

Commission to Study the Organization of Peace

UPR of São Tomé and Príncipe

Mr. President,

São Tomé and Príncipe is ranked a "free country," scoring a 2 on both political freedom and civil liberties (the scale is 1 to 7, with 1 corresponding to the highest and 7 the lowest level of freedom) in Freedom House's scoring system. Freedom of expression, guaranteed by the constitution, is also respected in practice. While the state controls a press agency and the only radio and television stations, no law forbids private broadcasting. Opposition parties receive free airtime and newsletters, and pamphlets criticising the government circulate freely.

The country has achieved commendable results in the field of social indicators such as access to education. The International Development Association (IDA) financed Quality Education for all, supports the implementation of the government's education and training plans. The project helps the government enhance the quality of education for all by improving the system of in-service teacher training, and by strengthening education human resource management. The operation was approved by the World Bank Group Executive Board on December 20, 2013, for an amount of \$900,000, and an additional financing of \$3.5 million was approved on June 27, 2014. The project is co-financed by a multiple donor Trust Fund for an amount of \$1.1 million. The project became effective in May 2014 and good progress is being made in the implementation of the planned activities.

As regard external economic aid for development, the World Bank portfolio currently stands at two projects with a total net commitment of \$ 8.77 million, of which 45.1% is disbursed. The average project age is three years. There are also active Trust Funds that finance activities in power sector efficiency improvement, the financial sector, the social protection system, the business climate,

extractive industries transparency (EITI), and adaptation to climate change.

The country has also taken measures for Increasing the Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable Coastal Communities. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) financed Adaptation to Climate Change Project, supports the implementation of the government's National Adaptation Program of Action (NAPA). The NAPA promotes priority actions on adaptation including in the fisheries, agriculture, forestry, infrastructure, civil protection, health, and energy and water sectors. Based on the NAPA, the government of STP established a National Adaptation to Climate Change Program with the goal of increasing the adaptive capacity of its population to reduce their vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate variability and change. The operation was approved by the GEF on June 20, 2011, for a total amount of \$4.5 million. The project is showing encouraging results: the number of fishermen lost at sea has been reduced to zero for two consecutive years after the introduction of the safety at sea program; 50% of fishermen have access to 12-hour weather forecasts during the fog/storm season; and a marine meteorological station - a first in Sao Tome and Principe - has also been installed, as well as a system of SMS-based alert developed.

The country has a good human rights record, particularly with regard to women's rights, religious freedom, its free and fair elections and peaceful transfer of power. In this respect Sao Tome and Principe is a model for others.