

In 2020, Zambia made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The government significantly increased funding for its labor inspectorate and finalized its second National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor. It also reinvigorated key coordinating bodies, including the National Steering Committee on Child Labor and the National Coordinating Committee for Children. However, children in Zambia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. The Education Act does not specify a compulsory education age, and human trafficking laws do not meet international standards because they require threats, the use of force, or coercion to establish the crime of child trafficking. In addition, labor inspectors do not routinely inspect non-registered businesses in which child labor is known to occur.



I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Zambia are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in agriculture and commercial sexual exploitation, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1,2) Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture. (1) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Zambia.

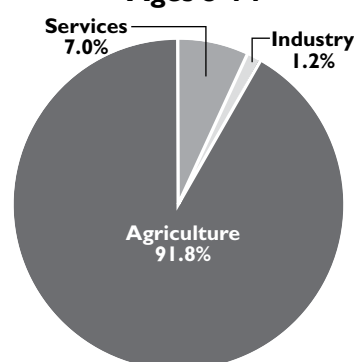
Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working (% and population)	5 to 14	28.1 (992,722)
Attending School (%)	5 to 14	65.2
Combining Work and School (%)	7 to 14	27.6
Primary Completion Rate (%)		80.0

Source for primary completion rate: Data from 2013, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (3)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's Analysis of Statistics from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), 2008. (4)

Figure 1. 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	Work in the production of cotton,† tobacco,† and other cash crops (1,5-7)
	Raising and herding† cattle (1,7,8)
	Fishing,† working on boats, and cutting and smoking fish (6,9)
	Production of charcoal† (6,10)
	Loading of timber (1)
Industry	Mining of ore and gems, including manganese (1,10,11)
	Work in quarries, including carrying heavy loads,† and crushing stones† (1,6,8)
Services	Domestic work (1)
	Street work, including begging and vending (1)

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

Sector/Industry	Activity
Categorical Worst	Commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (1,2,12)
Forms of Child Labor‡	Forced labor in agriculture, herding, construction, domestic work, mining, and textile production, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (2,11,12)

† 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.

Child labor in Zambia is most prevalent in the agricultural sector and includes forced labor, sometimes resulting from human trafficking. (1,11,13) Traffickers exploit children from rural areas in Zambia for domestic work in cities and in agriculture. (2,14) Sources reported the exploitation of children for cattle herding, which sometimes involves parents repaying debts by sending children, particularly young boys, to work as cattle herders for the people to whom they are indebted. (1) Orphans and street children are particularly vulnerable to child trafficking. (2,15) In addition, traffickers exploit children from neighboring countries for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. (2)




Illegal mining syndicates, called *jerabo* gangs, in the Copperbelt province employ children for mining activities, including forcing children to load trucks with stolen copper ore. (2,16) In January 2019, three children, ages 11, 13, and 15, were killed during an accident at a manganese mine in which they were working. (17,18) Commercial sexual exploitation of children is common, particularly along Zambia's borders and transit corridors. (2,12) Research indicates that school closures resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic have expanded the vulnerability of children to the worst forms of child labor, including forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. (12) The government has conducted regular Labor Force Surveys and published the results in 2011, 2014, and 2016, but these surveys did not include child labor data. The government included a child labor module in its 2018 Labor Force Survey, but these results are not yet available to the public. (19,20)

Long distances to schools, particularly in rural areas, an insufficient number of teachers and classrooms, and costs of learning materials are barriers to education. (1,11,21,22) The inability to access birth certificates and the high prevalence of early marriage of girls increase the vulnerability of children to child labor; children without birth certificates are not able to enroll in school, and once girls marry, they sometimes leave school before reaching the minimum working age and engage in work outside the household. (15,23,24)

II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Zambia 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 Zambia’s legal framework to adequately protect children from the worst forms of child labor, including an undefined age range for compulsory education and lack of a list of activities considered to be light work, as required by Zambian law.

