



# Measuring and Engaging the Business Sector Response to NCDs

## THE CARIBBEAN NCD PRIVATE SECTOR FORUM

June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 | Courtyard Marriott Hotel, Barbados

### CONCEPT NOTE



## **Background**

In 2007 Heads of Government of CARICOM met in Port of Spain to discuss non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and determined that these diseases were a major health, economic, and development issue; requiring all sectors of society including the private sector (business community) to come together to play their part separately and collectively to address the issue. In 2008 the Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC) was established arising out of the Heads of Government meeting as a regional NCD Alliance and network of health and non-health NGOs, private sector and others both regionally and internationally to *"harness the power of civil society, in collaboration with government, private enterprise, academia, and international partners, in the development and implementation of plans for the prevention and management of chronic diseases among Caribbean people"*.

This NCD Private Sector Forum for business executives is being led by the HCC with support from the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Forum is aimed at the private sector becoming more active, and contributing more effectively, to the multi-sectoral response to NCDs. It is a further contribution of the HCC to the advancement of multi-sectoral approaches in control and prevention of NCDs, and follows on a series of activities including: the NCD Alliance/ Medtronic funded NCD Regional Status report developed in 2014; a detailed report on National NCD Commissions (NNCDCs) to be launched early in 2015; and the COMSEC funded Implementation Framework for NNCDs. Official workshop partners include The Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) and the NCD Alliance. Further support for this meeting has been provided by the Courtyard by Marriott Bridgetown, Barbados. The work of the HCC would not be possible without the kind support of Sagacor Life Inc.

## **The Private Sector and NCDs**

NCDs - heart disease and stroke, diabetes, some cancers and chronic lung conditions – are responsible for 7 out of every 10 deaths and account for more than 60% of the expenditure of health budgets in most Caribbean countries. Collectively, these diseases have a significant impact on workplace productivity, absenteeism and the wider economy. There is a strong rationale and incentive for businesses to implement workplace wellness programmes targeting primary prevention of risk factors and early management of NCDs. Companies that are taking a more comprehensive and planned approach to workplace health and wellness have seen increases in productivity and reductions in health care costs for workers. Additionally, the private sector has an important role to play in prevention and control of NCDs by engagement with the wider community beyond the workplace in a partnership with government and civil society in which the private sector brings to bear its strengths of product power, philanthropy and shared values, and contributes to efforts aimed at provision of a healthier environment resulting in healthier people.

There is significant global focus on the role of private sector in NCD response and creating enabling environments and incentive structures supportive of public-private partnerships leading to accelerated action both within the workplace through workplace wellness initiatives; and within communities leveraging the tremendous influence of the business sector whether through reformulation of products; innovative research and development of medicines and technologies; strengthening the private sector role in healthy supply

chains to address access issues; and to generally to draw on the significant resource capacity of this sector of society.

## **Forum Objectives & Expected Outcomes**

The primary **objective** of the Forum is to provide an opportunity for senior business executives of the Caribbean to discuss how the private sector may implement and strengthen workplace wellness programmes and more effectively interact with government and civil society, in the response to NCDs. The Forum supports at the regional level the WHO GCM/NCD Working Group on how to realize governments' commitments to engage with the private sector for the prevention and control of NCDs.

The **expected outcomes** are:

- Survey of wellness programmes in private sector and of the role that the sector has played thus far in the wider community in NCD prevention and control.
- Share and exchange knowledge and experience about role of the private sector in the multi-sectoral response to NCDs.
- Statement of intent of the private sector's response to the prevention and treatment of NCDs.

## **Participants & Beneficiaries**

Participants at the Forum will be leading and senior decision-makers from across the region representing key sectors in the private sector including financial services, manufacturing, tourism, insurance, media and communications.