



MANAGING CONFLICT OF INTEREST FOR NCD PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE CARIBBEAN

With Wider Implications for
Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

March 26-27th, 2019 | Radisson Aquatica Hotel, St. Michael | Barbados

CONCEPT NOTE & PROGRAMME

PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS: Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO) | The Peter Moores Foundation | University of Edinburgh, Scotland | Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA) | University of the West Indies Open Campus | CIBC/FirstCaribbean International Bank | Sagacor Life Inc

Background

The Healthy Caribbean Coalition has influenced and contributed to the regional and national multisectoral response to NCD prevention and control through its work on National NCD Commissions (or their equivalents); work with the private sector and workplace wellness; and through the hosting of a series of annual multistakeholder, multisectoral regional meetings. In promoting multisectorality, real and complex regional issues around conflict of interest (COI) have come to the fore.

Globally this issue of managing interactions with the private sector while prioritizing the interests of public health, has received significant attention and continues to challenge the NCD community. While the rules of engagement for working with the tobacco industry have been clear and unambiguous, due largely to the existence of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) – global guidance for partnering with other industries, especially alcohol and food and beverage, has been much weaker despite the existence of the WHO’s Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors (FENSA). This lack of consensus on private sector partnerships (outside of tobacco) is compounded in small developing states where the traditional red lines around private sector collaborations are much harder to draw. The HCC has sought to advance regional dialogue and action in this area through work focused on exploring and addressing conflict of interest in the small developing states of the region.

In July 2017 the HCC signed a Letter of Agreement (LoA) with PAHO to strengthen the civil society’s contribution to NCD prevention and control in the Caribbean across three key areas: childhood obesity prevention; reduction of the harmful use of alcohol; and addressing conflict of interest in the region. During the same year, the HCC released the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan of which a key element was continued support for improved governance of Caribbean civil society to strengthen their effective functioning and ensure they are ‘fit for purpose’. A key element of NCD CSO governance is managing the inevitable conflicts of interest which arise in embracing a true multisectoral response to NCDs. In support of addressing COI, with funding from the NCD Alliance and PAHO, HCC hosted a meeting in 2017 entitled **‘Advocacy, Accountability and Conflict of Interest’** (AACOI) in an effort to initiate a regional dialogue and set the foundation for possible guidance around managing this increasingly important and complex issue. The meeting was aimed at building capacity to identify and manage conflicts of interest in order to enhance and achieve long-term sustainability of an effective and transparent multi-sectoral, and whole of society approach to NCD prevention and control. A number of regional stakeholders from a variety of sectors including public sector, private sector and civil society shared their experiences in tackling this issue within the context of small developing states. Jeff Collin, Professor of Global Health Policy at the University of Edinburgh and expert on the intersection of public health and the unhealthy commodities industries (tobacco, alcohol and ultra-processed foods and drinks), provided insights on strategies to address COI in various settings based on international experiences.

In 2018 the HCC signed a second LoA with PAHO which allowed for continuation of the work on COI. The HCC is currently working with Professor Collin and his team to prepare a report on conflict of interest issues in the Caribbean region through an assessment of various case studies (those presented at the 2017 meeting and more recent examples) which capture the issues unique to small developing states. The findings and recommendations from the report have been used to inform the development of a Draft HCC civil society policy for the management of conflict of Interest.

In 2017, the World Health Organization (WHO) developed a draft tool for preventing and managing COI in nutrition policy. While the draft WHO tool is primarily intended for national Ministries of Health, it has potential relevance for civil society groups concerned with COI. At the regional level, PAHO has been working on testing the applicability of the tool and adapting it to the needs of Member States. To this end a summarized or 'scoping' version of the full WHO tool has been developed for use by Ministries of Health, which can also be helpful for civil society groups. This scoping tool offers an accessible framework for assessing COI in nutrition policy, supported by the more comprehensive WHO draft tool.

