

AN ANALYSIS OF THE APPLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO) STANDARDS ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN NIGERIA

Prof. Beatrice Nkechi Okpalaobi (PhD)¹ & Augustine I. Orabueze (PhD)²

ABSTRACT

International labour standards promote decent work in freedom, equity, security, and dignity. They are ILO conventions and recommendations setting global principles and rights at work. This study examines the application of International Labour Organization (ILO) standards on the protection of children's rights in Nigeria. Nigeria's ratification of these core conventions reflects a formal commitment to eliminating child labour and safeguarding children from economic exploitation. The study adopts a doctrinal and analytical approach, reviewing relevant legal frameworks, anti-trafficking legislation, alongside policy initiatives and institutional mechanisms established in collaboration with the ILO. The findings reveal that Nigeria has made significant progress in aligning its domestic legal and policy structures with international labour standards. Notably, the prohibition of hazardous child labour, increased awareness campaigns, and the integration of child protection measures into national development strategies demonstrate a degree of compliance with ILO obligations. However, the study identifies a persistent gap between legal commitments and practical implementation. Key challenges include inconsistencies in national laws, weak enforcement mechanisms, inadequate labour inspection systems, and limited institutional capacity. Furthermore, the prevalence of child labour in Nigeria remains high, largely driven by socio-economic factors such as poverty, limited access to quality education, cultural norms, and the dominance of the informal sector. These structural issues undermine the effective application of ILO standards and hinder the realization of children's rights in practice. The study argues that while Nigeria is largely compliant at the normative level, it falls short in operational enforcement, resulting in only partial adherence to international standards. The paper concludes that strengthening the protection of children's rights in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach, including legal harmonization, enhanced enforcement mechanisms, expansion of social protection programmes, and sustained community-level engagement. It emphasizes that the effective application of ILO standards is contingent not only on legislative alignment but also on addressing the broader socio-economic conditions that perpetuate child labour.

Keywords: International labour standards, children's rights, Child labour, Children's rights protection

INTRODUCTION

Children's rights protection, particularly against economic exploitation and child labour, constitutes a fundamental aspect of international human rights and labour standards.³ The International Labour Organization (ILO) has played a central role in promoting the protection of children through conventions and recommendations aimed at eliminating child labour while ensuring access to education, dignity, proper health, and development for children.⁴ Nigeria, being one of the most populous countries in Africa with a large youthful population, continues to face serious socio-economic challenges that contribute significantly to the persistence of child labour. Child labour is prevalent in sectors such as agriculture, domestic service, mining, street vending, and other informal economic activities.⁵ An analysis of the application of ILO standards in Nigeria is therefore necessary to evaluate the extent to which international obligations have been implemented domestically and to identify gaps between legal commitments and practical realities.

Several legal and institutional frameworks regulate children's rights protection in Nigeria. These include the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), the Child Rights Act 2003, the Labour Act, the Children and Young Persons Act, the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and

¹ Professor of Law, Department of Commercial and Property Law, Faculty of Law, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Email: bn.okpalaobi@unizik.edu.ng

² Lecturer, Department of Public Law, Faculty of Law, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Email: izuorabueze@gmail.com or ai.orabueze@unizik.edu.ng

³ International Labour Organization (ILO), Child Labour and Education in Nigeria: Policy Paper (ILO Geneva 2021) ch 1, 12–18.

⁴ International Labour Organization, Convention Concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (Convention No. 138) 1973, arts 1–3; International Labour Organization, Convention Concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (Convention No. 182) 1999, arts 1–4.

