

São Tomé and Príncipe

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1. INTRODUCTION

Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe (Portuguese: República Democrática de São Tomé e Príncipe), is an island country in the Gulf of Guinea, off the western equatorial coast of Central Africa. It consists of two archipelagos around the two main islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, about 150 km (93.21 mi) apart and about 250 and 225 km (155 and 140 mi) off the north-western coast of Gabon. With a population of 201,800 (2018 official estimate),[5][11] São Tomé and Príncipe is the second-smallest and second-least populous African sovereign state after Seychelles.

The islands were uninhabited until their discovery by Portuguese explorers in the 15th century. Gradually colonized and settled throughout the 16th century, they collectively served as a vital commercial and trade centre for the Atlantic slave trade. The rich volcanic soil and proximity to the equator made São Tomé and Príncipe ideal for sugar cultivation, followed later by cash crops such as coffee and cocoa; the lucrative plantation economy was heavily dependent upon African slaves. Cycles of social unrest and economic instability throughout the 19th and 20th centuries culminated in peaceful independence in 1975. São Tomé and Príncipe has since remained one of Africa's most stable and democratic countries.

The people of São Tomé and Príncipe are predominantly of African and mestiço descent, with most practicing Roman Catholicism. The legacy of Portuguese rule is also visible in the country's culture, customs, and music, which fuse European and African influences. São Tomé and Príncipe is a founding member state of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries

Geological history

The islands making up São Tomé and Príncipe were formed around approximately 30 million years ago due to volcanic activity in deep water along the Cameroon Line. Over time, interactions with seawater and periods of eruption have engendered a wide variety of different igneous and volcanic rocks on the islands with complex assemblages of minerals.

Independence (1975)

By the late 1950s, when other emerging nations across the African continent demanded their independence, a small group of São Toméans formed the Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe (MLSTP), which eventually established its base in nearby Gabon. Picking up momentum in the 1960s, events moved quickly after the overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship in Portugal in April 1974.

The new Portuguese regime was committed to the dissolution of its overseas colonies. In November 1974, their representatives met with the MLSTP in Algiers and

worked out an agreement for the transfer of sovereignty. After a period of transitional government, São Tomé and Príncipe achieved independence on 12 July 1975, choosing as the first president the MLSTP Secretary General Manuel Pinto da Costa.

In 1990, São Tomé became one of the first African countries to undergo democratic reform, and changes to the constitution – the legalization of opposition political parties – led to elections in 1991 that were nonviolent, free, and transparent. Miguel Trovoada, a former prime minister who had been in exile since 1986, returned as an independent candidate and was elected president. Trovoada was re-elected in São Tomé's second multiparty presidential election in 1996. The Party of Democratic Convergence won a majority of seats in the National Assembly, with the MLSTP becoming an important and vocal minority party. Municipal elections followed in late 1992, in which the MLSTP won a majority of seats on five of seven regional councils. In early legislative elections in October 1994, the MLSTP won a plurality of seats in the assembly. It regained an outright majority of seats in the November 1998 elections.

Presidential elections were held in July 2001. The candidate backed by the Independent Democratic Action party, Fradique de Menezes, was elected in the first round and inaugurated on 3 September. Parliamentary elections were held in March 2002. For the next four years, a series of short-lived opposition-led governments was formed.

The army seized power for one week in July 2003, complaining of corruption and that forthcoming oil revenues would not be divided fairly. An accord was negotiated under which President de Menezes was returned to office.[citation needed] The cohabitation period ended in March 2006, when a propresidential coalition won enough seats in National Assembly elections to form a new government.

In the 30 July 2006 presidential election, Fradique de Menezes easily won a second five-year term in office, defeating two other candidates Patrice Trovoada (son of former President Miguel Trovoada) and independent Nilo Guimarães. Local elections, the first since 1992, took place on 27 August 2006 and were dominated by members of the ruling coalition.[citation needed] On 12 February 2009, a coup d'état was attempted to overthrow President Fradique de Menezes. The plotters were imprisoned, but later received a pardon from President de Menezes.

