

Chronic Disease Prevention & Control in the Americas



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Spotlight

Trans Fat Free Americas: Declaration of Rio de Janeiro



On 22 June 2008, following an international meeting, representatives from the food industry, governments, health organizations, and academia from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, and Mexico signed the [Trans Fat Free Americas: Declaration of Rio de Janeiro](#). The declaration calls for limiting trans fats in industrially processed foods as well as other measures to reduce public consumption of trans fats.

During the last decade, conclusive scientific evidence has linked the consumption of industrially produced trans fatty acids (TFAs), with alterations of the metabolism of blood lipids, vascular inflammation, and the development of cardiovascular diseases (CVDs). TFAs are mainly present in cooking oils, margarines, and shortenings that are regularly used in the preparation of pastries, bread, and snacks, among others.



This unprecedented document is aimed directly at eliminating TFAs from processed foods consumed in the Americas. Among the suggestions included in the declaration are the following:



- ➔ Substituting trans fats in processed foods, where its presence should not be more than 2% of the total fat in oils and margarines, or more than 5% of the total fat in processed foods.
- ➔ Including the trans fat content in nutritional labels.

- ➔ Substituting trans fats with unsaturated fats, including the omega-3 group.
- ➔ More discussion on the regulation of food advertising aimed at children and young people.



The declaration is also available in [Spanish](#) and [Portuguese](#).

Spotlight: Caribbean Update



Trinidad & Tobago Physical Activity Workshop

This [training course](#) to promote physical activity in the Caribbean was held on 6-7 May 2008 in

Contents

• Spotlight.....	1
o Trans Fat Free Americas: Declaration of Rio de Janeiro	1
o Caribbean Update	1
▪ Trinidad & Tobago Physical Activity Workshop.....	1
▪ Trinidad & Tobago Consultation on Caribbean Private Sector Response to Chronic Diseases	2
▪ Dominica NCD Summit.....	2
▪ Jamaican Tobacco Project Invited to India	3
▪ Jamaica Hosts Caribbean Expert Consultation on CVDs & Diabetes.....	3
▪ Barbados National CNCD Commission.....	3
• Key CNCD Events.....	3
o Guatemala: Certification of First Round of Cardiovascular Health Promoters.....	3
• Information Resources	5
o PanAmSteps Surveillance Instrument Updated.....	5
o Report on Cancer Stakeholders Meeting.....	5

Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. Its objective was to provide education on the value of physical activity for assuring people's health and preventing obesity and chronic disease. Real-life examples were taken from a broad variety of countries (including those of the Americas) showing built environments, public spaces, and urban planning that promote walking and biking, both for recreation and as a valid means of getting places, as well as the use of public transportation and the importance of green spaces. The two presenters were PAHO's regional advisor on healthy eating and active living, Dr. Enrique Jacoby, and Gil Peñalosa, executive director of [Walk and Bike for Life](#).



The [online presentations](#) in the four training sessions offer hundreds of photographs that speak for themselves and the latest data on the obesity epidemic. They show how concepts of prioritizing opportunities for physical activity can be applied effectively, with arguments as to their validity that refute common myths as to why it can't be done.



Source: PAHO Office of Caribbean Program Coordination (OCPC).

Trinidad & Tobago Consultation on Caribbean Private Sector Response to Chronic Diseases

This [workshop](#) was held with representatives of the Caribbean private sector on 8–9 May 2008 in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago. All materials from the conference CD-ROM are available online via the above link.



Objectives

1. To encourage the Caribbean private sector to take a more active role in the reduction of chronic noncommunicable diseases by implementing measures to reduce the risk of these diseases affecting employees as well as the wider community.

- a. Changed private-sector policies and practices that favor chronic noncommunicable diseases
- b. Adoption of certain areas from the Caribbean Summit Declaration: 6 areas (see [September 2007](#) newsletter)
- c. Regular circulation & use of health information
- d. Workplace health promotion programs
- e. Promotion of physical activity and healthy living
- f. Increased partnership of private sector and government

2. To give support to a *Caribbean Wellness Day* on 13 September 2008 (see [last month's](#) newsletter).



Outcomes

- ➔ Identification of the roles and responsibilities of the Caribbean private sector in the reduction of chronic noncommunicable diseases.
- ➔ An action plan that identifies workplace wellness programs and activities.
- ➔ A statement from the Caribbean private sector in support of the initiative by the end of the conference, to represent the commitment of the private sector to CNCD reduction and to be presented at the Meeting of the CARICOM Heads of Government later this year.



Working Groups

1. Workplace Wellness Programs
2. Healthy Foods Import and Local Foods
3. Media and Communication
4. Physical Activity & *Caribbean Wellness Day*
5. Workplace Policies & Practices
6. Fundraising: Regional and Local Levels

Source: PAHO/OCPC.

