

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

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

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.<sup>1</sup> This fact sheet highlights evaluation results, the current situation and how we can accelerate action.

**2007 NCD Declaration mandates: Promote policies and actions aimed at increasing physical activity in the entire population; commit to increasing adequate public facilities such as parks and other recreational spaces to encourage physical activity by the widest cross-section of citizens**

### What we know

- There are marked gender differences in levels of physical inactivity: women are significantly less active than men.
- Only three CARICOM Member States have met the commitment of mandatory provision of spaces for physical activity.
- The determinants of physical activity in Caribbean countries are incompletely understood, and important questions include:
  - What types of changes to the built environment will facilitate increased physical activity?
  - What is the potential role of 'active transport' (e.g. walking or cycling)?
  - What can be learned from major physical activity promotion campaigns, such as the 10,000 Steps a Day Challenge in the British Virgin Islands?

### The way forward

Goal: to develop the physical and social environment to promote physical activity in adults and children by providing areas which are easily accessible, safe and well-maintained.

### Policies and plans

- Identify and address policies/barriers preventing the easy adoption of physical activity.
- Create spaces to promote physical activity like bicycle lanes, run/walk/cycle events, boardwalks.
- Improve public transportation systems to decrease reliance on cars.
- Discourage use of cars by increasing parking fees and providing central parking facilities.
- Subsidise public transport for children.
- Work with town planning departments to develop health-promoting physical spaces.

## Supporting activities

- Compile and share a list of best practices, using fora such as regional meetings and journals.
- Encourage the use of already available opportunities for increased exercise, e.g. beaches, parks, steps at work.
- Provide hiking and biking trails.
- Ensure that educational and care facilities for children provide space for physical activity.
- Encourage young people to participate in youth clubs that promote physical activity.
- Support initiatives such as Get Women Moving which encourages women and girls to take more exercise.

## We are making progress

### An example: Taking to the streets in Trinidad and Tobago



Every Sunday morning, between 6.00 and 9.00 am, hundreds of people in Diego Martin, a suburb of Trinidad's capital Port of Spain, take over the streets. This community-based activity, led by local business Mike's Bikes, was kick-started in 2008 by the annual Caribbean Wellness Day, an initiative mandated by the Port of Spain NCD Declaration.

On a one mile stretch of road, traffic is diverted and individuals and families come out to walk, run, race, cycle, skateboard, roller blade, do aerobics and generally get themselves fitter. They also often end up building stronger community bonds.

For some of the Sunday morning exercisers in Diego Martin, taking responsibility to get fitter is a key strategy to help prevent NCDs. Regular participant Ms Penny Sellier says, "Keep Moving is a great place to ride with kids. It's a fantastic opportunity to spend quality time with your family, while exercising and having fun."

For more information go to [http:// www.onecaribbeanhealth.org/keep-on-moving-in-port-of-spain/](http://www.onecaribbeanhealth.org/keep-on-moving-in-port-of-spain/)

Visit our website at [www.onecaribbeanhealth.org](http://www.onecaribbeanhealth.org) for full Evidence Briefs from the evaluation, recommendations for accelerating action and much more on NCDs.

