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Holy See Press Office Communiqué

Signing of Agreement between the Holy See and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe

On Monday 15 August 2022, in São Tomé, in the “Meeting Hall” of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, an *Agreement between the Holy See and the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe* was signed.

The signatories, on behalf of the Holy See, were: Archbishop Giovanni Gaspari, titular of Alba Marittima, apostolic nuncio in São Tomé and Príncipe, and for the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe, Ms. Edite Ramos da Costa Ten Jua, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities.

The solemn act was witnessed by:

On behalf of the Holy See: Bishop António Lungieki Bengui, apostolic administrator *sede vacante* of the diocese of São Tomé and Príncipe, Bishop Manuel António Mendes dos Santos, emeritus of the diocese of São Tomé and Príncipe, the Reverend Christopher Seiler, secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature in Angola and in São Tomé and Príncipe, the Reverend Telmo da Glória Serôdio, chancellor of the Curia of São Tomé, and Ms. Maria Madalena Cravid, secretary of the Curia.

On behalf of the Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe: His Excellency Bandeira Pires dos Santos, Minister for Justice, of Internal Administration and Human Rights, Mr. Edyjair Carvalho, director of the Cabinet of the Prime Minister, Mr. Ambassador Homero Jerónimo Salvaterra, diplomatic advisor to the Prime Minister, Mr. Ambassador Carlos Castro, director of the Department for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Melany dos Santos, head of the Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Ambassador Mateus Meira Rita, advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Agreement, drafted in Italian and Portuguese and composed of 28 articles, shall enter into force with the exchange of the Instruments of Ratification. It stipulates the recognition of the legal personality of the Catholic Church and ecclesiastical institutions, and defines the legal framework for relations between the Church and the State.

The Agreement further consolidates the existing bonds of friendship and collaboration between the two Parties who, while maintaining the independence and autonomy proper to each one, shall undertake to collaborate for the spiritual and material wellbeing of the human person, as well as the promotion of the common good.