Dominica CNCD Summit

Dominica held its [National Chronic Noncommunicable Diseases Summit](#) on 14 December

2007, three months after the CARICOM CNCD Summit (see [September 2007](#) newsletter). The meeting was attended by the president, prime minister, Cabinet members, and representatives of civil society, including the private sector, nongovernmental organizations, and the media.



The prime minister requested that Dr. Mirta Roses, PAHO director, be told of the appreciation of the government and people of Dominica for the help and support they have been receiving from PAHO.

The agenda included technical presentations on the status of chronic noncommunicable diseases (CNCDs) in Dominica and proposals for their prevention and control, including initiatives that have been successful in other countries in addressing the CNCD epidemic.

The composition and terms of reference of the National Commission are to be taken to Dominica's Cabinet for approval.

Source: PAHO/OCPC.

Jamaican Tobacco Project Invited to India

The Heart Foundation of Jamaica / Jamaica Coalition for Tobacco Control (HFJ), recipient of a [Bloomberg Global Initiative](#) grant, recently had its Tobacco-Free Youth poster presentation accepted at the [14th World Conference on Tobacco OR Health](#) (WCTOH) to be held 8–12 March 2009 in Mumbai, India. The conference organizers have provided the project team with funding to cover the costs of attending this important meeting.



For more information on this project, see the [June 2008](#) issue of this newsletter.

Source: [Barbara McGaw](#), Project Manager, HFJ.

Jamaica Hosts Caribbean Expert Consultation on CVDs & Diabetes

The [Caribbean Expert Consultation on Scaling Up Population-Based Screening and Management of](#)

[CVD and Diabetes](#) was held in Montego Bay, Jamaica, on 4–5 March 2008. All presentations are available online via the above link.



Source: PAHO/OCPC.

Barbados National CNCD Commission

The Barbados National Chronic Non-Communicable Disease Commission (NCNCD) has made available to PAHO information on its achievements for last year, as well as its terms of reference and membership, which were presented at the commission's Strategic Planning Meeting in January of this year. [See documentation.](#)



Source: PAHO/OCPC.

Key CNCD Events

Guatemala: Certification of First Round of Cardiovascular Health Promoters



On 26 June 2008, at the Institute of Nutrition of Central America and Panama (INCAP) in Guatemala City, Guatemala, the first round of cardiovascular health promoters graduated from the course sponsored by the Ministry of Health and Social Assistance (*Ministerio de Salud y Asistencia Social* / [MSPAS](#)), PAHO, and the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health

([NHLBI/NIH](#)) of the United States, under the umbrella of the *Pan American Cardiovascular Initiative* / PACI). Among those

Pan American Cardiovascular Initiative (PACI)



participating in the graduation event was Dr. Eusebio del Cid Peral, then minister of health and public assistance (see photo) and Dr. Erika Stolz, healthcare program director.



Dr. Eusebio del Cid Peralta, minister of health and social assistance, awards diplomas to volunteers to certify them as cardiovascular health promoters.

The country now has 29 cardiovascular health promoters who have graduated from the first round of certification courses offered by the ministry's National Program for Chronic Noncommunicable Diseases (*Programa Nacional de Enfermedades Crónicas No Transmisibles*), which gave them training in education, prevention, and timely detection of cardiovascular diseases.



The 29 cardiovascular health promoters who graduated from the first round of courses from the ministry's National CNCD Program, with the minister of health

The course began with volunteers from communities in Mixco who were trained over a six-month period on risk factors and prevention of cardiovascular diseases (CVDs). Today, each and every one of them can provide guidance to their communities in how to adopt healthier lifestyles.

They are also qualified to detect disease and make referrals to health centers to those needing care for hypertension, overweight, obesity, and high blood sugar levels.

Among the strategies that the newly qualified promoters are putting into practice is visiting groups of neighbors and parents of schoolchildren enrolled in Mixco schools, to provide them with information on CVD prevention. They will encourage physical activity, healthy eating, saying "no" to tobacco, and awareness of the importance of maintaining a healthy weight.

Guatemala
Promoting
Cardiovascular
Health

This graduation was part of the "Healthy, Happy Heart" (*Corazón sano y feliz*) project of the Community Initiatives to Prevent and Control CVDS (*Intervenciones comunitarias para la prevención y control de las enfermedades cardiovasculares*) being carried out jointly with APRECOR, a Guatemalan NGO. Other ongoing PACI projects in other countries include:

Pan American
Cardiovascular
Initiative
(PACI)

- Argentina: *Guardacorazón* ("Keeping up your heart," under [PROPIA](#), Programa de Prevención del Infarto en la Argentina, Program to Prevent Heart Attacks)
- