

Emigration and the Internal Limits in Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe

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The international migrations have an old historical origin, linked either to economic or political causes. If you define "migrant" as someone who moves from his/her country for a period longer than one year, we can consider Africa with high levels of migration. We find strong emigration in countries with political instability, armed conflicts and lack of food, this one also linked with inadequate ODA policies. The search for new opportunities is the main cause for individual mobility. This is often restricted by the laws of countries, despite today's global society. These protective gates make mobility difficult and an unbalanced world development. Huge disparities concerning income and well-being between Northern and Southern countries has caused, in more recent years, illegal emigration for those regions that can provide better living standards, expecting for a better welfare not only to these migrants but also to their families who remain in their countries of origin.

In Cape Verde the migration process is already old. The dry climate and the successive famines are the main causes for the emigration. First, to São Tomé and Príncipe, in the historical time of II colonization, where they worked in coffee and cocoa plantations, property of Portuguese enterprises, named "roças", with a particular social and economic structure. More recently the USA and some European countries are the main destinations of the emigrants from Cape Verde which absorb approximately 37,5% of the total of population, representing their remittances 9% of GDP (2009-2010). This value gives an important contribution to the Current Account Balance and also allows the improvement of the living conditions of their families who remain in the country increasing the level of consumerism or the creation of small family businesses generating incomes.

São Tomé and Príncipe has different characteristics. In historical terms it was more a country of immigrants (Cape Verde, Angola, West Africa but also from European origin). More recently and as result of the structural changes in the economy and social system there has been an increase in emigration, especially of young people who will complete their studies abroad and not coming back home. Family ties are also less intense and consequently also the levels of remittances.