



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES
CHANGING LIVES



WFP São Tomé and Príncipe Country Brief November 2022



Operational Context

In 2021, the estimated GDP per capita in São Tomé and Príncipe amounted to approximately USD 2,361.7. Recent World Bank estimates show that about one-third of Sao Tome and Principe's population lives on less than the lowest international poverty line of USD 1.90 per day, and over two-thirds of the population is poor, using the World Bank's higher poverty line of USD 3.20 per day.

In the past decade, the country has made considerable progress in reducing child mortality and malnutrition, and in improving maternal health. According to the 2021 Global Nutrition Report, Sao Tome and Principe has made progress to meet the target for stunting, with 11.7 percent of children under 5 years of age affected, which is lower than the average for the Africa region (31 percent). Sao Tome and Principe is also 'on course' for the target for wasting, with 4 percent of children under 5 years of age affected, which is lower than the average for the Africa region (6 percent). The 2021/2022 Human Development Index value of 0.618 maintains the country in the medium human development category, ranking 138 out of 191 countries and above the Sub-Saharan Africa average by 0.071 points. According to the same Human Development Report, São Tomé and Príncipe has a Gender Inequality Index (GII) value of 0.907, ranking it 138 out of 191 countries in the 2021/2022 index.

With São Tomé 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.

On 28 and 29 December 2021, and in March 2022, São Tomé was hit by tropical storms of high intensity that destroyed more than 670 hectares of production, affecting more than 1,500 producers, including 1,000 horticulture families and 500 livestock farmers and fishermen. WFP's assistance is focused on strengthening capacities of the Government to implement the national home-grown school feeding programme, facilitate smallholder farmers' access to markets and help save lives when a crisis erupts.

Population: **225,000**

2021 Human Development Index ranking: 138 out of 191 countries

Income Level: **Lower middle**

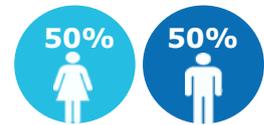
Chronic malnutrition: **17 percent of children aged 6-59 months**

In Numbers

No food assistance distributed

USD 2.8 million six-month (December 2022 - May 2023) net funding requirements

1124 people assisted in November 2022



Operational Updates

- In November, WFP engaged with the Brazilian Embassy, on food assistance to crisis-affected populations. Discussions focused on beneficiary selection criteria and transfer modality. A Brazilian-funded assistance is planned to begin in early 2023.
- From 1 to 18 November, with WFP support, the Government distributed 40,043 vegetable plants to 281 families in the districts of Me-Zochi, Cantagalo, Lobata and Lembá, under the emergency assistance to families affected by December 2021 and March 2022 floods.
- In November, WFP continued talks with FAO and IFAD on South-South Collaboration and Triangular Cooperation, - to enhance the sustainability of the school feeding. This cooperation will facilitate knowledge and best practices exchange, as the Government expects to learn how best to implement a nutritious home-grown school feeding through skills and innovative solutions from countries in the same context. The draft concept note is being aligned with the country's priorities and will be submitted to the Government for endorsement and implementation in the coming months.
- In late November 2022, WFP met with the new Government authorities to discuss priorities for the upcoming National Development Plan. In this context, WFP also met with international financial institutions (World Bank, African Development Bank, and the International Monetary Fund), to understand their priorities for the coming years and potential synergies with WFP's programs, as the timeframes of strategic plans are aligned. Among the priority areas discussed were school feeding, support to smallholder farmers, and shock-responsive social protection.

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Photo credit: © Milton Machel/WFP

Photo caption: With WFP support, the Government distributed 40,043 vegetable plants to 281 families in November

Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)		
Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
1.5 m	0.8 m	2.8 m

Strategic Result 5: Developing countries have strengthened capacities to implement SDGs

Strategic Outcome 1: The Government of São Tomé and Príncipe has strengthened capacity to implement an environmentally and socially sustainable, gender-transformative and smallholder-friendly home-grown school meals (HGSM) programme and related food security and nutrition policies and programmes nationwide by 2030.
Focus area: Root Causes

- Activities:**
- Provide capacity strengthening (including through SSTC) to the Government in the design, management, and coordination of an environmentally and socially sustainable, gender-transformative and nutrition-sensitive HGSM programme and related FS&N policies and programmes.
 - Provide capacity strengthening and coordination support to the Government in providing incentives for sustainable and equitable local food value chains and stimulating smallholder agricultural markets.

Strategic Result 2: Access to food

Strategic Outcome 2: Crisis-affected populations including school-aged children in targeted areas are able to meet their basic food and nutrition needs during and in the aftermath of crisis.
Focus area: Crisis Response

- Activities:**
- Provide food and nutrition assistance to crisis-affected populations through in-kind transfers

Operational Updates

- On 30 November, the Government and the United Nations signed a new cooperation framework for the next five years (2022-2027), estimated at USD 150 million, to foster the country's sustainable development. WFP is one of the 18 UN agencies signatories of the framework, which for the first time has the World Bank and African Development Bank as consignees. Under the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), WFP will engage on two strategic outcomes: inclusive social systems; and sustainable green and blue economy.

Challenges

- WFP's funding situation is still of concern. The six-month net funding requirements for crisis response and government capacity strengthening now stand at USD 2.8 million.
- On 25 November, a failed raid on military barracks - allegedly in an attempt to subvert the constitutional order- triggered a political crisis under the new Government, sworn on 14 November. A public outcry over human rights violations perpetrated by the military and critique from civil society and opposition parties hold the country in political turmoil while the economic crisis worsens. The UN Country Representative has intervened to ensure respect for human rights, peace, and security. The UN Secretary-General deployed special envoys to work with the authorities for a peaceful and just crisis resolution. The political instability may affect the new Government credibility in the international community, thus affecting WFP ability to mobilize resources to help the country address the current social and economic crisis.
- The Government post-COVID-19 pandemic assistance to vulnerable families ended in November. The World Bank-funded unconditional cash transfer on by-monthly benefits of STDB 900 (USD 42) covered 15,325 families (79 percent of the beneficiaries are women) for 18 months. According to the World Bank, 4500 families will continue to be assisted under the government's regular social protection system. It leaves 10,825 families vulnerable to an economic crisis if an emergency response is not ensured, while cost-of-living is soaring: the annual inflation rate is at its new highest, 24 percent in October 2022, from 21 percent in the previous month. Every month, consumer prices rose by three percent, according to the National Statistics Institute (INE). Meanwhile, the Government does not have enough reserves to cover one month of imports, with net international reserves now at USD 12.16 million. Sao Tome and Principe depends on more than 80 percent of imports.

Donors

Donors to WFP Sao Tome and Principe in 2022 include the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, the SDG Joint Fund and other UN funds and agencies.