



Statement by the Healthy Caribbean Coalition Inc.

28th Pan American Sanitary Conference of the PAHO, 64th Session of the Regional Committee for the Americas of the WHO, 17 – 21 September, 2012.

Madam President, Director of the Sanitary Bureau-PAHO, Director General of WHO, Members of the Head Table, distinguished members.

It gives me great pleasure to make these remarks and bring greetings on behalf of Professor Trevor Hassell, President of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition who is unable to be present.

The Healthy Caribbean Coalition is a Civil Society movement established in 2008 which strives to combat the increase of Chronic NCDs in the Caribbean. This initiative followed the call of the 2007 summit of CARICOM Heads of States to stem the tide of Chronic Non Communicable Diseases in our Region.

Professor Hassell is, at this point in time, chairing the First meeting of the Board of Directors of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition and also attending a Signing Ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Healthy Caribbean Coalition and Sagikor Life Insurance in the Caribbean in which that organization is underwriting the cost of establishing and managing an HCC Secretariat over the next 3 years in an initiative that represents an excellent example of collaboration between different sectors in the response to NCDs.

We in the Healthy Caribbean Coalition are delighted to be present at this meeting, particularly since the Healthy Caribbean Coalition was accepted into Official Relations with PAHO at the 150th Session of PAHO/WHO, held 18 – 22 June, 2012, when a commitment was made between the two organizations to implement an agreed work plan for the next 2 years. This plan will among others give practical expression to the four main strategic objectives of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition as outlined in its Caribbean Civil Society Strategic Plan, 2012 – 2016. These strategic objectives are; **building capacity** in and among health NGOs in the Region to make them more fit to contribute to the “whole of society response to NCDs”; **advocacy**; **enhanced communication** about NCDs to make the people more aware of the problem and what can be done to slow the epidemic and finally the promotion of **mhealth and ehealth** in NCD prevention and better management. An important example is our Get the message campaign prior to the UNHLM in New York in 2011.

Madam President recognising the responsibility of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition to use all opportunities to contribute to the response to NCDs and on this occasion mindful of our awesome advocacy role, the Healthy Caribbean Coalition while aware of the very positive development in which virtually all Caribbean Governments have ratified the WHO Treaty - Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), wishes to place on record our profound concern that many Caribbean governments

continue to not observe either the spirit or the letter of several of the critically important articles of the treaty.

It is our hope that WHO and PAHO will use your good offices to assist these governments in adhering to the several articles of the treaty in the best interest of the health of the people of the Caribbean.

Lastly, in closing I wish to express my personal appreciation to the Hon Minister Mr V.H. Cornelius de Weever, Minister of Public Health, Social Development and labour, Government of Sint Maarten who has made it possible for me to attend this meeting as an Invited Observer on behalf of the HCC while at the same time being an official member of the Sint Maarten delegation.

I thank you.