

BACKGROUND

COTED and COHSOD agree that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and childhood obesity are priority issues which need to be addressed to improve economic resilience and sustainable development prospects of the Caribbean people. A comprehensive approach is needed, which should include a set of feasible, cost-effective policies to tackle obesogenic environments combined with sustained consumer education. The implementation of such measures will support the attainment of SDGs #2 and #3, the Samoa Pathway for SIDS, and the Caribbean Cooperation in Health Phase IV (CCH-IV).

In November 2015, COTED considered a paper on the “*Childhood Obesity: Economic Sector Related Aspects of its Prevention.*” It was agreed that review and further consultation on adopting the CARPHA 6-point policy package for healthier food environments in a stepwise manner was required. The evidence-informed 6-Point Policy package includes measures to address: Food Labelling; Food Marketing; Nutrition Standards and Guidelines for schools and other institutions; Trade and Fiscal Policies; Food Chain Incentives; and Nutritional Quality of Food Supply. This was subsequently supported by the CARICOM Heads of Institutions at a meeting held in March 2016; the 37th Conference of CARICOM Heads Meeting in July 2016; and the 43rd Meeting of the COTED in November 2016. At this final meeting, there was reaffirmation of the decisions emanating from CARICOM Heads for national multi-sectoral action and interagency collaboration to advance the agenda on reduction of childhood obesity.

Further to the mandate of the CARICOM Heads of Government Meeting for the formation of a joint COTED/COHSOD task force with support of a consortium of institutions with responsibility for economic and social sectors to combat the childhood obesity epidemic, a Meeting of High-Level Officials from CARICOM institutions and other agencies was held in Barbados, from 8-10 February 2017, under the auspices of HSD and TEI. The main objective of this meeting was to facilitate collaborative working arrangements between regional economic and social sector institutions to support accelerated implementation at member state level of the CARPHA 6-point policy package. This resulted in a high-level programme of joint-work, between the various institutions, towards implementation of a ‘Roadmap on Multi-Sectoral Action in Countries to Prevent Childhood Obesity through Improved Food and Nutrition Security’.

Key Action Area

The Roadmap is based on the recommendations contained in the CARPHA 6-point policy package presented to the COTED. Key action areas for immediate collaboration and implementation are shown in the Table below.

<i>Action Area</i>	<i>Lead Agency</i>
Undertaking revision of labelling standards (Jamaica and Suriname lead) and undertaking awareness, communication and advocacy to promote mandatory food labelling;	CROSQ
Providing technical support to countries to adapt and adopt regional nutrition guidelines for schools	CARPHA
Developing regional guidelines to reduce the marketing of unhealthy food and beverages to children through all channels	PAHO
Reducing levels of harmful ingredients: Ddeveloping a model regulatory legislative framework for the removal of trans fat from	FAO

the food supply; and engaging industry in dialogue to reduce salt, fat, sugar and overall calorie levels	
Promoting levy taxes on food and drink products that are high in sugar, salt or fat. Advising trading partners of labelling law requirements for manufactured products	OTN/CARICOM
Preferentially target agricultural supports and incentives towards nutrient -rich commodities, especially fruits and vegetables.	CARDI

Implementation of the Roadmap is expected to promote strengthened relationships and communication between regional institutions to improve inter-agency synergies and for mutual benefit. The Agencies with lead responsibility will coordinate the implementation of planned activities, with support from identified agencies, as detailed in the Roadmap.