



UNITED NATIONS
SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE



2021
**UN ANNUAL
RESULTS REPORT**
SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE





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FOREWORD

On behalf of the United Nations Sao Tomé and Príncipe, I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2021, highlighting the key results of the UN during 2021, which has been marked by the socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Due to the challenges of the multidimensional impact of the Coronavirus, the UN's activities have been upscaled to support the health system, entrepreneurs most affected by COVID and the social protection system to cover the most vulnerable. I would like to thank the development partners who have supported us during this post-Covid period in order to preserve the development gains of Sao Tome and Principe.

Despite the socio-economic impact of Covid, the country has continued its path forward towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The country is also on its way to graduate from the Low Development Country status to a middle-income country, as its development achievements are worth to be highlighted. To this effect, it is presenting its first Voluntary National Report on the progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals from 2015, date of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, until 2021 to the High-Level Political Forum of the ECOSOC of the UN in July 2022.

The annual report 2021 of the Sustainable Development Network credits Sao Tome and Principe with a score of 58.8 out of 100 in the achievement of the 17 SDGs, which ranks the country 124th among 165 countries which were assessed.

I am honored to have been nominated to the position of United Nations Resident Coordinator, representing the Secretary General of the UN in Sao Tomé and Príncipe, and to serve in this beautiful country. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Sao Tomé and Principe for the trust in the UN system. I hope that the current cooperation with UN agencies, funds and programs will be further consolidated. This report reflects the vision of the Secretary General of a more transparent and accountable UN system at country level, focused on concrete results for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, for a more sustainable and egalitarian society, which leaves no one behind and puts solidarity of the most vulnerable at the heart of its actions.



Eric Overvest
United Nations Resident Coordinator
Sao Tome and Principe

UNITED NATIONS IN SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

The United Nations House, inaugurated in 1995, hosts all UN agencies, apart from FAO. However, the FAO is in the process of relocating to the UN House, foreseen to happen in 2022. The building also houses the World Bank and the African Development Bank. The United Nations Country Team in Sao Tome and Principe is represented by 8 agencies, although some have their main office in neighboring countries. The main resident agencies include, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Fund for Population (UNFPA), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Program (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) office in Sao Tome is overseen by the Representative based in Libreville Gabon. The International Labor organization (ILO) office in Sao Tome is overseen by the Representative based in Yaoundé Cameroon. UN-Habitat's office in Sao Tome is overseen by the regional office in Nairobi.

Several non-resident agencies provide support to Sao Tome and Principe such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which all five are based in Yaoundé Cameroon. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provides support to Sao Tomé and Principe from its office in Senegal.

The UN staff in the country consists of around 100 personnel to support the UN operations, of whom around 12 % are international staff.

Among the UN staff, the United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV) supports with 15 UN volunteers (six woman and nine men) in two UN agencies (UNDP and UNICEF). The UNV has promoted volunteerism in development and has been an important mechanism to enhance youth inclusion in UN programming.

The UN Resident Coordinator acts as the overall leader of the agencies operating in the country, supported by his office (RCO), and attached to the Secretariat, reporting to the Secretary General of the UN. The UN team is committed in supporting the Government of Sao Tomé and Principe in the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.





STATISTICS OF SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

Population



201,874

61% of the population is under the age of **25**
Population median age of **18.6**

Food Security



10% of the population is food insecure

Source: IOF (2017)

Inflation and Grow



9,5% in 2021

Real GDP 2021 (In Million Dollars) - **478.2**

GDP Per capita (In Dollars) - **2,144**

Source: INE 2022, IMF estimates 2021

Nutrition



4,5% of children under 5 are malnourished (overweight)

11,7% of children under 5 are undernourished

Source: MICS 2019

Poverty



66,7%

Poverty, defined as US\$1.90 per day : **25,9%**

Extreme poverty: **47%**

Source: IOF (2017)

Life expectancy at birth



70.4%

Life expectancy at birth, female (years) **72.8**

Life expectancy at birth, male (years) **68**

Source: HDR (2019)

Unemployment



8.90%

Source: IOF (2017)

Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV)



13.2% Women (15-49) that ever in her life been a victim of physical violence

3.6% Women (15-49) that suffered violence in the past 12 months

Source: MICS 2019

Mortality Rate



22.4 Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)



74 Maternal mortality (per 100,000 live births)

Source: MICS 2019

Woman in politics



12% of members of parliament are women

Source: Parliamentary elections 2018

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene



44,7% Population using improved sanitation facilities

97,5% Household using improved drinking water sources

Source: MICS 2019

Education



92,8% Literacy rate, adult (% ages 15 and older)

Expected years of schooling **12.7**

Expected years of schooling, female (years) **12.8**, male (years) **12.6**

Population with at least some secondary education (% ages 25 and older) **40.8**
(Female **31.5**, Male **45.8**)

Primary school dropout rate (% of primary school cohort) **7.3**

Source: HDR 2019 and MICS 2019



CHAPTER 1: Socioeconomic and Political Snapshot and Development Trends

Social Context



The social indicators in Sao Tome and Principe have shown a continuous improvement over the past year. In 2019, the adjusted net attendance rate for basic education was 90%, for 1st cycle secondary education it amounted to 55% and for 2nd cycle secondary education it was 30%. In 2020, about 85% of the population had access to improved water sources and 62.5% access to basic sanitation. About 83% of the population had access to electricity in 2019, but the country faces serious challenges in the regular supply of energy. The import of fuel to generate electricity is one of the main factors that contribute to the increase in foreign debt. That is why the country is committed to transitioning to clean energy and greater energy efficiency.

In terms of social protection, the system has recently been strengthened with an increase in beneficiaries, mostly due to the COVID pandemic. Before COVID, only an estimated 7 % of households met the vulnerability criteria and received social transfers or benefits, as evidenced by the data from the most recent MICS household survey in 2019) while around 43 % of workers were included in the social security system, according to data from the

social security system, according to data from the National Social Security Institute INSS. The budget for social security and assistance increased from 0.13% of GDP in 2019, to 1.52% of GDP in 2020 in response to the COVID pandemic.

The newly implemented Social Registry has recorded around 21 000 vulnerable households in 2021, while 3 remaining districts are still to complete the vulnerability assessment. In 2020, around 16,314 households benefited from the social protection system (data from INSS). About 33% of the 2022 state budget is allocated to the education, health and security and social assistance sectors (17.0%, 12.9% and 3.1%, respectively).

The National School Feeding and Health Program (PNASE) is the main food safety net programme in Sao Tome and Principe, benefiting over 50,000 thousand children (approximately 25% of the population) aged 3-14 years. The PNASE plays an essential role in ensuring the food security and nutrition of schoolchildren, especially the most vulnerable, and improving national school enrolment and retention rates.



Politics and Institutions

Politically, 2021 was marked by the organization of the presidential elections with the participation of a historically high number of candidates (19 in total), which resulted in the election of Carlos Manuel Vila Nova for a five-year mandate that spans from 2021 to 2026. The election process was decided in the second round and the elected President reached 57.6% of the votes cast. The inauguration of the new President took place on 2 October.

The upcoming 2022 legislative and local elections will be another milestone in the consolidation of the young democracy, that has been a model for many African countries, and which has shown frequent political parties' alternation.

Economic Background

In 2021, the Santomean authorities continued their efforts to preserve macroeconomic stability in a context where the effects of shocks associated with the health and economic crisis, caused by the COVID pandemic, continued to persist. Accumulated inflation remained moderate, at 9.5%, in line with that observed in recent years. However, economic growth slowed (IMF estimates put real GDP growth

at 2.1 % in 2021 compared to 3% in 2020), mainly due to lower resource inflows to finance the economy and the delay in fully restoring and recovering the tourism sector from the effects of the pandemic crisis, which accounts for about 3% of GDP.

The macroeconomic outlook for 2022 is surrounded by uncertainties and pressure to increase price levels, because of rising fuel and food product prices in the international market, reflecting the adverse impacts of the war in Ukraine and its shocks caused in the global food supply value chain. Sao Tomé and Príncipe is a main importer of food products, and the price increases will have important repercussions on the purchasing power. Sao Tomé and Príncipe has one of the highest share of food items in household expenditures in Africa as measured by the Consumer Price Index basket.

An unknown factor that may impact tremendously on the country's future is the oil exploration, which has been unsuccessful since the first announcements of oil presence were made. Hopes are high for the ultra-deep-sea drilling in Sao Tomé and Príncipe's exclusive economic zone during the first half of 2022, in order to assess the existence of oil resources in commercially viable quantities. Successful drilling results may have a huge impact on the prospects for achieving the SDGs.



Climate Change and Impacts

The year 2021 was also marked by heavy rains and floods that took place on 28 and 29 December, causing severe damage to some of the infrastructure, mainly in the north of the island of Sao Tomé and affecting the living conditions of the already vulnerable populations in coastal areas. The adverse impact of the floods due to erosion, inundations and salination of coastal areas due to rising sea levels, reflects the huge vulnerabilities of the islands with respect to climate change, and thus the need for greater resilience. Most of the population lives in coastal areas.

The physical characteristics of the islands, an undiversified economic model with a strong component of subsistence agriculture and fisheries, pose challenges for the sustainable development of the country in the context of climate change.

Financing for development

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development requires a substantial increase in investment and the various sources of financing for the SDGs. Sao Tomé and Príncipe's financial landscape is dominated by public financing and the inflow of external resources (ODA was 12.3% of GNP in 2020 while FDI amounted to 9.96% of GDP, against 1.9% of GDP for bank credit). Diaspora remittances remained low (1.82% of GDP in 2020).

Only 48.9% of the state budget is financed through domestic resources and 51.1% through grants and loans. Around 95% of the public investment budget is being financed with external resources, against 5% domestically generated resources.



CHAPTER 2: Major achievements of the United Nations System in 2021

2.1 - Cooperation Framework

The Cooperation with the Government of Sao Tome and Principe is based on the 2030 Agenda and the 17 SDGs, which puts the people left or in risk of being left behind at the heart of UN action. The impact of UN interventions is therefore measured by the results achieved for the benefit of specific groups of the population who are in a vulnerable situation, either due to inequality or discrimination and are disproportionately dependent on basic public services, social protection mechanisms and informal support networks, which were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The available data show that these groups have higher level of unemployment and underemployment and are disproportionately represented in insecure and risky informal employment. Furthermore, they have limited participation in the political arena and are exposed to economic, environmental and climatic shocks.

The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2017-2021 was extended to 2022 due to COVID and has been aligned with the national development priorities as expressed the National Transformation Agenda 2030 and the National Development Plan 2017-2021. The UNDAF focuses on results around three strategic priority areas, namely:

Social Cohesion, through its Outcome 1:

Disparities and inequalities are reduced at all levels through the effective participation of vulnerable and prioritized groups, and the development and use by these groups of protection services and basic social services;

Good Governance, through its Outcome 2:

Increased efficiency of central and local public administration and oversight institutions, with guaranteed citizen participation, especially for youth and women;

Economic Growth, through its Outcome 3:

Employment and competitiveness are ensured through economic diversification, the development of resilience to climate change, which improves the quality of life of poor and vulnerable populations in rural and urban areas as well as access to financial assistance and access to market for young people and women.

The main achievements of the UN system in these priority areas in 2021, are listed in the following sections.







2.2 - Social Cohesion

During 2021, the COVID-response of the UN moved to a more longer-term approach, promoting vaccination and addressing the socio-economic impact, in particular through the strengthening of the social protection system to protect the most vulnerable, the adaptation of the education system to COVID realities and the strengthening of the governance of the health system. To this effect, the UN agencies (UNICEF WHO UNFPA UNDP and WFP) supported the Ministry of Health with integrated policy advice linking health, education and economic needs of the population during COVID. The UN system supported in developing the COVID National Vaccine Deployment Plan, including strengthening the cold chain, within the COVAX platform, in partnership with the GAVI Alliance and the World Bank.

A capacity building program was implemented for the management and maintenance of the cold chain storage. At the beginning of 2022, the full vaccination rate registered close to 40 % of the adult population, and Sao Tome and Principe figures among the top 10 countries in Africa in terms of vaccination rate for COVID.

The UN provided support to Government to collecting, analyzing and disseminating routine health and child protection information for planning purposes. The new Social Registry, covering a holistic approach to socio-economic vulnerabilities, also constituted an important milestone which improved the socio-economic information of vulnerable individuals and households, allowing for better determination of potential eligibility for social programs, and for better planning, budgeting and policy implementation. The UN supported the Ministry of Health to add new indicators to monitor non-communicable diseases, as well as access and coverage of health services are being added in the single health information system (DHIS2) which also has been strengthened to monitor COVID epidemiological trends and COVID vaccine coverage.

In order to support the review of the governance of the health sector, the UN assessed Sao Tomé and Príncipe's progress towards Universal Health Coverage and to define a roadmap for accelerating progress in the health system, resulting in key recommendations (i) from a disease to person



centered integrated health services, covering the whole spectrum of care ; (ii) revitalizing the primary health care and rationalization of the use of the hospital; (iii) reform of the current system of gratuity of health services while ensuring effective access for the most vulnerable and (iv) the need for evidence based planning.

As result of UN advocacy efforts, significant progress towards vaccine independence has been done and Sao Tome e Principe met the co-financing commitments. The vaccination coverage of the “6-in-1 vaccine” DTP-Hib-Heb3 in children under 23 months has been 96%. For the first time, the HPV vaccine was introduced with UN support, which allowed to vaccinate all girls from 10 to 12 years. Regarding Family Planning, the UN supported 38 health facilities with contraceptives, promotional materials, and training service providers to offer family planning services including long-term acting contraceptive methods. The UN also supplied health centres with essential medicines, mainly antibiotics, ORS, zinc and folic acid, to ensure continuity of maternal, neonatal and child health care services. Thanks to this effort, the number of children with pneumonia treated with antibiotics increased from 1 290 (2020) to 1 635 (2021).

The implementation of the Prevention of Maternal to Child Transmission strategy for HIV Aids under new updated guidelines produced very satisfactory results in reducing vertical transmission. Currently the country has an outstanding performance, meeting the ambitious target of 0 vertical transmission in 2021 which positions the country favorably to reach elimination of Mother to Child transmission by 2025.

Interventions in WASH, supported by the UN have focused mainly on promoting the end of open defecation through the community-led total sanitation (CLTS) approach, which adapts communication to the social and cultural context and allows intervening more effectively for access and acceptability of basic social services. Communication through community radio is strategic to reach the rural populations as well as communicating in local languages have been privileged. The UN supported the Ministry of Health to evaluate water and sanitation in 40 health facilities, including the Ayres de Menezes hospital, following the WASH/FIT/WHO tool developed for this purpose.

Moreover in 2021, support was given to the MICS6 validation through national workshops giving emphasis to children related data from an equity perspective. The development of the UN Socio-economic Impact Assessment and Socio-economic Response Plan to COVID, which was officially approved by the Government as the national response plan to the pandemic, provided a clear path to respond to the identified needs through the establishment of a responsive and scalable social protection system.

In terms of education, the UN supported the Ministry of Education to ensure the continuity of the teaching-learning process and the safe return of kids to school. The UN procured and distributed 995 solar radios among vulnerable families to allow them to attend the 95 TV and radio school lessons designed to this effect. The UN’s intense advocacy with Ministry of Education (including teachers’ unions) and Ministry of Health contributed to ensure a safe back to school, through the vaccination of teachers and other school staff (101% of first dose and 50% fully immunized), the installation of handwashing points in 93 schools benefiting 25,439 children and the training of 321 education staff on prevention measures.

The UN also supported policy reforms such as the decentralized preschool framework and the framework law for special education.





Key results in Social Cohesion

- 39.7 % of the population vaccinated with two doses COVID and 60 % with the first dose, as of end of December 2021;
- 600 health workers received different trainings to promote health and 123 community health agents were trained related to COVID vaccination, influenza surveillance, laboratory diagnostics and Covid-19 risk communication;
- 4 PCR machines to perform genomic sequencing were installed in national laboratories;
- 93 schools were equipped with handwashing points benefiting 25,439 children and 7,500 hygiene kits to safely return to school were distributed;
- 321 education staff countrywide were trained on measures for the prevention and maintenance of hand washing devices;
- Reduction the incidence of malaria particularly in Principe and in the district of Lembá where incidence went from 21/1000 in 2020 to 3/1000 inhabitants in 2021 lock-down;
- 7500 children received school kits (backpack, pencil case, notebook, etc.);
- 995 solar radios were distributed to vulnerable families to allow the continuity of the teaching-learning process during the COVID lock-down;
- 96 % of DTPHib-Heb3 vaccination coverage achieved;
- 21 668 beneficiaries of the social protection system “Cadastro Social” have been registered;
- 38 health facilities (100%) supported to offer family planning services including long-term acting contraceptive methods
- 3 PNAE warehouses and offices located in Cantagalo, Cauê and Lembá districts were retrofitted
- 3 community school gardens were activated in Caue and Lemba districts

Increased access of vulnerable people to coordinated social protection programs

Because of the devastating impact of COVID pandemic on the most vulnerable, the UN launched the Joint Programme focusing on integrated social protection, that has put together the expertise of UNICEF, UNDP and ILO. Thanks to the funding by the SDG Trust Fund that the Secretary General of the UN set up in 2020, the UN in Sao Tome and Principe was able to mobilize the resources to launch the joint program on the Social Registry, to better coordinate the information exchange and the targeting by various ongoing social programmes.

The Social Registry - built on the World Bank program to update the cash transfer beneficiary database - accomplished a major milestone in strengthening the Social Protection system, fostering concrete cross-sectoral coordination and an expanded coverage of social protection programmes. With the aim of increasing the number of vulnerable families covered by social protection programmes, a Social Registry was established, providing reliable data on key vulnerability criteria of the most vulnerable population in each community. The social registry is linked to the individual health monitoring and case management and ensures that beneficiaries of the social transfer programs can be included in parental education programs and youth engagement in the social sector. The social registry is populated with data from the districts thanks to the local technical committee that identifies vulnerable people and households.

The system is foreseen to include the unique Social Identification number and will be updated, cross-referencing data with other social

During COVID, the Social Registry was used by the Government to select beneficiaries for the emergency cash transfer intervention, based on vulnerability criteria.

As a result, currently, 57% of registered families have access to the expansion of the cash transfer program under the Social Emergency Response Program.

With the aim of increasing the coverage of essential health services, the joint program implemented a pilot initiative on universal health coverage to gather evidence and data to inform strategic directions for the new national health policy, including the paradigm shift for health financing, which aims at fostering the collaboration and coordination among health sector and national social security, through the interlinkage of the Social Registry and the unique register for users installed in the District Health Information System (DHIS2) tracker platform. Today, the data from the Social Registry has been populated into the DHIS2 for 4 districts, and it is now possible to monitor the health status and access to basic health services of vulnerable families (21.668 beneficiaries).

In relation to the Joint Program commitment to increase the enrollment rate in pre-primary education of children from vulnerable families registered in the Social Registry, the sensibilization sessions provided by the Parental Education Programme started in 2021 and more than 50% of the family's beneficiaries of the cash transfer have received sessions on positive parenting practices by capacitated front-line workers. In addition, 7000 school kits have been delivered to children and 5,000 schoolchildren received emergency food assistance in the modality of take-home rations (food baskets).





2.3 - Good Governance

In terms of governance, the UN focused its capacity building activities on transparency and on the justice sector.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, 40 technicians and other agents linked to the national public accounting system were trained in the implementation of standardization of accounting techniques in Government, following the International Public Sector Accounting Standards. Furthermore, the UN also worked on the process of modernizing and digitalizing public administration and the office of the Parliamentary Auditors and Public Finance Agents.

The UN also supported the modernization of the judicial system, one of its flagship programs, with the aim to make the justice accessible to all. In this respect, the UN rehabilitated some courts and equipped the Government, academics, social partners and justice bodies with a Labor Law Compendium and related legislation. Adding to this the UN supported the country with the decentralization of judicial services and the continuing digital transformation of the sector. Through the expertise mobilized by UNDP, the process of engineering Sao Tomé and Príncipe's first Government Data Center and of designing the National Interoperability Framework started.

Innovative work within the justice modernization programme, included intensifying the fight against gender-based violence and sexual crimes. The program partnered with leading Portuguese universities to train doctors, nurses, prosecutors and judicial police in collection and analysis of evidence in cases of sexual violence, especially against children. The support of the UN in the domain of justice included support to infrastructure as the new court houses in the 2 districts are being rehabilitated (Caué and the Príncipe Island Court). In addition, the first national arbitration center of the country is being implemented (building rehabilitation, training of referees, procurement of IT equipment and furniture), which will focus on legal and commercial disputes, and will mitigate the risks of contract enforcement and improve the overall business environment.

In partnerships with the University of Coimbra in Portugal, the UN supported the Government, in building capacity the by providing the first training course on Forensic Medical - Legal Evaluation of Crimes Perpetrated against Children and Adolescents.

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In addition, the UN focused on strengthening the capacity of social partners, in the area of social dialogue. More specifically, it supported the country in raising awareness and specific skills of the Members of the Specialized Permanent Commissions, the Network of Women Parliamentarians, the Network of Young Parliamentarians and the Parliamentary Staff in the area of gender-sensitive budgeting to allow them to better perform the legislative budget oversight function.

The UN also assisted the Presidential electoral process in order to mitigate potential political conflicts. This involved the drafting of a code of conduct and ethics signed by all political parties and Presidential candidates, stating that the losing candidate would accept the results without protest and avoid a contested outcome. Furthermore, the UN supported through high-profile trainings on the electoral process, including training of journalists, with an emphasis on gender and youth.

