



UNITED  
NATIONS  
SAO TOME AND  
PRINCIPE



**UN** ANNUAL RESULTS  
REPORT 2025  
SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

The background features a large, light blue watermark of the United Nations logo, which consists of a world map surrounded by a laurel wreath. A vertical white line is positioned to the left of the logo.

# ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT 2025

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# FOREWORD BY THE UN RESIDENT COORDINATOR

2025 was a year that reminded São Tomé and Príncipe, and all of us, of its vulnerability as a small island developing state and its delicate balance between resilience and socio-economic pressures. Flooding in low-lying coastal communities, persistent inflation, disruptions in electricity and water supply and infrastructural constraints continued to shape the daily reality of families across the archipelago. Yet the year also demonstrated something equally important: when institutions and partners come together and act around a shared vision, meaningful progress is possible.

We have been proud to accompany the Government in the elaboration of its National Sustainable Development Strategy 2026–2040 and the Integrated National Financing Framework, and I congratulate the country for becoming the first in the world to have its entire territory classified as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

Throughout the year, the United Nations system worked alongside national institutions to support reforms that strengthen essential systems and expand opportunities for the population. Efforts focused on improving access to health and education, strengthening climate resilience, reinforcing justice and accountability institutions and mobilizing sustainable financing to support national development priorities.

The progress presented in this report is therefore not a catalogue of activities. It tells the story of how São Tomé and Príncipe is evolving, and why these changes matter for people's lives. It also reflects the spirit of the UN reform agenda: working more coherently as one system, aligning closely with national priorities and ensuring that development support translates into tangible results for communities.

As my mission in São Tomé and Príncipe approaches its conclusion during the first half of 2026, I do so with a strong sense of optimism and gratitude. Serving alongside the people and institutions of this country has been both a privilege and a source of inspiration. The progress achieved throughout these years has only been possible because of the commitment, partnership and shared determination of all those working towards a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future for São Tomé and Príncipe.

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Government of São Tomé and Príncipe, civil society organizations, international development partners, the private sector and the people of the country for their continued collaboration and trust. Their leadership and partnership remain essential to advancing sustainable development and ensuring that no one is left behind.



**Eric Overvest**  
UN Resident Coordinator in  
Sao Tome and Principe



# UN COUNTRY TEAM CONFIGURATION

The United Nations in São Tomé and Príncipe supports the country's national development priorities and its progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through an integrated and coordinated approach centred on the principle of Leaving No One Behind.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023–2027) provides the strategic framework guiding this support. It brings together the collective expertise and comparative advantages of the UN system, led by the Resident Coordinator, to accelerate progress across key development transitions through coordinated and mutually reinforcing interventions.

Implementation of the Cooperation Framework is supported by a strengthened UN coordination system that brings together both 9 resident and 12 non-resident entities. UNOPS has become the latest UN agency added to the Cooperation Framework while ILO is now covering Sao Tome and Príncipe through the Angola office. This model allows the UN to combine operational capacity in country with specialized technical expertise from regional and global levels, enabling the system to respond flexibly to the country's evolving development priorities while maintaining coherence and strategic focus.

During the reporting period, adjustments in the engagement modalities of the UN Country Team reflected emerging national priorities and resource constraints. In several areas, the Resident Coordinator's Office played an expanded role in facilitating policy dialogue, coordination and joint initiatives across agencies and partners, such as the Sao Tome and Principe Investment Forum that took place in Brussels in December 2025.



The United Nations House in São Tomé hosts the resident UN entities, in addition to the African Development Bank and the World Bank, co-signatories of the Cooperation Framework, which work closely with the UN system to align financing, policy dialogue and implementation efforts in support of the country's development agenda.



## IN-COUNTRY PRESENCE



## NON-COUNTRY PRESENCE



# FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT – AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

The United Nations works with a diverse range of partners to mobilize and align development financing in support of São Tomé and Príncipe's national priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals.



In 2025,

**US\$ 24.5 million**

in development resources were mobilized through strategic partnerships.

These contributions support key national priorities across health, education, climate action, governance and economic development.

The UN's role goes beyond mobilizing resources. Through policy advice, coordination and partnership facilitation, the UN helps ensure that financing is aligned with national strategies, strengthens institutional systems and delivers sustainable development outcomes.



## KEY DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS



UN Agencies' Core & Thematic Funds



UN Peacebuilding Fund



Global Environment Facility



Green Climate Fund



NDC



GAVI



Universal Health Coverage Partnership



Global Thematic WASH



GPE - Global Partnership for Education



Global Fund



AFDB (African Development Bank)



World Bank



Portugal



Germany



Switzerland



European Union



Brazil



GOVERNMENT OF SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE

Bloomberg Philanthropies

Bloomberg Philanthropies

# SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE AT A GLANCE

Key socio-economic indicators  
highlighting the situation of  
Sao Tome and Principe in 2025.



Estimated Population  
(Dec 2024):  
**209,607**  
Preliminary data INE  
Population Census 2025



Life expectancy at birth:  
**69.7** years  
UN/World Bank (2023)



Average population growth  
2012 - 2024: **1.3%**  
INE Population census 2024



Maternal mortality ratio  
per 100,000 live births (2023):  
**75**  
UN (2023)



Population median age  
(2017): **18.6** years  
INE IOF 2017



Infant mortality per 1,000  
live births: **9.4**  
UN interagency group Child  
Mortality (2023)



Net Frequency Rate Basic  
Education: **89.9%**  
INE, MICS 2019



Net Frequency Rate Second  
Cycle/Secondary Education:  
**29.9%**  
INE, MICS 2019



GINI coefficient (2017):  
**40.7**  
WDI 2022



% Population with access to  
electricity: **83.1%**  
INE, MICS 2019



Debt to GDP ratio  
(2025e): **54%**  
IMF 2025



% of population with access to  
improved sanitation (2019):  
**45%**  
VNR 2022



GNI per capita, PPP  
(current international \$)  
(2024): **6,424**  
WDI 2026



Inflation: 2025: **10.3%**  
INE 2026



Foreign direct investment,  
net inflows (% of GDP)  
(2025e): **7.6%**  
IMF 2025



Main export products in 2025:  
cocoa beans (78%),  
palm oil (17%)  
BCSTP 2026



Social Protection Coverage: **22%**  
INE Statistical Bulletin  
Social Protection 2022



Sao Tome e Principe is  
the first country in the world  
to have its entire territory  
classified as a UNESCO  
Biosphere Reserve.

