

Committee on the Application of Standards

Date: 16 May 2022

Governments appearing on the list of individual cases have the opportunity, if they so wish, to supply written information to the Committee.

▶ Information on the application of ratified Conventions supplied by governments on the list of individual cases

Benin (ratification: 2001)

Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)

The Government has provided the following information.

The Government has taken several actions to combat all forms of forced labour or commercial sexual exploitation of children, particularly *vidomégon* children. Examples of this include:

- analysis of the extent to which national legislation conforms with the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), with a view to its ratification;
- the establishment and strengthening of communication about the children's helpline and implementation of the communication plan for the "hello 138" campaign.

Thanks to the children's helpline:

- 28,364 calls were taken between 18 March 2020 and 30 November 2021;
- 138 cases of child victims of violence have been dealt with;
- 13,356 calls provided an opportunity to give advice, guidance and information about the children's helpline and other toll-free numbers, as well as fun calls with children;
- 186 children – 77 in Ouando, 18 in Parakou and 91 in Dantokpa – were removed from large markets in Benin in 2017 as a result of inspections organized by labour inspectors;
- in 2022, 15 cases of *vidomégon* children were resolved with the perpetrators and parents appearing before the juvenile court judge. To date, three children have been rehabilitated and the others returned to their families following rulings from the juvenile court judge.

With regard to the implementation of Act No. 2006-04 of 10 April 2006 establishing conditions for the movement of young persons and the elimination of child trafficking in the Republic of Benin, a good number of actions have been taken. Including, for example:

- the drafting of the 2022–31 national policy document on combating trafficking in persons and its action plan 2022–26;
- the workshop on the drafting of action plans for the implementation of the recommendations stemming from the diagnostic study of law enforcement with regard to trafficking in persons;
- Benin's participation in the 14th Annual Review Meeting of the ECOWAS Regional Network of National Focal Institutions against Trafficking in Persons Plus.

In accordance with its mandate, the Central Office for the Protection of Children and the Elimination of Trafficking in Persons (OCPM) is working to combat the trafficking of children through prevention, and also by raising awareness among children, parents and vulnerable sectors of society, in particular.

In terms of protection, the OCPM is part of the chain for the elimination of trafficking in children, alongside border units, several NGOs and the public prosecutor's office, working to find and punish cases. These actions have led to the following results:

- in 2020, the office recorded 49 cases of child trafficking, with 34 convictions (20 men and 14 women);
- in 2021, 37 cases were recorded and led to 13 convictions (9 men and 4 women).

The Government is concerned about child labour in mines and quarries, given how widespread it is. That is why, in November 2019, a large meeting was organized, in the framework of the intersectoral dialogue on combating child labour, established by the ministry responsible for the periodic evaluation of the situation with officials from those sectors with high levels of child labour.

The conclusions and recommendations of that meeting led to the need to organize a joint visit with the various ministries to the mining sites in the departments of Mono and Couffo in October 2021.

During this visit, which brought together a number of different political and administrative authorities in the sectors concerned, with participation from the Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs, the chief of staff of the Mines Minister and the resident representative of UNICEF in Benin, the various authorities had the opportunity to evaluate the situation on the ground for the children working at those sites and to assess the risks related to the work. It was an opportunity for the ministers, the prefects of Mono and Couffo and the resident representative of UNICEF to raise awareness among parents, children and site operators of the need to end the exploitation of children in this sector.

At the end of this visit, the authorities decided to launch a case study to understand exactly how widespread the phenomenon is. The plan is for the study to be accompanied by a three-year plan of action for targeted intervention in the mining sector over the coming years. This study was launched in March 2022.

The 2019–23 National Plan of Action drawn up by Benin is fully in line with the implementation of ILO Convention No. 182 and aims to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, while also aiming to eliminate all forms of child labour in the long term. In that regard, a number of actions have been taken, for example:

- Analysis of the extent to which the texts of national legislation conform with the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) and the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129), with a view to their ratification;

- the review and update of the list of hazardous types of work;
- the drafting of the list of light work in Benin;
- the establishment of services to combat child labour in the 12 administrative departments of Benin;
- the drafting of the procedure and protocol document for the monitoring of child labour

The labour inspection services carry out monitoring visits to prevent child victims of trafficking and remove them from the worst forms. In that regard, the 2022 annual work plan for the departmental labour directorates and the civil service includes inspection visits throughout the country.

The Ministry of Social Affairs, through the social assistants, is setting up and strengthening the capacity of child protection monitoring committees (identification of at-risk children or child victims, establishment of local alert and reporting systems). In that regard:

- 409 monitoring committees have been set up – 197 in Borgou and Alibori and 212 in Atacora;
- 118 monitoring committees have been strengthened in Borgou and Alibori.

The following actions have been taken to ensure the protection of orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs). At the institutional level:

- capacity-building for social workers working in social promotion centres;
- the establishment of a consultation framework for those working to protect OVCs.

At the technical level:

- a census and categorization of OVCs according to a vulnerability rating scale;
- support for school and apprenticeship supplies for highly vulnerable OVCs;
- monitoring of the schooling of OVCs by social promotion centres;
- advocacy for communal authorities to take account of the needs of OVCs in communal development plans and the inclusion of a budget line to that effect.

In the framework of the pursuit of cooperation efforts with neighbouring countries with a view to eliminating child trafficking, the following cross-border bilateral agreements have been signed:

- Benin–Gabon Agreement, 11 November 2020;
- Benin–Congo Agreement, 20 September 2011;
- Benin–Nigeria Agreement, 2013;
- Benin–Togo–Burkina Faso Agreement, 2020;
- Benin–Ghana Agreement (ongoing).

Multilateral cooperation agreements on combating child trafficking in West Africa have also been signed. This refers to the agreement between Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Togo signed in 2005.

It should be noted that a national plan of action to combat trafficking has been drawn up but its implementation has not yet begun.