

In 2020, Nigeria made moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. The Nigerian Government continued to support the National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism which helps end use and recruitment of child soldiers by identifying and formally separating children from armed groups, including 209 boys and 6 girls in 2020. In addition, the Nigerian Government hired over 400 new labor inspectors and enacted the National Social Behavioral Change Communication Strategy for Elimination of Child Labor in Nigeria (2020–2023). However, children in Nigeria are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in quarrying granite, artisanal mining, commercial sexual exploitation, and use in armed conflict, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. The Child's Right Act has been adopted by only 25 out of Nigeria's 36 states, leaving the remaining 11 states in northern Nigeria with legal statutes that do not meet international standards for the prohibition of child trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation, and illicit activities. In addition, the minimum age for work in the Labour Act does not apply to children who are self-employed or working in the informal economy.



### I. PREVALENCE AND SECTORAL DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD LABOR

Children in Nigeria are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in quarrying granite, artisanal mining, commercial sexual exploitation, and use in armed conflict, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. (1-5) Table 1 provides key indicators on children's work and education in Nigeria. Data on some of these indicators are not available from the sources used in this report.

**Table 1. Statistics on Children's Work and Education**

| Children                      | Age     | Percent            |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------------------|
| Working (% and population)    | 5 to 14 | 47.5 (Unavailable) |
| Attending School (%)          | 5 to 14 | 76.6               |
| Combining Work and School (%) | 7 to 14 | 39.9               |
| Primary Completion Rate (%)   |         | Unavailable        |

Primary completion rate was unavailable from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2021. (6)

Source for all other data: International Labor Organization's analysis of statistics from Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 5 (MICS 5), 2016–2017. (7)

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     | Production of manioc/cassava, cocoa, rice, and tobacco (2,8)                       |
|                 | Fishing, activities unknown (9)  |
|                 | Herding livestock (8,10)   |
| Industry        | Mining and quarrying of granite and gravel (2,10)                                  |
|                 | Artisanal gold mining and processing (1,8,10,11)                                   |
|                 | Harvesting sand (11)   |
|                 | Construction, including making bricks and carrying construction materials (2,8,10) |
| Services        | Domestic work (2,8,10,12-14)   |
|                 | Collecting money on public buses, washing cars, and automotive repair (8,10,12,13) |
|                 | Street work, including vending, begging, and scavenging (2,8,10,12,13)             |

# Nigeria

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

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

| Sector/Industry                         | Activity  |
|---|---|
| Categorical Worst Forms of Child Labor‡ | Commercial sexual exploitation, including use in the production of pornography, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4,8,12,14,17)   |
|   | Forced labor in begging; domestic work; street vending; textile manufacturing; mining and quarrying gravel, granite, and artisanal gold; and labor in agriculture, including in cocoa; each sometimes as a result of human trafficking (4,8,10,14,18) |
|   | Recruitment of children by non-state armed groups for use in armed conflict and in non-conflict support roles, sometimes as a result of human trafficking (10,19)   |

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

Rapid population growth in Nigeria is driving the “informal” education sector, with several million boys in the north going to Quranic schools known as “*Almajiri*.” The *Almajiri* system includes a component of child labor, with some teachers tasking older children with menial jobs and other children coerced into forced begging. (5,10) Furthermore, these children are highly vulnerable to recruitment by Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa (ISIS-WA), which continued to forcibly recruit and use child soldiers in combat and support roles, and as suicide bombers and concubines. (5) The government does not officially recognize these schools, and students attending *Almajiri* schools are officially considered out of school. In April 2020, the Northern Governors’ Forum of Nigeria unanimously agreed to return all *Almajiri* children to their respective states of origin across the region to stem the spread of COVID-19 and, as of July 2020, more than 40,000 children had been reunited with their families. (10,20)

Benin City, the capital of Edo State, is a major human trafficking hub in Africa, but increased enforcement efforts may have caused some human trafficking rings to shift their focus to other areas of southern Nigeria. (21) Girls from Nigeria are sent to North Africa and Europe for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation. (22-25) Children from West African countries experience forced labor in Nigeria, including in granite and gold mines. (4,5,26)