 **964 sq. km**  
of land area

 **160,000 sq. km**  
of maritime area



# KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

## Country Context in 2025

São Tomé and Príncipe continued to navigate a complex development landscape shaped by economic vulnerability, environmental risks and structural constraints associated with its status as a Small Island Developing State.



### ECONOMIC STABILIZATION WITH ONGOING CHALLENGES

Economic growth reached 2.1% in 2025, an improvement from near stagnation between 2022 and 2024. Inflation eased but remained high at 10.3%, driven largely by food and energy prices continuing to affect household purchasing power particularly among vulnerable groups.



### FISCAL CONDITIONS REMAIN CHALLENGING

By mid-2025, public debt stood at over 64% of GDP. Domestic revenue is around 13% of GDP, while more than 90% of the public investment programme is financed through external resources, underscoring the importance of strengthening domestic resource mobilization.



**90%**

of the public investment programme is financed through external resources



**13%**

domestic revenue remains at only 13% of GDP



### SOCIAL PROGRESS WITH STRUCTURAL GAPS

Vaccination coverage remains above 95% and life expectancy rose to 68.8 years. Social protection coverage reached 22%, with opportunities to expand support. Non-communicable diseases account for approximately 70% of all deaths, highlighting the need to adapt health systems to evolving needs.



### DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS AND MIGRATION

The population reached approximately 210,000 people by the end of 2024. Between 2023–2024, 35,000 visas were issued to Santomeans to Portugal—equivalent to 17% of the population, while an estimated 15–20% of citizens emigrated over the 4–5 years, reflecting both challenges and opportunities.



**35,000**

visas issued to Portugal between 2023–2024

**17%**

equivalent to of the population



**15–20%**

of citizens emigrated over the past 4–5 years



### ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURES PERSIST

Forest cover declined from 60.5% in 2010 to 54.7% in 2019. Around 80% of waste is uncollected, and more than 70% of rural households rely on firewood or charcoal for cooking. Coastal erosion, flooding, illegal fishing and extreme rainfall events continue to threaten livelihoods and ecosystems.



### EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ **TOURISM:** Reached a historic high of 41,644 visitors in 2025, reflecting growing recognition of the country's biodiversity and natural assets.
- ✓ **RENEWABLE ENERGY:** Agreements signed to drastically increase solar energy in 2026, supporting a transition away from imported fuel, which accounts for around 27% of total imports.
- ✓ **OIL EXPLORATION:** Offshore exploration advanced through new seismic surveys, reinforcing the need for strong governance and transparency.



### OUTLOOK

Following its graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in December 2024, São Tomé and Príncipe entered 2025 as a lower-middle-income Small Island Developing State with both challenges and renewed opportunities.

Projected economic growth of 3.9% in 2026–2027, combined with ongoing reforms in energy, public finance and human capital, provides a cautiously positive outlook, particularly if investments in diversification, resilience and institutional strengthening are sustained.



The United Nations continued to work closely with the Government and national partners to support priority reforms, strengthen institutions and promote sustainable solutions that contribute to improving people's lives across the country.

# WHY CHANGE MATTERS

With 59.4% of its population under 25, São Tomé and Príncipe stands at a critical juncture.

As a Small Island Developing State, the country faces interconnected pressures—from climate shocks and import dependence to fiscal constraints, skills shortages and gaps in digital access.

## YET 2025 MARKED A SHIFT TOWARDS STRATEGIC ACTION.



The National Health Financing Strategy 2025–2032 strengthens access and resilience of health services.



The National Sustainable Development Strategy 2026–2040 sets a clear vision for inclusive and resilient development.



The Higher Education Financing Strategy 2025–2030 invests in people and skills for the future.



The Integrated National Financing Framework mobilizes and aligns resources for impact.



Digital transformation and renewable energy investments open doors to new opportunities.

These steps signal a commitment to building a more inclusive, resilient and prosperous future for all Santomeans.

# A Space to Ask, a Chance to Know

“I finally found answers without feeling ashamed or afraid to ask.”

For Ana Soares, a 17-year-old student in Sao Tome, those words mark a turning point.

Like many adolescents in Sao Tome e Principe, Ana grew up with questions she did not feel comfortable asking about her body, relationships and the changes she was experiencing. At school, conversations were limited. At home, they were often avoided. Among friends, answers were not always reliable.

“I didn’t know who to trust,” she says. “I would hear different things, and it just made me more confused.”

That changed when she discovered DIKA JOVEM.

More than just a mobile application, the platform offers young people a safe and private space to access accurate, age-appropriate information on sexual and reproductive health. Developed by the United Nations Population Fund in partnership with national institutions, it allows adolescents to explore topics often surrounded by stigma, without fear of judgement.

“For the first time, I could ask what I wanted,” Ana explains. “No one was looking at me. No one was judging me.”

Through the app, she learned not only about her body, but also about her rights and how to make informed decisions about her health and future. More importantly, she gained confidence.

Across the country, many young people face similar challenges, where silence and misinformation increase risks and limit opportunities. Tools like Dika Jovem are helping to change that by creating a new kind of dialogue, one that starts in private, but empowers young people in their everyday lives.

“I feel more sure of myself now,” Ana says.



## IMPACT IN SAO TOME AND PRÍNCIPE



Empowering young people with knowledge



Promoting healthy choices and protecting rights



Breaking silence and confronting misinformation



Building confidence for a brighter future

“I feel more sure of myself now.”