Evaristo Carvalho was the President of São Tomé and Príncipe since 2016 elections, after winning over the incumbent President Manuel Pinto da Costa. President Carvalho is also Vice president of the Independent Democratic Action party (ADI). Patrice Emery Trovoada was Prime Minister since 2014 and he is the leader of Independent Democratic Action party (ADI).[36] In December 2018, Jorge Bom Jesus, the leader of the Movimento de Libertação de São Tomé e Príncipe-Partido Social Democrata (MLSTP-PSD), was sworn in as new prime minister.

In September 2021, the candidate of the centre-right opposition Independent Democratic Action (ADI), Carlos Vila Nova, won the presidential election. The

president is largely ceremonial figure, as the political power lies with the prime minister.

2. GEOGRAPHY AND DEMOGRAPHY

2.1 GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

The two islands that make up what is called São Tomé and Príncipe were formed 30 million years ago during the Oligocene era, due to volcanic activity beneath deep water along the Cameroon Line. The volcanic soils of basalts and phonolites, dating to 3 million years, have been used for plantation crops since colonial times.

The islands of São Tomé and Príncipe, situated in the equatorial Atlantic and Gulf of Guinea about 300 and 250 km (190 and 160 mi), respectively, off the northwest coast of Gabon, constitute Africa's second-smallest country.[41][42] Both are part of the Cameroon volcanic mountain line, which also includes the islands of Annobón to the southwest, Bioko to the northeast (both part of Equatorial Guinea), and Mount Cameroon on the coast of Gulf of Guinea. São Tomé is 50 km (30 mi) long and 30 km (20 mi) wide and the more mountainous of the two islands. Its peaks reach 2,024 m (6,640 ft) – Pico de São Tomé. Príncipe is about 30 km (20 mi) long and 6 km (4 mi) wide. Its peaks reach 948 m (3,110 ft) – Pico de Príncipe. Swift streams radiating down the mountains through lush forest and cropland to the sea cross both islands. The Equator lies immediately south of São Tomé Island, passing through the islet Ilhéu das Rolas.

The Pico Cão Grande (Great Dog Peak) is a landmark volcanic plug peak, at 0°7'0"N 6°34'00"E in southern São Tomé. It rises over 300 m (1,000 ft) above the surrounding terrain and the summit is 663 m (2,175 ft) above sea level.

2.2 DEMOGRAPHY PROFILE

The total population is estimated at 201,800 in May 2018 by the government agency.[11] About 193,380 people live on São Tomé and 8,420 on Príncipe. The natural population increase is about 4,000 people per year.

Nearly all citizens are descended from people from different countries taken to the islands by the Portuguese from 1470 onwards. In the 1970s, two significant population movements occurred — the exodus of most of the 4,000 Portuguese residents and the influx of several hundred São Tomé refugees from Angola.

Sao Tome and Principe's youthful age structure – more than 60% of the population is under the age of 25 – and high fertility rate ensure future population growth. Although Sao Tome has a net negative international migration rate, emigration is not a sufficient safety valve to reduce already high levels of unemployment and poverty. While literacy and primary school attendance have improved in recent years, Sao Tome still struggles to improve its educational quality and to increase its secondary school completion rate. Despite some improvements in education and access to healthcare, Sao Tome and Principe has much to do to decrease its high poverty rate, create jobs, and increase its economic growth.

The population of Sao Tome and Principe descends primarily from the islands' colonial Portuguese settlers, who first arrived in the late 15th century, and the much larger number of African slaves brought in for sugar production and the slave trade. For about 100 years after the abolition of slavery in 1876, the population was further shaped by the widespread use of imported unskilled contract laborers from Portugal's other African colonies, who worked on coffee and cocoa plantations. In the first decades after abolition, most workers were brought from Angola under a system similar to slavery. While Angolan laborers were technically free, they were forced or coerced into long contracts that were automatically renewed and extended to their children. Other contract workers from Mozambique and famine-stricken Cape Verde first arrived in the early 20th century under short-term contracts and had the option of repatriation, although some chose to remain in Sao Tome and Principe.

