

III International Seminar on Best Practices in School Feeding within CPLP

FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ
São Tomé, December 3-4, 2024

The **III International Seminar on Best Practices in School Feeding within CPLP** took place on December 3-4, 2024, in a hybrid format, from the conference hall at the Hotel Praia in São Tomé City, São Tomé and Príncipe. The event gathered representatives from CPLP Member States, except for Equatorial Guinea, with a total of 95 in-person participants and six virtual attendees via Zoom.

Held under the Pro Tempore Presidency of São Tomé and Príncipe (2023-2025), the seminar contributed to the implementation of the **CPLP Multilateral Cooperation Action Plan for Education (2022-2024)**, approved during the **II Extraordinary Meeting of CPLP Ministers of Education** (March 31, 2022, virtual format).

National school feeding programmes align with the **CPLP Food and Nutrition Security Strategy (ESAN-CPLP)**, particularly its:

- **Axis II:** Promoting access to and use of food to improve livelihoods for the most vulnerable groups.
- **Axis III:** Increasing domestic food availability based on small-scale producers.

As public policies, these programmes emphasize the importance of healthy meals, using diverse foods that respect local cultures, traditions, habits, and products, while contributing to food security and sustainable development.

Opening Session

The opening speech was delivered by **Her Excellency Isabel Maria Correia Viegas de Abreu**, Minister of Education, Culture, and Sciences of São Tomé and Príncipe, in the presence of key figures, including:

- Representative of the CPLP Executive Secretariat.

- Representatives of CPLP Member States' diplomatic corps.
- Representatives of United Nations agencies.
- National experts on school feeding, nutrition, and health from CPLP Member States.

The opening session happened on December 3rd, where **Dr. João Ima-Panzo**, CPLP Director of Cultural Action and Portuguese Language, representing the CPLP Executive Secretary, stressed the need to transform CPLP into a more people-oriented organization focused on youth, children, and the future, guided by the principles of solidarity, inclusion, and the right to healthy and adequate food.

Afterwards, Minister Isabel Maria Correia Viegas de Abreu highlighted the need for stronger policies to enhance the consumption of local products in schools, inspiring a sustainable future for Member States in school feeding, nutrition, and health.

Seminar Structure

The seminar included **four panels** and **two roundtables**:

Day 1

1. Roundtable 1:

- **Theme:** School Gardens as Tools for Promoting Healthy and Sustainable School Feeding with Local Resources and Products.
- **Moderator:** WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger – Brazil.
- **Interventions:** Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe.

2. Panel 1:

- **Theme:** Capacity Building for Professionals to Strengthen School Feeding Programmes.
- **Moderator:** Director-General of Educational Planning and Innovation, São Tomé and Príncipe.
- **Speakers:** Cape Verde, Mozambique, Portugal.

3. Panel 2:

- **Theme:** Challenges, Opportunities, Strategies, and Solutions in School Feeding Programmes vs. Food and Nutrition Education for Healthy and Sustainable Meals.
- **Moderator:** Coordinator of the Project for Support to Commercialization, Agricultural Productivity, and Nutrition (COMPRAN).

- **Speakers:** Angola, Guinea-Bissau, Timor-Leste.

Day 2

4. Panel 3:

- **Theme:** Strategic Partnerships and Bilateral, Trilateral, and Multilateral Cooperation for Promoting, Developing, and Strengthening School Feeding Programmes.
- **Moderator:** Dr. João Ima-Panzo, CPLP Director of Cultural Action and Portuguese Language.
- **Speakers:** Brazilian Embassy in São Tomé and Príncipe/ABC, WFP.

5. Panel 4:

- **Theme:** School Feeding Programmes and the Fight Against Food Insecurity.
- **Moderator:** CONSAN Coordinator, São Tomé and Príncipe.
- **Speakers:** Brazil, São Tomé and Príncipe.

6. Roundtable 2:

- **Theme:** Importance of Building Strong Capacities for Implementing, Managing, and Monitoring School Feeding Programmes.
- **Moderator:** WFP Centre of Excellence against Hunger – Brazil.
- **Speakers:** Angola, Mozambique, Portugal, Timor-Leste.

A Publication on Best Practices in School Feeding within CPLP was presented before the closing session.

Key Conclusions

Participants concluded the following:

1. The seminar aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 12, 13, and 17.
2. School feeding programmes play a central role in promoting education, food security, and sustainability, serving as critical tools to achieve SDGs.
3. Experience sharing among Member States enables the identification of best practices and effective strategies for addressing common challenges.

4. Professional capacity-building and multilateral strategic partnerships are essential for sustainable school feeding programmes.
 5. School gardens are vital tools for integrating local production into healthy and sustainable school meals.
 6. Continuous capacity-building is crucial for programme effectiveness and sustainability.
 7. Bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral cooperation is key to mobilizing resources and expertise.
 8. Integrating educational practices in school feeding is decisive in combating food insecurity.
 9. Monitoring and evaluation require specific indicators for long-term programme effectiveness.
 10. There is a need for continuous and permanent capacity building for professionals connected to school feeding programmes.
 11. The implementation of National School Feeding Programmes should require articulation between Ministries of Education and other government and civil society entities.
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Recommendations

1. Organize regular seminars to share best practices, with the next in 2025 (country TBD).
2. Develop joint initiatives for professional capacity-building and technical support to structure policies that integrate school feeding, food education, and sustainability.
3. Strengthen sharing mechanisms through accessible collaborative digital platforms.
4. Support the design of indicators for rigorous and transparent programme monitoring and evaluation.
5. Ensure operationalization of the CPLP Multilateral Cooperation Strategic Plan (2022-2026) recommendations, focusing on youth and sustainability.
6. Create short-, medium-, and long-term campaigns to reduce the use of non-ecological wood stoves.
7. Engage school communities in creating and maintaining school gardens.
8. Advocate for government support in implementing school gardens.
9. Promote intersectoral approaches to benefit from the implementation of school gardens as guarantees for safe and healthy school meals.

10. Enhance collaboration with international partners, such as WFP, ABC, and Camões Institute to guarantee technical and financial support for inclusive, innovative programmes.
11. Encourage CPLP Member States to consider school feeding a state issue.
12. Establish water treatment mechanisms for safe consumption.
13. Emphasize the importance of sustainable funding for school feeding programmes.
14. Reinforce Member States' commitments to SDGs, integrating school meals as a strategic axis.
15. Tailor programmes to local food practices and cultural traditions.
16. Create a CPLP Network for School Feeding, Nutrition, and Health for dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and multilateral surveillance.
17. Value cooks and nutritionists with targeted training.
18. Support Member States in joining the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, especially regarding technical and financial support to member states.
19. Assist Member States in preparing national commitments for the School Meals Coalition Summit in Brazil, in September 2025.