



HCC OPEN LETTER

TO CARICOM HEADS OF GOVERNMENT

AT THE 39TH REGULAR MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT JULY 4-6, 2018, KINGSTON, JAMAICA

June 29, 2018

Dear Honourable Heads of Government of CARICOM,

On the occasion of this, the Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) calls on you, Caribbean Heads of Government and State, to indicate your commitment to addressing one of our region's most pressing development issues – noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) - by attending the 3rd United Nations High-Level Meeting on NCDs.

This year on September 27th, 2018 in New York, the United Nations will host the 3rd High-Level Meeting on NCDs during the 73rd Meeting of the UN General Assembly. The 3rd High-Level Meeting on NCDs comes at a critical time when globally and in the Caribbean, rising rates of NCDs are vastly outpacing prevention and control efforts. Leaders from across the globe are reaffirming their resolve to take bold steps to reduce unnecessary suffering and death caused by these diseases by attending the 3rd High-Level Meeting on NCDs.

CARICOM states played an important role in catapulting NCDs onto the global health agenda beginning in 2007 with the seminal Port of Spain Declaration. This was followed by the 1st UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs in 2011 which was attended by a significant number of CARICOM Heads who declared in a strong, unified voice that the prevention and control of NCDs was of the highest priority for the region. Almost 10 years after the 1st UN High-Level Meeting, progress in NCD prevention and control is uneven and the region is off track to meet critical NCD targets. NCDs, cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancers and chronic respiratory diseases, are the leading cause of premature deaths worldwide. In the Caribbean, 8 out of 10 deaths are attributable to NCDs of which 40% occur prematurely before the age of 70 years.

As unnecessary death and disability continue to rise, so do the associated costs of preventing and controlling these diseases. The NCD crisis is a significant burden on the limited economic resources of CARICOM States. Inadequate action on NCDs threatens to cost regional governments hundreds of millions of dollars – a luxury we cannot afford given the current economic climate. Action at the highest levels from CARICOM Heads of Government and State is therefore vital.





The upcoming 3rd UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs provides a unique opportunity for CARICOM governments to reaffirm their political leadership and make bold and decisive commitments to accelerate country action on NCDs. Never has there been a time where NCD leadership is more urgently needed. The 3rd High-Level Meeting on NCDs also provides a platform for CARICOM to share progress, discuss challenges and lessons learned and pledge to prioritize NCD actions which fast-track the implementation of WHO recommended Best Buy policies and programmes in support of the achievement of the 2025 global NCD targets and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Therefore in recognition of the singular importance of the 3rd High-Level Meeting on NCDs; and the growing burden of NCDs; and the considerable economic, social and health burden of this group of diseases in the region; we, the 100+ members of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition ask the following of CARICOM Heads of Government and State to:

- 1. Commit to provide strong global, regional and national leadership on NCD prevention and control and further commit to and attend the 3rd UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs on September 27th, 2018.
- 2. Include a statement of commitment to attend the 3rd UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs in the official Communiqué emerging from this, the Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).
- 3. Support HCC's nine regionally endorsed NCD advocacy priorities* for inclusion in the 3rd High-Level Meeting on NCDs outcome document.
- 4. Support one or more CARICOM Heads of Government or State to have a lead role in at least one of the multi-stakeholder panels at the 3rd High-Level Meeting on NCDs.
- 5. Support the hosting of an event on the margins of the 3rd High-Level Meeting on NCDs led by CARICOM Heads of Government as was done in 2011 at the 1st UN HLM on NCDs.
- 6. Endorse the inclusion of a representative from a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) on country delegations to the 3rd UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs in recognition that the NCD epidemic requires a whole-of-society response.

The world and our region have clear NCD targets and evidence-based, cost-effective solutions. The High-Level Meeting is our collective opportunity to make bold commitments on how to boost investment and high-level political action to implement at scale. NCD action is an investment, not a cost, and strategic, forward-looking responses across prevention and control will not only save lives but mitigate escalating health care costs.

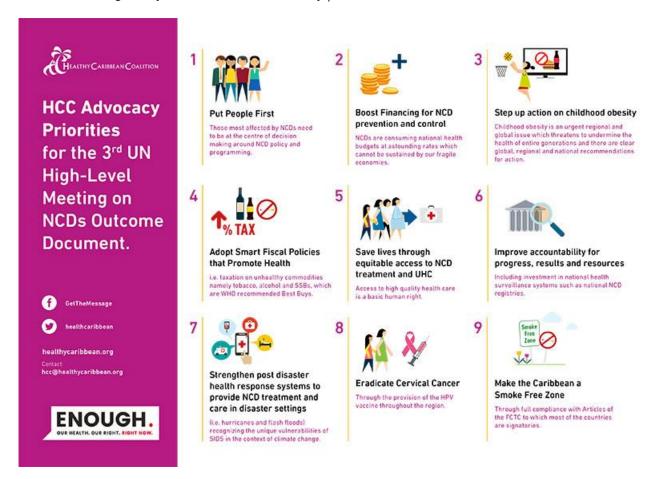
The Healthy Caribbean Coalition is committed to providing ongoing support to Caribbean governments and we look forward to your attendance on September 27th at the 3rd UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs as we work towards a successful HLM3 and beyond.

Board of Directors and members of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition June 29, 2018





* HCC's nine regionally endorsed NCD advocacy priorities



About Healthy Caribbean Coalition

The Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) is a registered not-for-profit organisation formed in 2008, arising from the 2007 Declaration of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The HCC is the only regional NCD alliance of over 100 health and non-health civil society organisations (CSOs).

The HCC works closely with regional and international leaders in NCD prevention to leverage the power of civil society by strengthening and supporting its membership in the implementation of programmes aimed at reducing the morbidity and mortality associated with NCDs.