José Eduardo dos Santos was born in Luanda on 28 August 1942, the son of Avelino dos Santos and Jacinta José Paulino, now deceased. During his childhood, he attended the elementary school in his neighborhood before going to Salvador Correia College, Luanda, for his secondary school education.

José Eduardo dos Santos began political activities by joining the clandestine groups formed in the urban districts of the Angolan capital, Luanda, where the MPLA (People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola) was founded on 10 December 1956.

After the outbreak of the armed struggle against the Portuguese colonial occupation, on 4 February 1961, José Eduardo dos Santos, then aged 19, left the country in November of the same year for overseas where he became the coordinator of the activities of the youth wing of the MPLA.
From 1963 to 1969 he pursued his higher studies at the Institute of Petroleum and Gas in Baku, USSR.

During the turbulent period before Angola's independence, José Eduardo dos Santos was appointed coordinator of the Department of External Relations of the MPLA and at the proclamation of independence of Angola on 11 November 1975, he became the Minister of External Relations.

He also exercised until December 1978 the functions of Deputy Prime Minister before becoming the Minister of Planning.

On the death of Dr. Antonio Agostinho Neto, the first President of the Republic of Angola, José Eduardo dos Santos was elected President of MPLA on 20 September 1979 and the day after was inaugurated as President of the People’s Republic of Angola and Commander in Chief of FAPLA (People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola).

Under the leadership of José Eduardo dos Santos, Angola will consolidate its organs of sovereignty and defence and from 1986 to 1992, José Eduardo dos Santos was the initiator of peace efforts in the country and the region, which resulted in the withdrawal of the invading troops from South Africa, the repatriation of Cuban troops and the independence of Namibia.

On 31 August 2012, General elections were held and were won by the MPLA, and in accordance with the Constitution approved in 2010, José Eduardo dos Santos, as the number one on the electoral list of the ruling MPLA, was automatically elected President of the Republic, for a term of five years.

His tenure is marked by pragmatic measures to improve the competitiveness of his country, the diversification of its economy, the development of its infrastructure and a strong political will to promote job creation in order to combat hunger and poverty.

Among the many awards he obtained, we can highlight that of the National Institute of North American Liberty (INC) in recognition of his efforts to develop "democratic, free and peaceful Angola; the Man of the Year 2014" Award by the World Africa magazine for his great contribution to the excellent process for the democratic and economic reconstruction and rehabilitation of Angola since the end of the war in 2002; and, on 8 May 2015, the award for good governance given by "Meafrica Award" in Dubai, United Arab Emirates to recognize and honour individual personalities that
contribute to facilitating investment and economic relations in the developing economies.

The current Head of State of the Republic of Angola is co-founder of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP) and has done everything to see to the establishment of an organisation that will drive the harmonious development of the Gulf of Guinea sub-region within a framework of peace and security. To this end, President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos signed, on 3 July 2001, the Treaty Establishing the Gulf of Guinea Commission.

President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos is therefore one of the FOUNDING FATHERS of the Gulf of Guinea Commission.