ACCELERATING NUTRITION POLICIES IN THE CARIBBEAN

Creating Supportive Environments for Healthy Children

September 17-18, 2019 | Accra Beach Hotel & Spa | Barbados

CONCEPT NOTE and PROGRAMME

PARTNERS
Background

The need to accelerate policy responses to childhood obesity:

The Caribbean has some of the highest adult obesity rates in the world and an emerging crisis of overweight and obesity facing up to 1 in 3 children in the region. Childhood overweight and obesity not only are associated with serious complications in childhood and adolescence, but they also track into adulthood placing individuals at higher risk for non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Like many other small developing states and low- and middle-income countries, the Caribbean region has experienced a nutritional transition driven by globalization and trade liberalization resulting in a culture of diets characterized by foods high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) fuelling skyrocketing rates of NCDs, in particular diabetes. The Lancet recently called on the global public health community to recognize and take urgent action to address the Global Syndemic of obesity, undernutrition and climate change. The EAT-Lancet Commission focussed attention on the importance of addressing global food systems which fuel unhealthy diets and which now pose a greater risk to morbidity and mortality than unsafe sex, and alcohol, drug, and tobacco use combined. Unhealthy diets must be tackled with urgency through the accelerated implementation of healthy nutrition policies. The global and regional public health and civil society communities have responded to the problem of unhealthy diets with clear, evidence-based guidance for a multisectoral, whole-of-society response taking into consideration the social and commercial determinants of health. WHO and PAHO have recommended a number of evidence-based policy actions to create healthy environments for children, as reflected in global and regional action plans for the prevention of childhood obesity such as the PAHO Plan of Action for the Prevention of Obesity in Children and Adolescents and the Report of the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity Implementation Plan: Executive Summary. These recommended policy options include: effective tax on sugar-sweetened beverages; interpretive front-of-pack labelling, supported by public education of both adults and children for nutrition literacy; and the elimination of the provision or sale of unhealthy foods, such as sugar-sweetened beverages and energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods, in the school environment. The CARPHA 6 Point Policy Package (6PP) further endorses these global and regional recommendations as does the HCC Civil Society Action Plan 2017-2021: Prevention Childhood Obesity in the Caribbean (CSAP).

CARICOM Member States at the highest levels have also acknowledged the scale and severity of the problem and the need for an urgent response. In 2016 at the 37th Regular Meeting of CARICOM Heads of State and Government, a pledge was made “to address issues such as banning advertisement of potentially harmful foods which specifically target children”. One year later at the 38th CARICOM Summit, in the 10-year anniversary of the Port of Spain Declaration, Heads of State and Government “noted with concern that obesity in children represented the greatest threat to the health of future generations with the level of overweight and obesity being more than 30 % in both primary and secondary school populations in many Member States...and urged the promotion of Physical Exercise in school-age children”. In 2018, at the 39th Summit, CARICOM Heads of State and Government endorsed a number of priorities for the 3rd UN High Level Meeting on NCDs including: “implementing policies geared to preventing childhood obesity, including health-promoting school environments and Front of Package (FOP) labelling”. In July 2019, the Government of Barbados successfully advocated for the inclusion of school-based health promotion.

Interventions for childhood obesity, as well as teacher training on NCDs, into the Inter-American Education Agenda under Agenda Item ‘Education and Health’ in the context of the 10th Inter-American Ministerial Meeting on Education, held on July 10th, 2019 under the auspices of the Organisation of American States (OAS). Finally, planning is currently underway for the First Joint Meeting of the Council for Human and Social Development (COHSOD) and the Council of Trade and Economic Development (COTED) which will focus on among other things, nutrition policy in the region. The planning process is being led by an Inter-Agency Technical Committee Working Group led by the CARICOM Secretariat with broad membership including PAHO, CARPHA, UWI and HCC.

Despite recognition of the urgent need for action, the existence of a global and regional menu of policy recommendations, and the CARICOM mandates highlighted above, Caribbean governments have for the most part failed to implement population-based interventions to modify the current obesogenic environments. Currently only 3 of 20 CARICOM countries tax sugary beverages; only 2 of 20 have enforced national policies regulating the availability of sweet beverages in school environments; no country regulates marketing of unhealthy products to children; and no country has mandatory front of package nutrition labelling. Within the context of a crisis of obesity and diet-related NCDs, this raises important questions about why governments are resisting policy and legislative action in these areas. Despite a plethora of political commitments from CARICOM Heads of Government and Ministers of Health, overall there has been a general policy inertia driven by: inadequate political leadership and governance to implement and enforce nutrition policies; strong opposition by powerful regional and global commercial interests and lack of public demand for these policies.

