**Operational Context**

In 2019, the estimated GDP per capita in São Tomé and Príncipe (STP) amounted to approximately USD 2,001. Recent World Bank estimates show that about one third of the population lives on less than USD 1.9 per day and more than two thirds of the population is poor, using a poverty line of USD 3.2 per day.

In the past decade, the country has made considerable progress in reducing child mortality and malnutrition, and in improving maternal health. However, in 2014, it was estimated that 17.2 percent of children aged 6-59 months were stunted, 8.8 percent were underweight, and 4 percent were suffering from wasting. The 2019 Human Development Index value of 0.625 puts the country in the medium human development category, ranking 135 out of 189 countries and above the Sub-Saharan Africa average.

With Sao Tome heavily dependent on food imports, food availability is unpredictable: there is no deep-sea port, and, in bad weather, landing is difficult on the country’s single short airstrip. In addition, no cereals are cultivated on the island. The country is prone to natural hazards such as floods and landslides, which negatively affect crop development and road access as well as destroy houses and household assets.

WFP assistance is focused on strengthening capacities of the Government to implement the national sustainable home-grown school feeding programme, which reaches over 50,000 children attending schools (around 25 percent of total population) and facilitating smallholder farmers’ access to markets.

Sao Tome and Principe confirmed its first case of COVID-19 on 6 April 2020.

WFP has been present in Sao Tome and Principe since 1976.

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**Operational Updates**

- As part of its efforts to support the Government in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP has provided technical and financial support to the National Secretary for Communication to organize a training course for 27 technicians and journalists from community radios across the country. During the 10 days of training, the technicians and journalists were able to learn about health, hygiene, food security and nutrition, gender and communication techniques to inform rural populations living in remote locations of the country. Although the activity has been financed by WFP, other UN agencies also contributed to developing the training modules, namely UNICEF, UNDP, WHO and UNFPA.

- Within the scope of the project “Ensuring the access of most vulnerable families to food and working condition facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic”, WFP, in partnership with the national Support Centre for Rural Development (CADR), organized a training on 14 and 15 January, for 15 vulnerable households from Agua Grande District, in Sao Tome island, on transforming domestic waste in fertilizers. The beneficiaries also received individual containers to store food and/or water for domestic use.

- On 15 January, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development, in partnership with WFP and AfDB has officially launched the agricultural assessment in the country. The event was chaired by the Minister of Agriculture and attended by WFP representative, the PRIASA II Project coordinator, funded by AfDB and the Vice-President of the National Institute of Statistics. The assessment co-financed by WFP and AfDB, will enable the data collection on local production and the identification of the smallholder farmers’ needs.

- A total of 1,257 cases of COVID-19 (more 243 cases compared to the previous month) was confirmed in the country for the month of January, with no deaths reported by WHO and the Ministry of Health. Due to the significant increase in the number of cases during this second outbreak of COVID-19, the Government re-activated the state of emergency and reinforced the mitigation measures.

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**In Numbers**

USD 0.3 m six months (February 2021 – July 2021) net funding requirements

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**Main photo: Credit:** WFP/J orcilia Correia

**Caption:** Rural woman planting in her backyard during the COVID-19 pandemic
Challenges

- Programme implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic represents one of the major WFP challenges in Sao Tome and Principe in early 2021. The containment measures declared by the Government are affecting the implementation of activities and WFP’s capacity to organize in-person meetings with government counterparts, stakeholders and donors.

- The challenging funding environment is another concern for WFP in STP and might affect the implementation of an innovative home-grown school feeding programme linked to smallholder farmers’ market.

Partnerships

- The National School Feeding and Health Programme (PNASE), the National Council for Food Security and Nutrition (CONSAN) and the National Centre for Supporting Smallholder Farmers (CADR) remain WFP STP’s main partners.

- WFP is also partnering with UNICEF for the reopening of schools, local and international NGOs, namely HELPO and ADAPPA for the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Project and the African Development Bank for the database and information management system for the Ministry of Agriculture.

Donors

Donors to WFP Sao Tome and Principe in 2021 include the UN COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund and the Global Partnership for Education Fund.