Despite notable military advances and proclamations of Boko Haram’s defeat by government forces, the group remained a security threat, with escalating attacks by both Boko Haram and ISIS-WA forcing people out of Nigeria’s northeastern regions and new attacks occurring in the Northwest region. These attacks include a December kidnapping of more than 300 schoolboys from Kankara, a city in the northwest state of Katsina. (27-30) These attacks have contributed to the displacement of more than 2 million people, of which 56 percent were children. (30-32)

Although free and compulsory education is federally mandated by the Education Act, little enforcement of compulsory education laws occurs at the state level. School fees are often charged in practice, and the cost of materials can be prohibitive for families. (8,10) When families experience economic hardship, the enrollment of boys is typically prioritized over the enrollment of girls. Other barriers to education include a lack of trained teachers, sexual harassment, inadequate sanitation facilities, poor infrastructure, and fear of abduction or attack by Boko Haram while at school, particularly for girls in the northeastern part of the country. (8,13,26,32,33)

Although there are no nationwide studies providing definitive information regarding the correlation between lack of identity documents and education, some children are not able to attend public schools because they lack birth certificates or other formal forms of identification. This is most common in the northeastern region and rural areas. (10)

Poverty is the main reason that many children do not attend school, and some parents are unable to afford fees, uniforms, and materials. In addition to the lack of funds, parents also need the children’s assistance in household chores and with caring for younger siblings. (10)

## II. LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD LABOR

Nigeria 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 has established laws and regulations related to child labor (Table 4). However, gaps exist in Nigeria'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                            | 12  | Section 59(1) of the Labour Act; Sections 28–29 of the Child's Right Act (34,35)  |
| Minimum Age for Hazardous Work  | Yes                           | 18  | Section 59 (5) and (6) of the Labour Act; Sections 28–29 and 277 of the Child's Right Act (34,35)   |
| Identification of Hazardous Occupations or Activities Prohibited for Children | No                            |     | Sections 59–61 of the Labour Act; Section 28 of the Child's Right Act; Section 23 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act (34-36)              |
| Prohibition of Forced Labor   | Yes                           |     | Sections 13, 22, 24 and 25 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act; Sections 28 and 30 of the Child's Right Act (35,36)                        |
| Prohibition of Child Trafficking  | No                            |     | Section 13 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act; Section 30 of the Child's Right Act (35,36)  |
| Prohibition of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children                     | No                            |     | Sections 13–17 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act; Section 23 of the Cybercrimes Act; Sections 30 and 32 of the Child's Right Act (35-37) |
| Prohibition of Using Children in Illicit Activities                           | No                            |     | Section 19 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act; Sections 25–26 and 30 of the Child's Right Act (35-37)                                     |
| Minimum Age for Voluntary State Military Recruitment                          | Yes                           | 18  | Section 28 of the Armed Forces Act; Section 34 of the Child's Right Act (35,38)   |
| Prohibition of Compulsory Recruitment of Children by (State) Military         | N/A*                          |     |   |
| Prohibition of Military Recruitment by Non-state Armed Groups                 | No                            |     | Section 19 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act (36)  |
| Compulsory Education Age  | Yes                           | 15  | Sections 2 and 15 of the Education Act; Section 15 of the Child's Right Act (35,39)   |
| Free Public Education   | Yes                           |     | Sections 2 and 3 of the Education Act; Section 15 of the Child's Right Act (35,39)  |

\* No conscription (38)

The Child's Right Act (CRA) codifies the rights of children in Nigeria and must be adopted and implemented by each state to become law in its territory. However, only 25 of the 36 states have adopted and implemented the CRA, leaving the 11 remaining states in northern Nigeria with legal statutes that do not meet international standards for the prohibition of child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation. In these 11 states, laws prohibiting child trafficking do not criminalize both domestic and international trafficking or trafficking for the purpose of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation; the offering of a child for prostitution

# Nigeria

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

is not criminally prohibited; and there is no prohibition against the use of children in illicit activities. (35-37,40,41) Furthermore, the CRA upholds certain portions of the Labour Act that are not in compliance with international child labor standards. This includes Section 59, which sets the minimum employment age at age 12 in contradiction to the CRA, which only permits children under age 18 to engage in light work for family members. (34,35) The minimum age for work is lower than the compulsory education age, which may encourage children to leave school before the completion of compulsory education. (34,35,39)

