

Accelerating Implementation of the 2007 Port of Spain Declaration on Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs)

DIET, FOOD AND FOOD SECURITY: AGRICULTURE AND TRADE POLICIES

The 2007 Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Government Summit produced the landmark Port of Spain Declaration on NCDs. An evaluation of successes and challenges in implementing the Declaration's commitments has been undertaken.ⁱ This fact sheet highlights evaluation results, the current situation and how we can accelerate action.

2007 NCD Declaration mandates: Healthy school meals; enhancing food security; pursuing fair trade policies; supporting local food production; elimination of trans fats; labelling of foods; promoting greater use of indigenous agricultural products and foods; public education

What we know

- More than 85% of adults in CARICOM Member States eat less than the recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- Food imports and terms of trade that suppress local agricultural production and marketing by transnational food corporations are driving this pattern of consumption.
- There are limited examples of collaboration between Ministries of Agriculture and Health to improve local food supply.
- There is virtually no progress on the Port of Spain commitments related to the macro (upstream) determinants of nutrition (e.g. trade arrangements, banning trans fats, food labelling), while childhood and adult obesity rates continue to rise.

The way forward

Goal: to promote the sustainable production, processing, distribution, preparation, sale and consumption of safe, affordable, nutritious, high-quality Caribbean food.

Policies and plans

- Develop a Caribbean strategic plan/policy addressing the role of agriculture and food production in the NCD response and reshaping agricultural policies to increase focus on NCDs.
- Examine the potential role of food/drink taxes and subsidies. Barbados and Dominica have recently implemented a tax on sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Develop an overarching regional school nutrition policy, introduce school feeding programmes and encourage more water consumption.
- Introduce compulsory standards for nutritional labelling.
- Pursue greater understanding of food consumption patterns and drivers.

Supporting local food production

- Incentivise the production of low cost, high-quality domestic products. Assist in capacity building for farmers to support better production planning.
- Explore partnerships to support local farmers and fishermen; encouraging policies that prevent over-fishing. Promote urban and peri-urban sustainable agriculture (such as home gardens).
- Adapt, develop and apply innovation and appropriate technologies to deliver high-quality products to the market.
- Encourage all food retailers to display nutritional content.

We are making progress

An example: Antigua and Barbuda



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The region is attempting to rise to the challenge of addressing food and agriculture. The CARICOM Regional Food & Nutrition Security Policy was developed in 2010 and its sister policy in Antigua and Barbuda was launched in 2012 to improve the nation's health and diet and to address some of the issues around food security. These issues include the idea that affordability, rather than lack of health awareness, often drives food choices and there is a reliance on food imports, despite steps being taken to encourage local 'backyard' food production.

Visit our website at www.onecaribbeanhealth.org for full Evidence Briefs from the evaluation, recommendations for accelerating action and much more on NCDs.