— Ana Soares, 17 years old

# DELIVERING AS ONE IN 2025 IMPACT SNAPSHOTS

Together with national partners and communities, the United Nations made meaningful progress across all areas of the 2030 Agenda.



## HEALTH

- 100% coverage of essential service packages at substantial level 1 (up from 42.9% in 2027).
- Immunization coverage above 90% (DTP3 91%, RR2 90%) and zero cases of vertical HIV transmission.
- Emergency preparedness strengthened, with SPAR (State Part Annual Report) submitted on time and out of 15 IHR core capacities under reporting, 6 are above 60%.
- DHIS2 installed on national servers, providing real-time data for decisions.
- Smart cold-chain monitoring piloted in health centres, reducing vaccine loss during power cuts.
- 95% HPV vaccination coverage, zero cases of mother-to-child HIV transmission.



## EDUCATION

- 50,000 children receive daily school meals.
- 4,000+ students access digital learning platforms (Akelius, Learning Passport) and 699 teachers trained.



## CLIMATE, ENERGY & NATURE

- 4,148 hectares restored with 40 native species; long-term programmes now exceed 12,000 ha restored cumulatively.
- Solarization of 6 district health centers, Principe hospital and 1 secondary school, cutting fuel dependence.



## PROTECTION & INCLUSION

- 284 professionals trained in child protection and GBV case management.
- Family Programme coverage for 15,229 children, with Social Behavioural Change outreach to 4,070 families.



## JUSTICE & GOVERNANCE

- Forensic digital tools introduced to the Police Judiciary (Cellebrite) for faster, more reliable investigations.
- Arbitration Court operational with digital case management for Justice sector underway.
- National Human Rights Commission bill presented to Parliament.



## JOBS, YOUTH & ENTERPRISE

- >1,000 young and women entrepreneurs supported through REINA; 41 inclusive business models adopted; digital payments scaled nationwide.
- Coding School launched with first cohort graduating in 2026.



People



Planet



Peace



Partnership



Prosperity

# OUTCOME 1 Health, Education & Social Protection



## 1.1 A digital, resilient and people-centred health system

In 2025, São Tomé e Príncipe took a decisive step towards transforming its health system, from fragmented data systems to a coordinated, nationally owned digital architecture. With support from the United Nations, the Government strengthened the foundations of a more reliable, efficient and people-centred system.



### STRONGER DIGITAL FOUNDATIONS

Key national platforms were upgraded and expanded, while DHSI2 was integrated to the national server and scaled nationwide.



### SMARTER SUPPLY AND VACCINES

The missupply system was enhanced and linked to a digital vaccine module, including better stock management, reduced shortages, and improved forecasting.



### BETTER INTEGRATION FOR THE FUTURE.

A new interoperability layer was introduced, allowing the groundwork for future integration, having civil registration and social protection systems, once a universal identification system is adopted.



### IMPROVING LIVES EVERY DAY

In districts such as Caué, mothers arriving at health facilities are more likely to find vaccines available, while health workers rely on real-time dashboards to manage schedules and anticipate needs. Automated alerts signal when stock levels are low, turning data into timely action.

## STRONGER HEALTH SYSTEMS, BETTER RESULTS



100%

essential service coverage at subnational level 1 (up to 42.9%) (2021)



90%

immunization coverage nationwide



0

cases of vertical HIV transmission



6 of 15

IHR core capacity domains at -60% with timely SPAR submission

Progress in primary health and system resilience accelerated in 2025. Tangible advances were made in disease control and elimination, emergency preparedness, laboratory capacity and surveillance, reinforcing the country's readiness for current and future public health threats.



Reliable data for decisions



Real-time alerts for timely action



Stronger supply chains



Better services for all

## 1.2 Education and skills for a new generation

Investing in education and skills development remained central to building opportunities for São Tomé and Príncipe's young population.



School-based clubs for boys and girls in **16** schools engaged **1,719** students, with an attendance rate of **88** per cent. These spaces strengthened life skills, leadership and peer support.



Digital learning solutions expanded access to education for more than **4,176** students, ensuring continuity of learning even during harsher or climate-related disruptions.



Vocational fairs reached over **1,600** youth, linking them to emerging sectors such as solar energy maintenance, hospitality and digital services helping bridge the gap between education and employment.



The national school feeding programme reached **50,000** children, improving attendance and learning outcomes while supporting local economies.

Through local procurement, **44** smallholder farmers benefited from stable demand and increased income, contributing to more diverse and nutritious school meals.



**Education opens doors. Skills build futures. Together, we empower a new generation of leaders and innovators.**



## 1.3 Building a more coordinated social and child protection system

Strengthening protection systems remained a key priority to ensure that the most vulnerable, especially children are not left behind.



A multi-ethical protocol for violence against children (VAC) case management was validated and implemented, with **284** professionals trained across sectors.

Child-friendly spaces were also established, creating safer environments for prevention and response.



Progress on disability inclusion continued, with the development of a national protocol and targeted training for **30** frontline workers, improving the capacity of services to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities.



Support to families was also scaled up. Parental education programmes reached **4,070** families, benefiting over **15,000** children by promoting positive parenting practices and strengthening family environments.



### Why this matters



Across these areas, the United Nations focused on strengthening national systems rather than creating parallel structures. Through technical support, policy development, digital tools, training and quality standards, the UN unconditionally to building sustainable, government-led systems capable of delivering results at scale.



This approach ensures that progress is not limited to individual projects, but embedded within national institutions laying the foundation for long-term, inclusive and resilient development in São Tomé and Príncipe.



# School meals that keep children in class

“This is where it begins,” he says.  
“What we grow here ends up on  
the plates of our children.”

Under the morning sun, rows of green leaves stretch across a small community garden. Standing among them, Emanuel Montóia, Coordinator of the National School Feeding and Health Programme (PNASE), points to the crops.

“This is where it begins,” he says. “What we grow here ends up on the plates of our children.”