Table 4. Laws and Regulations on Child Labor

Standard	Meets International Standards	Age	Legislation
Minimum Age for Work	Yes	15	Article 24 of the Constitution; Articles 16 and 81 of the Employment Code Act (25,26)
Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	Yes	19	Article 83 of the Employment Code Act (26)
Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children	Yes		Prohibition of Employment of Young Persons and Children (Hazardous Labor) Order; Section 137(2)(n) of the Employment Code Act (26,27,28)
Prohibition of Forced Labor	Yes		Articles 14 and 24 of the Constitution; Articles 143, 261, and 263 of the Penal Code; Article 3 of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act; Section 8 of the Employment Code Act (25,26,29,30)
Prohibition of Child Trafficking	No		Article 17 of Amendment to the Constitution; Article 143 of the Penal Code; Articles 2 and 3 (1-4) of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act; Sections 80 and 83 of the Employment Code Act (25,26,29,30)
Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children	Yes		Articles 143 and 144 of the Penal Code; Sections 80 and 83 of the Employment Code Act (26,30)
Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities	Yes		Sections 80 and 83 of the Employment Code Act (26)
Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment	Yes	18	Article 14 of the Defence Act (31)
Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military	N/A*		
Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups	Yes		Article 3 of the Anti-Human Trafficking Act; Articles 80 and 83 of the Employment Code Act (29)
Compulsory Education Age	No		Article 16 and 17 of the Education Act (32)
Free Public Education	Yes		Article 15 of the Education Act (32)

* No conscription (33)

The law establishes a light work framework for employment of children between ages 13 and 15, but has not identified permitted light work activities. (26,34) Moreover, human trafficking provisions remain inconsistent with international standards because they require demonstration of threats, force, intimidation, or other forms of coercion to constitute a child trafficking offense. (29)

The Education Act requires that the government provide free education up to the ninth grade and stipulates that education is compulsory for children of "school-going age." The Act, however, does not set a specific age or define "school-going age," which may allow children to leave school before they are legally able to work and thereby increase their vulnerability to the worst forms of child labor. (32-35)

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 operations 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 Labor and Social Security (MLSS)	Implements, enforces, and regulates child labor laws. (36) Advises other government agencies on child labor issues and coordinates government efforts to combat child labor through its Child Labor Unit (CLU). (1) The CLU, which falls under the labor inspectorate, carries out inspections related to child labor. (37)
Ministry of Home Affairs	Enforces criminal laws against human trafficking, child commercial exploitation, use of children as soldiers, and use of children in illegal activities. (1)

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

Organization/Agency	Role
Zambia Police Service	Collaborates with the Ministry of Justice to investigate and prosecute child labor cases. (38) Handles the enforcement of laws against human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and the use of children in illicit activities through its Victim Support Unit. (11,39) Through its Child Protection Unit, works with immigration officials and local officials to respond to child trafficking, enforce child labor laws, and remove vulnerable children from the streets, placing them into families, foster homes, or in safe homes. (11)
Ministry of Justice	Prosecutes criminal law enforcement cases related to the worst forms of child labor through its Office of the Prosecutor. (11)
Ministry of Community Development and Social Services	Provides social services to victims of human trafficking or sexual abuse. Operates one government shelter in Luapula province. (2,14)

Labor Law Enforcement

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Zambia took actions to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MLSS) that may hinder adequate enforcement of child labor laws, including human and financial resource allocation.

Table 6. Labor Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Labor Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Labor Inspectorate Funding	\$143,037 (11)	\$281,520 (1)
Number of Labor Inspectors	160 (11)	160 (1)
Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties	Yes (11,26)	Yes (26)
Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors	Yes (11)	Yes (1)
Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor	Yes (11)	Yes (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	Yes (11)	Yes (1)
Number of Labor Inspections Conducted	615 (11)	630 (1)
Number Conducted at Worksite	615 (11)	630 (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations Found	Unknown (11)	1 (1)
Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed	Unknown (11)	1 (1)
Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected	Unknown (11)	1 (1)
Routine Inspections Conducted	Yes (11)	Yes (1)
Routine Inspections Targeted	Yes (11)	Yes (1)
Unannounced Inspections Permitted	Yes (26)	Yes (26)
Unannounced Inspections Conducted	Yes (11)	Yes (1)
Complaint Mechanism Exists	Yes (11)	Yes (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services	Yes (11)	Yes (1)

