gold mining. (4-6) Table I provides key indicators on children's work and education in Uganda.

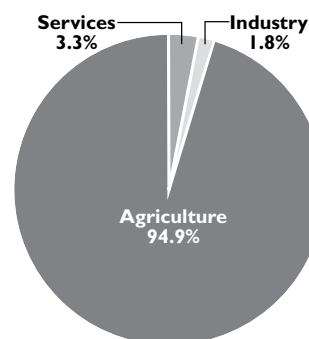
**Table I. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

| Children                      | Age     | Percent          |
|-------------------------------|---------|------------------|
| Working (% and population)    | 5 to 14 | 22.2 (2,525,644) |
| Attending School (%)          | 5 to 14 | 85.1             |
| Combining Work and School (%) | 7 to 14 | 25.9             |
| Primary Completion Rate (%)   |         | 52.7             |

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2017, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (7)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Labour Force Survey (LFS), 2016–17. (8)

**Figure I. Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14**



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                             | Cultivating and harvesting cocoa, coffee, corn, tea,† tobacco,† rice,† sugarcane,† and vanilla, and acting as scarecrows in rice fields (9-15)   |
|   | Working with livestock, including herding cattle† (2,10,14-17)   |
|   | Fishing,† including catching, smoking,† and selling fish, and paddling† and loading boats† (2,10,15,16,18,19)  |
|   | Producing charcoal (10)  |
|   | Collecting grasshoppers (2,15-17)  |
| Industry                                | Construction,† including making and laying bricks (2,14-16)  |
|   | Quarrying stone† and mining gold, sand,† tin, and salt (2,4,10,15,16,18,20-22)   |
|   | Manufacturing, including in steel rolling mills† and carpentry workshops† (2,10,16)  |
| Services                                | Domestic work† (1,2,14,16-18,23,24)  |
|   | Street work, including vending,† begging,† car washing,† working as porters,† scavenging,† and collecting and selling scrap metal (1,2,10,15-17,25,26)   |
|   | Working in hair salons, hotels,† restaurants,† bars,† and video halls† (2,10,14-16,25)   |
|   | Collecting firewood for sale (27)  |
|   | Producing alcoholic beverages (2,16,28)  |
| Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡ | Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,2,15-17,25,29)   |
|   | Forced labor in agriculture, fishing, cattle herding, working in bars and restaurants, begging, brickmaking, mining, stone quarrying, street vending, and domestic work, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (3,16,17,28,30) |
|   | Use in the production of pornography and pornographic performances (2,16,31)   |
|   | Use in illicit activities, including smuggling, burglary, and car and house break-ins, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2,10,15,16)  |

† 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.

Both boys and girls are vulnerable to human trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation in Uganda. (3) Although child victims of human trafficking have typically been trafficked internally from rural to urban areas, 2019 reports highlighted the trafficking of children to countries such as Kenya and Somalia. (32-34) Some children have also been trafficked as far as the Middle East and South Central Asia. (35) Children from rural areas, especially the Karamoja region, are vulnerable to human trafficking, and at times willingly migrate to Kampala and other urban centers, where they engage in begging, street vending, and domestic work, or are victims of commercial sexual exploitation. (1,3,34) NGO and media reports have indicated that children from Karamoja are sold in open-air markets or through intermediaries and forced into domestic work, begging, cattle herding, and commercial sexual exploitation. (2,3,36,37) Well-organized networks of traffickers run by "elders" force children into street begging and, for girls, into commercial sexual exploitation. These children are often physically abused for failing to collect an established amount of money. (3) Children from neighboring countries are exploited in forced agricultural labor and commercial sexual exploitation in Uganda. (3)

The results from the last National Labour Force Survey, published in 2018, show that an estimated 2,057,000 children are involved in child labor. The government completed collection of new data on child labor during the reporting period, but the data were pending validation as of January 2021. (15,38) However, government officials and civil society organizations indicate that as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, child labor rates increased after a government-imposed lockdown and the closure of schools from March 2020 through October 2020. The prevalence of children working in markets, on farms, in mines, and as domestic workers, as well as children used for commercial sexual exploitation, increased during the reporting period. (15) Girls were found to be working in gold mines in Karamoja in northern Uganda, and boys grazed cattle in Rwenzori in western Uganda. Meanwhile, children in the Bidibibi refugee settlement in northwestern Uganda were engaged in hazardous labor, including working on farms, and as domestic workers, which may include working long hours and physical, verbal, and sexual abuse. (15,39)