On gender equality, the UN agencies continued advocacy and strong communication interventions, among others for the ICPD program of action. A gender sensitive budget in the water and sanitation sector was prepared and approved for the 2022 state budget. Also, the UN carried out an advocacy program for the adoption and implementation of the parity law, carried out by the Network of Women Parliamentarians in partnership with the Association of Women Lawyers, Institute for the Promotion of Gender Equality and Members of the National Assembly. The UN participated actively in advocacy activities promoting the unity among women of political parties for the approval of a Gender Parity Law in 2022 that provides for 40% women participation in political life.

The UN also supported building capacity of national institutions to produce, analyses and manage socio-economic and demographic data, disaggregated by age, sex, for decision-making and development planning. The National Institute of Statistics was supported in collecting and processing SDG indicators data, Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and other statistical surveys.

Modernization of the Justice system

The UN, through UNDP is working closely with National Authorities on the digitalization of the Justice System with the objective of strengthening the capacity of the justice system to respond timely, adequately and with quality to the demands of those seeking justice.

Key achievements in this area in 2021:

- Creation of the Government Data Center (physical infrastructure remodeled and equipped with the most modern security systems. The technological infrastructure has already been acquired and will begin to be installed in April 2022.
- Design of the National Interoperability Framework and the requirements of the Interoperability Platform. This will allow all developed software / programmes to interoperate, reducing high operational costs.
- Functional analysis of the justice, police and prison system - which is being prepared by the United Nations University, will enable the identification of the best performance indicators for the development, implementation and production of the Case Management System.
- In criminal matters - Case Management System. The functional analysis carried out by the United Nations University began in mid 2021 and will be completed during the month of April 2022.
- Procedural Management System - The Terms of Reference are being drawn up. It will allow the dematerialization / digitalization of the entire process flow. This computerization of processes and respective dematerialization will allow a faster access, more transparency and accountability. The launch of the tender is expected to take place by the end of June.



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Health and justice professionals trained on Forensic and Medico-Legal Evaluation of Crimes Perpetrated against Children and Adolescents - "Sexual Abuse"



500

Institutional email accounts were acquired in 2021 to enable the exchange of information between State institutions to occur in a reliable and institutional manner



40

Technicians from the Ministry of Finance and other agents linked to the national public accounting system trained in the implementation of accounting standardization techniques in General Government



30

Journalists and media personnel trained in elections reporting



2.4 - Economic growth and resilience

In 2021, the work of the UN in the area of economic growth and resilience in Sao Tomé and Príncipe focused on strengthening institutional capacities for more inclusive economic growth that creates jobs. In this regard, the country benefited from the support from UN to develop a National Investment Framework for the transition towards Blue Economy, a proposal for a Blue Economy Observatory and a Technical Intersectoral Platform. The support for the inclusive transformation towards Blue Economy is part of the implementation of the National Strategy for Blue Economy adopted in 2020. In addition, the UN supported the preparation of studies on the fish products value chains, aimed at the sustainable development of the fishing and aquaculture. This on-going study will produce data that will support decision making in this sector, with high potential to contribute to the national economic growth, job creation and food and nutritional security. Ongoing capacity building of farmers in irrigation technologies, field school tools and use of horticulture database and in nutrition good practices aim at increasing the agricultural diversification.

In addition, with UN support, the country made considerable progress in the development of a Measuring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system for climate change action, through the engagement of national and international experts. The MRV platform to be used by the Country in the monitoring of its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). The country elaborated an updated its NDC plan which was submitted to the secretariat of the UN Convention on Climate Change in July 2021. The MRV system will allow a proper tracking of results and activities of all climate actions in the country, being the basis for global and national climate goals and commitments reporting. Also, the National Forest Monitoring System (NFMS) in the process of operationalization and already migrated and is available on the national Cloud. Three communities in the district of Cantagalo are engaged in the project and have diversified their income, benefiting from technical support and training in the processing of non-wood forest products such as high-quality honey.

Moreover, with the support of the UN the sustainable financing plan for protected areas and biodiversity has been developed and shared with national stakeholders, which will support the establishment of a Trust Fund for Biodiversity Conservation in Sao Tomé and Príncipe starting in 2022.

Furthermore, a Communication Strategy for Sustainable Forest Ecosystems Management “Non Sa Obo” was developed and launched on the World Environment Day 2021.

Furthermore, the work of the United Nations in economic transformation and inclusion focused on supporting the Government in private sector development, especially for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and the creation of employment opportunities for people with more difficulties to access the labor market, mostly women and youth. In this regard, a new approach to private sector development has been undertaken with great success in 2020 -2021 focused on financial and technical support to formal and informal businesses





negatively impacted by the COVID pandemic, which led to visible results:

Over 2 250 people, mostly youth entrepreneurs, and businesswomen applied for this facility. Out of these, 99 projects were selected for funding (66 Female Promoters; 33 Male Promoters), 391 entrepreneurs benefitted from training and mentoring that created around 140 new jobs. In addition, 26 companies in the agrobusiness sector, benefited from tailor-made support to boost their competitiveness that includes: improvement in production techniques, marketing and sales training and services, organic and other certification, collaboration to export and legal support. Furthermore, with the support of the UN the entrepreneurial ecosystem was reinforced through the creation of the National Network of Business Incubators and Accelerators (REINA), that will operate in a colonial house under rehabilitation.