Although the government increased the budget of the labor inspectorate to \$281,520 during the reporting period, allocated financial resources were likely insufficient to enforce laws related to child labor. (1,40) The MLSS has stated that inadequate resources, including an insufficient budget, limited office space, inadequate training, and a lack of transportation and fuel have prevented it from adequately conducting inspections countrywide. (6,11,35,41,42) The number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Zambia's workforce, which includes approximately 6.9 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 40,000 workers in less developed economies, Zambia would employ about 172 inspectors. (43,44)

The MLSS generally conducts planned labor inspections in registered private institutions only; inspections of unregistered institutions, including at artisanal mining sites, farms, and private homes in which child labor is most common, primarily occur in response to complaints. (35,45,46) The MLSS is conducting community sensitization campaigns and coordinating with local police to build public understanding of the labor inspectorate's role and enforcement mandates to facilitate more inspections of private and unregistered institutions. (46)

Criminal Law Enforcement

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Zambia took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including investigation planning.

Table 7. Criminal Law Enforcement Efforts Related to Child Labor

Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement	2019	2020
Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators	No (11)	No (1)
Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	N/A (11)	N/A (1)
Refresher Courses Provided	No (11)	No (1)
Number of Investigations	5 (14)	Unknown (1)
Number of Violations Found	10 (14)	Unknown (1)
Number of Prosecutions Initiated	6 (14)	4 (1,12)
Number of Convictions	1 (14)	Unknown (1)
Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor	Yes (14)	Unknown (1)
Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services	Yes (11)	Yes (1)

In 2020, the government coordinated with IOM to intercept more than 80 Ethiopian migrants, some as young as age 13, on route to South Africa; however, research could not determine if the migrants had been exploited for forced labor or commercial sexual exploitation. (12) During the reporting period, the government initiated at least four prosecutions for human trafficking related to worst forms of child labor; however, research could not determine if there were additional investigations or violations related to the worst forms of child labor, as the government did not publish disaggregated information on the ages of victims in cases related to human trafficking and other related forms of labor exploitation. (12) Government agencies do not have sufficient financial and human resources to address human trafficking, and standard operating procedures to screen and identify victims remain limited. (14)

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 coordination among agencies.

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

Coordinating Body	Role & Description
National Steering Committee on Child Labor (NSCCL)	Advises and oversees child labor matters, including implementation of hazardous work regulations. Chaired by the MLSS and comprises government representatives, employers, trade unions, and civil society members. (11,38,47) In 2020, NSCCL was reconstituted to oversee the implementation of the second National Action Plan for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor. (1)
District Child Labor Committees (DCLCs)	Respond to child labor complaints at the district level, file complaints to MLSS, and serve as the main referral mechanism for social welfare services in collaboration with the CLU of the MLSS. Comprises the Zambia Police Service; MLSS; the Ministry of Community Development, Mother, and Child Health; and civil society stakeholders. (11) Coordinate with Community Child Labor Committees (CCLC), which operate at the community level to raise awareness and promote mobilization against child labor. DCLCs, along with community-level committees, were active at the local level in 2020. (1)
National Coordinating Committee for Children	Coordinates the implementation of the National Child Policy and government responses to child protection issues, including child trafficking, sexual exploitation of children, and child labor. Led by the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Child Development (MYSCD) in coordination with DCLCs that operate in selected districts. (11) During the reporting period, the MYSCD undertook a reorganization of the committee to promote activity, which entailed revisions of the Committee's terms of reference and an expanded mandate to report on the implementation of international treaties and conventions related to children that the government has ratified. (1)
Inter-Ministerial Committee on Anti-Human Trafficking	Leads efforts to address human trafficking. (48) Chaired by the Ministry of Home Affairs and includes representation from MLSS, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, the Ministry of Local Government, the MYSCD, the Zambia Police Service, the Department of Immigration, IOM, and a number of NGOs. (11) In 2020, the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Anti-Human Trafficking worked on a review of existing legislation and developing a National Policy on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants. (12)