Although the law provides for free compulsory education, the cost of school supplies, uniforms, and other materials often prohibits children from attending school. (2,6,18,40-42) Research also found that children

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experience physical and sexual abuse at school by teachers and classmates. (31) Furthermore, a lack of teachers and school infrastructure, and poor transportation in remote rural areas, have created barriers to children's access to education. (2,16,43) Although schools reopened in October 2020, this was only for children taking national exams, which accounted for only 1.2 million out of 15 million students. The Government of Uganda implemented alternative instruction strategies such as printed materials, and radio and televised instruction, but poor and vulnerable children were less likely to be able to access the alternative resources. (15)

Although laws on free compulsory education apply equally to refugee children, refugee children are often not enrolled in or not attending school. Girls, especially those in refugee camps, are at particular risk of being out of school and vulnerable to exploitation due to pressure to undertake domestic duties, gender-based violence, and harassment. (35,44,45) In addition to the same obstacles faced by Ugandan children, refugee children may face discrimination from fellow pupils and teachers due to their refugee status, and they may also experience language barriers. (46) For a number of refugee settlements, such as Nakivale, schools are often located far from where refugees live and are inadequately equipped to meet the needs of the large student population. (47)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Uganda 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 (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Uganda's legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including the minimum age for work.

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor**

| Standard  | Meets International Standards | Age | Legislation   |
|---|-------------------------------|-----|---|
| Minimum Age for Work  | No                            | 16  | Section 7 of the Children (Amendment) Act (48)  |
| Minimum Age for Hazardous Work  | No                            | 18  | Section 7 of the Children (Amendment) Act; Section 32 of the Employment Act; Regulations 5 and 8 of the Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations (48-50)                                     |
| Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children | Yes                           |     | Regulation 6 and the First Schedule of the Employment (Employment of Children) Regulations; Section 7 of the Children (Amendment) Act (48,50)   |
| Prohibition of Forced Labor   | Yes                           |     | Sections 2 and 5 of the Employment Act; Sections 3–5 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (49,51)  |
| Prohibition of Child Trafficking  | Yes                           |     | Section 8 of the Children (Amendment) Act; Sections 2–5 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (48,51)   |
| Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children                     | Yes                           |     | Section 8A of the Children (Amendment) Act; Sections 2–5 of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act; Sections 131 and 139 of the Penal Code; Section 14 of the Anti-Pornography Act (48,51-53) |

**Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor (Cont.)**

| Standard  | Meets International Standards | Age | Legislation  |
|---|-------------------------------|-----|--|
| Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities                   | Yes                           |     | Article 5(d) of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act; Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) Act (51,54) |
| Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment                  | Yes                           | 18  | Article 52(2)(c) of the Defence Forces Act (55)  |
| Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military | N/A*                          |     |  |
| Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups         | Yes                           |     | Section 5(b) of the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (51)  |
| Compulsory Education Age  | No                            | 13‡ | Section 2 and 10(3)(a) of the Education Act (40)   |
| Free Public Education   | No                            |     | Section 10(3)(a) of the Education Act (40)   |

\* No conscription (55)

‡ Age calculated based on available information (40)

Although the Children (Amendment) Act establishes age 16 as the minimum age for work, the Employment Act enables children as young as age 12 to work. (48,49) The law's minimum age protections do not apply to children working without a formal employment relationship, which does not conform to international standards that require all children to be protected by the minimum age to work. (49) Although Uganda has a list of hazardous occupations prohibited to children under age 18, Section 8 of the Employment of Children Regulations permits a commissioner to allow children age 12 and older enrolled in an educational training or apprenticeship program to engage in hazardous work, in violation of international standards. (50) In 2018, the government began a process to harmonize the country's legal provisions and bring the allowable minimum age for work in line with international standards. Completion of the process was expected in 2020, but due to the pandemic, the government now expects to finalize the revisions in December 2021. (15,16) The process will require approval from the cabinet, parliament, and the president before enactment. (2)

