

Multisectoral Action Influencing Public Policy

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Introduction of SSB Tax in Dominica



Context

- SSB tax viewed as one of several policy decisions taken by the Government of Dominica in efforts to maintain a healthy population and necessitating action from various sectors-Government, NGO
- Several initiatives may have led to the imposition of the SSB tax, notable, a multi sectoral workshop on obesity and ensuing recommendations

MULTI SCETORAL ACTION

Workshop on obesity - Objectives

- To review the current evidence relating to the overweight and obesity situation in Dominica.
- To review/assess successful intervention strategies in the prevention and management/control of overweight and obesity both regionally and globally.
- To develop recommendations for mainstreaming the prevention and management of overweight and obesity in all sectors

BROAD BASED PARTICIPATION

- Government – Health, Education, Agriculture, Finance, Trade, ICT
- Civil Society – Dominica Food and nutrition Council, Healthy Communities, Dominica Council on Aging, Dominica Cancer Society, Dominica Diabetes Association
- Institutions of Higher Education
- Media
- Private Sector
- Regional Organizations: PAHO, HCC

POLICY OPTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- The removal of processed foods from schools
- Promote healthy eating at schools
- No advertising of commercial products in schools
- Mandatory physical education at all schools
- Regulation of advertising of processed foods aimed at children
- Increase taxes on sugary nonalcoholic beverages.

RESULTS

- SSB Tax implemented as an amendment to the Excise Tax Act of 2005
- School Health and Nutrition Policy in advance stage of development; addresses *inter alia*
 - nutrition education
 - physical education
 - control of food and beverage marketing
- Dominica National Commission on NCD reactivated

OBSERVATIONS

- Insufficient Documentation of the Process
- Decision making at Policy level unclear to the outsider; eg A comprehensive Plan of Action was developed post Obesity Workshop, one aspect, the SSB tax implemented (so far).
- Much of the “push” seem to come from the voices of the influential and/or a powerful Political champion

LESSONS LEARNED

For success

- Many Voices—NGO, Public and Private Sectors, **the influential**, before and after imposition of tax
- **Strong Political Will**
- Stakeholder consultations and engagement of the population necessary - an informed public will likely make better choices
- Monitoring and evaluation must be considered at the policy development stage