As on 03 February, 2020

Embassy of India
Luanda

**Brief on India-Sao Tome & Principe Relations**

India and Sao Tome and Principe (STP) have generally enjoyed warm and friendly relations, particularly after 1975 (post-STP independence era). High level interactions have been limited to occasional multilateral meetings. However, STP is keen to develop closer ties with India. They consider India as a potential strategic partner and are willing to enter an institutional arrangement in that regard. They have consistently supported India in the multilateral fora. STP Government holds India in high esteem. STP announced its support for India to become a Permanent Member of an expanded UN Security Council. It voted for India for the Executive Council membership of UNESCO in 2017.

**Political**

Leaders of both countries have been meeting on the side lines of some of the international fora such as the UN, NAM, etc. Dr. Carlos Alberto Pires Tiny, then STP Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation & Communities visited India from November 29 to December 2, 2009. This was the first high level visit on either side since the island nation got its independence from Portugal in 1975.

Prime Minister Dr Patrice Emery Trovoada visited India in October 2015 to participate in the IAFS-III and held bilateral talks with PM Modi and sought assistance of India in developing its infrastructure and agriculture sector.

MoS (AYUSH), Shri Shripad Yesso Naik visited Sao Tome and Principe in August 2015 as special envoy to PM for extending IAFS III invitation.

Mr. M.J. Akbar, Minister of State of External Affairs visited Sao Tome on March 13-15, 2018 and met President, Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Sao Tome. He held bilateral discussion with the Sao Tomean delegates.

Mr. Afonso da Graca Varela, Minister's of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and Parliamentary Affairs visited India to participate in the Founding ISA Summit held in New Delhi on March 11, 2018.

A 2-member ISRO delegation visited Sao Tome and Principe from June 2-9, 2018 to finalise the MOU and for land survey for establishment of ISRO Ground Station.

Foreign Minister Mr. Urbino Botelho visited India on September 8, 2018 to sign the Framework Agreement on Space Cooperation.
Trade

The trade between India and STP is almost negligible. Though STP importers are interested in procuring various items of interest from India, one of the constant complaints they have is that the shipping time and costs are quite high. Main items of imports have been pharmaceuticals, organic chemicals, cotton and optical, photographic, medical instruments etc. Bilateral trade figures for the last 5 years are given below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian Exports</td>
<td>1.47</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.92</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian Imports</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total trade</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Agreements

A Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations between India and STP was signed on 01st December 2009, during the visit of then STP Foreign Minister Dr Carlos Alberto Pires Tiny. During the visit of Mr. M.J. Akbar, Minister of State of External Affairs to Sao Tome on March 13-15, 2018, Agreements on Economic Cooperation, MOU on Cooperation on Traditional Medicine and MOU on Cooperation on Medicinal Plants were signed. STP has also signed the Framework Agreement on ISA on February 8, 2018. Also the Framework Agreement on Cooperation in the Exploration and Uses of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes was signed between the two countries September 7, 2018.

Sao Tome and Principe has signed and ratified the ISA Framework agreement.

LOC

Govt of India had announced a grant of US$ 1 million under LOC for setting up a Technology Incubation cum Production centre for development of SME sector and another grant of Rs 10 million for meeting immediate requirements in education and health sectors. It was also agreed to consider a LOC for US$ 5 million for priority projects to be identified by the STP side in agriculture, infrastructure and capacity building. Both the LOCs are yet to be utilized.
Grants

India gifted 150 computers to Sao Tome and Principe in November 2019 towards IT upgradation of the Ministries and secondary schools.

Pan African E-connectivity Project

STP has agreed to join the e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati (E-VBAB) Network Project in Africa. TCIL has signed the Agreement on E-connectivity Project and stationed an engineer in STP to oversee the implementation of the project.

Indian Community

There was a small Indian community in STP until 1961 which moved away to other countries during the liberation of Goa. There are only a few Indians in STP working in the food sector, but Indian traders settled in neighboring countries visit São Tomé & Principe for trading.