



World Food Programme

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# WFP Sao Tome and Principe

## Country Brief

January - March 2023



### Operational Context

In 2021, the estimated GDP per capita in São Tomé and Príncipe (STP) amounted to approximately USD 2,361.7. World Bank estimates in 2022 show that about 15.3 percent of the population lives with less than USD 1.15 per day while another 29 percent of the population is poor, living under a poverty line of USD 3.65 per day.

In the past decade, the country made considerable progress in reducing child mortality and malnutrition, and in improving maternal health. However, increasing food prices, the limited access to public services, and inadequate diets, pushed vulnerable groups into malnutrition, especially children of 5-11 years old. The anaemia rate among children under 5 years old in STP reached 59 percent in 2022. This rate diminished by as little as 3.2 percent from 2010 to 2022.

The Consumer Price Index increased at an average of 3.30 percent per month in 2022. The 2022 record inflation rates were due to the combination of various factors including the residual effect of the COVID-19 pandemic, the devaluation of the local currency, the price of products, debt, and energy costs. Meanwhile, food baskets represented 73 percent of the average family expenditures. The energy sector also affected the food and nutrition security. Inefficiencies in this sector resulted in two major energy crises that hit the Santomean economy in recent years.

In 2022, WFP supported the Government in its emergency response, helping with the implementation of the national contingency plans to reduce the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 pandemic, persistent energy shortages, the floods at end-2021 and early-2022, and a sharp increase in global food and fuel prices.

With WFP focused on assistance to the most vulnerable schoolchildren, support to small holder farmers and to boost local food value chains, São Tomé and Príncipe's economy will continue to be facing serious challenges and experiencing large imbalances, sluggish growth, and high inflation in 2023.

Population: **215,056**

2021 Human Development Index ranking: **138 out of 191 countries**

Income level: **lower middle**

Chronic malnutrition: **17.2 percent of children aged 6-59 months**

**Contact info:** Edna Peres ([edna.peres@wfp.org](mailto:edna.peres@wfp.org))

**Country Director:** Wanja Kaaria

**Further information:** <https://www.wfp.org/countries/sao-tome-and-principe>

**Photo credit:** © Jorcilina Correia/WFP

**Photo caption:** With WFP and Portugal co-funding, PNASE started delivering animal proteins to schools, to enhance the nutritional value of school meals

## In Numbers

No people assisted during this period

**USD 1.9 million** six-month (April 2023 - September 2023) net funding requirements

### Operational Updates

- In February, WFP organised a workshop chaired by the Minister of Education, Culture and Sciences, to present the SABER-School Feeding report and recommendations. The event aimed at aligning the study findings with the Education sector policies and strategies to enhance home-grown school feeding. SABER methodology enables to diagnose the political and institutional framework of school feeding. During the workshop, WFP presented the main strategic orientations of its new programmatic cycle (the Second-Generation Country Strategic Plan) and facilitated discussions between national partners and stakeholders to collect subsidies to inform the São Tomé and Príncipe (STP) 2G CSP 2024-2028.
- In February, National School Feeding and Health Program (PNASE) started delivering to schools swine meat produced in a pigsty installed in PNASE facilities, under a project co-funded by WFP aiming to enhance the nutritional value of school meals through animal protein intake. At least 7,594 schoolchildren from 25 schools in Cantagalo and Lobata Districts benefited from 2.1 metric tons of meat distributed in February and March, an initiative implemented by the Portuguese NGO Helpo, a WFP partner.
- On March 8<sup>th</sup>, WFP funded and participated in the International Women's Day celebrations, which included a women's gathering organised by the National Institute for Gender Promotion (INPG), and a workshop organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries to discuss the challenges faced by women in the agriculture sector.
- On March 10<sup>th</sup>, PNASE, the Ministry of Education, and WFP celebrated the African Day of School Feeding with schoolchildren and the school community of Mendes da Silva Basic School, in Cantagalo District. Meanwhile, a PNASE team attended a conference on the African Day of School Feeding in Angola, with WFP's support. PNASE shared its experience in the local production of vegetables and animal protein. PNASE also presented the challenges of school meals menus' management in STP.
- In March, the installation of a food crops processing unit started in Uba Budo, as well as the construction of a water capturing and drainage/irrigation systems in the agricultural community of Camavo. Through this activity, a small industrial unit will transform maize into flour and dry beans to supply the national markets, including the school feeding market. The Camavo community will supply the food crops. This two-year project (2022 – 2024), funded by the SDG Joint Fund, is led by WFP, and jointly implemented by the Government and other participating UN agencies (ILO, UNFPA and UN-HABITAT).

Country Strategic Plan (2019 – 2024)		
12 Months Funding Requirements (in USD)	2023 Available Contributions (in USD)	Six-Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
2.0 m	0.3 m	1.9 m

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

**Strategic Outcome 1:** The Government of Sao Tome and Principe 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

- In the end of March, WFP’s Country Director (CD) for Cameroon and STP visited STP for three days and delivered her letter of credentials to the Government. During her mission, the CD met with the Prime Minister and Head of Government, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities, the Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, and the Minister of Education, Culture and Sciences. The CD also met representatives of communities and civil society, other UN agencies, donor representatives and implementing partners. She shared WFP’s new strategic approach with the Government and discussed further support to help the country attain its vision by 2030: through continuing support to capacity strengthening via activities which enhance small producers value chain and school feeding, and also through climate change adaptation and mitigation efforts.

## Communication

- On March 1st, WFP supported the Minister of Education, Culture and Sciences in delivering the country’s message at the high-level global celebration of the eighth year of the African School Feeding Day, simultaneously hosted by Ethiopia and Morocco. In a recorded video, the Minister praised WFP’s partnership while underlining her Government’s commitment to invest in a home-grown school feeding. The live-streamed event was organised by the African Union Commission with the support of WFP, Regional Economic Communities, and other partners under the theme: “Boosting Local Food Procurement Systems and Regional Value Chains in the Context of the AfCFTA (Free Trade Area of the African Continent) for School Feeding Based on Sustainable Local Products”.

## Challenges

- WFP’s funding situation remains critical; the level of underfunding stands at 119 percent for the next six months (April – September 2023) and 114 percent for the next 12 months.
- São Tomé and Príncipe's economic crisis is still of concern; the annual inflation rate climbed further to 25.5 percent in January 2023, from 25.2 percent in December 2022. The inflation rate is expected to reach 25 percent by the end of this quarter, according to Trading Economics global macro models and analysts’ expectations.

Donors to WFP’s CSP include the Government of Sao Tome and Principe, the SDG Joint Fund and other UN funds and agencies.