

Caribbean Private Business Sector

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT ON PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NCDs

We, the Caribbean Private Business Sector, represented at the Caribbean Civil Society led conference: *'Measuring and Engaging the Business Sector Response to NCDs: The Caribbean Private Sector Forum'* held at the Courtyard Marriott Hotel in Bridgetown Barbados on June 4, 2015, now indicate our support to address the Caribbean epidemic of NCDs through actions in our workplaces, in our products and services and within the communities we serve.

1. WE ACKNOWLEDGE/ RECOGNISE THE FOLLOWING:

- a. Non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including diabetes, hypertension, heart diseases, stroke, cancer, mental illness and chronic lung disease, are occurring in epidemic proportions in all countries of the Caribbean and are major causes of premature death, suffering, disability and excessive financial burden;
- b. There are four key behavioural risk factors: physical inactivity, unhealthy diets, tobacco use and harmful use of alcohol, that increase the risk of NCDs and that reduction of these risk factors, early detection of disease and provision of effective and affordable treatment, are required to prevent and control NCDs. To make meaningful reduction in NCDs it is necessary to take action on the broader factors which influence people's health behaviour: the conditions in which they are born, grow, live, **work** and age, and the influence of society – the underlying social, economic, political, environmental and cultural factors broadly known as social determinants;
- c. The onset of NCDs can be delayed by promotion of appropriate healthy choices and that these choices should be made in environments that promote physical activity, promote choices of foods low in salt, refined sugars and unhealthy fats; reduce consumption of and exposure to tobacco and limit intake of alcohol;
- d. NCDs are a threat to the economies of the Caribbean and that through premature loss of the productive work force and burgeoning healthcare costs, they can cause a decline or reversal of the region's developmental and economic gains;

- e. A “whole of government and whole of civil society response” is needed to address the NCD risk factors and that this can only occur through engagement and effective collaboration between government, the private business sector and civil society;
- f. Through collaborative efforts with government and civil society, the private sector can play a key role in both national and regional efforts to combat NCDs through ensuring the wellness of employees; health advocacy, networking, coalition building, service delivery programmes, mobilization of resources, empowerment of local communities and special groups and provision of technical assistance and expertise.

2. WE THEREFORE DECLARE OUR COMMITMENT TO ASSIST IN THE RESPONSE TO NCDs AND WE WILL AS FEASIBLE WITHIN OUR RESPECTIVE COMPANIES:

1. Adopt a corporate wellness policy that aims to implement or increase sustainable worksite wellness programs offered to our employees by promoting healthy lifestyles; creating supportive environments for physical activity and healthy nutrition; providing continuing health education, promoting disease screening, and much more;
2. Advocate for and participate in, partnerships between governments, the private business sector and civil society that aim to develop and implement multi-sectorial strategies for the prevention and management of NCDs at the national and regional levels;
3. Support national policies on health education and promotion particularly among youth, women and other population groups at high risk for the development of NCDs;
4. Advocate and provide support for development of national policies on tobacco, diet and nutrition, physical activity and use of alcohol;
5. Advocate and provide support for national policies on water, air and land pollution and engage in: recycling non-biodegradable materials; composting biodegradable materials; reducing harmful factory emissions and ensuring safe disposal of industrial waste;
6. Utilise our competencies in business and finance to enhance and support government and civil society efforts to: strengthen healthcare infrastructure; increase availability and distribution of affordable medication and health technologies; increase availability of health and social protection systems; create sustainable healthcare financing and reduce poverty;
7. Contribute in whatever way is feasible in assisting individuals in making healthy dietary choices by contributing to the development of healthy nutritional environment, including product reformulation (reducing levels of salt, refined sugars and unhealthy fats in foods and beverages), improvement of nutritional labelling, reducing the marketing and promotion of unhealthy foods to children, and conforming to known national and international standards for salt, sugar and fat content in foods and beverages, where these exist.