

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

### **Political Relations**

Since the independence of Sao Tome & Principe in 1975, India and Sao Tome & Principe have enjoyed warm and friendly relations. During the period 2008 - September 2020, Sao Tome & Principe was accredited to the Embassy of India in Angola. The Embassy of India in Sao Tome started functioning from 21 September 2020. Presently, Sao Tome & Principe does not have a Resident Mission or an Honorary Consul in India.

### **Visits from Sao Tome & Principe**

Sao Tome & Principe Prime Minister, Dr. Patrice Emery Trovada visited India in October 2015 to participate in the Third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III) and held bilateral talks with Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi on 28 October 2015. The two leaders discussed bilateral cooperation, especially cooperation for developing the infrastructure, agriculture and healthcare sectors of Sao Tome & Principe.

### **Other Ministerial visits**

Dr. Carlos Alberto Pires Tiny, Sao Tome & Principe Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation & Communities visited India from 29 November to 2 December 2009. This was the first high level visit on either side since the island nation got its independence from Portugal in 1975. During his visit, the Sao Tomean Foreign Minister held extensive discussions with Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Minister of State for External Affairs. The two Ministers signed a Protocol for Foreign Office Consultations.

Mr. Alfonso da Graca Varela, Minister of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and Parliamentary Affairs of Sao Tome & Principe visited India to participate in the first International Solar Alliance (ISA) Summit held in New Delhi on 11 March 2018.

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

A 3-member defence delegation led by Mr. Oscar Aguiar Sacramento,

Minister of Defence and Internal Affairs of Sao Tome & Principe participated in the DEFEXPO 2020 and the “India Africa Defence Ministers Meet” in Lucknow during 5 - 8 February 2020.

### **Participation in the Voice of Global South Summits (VoGSS)**

Dignitaries from Sao Tome & Principe actively participated in all the Voice of Global South Summits (VoGSS). Mr. Adelino Rosa, Minister of Infrastructure & Natural Resources participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> VoGSS held in January 2023. Mrs. Euridice Semedo, Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports participated in the 2<sup>nd</sup> VoGSS held in November 2023. Dr. Gareth Guadalupe, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities participated in the Foreign Ministers' Session of the 3<sup>rd</sup> VoGSS held in August 2024.

### **Other visits**

Hon'ble Justice Mr. Manuel Silva Gomes Cravid, President of Supreme Court of Justice of Sao Tome & Principe participated in the 25<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Chief Justices of the World held in Lucknow during 20-24 November 2024. Earlier in 2023 also, Hon'ble Justice Mr. Manuel Silva Gomes Cravid had participated in the 24<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Chief Justices of the World held in Lucknow.

During 14-20 July 2024, a 7-member delegation from the Ministry of Justice of Sao Tome & Principe visited Bengaluru, India to study the Digital Public Infrastructure model, including the digital ID and digital payments systems. This visit was coordinated by the World Bank office in New Delhi.

A 3-member delegation from Sao Tome & Principe attended the Seventh Session of International Solar Alliance Assembly held during 3-6 November 2024 at New Delhi.

Two health technicians from Sao Tome & Principe attended the 6-months Radiation Technician Training Programme at Karad, Maharashtra during September 2024 – February 2025. The training programme was arranged by India office of Merck Foundation.

### **Visits from India**

### **Ministerial-level visits**

Shri Shripad Yesso Naik, Minister of State (AYUSH) visited Sao Tome & Principe in August 2015 as a Special Envoy of the Prime Minister to extend IAFS III invitation.

Shri M.J. Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs visited Sao Tome during 13-15 March 2018 and met with the President, Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Sao Tome & Principe. During the visit, an Agreement for Economic Cooperation and a Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in Traditional Medicines and Medicinal Plants were signed.