In São Tomé and Príncipe, school meals are no longer just about food. They are part of a system connecting schools, farmers and communities, ensuring that children not only eat, but are able to learn and stay in school.

At a primary school in Cantagalo District, this connection is visible every day. Before classes begin, meals are prepared using ingredients that increasingly come from local producers and nearby community initiatives.

Through PNASE, supported by the World Food Programme, around 50,000 pupils receive a daily hot meal across the country. This has helped improve attendance, concentration and learning outcomes.

Behind each meal is a system that continues to evolve. With support from partners, São Tomé and Príncipe is strengthening a model that integrates local production into school feeding. community gardens, smallholder farmers and cooperatives are becoming part of how food reaches schools.

“We are not only feeding children,” Emanuel explains. “We are supporting farmers, strengthening communities and improving nutrition.”

The impact is clear in classrooms across the country. More children are attending school regularly and staying engaged throughout the day, supported by the assurance of a daily meal.

At midday, children line up with plates in hand. Each meal reflects the work of farmers, programme staff and communities working together to support children’s education and well-being.

## IMPACT IN SAO TOME AND PRÍNCIPE



Keeping children in school



Strengthening food security



Supporting local farmers and livelihoods



Improving nutrition and child well-being



“We are not only feeding children.  
We are supporting farmers,  
strengthening communities  
and improving nutrition.”  
- Emanuel Montóia, Coordinator of PNASE

OUTCOME 2

# Climate Resilience, Biodiversity & Clean Energy



## 2.1 From climate ambition to national strategy

Sao Tomé and Príncipe is positioning itself as a leader among Small Island Developing States in climate ambition. In 2025, the country's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) set a bold course for a low-carbon and climate-resilient future.

The new framework commits to a 35% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2035, while significantly scaling up adaptation actions and strengthening the national Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system. This marks a shift from ambition to implementation, anchoring climate action within national planning systems.

A key milestone in 2025 was the validation of Local and Regional Adaptation Plans across all seven districts and the Autonomous Region of Príncipe, aligning local priorities with the National Adaptation Plan. Developed through participatory processes, these plans provide practical tools to address climate risks such as flooding, coastal erosion and landslides, while strengthening local capacity to access climate finance and implement resilience measures.

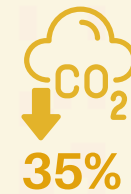
United Nations support was instrumental in translating this ambition into credible and actionable strategies. Technical assistance enabled the Government to estimate costs, prioritize interventions and design sustainable financing pathways through integrated approaches such as the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) and the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFAN). This ensures that climate commitments are not only aspirational, but financially grounded and implementable.



### COMMUNITIES LEADING CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

From restoring mangroves on Príncipe to building climate-smart infrastructure in coastal communities, local action is at the heart of a more resilient Sao Tomé and Príncipe.

### STRONGER CLIMATE ACTION, LASTING IMPACT



greenhouse gas emissions reduction target by 2035 (NDC 3.0)



districts with validated Local and Regional Adaptation Plans



strengthened national MRV system



Integrated financing approaches (INFF & BIOFAN) adopted

These advances strengthen national systems, mobilise finance and empower communities to build resilience, protect biodiversity and invest in a clean energy future for all.



Climate ambition turned into action



People and nature at the centre



Clean energy for a resilient future

## 2.2 Restoring ecosystems and protecting coastal resilience

Nature-based solutions are increasingly recognised as critical infrastructure for São Tomé and Príncipe's sustainable development.



In 2025 alone, 4,148 hectares of degraded land were restored, contributing to more than 12,000 hectares rehabilitated over the full programme cycle. These efforts are strengthening forest ecosystems, protecting watersheds and enhancing resilience to climate shocks.



A landmark achievement further reinforced the country's global environmental leadership: São Tomé and Príncipe became the first country in the world to have its entire terrestrial and marine territory designated as a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. This recognition highlights the country's exceptional natural heritage while positioning biodiversity as a strategic asset for sustainable development.



At the same time, the introduction of the SMART biodiversity monitoring system is transforming how protected areas are managed. By tracking both wildlife and illegal activities in real time, the system enables more effective conservation enforcement and evidence-based decision-making.



Together, these efforts demonstrate how investing in nature not only protects biodiversity, but also supports livelihoods, reduces climate risks and creates new opportunities for sustainable economic development.

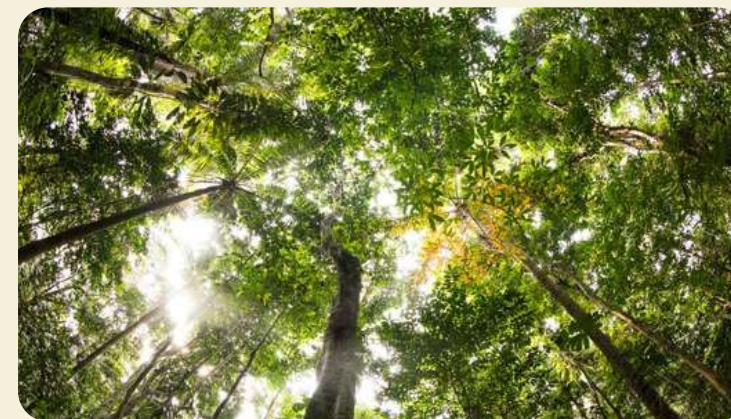


## 2.3 Accelerating the transition to clean and sustainable energy

The energy transition is gaining momentum, with tangible benefits for communities, public services and the environment.



Solar energy solutions are already improving the reliability and efficiency of essential services. Six district health centres, the Hospital of Príncipe and the Guadalupe Secondary School are now powered by rooftop solar systems, with an additional 15 schools in the process of being equipped with solar panels and clean cooking solutions. These installations are helping prevent medicine spoilage, improve learning conditions and reduce operational costs, while lowering emissions.