Uganda's Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act complies with international standards on prohibiting child trafficking. However, the Children (Amendment) Act conflicts with the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act in that it defines child trafficking as requiring force, fraud, or coercion. (29,48,51)

Children in Uganda are required to attend school only up to age 13. (40) This standard makes children ages 13 to 15 vulnerable to child labor because they are not required to attend school but are not legally permitted to work. Finally, although Uganda has adopted policies to extend universal education through secondary level, by law free education is limited to the primary level. (40,56)

### III. ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established institutional mechanisms for the enforcement of laws and regulations on child labor (Table 5). However, gaps exist within the authority of enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate enforcement of their child labor laws.

**Table 5. Agencies Responsible for Child Labor Law Enforcement**

| Organization/Agency                                       | Role   |
|---|--|
| Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (MGLSD) | Sets labor inspection priorities and inspection guidelines. (57) Includes the Industrial Court, which judges labor dispute cases that are referred by labor officers. (10) Operates the Uganda Child Helpline known as Sauti. (58)   |
| Ministry of Internal Affairs                              | Enforces criminal laws on the worst forms of child labor: The Uganda Police Force's Child and Family Protection Unit investigates forced labor cases, the Special Investigations Division and the Anti-Human Trafficking Desk investigate cases related to human trafficking and the use of children in illicit activities, and the Sexual Offenses Desk investigates commercial sexual exploitation. (10) |

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

| Organization/Agency                | Role   |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Ministry of Local Government       | Oversees district labor officers who refer cases to the Industrial Court. (10) Deploys community development officers at the district level when district labor officers are not available. (27) |
| Directorate of Public Prosecutions | Prosecutes criminal cases related to the worst forms of child labor that are referred by the Uganda Police Force. (59)   |

**Labor Law Enforcement**

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Uganda took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the authority of the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (MGLSD) that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including the ability to assess penalties.

**Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

| Overview of Labor Law Enforcement  | 2019    | 2020           |
|--|---------|----------------|
| Labor Inspectorate Funding   | Unknown | \$320,000 (15) |
| Number of Labor Inspectors   | 81 (2)  | 168 (15)       |
| Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties  | No (2)  | No (60)        |
| Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors  | Yes (2) | Unknown (15)   |
| Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor  | N/A     | N/A            |
| Refresher Courses Provided   | Yes (2) | Unknown (15)   |
| Number of Labor Inspections Conducted  | Unknown | 421 (15)       |
| Number Conducted at Worksite   | Unknown | Unknown (15)   |
| Number of Child Labor Violations Found   | Unknown | Unknown (15)   |
| Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed                  | Unknown | Unknown (15)   |
| Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected                        | Unknown | Unknown (15)   |
| Routine Inspections Conducted  | Yes (2) | Yes (15)       |
| Routine Inspections Targeted   | Yes (2) | Yes (15)       |
| Unannounced Inspections Permitted  | Yes (2) | Yes (60)       |
| Unannounced Inspections Conducted  | Yes (2) | Yes (15)       |
| Complaint Mechanism Exists   | Yes (2) | Yes (15)       |
| Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services | Yes (2) | Yes (15)       |

During the pandemic, the labor inspectorate continued to carry out inspections but inspectors reported facing increased difficulties due to the lack of personal protective equipment, fears of interacting with the public, and restrictions on movement imposed by the government for both public and private transportation. (15)

Uganda doubled the number of its labor inspectors, but it was not clear whether new inspectors received initial training during the reporting period. The MGLSD indicated that 50 labor inspectors received training during the reporting period, but details about those trainings were not available. (15) Research has shown that training in general is not sufficient because labor inspectors lack the expertise to follow through on child labor cases. Labor unions have noted that the number of inspections is insufficient and that inspections are only carried out when complaints are received. (2) Labor inspectors in Uganda have the authority to inspect private farms and residences, but the MGLSD has noted that inspectors rarely exercise this authority despite the prevalence of child domestic labor in the country. (2)

