

Policies needed to reduce NCDs

One of this island's advocates for healthy lifestyle is calling for policies on the prevention and reduction of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) to be included in the **National Development Plan**.

The plan, which has six strategic goals, was launched in 2005 with the objective of realizing by 2025 the national aspiration to become a fully developed society that is prosperous, socially just and globally competitive.

Sir Trevor Hassell, president of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition, said it was critical that NCDs be among areas that were addressed if the island was to become fully developed.

Stressing the importance of the Chronic Disease Research Centre (CDRC), Sir Trevor said NCDs not only presented a health burden but it was "a major constraint on development of residents".

"It is my view and the view of others that it should therefore be included in the national development plan. And it should feature in the economic discussions and issue of the day. Furthermore, I submit it should be included in the Millennium Development Goals that will be negotiated next year," he said.

Sir Trevor made the call as he addressed a small gathering at the CDRC during the unveiling of a mural **Physicus: The**

Art Of Healthy Living.

Sir Trevor, who is also the chairman of the NCD Commission, said: "I wish to encourage the support of activities around healthy living as we aim to make the Caribbean a wellness and healthy living zone."

Outlining the work that a number of organizations have already embarked on in the fight against NCDs, Sir Trevor said it was important that more residents get on board.

"We speak so often of backyard gardens as an economic good, but I wish to suggest that it also represents a health good for us in Barbados. So it is one that I would encourage," he said.

He said recently the subcommittee of the Social Partnership discussed with the NCD commission, a national project aimed at focusing the attention of Barbadians on the prevention and control of NCDs.

Sir Trevor stopped short of saying what that project entailed however, adding that he would leave the announcement to be made by the subcommittee of the Social Partnership.

The mural, among other things, is expected to serve as a reminder to those who use the Jemmott's Lane, St Michael area of the importance of healthy living. The art work depicts people engaging in physical activities and reaping of crops. **(MM)**