

HCC calls for legislation to ban marketing of fast foods and junk foods in schools

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On this Caribbean Wellness Day 2016, the Healthy Caribbean Coalition calls on Caribbean regional governments to urgently enact policies and legislation that provide healthy environments for healthy children.

"There is increased evidence of the adverse and unhealthy impact of the offerings of fast food restaurants on children and young adults", said HCC President Sir Trevor Hassell.

The impact of unhealthy food environments driven by various factors including globalisation and the export of western fast food giants is evident throughout most of the world and increasingly in low and middle income countries, including the Caribbean, leading to overweight and obesity rates among children as high as 30%.

Children who are overweight or obese may develop serious medical problems in childhood including Type 2 Diabetes and high blood pressure. Obese children are more likely to become obese adults and adult obesity is associated with increased risk of NCDs including heart disease, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, and cancer.

The Caribbean has experienced a major shift in dietary patterns fuelled largely by increased consumption of imported ultra processed foods and an expanding home grown and international fast food industry (thanks to the liberalisation of trade and investments allowing international companies to open fast-food franchises in emerging markets worldwide including the Caribbean).

This development necessitates an assessment of the financial and health impact of fast food restaurants on the health and development of children and adults in the Caribbean.

For more information on the Caribbean Wellness Day 2016, including NCD Response Action Guides, click on the links below.

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