At the regional level there has been a growing public and political acceptance and appetite for a response to the growing epidemic of obesity among adults and children. CARICOM Heads have repeatedly acknowledged and committed themselves to action thereby creating favorable environments for obesity prevention policies. The HCC has been heavily engaged in the promotion of nutrition policy in the region as a part of the ***HCC Civil Society Action Plan 2017-2021: Preventing Childhood Obesity in the Caribbean***. With funding from the Global Health Advocacy Incubator, civil society-led advocacy for obesity prevention policies has created almost tectonic shifts in public awareness and policymaker readiness for nutrition policy particularly in Jamaica and Barbados through the work of the Heart Foundation of Jamaica and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Barbados respectively. The unhealthy food and beverage industry has responded with force coming out strongly against anti-sugar public health media campaigns, taxation of sugary beverages, restrictions of sugary beverages in schools and front of package warning labels - using many of the same tactics employed by the tobacco industry at the height of the anti-tobacco advocacy movement.

In order to guide a targeted civil society response to growing opposition from the processed food industry, through the HCC GHAI project, in late 2018 the HCC commissioned a mapping of the regional food and beverage sector which provided a snapshot of the key actors in the processed food and beverage industry in the region; a profile of their primary products; and a database of instances of corporate political activity or industry interference in public health and policy making.

In March 2019, as part of the PAHO LoA, the HCC will host a small regional consultation on conflict of interest, bringing together these various strands of related work. The 2-day training workshop, attended by civil society and public sector representatives, will explore the unique facets of COI within the context of small communities such as those found in small developing

states in the Caribbean and build capacity in the identification and management of COI in the Caribbean. It is anticipated that this collective work will assist in developing and refining guidance for the identification and management of conflict of interest in the Caribbean with utility for wide application across small island developing states (SIDS) outside of the region.

Event Goals, Objectives & Expected Outcomes

Goal

To build regional capacity to identify and manage conflict of interest within the context of NCD prevention and control (tobacco, alcohol and nutrition policies) in the Caribbean with wider implications for other small island developing states.

Objectives

1. To **share and discuss conflict of interest** in the Caribbean:
 - a. **Review the HCC-led and commissioned COI Case study Report** to improve **understanding and capacity to identify conflict of interest in the Caribbean** and the unique context within which COI exists in the region and other small communities.
 - b. Share recent examples of COI in the region.
2. To **better understand nutrition related COI issues** in the Caribbean through a **review of the findings of HCC/HSFB food and beverage sector mapping with a focus on:**
 - a. The food and beverage industry landscape in the region including key players and scope of processed and ultra-processed foods manufactured in the region.
 - b. Instance of corporate political activity/ industry interference in policy development.
 - c. Strategies to counter industry opposition including a review of selected examples and discussion of strategies moving forward within the context of the GHAI projects in Barbados and Jamaica.
3. To **explore strategies to manage/mitigate conflict of interest** with three key sectors within the context of NCD prevention and control:
 - a. The tobacco industry.
 - b. The alcoholic beverage sector.
 - c. The food and beverage sector.
4. To **pilot the WHO Scoping Tool** for managing conflict of interest within the context of nutrition policy.
5. To build HCC's capacity to manage conflict of interest through the **piloting** and (subsequent) provision of **Conflict of Interest Policy** for HCC and its members.

Expected Outputs and Outcomes

1. Outputs
 - a. HCC COI Case Study Report shared and discussed.
 - b. Regional Examples of COI shared and discussed.
 - c. HCC GHAI Food Industry Mapping shared and discussed.
 - d. HCC COI Policy piloted.
 - e. WHO Scoping Tool piloted.
2. Outcomes
 - a. Improved understanding of COI in the Caribbean.
 - b. Increased capacity of civil society and the public sector to identify COI and more effectively manage and mitigate its impact.

Participants & Beneficiaries

Participants will be representatives of: regional civil society organisations; regional Ministries of Health; HCC specialist advisors; HCC interns; and PAHO.

