

“Advancing Implementation of the WHO FCTC in the Caribbean Community”

Side Meeting to the PreCOP8 for the Region of the Americas.

31 August 2018.

Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO)
525 23rd St N.W., Washington, DC, USA
Room C

CONCEPT NOTE

1. Background

Status of tobacco control efforts in the Caribbean Community:

Tobacco control efforts in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) are progressing at a very slow pace. Of the fourteen countries that are Member States of the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO)¹, only Haiti is not Party to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). This high level of FCTC ratification notwithstanding, implementation of MPOWER policies at the highest level of achievement has been slow across the subregion. As of December 2017²:

- Five countries (Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago) had 100% smoke-free environments;
- Five countries (Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago) had health warnings on the packaging of tobacco products at the highest level of achievement³;
- Two countries (Guyana and Suriname) had a complete ban on the advertising, promotion, and sponsorship;
- One country (Jamaica) offered national comprehensive services on cessation of tobacco use;
- One country (Barbados) had recent and representative data for both adults and youth;
- Although some countries had raised excise taxes on tobacco, no country had achieved the WHO recommended level.

From a regional perspective, the CARICOM is also showing the least progress: of the six countries that have fully implemented three of the four WHO “best buys” for tobacco control in Latin America and the Caribbean only one (Guyana) is a CARICOM country. Additionally, eight of the twelve countries that have not yet implemented any of these measures at the highest level are from CARICOM.

¹ CARICOM countries that are PAHO/WHO Member States include: Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

² Pan American Health Organization. Report on Tobacco Control in the Region of the Americas, 2018. Washington, D.C.: PAHO, 2018. [In press].

³ As of December 2017, no effective date for implementation had been specified in the corresponding regulations for Barbados, Saint Lucia, and Trinidad and Tobago; Suriname will be initiating a second round of fully compliant health warnings effective December 7th, 2018.

This lack of progress is particularly worrisome since, compared to other subregions of the Americas, people in the Caribbean have the highest probability of dying prematurely from noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). According to the latest available data from the Global Youth Tobacco Survey⁴, the Caribbean has the second highest prevalence in the Americas of current tobacco use among adolescents for both sexes (21.3%) far above the regional estimate (13.5%). This burden has enormous economic and developmental implications, particularly in the context of Small Island Developing States. Thus, urgent action is needed in the Caribbean to accelerate effective implementation of the WHO FCTC.

Recent mandates and opportunities to accelerate progress:

Despite slow progress, recent subregional and national developments signal a more conducive policy environment for effective implementation. In July 2016, CARICOM Heads pledged to address banning of smoking in public spaces⁵. In September 2016, the fourth iteration of Caribbean Cooperation in Health (CCH-IV), CARICOM's Health Strategy for 2016-2025, was adopted by the Council of Health and Social Development (COHSOD), including Regional Public Goods (RPGs) to support implementation of the WHO FCTC. In September 2017, Caribbean Ministers of Health endorsed the *PAHO Strategy and Plan of Action to Strengthen Tobacco Control in the Region of the Americas 2018-2022*⁶, including 100% smoke-free environments and health warnings on the packaging of tobacco products that meet the criteria of the WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic throughout the Americas by 2022. Tobacco control was also featured as one of the focus areas during a “*High-Level meeting on the use of Law to tackle NCDs*”⁷ co-hosted by PAHO, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Caribbean Court of Justice and Court Administration (CALCA), on 10 March 2018 in Port of Spain, Trinidad. This *High-Level meeting* convened judges of the Caribbean Court of Justice, relevant CARICOM bodies and institutions, key policy makers, including the chairs of the COHSOD and the Council of Trade and Economic Development (COTED), subregional partners, and international organizations, and resulted in a set of agreed priority actions and a meeting statement. More recently, in July 2018, CARICOM Heads of Government at Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads endorsed “*establishing and maintaining a smoke-free status for the Region*” as one of six priorities on which the Region should advocate for during the negotiation of the Outcome Document of the Third United Nations (UN) High-Level Meeting (HLM3) on NCDs, to be held on 27 September 2018⁸.