The role of civil society in creating supportive environments to scale-up priority policies

In, 2017, recognising the critical role of civil society in this process and informed by global and regional guidance, the HCC developed a Civil Society Action Plan 2017-2021: Prevention Childhood Obesity in the Caribbean (CSAP) to provide a blueprint for civil society action in support of national responses. The goal of the CSAP is to halt the increase in childhood obesity by 2025 through improved development and implementation by CARICOM countries of policies, and/or legislation, and/or regulations. The overall expected outcome of the plan is strengthened contribution of Caribbean civil society to the development, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of national and regional policies, legislation, regulations, programmes, and interventions related to childhood obesity prevention by 2021. The CSAP covers seven priority areas which align with WHO/PAHO’s policy recommendations: trade and fiscal policy; nutrition literacy; marketing of healthy and unhealthy foods and beverages to children; school - and community-based interventions; resource mobilisation; and strategic planning, monitoring, and evaluation. The key policy asks are: taxation of sweet beverages; mandatory front of package nutrition labelling; enacting legislation related to The International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes; banning the marketing of unhealthy foods to children; banning the sale and marketing of unhealthy foods in schools; and mandatory physical education in schools.

Within this context, the HCC and the broader civil society community, supported by key partners including PAHO, CARPHA, Caribbean Development Bank, FAO, UNICEF, NCD Alliance and the Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAI), are working collaboratively with regional governments to create environments that are supportive of accelerated nutrition policy. Through advocacy targeting various stakeholder groups,

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CARICOM civil society is focusing on addressing the barriers to policy action in order to fast track the following priority policies:


2. Policies promoting healthier school environments including banning the sale and promotion of sweet beverages.

3. Taxation of sweet beverages of at least 20%.

The policies identified above have been prioritized based on existing mandates, potential impact, and ongoing regional/national initiatives that can be leveraged. In the case of FOPL, the CARICOM Regional Organisation for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) is currently undertaking a revision of CARICOM REGIONAL STANDARD: Labelling of Foods – Pre-Packaged Foods – Specification CRS 5: 201X. This revision is intended to update the current standard in line with the most recent CODEX Alimentarius guidelines as well as to include front of package (FOP) labelling specifications. The revised draft standard recommends a FOPL scheme using the ‘HIGH IN’ model which is currently implemented in Chile, Peru, Uruguay and Israel (the process is underway in Canada and Brazil). Evidence has shown this model to be the most effective type of interpretative FOPL system in terms of enabling consumers to make more informed nutritional decisions. If CARICOM member states were to implement the ‘HIGH IN’ FOPL model, it would facilitate implementation of other related nutrition policy interventions where ‘high in’ products would be prohibited from schools, banned for marketing to children and taxed.

As it relates to the sale of sweet beverages in schools, in 2017 Trinidad and Tobago implemented a national ban on sugar sweetened beverages in all government primary and secondary schools. Implementation tracking one year post the ban points to high levels of compliance. In January 2019, Jamaica implemented guidelines, restricting the sale of Sweetened Beverages in government schools. Since 2005 and 2010, Bermuda and Bahamas respectively, have had policies restricting the sale of Sweetened Beverages in schools however Bermuda’s policy is not mandatory resulting in patchy implementation and Bahamas national policy is not enforced. A cabinet paper for a ban on SSBs in schools has recently been approved in Belize. Healthy school environments are critical to the reduction in consumption of unhealthy foods and beverages amongst children and adolescents. Early success in Trinidad and Jamaica and insights gained from Bermuda and the Bahamas, may provide clear blueprints for action in other Caribbean countries.

Lastly, global and regional evidence is now demonstrating conclusively that taxation of sugary drinks leads to reduction in consumption of sweetened beverages. In addition, this fiscal measure generates much needed revenue to fund health programmes. Caribbean governments are struggling to manage the costs of NCDs which are consuming health budgets – STAXs or taxes on sugar, tobacco and alcohol provide important potential revenue streams to offset national health costs. This is vital within the context of financing for Universal Health Coverage in particular and health care in general, especially for NCDs.

