Embracing the private sector:  
THE JAMAICA FOOD INDUSTRY TASK FORCE  
HCC NCD FORUM

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Knutsford Court Hotel,  
Kingston, Jamaica
To formulate strategies that can improve the dietary environment and contribute to the reduction of the burden of NCDs in Jamaica.
THE FOOD INDUSTRY TASK FORCE GOALS 2017-19

- PRODUCT REFORMULATION
- FOOD MARKETING
- FOOD LABELING
- ADVOCACY & COMMUNICATION

HALT OBESITY & NCDs
PRODUCT REFORMULATION GOALS

Fat, Salt, Sugar content of products to meet national standards

Mandatory removal of trans-fats in all products

Food service outlets & vendors improve the quality of foods sold
FOOD MARKETING GOALS

Mandatory standards for all foods in schools based on the FBDG

>> in portion sizes of energy-dense foods and beverages

Limitation of sale and sponsorship of unhealthy food products in schools

>> in children’s exposure to unhealthy food advertising through all channels
FOOD LABELING GOALS

Mandatory Nutrition Facts Panel on all packaged retail grocery foods & beverages

Standardized understandable nutrition labels on packaged foods and beverages

Mandatory nutrition labeling on menus, menu boards, in chain restaurants and other food outlets
COMMUNICATION & ADVOCACY GOALS

Massive public education and specific training on the various initiatives

Support manufacturers and vendors in using healthier ingredients

Explore fiscal measures to increase the availability of healthier foods

Mandatory use of healthy meals / snacks in all government functions
THE TASK FORCE

GOV’T – MOH, MOEYI, MICAF, MOF, OPM

ACADEMIA – UWI, UTech, NCU

NGOS – HFJ, DAJ

GOV’T AGENCIES – CAC, SRC, BOS, JBC

OTHERS - Vendors Ass, Media

PRIVATE SECTOR – PSOJ, MAJ, Chambers of Commerce - 15 large & small food industry partners
KEY PRINCIPLES
Ethics & Transparency

TOR clear about conflict of Interest – One rejected

Sub-committee meetings are documented to endure transparency and continuity
RISK MANAGEMENT

Clear about who should be involved in initial policy formulation…. 

Before approaching Food Industry partners to discuss and negotiate…. 

Boundaries of compromise are quite clear
EXPERIENCE TO DATE - OVERALL

Interactions are good

The thorny issue, as expected, was on the sugar tax.
EXPERIENCE TO DATE:
ON PRODUCT REFORMULATION

Trans Fat:
All stakeholders agree this must be removed from the food supply.
Manufacturers claim they do not use it.
Independent verification will come later this year with the strengthening of BOS & SRC labs
EXPERIENCE TO DATE:
ON PRODUCT REFORMULATION

Ingredient reduction:
Several large manufacturers publicly announced 20-50% reduction of sugar in popular products.

[Lasco, Seprod, National & Purity bakeries, Nestle, etc.]

Independent verification later
EXPERIENCE TO DATE: ON LABELING

Agreement to move from voluntary to mandatory for packaged foods with new label.

Most do for exports

US deadline [July 2018] was a great boost.

Lobbying in US has pushed that back

Timeline for compliance is the key issue
EXPERIENCE TO DATE: ON EDUCATION / COMMUNICATION

Massive public education on SSBs – HFJ

Unprecedented positive response from public

Unprecedented negative response from one Beverage manufacturer – “crying foul”

With the new phase on “sugary drinks” i.e. box drinks also, the pushback has waned.

More ADs needed on other ingredients
EXPERIENCE TO DATE:

ON ADVOCACY – SUGAR TAX

Core group compiled the evidence – health, economic, social, etc.

Some Industry Partners insist on “self regulation”…which was not an option to recommend to a government.

Now discussing timelines for implementation.

May 1 budget debate will better inform us.
EXPERIENCE TO DATE:

ON MARKETING

The new nutrition policy and standards in schools – difficult for many Industry Partners to comply.

Sanctions by government for non-compliance will determine success.

May 1 budget debate will better inform us.
THE MAJOR CHALLENGES

1. BRANDING AND SPONSORSHIP OF UNHEALTHY FOODS IN SCHOOLS

2. ADVERTISING OF UNHEALTHY FOODS VIA ALL MEDIA
THE OPPORTUNITIES

Strong support of BOS – Legal authority
SRC – To assist small producers re-formulate
Vendors Assn. – difficult to reach market
Leadership support – PM, MOH strong – hope it persists
FOOD INDUSTRY TACTICS - not unfamiliar

Lobbying in media against the sugar tax
JMA efforts to finance measure for new nutrition standards
Attempts to discredit TF & leadership

[All have been rubbished]
LESSONS TO DATE

1. Inclusion of critical members
2. Ethics of participation
3. Transparency in process
4. Anticipate & Manage Risk
5. Secure sustained financing
6. Garner political & public support