

Suriname

The Government of Suriname has strengthened legislation against commercial sexual exploitation of children. Nevertheless, the worst forms of child labor in Suriname continue in the agricultural sector. Gaps remain in the enforcement of child labor laws and establishment of policies and social programs to eliminate the worst forms of child labor.

Statistics on Working Children and School Attendance

Children	Percent
Working	Unavailable
Attending School	Unavailable
Combining Work and School	Unavailable



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor⁴⁶⁸⁵

Children in Suriname are exploited in the worst forms of child labor, particularly in agriculture. Children harvest fruit and rice where they may work with dangerous tools, risk exposure to pesticides and chemical fertilizers, and carry heavy loads. Children are also employed in fishing, where they are exposed to risks of drowning, injury, and use of sharp tools. Children also work in mining and logging.⁴⁶⁸⁶

Children are also involved in prostitution and are trafficked both internally, particularly between Paramaribo and mining camps in Suriname's interior and across the country's borders.⁴⁶⁸⁷ Adolescent girls are most likely to be trafficked for sex.⁴⁶⁸⁸

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Suriname's Labor Code of 1963 sets the minimum age for employment at 14⁴⁶⁸⁹ and prohibits children under the age of 18 from performing hazardous work.⁴⁶⁹⁰ Children age 14 to 17 are prohibited from working between 7:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m.⁴⁶⁹¹ Minors under the age of 15 are not allowed to work on boats.⁴⁶⁹²

The Safety Act prohibits young persons under the age of 18 from engaging in work activities that may be injurious to their health and safety.⁴⁶⁹³ The Preparatory Working Group of the National Commission on Child Labour (PWGCCL) created a draft decree containing a list of hazardous work prohibited to children.⁴⁶⁹⁴ However, this draft has not yet been adopted by the Surinamese Government.

	C138, Minimum Age	No
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	No
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography	No
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	12
	Free Public Education	Yes

Article 15 of the Constitution bans forced labor.⁴⁶⁹⁵ Article 307 of the Penal Code prohibits trafficking in persons.⁴⁶⁹⁶ Prostitution is illegal,⁴⁶⁹⁷ and in July 2009, the Criminal Code was amended with specific penalties against child prostitution and a prohibition on child pornography, including a minimum of ten years imprisonment.⁴⁶⁹⁸

School is compulsory until the age of 12, but children cannot legally work until the age of 14. Children between these ages are vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor.

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

In November 2009, the National Commission for the Eradication of Child Labor (NCECL) was established by the Preparatory Working Group of the Commission on Child Labour (PWGCCCL). The NCECL recommends additional laws and improves those that already exist in order to ensure accordance with international labor standards, including on the worst forms of child labor.⁴⁶⁹⁹ The Commission consists of officials from the ministries of labor, social affairs, and education, and individuals from labor unions, NGOs, and the private sector.⁴⁷⁰⁰ The Anti-trafficking Working Group is led by the Chief Prosecutor and coordinates the Government's anti-trafficking efforts. This body also works with other countries in the region for this purpose.⁴⁷⁰¹

The Ministry of Justice and Police (MJP) and Ministry of Labor, Technology and Environment (MLTE) are jointly responsible for enforcement of child labor and related laws.⁴⁷⁰² The Youth Affairs Police is also responsible for issues relating to any persons under the age of 18.⁴⁷⁰³

The Ministry of Labor, Technology and Environment's Department of Labor Inspection has 75 inspectors and 25 more new inspectors in training.⁴⁷⁰⁴ The Department of Labor Inspection is responsible for workplace inspections for issues of health and safety conditions and child labor, and inspector visits were carried out within the private sector, primarily in urban areas.⁴⁷⁰⁵ The police generally have responsibility for investigating worst forms of child labor issues in the informal sector.⁴⁷⁰⁶

The Special Anti-trafficking Police Unit (a six-person unit) raids brothels twice a month to determine whether minors are being trafficked or involved in prostitution.⁴⁷⁰⁷ The Trafficking in Persons Police Unit (TIPPU) investigates reports and allegations of trafficking in persons, including those involving children.⁴⁷⁰⁸ A child trafficking case is usually resolved within 6 to 9 months.⁴⁷⁰⁹ Children who have been trafficked are typically referred to the Foundation Against Trafficking in Persons, which is a private organization comprised of local NGOs that provides shelter services for trafficked victims.⁴⁷¹⁰

There were three convictions for trafficking in minors during the reporting period.⁴⁷¹¹ However, the sentences of two years, 1.5 years, and 9 months respectively were not equivalent to the Penal Code standard of 5 to 20 years imprisonment for trafficking in persons for sexual exploitation and for labor exploitation and the sentences were not fully served.⁴⁷¹²

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Research found no evidence of any policies to address the worst forms of child labor.⁴⁷¹³

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The Government of Suriname participated in a regional project to combat the worst forms of child labor in the Caribbean, which was funded by the Government of Canada.⁴⁷¹⁴ The project's outcomes included a sub-regional workshop on combating child labor in indigenous communities in Suriname and the formation of a national steering committee on child labor.⁴⁷¹⁵ Although the Government of Suriname participated in a regional project to address the worst forms of child labor, research found no evidence that it has carried out programs to assist children in agriculture specifically.

