

NEWSLETTER

EDITION: 02

















Organização
Mundial da Saúde
São Tomé e Príncipe

APRIL – JUNE 2025



SÃO TOMÉ E PRÍNCIPE

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Editorial Message

Dr Abdoulaye Diarra

WHO Representative in São Tomé and Príncipe



It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the second edition of our WHO São Tomé and Príncipe Newsletter.

Over the past quarter, we have witnessed remarkable progress in several areas of public health, made possible through the unwavering collaboration between the Ministry of Health, WHO, and our valued partners. This edition showcases key milestones, from the successful celebration of African Vaccination Week and World Malaria Day, the adoption of digital tools for health surveillance, and strengthened community engagement for emergency preparedness.

At the heart of these achievements is a shared vision of universal health coverage and equitable access to quality care for all. Whether through capacity building at district level, reinforcement of laboratory systems, or partnerships that place health diplomacy at the centre of our action, we are building the foundation for a more resilient health system.

As we continue to address pressing health challenges, I invite you to reflect on the stories featured in this issue — not only as reports of what has been accomplished, but as a call to maintain momentum and deepen our collective impact.

Together, we are supporting the Ministry of Health to make health for all a reality in São Tomé and Príncipe.

I wish you an enriching read.■

WORLD HEALTH DAY

HEALTHY BEGINNINGS, HOPEFUL FUTURES

DA SAÚDE

The celebration of World Health Day, under the theme “Healthy Beginnings, Hopeful Futures,” culminated in a Maternal Health Fair held at Yon Gato Square in the center of the Santomean capital. The event was organized by the Ministry of Health, with the technical support of World Health Organization (WHO) and other partners.

The opening ceremony was chaired by the Minister of Health, Dr. Celso Matos, and attended by the WHO Representative, Dr. Abdoulaye Diarra. The initiative aimed to promote free access to essential health services for the population, such as general practice, gynecology, obstetrics, pediatrics, family planning, and specialized tests.

During his speech, the Minister highlighted the progress made in maternal and child health, despite the shortage of qualified human resources. He also cited a 65% drop in the infant mortality rate since 2000, according to the 2019 MICS survey, and thanked the WHO for its continued support.

The WHO Representative stressed the importance of investing in women's and children's health as a commitment to human rights and sustainable development. Recent WHO data warn that globally, maternal and neonatal deaths remain high, especially in fragile contexts such as Africa, “where 20 mothers and 120 newborns die every hour – a total of 178 000 maternal and 1 million newborn deaths annually”, according to Dr. Chikwe Ihekweazu acting WHO Regional Director. This celebration offers the opportunity for WR and colleagues to donate blood and participate to the sensitization for health promotion.

The initiative reinforces the commitment of the country and WHO to ensuring accessible and quality health care for all. ■



African Vaccination Week boosts coverage and strengthens child protection in São Tomé and Príncipe

From April 21st to May 9th, 2025, São Tomé and Príncipe celebrated African Vaccination Week for children aged 0 to 2 years. The main target groups were the zero doses and the children whose vaccination schedules is incomplete.

The launching ceremony took place in the community of Praia Gâmbôa, in the district of Água Grande, in the presence of Minister of Labour, Solidarity and social Security, Jouceiril dos Ramo, Representing the Minister of Health, the WHO representative in São Tomé and Príncipe, Dr. Abdoulaye Diarra, and the representatives of other UN agencies, namely UNICEF, UNFPA and other partners. The personnel of the national immunization programme and other technicians from the Ministry of Health also attended the event.

This campaign is strategically in line with the goals of the 2025–2029 National Vaccination Strategy and the 2030 Vaccination Agenda, responding to the challenges of maintaining high coverage rates despite the good indicators already achieved compared to the average of the subregion.

The mains results achieved of the campaign
Approximately 1,170 children were identified, of whom 771 were vaccinated. Most of them received a booster dose against measles. Only one child among those vaccinated had no previous recorded dose.

In addition to routine vaccination, the campaign included:

- Measles vaccine booster for children and adolescents up to 15 years, a total of 23,989 were vaccinated
- HPV vaccination in schools, targeting girls aged of 10 years. A total of 2,896 out of 3,119 girls were vaccinated with an average coverage of 93%. The highest coverage was achieved in Cantagalo (99.4%) and Caué (99.1%).
- The supplementation with Vitamin A, reaches about 90% of children aged from 6 to 11 months and 80% of those aged from 12 to 59 months.

