

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE TOURISM SEARCHING FOR INFLUENCE

With its 211,000 inhabitants, the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe is, in many ways, considered the natural gem of the Atlantic Ocean.

Nicknamed "Chocolate Island" for its richness in cocoa, this island - located in the Gulf of Guinea, not far from the coasts of Gabon and Equatorial Guinea - is traditionally an agricultural island more than a tourist one.

But the exporter of agricultural commodities is beginning to awaken its tourism fiber since the recent crises have disrupted the supply chains.

"Sao Tome and Principe tourism sector is undoubtedly one of the important pillars for the growth of the national economy [and] its development represents one of the main objectives to be achieved by the government," said Prime Minister Jorge Bom Jesus recently.

The curiosity of international tourists eager for new discoveries in Africa and the efforts made by Santomean operators have enabled the island to experience a boom in 2019 with 34,900 visitors for more than 63 million euros in revenue, or about 5% of international tourism revenue in Central Africa.

In general, analysts are quite optimistic about the upcoming tourism boom on this island where the new president, Carlos Vila Nova, elected in September 2021 is basically a magnate of the tourism industry.

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