

Sao Tome and Principe as a Regional Gateway

(A strategy for a sustainable development)

ABSTRACT

This study is basically aimed at analyzing whether Sao Tome and Principe can serve as a Regional Gateway. Subsequently, based on a case study methodology, our intention is to discuss Sao Tome and Principe potential to engage on a process of sustainable development, services based namely tourism and fiscal facilities featuring as central factors in the context of future investments. We argue that Sao Tome and Principe carries a set of endogenous conditions that, if properly articulated, may redesign a context that transforms this archipelago into a Regional Gateway, which will allow the country to start a new economic cycle based on increasing service provision. This is a challenge that will only be possible with the implementation of structuring projects on infrastructure and fiscal policy, capable of guaranteeing peripheral competitiveness.

This economic performance is explained primarily by geopolitical, geostrategic and geo-economics' factors that ultimately provide the country with a set of comparative advantages. The study also takes into consideration the need to tackle permanent governmental instability, which has contributed to wedge the country's development process. Therefore, we emphasize an urgent need to build consensus around this extraordinary challenge as well as need to provide for the governmental stability as an essential element to promote sustainable development. After an in-depth scrutiny we conclude that the country evidences the capability of becoming a Regional Gateway, provided that some basic conditions are met: the optimization of factors such as the geostrategic position of the country in the Gulf of Guinea; the democratic political regime; the aptitude to provide services, air and sea transport logistics; free zones services, tourism and the economy of the sea; a strong investment in the infrastructures; implementation of an adequate fiscal policy, capable of guaranteeing the external competitiveness of the country. Finally, we introduce some key ideas for a strategic choice of sustainable development based on the condition of Regional Gateway.

Palavras Chave: Small island developing States, sustainable development, Regional Gateway, logistics platform, geostrategic, geopolitics, geo-economics, fiscal competitiveness, political stability and infrastructures.