The strong community mobilization, involving the media, and the local community leaders was



essential to raise awareness among families about the importance of vaccination. As emphasized by WHO Representative Dr. Abdoulaye Diarra: “No child should be left behind.” ■

Time to achieve zero malaria case: invest, innovate, and implement



São Tomé and Príncipe celebrated World Malaria Day on April 25 under the slogan “Time to achieve zero malaria case: invest, innovate, and implement”. The main event, which took place in the community of Ribeira Afonso was attended by the Minister of Labor, Solidarity, and Social Security, Jouceerli Tiny dos Ramos, representing the Minister of Health, and the WHO representative in São Tomé and Príncipe, Dr. Abdoulaye Diarra, and other partners. During his speech, the WHO representative congratulated the country for the good results achieved in the fight against malaria and stressed the “need to invest, innovate, and implement actions that help the country achieve the objectives of the Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination 2023–2027.” The WHO reaffirms its commitment to continue supporting São Tomé and Príncipe in building a malaria-free future. ■



São Tomé and Príncipe determined to eliminate malaria



With a dramatic reduction in cases and deaths, São Tomé and Príncipe has made significant progress against [#malaria](#), with support from the World Health Organization, Global Fund, and others. Find out how the country is determined to overcome the remaining challenges to eliminate malaria.

[Find out More](#)

WHO donates laboratory and IT equipment's and consumables, to the Ministry of Health of São Tomé and Príncipe

The donation of computers and laboratory equipments is in response to the request of the Ministry of Health and it will help strengthen the diagnostic and surveillance capacity for emerging diseases, namely mpox and influenza.

According to WHO representative after the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO engaged to support countries to strengthen their “preparedness and response capacities to detect and respond appropriately to potential threats to public health.”

Speaking on behalf of the Minister of Health, Dr. Martinho Nascimento, highlighted the importance of collaboration with WHO in promoting a more resilient and effective health system. He also said that these equipment's will improve “the quality of the tests carried out and strengthen the laboratory's capacity to meet current demands.”

The representative took the opportunity of being there to visit the facilities of the National Reference Laboratory and talk to the coordinator and technicians about the importance of their role and the place of good quality laboratory equipments and qualified technicians within the preparedness and response to emergencies.



[Find out More](#)

Risk communication and community engagement



In order to strengthen risk communication skills of district teams and communication focal persons of the National Centre for Health Education (CNES) a training course for trainers on “Risk Communication and Community Engagement” was held in São Tomé from April 29th to 30th 2025.

The training organized in response to a request of the Ministry of Health addressed the country's needs to comply with the requirements of the International Health Regulations regarding risk communication. After the training, a technical team was put in place, with assistance of WHO, to finalize the Risk Communication Strategy for Public Health Emergencies which was drafted during the workshop.

This activity was carried out within the implementation of the agreement between WHO and AFAP/World Bank, for the country's preparation to respond to Public Health Emergencies and strengthen the resilience of the country's health system. ■





WHO supports São Tomé and Príncipe in using new technologies for epidemiological surveillance

A four-day technical training on the EIOS (Epidemic Intelligence from Open Sources) platform, a WHO tool, was held in São Tomé and Príncipe from May 20th to 23rd, 2025. The training aimed to strengthen early detection of public health threats by analyzing open-source information.

The training benefited the support from WHO Regional Office for Africa (WHO AFRO) and the WHO country Office of Cape Verde. The 26 participants of the workshop were composed of epidemiological surveillance officers, Health Information System (SIS) technicians from national and district levels, and the representatives of other sectors such as the Agrotechnological Research Center (CIAT), the Environment Directorate, and the Livestock Directorate.

The training aimed to strengthen participants' technical skills in identifying and monitoring early warning signs for a more effective and timely response to public health events. The integration of the EIOS platform into the national surveillance system contributes significantly to improving the country's response capacity, enabling greater situational surveillance and mitigating social, economic, and health impacts.

This initiative is part of the efforts of the Ministry of Health and WHO to strengthen early warning and rapid response systems, which are essential pillars of national health security. ■

Find out More

Handwashing can save lives



The World Health Organization (WHO) supported the celebration of World Hand Hygiene Day. Normally planned for 5th of may the celebration by the Ministry of Health was organized on may 9th at Dr. Ayres de Menezes Hospital.

This year's campaign, under the slogan "Gloves, sometimes. Hand hygiene, always," emphasized correct hand hygiene techniques, appropriate glove use, integration of hand hygiene into national IPC strategies, and the environmental impact of excessive glove waste.

The Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) team of the hospital organized a session with healthcare staff to reinforce the critical role of hand hygiene in daily clinical practice.