Looking ahead, the new Africa Minigrids programme will further expand access to clean energy. The initiative will install 0.7 MWp of solar capacity and 1.0 MWh of battery storage, providing reliable electricity to approximately 21,800 people and avoiding an estimated 26,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. This represents a significant step towards decentralised, resilient energy systems.



Complementing these efforts, São Tomé and Príncipe is also strengthening disaster risk preparedness. The country validated its Early Warning for All (EW4All) National Roadmap 2025–2028, establishing a comprehensive framework for multi-hazard early warning systems. Structured around risk knowledge, monitoring, communication and response, the roadmap aims to ensure that all people are protected by effective early warning systems, reinforcing resilience to floods, storms and other climate-related hazards.



Together, these policy frameworks position the country to attract investment, strengthen institutional coordination and accelerate the transition towards sustainable energy and climate resilience.

### Why this matters

Together, these efforts reflect a systemic transformation where climate ambition is translated into concrete action at national and local levels, ecosystems are managed as strategic development assets, and clean energy and early warning systems directly improve people's lives.

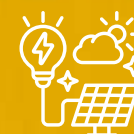
By combining policy reform, local planning, financing strategies and on-the-ground investments, São Tomé and Príncipe is building a pathway towards a greener, more resilient and inclusive future, where climate action drives both environmental sustainability and economic opportunity.



Healthy ecosystems protect people and livelihoods



Biodiversity is our heritage and our future



Clean energy for stronger communities and services



Investing in nature and people builds a greener, prosperous São Tomé and Príncipe

# When the lights stay on, everything changes

“It completely changed the way the hospital functions. We now have greater stability, and that allows teams to work with more confidence and peace of mind.”

– Antonio Lopes - Hospital Director

At Hospital do Príncipe, António Lopes walks through the corridors at the end of another long day.

As Director of the hospital, he has spent years managing not only the daily pressures of healthcare, but also the uncertainty caused by unreliable electricity.

“When the power went out, everything became more difficult,” António recalls. “You are constantly thinking about the impact on patients, medicines, equipment and essential services.”

On Príncipe Island, interruptions in electricity supply were once a regular concern. For the hospital, this meant risks to vaccine storage, interruptions to medical services and added pressure on health professionals already working in challenging conditions.

“There was always anxiety,” he says. “Even after leaving the hospital, you kept thinking about what could happen during the night.”

Today, that reality is beginning to change.

Solar panels installed at the hospital now provide a stable and reliable source of energy, even during outages. The system captures and stores energy throughout the day, ensuring that critical services continue to function when the main grid fails.

The impact is visible across the hospital.

- Refrigerators storing vaccines and medicines operate without interruption.
- Essential equipment continues running.
- Health workers can focus on patient care without the same constant fear of sudden power cuts.

“It completely changed the way the hospital functions,” António says. “We now have greater stability, and that allows teams to work with more confidence and peace of mind.”

Energy improvements were only part of a broader transformation.

The hospital’s emergency service has been reorganized, improving patient flow, strengthening the organization of medicines and equipment, and introducing clearer procedures and clinical guidelines. These changes allow emergency teams to respond more efficiently during critical situations.

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“In emergencies, every minute matters,” António explains. “The improvements have helped us become more prepared and more organized.”

Reliable water supply has also been restored throughout the hospital. Constant access to water has strengthened hygiene conditions, improved infection prevention and made daily operations safer for both patients and staff.

A newly established hospital laundry now supports higher standards of cleanliness and smoother hospital operations, while the construction of a new mortuary has improved conditions for the dignified management of deceased patients, easing part of the burden on both families and hospital personnel.

Together, these investments have strengthened the hospital far beyond infrastructure alone. They have improved the working environment for health professionals and reinforced the quality and reliability of care provided to the community.

For António Lopes, the changes are deeply meaningful.

“When you work in healthcare, you always carry a sense of responsibility,” he says. “Today, there is more confidence that the hospital can continue serving people properly, even in difficult moments.”

As he finishes his round and prepares to leave for the evening, the hospital continues running steadily behind him, lights on, equipment functioning and services uninterrupted.

## IMPACT IN SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE



Reliable energy for uninterrupted care



Better services, better outcomes



Healthier, safer hospital environment



Stronger hospital, stronger community



OUTCOME 3

# Inclusive Economic Transformation & Blue Economy



## 3.1 Mobilising sustainable investment for national priorities

São Tomé and Príncipe is increasingly positioning itself as a destination for sustainable and impact-driven investment. In 2025, this ambition reached a new level with the São Tomé and Príncipe 2040 Investment Forum (RISE STP), held in Brussels.

Convened one year after the country's graduation from Least Developed Country status, the Forum marked a shift in how São Tomé and Príncipe engages with global financing, moving from project-based outreach to a strategic, integrated investment narrative anchored in the National Sustainable Development Strategy (ENDS 2026–2040) and Vision 2040.

Bringing together around 200 participants, including international financial institutions, multilateral development banks, private investors and government representatives, the Forum showcased opportunities across the blue economy, renewable energy, sustainable tourism, climate-resilient infrastructure and agri-food value chains.



### INVESTMENT-READY PIPELINE

A national portfolio of 25 investment-ready projects was prepared using standardized business case templates, strengthening credibility and investor engagement.



### STRONG INVESTMENT MOMENTUM

Partners indicated approximately USD 440 million in potential financing, reflecting growing international confidence in the country's trajectory.



### STRATEGIC SECTOR WITH HIGH POTENTIAL

The Forum highlighted opportunities in the blue economy, renewable energy, sustainable tourism, climate-resilient infrastructure and agri-food value chains.



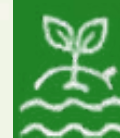
### UN COORDINATION DRIVING RESULTS

The UN convened partners, aligned dialogue around ENDS and NDC 3.0 and supported investment readiness to translate national vision into concrete opportunities.



### FROM CONVENING TO EXECUTION

To sustain progress, the Government has initiated follow-up mechanisms to strengthen investor engagement, develop project pipelines and enhance capacity for public-private partnerships and blended finance, signalling a broader shift from convening to execution.