Uganda is signatory to ILO Convention 81 that requires labor inspection to be placed under the supervision and control of a central authority. (61,62) Research found, however, that coordination among the various agencies responsible for child labor law enforcement remains a challenge because labor officers are under district government authority, rather than under authority of the MGLSD. (63,64) For example, although under the Employment Act labor officers are required to submit monthly reports, in practice, the MGLSD does not receive labor reports from districts. (57) Uganda now has 168 labor officers to cover its 135 districts, but due

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to budgetary limitations and a lack of labor inspection prioritization at the district level, these officers did not have sufficient funds to regularly carry out child labor inspections. (2,15,39,43) Research also found that follow-up inspections rarely happen due to insufficient funding at the district level. (57) Given the lack of resources for inspections, local civil society organizations often train labor inspectors and even assist them in conducting inspections. (16,28)

Research found that child labor cases rarely reach the Industrial Court because of poor monitoring and the court's limited access to communities outside urban centers, where child labor is most likely to occur. (62) Finally, the number of labor inspectors is still likely insufficient for the size of Uganda's workforce, which includes more than 15 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 40,000 workers in less developed countries, Uganda would employ about 377 inspectors. (65-68) The government did not provide comprehensive information on its labor law enforcement efforts for inclusion in this report.

### **Criminal Law Enforcement**

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Uganda took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of the criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including official complicity in the commercial sexual exploitation of children.

**Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor**

| Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement  | 2019    | 2020         |
|---|---------|--------------|
| Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators                                       | No (2)  | Yes (15)     |
| Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor                        | N/A     | N/A          |
| Refresher Courses Provided  | No (2)  | Yes (15)     |
| Number of Investigations  | Unknown | Unknown (15) |
| Number of Violations Found  | Unknown | Unknown (15) |
| Number of Prosecutions Initiated  | Unknown | Unknown (15) |
| Number of Convictions   | Unknown | Unknown (15) |
| Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor            | Unknown | Yes (34)     |
| Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services | Yes (2) | Yes (15)     |

Law enforcement agencies and civil society organizations have acknowledged that immigration officials are complicit and involved in human trafficking, including the trafficking of children. (3,32,34) Research has also found that some police are allegedly complicit in the commercial sexual exploitation of child refugees. Other high-level government officials own or are associated with labor recruitment companies and networks of traffickers run by "elders" that engage in child trafficking. (3,32,34,66) The involvement of government officials in trafficking networks has significantly impeded operations against the worst forms of child labor. (3) Uganda's State House Anti-Corruption Unit, which works on human trafficking issues on an ad hoc basis, has initiated some investigations related to official complicity in human trafficking but has not made any of these reports public, nor has it arrested any government officials. (3,32) During the reporting period, the government carried out minimal active measures to investigate, prosecute, convict, and sentence officials complicit in facilitating the worst forms of child labor. The Judicial Service Commission launched investigations against two high court judges for complicity in irregular adoption of children after the judges were sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury. (34,69) However, charges have yet to be filed, and details of the investigation have yet to be made public. (39) One officer of the Uganda People's Defense Forces was arrested and charged with child trafficking. (34) By April 2021, the officer was out on bond. Courts typically take up to 2 or 3 years to complete a prosecution. (39)

Due to the pandemic, officials indicated that a nationwide shutdown complicated criminal law enforcement efforts related to the worst forms of child labor. Nonetheless, during the reporting period, officials filed 146 charges of child trafficking, with most of these cases involving commercial sexual exploitation of children. (34) One suspect was convicted of child trafficking and sentenced to 12 years in prison and at least 12 children were



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rescued from situations of sex trafficking after police raided 3 supposed sex parties. The government credited improved training of prosecutors with an increase in trafficking in persons cases prosecuted compared to the previous year. (34) Despite these actions, the government did not provide comprehensive data regarding its efforts to combat the worst forms of child labor for inclusion in this report.