### **Economic and Commercial Relations**

According to the available statistics, the bilateral trade between the two countries for the last few years is follows:

*Figures in USD Million*

Year	Export to Sao Tome & Principe	Import from Sao Tome & Principe	Total Trade	Balance of Trade
2020-2021	1.96	0.08	2.04	1.88
2021-2022	2.07	Nil	2.07	2.07
2022-2023	1.51	Nil	1.51	1.51
2023-2024	1.53	0.02	1.55	1.51
Apr-Dec 2024	1.22	Nil	1.22	1.22

Source: Department of Commerce, Government of India

The trade between India and Sao Tome & Principe is very less. Sao Tome & Principe is the 2<sup>nd</sup> smallest country in Africa and its economy is very fragile, relying heavily on external aid and remittances. Major bottlenecks in boosting trade are inadequate air and sea connectivity, high cost for trans-shipments of goods and very small size of the domestic consumer market. Main items of imports from India are rice and cereals, pharmaceuticals, organic chemicals, vegetable fats and oils, textile fabric and plastics.

### **Development Partnership**

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) International is engaging with the Central Bank of Sao Tome & Principe for deployment of a fast payments' solution for Sao Tome & Principe under the Central Bank to

Central Bank arrangement.

In November 2023, a Technical Country Mission of International Solar Alliance visited Sao Tome & Principe and NTPC carried out a pre-feasibility report for implementation of solar rooftop projects for prominent buildings in Sao Tome & Principe.

Sao Tome & Principe signed the Framework Agreement on International Solar Alliance on 8 February 2018 and has also ratified the same. It also supported India's candidature for the post of Director General of International Solar Alliance (ISA) for the period 2025-2029.

Government of India has provided humanitarian medical assistance to Sao Tome & Principe on five occasions, viz. 24,000 doses of Covax vaccines in March 2021 as part of the *Vaccine Maitri* initiative; a donation of medicines in June 2021 on the request of Sao Tome & Principe side; anti-TB medicines in May 2023 as part of the Government of India's initiative; donation of lifesaving drugs and generic medicines in June 2023 on the request of Sao Tome & Principe side; and humanitarian medical assistance of life-saving medicines for the main hospital in the country in January 2025 on the request of Sao Tome & Principe side.

In August 2024, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between India and Sao Tome & Principe for supply of 6 school buses to STP as a gift from the Government of India.

India gifted 150 computers to Sao Tome & Principe in November 2019 for information technology upgradation of the Ministries and secondary schools of Sao Tome & Principe.

Government of India has announced grant of Lines of Credit for US\$ 1 million for setting up a Technology Incubation-cum-Production Center for development of SME sector and for US\$ 5 million for priority projects to be identified by Sao Tome & Principe side in agriculture, infrastructure and capacity building.

### **ITEC Programme and capacity building courses**

Sao Tome & Principe has been utilizing the slots allotted under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme being offered to the country as part of Government of India's contributions for capacity

building and development assistance. 25 Sao Tome & Principe nationals have been trained in India under the ITEC Programme since 2002.

2 officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sao Tome & Principe attended the 71<sup>st</sup> Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats held at Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service, New Delhi during 22 April-3 May 2024.

During November 2024, an Officer from the Coast Guard of Sao Tome & Principe attended the 11<sup>th</sup> edition of National Maritime Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX-2024) conducted by the Indian Coast Guard at Kochi.

During 2024, a total of 14 Sao Tome & Principe officials attended the capacity building courses in India.

### **Cultural Relations**

A 14-member cultural delegation from Sao Tome & Principe participated in the 37<sup>th</sup> Suraj Kund International Crafts Mela 2024 held in February 2024. Earlier in 2022 also, a 7-member cultural delegation from the country participated in the 35<sup>th</sup> Suraj Kund International Crafts Mela 2022.

Local Yoga institutions partner with the Mission in organizing the International Day of Yoga, which is resulting in increased interest in the practice of Yoga among Sao Tome nationals and expatriates. The Mission celebrates important Indian festivals, with active participation by the Indian diaspora and the local community.

### **Indian Community**

Till 1961, there used to be a small-sized Indian community in Sao Tome & Principe, which moved away to other countries after the liberation of Goa. Presently, there are approximately 35 Indian citizens in Sao Tome & Principe, working in the retail outlets and services sectors.

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***March 2025***