Investing in the blue economy for sustainable growth



Renewable energy for a clean and resilient future



Sustainable tourism, protecting nature and creating jobs



Agri-food value chains that empower communities



Building partnerships for inclusive and sustainable prosperity

## 3.2 Expanding jobs, entrepreneurship and digital inclusion

Creating opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship, particularly for youth and women, remains central to inclusive economic growth.



The REINA programme has emerged as a key national platform for entrepreneurship development. To date, it has supported more than **1,000** entrepreneurs, helping transform ideas into viable businesses. Among these, **247** women-led enterprises have been scaled, while **173** women successfully launched new ventures. In parallel, **41** innovative and inclusive business solutions have been adopted nationwide, contributing to a more dynamic and diversified economy.



Digital innovation is also playing a transformative role. The expansion of digital payment systems is improving financial inclusion, particularly for youth, women and rural communities, enabling safer and more efficient access to financial services.



At the same time, investments in digital skills are preparing the next generation for the global economy. The establishment of the country's first coding school marks a significant step in this direction. Training young developers for international digital markets, the programme equips students with skills that transcend local constraints. Its first cohort is expected to graduate in **2026**, opening new pathways for employment and innovation.



## 3.3 Strengthening food systems and unlocking the blue economy

Efforts to build resilient food systems and harness the potential of the blue economy are advancing in parallel, reinforcing both livelihoods and sustainability.



In the agriculture sector, locally sourced school feeding initiatives are creating direct linkages between farmers and communities. A total of **6,084** children across **51** schools benefited from nutritious meals sourced from local producers, supporting both child nutrition and rural incomes.



In fisheries, targeted support is strengthening both skills and governance. Through initiatives such as EAF Nansen and FISH4ACP, **85** fishers received training, while a new fisheries governance plan was developed in collaboration with the Government, laying the foundation for more sustainable and productive marine resource management.



Looking ahead, the blue economy is emerging as a central pillar of long-term economic transformation. With technical support from the United Nations and financing from partners such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the country has developed investment frameworks across blue finance, sustainable fisheries, tourism and ecosystem services—providing a structured pathway to mobilise investment while protecting marine and coastal ecosystems.



### Why this matters

Together, these efforts reflect a shift towards a more integrated and forward-looking economic model, where investment, entrepreneurship and sustainability reinforce each other.

By strengthening national capacities to attract financing, supporting inclusive business development and building resilient food and ocean-based systems, São Tomé and Príncipe is laying the foundations for a more diversified, inclusive and sustainable economy, one that creates opportunities for its people while safeguarding its natural assets.



Creating jobs and supporting entrepreneurs builds a strong and inclusive economy



Digital inclusion empowers people and drives opportunity



Stronger food systems improve nutrition and livelihoods



Sustainable fisheries and the blue economy protect resources and create jobs



Investment today shapes a resilient and prosperous future for all

# An island of chocolate gold

“Cocoa makes a big difference in my life. With the money, I can buy food and take care of my home.”

As the morning light spreads across the hills of São Tomé, children walk along narrow paths to school. Among them are the eight children under the care of Camila Varela de Carvalho, her own and those of her siblings.

Once they are in class, Camila heads to her cocoa farm. With a practiced motion, she harvests ripe pods and splits them open, revealing the beans that sustain her family.

At 32, Camila is a farmer, a mother, and a provider. She balances multiple responsibilities to ensure the children in her care can stay in school and build a better future.

She also works as a cocoa inspector at a local cooperative, where she helps prepare beans for drying. Joining the cooperative has brought a sense of stability.

“Before, we harvested and waited for buyers. Sometimes they didn’t come,” she recalls. “Now, we know we can sell what we produce.”

In São Tomé and Príncipe, cocoa is a lifeline for thousands of families. But the sector faces growing challenges, including land degradation and climate change. With support from partners such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, farmers like Camila are adopting more sustainable practices and restoring degraded land through agroforestry.

For Camila, the impact goes beyond income. It brings security, dignity, and new ambitions.

She now dreams of producing her own chocolate, being part of the journey from bean to bar.

“Being a woman farmer means being strong,” she says. “We must keep working.”

At the end of the day, she returns home to the children she supports, nurturing not only cocoa, but their future.



“Being a woman farmer means being strong. We must keep working.”  
– Camila Varela de Carvalho

## IMPACT IN SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE



Stronger livelihoods for farming families



Sustainable cocoa production and restored land



More stability through cooperatives and fair markets



Education and opportunities for the next generation

OUTCOME 4

# Justice, Rights, Accountability & Inclusive Governance



## Why this matters

Together, these efforts reflect a shift towards stronger, more transparent and more accountable institutions.



By investing in justice systems, human rights frameworks and data-driven governance, São Tomé and Príncipe is building the foundations for trust between citizens and institutions, ensuring that public systems are not only more efficient, but also more inclusive, responsive and aligned with the needs of its people.



Stronger justice systems and rule of law



Protection and promotion of human rights



Accountability and fight against corruption



Inclusive and people-centred governance



Equal access to justice for all

## 4.1 Reinforcing justice systems and the rule of law

In 2025, São Tomé and Príncipe made important progress in strengthening the effectiveness, accessibility and fairness of its justice system. With support from the United Nations, key institutional reforms and technological innovations are improving both the quality and efficiency of justice delivery.



### STRONGER INVESTIGATION CAPACITY

The introduction of advanced digital forensic tools, including Cellebrite technology, is enhancing the capacity of law enforcement to collect and analyse evidence, contributing to faster and more reliable case resolution.



### EXPANDED ACCESS TO JUSTICE

The full operationalisation of the Arbitration Court is expanding access to alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, easing the burden on the judicial system while providing more efficient pathways for businesses and citizens.



### CHILD-FRIENDLY JUSTICE

The establishment of a child-friendly courtroom marks a significant step towards a more trauma-informed justice system, ensuring that children can engage with legal processes in a safe and supportive environment.



