

Partnership with the United States

The relations between Cape Verde and the United States date back to the 17th century, when many Cape Verdeans, fleeing the islands hardships, in search of economic opportunities, embraced the whaling industry and eventually made New Bedford their first settlement.

The first American Consulate in Cape Verde was established in 1818.

With the decline of the whaling industry, many Cape Verdeans continue to immigrate to the US in sailing vessels and packets ships, resulting in a vast and very active Capeverdean-American Community, the largest CV Diaspora in the world.

Cape Verde and the US appreciate the role the community has played in contributing to the development and progress of both nations. They are committed to promoting new opportunities to leverage its further involvement in their cooperation, which gained new impetus with the independence of Cape Verde on July 5, 1975.

Today, the solid and rich bilateral partnership encompasses aspects such as economic growth, security, counter-narcotics operations, and promotion of democracy, human rights, and good governance.

Cape Verde was the first of three countries to qualify for a Millennium Challenge Account Grant and is the only one to have signed a second one, after meeting all the eligibility requirements, including the successful completion of the first program in the scheduled timeframe. The second grant in an amount of USD \$66.2 million, was signed on February 10, 2012 and will focus on two main priority areas, e.g. Water and Sanitation and Land Management and Property Rights.

While increasing agricultural productivity, developing and expanding the country's infrastructure (roads, port, and bridges), the 1st grant of USD \$110 million, improved access to credit, markets and social services and supported implementation of key policy reforms for sustained economic growth and development.

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Various gains propelled by the Compact are related with capacity building, strengthening management capacity, transparency, accountability, and development partners' articulation and coordination as well. Compact components such as Monitoring and Evaluation and Procurement now serve ad a model to implement broader national systems.

Among other relevant initiatives that support the Capeverdean-American partnership is the African Growth Opportunity Act "AGOA". AGOA aims at boosting economic development of Africa through trade, where beneficiary countries can export a wide range of 6000 products to the US, duty free and quota. For more details consult www.agoa.gov .

The US has supported Cape Verde's goal to become a regional hub for air transportation through the Safe Skies program. As a result, Cape Verde obtained the US FAA Category I certification (Sept. 9, 2003) and ETOPS qualification which allows Cape Verdean Airlines to fly directly from Praia and Sal Airports to the United States. These qualifications have a direct impact on the country's economy and contribute to boost the country's safety and tourism capacities. The inaugural flight to the U.S. by Cape Verde's national carrier TACV took place on July 4, 2005.

Furthermore, Cape Verde benefitted from the United States' technical assistance during the preparatory process and accession negotiations that led to its acceptance as the 153rd WTO member on 23 July 2008.

In addition, reference has to be made to; programs that further empower young leaders and women and communities; training and exchange programs in the sectors of education, science and technology; and initiatives embraced by the private sector aimed at increasing access to the new Information Technologies. Another element has been a strong presence of Peace Corps Volunteers (www.peacecorps.gov).

In this context, Cape Verde's transformational agenda offers new opportunities for cementing and expanding the partnership. We, at the Embassy are glad to note that the American administration is willing to continue to support Cape Verde in its new development stage.

In her second visit to Cape Verde last January, Secretary of State Clinton pledged a continued partnership with Cape Verde, in particular in the areas of energy, investments and trade, and security.

Similarly, in his congratulatory letter to Prime Minister Neves, on the signing of the second MCA Compact, President Obama reiterated determination to work for a continued cooperation and partnership with Cape Verde, a country he considered an important partner to the United States and whose government and people are effectively committed to democratic governance and to address economic growth constraints.