



63rd DIRECTING COUNCIL

*78th SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COMMITTEE OF WHO FOR THE AMERICAS
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Delivered by Senator Dr. Kenneth Connell, HCC President

Statement on Provisional Agenda 8.5

Plan of Action for the Elimination of Industrially Produced Trans-Fatty Acids 2020– 2025: Final Report (Resolution CD57.R12 [2019])

WORDS: 300

Chair, the Healthy Caribbean Coalition and the NCD Alliance welcome the final report on the Plan of Action for the Elimination of Industrially Produced Trans-Fatty Acids 2020–2025 and commend PAHO for its leadership.

We congratulate Latin American Member States that have adopted and implemented best-practice trans-fat regulation, and the civil society organisations that have worked alongside governments to build public support and demand.

Unfortunately, no CARICOM Member State has implemented WHO best-practice iTFA legislation, despite the 2022 CARICOM commitment to eliminate partially hydrogenated oils from the regional food supply by 31 December 2025. The deadline has passed, leaving millions of people across CARICOM without the protections afforded to much of the Americas.

There is encouraging momentum. Several CARICOM countries are advancing regulatory tools and implementation roadmaps, supported by PAHO and partners. But this momentum must now translate rapidly into legislation, implementation, enforcement and monitoring. Trans-fat elimination is a proven, cost-effective public health intervention. The region has agreed what must be done; the priority now is delivery.

We support the report's call for stronger compliance monitoring and market surveillance, accountability and public reporting, and protection of policy processes from industry interference.

With support from Resolve to Save Lives, HCC has contributed through regulatory analysis, public education, civil society capacity building, accountability and regional dialogue, and will continue this support over the coming year.

Governments, with the support of PAHO, CARPHA, the CARICOM Secretariat, the OECS Commission and civil society, must now work together to finish the job. As the Caribbean approaches the 20th anniversary of the 2007 Port of Spain Declaration on NCDs, this milestone underscores the urgency of accelerating progress on long-standing regional commitments. HCC and our civil society partners stand ready to support Member States in translating commitment into effective TFA regulation and meaningful protection for Caribbean people.

Thank you.

Statement on Provisional Agenda 8.8 E

Strategy and Plan of Action on Health Promotion within the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals 2019–2030: Midterm Review (Resolution CD57.R10 [2019])

WORDS: 298

Chair, the Healthy Caribbean Coalition and the NCDA, welcome the midterm review of PAHO's 2019–2030 Strategy and Plan of Action on Health Promotion and commend PAHO for its leadership.

Across CARICOM, we welcome efforts to institutionalise health promotion, including developing a national health promotion strategy in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Barbados' renewing its national well-being policy; and the 2023 PAHO meeting, "*Strengthening Health Promotion: Three Decades after the Caribbean Charter*," involving 15 Caribbean countries and territories.

From civil society, we welcome recognition that social participation and community leadership must be structural components of governance - particularly critical as we examine global health architecture reform. HCC is investing in tools for meaningful engagement of civil society organisations, people living with NCDs and young people in NCD policy development, monitoring and accountability - moving participation from principle to practice.

We also urge stronger attention to the commercial determinants of health, recognised by PAHO as the commercial dimension of the social determinants of health. A health promotion agenda that fails to address these determinants overlooks the role of commercial actors in shaping unhealthy environments and places an unfair burden on individuals to make healthy choices in unhealthy environments. Effective health promotion must include safeguards to manage conflicts of interest and protect health policymaking from undue influence. PAHO has a critical role in helping Member States strengthen these protections. In collaboration with PAHO, HCC has invested extensively in capacity building and practical tools in this area and stands ready to support Member States.

As CARICOM approaches the 20th anniversary of the 2007 Port of Spain Declaration on NCDs, this milestone provides an important opportunity to prioritise investment in people-

centred health promotion through meaningful participation of civil society, people living with NCDs and young people, alongside investment in stronger safeguards against harmful commercial influence.

Thank you.