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Overlapping responsibilities and communication lapses among government agencies may hinder coordination and their ability to implement their mandates related to the worst forms of child labor. (6,14)

During the reporting period, the government developed, but has not yet formally launched, a Child Labor Monitoring System (CLMS) to assist in coordinating information gathering, analysis, and dissemination from the community to the ward, constituency, district, provincial, and national-level MLSS office. The CLMS will be integrated into the Labour Market Information System, which is the mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of labor-related policies and programs. (1,49)

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 mainstreaming child labor issues into relevant policies.

Table 9. Key Policies Related to Child Labor

Policy	Description
National Child Labor Policy	Outlines objectives for prevention and elimination of child labor and designates responsible agencies to address child labor issues. (38,50) During the reporting period, the government, in consultation with the ILO and other stakeholders, finalized the second National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labor, which is the implementation strategy for the National Child Labor Policy. (1,51) The government also held awareness-raising campaigns around the World Day Against Child Labor, reaching 3,000 teachers and pupils. (1)
7th National Development Plan (2017–2021)	Outlines Zambia's strategy to promote inclusive economic growth and national development to support Zambia's long-term goal of becoming a "middle income" country, including through the elimination of child labor, by 2030. Seeks to improve access to quality education and reduce poverty by 20 percent by 2021. (52) During the reporting period, the government coordinated with ILO to engage in awareness raising regarding child labor and build capacity of government staff and communities to respond to child labor. (1)
National Youth Policy	Outlines Zambia's strategies to ensure that social programs benefit vulnerable youth, including victims of commercial sexual exploitation and human trafficking. (53) In 2020, MYSCD targeted street children through a Street Children Rehabilitation and Reintegration program under the National Youth Policy, emphasizing skills training for street children, removal of children from streets, and reintegration of street children with guardians and families. (1)
UN's Sustainable Development Partnership Framework (2016–2021)	\$806 million framework that builds upon the previous UNDAF but with a stronger emphasis on partnership. Aims to prevent the worst forms of child labor and protect children. (54) In 2020, the UN and the government provided sensitization of parents, community organizations, and local traditional leaders on decent work, child labor, and COVID-19. (1)

‡ The government has other policies that may have addressed child labor issues or had an impact on child labor. (11,55-57)

During the reporting period, the government finalized its draft of the second National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labor (2018–2022), which will guide the implementation of the National Child Labor Policy. The new action plan promotes social protection systems that address poverty and economic shocks, which contribute to child labor, with attention to the economic fallout from the pandemic; also, it outlines the development of legal and regulatory mechanisms to promote compliance with public policy. (1,58) The government has not yet launched the policy. (1)

The government has a National Employment and Labor Market Policy, which outlines objectives for promoting decent work in Zambia, but the policy does not incorporate strategies for prevention and elimination of child labor. (59) Also, the government has not included child labor elimination and prevention strategies in the Education Policy. (60)

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 programs to address child labor in all relevant sectors.