WHO provided technical and financial support for the event. These resources helped to reinforce the campaign's key messages for health workers in the hospital, promoting broader awareness and engagement.

Hand hygiene and environmental cleaning remain among the most effective, low-cost measures to ensure patient safety, prevent infections, and combat antimicrobial resistance.

While gloves are essential for certain procedures, they are never a replacement of appropriate hand hygiene. Cleaning hands at the right moment and in the right way protects both patients and healthcare workers—and ultimately saves lives. ■





São Tomé and Príncipe participates in the 78th World Health Assembly

The Minister of Health of São Tomé and Príncipe, Dr. Celso Matos, led the national delegation to participate to the 78th World Health Assembly (WHA) in Geneva, from May 18 to 27, 2025. This annual event, convened by the World Health Organization (WHO), brings together health leaders from around the world to shape the global public health agenda. The participation of São Tomé and Príncipe was a strategic opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to global health cooperation.

The WHO Country Office in São Tomé and Príncipe provided comprehensive support to the delegation of the country to be well prepared for an effective participation. This included organizing a preparatory meeting, sharing key documentation, and producing detailed country's briefings notes on the epidemiological situation and health priorities. These efforts permitted the national delegation to be fully prepared to engage in technical and strategical discussions and bilateral meetings with global health leaders including the WHO' Director General.

Minister Matos met with Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus WHO Director-General and with Prof. Mohamed Yakub Janabi, the newly appointed WHO Regional Director for Africa. During these meetings, he expressed São Tomé and Príncipe's gratitude for WHO's ongoing support and reaffirmed the country's interest in strengthening technical collaboration.

The Minister also had bilateral meeting with high-level partners, including Gavi's Executive Director and Regional Director for Africa. The focus of these discussions was on initiatives to strengthen immunization and health coverage in São Tomé and Príncipe.

In his official address to the Assembly, Dr. Matos emphasized the country's commitment to transforming its health system by adopting a people-centered, Primary Health Care approach, which, according to him, is essential to accelerating progress toward universal health coverage and ensuring that no one is left behind. ■

Representation, Health Diplomacy and Partnership

During the second trimester, the WHO representative in São Tomé and Príncipe, Dr. Abdoulaye Diarra and his team delivered several activities pertaining to the key roles and responsibilities of WHO representation in the country.

Within the framework of the regular meetings between WCO and the officials of the ministry of health, the WR had two working sessions with the Ministry himself related to the ongoing implementation of planned activities such as the elaboration of the national health financing strategy and the organization of the training of the district health management teams. These meetings provided the opportunity to discuss and share current issues.

WHO participated to several activities such as the regular UNCT monthly meetings and the OMT meetings. The WHO representative ensures the leadership of OMT. ■

Audiences with bilateral partners

Meeting with Chinese team supporting Malaria in São Tomé e Príncipe



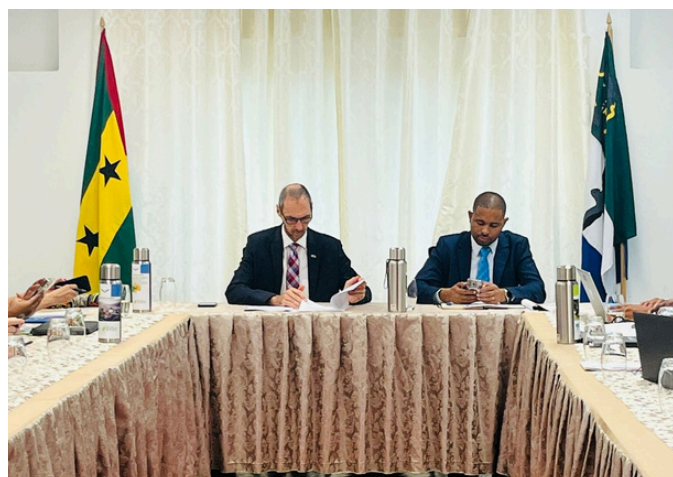
The WHO representative in São Tomé and Príncipe, Dr. Abdoulaye Diarra, met on May 20, 2025, with the Chinese technical team supporting malaria control efforts in the country. During the meeting, which was attended by members of the WHO and Chinese teams, ongoing actions were discussed and potential means of strengthening bilateral cooperation for malaria elimination were explored. The main objective of this meeting was to learn more about the work carried out by the Chinese technical team and to identify possible synergies to accelerate the malaria elimination process in the country. ■

