

Signing of the Interministerial Commitment Memorandum marks an historic moment for health in São Tomé and Príncipe



São Tomé, 15 April 2026 will be recorded in the history of São Tomé and Príncipe as the moment when health ceased to be an exclusive responsibility of the health sector and became a commitment assumed by the entire Government. During the ceremony of launching three key national health policy documents, developed with WHO's support the Interministerial Commitment Memorandum for Multisectoral Action in Health Promotion and Disease Prevention was signed – a document that puts the principle of “Health in All Policies” into practice. The signing of the Pact took place within the framework of the official launch of:

- the Multisectoral Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2026–2030;
- the National Strategic Plan for Cancer Control 2026–2030; and
- the National Community Health Strategy 2026–2030.

For the first time, in presence of the Prime Minister, Americo Ramos, four ministers, including the Minister of Health, the minister of Education, Culture, Science and Higher Education; the minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development; and the minister of Labor, Solidarity and Social Security came together to formally commit to recognize that health is built far beyond hospitals and health centers. Two other ministers, namely the minister of Environment, Youth and Sustainable Tourism and the minister of Infrastructure and Natural Resources were not present but have already

confirmed that they will sign the memorandum. The signed memorandum is based on the key findings, supported by scientific evidence, that around 80% of health determinants lie outside the health sector. Water quality, food, education, the environment, housing, urban planning, and working conditions all have a significant influence on the population's health. The document, which enters into force on the date of its signature and remains valid until 2030, establishes concrete commitments for each above-mentioned sector. The Ministry of Education commits to promoting health education and healthy school environments. The Ministry of Environment commits to reducing environmental risks and promoting healthy lifestyles, especially among young people. The Ministry of Infrastructure commits to ensuring equitable access to safe drinking water, safe sanitation, and health-promoting infrastructure. The Ministry of Agriculture commits to promoting sustainable food systems and safe, nutritious food. The Ministry of Labor, Solidarity and Social Security, meanwhile, commits to strengthening social protection and reducing the inequalities that affect health. To ensure the effective implementation of this commitment, the memorandum provides for the establishment of a Multisectoral Action Committee for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention. This

committee will function as a central governance mechanism, coordinating activities across sectors and ensuring the definition of joint priorities, the implementation of coordinated actions, and monitoring results.

The signing of this memorandum marks a significant shift in health governance in São Tomé and Príncipe. It moves from a fragmented, sector-specific approach to an integrated, collective response. It shifts the focus from diseases specific approach to people centered one, with an emphasis on social determinants. As the Prime Minister highlighted during the ceremony, "It changes the way we govern, the way we invest and, above all, the way we take responsibility."

According to Dr Abdoulaye Diarra, WHO Representative, "With this act, São Tomé and Príncipe is aligning itself with best international practices promoted by the World Health Organization, taking a decisive step towards addressing the country's main public health challenge: noncommunicable diseases, which are already responsible for 70% of deaths. The memorandum is not merely a political declaration; it is the institutional foundation for coordinated, sustainable action with clear targets—placing health at the center of the country's development agenda and ensuring that no one is left behind".



Dr. Américo Ramos
Prime Minister of
Sao Tome and Principe

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With the signing of the Interministerial Commitment Memorandum, we affirm, clearly, that health is the responsibility of the entire Government. Every ministry represented has a direct role in the health of our population.
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Dr. Abdoulaye Diarra
WHO Representative in
Sao Tome and Principe



Participants at the launch of health strategies



Health workers participating in the ceremony



Minister of Justice, Dr. Vera Cravid, UN Residente Coordinator, Eric Overvest, WHO representative, Dr Abdoulaye Diarra, Angola Ambassador in STP, Equatorial Guinea Ambassador in STP



Prime Minister, Américo Ramos, Minister of Health, Dr Celso Matos, Minister of Education, Isabel Abreu, Minister of Labor, Jocerli Ramos, and Minister of Agriculture, Nilton Garrido.

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