

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE



INTRODUCTION

Portugal discovered and colonized the uninhabited islands in the late 15th century, setting up a sugar-based economy that gave way to coffee and cocoa in the 19th century. Independence was achieved in 1975, but democratic reforms were not instituted until the late 1980s. The country held its first free elections in 1991.

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State

President Carlos VILA NOVA

Head of Government

Prime Minister Jorge Bom JESUS

Government Type

semi-presidential republic

Capital

Sao Tome

Legislature

unicameral National Assembly or Assembleia Nacional (55 seats)

GEOGRAPHY

Area

Total: 964 sq km
Land: 964 sq km
Water: 0 sq km

Climate

tropical; hot, humid; one rainy season (October to May)

Natural Resources

fish, hydropower

ECONOMY

Economic Overview

lower middle-income Central African island economy; falling cocoa production due to drought and mismanagement; joint oil venture with Nigeria; government owns 90% of land; high debt, partly from fuel subsidies; tourism gutted by COVID-19

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) \$890 million (2020 est.)

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) \$4,100 (2020 est.)

Industries - light construction, textiles, soap, beer, fish processing, timber

Agricultural products - plantains, oil palm fruit, coconuts, taro, bananas, fruit, cocoa, yams, cassava, maize

Exports \$50 million (2020 est.)

gas turbines, cocoa beans, aircraft parts, iron products, chocolate (2019)

partners: Singapore 30%, Switzerland 24%, France 11%, Poland 7%, Belgium 7%, US 5% (2019)

Imports \$160 million (2020 est.)

refined petroleum, cars, rice, flavored water, postage stamps (2019)

partners: Portugal 41%, Angola 17%, China 8% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population

213,950 (July 2021 est.)

Population Growth

1.5% (2021 est.)

Ethnicity

Mestizo, Angolares, Forros, Servicais, Tongas, Europeans (primarily Portuguese), Asians (mostly Chinese)

Language

Portuguese 98.4% (official), Forro 36.2%, Cabo Verdian 8.5%, French 6.8%, Angolar 6.6%, English 4.9%, Lunguie 1%, other 2.4% (2012 est.)

Religion

Catholic 55.7%, Adventist 4.1%, Assembly of God 3.4%, New Apostolic 2.9%, Mana 2.3%, Universal Kingdom of God 2%, Jehovah's Witness 1.2%, other 6.2%, none 21.2%, unspecified 1% (2012 est.)