Table 10. Key Social Programs to Address Child Labor

Program	Description
Social Cash Transfer Program†	Government program to provide funds to families and increase school enrollment. (38,61) As of September 2020, about 700,000 were receiving benefits under the Social Cash Transfer Program. (1) During the reporting period, the government, with support from Child Fund, UNICEF, Red Cross, Plan International, the World Food Program, and other organizations, launched an emergency expansion of the Social Cash Transfer Program to provide cash assistance to families to mitigate the economic hardships resulting from the pandemic. (1) The emergency program provides families with a monthly stipend of approximately \$18, along with nutritional support, and is expected to ultimately reach 249,200 households (around 1.2 million people). (1,62)
Achieving Reduction of Child Labor in Support of Education (ARISE)	Japan Tobacco International and Winrock International joint initiative that seeks to combat the worst forms of child labor in tobacco-growing communities in Brazil, Malawi, Tanzania, and Zambia. (21,63) In 2020, the ARISE project trained eight CCLCs and built the capacity of DCLCs in Kaoma and Nkeyema districts, and developed 15 community action plans to support communities to promote economic empowerment for families and independently continue child labor prevention programs in the future. In addition, an estimated 921 children, including 534 girls, were removed from child labor. (1)
Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe (DREAMS)	\$30 million U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief and USAID-funded project to increase protections for vulnerable adolescent girls and young women through access to health services, including support for HIV prevention and treatment, family planning, care for survivors of gender-based violence, and economic empowerment activities to promote access to a basic income; a total of 177,015 adolescent girls and young women were enrolled in the program in 2020. (1,51,64-28)
EMPOWER: Increasing Economic and Social Empowerment for Adolescent Girls and Vulnerable Women in Zambia (2016–2020)	\$5 million, 4 year, USDOL-funded project implemented by Winrock International to address child labor. (66) The EMPOWER program concluded at the end of 2020; during the year, the program provided training to local District Child Protection committees on child labor prevention and gender equality. (67) A total of 1,740 adolescent girls were provided education or vocational skills training during the life of the project. (58) Additional information is available on the USDOL website .

† Program is funded by the Government of Zambia.

‡ The government had other social programs that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (11,68)

Research indicates that problems with tracking of payments and cash flows within the Social Cash Transfer System resulted in irregular payment disbursements, including delayed and reduced payments, for vulnerable families receiving funds. (1,28) Moreover, an evaluation of the Social Cash Transfer Program found that it resulted in a net increase in child labor, particularly in farm work and cattle herding, because families used funds from the program to expand their agricultural and livestock holdings, which resulted in an increase of children's work activities within the home. Children were also more likely to work excessively long hours and there was no reduction in children's work outside of the home. (69) Although Zambia has programs that target child labor, the scope of these programs is insufficient to fully address the extent of the problem in all relevant sectors, particularly regarding child labor in agriculture, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation.

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 Zambia (Table 11).

Table 11. Suggested Government Actions to Eliminate Child Labor

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Legal Framework	Accede to the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the UN CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict.	2018 – 2020
	Determine list of light work activities for children ages 13 to 15.	2018 – 2020
	Ensure that laws prohibiting child trafficking do not require threats, the use of force, or coercion for an act to be considered child trafficking.	2017 – 2020
	Establish through statutory instrument the "school-going age" for compulsory education, in line with the minimum age for work.	2012 – 2020
Enforcement	Ensure that labor inspectors have sufficient funding and have resources, including vehicles and fuel, office space, and training to enforce labor laws throughout the country.	2010 – 2020
	Increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.	2012 – 2020

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

Area	Suggested Action	Year(s) Suggested
Enforcement	Ensure that inspections cover all areas in which children work, including registered and unregistered businesses.	2010 – 2020
	Institutionalize training for criminal law enforcement investigators, including training for new investigators, training on new laws related to the worst forms of child labor, and refresher courses.	2019 – 2020
	Publish information on criminal law enforcement efforts, including the number of child labor investigations, violations, convictions, and imposition of penalties.	2014 – 2020
	Develop and implement consistent procedures to screen and identify human trafficking victims while ensuring government agencies have sufficient human and financial resources to address human trafficking.	2018 – 2020
Coordination	Improve lines of communication and clarify responsibilities among agencies to improve effectiveness and referrals to social services.	2011 – 2020
Government Policies	Integrate child labor elimination and prevention strategies into the Education Policy and the National Employment and Labor Market Policy.	2013 – 2020
Social Programs	Publish child labor data, including the results of the child labor module of the Labor Force Survey, to inform policies and programs.	2011 – 2020
	Ensure that all children have access to education and are not restricted by long travel distances, auxiliary school costs, lack of birth certificates, or marriage.	2012 – 2020
	Harmonize child labor prevention and elimination measures and improve financial tracking in the Social Cash Transfer.	2020
	Expand existing programs to address the full scope of the child labor problem in all relevant sectors, including agriculture, mining, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation.	2011 – 2020

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