



World Food Programme

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Sao Tome & Principe WFP Country Brief

January – March 2025

Operational Context

Sao Tome and Principe, an isolated lower-middle-income island nation, grapples with high trade costs and climate vulnerabilities. Despite these economic challenges, São Tomé and Príncipe graduated from the United Nations' Least Developed Countries (LDC) category in December 2024, becoming the eighth country to do so.

This milestone reflects improvements in education, health, and per capita income. However, the transition presents risks, including potential reductions in external financial support. Progress has been made in reducing child mortality, malnutrition, and improving maternal health over the past decade, yet food insecurity remains. The country is one of the few in Africa with universal school feeding coverage. Yet, education challenges persist, affecting school enrolment and participation in the national school feeding programme. Of nearly 82,000 school-aged children, only 56 percent are enrolled and can benefit from school meals under the National School Meals and Health Programme (PNASE).

WFP in Sao Tome and Principe focuses on strengthening government capacities, assisting the most vulnerable schoolchildren, supporting small farmers, and promoting local food value chains. In 2024, WFP remained focused on supporting the Government to address the needs of the most vulnerable populations, particularly school-aged children, women, and smallholder farmers.



Income Level: **Lower middle**

2023/2024 Human Development Report: **141 out of 193 countries**

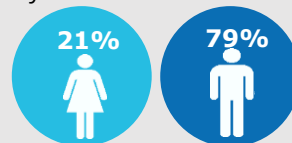
Population: **215,056**

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

In Numbers

US\$ 1.8 million six-month (April 2025 – September 2025) net funding requirements

50,000 children can receive food assistance in the event of crisis and emergency



Operational Updates

- In January, a training session for canteen workers in good food and nutrition practices began in São Tomé and Príncipe, organised by the National School Feeding and Health Programme (PNASE) in partnership with WFP to equip them with the necessary tools to improve school meals quality, guaranteeing healthier, safer food in line with the demands of the education sector. The training reinforced the use of local products, correct food handling practices and the fight against waste, with a focus on providing children with hot, nutritious meals. This initiative stands out as essential for improving the management of school meals and promoting healthy eating habits in São Tomé and Príncipe's schools.
- In March, at the African Day of School Feeding, celebrated in the Central African Republic, São Tomé and Príncipe was represented by the Minister of Education, Isabel Maria Abreu, the PNASE nutritionist, Youdmila Vila Nova, and the Head of the WFP Office. The delegation highlighted the country's commitment to free and universal school feeding programmes, with the Minister reinforcing the importance of continued investment in this area and participating as a speaker on African public policies. The nutritionist addressed school feeding as a sustainable tool against the impacts of climate change, reaffirming São Tomé, and Príncipe's role as a reference in promoting child nutrition.
- In March, São Tomé and Príncipe celebrated African School Feeding Day with decentralised activities, including a special ceremony at the Iô Grande school, promoted by PNASE in partnership with WFP.
- The initiative aimed to highlight the progress and importance of school feeding in the country, which currently provides nutritious meals to around 48,000 children, improving their health, attendance, and school performance. The action reinforced the commitment to a sustainable food system, based on the consumption of local products, which strengthens both education and the economy and agricultural communities of São Tomé and Príncipe.

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Photo credit: © Jorcilina Correia/WFP

Photo caption: Collaboration that feeds the future: PAM and PNASE together in the school kitchen for better nutrition

Country Strategic Plan (2024-2028)

Total Requirements (US\$)	Total Received (US\$)
15.3 million	2 million
2025 Requirements (US\$)	Six-Month (Apr-Sep) Net Funding Requirements (in US\$)
2.9 million	1.8 million

SDG target 1: Access to food

Strategic Outcome 1: Crisis-affected populations in Sao Tome and Principe are able to meet their food and other essential needs, before, during and in the aftermath of emergencies and disasters.
Focus area: *Crisis response.*

Activity 1: Provide assistance to affected populations before, during and after crisis to meet their essential needs.

SDG target 9: Capacity building

Strategic Outcome 2: By 2030, the Government has strengthened capacity to deliver a sustainable school feeding programme as part of strengthened social protection and resilient food systems.
Focus area : *Resilience building*

Activity 2: Provide capacity strengthening support to the Government and stakeholders with the aim of enabling them to deliver a nutrition-sensitive and gender-sensitive green and sustainable home-grown school feeding programme.

Activity 3: Provide technical assistance to the Government and stakeholders to support food system actors with the aim of enabling them to increase local nutritious, green, and sustainable food production and access to markets, including schools.

Activity 4: Provide capacity strengthening to the Government and stakeholders with the aim of enabling them to improve emergency preparedness and response, anticipatory action, early warning, and shock-responsive social protection systems, with a climate resilient and environmentally sustainable approach.

- The Head of the WFP Office in São Tomé and Príncipe, met with the new Minister of Agriculture to congratulate him on his appointment and reinforce the organisation's commitment to the agricultural sector. At the meeting, strategic projects were discussed, such as the Camavo irrigation system, which aims to increase farmers' resilience to climate change and strengthen food security. WFP reaffirmed its willingness to continue supporting the Government in promoting sustainable agriculture, with a focus on access to markets and rural development.

Communication

- As part of the Day of the African Child, WFP and PNASE organised a special activity at the Iô Grande primary school in São Tomé and Príncipe, with the aim of promoting children's rights and encouraging the consumption of local products in schools. The action took place in a vulnerable fishing community, where school meals are an essential source of nutrition. The children took part in educational activities such as painting and drawing food wheels based on the school gardens, received prizes and teaching materials, and shared a traditional meal made with local produce, reinforcing the importance of healthy eating, community production and valuing the national food culture.



Figure 1Celebrating African School Feeding Day: children inspiring the future

Joint Activities

- WFP visited schools to assess infrastructure and energy needs, and is working on supplying equipment for school canteens. This is part of a joint UN project with WHO and UNDP to improve schools.

Challenges

- WFP's funding situation continues to be critical; the level of underfunding is 85 percent for the coming months given the current context.

Donors

Donors to WFP's CSP include the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, the Portugal cooperation and other member states, the UK Government, the SDG Joint Fund, the Private Sector, and other UN funds and agencies.