



Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

Republic of Trinidad & Tobago, 27-29 November 2009

Statement on Commonwealth Action to Combat Non-Communicable Diseases

1. We, the Heads of Government of the Commonwealth, representing one third of the world's population, affirm our commitment to addressing the burgeoning incidence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and to increasing the ability of our countries to respond to this emerging health crisis.
2. We recognise that NCDs presently account for over half of all deaths worldwide and that they significantly reduce life expectancy, quality of life and productivity. They place growing pressures on our health systems and our economies, thereby posing a serious threat to sustainable development.
3. We further note that poverty and NCDs are linked and that it is the poorest people who are most vulnerable to the impacts of these diseases. In many instances the costs associated with treating NCDs and related complications can push entire households into poverty, severely limiting family members' prospects for the future, especially those of women and girls, on whose shoulders traditionally rests the burden of caring for the sick.
4. Noting the Action Plan on Non-Communicable Diseases adopted by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) during their 2007 Summit on Non-Communicable Diseases, we will work towards reducing the incidence of NCDs by fostering multi-sectoral policies and community-based initiatives to discourage tobacco use and unhealthy diets and to promote physical activity.
5. We will also work to fully integrate NCD prevention and control into our national health systems. In this regard, we will strengthen primary care to address the needs of people who are already facing NCDs, and support the universal access of essential medicines for people living with NCDs.
6. We firmly believe that the incidence and burdens of NCDs can be reduced through comprehensive and integrated preventive and control strategies at the individual, family, community, national and regional levels and through collaborative programmes, partnerships and policies supported

by governments, the private sector, NGOs and our other social, regional and international partners. We therefore call for global engagement of the private sector, civil society and governments in efforts to combat these diseases.

7. Aware that surveillance is key to effectively combating NCDs, we commit to supporting initiatives to include the monitoring of NCDs and their risk factors in existing national health information systems.

8. Noting that international cooperation is critical in addressing the phenomenon of NCDs, we call for their inclusion in global discussions on development, such as those which will occur within the framework of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) 2010 Coordination Segment. We similarly declare our support for the call to integrate indicators to monitor the magnitude, trend and socio-economic impact of NCDs into the core Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) monitoring and evaluation system during the MDG Review Summit in 2010.

9. We further call for a Summit on NCDs to be held in September 2011, under the auspices of the United Nations General Assembly, in order to develop strategic responses to these diseases and their repercussions.

Port of Spain
Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

29 November 2009