The agrobusiness sector also benefited from the UN through on-going development of the Exporters Portal to facilitate access to export procedures in the sector and to streamline. The COMPRAN project launched in 2020 focuses on agricultural productivity, commercialization of agricultural produce and nutrition. In 2021, it started investments for the improvement of agricultural production systems in the districts of Me-zochi, Lobata, Cantagalo, Caue, Lemba and Principe Island. 181 households, 81 of which are headed by women, benefited from specific interventions in terms of nutritional education and technical training through 7 farmer schools which were set up to promote innovative agricultural practices, adapted to climate and environment sensitive agriculture, including biological control of crop pests.

Lemba and Principe Island. 181 households, 81 of which are headed by women, benefited from specific interventions in terms of nutritional education and technical training through 7 farmer schools which were set up to promote innovative agricultural practices, adapted to climate and environment sensitive agriculture, including biological control of crop pests.

With the support of the UN, it was possible to create a data collection and information management system for the Ministry of Agriculture through which it was possible to collect data on agricultural production and on smallholder farmers nationwide. An agricultural assessment and a territorial diagnosis were carried out, the results of which will serve to inform national policies and strategies in agriculture and local production

In terms of water management, the UN supported the regulatory framework and the setting up of a new entity: the National Institute of Water Management, which will be in charge of water management as of 2022. In 2021, the national partners and water management institutions completed and approved the Integrated watershed management plans (IWMP) for the Abade, Banzu and Papagaio rivers, meanwhile IWMP for the Io Grande and Manuel Jorge rivers are under way with estimated completion date February 2022. With the IWMPs elaborated, implementation will bring about reduced soil erosion and land degradation, increased agricultural productivity, improved irrigation, there by benefitting farmers and the entire local communities near those rivers.

In the area of energy, the UN supported the Government with development of robust legal and

regulatory framework for the country's energy sector that will be essential for the attraction of investment to support the energy transition process. In order to improve energy matrix, heavily reliant on fossil fuel generation, the UN in partnership with AfDB is building in Santo Amaro the first solar plant in the country. This photovoltaic plant of 2.2 Megawatt will as of 2022 hybridize the existing diesel-powered electricity plant, producing considerable savings by reducing the amount of diesel. Another solar initiative will install a rooftop solar system to benefit the buildings at the Ministry of Infrastructures and Natural Resources compound, as part of solutions adopted to achieve universal access to clean and sustainable energy for the country.

The UN also provided support in capacity building of public institutions through the development of the National Training plan for the energy transition. The National Training Plan is a key element in increasing the country's capacities to ensure a full, speedy, and robust transition to renewable energy. The plan targets the technical staff and decision makers from all institutions identified to have an involvement in the energy transition process. The implementation of some training modules of this plan will start in 2022 and the government is to mobilize resources for its complete implementation.

Furthermore, the UN supported the Island of Principe in the planning process to improve electricity generation capacity to cover 80% of its electricity demand with hydro power, a sustainable source of energy, by completing the socio-economic impact assessment for the micro hydro power plant in Principe (Papagaio River) and completed the tender documents to hire the company that will carry out the rehabilitation of the infrastructure.



Support in the empowerment of vulnerable women in the context of COVID

The Joint Programme of ILO, UNICEF and UNDP - Women Economic Empowerment project, funded by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund, significantly contributed to the Government's efforts to address gender structural issues, which were exacerbated with the challenging context of COVID. Women between the age of 18 and 45 years, who wanted to create or improve their business (formal or informal) benefitted from the programme. As a result, over 239 women were trained and had their technical capacity reinforced in basic tools to access finance for the development of micro and small enterprises. In addition, a digital platform for public employment services was designed and validated by the Ministry of Labour.

The platform provided a tool to improve women's access to decent work offers, business opportunities and other income-generating activities and more than 25 vulnerable women in search of new jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities trained and encouraged to use and master the content of the digital tool/platform, to ensure mastery and ownership of the platform by women seeking employment or intending to open a new business.



99 out of 2250

Projects were selected for Entrepreneurship funding (66 Female Promoters; 33 Male Promoters)



391

Entrepreneurs benefitted from training and mentoring that created around 140 new jobs.



520

Vulnerable families were assisted in the production of their own food



2

Districts developed Community School Gardens



5000

Vulnerable children assisted through alternative take-home rations



5000

Hygiene kits to vulnerable school children during the peak of the pandemic.



3400

Students enrolled in 99 entrepreneurship classes in 15 secondary schools, of whom 52% girls.



346

Students successfully completed the full ECP course in 2021 and received the certificate from MESS, of whom 61% girls.



Information management and data collection system on smallholder's production and capacity needs created for the Ministry of Agriculture



2

Studies conducted on agricultural production and territorial diagnosis

2.5 - Lessons learned

Some important lessons learned can be drawn from the UN programming in 2021. Here are some:

Be driven by evidence:

Enhancing monitoring and evaluation is key for planning, prioritizing investments, and decision-making. The 2021 activities of the Cooperation Framework supported the strengthening of administrative data systems, which allowed having data for decision-making, to help maintaining efforts on indicators that registered progress and to accrue efforts where there was low progress. The UN provided support to Government to collecting, analysing and disseminating routine health (DHIS2) and child protection information for planning purposes. The Social Registry “Cadastró Social Único” also constituted an important milestone since supports the flows of information on individuals and households and their socio-economic conditions to determine potential eligibility for social programs for planning, budgeting and policy implementation.