Today's Sao Tomean population consists of mesticos (creole descendants of the European immigrants and African slaves that first inhabited the islands), forros (descendants of freed African slaves), angolares (descendants of runaway African slaves that formed a community in the south of Sao Tome Island and today are fishermen), servicais (contract laborers from Angola, Mozambique, and Cape Verde), tongas (locally born children of contract laborers), and lesser numbers of Europeans and Asians

Age structure

0-14 years: 39.77% (male 42,690/female 41,277)

15-24 years: 21.59% (male 23,088/female 22,487)

25-54 years: 31.61% (male 32,900/female 33,834)

55-64 years: 4.17% (male 4,095/female 4,700)

65 years and over: 2.87% (2020 est.) (male 2,631/female 3,420)

3. POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT

São Tomé and Príncipe has functioned under a multiparty system since 1990. With regard to human rights, there are guarantees on freedom of speech and the freedom to form opposition political parties.

São Tomé and Príncipe finished 11th out of the African countries measured by the Ibrahim Index of African Governance in 2010, a comprehensive reflection of the levels of governance in Africa.[46]

São Tomé and Príncipe is considered a free country, with very high freedom of speech, high political freedom and average economic freedom. In terms of corruption, São Tomé and Príncipe is a country with average corruption, although in recent years this level has been decreasing.[47] In tourism terms, the risk is low, equivalent to the risk of visiting France. São Tomé and Príncipe holds regular, competitive national elections and has undergone multiple transfers of power between rival parties. Civil liberties are generally respected, but poverty and corruption have weakened some institutions and contributed to dysfunction in the justice system.

3.1. GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE

Country Name Sao Tome and Principe

Full Country Name Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe

Local - Long Republica Democratica de Sao Tome e Principe

Local - Short Sao Tome e Principe

Etymology- history of name Sao Tome was named after Saint THOMAS the Apostle by the Portuguese who discovered the island on 21 December 1470 (or 1471), the saint's feast day; Principe is a shortening of the original Portuguese name of "Ilha do Principe" (Isle of the Prince) referring to the Prince of Portugal to whom duties on the island's sugar crop were paid

Government Type semi-presidential republic

Capital Name Sao Tome

Capital - geographic coordinate 0 20 N, 6 44 E

Capital Time Difference UTC 0 (5 hours ahead of Washington, DC, during Standard Time)

Independence 12 July 1975 (from Portugal)

National Holiday Independence Day, 12 July (1975)

Constitution approved 5 November 1975; revised several times, last in 2006

3.2. LEGAL SYSTEM

São Tomé legal system belongs to the civil law tradition. Internal sources of law (see 2.2.1 below for a more comprehensive overview) are grounded in São Tomé customary laws, Portuguese formal civil law based on the Napoleonic Code of 1804 and codified regulations. In colonial times, Portuguese law applied in São Tomé, although traditional customary laws were, in some cases, tolerated or implicitly accepted. The democratic Constitution echoed in Law 1/2003 is the fundamental law of the country and all laws and regulations must not contradict the principles and laws there incorporated. Sections 1, 2 and 3 of Article 13 of the Constitution approved by Law 1/2003 enumerate the sources of international law, international custom, general principles of international law, and treaty law. The “rules and principles of general or common international law” produce legal effects in the Santomean legal order automatically, without being required any type of incorporation.

4. ECONOMY OF SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

STP faces challenges that are typical for small and insular states and affect its ability to deal with shocks and maintain fiscal and external balance. The limited number of people and workers in the country often prevents the efficient production of goods and services at the scale needed to meet the demand of both local and export markets. Its remoteness and insularity increase export costs, preventing the country from diversifying its economy, and making it more vulnerable to terms-of-trade shocks. The indivisibility in the production of public goods, and the difficulty of providing services to a scattered population imply a high cost of public goods and a high level of public expenditure is required to provide adequate public services.

STP's growth in the last two decades was driven mostly by government expenditure propelled by external aid and government borrowing along with by agriculture, tourism and foreign direct investment fueled by expectations for oil production.