⁴ PAHO/WHO, Communicable Diseases and Health Analysis/Health Information and Analysis. Health Situation in the Americas: Core Indicators 2017. Washington, D.C., United States of America, 2017. Available from: <https://bit.ly/2tvFE6q>

⁵ Communiqué issued at the conclusion of The Thirty-Seventh Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, 4-6 July 2016, Georgetown, Guyana. Available from: <http://bit.ly/2wSEKwj>

⁶ PAHO Strategy and Plan of Action to Strengthen Tobacco Control in the Region of the Americas 2018-2022. Available from: <https://bit.ly/2NQs56>

⁷ High-Level Meeting on the Use of Law to tackle Noncommunicable Diseases: A critical step to accelerate progress in the Caribbean. Meeting Report (Port of Spain, 10 March 2018). Available from: <https://bit.ly/2Jy75aD>

⁸ Communiqué issued at the conclusion of the Thirty-Ninth Regular Meeting of the Conference of heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, 4-6 July, Montego Bay, Jamaica. Available from: <https://bit.ly/2ulw5TI>

In addition to these mandates and frameworks, three Caribbean countries have implemented at least one MPOWER policy at the highest level of achievement during 2017, including Barbados (health warnings), Guyana (100% smoke-free environments, health warnings, and complete ban on advertising, promotion, and sponsorship), and Saint Lucia (health warnings). Furthermore, a number of CARICOM countries are currently developing/implementing smoke-free legislation, creating a momentum that can influence others to advance in a similar direction.

In this context, the meeting “*Advancing implementation of the WHO FCTC in the Caribbean Community*” proposed by PAHO as a side meeting to the PreCOP8 for the Region of the Americas, aims to discuss the status of tobacco control efforts, and identify a set of concrete actions and required technical assistance to accelerate progress both at national and subregional levels, with a focus on advancing towards a 100% smoke-free Caribbean by 2022. The meeting will build upon recent trainings and capacity building activities led by PAHO in 2017, including a *Caribbean Seminar on Tobacco and Trade* (Barbados, May 2017); a *Subregional Workshop on Law and NCDs for Caribbean countries* (Jamaica, October 2017); and a *Workshop on labeling and packaging of tobacco products for the Caribbean countries* (Panama, November 2017). Additionally, the meeting will offer an opportunity to discuss strategies to ensure an active participation of CARICOM countries during the upcoming COP8 meeting, to be held in Geneva in October 2018, including a greater involvement of Caribbean Permanent Missions in Geneva.

2. Objectives

The specific objectives of the meeting are to:

- To share lessons learned and different approaches from Caribbean countries with WHO FCTC compliant legislation;
- To discuss challenges, opportunities, ongoing legislative processes and technical assistance required to advance the enactment and enforcement of effective legislation towards a 100% smoke-free Caribbean by 2022; and
- To identify strategies to enhance active participation of CARICOM countries during the upcoming COP8 meeting, to be held in Geneva in October 2018 and beyond.

3. Expected Outcomes

- An updated and comprehensive overview of the status of WHO FCTC implementation as well as ongoing domestic legislative processes, including required technical assistance, evidence needs and existing opportunities to accelerate progress;
- A prioritized set of actions, both at domestic and community level, to advance the enactment and enforcement of WHO FCTC compliant tobacco control legislation towards a 100% smoke-free Caribbean by 2022; and
- A proposed set of actions to engage Caribbean Permanent Missions in Geneva for a strong and active participation of CARICOM countries during the COP8 meeting, to be held in Geneva in 2018, and beyond.

4. Participants

This Caribbean meeting will take place in Washington D.C. on 31 August 2018, as a side meeting to the PreCOP8. Proposed participants will include:

- The WHO FCTC/tobacco control focal points in Ministries of Health and representatives of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs from the 14 CARICOM countries that are PAHO/WHO Member States;
- Representatives from the CARICOM Secretariat and relevant CARICOM institutions;
- The tobacco focal points from the United Kingdom Overseas Territories (UKOTS);
- Representatives from Public Health England (PHE);
- Representatives from relevant international organizations working on tobacco control;
- Civil society; and
- PAHO/WHO advisors, including NCD Advisors from country offices in the Caribbean and the Risk Factor Unit of the Noncommunicable Diseases and Mental Health (NMH/RF) Department, the Legal Counsel (LEG) Office, and the Country and Subregional Coordination (CSC) Office.