Supporters & Partners

This meeting is supported through a Letter of Agreement with the Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO). Other supporters and partners include the Peter Moores Foundation, Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI), University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and the University of the West Indies Open Campus. The work of the HCC would not be possible without the ongoing support from Sagicor Life Inc. and CIBC/FirstCaribbean International Bank.

MEETING PROGRAMME

MARCH 26-27, 2019 | RADISSON AQUATICA, ST. MICHAEL BARBADOS

DAY 1

8.30 - 9.00	REGISTRATION	
	MORNING SESSION	MODERATOR: Sir Trevor Hassell
9.00 – 9:15	Welcome and Introductions	Maisha Hutton HCC
9.15 – 9.30	Strategies to Manage Conflict of Interest: Introduction of the Draft HCC COI Guide <i>Presentation</i>	Maisha Hutton (HCC Guide)
9.30 – 10.30	Regional Experiences with COI Sharing from Participants <i>Civil Society Examples</i> <i>Public Sector Examples</i>	MODERATOR <i>Civil Society</i> 1. Barbara McGaw, HFJ 2. Sir Trevor Hassell, HCC 3. Ronnie Bissessar, IAHF <i>Public Sector</i> 1. Samantha Moitt, Antigua MOH 2. Dr. Phillip Swann, Bahamas MOH 3. Dr. Simone Spence, Jamaica MOH
10.30 - 11.00	HEALTH BREAK	
11.00 – 11.15	Regional Experiences with COI Sharing from Participants <i>Presentations Continued</i>	
11.15 – 11.45	Group Discussion	MODERATOR
11.45 - 12.30	Findings from the Regional Mapping of the Food and Beverage Sector - HCC Work - HSFB Work	Jenna Thompson tbc HCC Francine Charles tbc HSFB

12.30 - 1.30	LUNCH & GROUP PHOTO	
	AFTERNOON SESSION	MODERATOR: Sir Trevor Hassell
1.30 – 2.15	HCC COI Case Study Report	Professor Jeff Collin / Dr Sarah Hill <i>University of Edinburgh, Scotland</i>
2.15 – 3.00	Group Discussion	MODERATOR
3.00 – 3:30	Overview of the PAHO/WHO Tool for preventing and managing COI in Nutrition	Dr. Fabio Gomes <i>PAHO/WHO</i> Professor Jeff Collin <i>University of Edinburgh, Scotland</i>
3.30 – 3.45	HEALTH BREAK	
3.45 – 4.45	Working Session: Piloting PAHO/WHO Tool	Dr. Fabio Gomes / Professor Jeff Collin
4.45 - 5.00	Review of Day 1, Preview of Day 2 and Wrap Up	Dr. Christine Chin <i>CSOB, HCC</i>
5.00	CLOSE OF DAY 1	

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DAY 2

	MORNING SESSION	MODERATOR: Maisha Hutton
9.00 – 10.30	Working Session: Piloting PAHO/WHO Tool <i>Continued</i>	Dr. Fabio Gomes / Professor Jeff Collin
10.30 - 11.00	HEALTH BREAK	
11.00 – 1.00	Working Session: Piloting PAHO/WHO Tool <i>Continued</i>	Dr. Fabio Gomes / Professor Jeff Collin
1.00 – 1.45	LUNCH	
	AFTERNOON SESSION	MODERATOR: Maisha Hutton
1.45 – 2.15	Sharing of related Industry Work for GHAI 2019 – HCC, HFJ, HSFJ <i>Sharing and Group Discussion</i>	MODERATOR
2.15 – 3.15	Strategies to Manage Conflict of Interest: Finalising Draft HCC COI Guide/Policy <i>Group Work</i>	Maisha Hutton (HCC Guide/ Policy)
3.15 – 3.30	Review of Meeting Achievements and Next Steps and Evaluation	Maisha Hutton
3.30	CLOSE OF MEETING	