⁵ UNICEF, Child Labour in Nigeria: Causes and Consequences (UNICEF Report 2022) ch 2, 5–9

Administration Act 2015, and the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015.⁶ International instruments relevant to children's rights protection include ILO Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age, ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).⁷

Institutionally, agencies such as the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, Family Support Units of the Nigerian Police, and Family Courts are tasked with implementing and enforcing child protection laws.⁸

ANALYSIS OF ILO STANDARDS ON CHILDREN'S RIGHTS PROTECTION

Age of the Child

ILO Convention No.138 establishes the minimum age for admission into employment at 15 years or the age of completion of compulsory schooling, whichever is higher. Developing countries may temporarily adopt 14 years as the minimum age, while light work is permissible from ages 12 or 13 under certain conditions. Hazardous work is prohibited for persons below 18 years.⁹ Convention No.182 equally applies to all persons below the age of 18 regarding the worst forms of child labour.¹⁰

In Nigeria, the Child Rights Act (2003) defines a child as a person below the age of 18 years and prohibits exploitative labour.¹¹ However, the Labour Act permits children from the age of 12 to engage in light work under certain conditions, particularly in family agricultural or domestic settings.¹² This creates inconsistency within Nigeria's legal framework and conflicts with the objectives of ILO Convention No. 138.¹³

The position adopted in this work supports the Child Rights Act as the more appropriate legislation for child protection in Nigeria. Although the ILO permits minimum employment ages of 14 or 15 years, many children within this age bracket may not possess the physical or mental maturity necessary for labour-intensive activities beyond domestic chores. Consequently, all forms of employment involving children should ideally be restricted until the age of 18 years.¹⁴

Sexual Exploitation

ILO Convention No.182 identifies child prostitution, pornography, or pornographic performances and other forms of sexual exploitation as among the worst forms of child labour requiring immediate elimination.¹⁵ In Nigeria, the Child Rights Act criminalizes the use of children for prostitution, pornography, and other forms of sexual exploitation.¹⁶ The Trafficking in Persons Act also reinforces these protections.¹⁷ Despite the existence of these legal provisions, implementation remains weak due to poverty, underreporting, corruption, and weak enforcement mechanisms.¹⁸ Street hawking and displacement resulting from insecurity continue to expose children to sexual exploitation and trafficking.¹⁹

⁶ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), ch IV; Child Rights Act 2003, Parts I–XIII; Labour Act Cap L1 LFN 2004, ss 58–61

⁷ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, arts 19, 32 and 34; African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 1990, arts 15–16; ICESCR 1966, art 13

⁸ Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment Act 1952; Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015, ss 4–7.

⁹ ILO Convention No. 138, arts 1–3, 7.

¹⁰ ILO Convention No. 182, arts 2–3.

¹¹ Child Rights Act 2003, s 277.

¹² Labour Act Cap L1 LFN 2004, s 59(1)–(3).

¹³ AA Oba, 'The Child Rights Act 2003 and the Challenges of Its Adoption in Nigeria' (2008) 9(2) *University of Benin Law Journal* 125, 133–138.

¹⁴ AA Olowu, *Protecting Children's Rights in Africa: A Critique of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child* (Pretoria University Law Press 2004) ch 3, 45–52.

¹⁵ ILO Convention No. 182, art 3(b).

¹⁶ Child Rights Act 2003, ss 30–32.

¹⁷ Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act 2015, ss 13–27.

¹⁸ International Labour Organization, *Every Child Counts: New Global Estimates on Child Labour* (ILO 2017) ch 4, 31–36.

¹⁹ B Owasanoye and M Adekunle, 'Street Hawking and Child Exploitation in Nigeria' (2018) 6(2) *Nigerian Journal of Social Development* 88, 92–97.

Working conditions

ILO standards emphasize that children engaged in permissible forms of work must not be exposed to conditions harmful to their health, morals, or development. Work must not interfere with schooling, and hazardous labour is prohibited.²⁰

In Nigeria, *section 28* of the Child Rights Act prohibits exploitative labour, forced labour, heavy loads, domestic help outside the family, and employment of children in industrial undertakings.²¹ The Labour Act equally restricts underground work and machinery operation by children.²² Nevertheless, vague definitions of “light work” and broad exceptions relating to family work allow many exploitative practices to persist, especially in agriculture and domestic service.²³ High child involvement in hazardous tasks (pesticides, sharp tools, heavy loads) persists, with limited regulation of hours or rest in informal sectors.

