

Country Disease Outlook

São Tomé and Príncipe

August 2023



World Health Organization

African Region

Background

The Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe is a Portuguese speaking country made up of two volcanic islands approximately 150 km apart in the Gulf of Guinea, off the western equatorial coast of central Africa. It has a relatively small population of approximately 223,107 in 2021 of which 96% live on São Tomé Island. Life expectancy at birth has improved by 6.96 years from 63.5 years in 2000 to 70.4 years in 2020.

Key points

- ◆ São Tomé and Príncipe has successfully met the SDG3 target for the under-5 mortality (15.4 per 1000 live births, compared to a target of 25) and the neonatal mortality rates (7.6 per 1000 live births, compared to a target of 12).
- ◆ The country has a low burden of communicable diseases compared to other countries in the WHO African region but faces challenges related to non-communicable diseases and access to health care.
- ◆ The incidence of HIV is relatively low with only 126 new cases reported in 2020. São Tomé and Príncipe achieved two of the 95-95-95 goals, reaching 98-98-90 in 2021. Immunisation rates have been generally high in São Tomé and Príncipe, although the coverage rate for rotavirus and the first dose of measles-containing vaccine dipped to less than 80% in 2021, indicating that catch up strategies will be needed.

UHC/CN

Universal Health Coverage/Communicable and Non-communicable Diseases
WHO Regional Office for Africa



Broad disease outlook

The country has a low burden of communicable diseases compared to other countries in the WHO African region but faces challenges related to non-communicable diseases and access to health care.

Communicable Diseases

Malaria

Malaria is a major communicable disease with approximately 2,719 cases (with incidence rate of 12.18 per 1000 population) reported in 2021. Malaria remains highly seasonal on the two islands with indoor residual spraying (IRS) and the use of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) as the main tools used for vector control.

Neither Island of Sao Tomé nor Príncipe has ever reached malaria-free despite efforts to eliminate disease stemming back to the 1980s. However, Sao Tomé and Príncipe has succeeded in reducing malaria incidence in the country in the last two decades, although the number of cases has been increasing each year since 2020, thereby putting the country's plans to eliminate malaria by 2025 at risk.

HIV/TB

In 2021, incidence of tuberculosis for Sao Tome and Principe was 114 cases per 100,000 people. Tuberculosis death rate fluctuated substantially in recent years, it tended to decrease through 2001 - 2020 period ending at 19 cases per 100,000 population. The incidence of HIV is relatively low with only 126 new cases reported in 2020. Since 2015 HIV mortality has remained low while TB mortality has increased compared to 2015 levels. São Tomé and Príncipe achieved two of the 95-95-95 goals:

- ▲ 98% of people living with HIV know their status.
- ▲ 98% of people living with HIV who know their status are on treatment.
- ▲ 80% of people living with HIV and on treatment are virally suppressed.

Neglected tropical diseases

São Tomé and Príncipe has only three endemic NTDs requiring preventive chemotherapy through mass drug administration (MDA) namely lymphatic filariasis, soil-transmitted helminthiasis and schistosomiasis. At least 8 NTDs are known to be non-endemic. The country has been certified free of dracunculiasis (Guinea worm disease). It has never been endemic for yaws, but is yet to be certified.

Non-communicable diseases

The largest burden of disease and cause of death are due to non-communicable diseases, mainly cardiovascular disease, cancers, diabetes and chronic respiratory diseases. The age-standardised mortality rate for these diseases has been greater than 600 per 100,000 population since 2015.

Childhood Immunization

Immunisation rates have been generally high, although the coverage rate for rotavirus and the first dose of measles-containing vaccine have recently dipped to below 80%, indicating that catch up strategies will be needed. In 2021, an estimated 188 under-immunized children were in São Tomé and Príncipe. This estimate was the same as the number of zero-dose children. These children can be targeted through active tracking and community follow-up.

Child survival

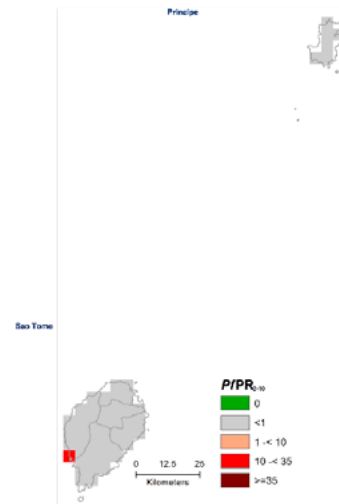
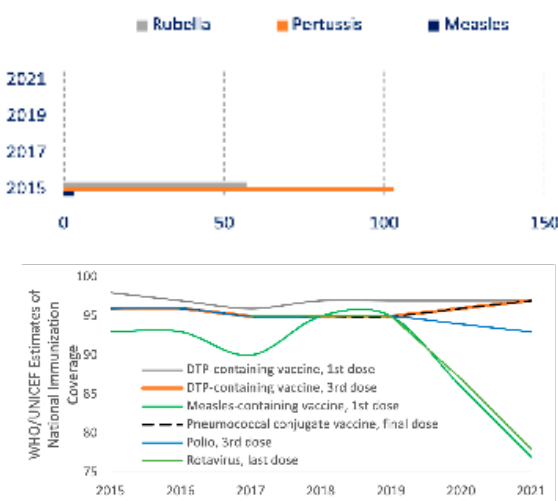
The under-5 mortality rate in São Tomé and Príncipe stands at 15.4 per 1000 live births, while the neonatal mortality is 7.6 per 1000 live births (2021). These indicators demonstrate that the country has exceeded the SDG3 target of 25 per 1000 live births and 12 per 1000 live births respectively. This lower rate is a likely contribution of several factors, including its high vaccination coverage rates in children, thereby averting a high disease burden in children.

