



PRESS RELEASE

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CARIBBEAN CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATION STRONGLY SUPPORTS JAMAICA ON THE RECENTLY PASSED TOBACCO REGULATIONS.

The Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) very strongly supports and congratulates the Jamaican Government on the Public Health (Tobacco Control) Regulations-2013 in Jamaica which bans smoking in all public places and workplaces and makes provision for the introduction of graphic health warnings on cigarette packs within 6 months in keeping with the CARICOM Regional standard for the Labeling of tobacco products.

The HCC is a registered non-governmental Caribbean organization formed in 2008, borne out of the Heads of Government of CARICOM Summit on NCDs held in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, in 2007. The HCC is a regional alliance of Caribbean Health NGOs and civil society organizations with the remit to combat chronic diseases (NCDs) and their associated risk factors and conditions.

Exposure to tobacco smoke causes serious heart disease and strokes, many lung diseases, and several forms of cancer. In infants, it causes sudden death. In pregnant women, it causes low birth weight. Smoking in workplaces and public places leads to massive societal economic costs in the form of direct and indirect medical costs. Exposure to tobacco smoke in indoor workplaces and public places is entirely preventable.

Studies overwhelmingly demonstrate that comprehensive smoking bans confer enormous public health benefits (significant reduction in heart attacks, reduction in all forms of cancer and significant improvement in general health) with no negative economic impact on businesses in any sector.

Professor Trevor Hassell, President of the HCC noted that he was delighted that "Jamaica had joined Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados and Suriname in the enforcement of smoke-free public spaces which honors Article 8 of Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) signed by Jamaica in 2005". He further stated "the passage of this regulation will result in the saving of many lives, reduce sickness and ill-health and be to the overall economic benefit of Jamaica and Jamaicans."

The HCC stands in solidarity with Jamaicans from all walks of life, especially the most vulnerable, the poor and disadvantaged, youth and women, in support of the regulations which enforces comprehensive smoking bans in public spaces and workplaces, and protects the health and wellness of Jamaican people.

Professor Trevor Hassell

President, Healthy Caribbean Coalition,

on behalf of the Directors and members of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition

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