Reports have also indicated that investigators rarely follow up on domestic child labor claims. When child domestic workers complain to their employers about not being paid, the employers report the children to the police for theft and police subsequently treat them as criminals rather than as victims who have not been paid for their work. (2)

According to the government, police officers identify and refer street children to probation officers and civil society organizations to place children in homes and shelters and do not keep them in detention facilities; however, some children may have been housed in juvenile rehabilitation centers because shelters are frequently full. Police intermittently rounded up street children, housed them in children's homes and shelters for several days while social workers completed background checks and family tracing, and then returned them to their families. (70,71) Research found that street children, including potential human trafficking victims and child laborers, have faced conflict with local authorities; however, law enforcement noted in 2020 that police are less likely to detain or beat them, in part as a result of an increased awareness about child protection issues. (29,37,39,67,72)

Research indicates there is not a sufficient number of criminal law enforcement officials responsible for investigating child labor. (10) Training of criminal investigators is insufficient, in part due to regular staff turnover and transfers. Some criminal law enforcement officials were not aware of key human trafficking laws, and some officers misclassified cases, conducted insufficient investigations, or encouraged victims to accept payment from their traffickers to settle cases. (3,28,32)

#### **IV. COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT EFFORTS ON CHILD LABOR**

The government has established mechanisms to coordinate its efforts to address child labor (Table 8). However, gaps exist that hinder the effective coordination of efforts to address child labor, including inactive mechanisms.

**Table 8. Key Mechanisms to Coordinate Government Efforts on Child Labor**

| <b>Coordinating Body</b>                                      | <b>Role &amp; Description</b>  |
|---|--|
| National Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labor | Coordinates child labor issues and implements the National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labor. Led by MGLSD, includes members from several ministries, the Child and Family Protection Unit, trade unions, development organizations, civil society, and media agencies. (16) The committee was reconstituted during the reporting period and was expected to resume activities by December 2020. (15)                               |
| Uganda Parliamentary Forum for Children                       | Multi-partisan body of Members of Parliament focused on issues affecting Ugandan children, particularly those in vulnerable situations, including street children. (2) Research was unable to determine whether the forum was active during the reporting period.  |
| Anti-Human Trafficking National Taskforce                     | Coordinates government efforts on human trafficking. Led by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, includes 30 members from government agencies and civil society. (73) Met monthly during the reporting period and began implementation of the second National Action Plan (NAP) for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons in Uganda 2019–2024. Also organized Uganda's second annual commemoration of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons. (15) |
| National Child Protection Working Group                       | Monitors the quality of services provided to orphans and vulnerable children. Led by MGLSD, includes members from five government agencies and civil society organizations. (10) Met quarterly in 2020 and also held intermittent working meetings focused on child protection and improving collaboration between the government and civil society organizations. (15)  |
| National Children Authority                                   | Works to ensure that member organizations integrate child labor concerns into their policies and budgets. Members include 10 government agencies. (10) The government had yet to fully operationalize the National Children Authority during the reporting period, but in its limited capacity, it carried out various awareness-raising campaigns focusing on children's rights, including child labor. (15)                                    |

### V. GOVERNMENT POLICIES ON CHILD LABOR

The government has established policies related to child labor (Table 9). However, policy gaps exist that hinder efforts to address child labor, including implementation.

**Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor**

| Policy  | Description   |
|---|---|
| National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labor 2017/2018–2021/2022               | Aims to reduce child labor in Uganda by 4 percent by 2022 through strengthening governmental frameworks on child labor; increasing coordination, expanding access to social services for children, enhancing research and advocacy, and improving the Monitoring and Evaluation System for the elimination of child labor. (2,74,75) The government acknowledged that it had not fully launched the plan and indicated that it intends to implement the NAP in 2021. (15) In addition, because of the decentralized nature of inspections in Uganda, some districts have developed their own labor action plans that do not always reflect MGLSD priorities. (62)                           |
| National Child Policy 2020†   | Launched in 2020 under MGLSD, seeks to coordinate the protection of child rights, focusing on abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence. Includes prioritization of the elimination of child labor and was launched with an implementation strategy through 2025. (76,77) The plan seeks to outline the responsibilities of all stakeholders in implementing child-related policies and focuses on four basic children's rights: survival, development, protection, and participation. (76,77)   |
| National Social Protection Policy   | Aims to reduce poverty and socioeconomic inequalities for inclusive development by targeting vulnerable people, including child laborers. (78) The government continued implementing the plan during the reporting period but did not take any specific efforts to address children or child labor. (15)  |
| National Action Plan for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons in Uganda 2019–2024†        | Officially launched in 2020, the second NAP builds on lessons from the previous plan and focuses on developing sustainable systems and structures to prevent trafficking in persons; improving capacity for the identification, protection of and support for victims; improving investigations and prosecutions; and establishing cooperative relationships with international stakeholders. The launch of the plan included the release of the National Referral Guidelines for Management of Victims of Trafficking, which seek to improve coordination among stakeholders responsible for providing services to victims as well as those responsible for prosecuting criminals. (79,80) |
| National Multi-Sectoral Coordination Framework for Adolescent Girls (2017/2018–2021/2022) | Coordinates government, civil society, and community efforts to provide services and programs that focus on issues affecting adolescent girls ages 10 to 19, including exploitation in domestic work and gender-based violence in schools. (16,81) The government implemented multiple campaigns as part of the framework during the reporting period, including efforts to address menstrual hygiene health and management in schools. (15)  |

† Policy approved during the reporting period.

‡ The government had other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (82,83)

### VI. SOCIAL PROGRAMS TO ADDRESS CHILD LABOR

In 2020, the government funded and participated in programs that include the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor (Table 10). However, gaps exist in these social programs, including the adequacy of efforts to address the problem in all sectors.

**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor**

| Program   | Description  |
|---|--|
| Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Supply Chains 2018–2022 (ACCEL Africa)* | Although launched in 2018, formally implemented by the ILO and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands in Uganda in 2020 in partnership with the Government of Uganda and the Federation of Ugandan Employers. The \$29 million project targets child labor in coffee and tea supply chains in the Mbale, Kabarole, Buikwe, Hoima, and Bushenyi districts. (15) During the first year of implementation, the project focused on conducting a baseline survey of child labor prevalence in the coffee and tea sectors, mapping child labor monitoring systems, and conducting child-labor awareness campaigns in the target districts. (15)  |
| Uganda Child Helpline (Sauti)†  | Funded primarily by UNICEF with in-kind contributions from MGLSD, comprises District Action Centers and a physical call center located in Wakiso that screens all calls on reported cases of child abuse. Caseworkers at District Action Centers follow up directly on cases of child abuse, including child labor and exploitation, assigned to them by the National Call Center and liaise with local authorities to address the reported incidents. (58) During the reporting period, the hotline identified 81 victims of child trafficking, including 29 victims of domestic servitude and 4 cases of international child trafficking. The hotline also identified 72 cases of child labor. (15,34) |
| Realizing Livelihood Improvement Through Savings and Education 2019–2021†                         | NGO-implemented program in partnership with the government that focuses on addressing child labor issues in tobacco-growing regions. (31,85) During the COVID-19 pandemic, the program provided personal protective equipment to health centers in Hoima and Kikube districts as well as conducted trainings for 140 local child protection committee members. (15)  |



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**Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor (Cont.)**

| Program                                   | Description  |
|---|--|
| Back Home Campaign for Karamoja Children† | Government program that rescues Karamoja street children working in Kampala and places them in rehabilitation centers in Wakiso and Moroto districts before reuniting them with their families. (16,86) In 2020, the program ceased focusing on resettlement efforts and instead implemented campaigns to encourage children to stay in school. Nonetheless, funds from the program were still used in early 2020 to assist in removing 202 children from the streets of Kampala. (15) |

\* Program was launched during the reporting period.

† Program is funded by the Government of Uganda.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (87-89)

Although Uganda has implemented programs that address child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem, particularly in mining and commercial sexual exploitation. For example, the government lacks its own facilities to house child victims of labor exploitation or human trafficking, and must instead rely on local community services organizations. (2,15) Furthermore, the MGLSD has noted that programs are concentrated in specific districts and thus do not cover child labor issues throughout the country. (2)

**VII. SUGGESTED GOVERNMENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE CHILD LABOR**

Based on the reporting above, suggested actions are identified that would advance the elimination of child labor in Uganda (Table 11).