Meeting with France Cooperation



On May 15, 2025, we received the visit of the Regional Advisor for Global Health at the French Embassy in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dr. Gilles Chaumentin. The meeting aimed to present the challenges facing the STP health system and the main priorities for WHO support to the country. Potential areas of collaboration between WHO, the Ministry of Health of São Tomé and Príncipe, and France were also discussed. These included strengthening the health system, combating noncommunicable diseases and oncology, improving mental health services, training health professionals, and supporting the hospital in the Autonomous Region of Príncipe. ■

UNCT Dialogue with Príncipe Government



From 7th to 8th May 2025, WR participated to a high-level dialogue which took place in Príncipe Island, between the United Nations System and the Regional Government, led by His Excellency Filipe Nascimento, with the active participation of Regional Secretaries. The meeting also brought together the UN Country Team, the World Bank, and the African Development Bank.

The WHO representative participated to this important strategic discussion, which focused on reviewing the progress made in the implementation of the 2024 2025 joint priorities activities aligned with the "Príncipe Strategic Plan 2030. This strategic discussion aims to guide collective action toward a more inclusive, resilient, and sustainable island.

According to the President of the Region Autonome of Principe, the rehabilitation of the regional hospital is the local government's main priority for 2025. To that end two main activities need to be followed up. These are i). Reinforcement of local surgical capacity and oxygen production at the main hospital and ii). Continued support for eliminating malaria and improving water supply and basic sanitation. The WR provided a detailed update on the pending technical review that would finalize the proposal for the operating room of the hospital. The WHO will send a technical mission to that end. Several initiatives are underway, but there is a lack of coordination this is why the President agreed to convene a coordination meeting with involved parties. With financial contributions from the Global Fund and GAVI, we supported some other activities such as: technical assistance for the implementation of the WASH program in the schools and health centers, in collaboration with the WHO, the WFP and the World Bank. Technical support to the regional team in routine and supplementary immunization activities. Finalization of the installation of the incinerator. Carry out training on evidence-based planning for the staff of the regional health services. Training of nurses in digital health tools to improve immunization monitoring (DHIS2), the ongoing rehabilitation of the Hospital's laboratory to establish six essential diagnostic units; a sample transport system using motorcycle to connect the peripheral facilities to the central laboratory and the installation of a protective service booth to improve infection control.

During the meeting, WHO reaffirmed its continued support to the region, with particular emphasis on strengthening surgical capacity at Dr. Manuel Quaresma Dias da Graça Hospital. The Organization is also supporting ongoing rehabilitation works to improve hygiene, water, and sanitation conditions at the hospital. ■

WHO staff in São Tomé and Príncipe embrace digital transformation with the new “Workday” work platform

WHO staff in São Tomé and Príncipe took an important step toward modernizing their operations by participating in a Business Management System (BMS) User Experience Lab session on June 11th 2022. This initiative is part of the organization's broader strategy to transition to the new Workday platform in BMS, which promises to simplify and improve various daily work processes.

The User Experience Lab sessions were designed to familiarize staff with the features and benefits of the Workday platform. Participants had the opportunity to explore the system's features, ask questions, and provide feedback on their experience. This hands-on approach ensured that everyone could gain the practical understanding they need about how the new system will impact on their daily tasks.

As the WHO continues to embrace digital innovations, the transition to the Workday platform represents a crucial step toward a more efficient and effective management system.



NO EXCUSE

On May 22, the World Health Organization in São Tomé and Príncipe reinforced its commitment to creating a safe workplace with the launch of the #NOExcuse campaign against sexual abuse, exploitation, and harassment at the United Nations in São Tomé and Príncipe. We also join the national campaign launched by the Ministry of Justice, Parliamentary Affairs, and Women's Rights and call on our partners to say NO to sexual violence.



5th Edition of the São Tomé and Príncipe Marathon



Once again, the WHO São Tomé and Príncipe office promoted inclusion and Zero Tolerance for sexual misconduct at the 5th edition of the São Tomé Solidarity Marathon. Two female staff members represented WHO STP and we also ensured the participation of athletes with disabilities, reinforcing our commitment to equity, inclusion, and the principle of leaving no one behind.

These were the Paralympic athletes who made it to the podium:

1st place: **Gualter Henrique** – 6:25:18

2nd place: **Ivanaldo Lopes** – 6:55:30

3rd place: **Abdulay Gué** -- 7:51:13





**Thank you for your collaboration
with WHO in supporting the
strengthening of the National Health
System in São Tomé and Príncipe.**





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Tel: +239 2222957
Tel: +239 9808319