Gross domestic product (GDP) grew at an average rate of more than 4 percent between 2010 and 2019, though decelerating to below 3 percent in 2018-19 due to severe power outages, government arrears to local suppliers, and crowding out of domestic financing. Agriculture and fisheries were also affected by weather shocks and agricultural pests. The COVID-19 pandemic affected STP as the country recorded a high rate of infection and the tourism industry, which had been a driver of private sector growth, came to a halt in March 2020. However, with significant external financing, the government was able to offset tourism workers' lost income and other negative impacts on economic activity. According to official data, STP's real GDP grew by 3.1 percent in 2020 despite the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Higher public expenditures on COVID-19 relief and other projects financed by exceptional international financial support have supported this growth performance. Despite an expected deceleration due to the unwinding of the externally-financed fiscal impulse, real GDP growth is projected to reach 2.1 percent in 2021 due to a strong upturn of the agricultural sector led by the global economic recovery, and a mild improvement of the tourism sector as the international travel gradually resumes.

The World Bank has supported STP since the beginning of the pandemic by providing quick financial assistance, including a \$2.5 million grant for the health, additional financing for social protection, and budget support operation of \$10 million.

4.1 REAL GDP (PURCHASING POWER PARITY)

\$890 million (2020 est.)

\$860 million (2019 est.)

\$840 million (2018 est.)

note: data are in 2017 dollar

Real GDP growth rate

3.9% (2017 est.)

4.2% (2016 est.)

3.8% (2015 est.)

country comparison to the world: 76

Real GDP per capita

\$4,100 (2020 est.)

\$4,000 (2019 est.)

\$4,000 (2018 est.)

note: data are in 2017 dollars

country comparison to the world: 183

4.2 INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION PARTICIPATION

ACP, AfDB, AOSIS, AU, CD, CEMAC, CPLP, EITI (candidate country), FAO, G-77, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCs, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM (observer), IPU, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, NAM, OIF, OPCW, PCA, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, Union Latina, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO (observer)

4.3 MAIN INDUSTRIES CONTRIBUTING TO GDP

In 2020, the share of agriculture in São Tomé and Príncipe's gross domestic product was 13.99 percent, industry contributed approximately 13.24 percent and the services sector contributed about 70.83 percent.

4.4 IMPROVEMENT IN THE BANKING SYSTEM ACCESS TO FINANCE

The World Bank approved \$7 million to support the government of Sao Tome and Principe to continue making improvements in the banking system, access to finance, and national statistics. This additional financing for the ongoing Institutional Capacity Building Project will help scale-up activities with the Central Bank of Sao Tome and Principe and support system modernizations as part of the COVID-19 mitigation response.

While digital payment systems have seen a significant improvement in recent years Sao Tome and Principe, coverage is still very limited, and the financial infrastructure remains underdeveloped and unreliable, constraining access to payment services, particularly in rural areas and on the island of Príncipe. This inhibits digital payment and collection of taxes, payment of utility bills, wages and pensions, and disbursement of welfare benefits.

“A modern and efficient financial system is crucial for a country’s sustained development. It is, therefore, vital for STP to maintain the relevant gains of improving its financial system, particularly as it will be an added value for the tourism industry, which generates a lot of economic activity and is highly dependent on digital payment systems,” said Jean-Christophe Carret, World Bank Country Director to STP, “In addition, a modern financial system is also key for financial inclusion,” he added.

The additional financing comes at a crucial time as it will support the government’s response to COVID-19, using digital payments to scale-up social protection programs and promote financial inclusion. With this AF the Bank’s overall contribution to the project will be US\$19 million

5. CULTURE

The island country of São Tomé and Príncipe is located in the Gulf of Guinea. It has two main islands, São Tomé and Príncipe, surrounded by numerous small islands and islets. The country’s culture is heavily influenced by Portuguese and African cultures. Portuguese is the official language and is spoken by 98.4% of the population. Cabo Verdian, French, Forro, Angolar, and English are the other major languages. Christianity is the religion of the majority in the nation.

Catholic 55.7%, Adventist 4.1%, Assembly of God 3.4%, New Apostolic 2.9%,
Mana 2.3%, Universal Kingdom of God 2%, Jehovah's Witness 1.2%, other 6.2%,
none 21.2%, unspecified 1% (2012 est.)