

PRESS RELEASE ON THE WORKING VISIT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE ECCAS COMMISSION TO THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE ON THE EVE OF THE SECOND ROUND OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

August 26, 2021

Libreville, August 23, 2021 .

His Excellency **Ambassador Gilberto da Piedade VERISSIMO** , President of the Commission of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), paid a working visit to São Tomé, capital of the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe, from August 19 to 22, 2021.

During this working visit, which aimed to gather information on the political situation in the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe following the publication of the results of the first round of the presidential elections of July 18, the President of the Commission met with **the Honorable Delfim das NEVES** , President of the National Assembly; HE Mr. **Jorge BOM JESUS** , Prime Minister; HE Mrs. **Edite RAMOS DA COSTA TEN JUA** , Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities; and Mr. **Fernando MAQUENGO** , President of the National Electoral Commission. He also spoke with Messrs. **Carlos VILA NOVA** and **Guilherme POSER DA COSTA**, the two candidates who will face each other in the second round of the presidential elections. These various interviews enabled him to better understand the contours, nature and potential consequences of this situation.

At the end of his visit, the President of the Commission wishes to express his deep concern with regard to the political situation prevailing in the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe. And referring to the principles guiding the handling of situations which may have serious consequences for peace and security within the Community, in particular those of non-indifference, collective responsibility, peaceful settlement of disputes, rapid reaction to situations crisis before they turn into open conflicts and respect for the rule of law, enshrined in the revised Treaty establishing the Economic Community of Central African States and its Protocol relating to Peace and Security effective August 28, 2020, it invites Santomean political actors to preserve the stability of their country and the achievements of their democratic system. Consequently, he enjoins them to refrain from any word or any act likely to put this stability and these achievements in danger.

While welcoming the promulgation of the law fixing the second round of presidential elections on September 5, 2021, the President of the Commission encourages Sao Tomean political actors to discuss responsibly the question posed by the holding of presidential elections after the end of the mandate. Constitution of the President of the Republic. And in this regard, he invites them to refrain from personal interpretations of the Constitution and to refer, in accordance with the principle of the rule of law and the spirit of constitutionalism, to the Constitutional Court.

The President of the Commission thanks the authorities and the people of Santome for their hospitality, their spirit of cooperation and their commitment to regional integration. He would

like to assure them of the Community's closeness, solidarity and support at this crucial moment in the development of democratic life in their country. He would also like to assure them of his determination to continue to follow the development of the political situation until the inauguration of the new President of the Republic and to strengthen his closeness without delay for this purpose.