Protection in Emergencies

ILO standards, together with humanitarian child protection frameworks, require the protection of children from recruitment into armed conflict, trafficking, and exploitation during emergencies²⁴ and loss of education during conflicts, disasters, or displacement. Convention No. 182 specifically prohibits forced recruitment of children into armed conflict.²⁵ Nigeria faces serious security challenges arising from insurgency, armed conflicts, and natural disasters.²⁶ (e.g., *Boko Haram*), farmer-herder conflicts, and flooding. Child’s Right Act and other laws prohibit recruitment of children into armed forces (*Section 34*) and provide for emergency protection orders. National policies exist, with ILO support for child labour in emergency responses. However, Implementation is inadequate. Children in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps are highly vulnerable to trafficking, forced labour, and sexual abuse.²⁷ Although the Child Rights Act prohibits child recruitment into armed groups, enforcement remains inadequate.²⁸

Equal Remuneration

ILO Convention No.100 guarantees equal remuneration for work of equal value without discrimination. For children/adolescents, it intersects with non-discrimination principles (C111, ratified) and protections against exploitation ensuring young workers are not underpaid in ways that perpetuate vulnerability.²⁹

In practice, however, child workers in Nigeria particularly those in informal sectors rarely enjoy equal pay or fair treatment.³⁰ Nigerian Labour laws and Constitution promote equality, but child workers (often informal) rarely benefit. Exploitation through low or no pay is common in family or apprenticeship settings. While formal sector application may be better, child labour’s informal nature renders equal remuneration protections largely theoretical. Girls are especially vulnerable to underpayment and exploitation in domestic labour and apprenticeship settings.³¹

Occupational safety and Health

ILO standards on occupational safety and health require states to prohibit hazardous work for children, ensure safe working conditions, risk assessments and training.³² Nigeria has laws prohibiting dangerous work for young persons, and a National Hazardous Child Labour Activity Framework was developed in 2013.³³

²⁰ ILO Recommendation No. 190 on Worst Forms of Child Labour 1999, paras 3–4.

²¹ Child Rights Act 2003, s 28.

²² Labour Act Cap L1 LFN 2004, s 59(5).

²³ UNICEF, *The State of the World’s Children 2021* (UNICEF 2021) ch 5, 67–70.

²⁴ International Labour Organization, *Children in Armed Conflict and Child Labour* (ILO Geneva 2019) ch 2, 9–13.

²⁵ ILO Convention No. 182, art 3(a).

²⁶ UNHCR, *Nigeria Emergency Update* (2023) pp 3–7.

²⁷ UNICEF Nigeria, *Education and Child Protection Factsheet* (2022) pp 2–5.

²⁸ Child Rights Act 2003, s 34.

²⁹ International Labour Organization, *Equal Remuneration Convention* (Convention No. 100) 1951, art 1.

³⁰ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, s 42.

³¹ MO Izugbara, ‘Negotiating Cultural Values and Child Rights in Nigeria’ (2016) 10(3) *African Human Rights Law Journal* 523, 530–536.

³² International Labour Organization, *Occupational Safety and Health Convention* (Convention No. 155) 1981, arts 4–7.

³³ Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment, *National Hazardous Child Labour Activity Framework* (2013) ch 2, 10–15.

Despite these measures, enforcement remains weak. Children working in agriculture, mining, and domestic service are frequently exposed to chemicals, dangerous tools, physical abuse, and excessive working hours.³⁴ Labour inspection systems are inadequate, especially within the informal sector where most child labour occurs.³⁵

APPLICATION OF ILO STANDARDS IN SELECTED JURISDICTIONS

All ILO member states have obligations regarding these even without ratification, via the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. C182 achieved universal ratification in 2020, making it the first such convention. C138 is widely ratified but not universally.

Ratification Status:

United Kingdom (Britain): Ratified C138 in 2000 (minimum age 16) and C182.

United States: Ratified C182 early (one of the first, 1999) but has not ratified C138.

South Africa: Ratified both (C138 in 2000 with minimum age 15/16; C182).

Ghana: Ratified both (C138 in 2011 with minimum age 15; C182).