Against this background, and building on the November 2017 regional HCC meeting Beyond the Call to Action Event, which celebrated the success of the Call to Action Petition to prevent childhood obesity and began the process of exploring healthy school policies, the HCC will host a regional meeting on September 17-18, 2019 entitled: ACCELERATING NUTRITION POLICIES IN THE CARIBBEAN - Creating Supportive Environments for Healthy Children. The outcomes of the meeting will support and feed into key regional activities and processes including the CROSQ FOPL national and regional processes, the 1st UN High Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage, the annual meeting of the COHSOD on the margins of the PAHO Directing Council Meeting September 2019 and the planned First Joint Meeting of COHSOD and COTED.
Event Goals, Objectives & Expected Outcomes

Goal

To build regional capacity and momentum for the implementation of obesity prevention policies with a focus on: mandatory front of package nutrition warning labels; bans or restrictions on the sale and marketing of sweet beverages in schools; and taxation of sweet beverages.

Objectives

1. To build awareness among a diverse group of multisectoral stakeholders of regional and global approaches and experiences in advocacy and implementation for:
   a. Mandatory front of package nutrition warning labels
   b. Bans or restrictions on the sale and marketing of sweet beverages in schools
   c. Taxation of sweet beverages

2. To engage high-level policymakers around HCC’s priority nutrition policies with a view to accelerating adoption and implementation of the same at the national level.

3. To explore conflict of interest best practices in response to positive and negative contributions of Industry in the advancement of nutrition policy.

4. To develop a meeting outcome statement and call to action which supports accelerated implementation of nutrition policies to reduce overweight and obesity among children in the Caribbean.

Expected outcomes

1. Increased awareness and understanding among a diverse group of stakeholders of regional and global approaches and experiences in implementation and advocacy for: mandatory front of package nutrition warning labels; bans or restrictions on the sale and marketing of sweet beverages in schools; taxation of sweet beverages; and a strengthened coalition of informed and effective nutrition policy advocates.

2. High-level policymakers engaged around HCC’s priority nutrition policies with a view to accelerating national implementation.

3. Increased awareness of best practices in managing conflict of interest in response to positive and negative contributions of Industry in the advancement of nutrition policy.

4. A meeting outcome statement/call to action which supports accelerated implementation of nutrition policies.
Participants & Beneficiaries

Participants will be national and regional representatives of: civil society organisations including members of the Barbados COP Coalition; Ministries of Health, Education, Trade and Commerce, and Finance; members of the HCC Regional CSO COP Action Team; young people; Academia; HCC Board of Directors; HCC specialist advisors; CARPHA and HCC global partners NCD Alliance, World Obesity Federation and NCD Child.

Sponsors

This meeting is supported through a grant from the Global Health Advocacy Incubator and HCC’s ongoing support from Sagicor Life Inc. and COMTRUST (CIBC First Caribbean).
# MEETING PROGRAMME DAY 1

## 8.00 - 8.30  REGISTRATION

## DAY 1 MORNING SESSION OPENING

**MODERATOR:** Sir Trevor Hassell

### 8.15 - 8.35  Welcome - Introduction to meeting and Call to Action

*Sir Trevor Hassell, Mrs. Maisha Hutton, Healthy Caribbean Coalition*

### 8.35 - 9.00  Official Opening Welcome

*Honourable Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey Bostic, Minister of Health and Wellness, Barbados*

*Honourable Santia Bradshaw, Minister of Education, Technological and Vocational Training and Leader of Government Business, Barbados*

### 9.00 - 9.30  Keynote Speaker

*Ms. Paula Johns, NCD Alliance, ACT Brazil*

## THE SIZE OF THE PROBLEM AND COMMITMENTS TO ACT

**MODERATOR:** Sir Trevor Hassell

### 9.30 - 9.40  PAHO Regional Response (10 min presentation)

*Dr. Anselm Hennis, PAHO*

### 9.40 - 9.50  CARPHA 6-point policy package (10 min presentation)

*Ms. Christine Bocage, CARPHA*

### 9.50 - 10.00  CARICOM (10 min presentation)

*Dr Rudolph Cummings, CARICOM Secretariat*

### 10.00 - 10.15  Q&A (15 min)

**MODERATOR:** Dr. Kenneth Connell, Heart & Stroke Foundation of Barbados

## 10.15 - 10.45  HEALTH BREAK

**Quick Café Chat: The Scope and Challenge of Regulating Marketing of SSBs to Children**

**Session Moderator:** Dr. Mychelle Farmer, NCD Child

*Barbados: Ms. Stacia Browne, HSFB*

*Youth: Mr. Pierre Cooke Jr., HCC*

*Jamaica: Mrs. K. Morrish-Cooke, HFJ*

*Global: Ms. Rachel Thompson, WOF*

*Caribbean: Ms. Jenna Thompson, HCC*

*Pacific: Dr. Si Thu Win Tin, Pacific Community*

*(14 min lightning round panellist comments followed by 8 min discussion)*
# Meeting Programme DAY 1

