



An NCD Civil Society Response in Support of the 2023 Bridgetown Declaration

The Moment for Caring in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) is Now

This submission provides key messages and follow-up recommendations by the [Healthy Caribbean Coalition](#) and the [NCD Alliance](#). It represents civil society's ongoing contribution to the development of the 2023 Bridgetown Declaration and accompanying Annexes for adoption at the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Ministerial Conference on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs) and Mental Health (14-16 June 2023). It is hoped that this Conference will be a turning point for SIDS, supported by the global community, to accelerate action on the largely preventable burden of NCDs, including mental, neurological and substance use disorders (MNSDs), that disproportionately impacts SIDS. People living in SIDS are at higher risk of dying prematurely from a major NCD, and SIDS show the highest rates of childhood and adult obesity worldwide.



Key Messages

We applaud the Bridgetown Declaration and accompanying Annexes, which contain critical framing and SIDS-tailored Calls to Action.



In particular, we commend these for:

- Adopting a SIDS-specific approach to deliver on the [Global NCD Compact 2020-2030 action commitments](#);
- Addressing the commercial determinants of health (including dependence on imported food, with commercial influence and trade-related challenges) and climate change as the main drivers of the burden of NCDs, including MNSDs, in SIDS;
- Providing solutions to build health-enabling environments and food systems, and climate- and other crisis-resilient health systems that integrate NCD and mental health services;
- Identifying concrete actions to address the commercial determinants of health by 1) regulating commercial practices that increase exposure to harmful products (including tobacco, alcohol, and unhealthy, ultra-processed foods and beverages) and 2) safeguarding policymaking and programmes from undue commercial influence through good governance mechanisms, including conflicts of interest policies and access-to-information legislation;
- Acknowledging the importance of setting SIDS-specific national targets including for NCD financing;
- Calling for the institutionalisation of the meaningful involvement of people living with NCDs, including MNSDs, and young people in decision-making; and
- Engaging civil society actors in the development process of the Bridgetown Declaration and accompanying Annexes.



We seek assurance that the three documents of the Bridgetown Declaration, including its two accompanying Annexes, will be considered and implemented as an integrated whole, with a particular emphasis on the importance of the Calls to Action (Annex 1).

As we look forward, we recommend that SIDS build on the Bridgetown Declaration and its Calls to Action by:

