

# HCC OPEN CONGRATULATORY LETTER

## IN RESPONSE TO THE OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUE

FOLLOWING THE 39TH REGULAR MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF HEADS OF GOVERNMENT JULY 4-6, 2018, JAMAICA

July 9, 2018

The Healthy Caribbean Coalition notes with tremendous pleasure the significant leadership in NCD prevention and control demonstrated by CARICOM Heads of Government and State at the recently concluded 39<sup>th</sup> Caribbean Community Summit.

CARICOM leaders at the Summit agreed that Member States should be represented at the highest level at the United Nations (UN) High-Level Meeting (HLM3) on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) to be held on Thursday, 27 September 2018 at UN Headquarters, New York, USA. Additionally CARICOM Leaders endorsed six priorities on which the Region should advocate for during the negotiation of the Outcome Document. These are: 1. establishing and maintaining a smoke-free status for the Region; 2. implementing policies geared to preventing childhood obesity, including for health-promoting school environments and Front of Package (FOP) labelling; 3. promoting the elimination of cancer of the cervix; 4. support for mitigation of post-disaster vulnerabilities related to NCDs in particular: nutrition, treatment and care; 5. increasing international financing and technical support; and 6. strengthening accountability through national coordinating mechanisms. These priorities are aligned with HCC's nine regional advocacy priorities for inclusion in the HLM3 Political Declaration.

Given the significant intersection between climate change and NCDs, we also take this opportunity to recognise the *Declaration on Climate Change* emerging out of the Summit which calls on the regional and global community to take concrete steps towards mitigating the devastating impacts of climate change.

The need for countries of the Caribbean Community to include the prevention and control of NCDs in their respective national development plans is increasingly recognised to be of critical importance in order to maintain economic and development gains in the region post-Independence especially at this time of tremendous economic challenge. Additionally such action is needed if the Region is to meet global NCD targets and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals which present indicators suggest that many of the countries are unlikely to meet in the absence of strong political leadership galvanising action by health and non-health ministries and civil society and the private sector.

The economic case for adopting the *WHO Best Buys and cost effective recommendations* and the financing options to support their implementation is becoming increasingly apparent with an appreciation that expenditure in NCDs is a smart and sustainable investment to reduce the adverse cost and health impact of the NCDs. In a recent WHO report it was noted that a 15 per cent reduction in premature mortality could be achieved by 2030 at a very low cost of just an additional \$1.27 per person per year in LLMICs.



CARICOM Heads of Government and State have expressed strong and far-reaching commitments to initiatives aimed at NCD prevention and control. All are now encouraged to embrace all sectors of the Caribbean to implement in a scaled-up approach with emphasis on effective universal health coverage undertaken in a setting of strategic financing and mindful of the specific priorities as detailed at the 39<sup>th</sup> Summit NCD prevention and control.

The HCC once more congratulates CARICOM Heads of Government and State in leadership in NCD prevention and control. We have had ENOUGH of NCDs. We will support you at the 3<sup>rd</sup> United Nations High-Level Meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases to be held on Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2018 at UN Headquarters, New York, USA. We will continue to contribute to the regional civil society response to NCDs in the Caribbean.

*Sir Trevor Hassell, HCC President and the Board of Directors and members of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition*

*July 9, 2018*