In addition to the administrative data, evaluations allow identifying effective approaches to support policymakers to prioritize investments in what works. Obtaining and analyzing data that are correct, consistent, and complete has also proved to be key for appropriate planning. In that sense UN technical support was also provided to discuss and validate MICS6 data and to develop the UN Socioeconomic Impact Assessment (SEIA) and Socioeconomic Response Plan (SERP) to COVID-19, to respond to the identified needs through the establishment of a responsive and scalable social protection system. In 2020, UN supported government to conduct an Epidemiological Study of HIV Transmission which findings were used in 2021 to update policies and guidelines on mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT). The update of the guidelines, based on reliable evidence, lead to improved and harmonized processes which contributed to achieve the milestone of 0 vertical transmission in 2021.

Systematic review of the planning process

A more systematic approach to build in quarterly data review meetings to inform the planning process and to ensure that institutional counterparts and partners jointly discuss evidence, resources and past results, would be helpful to



monitor performance. Planning is to be a process and cycle. Well prepared quarterly review meetings could be an opportunity to understand data and to timely identify gaps and bottlenecks, inequities, specific needs and priorities. More efforts are to be invested by the UN in ensuring joint planning interventions are embedded in sectoral national plans and take into account a monitoring framework to regularly review results and to adjust the plan, if necessary, and ensure that limited resources are allocated to the right priorities.

Understanding of socio-cultural norms and practices

Understanding social norms and local cultures is paramount to intervene effectively for access and acceptability of basic social services. This has been a lesson learned when addressing Open Defecation (45,5% MICS 2019), malnutrition (anemia) and mental health (abuse of alcohol). Adapting communication to the social and cultural context is a must, and community radios have proved to be a useful tool to reach the rural populations as well as communicating in local languages.

CHAPTER 3: Joint work in support of the SDG achievement and reporting



To cope with the adverse impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and to further capitalize on top of the activities implemented by the agencies in 2021, the UN system supported the government in the preparation of the National Plan for Socio-economic Resilience and Mitigation against Covid-19, as an essential governance tool to inform the policy options to be adopted to cope with the crisis and guide public measures for economic recovery, aligning reform actions aimed at reducing vulnerability to future shocks, overcoming the severe inequalities exposed by the pandemic, prevent jeopardy and to keep the SGD achievement in track.

This plan identify the set of measures to be put in place in the next two years, aiming at protecting the health care systems and immediate containment of the virus, protecting the people and improve equitable access to social protection and basic services, protecting jobs, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and the most vulnerable informal actors through economic recovery, ensuring that fiscal and financial policies make the macroeconomic framework work for the most vulnerable groups and strengthen multilateral and engagement and invest in resilience and community-led response systems.

regional responses and resource mobilization for development, and promoting social cohesion and build trust through social dialogue and political engagement and invest in resilience and community-led response systems.

On the other hand, data production, particularly to monitor the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, has been identified as a historical challenge in STP due to technical and financial constraints. The measurement of the indicators of the 17 SDG are grouped, at country level, according to the three evaluation levels defined by the United Nations SDG indicators expert group:

Level I: Indicators that have a methodology and are fully available.

Level II: Indicators that do not have a clear methodology and are partially available

Level III: Indicators that do not have a defined methodology and are not available.

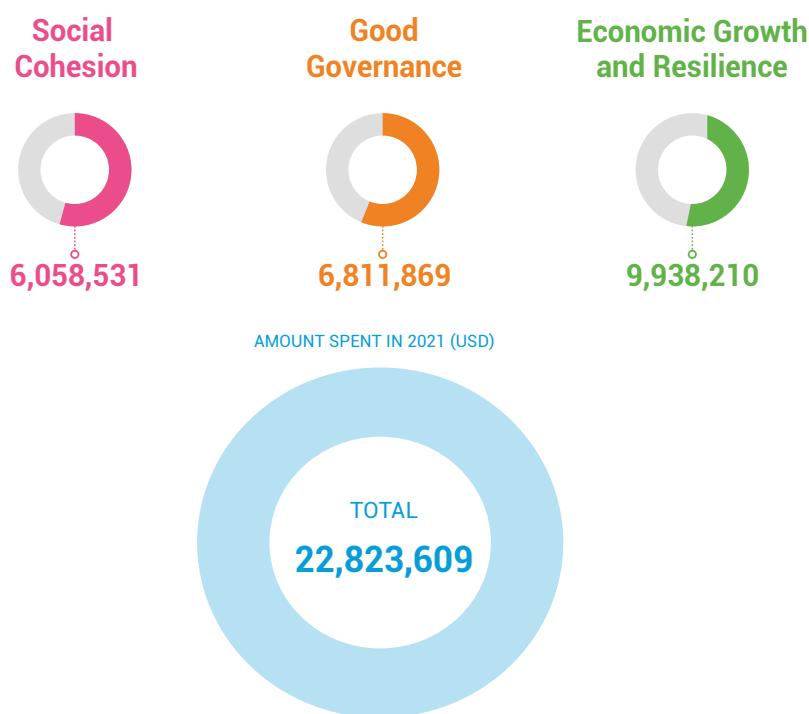


A diagnosis of national indicators in 2018 allowed the National Statistical Institute (INE) to collect data across various sectors, and of the 239 global SDG indicators, 115 were able to be measured. In 2019 some indicators were updated using information from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 2019 (MICS 6), from the Household Budget Survey 2017 and using administrative data produced by INE and some sectoral institutions. This has led to the production of data of 139 measurable indicators, of which 77 were level I and 62 level II, and the generation of two statistical reports on the country's performance in relation to SDG indicators, one in 2020 and another in 2021, both with the technical and financial support of the UN.