Although the Labour Act forbids the employment of youth under age 18 in work that is dangerous to their health, safety, or morals, it does not establish the types of hazardous activity that are prohibited to children under age 18. (34,42) The National Steering Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor developed a report in 2013 that identified hazardous child labor in Nigeria; however, the government has yet to determine by law or regulation the types of hazardous work prohibited for children. (2,42) The Labour Act also permits children of any age to do light work in agriculture and domestic work if they are working with a family member, which does not meet international standards. Furthermore, the minimum age protections in the Labour Act do not apply to children who are self-employed or working in the informal economy. (34,42) Lastly, children are not excluded from the Terrorism Prevention Act's penalty of life imprisonment for assisting in acts of terrorism. (43)

In early 2020, through the Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labour in Supply Chains in Africa Project, a review was conducted to amend the Labour Standard Bill to include preventive measures against child labor, a federal-level declaration of the minimum age for employment, regulations for the conditions of work for children within the legal working age, and a review of penalty measures for engagement in child labor for persons and corporations. The new Labour Standard Bill is still waiting to be passed into law. (10)

### 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  |
|--|---|
| Labor Inspectorate, Ministry of Labor and Employment   | Deploys labor inspectors across 36 state labor offices and the federal capital territory to enforce federal child labor laws. (8,31,44)   |
| National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP) | Enforces laws against human trafficking and exploitative labor. Coordinates with the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Development and state governments to provide child victims with social services and reunite trafficked children with their families. (8,14,31) Operates hotlines for victims in Abuja and each zonal command center. (21) |
| Nigeria Police   | Enforce all laws prohibiting forced child labor and commercial sexual exploitation. Collaborate with NAPTIP on human trafficking enforcement. (8)   |
| Nigeria Immigration Service  | Collaborates with NAPTIP to enforce laws against child trafficking. (8)   |
| State Taskforce Against Human Trafficking  | Enforces the Edo State Trafficking in Persons Prohibition Law and other laws prohibiting trafficking in persons, and investigates all cases of child trafficking and forced child labor. Includes an Investigation and Security Unit tasked with the prevention and detection of human trafficking cases. (26,45)                                     |

#### **Labor Law Enforcement**

In 2020, labor law enforcement agencies in Nigeria took action to combat child labor (Table 6). However, gaps exist within the operations of the Ministry of Labor and Employment that may hinder adequate labor law enforcement, including human resource allocation.

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

| Overview of Labor Law Enforcement  | 2019           | 2020          |
|--|----------------|---------------|
| Labor Inspectorate Funding   | \$475,600 (46) | \$75,358 (10) |
| Number of Labor Inspectors   | 1,415 (46)     | 1,888 (10)    |
| Inspectorate Authorized to Assess Penalties  | Yes (34)       | Yes (34)      |
| Initial Training for New Labor Inspectors  | Yes (46)       | Yes (10)      |
| Training on New Laws Related to Child Labor  | N/A (46)       | N/A (10)      |
| Refresher Courses Provided   | Yes (46)       | Yes (10)      |
| Number of Labor Inspections Conducted  | 15,643 (46)    | 9,877 (10)    |
| Number Conducted at Worksite   | 15,643 (46)    | 9,719 (10)    |
| Number of Child Labor Violations Found   | 3,937 (46)     | 3,422 (10)    |
| Number of Child Labor Violations for Which Penalties Were Imposed                  | 147 (46)       | 88 (10)       |
| Number of Child Labor Penalties Imposed that Were Collected                        | 147 (46)       | 75 (10)       |
| Routine Inspections Conducted  | Yes (46)       | Yes (10)      |
| Routine Inspections Targeted   | Yes (46)       | Yes (10)      |
| Unannounced Inspections Permitted  | Yes (34)       | Yes (34)      |
| Unannounced Inspections Conducted  | Yes (46)       | Yes (10)      |
| Complaint Mechanism Exists   | Yes (46)       | Yes (10)      |
| Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Labor Authorities and Social Services | Yes (46)       | Yes (10)      |

