
***DECLARATION OF ST. ANN
Implementing Agriculture and Food Policies to prevent
Obesity and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in the
Caribbean Community.***

Grand Bahia Principe Hotel, Runaway Bay, St. Ann, Jamaica, 9th October 2007

We, the Ministers of Agriculture of CARICOM, meeting at the Gran Bahia Principe Hotel, Runaway Bay, St. Ann, Jamaica on 9 October 2007 on the occasion of a special Symposium on Food and Agriculture Policies and Obesity: Prevention of NCDs in the Caribbean;

Recalling the 1996 declaration in The Bahamas of the region's Ministers of Agriculture that "Food and nutritional security in the Caribbean is also related to chronic nutritional life style diseases [NCDs] such as obesity, stroke and heart attack", and the 2007 Heads of Government Declaration of Port of Spain in which a commitment was made, "to provide critical leadership required for implementing...agreed strategies for the reduction of the burden of Chronic, Non-Communicable Diseases as a central priority of the Caribbean Cooperation in Health Initiative ...";

Affirming the main recommendations of the Caribbean Commission on Health and Development which included strategies to prevent and control heart disease, stroke, diabetes, hypertension, obesity and cancer in the Region by addressing their causal risk factors of unhealthy diets, physical inactivity, tobacco use and alcohol abuse and strengthening our health and agricultural policies;

Impelled by a determination to reduce the suffering and burdens caused by NCDs through the promotion and implementation of effective food and agricultural policies as part of our overall development plans;

Fully convinced that the burdens of NCDs can be reduced by 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, private sectors, NGOs and our other social, regional and international partners;

Declare –

- Our full support for the initiatives and mechanisms aimed at strengthening regional health and agricultural institutions, to provide critical leadership required for

implementing our agreed strategies for the reduction of the burden of Chronic, Non-Communicable Diseases as a central priority of the Caribbean Cooperation in Health Initiative Phase III (CCH III), being coordinated by the CARICOM Secretariat, with able support from the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and other relevant partners;

- Our determination to exhaust all options within Regional and WTO agreements to ensure the availability and affordability of healthy foods;
- Our support for the efforts of the Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery (CRNM) to pursue fair trade policies in all international trade negotiations thereby promoting greater use of indigenous agricultural products and foods by our populations and reducing the negative effects of globalization on our food supply;
- Our commitment to develop food and agriculture policies that explicitly incorporate nutritional goals including the use of dietary guidelines in designing food production strategies;
- That we will explore the development of appropriate incentives and disincentives that encourage the production and consumption of regionally produced foods, particularly fruits and vegetables;
- That we will establish, as a matter of urgency, the programmes necessary for research and surveillance on the aspects of agricultural policy and programmes that impact on the availability and accessibility of foods that affect obesity and NCDs;
- Our support for the establishment of formal planning linkages between the agriculture sector and other sectors (especially, health, tourism, trade and planning) in order to ensure a more integrated and coordinated approach to policy and programme development aimed at reducing obesity;
- Our strong support for the elimination of trans-fats from our food supply using CFNI as a focal point for providing guidance and public education designed toward this end;
- Our support for mandating the labeling of foods or such measures necessary to indicate their nutritional content;
- That we will advocate for incentives for comprehensive public education programmes in support of wellness and increased consumption of fruits and vegetables and embrace the role of the media as a partner in all our efforts to prevent and control NCDs;
- Our continuing support for CARICOM, CFNI/PAHO, FAO, IICA and CARDI as the entities responsible for leading the development of the regional Food Security Plan for the prevention and control of NCDs, and the monitoring and evaluation of this Declaration.