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has effectively incorporated ILO standards into domestic legislation through laws such as the Children and Young Persons Act and Working Time Regulations.³⁶ which restrict hours, prohibit hazardous work for under-18s, and set minimum ages. Enforcement occurs through local authorities and health/safety bodies. Child labor is relatively low in formal sectors due to compulsory education to age 16/18 and social protections. Child labour is relatively low due to compulsory education and strong institutional frameworks.³⁷

United States

The United States ratified ILO Convention No. 182 but has not ratified Convention No.138.³⁸ The Fair Labor Standards Act regulates child labour and prohibits hazardous employment for minors.³⁹ The U.S. funds global anti-child labor efforts and maintains import bans on goods made with forced/child labour. Nevertheless, broad exemptions in agriculture continue to expose children to dangerous work conditions.⁴⁰ Enforcement has increased recently amid rising violations (e.g., in meatpacking, warehouses), but systemic issues in agriculture and informal/immigrant labor persist. The U.S. excels in global advocacy and funding but falls short domestically on full ILO alignment, especially for vulnerable farm children.

South Africa

South Africa has adopted strong legal protections through the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and Children's Act (post-apartheid laws)⁴¹ align well with both conventions, prohibiting child employment under 15 (with exceptions), hazardous work under 18, and incorporating worst forms bans. The Child Labour Programme of Action (CLPA). Despite this, poverty and inequality continue to contribute to child labour, particularly in rural and informal sectors.⁴² Around 571,000 children remain in child labor. Recent evaluations show gaps in data, enforcement, and coordination; minimal advancement noted in some U.S. DOL reports. Root causes like limited social protection and education access undermine progress. South Africa demonstrates good formal commitment but struggles with de facto realization in a middle-income context with high inequality.

Ghana

Ghana has implemented ILO standards through the Children's Act and Labour Act, with particular attention to child labour in cocoa farming and mining.⁴³ Although progress has been made, child labour remains widespread due to poverty and weak enforcement mechanisms.⁴⁴ National plans, ILO-supported projects, and stakeholder work plans target supply chains. Moderate advancement in enforcement, but child labor remains significant (especially in agriculture, mining, fishing, and domestic work), driven by poverty, weak rural enforcement, and informal economy dominance. Inconsistencies in application, limited resources for labor inspection, and

³⁴ International Labour Organization, Safety and Health in Agriculture Convention (Convention No. 184) 2001, arts 7–16

³⁵ GA Akinola, Labour Law in Nigeria (2nd ed, Hybrid Publishers 2019) ch 8, 233–240.

³⁶ United Kingdom Children and Young Persons Act 1933, ss 18–21.

³⁷ United Kingdom Working Time Regulations 1998, regs 10–12.

³⁸ United States Department of Labor, 2023 Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labour (Washington DC 2023) ch 1, 1–8.

³⁹ United States Fair Labor Standards Act 1938, 29 U.S.C ss 201–219.

⁴⁰ International Labour Organization and UNICEF, Ending Child Labour by 2025 (2020) ch 3, 44–49.

⁴¹ South Africa Basic Conditions of Employment Act 1997, ss 43–48.

⁴² International Labour Organization, Global Estimates of Child Labour (ILO and UNICEF 2021) ch 2, 17–25.

⁴³ Ghana Children's Act 1998, ss 87–91.

⁴⁴ International Labour Organization, World Report on Child Labour (ILO 2013) ch 2, 41–50.

cultural/economic reliance on child work hinder full implementation. Ghana shows proactive policy efforts (e.g., Child Labour Free Zones) but faces structural barriers typical of lower-income settings.

CHALLENGES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ILO STANDARDS IN NIGERIA

Despite Nigeria's ratification of key International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions, particularly Convention No. 138 on Minimum Age and Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, the effective implementation of these standards remains a major challenge. While legal frameworks exist, their practical application has been undermined by a combination of legal, socio-economic, cultural, and administrative factors. Evidence suggests that approximately 39.2% of children aged 5–17 about 24.7 million children are engaged in child labour, demonstrating a significant gap between international obligations and domestic realities.