Along with the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, enforcement of child labor laws remained an issue due to the decrease in funding and the lack of resources for inspections, including office facilities, transportation, fuel, and other necessities to carry out the number of inspections deemed necessary. In addition, research did not find mechanisms to enforce existing protections for children in the informal sector. (10,46,47)

Although the Government of Nigeria significantly increased the number of labor inspectors, the total number of labor inspectors is likely insufficient for the size of Nigeria's workforce, which includes approximately 60 million workers. According to the ILO's technical advice of a ratio approaching 1 inspector for every 15,000 workers in industrializing economies, Nigeria would employ about 4,005 labor inspectors. (48,49)

### **Criminal Law Enforcement**

In 2020, criminal law enforcement agencies in Nigeria took actions to combat child labor (Table 7). However, gaps exist within the operations of criminal enforcement agencies that may hinder adequate criminal law enforcement, including the practice of detaining children associated with armed groups.

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

| Overview of Criminal Law Enforcement  | 2019       | 2020       |
|---|------------|------------|
| Initial Training for New Criminal Investigators                                       | Unknown    | Yes (10)   |
| Training on New Laws Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor                        | N/A        | N/A (10)   |
| Refresher Courses Provided  | Unknown    | Yes (10)   |
| Number of Investigations  | 467 (46)   | 381 (50)   |
| Number of Violations Found  | 3,937 (46) | 3,422 (10) |
| Number of Prosecutions Initiated  | 285 (46)   | 40 (50)    |
| Number of Convictions   | 5 (46)     | 24 (50)    |
| Imposed Penalties for Violations Related to the Worst Forms of Child Labor            | Yes (46)   | Yes (50)   |
| Reciprocal Referral Mechanism Exists Between Criminal Authorities and Social Services | Yes (46)   | Yes (10)   |

During the reporting period, 76 children were rescued and removed from forced child labor situations, and 24 of those were referred to social services. (10) In an official memo dated November 2020 from the Ministry of Defense, the government also stated that there were no children in military detention, and since the signing of the memo, children who have been rescued from Boko Haram camps pass through a de-radicalization process

# Nigeria

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

that is open to international observers and other interested parties. In 2020, the Civilian Joint Task Force, in conjunction with the UN, has also formally separated 215 children (209 boys, 6 girls) from armed groups and provided additional support for them. (10,51) These efforts were taken in response to past reports of abuse and exploitation within the military's detention system that had occurred in previous years. Several of these reports detail issues of prolonged detentions that were due to the lack of an official handover protocol to ensure the swift transfer of children affected by armed conflict from the custody of security actors to civilian child protection authorities for reintegration. (4,31,47,50,52)

### 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 efficacy in accomplishing mandates.

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

| Coordinating Body   | Role & Description   |
|---|--|
| National Steering Committee for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor | Coordinates efforts to combat child labor. Led by the Ministry of Labor and Employment, and comprises representatives from seven governmental agencies, faith-based organizations, NGOs, ILO, and UNICEF. (8,10) Members are charged with leveraging resources for project implementation from their institutions and identifying synergies with other existing programs. (8,10)             |
| State Steering Committee on the Elimination of Child Labor                        | Operates in the 36 Nigerian States and executes the provisions of the National Action Plan on the Elimination of Child Labour at the sub-national levels. During the reporting period, the State Steering Committee trained media practitioners from the public and private sector on the contents and implementation of the National Social Behavioural Change Communication Strategy. (10) |
| Inter-Ministerial Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons                             | Coordinates child labor issues related to human trafficking. Chaired by NAPTIP. The Inter-Ministerial Taskforce on Trafficking in Persons met on an ad hoc basis and helped develop national policies on human trafficking. (8)  |

In June 2020, the National Steering Committee, in coordination with the State Steering Committee, hosted a virtual commemoration of the 2020 World Day Against Child Labor. The objective was to gather support among Nigerians for government efforts at eliminating child labor. (10,53) Outcomes of this effort were the creation of sustained media awareness about child labor and effective mobilization of critical stakeholders in the fight against child labor. (10,53)

### 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 establishing a policy that covers all worst forms of child labor.