## The Evidence Behind the Commitments
**Moderator:** Sir Trevor Hassell, HCC

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.45 - 11.20</td>
<td>Evidence: Taxation of Sweet Beverages (20 min virtual presentation and 15 min Q&amp;A)</td>
<td>Professor Lisa Powell, University of Illinois at Chicago</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.20 - 11.55</td>
<td>Evidence: FOPL and PAHO nutrient profile model (20 min presentation and 15 min Q&amp;A)</td>
<td>Dr. Fabio da Silva Gomes, PAHO</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.55 - 12.30</td>
<td>Evidence: Healthy school policies (20 min presentation and 15 min Q&amp;A)</td>
<td>Professor Mary R. L'Abbé, University of Toronto</td>
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### Lunch & Group Photo

### Day 1 Afternoon Session
**Moderator:** Dr. Karen Sealey, HCC

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<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.30 - 2.15</td>
<td>Round Table</td>
<td>Chile (15 min presentation) Ms. Constanza Astorga Mercado, Ministry of Health of Chile</td>
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<td>Uruguay (15 min presentation) Mr. Luis Galicia, Ministry of Public Health of Uruguay</td>
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<td>Canada (15 min presentation) Professor Mary R. L’Abbé, University of Toronto</td>
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<td>2.15 - 3.00</td>
<td>Plenary Discussion</td>
<td>What lessons can we learn from these global experiences to guide regional strategies? (45 min discussion)</td>
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<td>Chairperson: Dr. James Hospedales, Defeat-NCD Partnership</td>
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### 3.00 - 3.15 Health Break

### Barriers to Effective Implementation
**Moderator:** Dr. Kavita Singh, MOH Guyana

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<tr>
<td>3.15 - 3.30</td>
<td>Conflict of Interest and Nutrition Policy: Spotting Industry Interference and managing COI (15 min presentation)</td>
<td>Ms. Rachel Morrison, Global Health Advocacy Incubator</td>
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3.30 - 3.45  Trade policies - barriers to and opportunities for, implementing nutrition policies  
(15 min presentation)  
Mrs. Nicole Foster, HCC

3.45 - 4.00  QUESTION AND ANSWER (15 min)  
MODERATOR

4.00 - 4.15  The UNICEF Regional Response to Childhood Obesity  
(10 min presentation and 5 min Q&A)  
Dr. Aloys Kamuragiye, UNICEF

4.15 - 4.30  The FAO Regional Response to Childhood Obesity  
(10 min presentation and 5 min Q&A)  
Ms. Renata Clarke, FAO

4.30 - 5.20  PANEL OF STAKEHOLDERS FROM SECTORS OTHER THAN HEALTH: Perspectives on overcoming barriers and accelerating nutrition policies  
(30 min panel discussion and 20 min Q&A)  
Chairperson: Dr. Virginia Asin Oostburg, Rotary Suriname

Youth  
Mr. Rondell Trim, Youth Leader

Community  
Mr. Corey Worrell, Community Thought Leader

Faith-Based Community  
Senator Reverend John Rogers, Anglican Church

Parents  
Ms. Raffiena Ali-Boodoosingh, TT PTA Association

Media  
Mr. Amitabh Sharma, The Gleaner Co. (Media) Ltd.

5.20 - 5.30  WRAP UP & CLOSE OF DAY 1  
Mr. Andrew Dhanoo, Diabetes Association of Trinidad and Tobago
# MEETING PROGRAMME DAY 2