5. Preparatory Work:

In preparation for this Caribbean Meeting, participants will be asked to review their ongoing tobacco control legislative processes, and to identify technical assistance, evidence needs and opportunities to advance enactment and/or enforcement of WHO FCTC compliant legislation in their countries. Brief guiding questions will be provided in advance to facilitate this preparatory work.

6. Resources:

General:

- World Health Organization. (2003). WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Available from: http://www.who.int/fctc/text_download/en/
- World Health Organization. (2015). The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: an overview. Available from: http://www.who.int/fctc/about/WHO_FCTC_summary_January2015.pdf
- World Health Organization. (2018). The Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products: an overview. Available from: http://www.who.int/fctc/Protocol_summary_3Jul18-en.pdf
- Pan American Health Organization. Manual for Developing Tobacco Control Legislation in the Region of the Americas. Washington, D.C.: PAHO, 2013. Available from: <https://bit.ly/2L8JZU0>
- Pan American Health Organization. Strategy and Plan of Action to Strengthen Tobacco Control in the Region of the Americas 2018-2022. Available from: <https://bit.ly/2N0Qs56>
- World Health Organization. WHO report on the global tobacco epidemic, 2017: monitoring tobacco use and prevention policies. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2017. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO. Available from: <https://bit.ly/2Lacq3N>
- Pan American Health Organization. Report on Tobacco Control for the Region of the Americas. WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control: 10 Years Later. Washington, D.C.: PAHO, 2016. Available from: <https://bit.ly/2N2koxR>
- Pan American Health Organization. Report on Tobacco Control in the Region of the Americas, 2018. Available from: <http://iris.paho.org/xmlui/handle/123456789/49237> (link will become active on 28 August 2018)
- World Health Organization. (2017). WHO Statement on Philip Morris funded Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. Available from: <http://www.who.int/news-room/detail/28-09-2017-who-statement-on-philip-morris-funded-foundation-for-a-smoke-free-world>

Guidelines for Implementation of the WHO FCTC:

- World Health Organization. (2008). Guidelines for implementation of Article 5.3: Protection of public health policies with respect to tobacco control from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry. Available from: http://www.who.int/fctc/treaty_instruments/adopted/article_5_3/en/

- World Health Organization. (2008). Guidelines for implementation of Article 6: Price and tax measures to reduce the demand for tobacco. Available from:
http://www.who.int/fctc/treaty_instruments/Guidelines_article_6.pdf?ua=1
- World Health Organization. (2007). Guidelines for implementation of Article 8: Protection from exposure to tobacco smoke. Available from: http://www.who.int/fctc/treaty_instruments/adopted/article_8/en/
- World Health Organization. (2010). Partial guidelines for implementation of Articles 9 and 10: Regulation of the contents of tobacco products and regulation of tobacco product disclosures. Available from:
http://www.who.int/fctc/treaty_instruments/article_9and10/en/
- World Health Organization. (2008). Guidelines for implementation of Article 11: Packaging and labelling of tobacco products. Available from: http://www.who.int/fctc/treaty_instruments/article_11/en/
- World Health Organization. (2010). Guidelines for implementation of Article 12: Education, communication, training and public awareness. Available from:
http://www.who.int/fctc/treaty_instruments/adopted/article_12/en/
- World Health Organization. (2008). Guidelines for implementation of Article 13: Tobacco advertising, promotion and sponsorship. Available from:
http://www.who.int/fctc/treaty_instruments/adopted/article_13/en/
- World Health Organization. (2010). Guidelines for implementation of Article 14: Demand reduction measures concerning tobacco dependence and cessation. Available from:
http://www.who.int/fctc/treaty_instruments/adopted/article_14/en/