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

| Policy  | Description  |
|---|--|
| NAPTIP 2019 Plan of Action  | Provides a framework for mobilizing NAPTIP and all stakeholders involved in combating human trafficking, with an emphasis on enforcement, prosecution, and provision of victim services. During the reporting period, NAPTIP supported the work of civil society organizations to increase capacity, coordination, and service provision for countering trafficking in persons. (10,54) In addition, NAPTIP held a consultative forum with international donors, NGOs, and other stakeholders to help develop the 2021–2025 National Action Plan. That process is ongoing. (50,54) |
| National Social Behavioural Change Communication Strategy for Elimination of Child Labour in Nigeria (2020–2023)† | Combats child labor at the household and community levels through awareness-raising activities. The document was developed, reviewed, and validated for use by stakeholders during the reporting period. (10)  |
| National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism  | Designed to end the recruitment and use of children by the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). Aims to promote the protection of children's rights, ensure that suspects under age 18 are treated in accordance with international law, and provide for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration for children previously associated with CJTF. (55-57) The UN and CJTF, with the support of the government, have identified and reintegrated more than 1,700 children since 2017, including 215 children (209 boys and 6 girls) in 2020. (10)                                  |

† Policy was approved during the reporting period.

‡ The government had other policies that may have included the goal of eliminating or preventing child labor. (10)

Since the signing of the National Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, the UN has reported nearly no use of children by the Civilian Joint Task Force. The Nigerian military has responded to end the unlawful recruitment and use of child soldiers when isolated incidents are brought to their attention, with some military personnel participating in training programs on children and human rights. (10)

During the reporting period, a National Action Plan on the Elimination of Child Labor was drafted, with the goal of having a document similar to all regional and sub-regional policies and plan of actions on child labor. The document, which is awaiting validation and adoption, incorporated elimination of forced labor and modern slavery. (10)

### 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   |
|---|---|
| NAPTIP Shelters for Human Trafficking Victims†  | Government-funded program that operates 10 shelters in Nigeria, with a total capacity of 315 victims. Shelters provide legal, medical, and psychological services, as well as vocational training and business management skills, along with referring victims to NGOs for additional care. (4,5,14) Shelters continued to operate during the reporting period. (4,5,14)  |
| Safe Schools Initiative   | Donor-funded program implemented by the government and international organizations that aims to improve access to education in northeastern Nigeria. (58) Research was unable to determine whether this project was active during the reporting period.   |
| Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labor in Supply Chains in Africa (2018–2022) | ILO-sponsored regional project aimed at eliminating child labor in supply chains, with particular focus on those involved in the production of cocoa, coffee, cotton, gold, and tea. Collaborates with global supply chain actors working in Africa on public policy, good governance, empowerment, representation, partnership, and knowledge sharing. (59) During the reporting period, the project performed a legal review of child labor-related issues and assisted with events undertaken by the National and State Steering Committees. (10)  |
| Measurement, Awareness-Raising, and Policy Engagement Project on Child Labor and Forced Labor | USDOL-funded project implemented by ILO to conduct research and develop new survey methodologies, improve awareness, strengthen policies and government capacity, and promote partnerships to combat child labor and forced labor. In Nigeria, the project has supported the collection of data on child labor and forced labor. (60) Additional information is available on the USDOL <a href="#">website</a> .  |
| World Bank-Funded Programs  | Projects aim to improve access to education. Includes: National Social Safety Nets Project (2016–2022), a \$50 million project that aims to provide primary school lunches and offers conditional cash transfers based on children's enrollment, and the Better Education Service Delivery for All (2017–2022), a \$611 million project that aims to increase access to education for out-of-school youth and improve literacy. (61–63) In 2020, the National Social Safety Nets Project continued working to enroll beneficiaries in 33 states across the country. To date, approximately 1.2 million poor or vulnerable households have been enrolled in the cash transfer program. (61) The Better Education Service Delivery for All project helped reduce the number of out-of-school children by 924,590, of which 633,772 were girls. (63) |

† Program is funded by the Government of Nigeria.