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor**

| Area            | Suggested Action  | Year(s) Suggested |
|-----------------|---|-------------------|
| Legal Framework | Ratify the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.  | 2013 – 2020       |
|                 | Ensure that all children are protected by a consistent minimum age for work law, including children who do not work under a formal employment relationship.   | 2016 – 2020       |
|                 | Ensure that only minors age 16 and older who have received adequate, specific instruction or vocational training are permitted to perform hazardous work, and that their health, safety, and morals are fully protected.  | 2017 – 2020       |
|                 | Align the definition of child trafficking in the Children (Amendment) Act with international standards by ensuring that force, fraud, or coercion are not required elements in child trafficking cases.   | 2019 – 2020       |
|                 | Ensure that the law requires free, compulsory education up to age 16 so that it is commensurate with the minimum age for work.  | 2009 – 2020       |
| Enforcement     | Publish information on trainings offered to inspectors, worksite inspections conducted, number of child labor violations found, number of child labor penalties imposed, and number of penalties collected.   | 2013 – 2020       |
|                 | Enhance the authority of the labor inspectorate by enabling it to assess penalties and ensure the inspectorate is using its existing authorities to inspect private farms and homes and to conduct sufficient routine and unannounced inspections.              | 2017 – 2020       |
|                 | Provide sufficient training to labor inspectors, initial training to new criminal investigators, and refresher training to existing investigators, to ensure that officials understand and are able to identify, categorize, and investigate child labor cases. | 2019 – 2020       |
|                 | Provide the labor inspectorate with sufficient funding and resources at the district level to ensure that inspectors are present in all districts and are able to carry out their duties.   | 2013 – 2020       |
|                 | Improve coordination between national and district-level child labor enforcement bodies to ensure that relevant data are shared and child labor inspections are prioritized across the country.   | 2019 – 2020       |
|                 | Ensure that child labor cases reach the Industrial Court and that penalties are assessed by addressing monitoring issues and improving the court's reach outside urban centers.   | 2019 – 2020       |
|                 | Significantly increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.   | 2009 – 2020       |
|                 | Publish disaggregated data on number of investigations, violations, prosecutions initiated, convictions achieved, and penalties imposed for the worst forms of child labor.   | 2017 – 2020       |
|                 | Significantly increase efforts to investigate, prosecute, and, as appropriate, convict and sentence government officials for their role in the worst forms of child labor, including child trafficking.   | 2019 – 2020       |

**Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor (Cont.)**

| Area                | Suggested Action  | Year(s) Suggested |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Enforcement         | Strengthen mechanisms for following up on child labor claims and referring street children, including potential human trafficking victims, to social services providers, and prevent these children from being detained and abused by police.   | 2015 – 2020       |
|                     | Increase the capacity of criminal law enforcement agencies to respond to the worst forms of child labor by dedicating more personnel to worst forms of child labor cases and improving training for criminal law enforcement staff.   | 2020              |
| Coordination        | Ensure that coordinating mechanisms are active and sufficiently funded to be able to operate and carry out their mandates.  | 2019 – 2020       |
| Government Policies | Ensure that district labor action plans reflect the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development's priorities.   | 2018 – 2020       |
|                     | Ensure that existing policies addressing child labor are implemented as intended.   | 2018 – 2020       |
| Social Programs     | Enhance efforts to eliminate barriers and make education accessible for all children by eliminating costs for supplies, uniforms, and materials; addressing physical and sexual violence; and ensuring sufficient teachers, infrastructure, and transportation in rural areas.  | 2012 – 2020       |
|                     | Enhance efforts to ensure that refugee children have equal access to educational opportunities by addressing gender-based violence and exploitation, harassment, and refugee discrimination; accommodating the language needs of refugee students; and ensuring that there are well-equipped schools accessible to refugee settlements. | 2012 – 2020       |
|                     | Ensure the availability of shelters for victims of child labor, including child trafficking victims.  | 2017 – 2020       |
|                     | Expand existing social programs to address the scope of the child labor problem, particularly in mining and commercial sexual exploitation, in all areas of the country.  | 2009 – 2020       |

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