One major challenge is the inconsistency between the Labour Act and the Child Rights Act concerning the minimum age for employment.⁴⁵ The Labour Act (2004) permits children under certain conditions to engage in light work, while the Child Rights Act (2003) prohibits exploitative labour and sets 18 years as the benchmark for full protection. This contradiction creates ambiguity in enforcement and weakens compliance with ILO Convention No. 138, which requires a clear minimum age for employment. Institutionally, enforcement agencies such as the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) are often underfunded and understaffed. This limits their capacity to monitor workplaces, investigate violations, and prosecute offenders effectively. Enforcement agencies are underfunded and understaffed, thereby limiting effective monitoring and prosecution of offenders.⁴⁶

Poverty remains a major factor driving child labour in Nigeria.⁴⁷ Many families rely on children's income for survival, especially in rural communities.⁴⁸ Poor access to quality education and hidden educational costs also contribute significantly to child labour.⁴⁹ Cultural practices further complicate implementation efforts. In many communities, child labour is viewed as part of socialization and economic contribution to the family.⁵⁰ For example, children are often engaged in family farming, street trading, domestic service, and apprenticeship systems. While some of these activities may be considered acceptable under certain conditions, they often cross the line into exploitative labour, particularly when they interfere with education or pose risks to the child's health and development. In some cases, the perception of child labour as a normal or even necessary aspect of upbringing undermines efforts to enforce international standards. Practices such as the Almajiri system in Northern Nigeria expose children to street begging and exploitation.⁵¹ Gender norms also play a role, with girls more likely to be engaged in domestic labour and boys in physically demanding work. These entrenched cultural beliefs hinder the internalization of ILO standards, as communities may not perceive child labour as a violation of rights but rather as a socio-economic necessity.

Another major challenge is the uneven domestication of the Child Rights Act across Nigerian states.⁵² Some northern states have been reluctant to fully adopt the law due to religious and cultural considerations.⁵³ Weak data collection systems, corruption, insecurity, and inadequate public awareness equally undermine implementation efforts.⁵⁴ Reliable data is essential for effective policy formulation and monitoring. However, Nigeria faces significant challenges in this regard: Lack of comprehensive and up-to-date data on child labour Weak monitoring and evaluation systems Limited integration of data across agencies scholarly research notes

⁴⁵ Labour Act Cap L1 LFN 2004, ss 58–61; Child Rights Act 2003, s 28.

⁴⁶ C Anyanwu, 'Challenges of Enforcement of Child Rights in Nigeria' (2017) 5(1) *Nigerian Bar Journal*, 101, 109.

⁴⁷ ON Ibe, 'Poverty and Child Labour in Nigeria' (2019) 11 (4) *African Journal of Social Sciences* 55, 61–65.

⁴⁸ International Labour Organization and National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria Child Labour Survey 2022 (Abuja 2023) ch 3, 21–27.

⁴⁹ National Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey Nigeria 2021, ch 4, 75–80.

⁵⁰ PO Ebigo, 'Child Abuse in Africa: Nigeria as Focus' (2003) Vol 35 *International Journal of Early Childhood*, 95–113.

⁵¹ AR Mohammed, 'The Almajiri System and Child Rights Violations in Northern Nigeria' (2020) 8(1) *Kano Law Review* 120, 127–131.

⁵² Child Rights Act 2003, Part XIII.

⁵³ AA Oba, 'The Child Rights Act 2003 and the Challenges of Its Adoption in Nigeria' (2008) 9(2) *University of Benin Law Journal* 125, 135–138.

⁵⁴ International Labour Organization, Report of the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (2022) 423–427.

that the absence of “firm estimates” has historically impeded effective intervention strategies. In addition, awareness of child rights remains low among:

Parents and guardians Employers, Local communities. The ILO has emphasized the need for increased community education and awareness campaigns to improve compliance with existing laws.