The state ministries of education supported distance learning through radio programs that allowed limited formal education. Radio-based distance learning is a modality used to increase access to learning both for hard-to-reach areas and for vulnerable children with restricted access to in-school learning, and it is one of the primary means by which the educational community has addressed the continuation of learning throughout the Federal closure of schools in Nigeria due to the pandemic. (10) USAID supported distance learning in Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Sokoto, and Yobe states during the pandemic-related school closures. (10)

In addition, USAID also issued a 5 year award entitled "Strengthening Civic Advocacy and Local Engagement (SCALE)." Working with the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Matters, this program will focus on countering trafficking in persons by supporting the work of civil society organizations to increase capacity, coordination, and service provision for countering trafficking in persons. (10)

# Nigeria

## MODERATE ADVANCEMENT

There are increasing concerns regarding the conditions in shelters housing human trafficking victims. These conditions include poor housing facilities, a lack of food, and insufficient stipends, along with reports of victims being held against their will for extended periods at shelters run by the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and Other Related Matters. (47,64)

In addition, research found no evidence of programs to address all relevant worst forms of child labor, including the use of children in armed conflict, quarrying granite, artisanal mining, 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 Nigeria (Table I I).

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

| Area                | Suggested Action  | Year(s) Suggested |
|---------------------|---|-------------------|
| Legal Framework     | Raise the minimum age for work to the age up to which education is compulsory, and ensure that national legislation on the minimum age for work is consistent so that all children are protected, including those in the informal sector. | 2012 – 2020       |
|                     | Ensure that the types of work determined to be hazardous for children are prohibited by law or regulation for all children under age 18.  | 2009 – 2020       |
|                     | Ensure that laws in all states criminalize both domestic and international trafficking or trafficking for the purpose of forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.   | 2019 – 2020       |
|                     | Criminalize the offering of a child for prostitution in all states.   | 2019 – 2020       |
|                     | Ensure that using, procuring, and offering a child for the production and trafficking of drugs are criminally prohibited in all states.   | 2015 – 2020       |
|                     | Ensure that the law criminally prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18 by non-state armed groups.  | 2016 – 2020       |
|                     | Ensure that provisions related to light work conform to international standards.  | 2009 – 2020       |
|                     | Amend the Terrorism Prevention Act to prohibit the punishment of children for their association with armed groups.  | 2016 – 2020       |
| Enforcement         | Significantly increase the number of labor inspectors to meet the ILO's technical advice.   | 2016 – 2020       |
|                     | Ensure that labor inspectors receive sufficient resources to enforce child labor laws.  | 2016 – 2020       |
|                     | Ensure that a mechanism exists for enforcing existing protections for children working in the informal sector.  | 2009 – 2020       |
|                     | Sign and implement a protocol to ensure the swift transfer of children affected by armed conflict from the custody of security actors to civilian child protection authorities for reintegration.   | 2020              |
|                     | Ensure that there are penalties imposed for the worst forms of child labor.   | 2020              |
|                     | Cease the practice of detaining children associated with armed groups for prolonged periods and refer these children to social services providers.  | 2016 – 2020       |
| Coordination        | Ensure that all coordinating bodies are active and able to carry out their mandates as intended.  | 2018 – 2020       |
| Government Policies | Adopt a policy that addresses all relevant worst forms of child labor, including the commercial sexual exploitation of children and forced child labor in granite, gravel, and cocoa production.  | 2018 – 2020       |
| Social Programs     | Ensure that all states adopt programs to offer free education, and expand existing programs that provide funds to vulnerable children, especially girls, to cover school fees and the cost of materials.                                  | 2014 – 2020       |
|                     | Make additional efforts to provide all children with birth documentation.   | 2020              |
|                     | Ensure that there is an adequate number of trained teachers and provide sufficient educational infrastructure for children, particularly girls, to access schools.  | 2015 – 2020       |
|                     | Conduct research to gather comprehensive data on child labor, including activities carried out by children working in fishing, to inform policies and programs.   | 2020              |
|                     | Ensure that the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons and related agencies provide appropriate facilities and resources to victims, and that victims are not held against their will in shelters.                 | 2019 – 2020       |
|                     | Establish programs that prevent and remove children from all relevant worst forms of child labor, including armed conflict, commercial sexual exploitation, and illicit activities.   | 2009 – 2020       |
|                     | Ensure that all social programs are active and pursuing their mandates.   | 2020              |

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