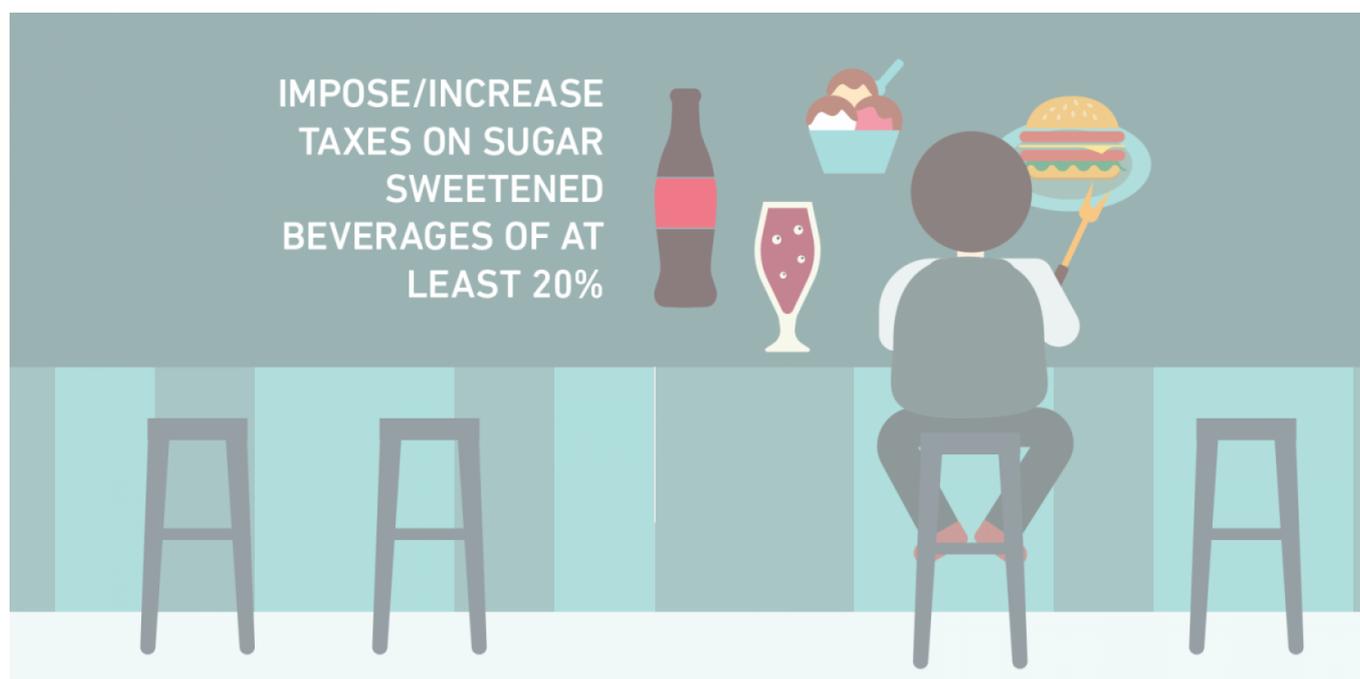


How trade policy affects health in the Caribbean



Non-health ministries must become aware of how their actions affect health, particularly NCDs, urges a new policy brief by Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC).

“When non-health ministries such as trade ministries operate in isolation, in the absence of broad consultation and with little consideration for far-reaching health impacts, the resulting policies have the potential to significantly and negatively influence the health of nations,” says the brief, [NCDs and trade policy in the Caribbean](#) [1].

The document notes that one-half of Caribbean community (CARICOM) countries import more than 80% of what they consume. This is fuelling dramatic changes in diet towards greater consumption of processed foods (leading the top five food imports in the region) “contributing to an ‘epidemic’ of obesity and diet-related NCDs”, says the brief.

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According to the document, the Caribbean region has the highest NCD-related mortality in all of the Americas. NCDs account for 62%-80% of all premature deaths (30-70 years) across CARICOM (with the exception of Haiti). NCD risk factors such as alcohol consumption, physical inactivity, unhealthy diets and obesity are on the rise, it adds.

The brief argues that the first step in creating a whole-of-government approach to fighting NCDs is to build awareness about the links between NCD risk and sectors outside of health such as trade, agriculture, finance, environment, and transportation. With that knowledge, one can make a compelling case for action on NCDs as an investment, not a cost.

Aimed at an audience of civil society, national NCD commissions and policy-makers in non-health government ministries, the brief makes a number of recommendations, some cross-cutting such as:

- Advocate for ministry of trade representation (at the highest levels) on national NCD coordinating mechanisms such as national NCD commissions or their equivalents
- Advocate for the establishment of inter-ministerial committees that facilitate greater dialogue and learning between ministries of trade and ministries of health, as well as other related ministries such as agriculture.

The brief also recommends policy changes for each risk factor, for example healthy foods:

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- Use the flexibilities under Article 6.2 and the de minimis provisions of the Agreement on Agriculture to benefit domestic production of healthy foods or to generate income which provide access to these foods
- Impose higher tariffs on unhealthy foods
- Prohibit importation of unhealthy foods.

Read the policy brief via the link below.

Post Date: Wednesday, 8 November, 2017

Search Keywords: commercial determinants of health

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[Sectoral Brief: Trade and Industry](#) [2]

[Improving the Healthiness of Food Environments in the Caribbean](#) [3]

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