Before 2020 there had been no regular reporting on the country's performance in relation to the SDGs, but since that year, with the support of the UN, the National Directorate for Planning had been developing an SDG portal and dashboard as tool for SDG monitoring and transparency, which made data accessible for the general public since 2021. This portal will be 100% managed by technical staff of the directorate, which training is ongoing and official launch previewed for 2022.

CHAPTER 4: Financial Overview

Disbursement of UN programmes by thematic areas



UN Disbursement by agency (programme resources only)

Agency	Amount spent in 2021 (USD)
UNDP	7,117,317
WHO	5,519,111
FAO	2,833,894
UNICEF	2,603,855
IFAD	1,544,295
ILO	899,668
UN HABITAT	881,337
UNFPA	743,589
WFP	680,544
	22,823,609

Sources of funding for the UN in Sao Tomé and Príncipe in 2021

Mobilized recourses	Total amount (USD)
Thematic resources from regional or HQ level	5,300,843
Core resources from the UN agencies	4,634,037
Global Environment Facility (GEF)	3,857,000
Private sector companies	924,734
World Bank	853,203
SDG Fund of the SG Secretariat	832,647
The Global Fund for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria	787,747
Sao Tome and Principe (Government Cost Sharing)	786,212
African Development Bank	685,849
Germany	531,687
Rural Poor Stimulus Facilities	444,295
UK	359,347
USA	325,381
Foundations (Chellaram Foundation Fund, Bloomberg, Rotary International)	313,021
European Union	290,924
Korea	256,834
Global Partnership for Education	177,329
Canada	114,720
Austria	100,000
Denmark	100,000
Azerbaijan	99,089
Universities (University of California and University of Edinburgh)	88,396
India	50,910
Australia	39,000
Japan	15,543
Portugal	15,400
Sweden	6,678
Total	22,823,609

CHAPTER 5: Outlook of UN activities in 2022

Due to COVID pandemic, the Cooperation Framework between the UN System and the Republic of Sao Tome and Principe has been extended by one year, until 2022. A new cooperation framework will be developed during 2022 which will cover the UN activities for the next 5 years, from 2023 to 2027. This new cooperation framework will have a particular focus on vulnerable people who are at risk to be left behind in the development gains, but also on the priority areas identified by the Government for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Sao Tome and Principe is scheduled to present its first Voluntary National Report on the implementation of the SDGs to the high-level panel of the ECOSOC in New York in July 2022. The UN will support this process with expertise and the facilitation of consultations with the various partners from Government, civil society and private sector, and most importantly, specific vulnerable groups. The Voluntary National Report on SDGs will be the benchmark on progress made since the SDGs were adopted and will issue a series of policy recommendations to better plan, finance and monitor the implementation of the priority SDG goals set by the Government. This will also inform the new Cooperation Framework of the UN.

The UN also aims to support the strengthening of the coordination between technical and financial partners and Government, in particular for the agricultural, energy and social sectors.

This will help the prioritization of support programs and allow a better monitoring by the Government of ongoing development programs.

At the request of the Government, the UN will also be supporting the decision-making process for the “graduation” of Sao Tomé and Principe from the group of Least Developed Countries towards middle income countries. A process that is overseen by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs in the UN Secretariat and final decisions are adopted by the General Assembly of the UN, based on a set of criteria and thresholds to which the country must comply in at least 2 consecutive triennial reviews, which has been the case for Sao Tomé and Principe. Following the adoption of the revised political party law, the upcoming legislative, local and regional elections will need to implement a 30% quota for women to allow for more gender equality and women’s empowerment. The UN will continue to support women political participation and work closely with Government and civil society partners to advocate for a stronger role of women in politics, including the parity law for men and women. The peaceful conduct of transparent and free elections will allow the country to further consolidate the democracy and to be a model in the region.





List of Acronyms

AfDB - African Development Bank	UNCT - United Nations Country Team
AIDS - Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome	UNDAF - United Nations Development Assistance Framework
COVID - Coronavirus Disease 2019	UNDP - United Nations Development Program
CLTS - Community-Led Total Sanitation	UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
COMPRAN - Project on Commercialization, Agricultural productivity and nutrition	UNFPA - United Nations Fund for Population
CSO - Civil Society Organization	UN-Habitat - United Nations Human Settlements Programme
DHIS - District Health Information Software	UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
FAO - The Food and Agriculture Organization	UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
GAVI - Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization	UNIDO - United Nations Industrial Development Organization
GDP - Gross Domestic Product	UNSDCF - United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
GNI - Gross National Income	UNV - United Nations Volunteers Programme
HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus	WASH - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
HDR - Human Development Report	WFP - World Food Program
HPV - Human Papilloma Virus	WHO - World Health Organization Programme
ICPD - International Conference on Population and Development	UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
ILO - International Labor organization	UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
INE - National Institute of Statistics	UNIDO - United Nations Industrial Development Organization
IMF - International Monetary Fund	UNSDCF - United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
IWMP - Integrated Water Management Program	UNV - United Nations Volunteers Programme
MICS - Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys	WASH - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
MPTF - Multi-Partner Trust Fund	WFP - World Food Program
MRV - Measuring, Reporting, Verification	WHO - World Health Organization
NDC - Nationally Determined Contributions	
NFMS - National Forest Monitoring System	
NWFP - Non-wood Forest Products	
OHCHR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	
RCO - United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office	
SDG - Sustainable Development Goal	
SERP - United Nations COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan	
UN - United Nations	





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