MALARIA

POPULATION AT RISK IN 2022	TOTAL MALARIA CASES IN 2021	TOTAL MALARIA DEATHS IN 2021
32.8 million	2,719	1

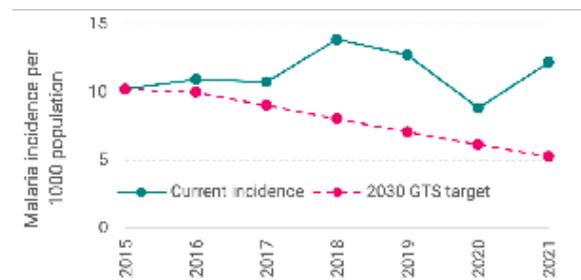
ITN use in children under five years 54.1% and 58.7% use of ACTs among those with fever for whom care was sought and received a finger or heel prick

EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNIZATION IN CHILDREN



Plasmodium falciparum malaria prevalence in children in Sao Tome and Principe in 2020. Estimates from the Malaria Atlas project

Malaria incidence in Sao Tome and Principe since 2015 compared to GTS targets shows that Sao Tome and Principe reversed its targets in 2020

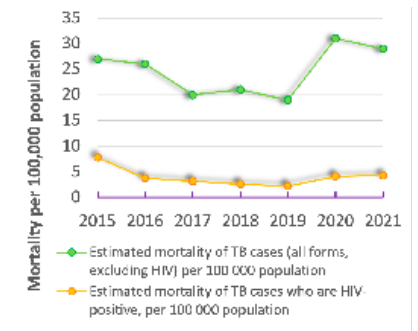
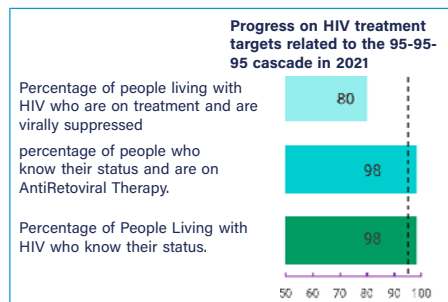


Zero dose children 188 Under-immunized 188

WUENIC coverage suggests a drop in measles coverage in 2020, Immunization coverage remains high for DPT antigen. Only 3 cases of measles in 2015. Mumps continues to occur with 5 cases last reported in 2012. 1 tetanus case in 2021

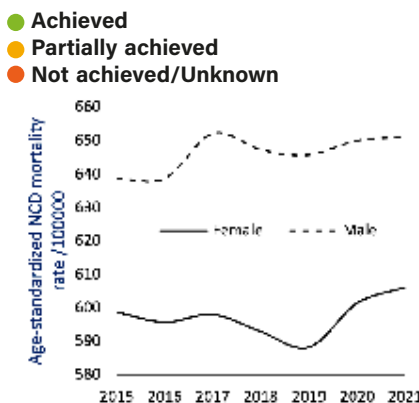
HIV AND TUBERCULOSIS

- 126** people receiving antiretroviral therapy in 2021
- 83%** Treatment success rate for HIV-positive TB cases
- 53%** of children (aged < 5 years) household contacts of bacteriologically-confirmed TB cases on preventive treatment
- 12%** Domestic funding for TB
- 4%** Domestic funding for HIV



- Indicator 1 - Targets
- Indicator 2 - CRV Mortality
- Indicator 3 - Surveys
- Indicator 4 - NCD policy and Plan
- Indicator 5A - Tobacco taxes
- Indicator 5B - Tobacco smoke free/polution
- Indicator 5C - Tobacco health warning
- Indicator 5D - Tobacco advertising ban
- Indicator 5E - Tobacco media campaign
- Indicator 6A - Alcohol availability
- Indicator 6B - Alcohol advertising restrictions
- Indicator 6C - Alcohol taxes
- Indicator 7A - Salt policies
- Indicator 7B - Trans fats policies
- Indicator 7C - Marketing to children
- Indicator 8 - Physical activity awareness
- Indicator 9 - NCD guidelines

NCD PROGRESS INDICATORS



NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES

- Endemic NTDS requiring Preventive Chemotherapy (PC)**
- Lymphatic filariasis
 - Soil-transmitted helminthiasis
 - Schistosomiasis

PC-NTDs treatment in 2021
49,562 targeted for MDA
47,704 treated with MDA

- OTHER MAJOR NTDs**
- Human Africa trypanosomiasis (gambiense)
 - Leishmaniasis (cutaneous and visceral)
 - Buruli ulcer
 - Taeniasis and cysticercosis
 - Leprosy
 - Rabies