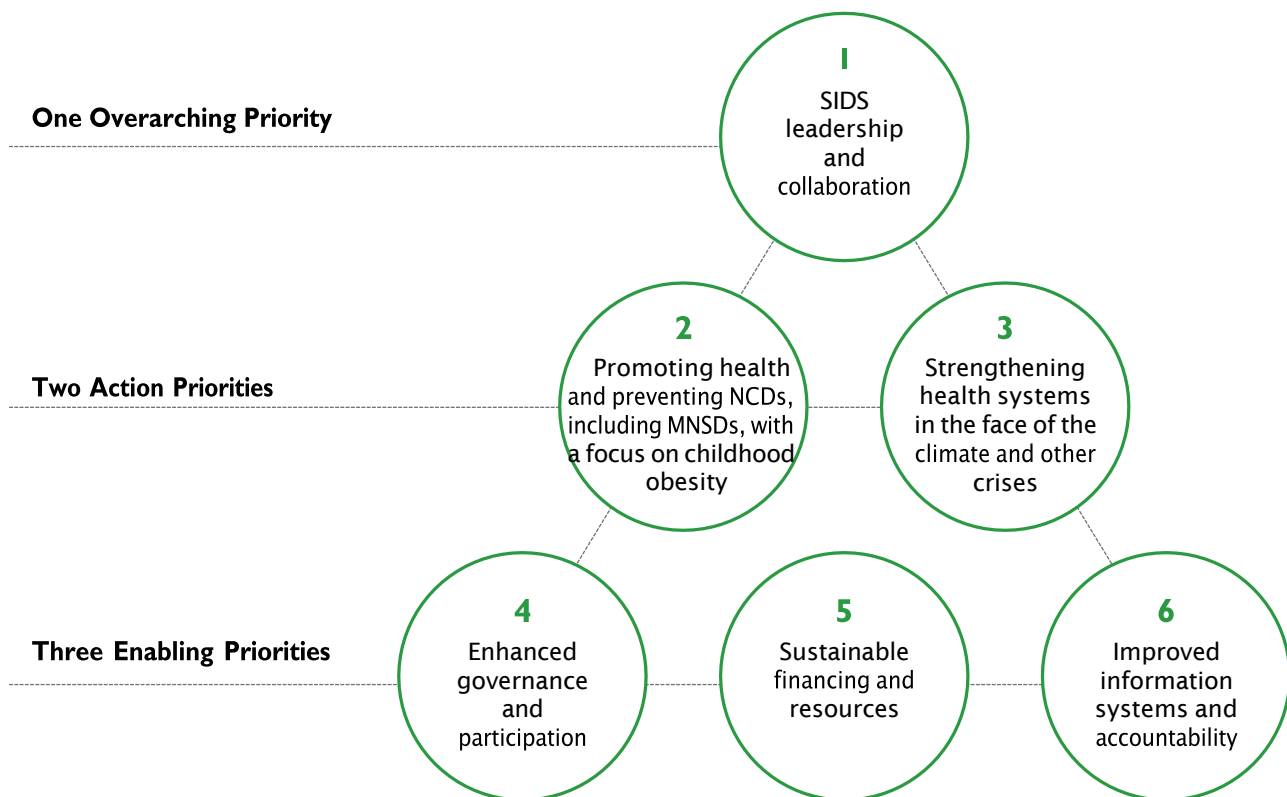


- Using them as a basis for the development of the *SIDS-specific NCD and Mental Health Implementation Roadmap*;
- Operationalising them at the highest political level in SIDS given the inter-sectorality that is required to prevent and control NCDs, including MNSDs, and ensure delivery of the required whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach;
- Promoting them in upcoming global health, climate and sustainable development processes to urge the global community to take action, and provide the support and investment needed for accelerated NCD action in SIDS;
- Further emphasising the need to prevent childhood obesity as a SIDS priority in the socialisation and implementation of the Bridgetown Declaration, and undertake the *SIDS Acceleration Plan to STOP Obesity* (referred in the Calls to Action);
- Ensuring health systems strengthening efforts seek integration and alignment across health services and funding programmes;
- Mainstreaming health, nutrition and climate considerations within SIDS public policies and collaboration, acknowledging the environment-nutrition-health nexus;
- Strengthening SIDS legal and regulatory capacity to enact and enforce NCD prevention and control legislation, but also broader legislation to improve governance (e.g., on access-to-information legislation); and
- Joining the [Global NCD Compact 2020-2030](#) and participating in the *Global Group of Heads of State and Government for the Prevention and Control of NCDs*.

The recommendations herein are informed by the [SIDS discussion paper on NCDs and mental health](#), and on the feedback received during the consultation phase. The discussion paper was developed by the Healthy Caribbean Coalition in collaboration with civil society representatives of other SIDS regions and with the support of the NCD Alliance, ahead of the SIDS High-Level Technical Meeting on NCDs and Mental Health (January 2023).

Six priorities to #ActOnNCDs in SIDS

The SIDS discussion paper on NCDs and mental health identified six priorities for action on NCDs by SIDS governments:



These six priorities are well represented in the Bridgetown Declaration and its Annexes, and are expected to facilitate accelerated action on NCDs in SIDS – including through the integration of cost-effective NCD prevention and care policies (the WHO’s NCD ‘best buys’ and other recommended interventions – [2023 version](#)) in national universal health coverage (UHC) benefit packages.

As we look forward, we must secure commitment from the international community to protect and build the resilience of SIDS from economic and supply shocks (SIDS have small economies of scale

and a strong dependence on imported food, with commercial influence and trade-related challenges) and from the impacts of climate change (SIDS emit less than 1% of greenhouse gases, but are disproportionately and severely affected by climate change and natural disasters).

Because of these context-specific challenges, we must ensure that SIDS-specific vulnerabilities and solutions are considered and integrated across global health, climate and sustainable development processes, and that broader policy SIDS platforms prioritise action on NCDs.

Examples of upcoming global opportunities for action

<p>24-26 July 2023 (Rome, Italy) UN Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment</p>	<p>To ensure that SIDS-specific solutions for a sustainable health-oriented food system transformation are reflected in the outcome document of this meeting.</p>
<p>14-21 September 2023 (virtual) The Global Week for Action on NCDs</p>	<p>To show leadership to #ActOnNCDs and commitment to the Moment for Caring about NCDs ahead of the 2nd UN High-Level Meeting on UHC.</p>
<p>19-29 September 2023 (New York, USA) High-Level General Debate of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA78)</p>	<p>To raise awareness about the Bridgetown Declaration and accompanying Annexes in your statements at UNGA78, and the need to urgently address the burden of obesity and NCDs, including MNSDs, in SIDS.</p>
<p>20 September 2023 (New York, USA) UN High-Level Meeting on Pandemic Prevention Preparedness and Response (PPPR) and the ongoing International Negotiating Body process for WHO Convention, Agreement or Instrument on PPPR (Geneva, Switzerland)</p>	<p>To address the increased vulnerability to pandemics of populations living in SIDS and with underlying conditions such as NCDs, including MNSDs.</p>
<p>21 September 2023 (New York, USA) 2nd UN High-Level Meeting on UHC</p>	<p>To promote the critical role of greater investment in, and integration of NCDs, including MNSDs, into the progressive realisation of UHC.</p>
<p>11-12 October 2023 (virtual) Global Forum for Adolescents</p>	<p>To ensure that the political and financial commitments made at this Forum also offer SIDS-specific solutions to promote the health of future generations and support the institutionalisation of the meaningful involvement of young people in policy development and implementation in SIDS.</p>
<p>6-17 November 2023 (Dubai, UAE) UNFCCC COP28</p>	<p>To ensure that SIDS-specific health, nutrition and climate considerations and resourcing needs are discussed as part of the 'Health Day' agenda.</p>
<p>2024 4th International Conference on SIDS</p>	<p>To ensure that action on NCDs, including MNSDs, through the Bridgetown Declaration and accompanying Annexes, is prioritised on the agenda and integrated into the ten-year programme of action emerging from the meeting.</p>
<p>2024 2nd Global Dialogue on NCD Financing</p>	<p>To promote the call for stretching targets for NCD financing, and better integration of prevention and control of NCDs, including MNSDs, in delivering person-centred UHC health services and benefit packages.</p>
<p>2025 4th UN High-Level Meeting on NCDs</p>	<p>To ensure that SIDS-specific challenges and solutions in addressing NCDs, including MNSDs, are captured in the meeting agenda and outcome document.</p>
<p>2026 UNFCCC COP31</p>	<p>To use Australia's announced plans to host COP31 along with its Pacific Island neighbours, as a key opportunity to galvanise action on SIDS-specific health, nutrition and climate considerations.</p>



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