

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

## INVESTING IN NCD PREVENTION AND CONTROL

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

**2007 NCD Declaration mandates: Public revenue derived from tobacco, alcohol or other such products should be employed, inter alia, for preventing chronic NCDs, promoting health and supporting the work of the [NCD] Commissions**

### What we know

- Taxation on tobacco, alcohol, and certain food and drink items (e.g. sugar-sweetened beverages) can both decrease consumption and raise considerable revenue.
- It is estimated that the revenue that could be raised from increased tobacco and alcohol taxation would be up to three times greater than what is required to implement NCD 'best buys' recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- However, raising taxes on alcohol is seen as politically difficult.
- Taxes on sugar-sweetened beverages have been implemented in Barbados and Dominica.
- A key issue is the political feasibility of ensuring that additional tax revenues from unhealthy products are protected for NCD-related activities.
- Consideration of how the additional funds are used should include:
  - Universal health coverage and access;
  - WHO 'best buys' for prevention and control; and
  - Increased surveillance, monitoring and evaluation.

### The way forward

Goal: to make the business case to increase investment in health and NCDs.

### Policies and plans

- Reorientate our thinking from 'financing' health to 'investing in health and wealth'.
- Obtain more data to demonstrate the benefits of investing in health and NCDs.
- Increase public and private investment in NCD prevention and control.
- Implement or increase taxation on sugar-sweetened beverages, tobacco and alcohol. Explore how this benefits the economically disadvantaged through reduced health spending.
- Explore options for lowering costs and increasing production of local fruits and vegetables, while protecting local farmers from cheaper imports.
- Examine the range of subsidies currently applied, increasing those that promote better health.

## Supporting activities

- Examine Jamaica's National Health Fund as an example of an investment to resource health programming that has survived political changes.
- Build meaningful partnership with (and among) government and civil society to address NCD needs and issues.
- Draft in a 'league of champions' to lobby leaders and try to secure sustainable political buy-in.
- Create public awareness of the need for taxation for health investment and garner support.

## We are making progress

### An example: Jamaica's National Health Fund



Only Jamaica has implemented the Declaration mandate to earmark taxes for health.

The country has made great strides in its response to the NCD epidemic, including the innovative National Health Fund (NHF) which, since 2008, has been partially financed by a special consumption tax charged on tobacco products in keeping with the mandates from the NCD Declaration. Given the need to explore raising taxation on products such as tobacco and alcohol across the Caribbean, the NHF provides a good example of a particular model that could be emulated or adapted.

The fund seeks to reduce the financial burden of healthcare for customers by giving them access to selected health benefits and subsidised NCD medications. It provides assistance to individuals and private and public sector projects that support primary healthcare with an emphasis on prevention.

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.