## DAY 2 MORNING SESSION: REGIONAL EXPERIENCES

**MODERATOR:** Dr. Damian Greaves, Grenada NNCDC

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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>8.00 - 8.35</td>
<td>Recap Day 1, Introduction to Day 2</td>
<td>Dr. Carlene Radix, HCC, OECS Health Desk, Mr. Andrew Dhanoo, Diabetes Association of Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<td>8.35 - 8.50</td>
<td>HCC Advocacy for Nutrition Policies (15 min presentation)</td>
<td>Mrs. Maisha Hutton, HCC</td>
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<td>8.50 - 9.20</td>
<td>CROSQ current status of regional process, updates and next steps (15 min presentation and 15 min Q&amp;A)</td>
<td>Ms. Cheryl Lewis, CROSQ/BNSI</td>
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<td>9.20 - 10.15</td>
<td>Caribbean experiences advocating for Mandatory Front of Package Nutrition Warning Labels</td>
<td>Chairperson: Dr. Elisa Prieto, PAHO (30 min presentations and 25 min Q&amp;A)</td>
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<td>Antigua and Barbuda</td>
<td>Ms. Juanita James, Diabetes Association of Antigua and Barbuda</td>
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<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Ms. Vonetta Nurse, Heart Foundation of Jamaica</td>
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<td>Uruguay</td>
<td>Mr. Luis Galicia, Ministry of Public Health of Uruguay</td>
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<td>10.15 - 10.30</td>
<td>HEALTH BREAK</td>
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<td>10.30 - 11.40</td>
<td>Caribbean Experiences with Bans or Restrictions on Sweet Beverages in Schools</td>
<td>Chairpersons: Mrs. Krystal Boyea, The Living Collection Inc. and Mr. Pierre Cooke Jnr., HCC (40 min presentations and 35 min Q&amp;A)</td>
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<td>Belize</td>
<td>Mrs. Cecilia Ramirez Smith, Ministry of Education, Belize</td>
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<td>Barbados</td>
<td>Mrs. Francine Charles, Heart &amp; Stroke Foundation of Barbados</td>
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<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Dr. Simone Spence, Ministry of Health, Jamaica</td>
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<td>Trinidad and Tobago</td>
<td>Mrs. Yvonne Lewis, Ministry of Health, Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.40 - 12.00</td>
<td>The Political Economy of NCDs (10 min presentation and 10 min Q&amp;A)</td>
<td>Dr. James Hospedales, Defeat-NCD Partnership</td>
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DAY 2 AFTERNOON SESSION: REGIONAL EXPERIENCES CONTINUED

MODERATOR: Dr. Madhuvanti Murphy, GA-CDRC, UWI

Fiscal Policies

1.00 - 2.15 Caribbean Experiences with Taxes on Sweet Beverages (45 min presentations and 30 min Q&A)

Chairperson: Mr. Vincent Atkins, HCC

Barbados
Professor Winston Moore, University of the West Indies

Bermuda
Mrs. Heather Hollis/Ms. Sara Bosch de Noya, HM Customs Bermuda/Bermuda Diabetes Association

St. Kitts and Nevis
Ms. Nadine Carty-Caines, St. Kitts and Nevis Ministry of Health

Jamaica
Mrs. Barbara McGaw, Heart Foundation of Jamaica

2.15 - 3.15 PANEL OF POLICYMAKERS FROM SECTORS OTHER THAN HEALTH: Perspectives on overcoming barriers and accelerating nutrition policies (60 min panel discussion and Q&A)

Chairperson: Sir Trevor Hassell, HCC

Finance
Dr. Fabian B. Lewis, Ministry of Finance and the Public Service, Jamaica

Education
Mrs. Daisy Higgs, Ministry of Education, Bahamas

Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries
Ms. Camiel Pennycooke, Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries, Jamaica

Trade
Dr. Thomas Samuel, Ministry of Commerce, International Trade, Investment, St. Lucia

3.15 - 3.30 HEALTH BREAK

3.30 - 4.15 THE CALL TO ACTION: Accelerated Nutrition Policy in support of the 2025 GAP and the 2030 Agenda (45 min group work session)

Chairperson: Mrs. Maisha Hutton, HCC

Group Work (3 groups)

Facilitators: Mrs. Barbara McGaw, Ms. Vonetta Nurse, Mrs. Francine Charles

4.15 - 4.45 Presentations of Group Work and Final CTA (30 min group presentations)

Mrs. Maisha Hutton, HCC

Group Presenters

4.45 - 5.00 WRAP-UP AND CLOSE OF MEETING

Dr. Maxine Nunez, HCC
CIVIL SOCIETY ACTION PLAN 2017-2021
PREVENTING CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN THE CARIBBEAN
Enabling Caribbean civil society’s contribution to national and regional action for healthier, happier children.

This meeting supports HCC’s Childhood Obesity Action Plan and priority areas

1. Taxation of unhealthy foods and beverages
2. Mandatory Front-of-Package Nutrition Labelling
3. Enacting legislation related to The International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes
4. Banning the marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages to children
5. Banning the sale and marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages in schools
   - Mandatory physical activity in schools
   - School- and community-based interventions

KEY POLICY ASKS

healthycaribbean.org

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