

partnership between government, private enterprise, academic and non-governmental partners, to develop and implement strategies for the prevention of NCDs through the promotion of healthy lifestyles, the better management of chronic diseases, supportive environments and empowered people.

The Coalition was formed to address the common risk factors of tobacco use, excessive alcohol consumption, physical inactivity, and to address these more effectively through a "whole of society" approach.



Professor Sir Trevor Hassell speaking to the Press on chronic non-communicable diseases.

Better grip on CNCDs challenges, says Sir Trevor

Regional governments now have a better grip on the challenges presented by chronic non-communicable diseases, says president of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC), Professor Sir Trevor Hassell.

He made this disclosure today at a Press conference at Sagcor headquarters, Wildey, St Michael, where he lauded the annual financial contribution of \$160 000 being made by the regional insurance giant to combat such diseases.

Sir Trevor noted that in the Caribbean CNCDs accounted for seven out of every ten deaths.

"Heads of Government made the very significant observation that if we were to successfully tackle, address and slow the epidemic of chronic diseases, there was a need for the whole of society approach to these challenges.

It was against that background therefore that the Healthy Caribbean Coalition was formed," he explained.

Sir Trevor, who is one of Barbados' leading medical practitioners, pointed out that over the years significant landmarks were realized, culminating in the production of the **Regional Status Report On CNCDs**.

Among the findings of the report, all but one CARICOM country (Haiti) was ratified the World Health Organization's **Framework Convention On Tobacco Control**, while some countries have enacted legislation in support of mandates of the treaty.

Also, there are no national policies against advertising of unhealthy foods to children, or against the harmful use of alcohol. Furthermore, no CARICOM country has national policies or major initiatives aimed at reducing salt intake of the population, which has been shown to reduce blood pressure — a major



problem among Caribbean people and a major cause of heart disease. The report advocates the banning or, at the very least, limiting the marketing of energy dense, high-salt foods and beverages to children; promoting reduction in salt consumption and reduction in consumption of sugar sweetened beverages (including fruit juices); banning the use/sale of trans fats; development, implementation and monitoring of national strategies on the reduction in harm from alcohol; and all residents within CARICOM countries having access to basic defined packages of NCD care, irrespective of their ability to pay, among other actions. (NC)