

CLIMATE CHANGE AND NCDS IN THE CARIBBEAN

Launch of the 2019 Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change Report

CONCEPT NOTE AND PROGRAMME

December 19th, 2019 | Radisson Aquatica Hotel | Barbados



Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

Background

The Lancet Countdown:

The Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change is an international research collaboration, dedicated to tracking the world's response to climate change, and the health benefits that emerge from this transition. Reporting annually in The Lancet, it follows a series of indicators, demonstrating that this transition is possible, that it has already begun, but that more work is needed.

The Healthy Caribbean Coalition

The Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) was informally established in 2008, arising out of the 2007 Declaration of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) on non-communicable diseases (NCDs). The coalition was officially registered as a not-for-profit organisation in 2012. The HCC is the only Caribbean NCD alliance of over 100 health and non-health civil society organisations (CSOs) working closely with regional and international leaders in NCD prevention and control 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.

Climate Change and NCDs in the Caribbean

Climate change and NCDs are the two defining challenges of the 21st century¹ and two of three slow motion disasters shaping the global health landscape according to former Director General of WHO² Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as those found in the Caribbean, are on the frontlines of climate change and suffer disproportionately major impacts, despite having made minor contributions to global emissions of greenhouse gases³. In recognition of the nexus between climate change and NCDs and the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS, the HCC published an infographic on **Climate Change, NCDs and SIDS**⁴ in 2016 highlighting key linkages and recommended actions for civil society advocates (an internal policy

brief was also developed). CARPHA and PAHO have also published reports and action plans aimed at catalyzing regional action to mitigate the impacts of climate change on health and health systems in the Caribbean. In 2018 CARPHA published the **State of Public Health in the Caribbean Report 2017-2018 Climate and Health: Averting and Responding to an Unfolding Health Crisis**⁵. In 2019 Caribbean Ministers of Health and Environment approved⁶ the **Caribbean Action Plan on Health and Climate Change**⁷, an outcome of the Third WHO Global Conference on Health and Climate Change, held in St. George's, Grenada, on 16-17 October 2018.

Climate change is increasingly gaining political traction at the highest level as the Caribbean falls victim to increasingly active hurricane seasons which are devastating entire communities and raising serious questions around climate resiliency across all sectors including health. At the 3rd United Nations High Level Meeting on NCDs in September 2018, Prime Minister Harris of St. Kitts and Nevis cautioned: "Climate change...is a major dislocator of our economies which undermines our ability to live up to the financing obligations that are required if we are to defeat NCDs." More recently, at the 2019, 74th United Nations General Assembly, Prime Minister Mottley of Barbados warned: 'This world in which we live, can no longer ignore the reality of climate change. Climate change is not (just) about hurricanes and floods, it is about droughts, it is about wildfires, it is about sargassum and our ability to provide drinking water and to feed our people....'. We have the captive attention of our region's leaders at the highest levels and a regional plan setting out clear lines of action. Importantly, there are strong linkages between climate change and NCDs and many of the interventions to tackle climate change have clear co-benefits for NCDs and vice versa⁸, for example with respect to improving air quality through transition to renewable energy, facilitating active transport such as walking and cycling, or promoting healthy and sustainable food systems. Conversely, neglecting to respond to climate change will lead to rising numbers of climate-related

¹ NCDs and Climate Change Shared Opportunities for Action. https://ncdalliance.org/sites/default/files/resource_files/NCDs_%26_ClimateChange_EN.pdf

² Address to the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly. Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of the WHO. <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/2016/wha-69/en/>

³ Caribbean Action Plan on Health and Climate Change. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/caribbean-action-plan-health-and-climate-change>

⁴ <https://www.healthycaribbean.org/climate-change-ncds-and-sids/>

⁵ <http://carpha.org/Data-and-Publications/Publications/CARPHA-Publications>

⁶ <https://sdg.iisd.org/news/caribbean-ministers-approve-action-plan-on-climate-resilient-health-systems/>

⁷ http://iris.paho.org/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/38566/PAHOCDE19007_eng.pdf?sequence=19

⁸ <http://www.globalgovernanceproject.org/2018/11/22/climate-change-and-non-communicable-diseases-two-sides-of-the-same-coin/>

disasters, with direct and indirect impacts to health through damage to health centres, disruption of medical supply chains, and increased burden on the health system due to injury and ill health.

The leadership of the HCC recognize NCDs and climate change as the two most pressing challenges

facing Caribbean region and actions taken by both the political leadership and the citizenry will have far reaching implications for generations to come. It is the gravity of this situation that has catalyzed this initiative.

The Launch Event

In August 2019, the HCC was invited to represent the Caribbean as one of the priority countries/regions of the Lancet Countdown over the period 2019-2023 based on the region's extreme vulnerabilities to climate change. As a participating priority region, the HCC will host the first Lancet Countdown Launch Event in the Caribbean to officially launch

the 2019 Report on the margins of the The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) 25th Conference of Parties (COP) negotiations which was held this year in Madrid, Spain from December 2nd - 13th. The HCC Launch Event will be a Press Event taking place in Barbados on **Thursday December 19th** following the COP25.

Launch Event Goal, Objectives & Partners

Goal

To raise the profile and stimulate action on climate change and health in the Caribbean among the political leadership, civil society organisations, the private sector and the general public.

Objectives

- 1** To launch the Lancet Countdown: Tracking Progress on Health and Climate Change 2019 Report.
- 2** To engage high-level policymakers around climate change and health.
- 3** To share HCC advocacy plans to support the climate change and health/NCD agenda in the Caribbean.
- 4** To jointly strategise on how to build on the response to climate change, NCDs and other health priorities in the Caribbean.

Partners

Lancet Countdown
Barbados Ministry of Health and Wellness
Barbados National NCD Commission
Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre (CCCCC)
Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission

Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)
Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)
CIBC First Caribbean COMTRUST
Sagikor Life Inc.

Programme

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MODERATOR: Sir Trevor Hassell

9.00 - 9.10	Welcome and purpose of the event	Dr. Carlene Radix <i>HCC Director</i>
9.10 - 9.30	High Level Remarks	Hon. Lt Col. Jeffrey Bostic <i>Minister of Health and Wellness, Barbados</i>
9.30 - 9.45	Climate Change in the Caribbean	Dr. James Fletcher <i>SOLORICON</i>
9.45 - 10.00	Climate Change and Health in the Caribbean	Dr. Joy St. John <i>Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA)</i>
10.00 - 10.10	Climate Change and Health Research in the Caribbean	Dr. Georgiana Gordon-Strachan <i>Programme Coordinator for the Pilot Programme for Climate Resilience, Caribbean, UWI</i>
10.10 - 10.40	The Lancet Countdown 2019 Report	Dr Nick Watts <i>Executive Director, Lancet Countdown</i>
10.40 - 10.55	Q & A / Discussion	Moderator
10.55 - 11.00	Closing Remarks	Sir Trevor Hassell <i>HCC</i>

11.00 - 12.00 **REFRESHMENTS**

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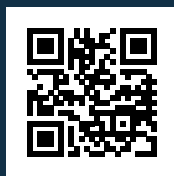
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For more information please contact the HCC at **hcc@healthcaribbean.org**

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