Children displaced by conflict are particularly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labour.⁵⁵ Nigeria’s security challenges significantly exacerbate child rights violations. Armed conflicts and insurgencies, particularly involving groups such as Boko Haram, have: Forced children into armed conflict Increased child trafficking and exploitation Displaced millions into internally displaced persons (IDP) camps Children in these contexts are highly vulnerable to the worst forms of child labour, including forced labour and sexual exploitation. Additionally, insecurity disrupts education systems, making children more likely to enter the labour force prematurely.

Education is a critical tool for eliminating child labour, yet financial barriers limit access. Despite policies promoting free basic education, hidden costs persist, including: Uniforms and books Transportation Informal school fees Consequently, many families prioritize immediate economic survival over long-term educational investment. The data reveals that only a minority of children are exclusively in school, while a significant proportion combine schooling with work or are entirely outside the education system. International Labour Organization Low enrolment and high dropout rates perpetuate the cycle of poverty and child labour, undermining the objectives of ILO conventions.

Weak enforcement mechanisms represent another major challenge. Although Nigeria has laws prohibiting the worst forms of child labour, enforcement is often inconsistent and ineffective. Labour inspectors are too few to adequately monitor the vast informal sector, where most child labour occurs. The informal economy including agriculture, street vending, and domestic work is largely unregulated, making it difficult to detect violations. Corruption also undermines enforcement efforts. In some cases, offenders avoid prosecution through bribery or political influence. This weakens the deterrent effect of existing laws and allows violations to persist. Additionally, there is a lack of reliable data on child labour in Nigeria. Without accurate and up-to-date statistics, it is difficult for policymakers to design effective interventions or measure progress. Administrative coordination among relevant agencies is also inadequate. Overlapping responsibilities and lack of clear communication between institutions result in inefficiencies and duplication of efforts.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria has demonstrated formal commitment to international standards on children’s rights protection through the ratification of key ILO conventions and enactment of domestic legislation.⁵⁶ However, implementation remains weak due to poverty, cultural practices, legal inconsistencies, insecurity, and weak institutional capacity.⁵⁷ The 2022 National Child Labour Survey revealed that approximately 24.7 million Nigerian children aged 5–17 are engaged in child labour, while about 14.4 million are involved in hazardous work.⁵⁸ The researcher has been able to identify certain challenges leading to inefficiency of those laws and until those challenges have been tackled, children will continue to be violated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There should be intensive public awareness campaigns through seminars, workshops, social media, radio programmes, and community outreaches in local languages.⁵⁹ Government should ensure the uniform domestication and implementation of the Child Rights Act across all states.⁶⁰ Poverty alleviation measures, free quality education, improved healthcare, and employment opportunities should also be prioritized.⁶¹ A favourable system should be put in place in communities to allow for easy report of child violation cases. when an enabling environment free from shame and victimization is created, it provides the safety and trust needed for victims to speak up and report cases of child violation.

⁵⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Nigeria Emergency Update (2023) 3–7.

⁵⁶ ILO Convention No. 138; ILO Convention No. 182

⁵⁷ BO Nwabueze, *Constitutionalism in the Emergent States* (C. Hurst & Co 1973) ch 7, 201–205

⁵⁸ International Labour Organization and National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria Child Labour Survey 2022 (Abuja 2023) ch 5, pp 21–27.

⁵⁹ Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, National Policy on Child Protection in Nigeria (2021) ch 2, 6–12.

⁶⁰ Child Rights Act 2003, Parts I–XIII.

⁶¹ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, art 13; UNICEF Nigeria, Education and Child Protection Factsheet (2022) pp 2–5.

Furthermore, labour inspectors and law enforcement officers should receive adequate training and funding to effectively implement child protection laws. Government must demonstrate genuine political commitment by enacting and enforcing policies that prioritize the welfare and protection of children irrespective of cultural or religious opposition. Finally, there should be constitutional clarity recognizing 18 years as the uniform minimum age of a child in Nigeria.⁶²

Finally, it is recommended that a statutory time frame of six months be prescribed for the commencement and completion of proceedings involving children. This will restore in the hearts of the victims to get due Justice.

⁶² Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), s 17(3)(f).