### BUILDING PROFESSIONAL CAPACITY

A total of 29 professionals—including magistrates, investigators and financial analysts—were trained in areas such as anti-corruption, financial crime and asset tracing, strengthening national capacity to address complex economic crimes.



### ADVANCING HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORKS

The draft law establishing a National Human Rights Commission advanced in Parliament, aligning the country's institutional architecture with the Paris Principles and laying the foundation for an independent body to promote and protect human rights.

## 4.2 Strengthening governance, data systems and public sector performance

Building stronger institutions also requires robust data systems and evidence-based decision-making.



### DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND DATA SYSTEMS

With UN support, Government institutions are leveraging digital infrastructure to improve planning, coordination and service delivery. The establishment and operationalisation of a national data centre and the introduction of Sydonia World for customs authorities will increase efficiency and revenue collection.



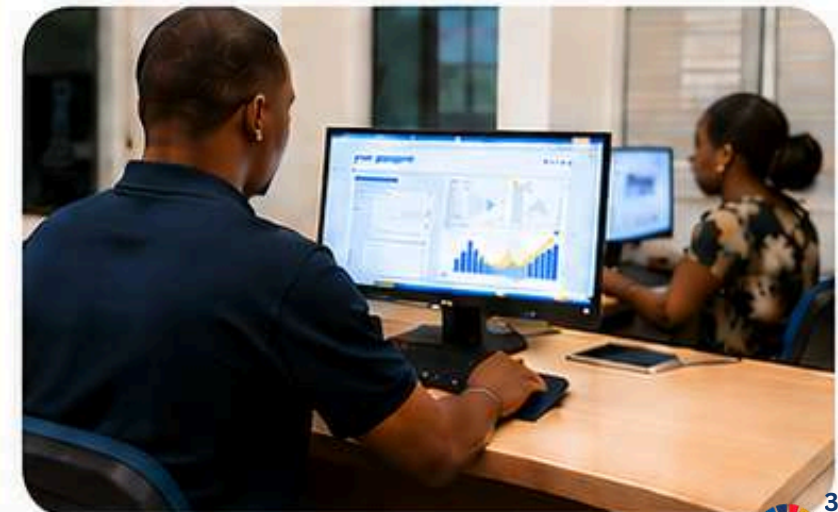
### EVIDENCE-BASED DECISION-MAKING

Expanded use of data platforms, such as Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS) and the national statistics "STP DADOS" system, is enabling more informed policy-making and more targeted public interventions.



### DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION FOR TRANSPARENCY AND EFFICIENCY

The rollout of digital case management systems and public information platforms in health, education and justice is streamlining administrative processes, improving access to information and strengthening accountability in public service delivery.





# Youth Voices in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

**“I want to be ready for this world. But we need the tools and the knowledge to be part of it.”**

At the United Nations House in São Tomé, university students gathered to discuss a question that is becoming increasingly urgent, how will artificial intelligence shape their future?

The conversation took place during the launch of the Human Development Report 2024/2025 by the United Nations Development Programme, which examines the growing impact of AI on human development. For many students, the topic felt immediate and personal.

“I want to be ready for this world,” one student said. “But we need the tools and the knowledge to be part of it.”

The discussion focused on the role of young people, not just as users of technology, but as active contributors to the digital future. Among the speakers, Dalila Rita, President of the Board of the INIC – Institute of Innovation and Knowledge, highlighted the importance of investing in youth.

Young people must not be left behind in this transformation,” she said. “They need the skills, opportunities and confidence to lead.”

In São Tomé and Príncipe, where access to digital tools and training is still uneven, AI presents both opportunity and risk. While it can expand access to education and create new economic pathways, it may also deepen inequalities if young people are not adequately prepared.

Students pointed to key challenges, access to infrastructure, quality education and opportunities to compete globally.

Throughout the discussion, one message stood out, the future of artificial intelligence will depend on human choices and young people must be part of them.

For those in the room, the conversation was clear. The digital future is already here and shaping it will depend on how well countries invest in their youth.

## IMPACT IN SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE



Building digital skills and preparing youth for the future



Empowering young voices to shape the digital transformation



Expanding access to education and opportunities



Promoting inclusion and reducing digital inequalities

# Cross-Cutting Priorities:

## Advancing Gender Equality, Youth Empowerment and Disability Inclusion

Across all areas of work, the United Nations continued to prioritise gender equality, youth empowerment and disability inclusion as essential drivers of inclusive and sustainable development.



### Gender equality

Gender equality remained central to programme implementation and policy engagement. Efforts focused on advancing women's leadership and participation in decision-making processes, including through sustained advocacy for the Parity Law, capacity-building initiatives and multi-stakeholder dialogues. At the same time, women's economic empowerment was strengthened through targeted support to entrepreneurship and livelihoods, notably under the REINA programme and agriculture value chain initiatives, enabling women to expand businesses, increase incomes and access new market opportunities.



### Youth empowerment

Youth empowerment was reinforced through greater inclusion in policy processes and innovation platforms. The validation of the CLAC framework marked an important step in institutionalising youth participation in climate governance, ensuring that young people have a voice in shaping national priorities. Complementing this, youth innovation bootcamps and engagement initiatives were launched to strengthen skills, entrepreneurship and civic participation, positioning young people as active contributors to national development.



### Disability inclusion

Disability inclusion continued to be mainstreamed across sectors, with a focus on strengthening both policy frameworks and service delivery. National inclusion protocols were developed and operationalised, while improved data systems are enabling more evidence-based planning and targeting. Efforts to promote accessibility were also expanded, with public institutions, events and schools increasingly adopting inclusive practices to ensure equal access and participation for persons with disabilities.

Gender Factsheet



Parity Law Brochure



Disability Inclusion  
Advocacy Note



# WORKING MORE AND BETTER TOGETHER: COHERENCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

## Lessons on the added value of the UN Development System

As Sao Tome and Principe advances in the implementation of its United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), 2025 has provided important insights into how the UN Development System can deliver greater coherence, effectiveness and impact.



