

SAO TOMÉ & PRINCIPE

DHAPP

**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HIV/AIDS
PREVENTION PROGRAM**

**REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF HIV/AIDS
AMONG UNIFORMED PERSONNEL IN
SELECTED AFRICAN NATIONS AND BEYOND**

WINNING BATTLES IN THE WAR AGAINST HIV/AIDS

BACKGROUND

Country Statistics

One of Africa's smallest countries, Sao Tomé and Príncipe consists of two main islands and a number of smaller islets. The population of Sao Tome and Principe is estimated to be 187,000 people, with an average life expectancy of 67 years. Portuguese is the official language; the estimated literacy rate is 79%, distributed disproportionately between men and women. The country's economy is mainly based on agriculture; other important economic activities include fishing and a small industrial sector. The scenic islands have potential for tourism, and the government is attempting to improve its tourist industry infrastructure. The annual per capita income is estimated at \$1,200.

HIV/AIDS Statistics

The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the general population is estimated at 1.0%, with an unknown number of people living with HIV/AIDS. The first case of AIDS was confirmed in Sao Tomé in 1987, but there was a sudden increase in the number of HIV cases in 1998, when Gabon (which has an infection rate of 8.1%) expelled all 3000 Sao Tomeans who had been living in Gabon and sent them home. Men are more severely affected by HIV than women. Relatively little is known about the factors that influence the spread of HIV/AIDS in Sao Tomé and Príncipe.

Military Statistics

The size of the armed forces is approximately 700. As of this annual report, no information regarding HIV prevalence in the military was available.

PROGRAM RESPONSE

In-Country Ongoing Assistance

With an interest in expanding their program, the Walter Reed–Johns Hopkins Cameroon Program (WRJHCP), traveled to Sao Tomé to establish a relationship with its government and local military teams to discuss possible project work in the future, possible objectives, and an implementation plan.

Proposed Future Activities

A proposal was received on behalf of the military of Sao Tomé and Principe for the 2006 fiscal year. The objectives of the proposed project include conducting a mass awareness campaign, conducting a peer education program, training counselors, training laboratory technicians, conducting a condom distribution program, and developing laboratory capacity.

OUTCOMES & IMPACT

Prevention/Care/Treatment

The Walter Reed–Johns Hopkins Cameroon Program is committed to providing technical assistance to Central African militaries to improve their HIV/AIDS prevention programs. To meet this objective, a statement of work was refined for efforts in Cameroon, Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville, Chad, Sao Tomé and Principe, Equatorial Guinea, and Democratic Republic of the Congo. During the latter part of FY05, initial efforts took place in Cameroon, as well as Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville, and Chad, with emphasis on sexually transmitted infection treatment and care, training military peer educators, and training laboratory technicians on the use of rapid testing kits. Early FY06 efforts will involve Sao Tomé and Principe, Equatorial Guinea, and Democratic Republic of the Congo, and will expand on the efforts commenced during FY05. DHAPP anticipates successful programs in all 7 Central African militaries and is progressing toward these important targets in prevention and care.