The Ministry of Social Affairs administers a welfare and daycare system for indigent children to prevent them from seeking employment.⁴⁷¹⁶ Vocational programs have also been supported by the government to provide dropouts and older children with an alternative to child labor. The Ministry of Education

and Community Development (MOECD) requested a reformulation of the Program for Improving Basic Education, which was implemented in 2004.⁴⁷¹⁷ Funded by a loan from the Inter-American Development Bank, the project aims to improve basic education and reduce student dropout rates in Suriname's education system. The question of whether these programs have an impact on the worst forms of child labor does not appear to have been addressed.⁴⁷¹⁸

Suriname also took part in a regional initiative to raise awareness of trafficking in persons, funded by IOM.⁴⁷¹⁹ The Maxi Linder Foundation, an NGO funded by the Government, provides resources for victims of trafficking for prostitution, including children.⁴⁷²⁰ The Child and Youth Hotline, called the "1-2-3 Hotline," is a simple number that children can dial to report instances of abuse and trafficking.⁴⁷²¹

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the reduction of the worst forms of child labor in Suriname:

IN THE AREA OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS:

- Define hazardous types of work prohibited to children through adoption and publication of the draft hazardous decree.
- Raise the compulsory education age to 14, the established minimum age for work.

IN THE AREA OF COORDINATION AND ENFORCEMENT:

- Ensure that those convicted for trafficking children for sexual exploitation and labor exploitation are given the appropriate punishment equivalent to the Penal Code standard.

IN THE AREA OF POLICIES:

- Adopt policies to address the worst forms of child labor.

IN THE AREA OF PROGRAMS:

- Assess the impact that existing programs may have in addressing the worst forms of child labor.
- Expand and develop social programs to assist children engaged in or at risk of entering the worst forms of child labor, in particular children working in agriculture.

⁴⁶⁸⁵ Data provided in the chart at the beginning of this country report are not available from the data sources that are used by USDOL. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms. For more information on sources used for these statistics, the definition of working children, and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Children's Work and Education Statistics: Sources and Definitions" section.

⁴⁶⁸⁶ U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, *Trafficking in Persons reporting*, February 19, 2010.

⁴⁶⁸⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Suriname," in *Trafficking in Persons Report- 2010*, Washington, DC, June 14, 2010; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/tip/rls/tiprpt/2010/142761.htm>.

⁴⁶⁸⁸ U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, *Trafficking in Persons reporting*, February 19, 2010.

⁴⁶⁸⁹ Clive Pegus, "A Review of Child Labour Laws of Suriname- A Guide to Legislative Reform," *ILO Subregional Office for the Caribbean* (June 2005).

⁴⁶⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹¹ U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, *reporting*, February 19, 2010.

⁴⁶⁹² Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹³ Clive Pegus, "A Review of Child Labour Laws of Suriname- A Guide to Legislative Reform."

⁴⁶⁹⁴ ILO Committee of Experts, *Direct Request, Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No.182) Suriname (ratification: 2006)*, [online] 2010 [cited August 10, 2010]; available from <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/pdconv.pl?host=status01&textbase=iloeng&document=25337&chapter=9&query=Suriname%40ref&highlight=&querytype=bool&context=0>.

- ⁴⁶⁹⁵ Government of Suriname, *Constitution of the Republic of Suriname*, (October 30, 1987); available from <http://pdba.georgetown.edu/Constitutions/Suriname/english.html>.
- ⁴⁶⁹⁶ Clive Pegus, "A Review of Child Labour Laws of Suriname- A Guide to Legislative Reform."
- ⁴⁶⁹⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Suriname," in *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2009*, Washington, DC, March 11, 2010; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2009/wha/136127.htm>.
- ⁴⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.* See also U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, *reporting, February 19, 2010*.
- ⁴⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷⁰⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2009: Suriname."
- ⁴⁷⁰¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷⁰² U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, *reporting, February 19, 2010*.
- ⁴⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷⁰⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2009: Suriname."
- ⁴⁷⁰⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷⁰⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷⁰⁸ U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, *Trafficking in Persons reporting, February 19, 2010*. See also U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, *reporting, February 19, 2010*.
- ⁴⁷⁰⁹ U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, *reporting, February 19, 2010*.
- ⁴⁷¹⁰ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2009: Suriname." See also ILO Committee of Experts, *Direct Request C182: Suriname (2010)*.
- ⁴⁷¹¹ U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, *reporting, February 19, 2010*. See also U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2009: Suriname."
- ⁴⁷¹² U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, *reporting, February 19, 2010*.
- ⁴⁷¹³ U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, *reporting, March 3, 2009*.
- ⁴⁷¹⁴ ILO, *ILO in the Caribbean Projects Archive*, [online] July 27, 2009 [cited August 11, 2010]; available from http://www.ilocarib.org.tt/portal/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1116&Itemid=1015#clcaribbean. See also ILO-IPEC Geneva official, E-mail communication to USDOL official, December 12, 2007.
- ⁴⁷¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁷¹⁶ Clive Pegus, "A Review of Child Labour Laws of Suriname- A Guide to Legislative Reform."
- ⁴⁷¹⁷ IDB, *Program for Improving Basic Education*, Project Profile, March 11, 2010; available from <http://www.iadb.org/projects/project.cfm?id=SU-L1019&lang=en>. See also ILO Committee of Experts, *Direct Request C182: Suriname (2010)*.
- ⁴⁷¹⁸ IDB, *Improving Basic Education, Project Profile*.
- ⁴⁷¹⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2009: Suriname."
- ⁴⁷²⁰ *Ibid.* See also U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, *Trafficking in Persons reporting, February 19, 2010*.
- ⁴⁷²¹ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports- 2009: Suriname." See also U.S. Embassy- Paramaribo, *reporting, February 19, 2010*.