**Experience has reaffirmed the importance of systems thinking.**

Across sectors, from digital health and interoperable social registries to national data centres and energy transition initiatives progress has been most effective where interventions are designed as part of broader systems, rather than standalone projects. The UN's contribution has focused on strengthening these systems through technical design, standards, capacity-building and sustainable financing frameworks, ensuring that investments generate long-term, scalable results.

**The UN's converging power continues to be a critical asset.**

Throughout 2025, the UN brought together Government, private sector actors, international financial institutions and civil society to align priorities and mobilise collective action. This was particularly evident in processes such as the RISE STP Investment Forum, the development of NDC 3.0 and reforms in social protection systems. These platforms not only facilitated dialogue, but also transferred into concrete partnerships and coordinated implementation.

**Delivering as one remains central to impact.**

The UN system has strengthened its integrated offer, aligning agencies behind joint priorities under the UNSDCF. From health and education to justice and climate action, interventions were implemented through Government systems, reinforcing national ownership and avoiding parallel structures. This approach has enhanced both efficiency and sustainability.

**Lesson is the continued importance of maintaining a strong focus on equity and leaving no one behind (LNOB).**

Across programmes, deliberate efforts were made to reach those most at risk of exclusion including women, youth, rural households, persons with disabilities and out-of-school children. Targeting these groups is essential not only for fairness, but also for achieving broader development outcomes.

**The value of credible data and transparency has become increasingly clear.**

Investments in surveys, digital dashboards, monitoring systems and strengthened MRV frameworks are improving the quality and timeliness of data available to decision-makers. This, in turn, supports more effective planning, accountability and adaptive management of national development priorities.

# CONVENING FOR IMPACT: TURNING PARTNERSHIPS INTO PROGRESS

At the RISE STP Investment Forum in Brussels, the value of working together was clear.

Over 200 participants from international financial institutions, private investors, government representatives and development partners, came together to engage directly on São Tomé and Príncipe's development priorities. But beyond the numbers, what stood out was the quality of the exchanges: focused, solution-oriented and aligned with concrete opportunities.

The forum created a space where national priorities met potential partners. Projects in renewable energy, blue economy, tourism and agri-food value chains were not only presented, but discussed in terms of financing, implementation and impact.



For Prime Minister Américo Ramos, the message was clear:

**“ We are ready to work with partners to transform our national vision into concrete investments that benefit our people.” ”**



This is where the added value of the United Nations Development System became visible.

By convening actors that do not always sit at the same table, aligning discussions with national strategies such as ENDS 2026–2040 and helping structure investment opportunities, the UN helped turn dialogue into actionable pathways.



As the UN Resident Coordinator noted:

**“ The strength of the UN lies in its ability to bring partners together and connect ambition with implementation. ”**



Bilateral meetings and follow-up discussions ensured that conversations moved beyond general interest.

Project promoters engaged directly with potential investors, identifying next steps and building relationships that extend beyond the forum itself.



More than an event, RISE STP illustrated how coordinated action can accelerate results.

It showed that when partnerships are aligned, informed and focused on impact, they can unlock opportunities that no single actor could achieve alone.



# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

The United Nations Country Team will remain firmly focused on delivering high-impact results aligned with the priorities of the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. In 2026, efforts will concentrate on five strategic areas.

The UN will support the completion of digital integration across key social sectors, including the advancement of a unique identification system capable of linking health information systems with the national social registry. This will strengthen service delivery, improve targeting and enable more responsive, people-centred systems.

Efforts will also focus on scaling up clean energy solutions across public infrastructure, particularly in schools and health facilities. Expanding solar energy to more than 30 public buildings will help reduce operational costs, enhance service reliability and strengthen resilience to climate and energy shocks.

Climate resilience will continue to be reinforced through the implementation of national adaptation priorities and the mobilisation of green and climate finance. These efforts are critical in the context of increasing climate-related risks and will support the transition towards a more sustainable and resilient development pathway.

At the institutional level, the UN will support the operationalisation of the National Human Rights Commission, strengthening institutional safeguards, accountability mechanisms and social cohesion, particularly important in the lead-up to the 2026 electoral cycle.

The UN will also deepen its engagement in promoting the digital and blue economy, with a strong emphasis on expanding decent employment opportunities for young people and addressing the structural drivers of outward migration.

These priorities are informed by key milestones and risks anticipated in 2026, including presidential and legislative elections, the mid-term review of the Cooperation Framework and the preparation of an updated Common Country Analysis in the second half of the year. In response, the UN system will continue to adapt its configuration and ways of working, strengthening advisory and coordination capacities through the Resident Coordinator's Office, scaling up joint programming and prioritising collective resource mobilisation to deliver transformative, system-level results.

In a context marked by uncertainty and evolving development challenges, the UN remains committed to protecting and building on the progress achieved to date. These efforts will contribute to sustaining the development trajectory set out in ENDS 2026–2040, while positioning the UN system to better anticipate risks, prevent reversals and support nationally led solutions during this critical transition period.



# ACRONYMS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AFDB	African Development Bank
CF	Cooperation Framework of the UN
CLTS	Community-Led Total Sanitation
COMPRAN	Project on Commercialization, Agricultural productivity and nutrition
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Children
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DHIS	District Health Information Software
FAO	The Food and Agriculture Organization
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNI	Gross National Income
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HDR	Human Development Report
HPV	Human Papilloma Virus
ICPD	International Conference on Population and Development
ILO	International Labor organization
INE	National Institute of Statistics
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IWMP	Integrated Water Management Program
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys
MPTF	Multi-Partner Trust Fund
MRV	Measuring, Reporting, Verification
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
STP	Sao Tome and Principe
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population
UN-HABITAT	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNV	United Nations Volunteers Programme
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Program
WHO	World Health Organization Programme





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SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE



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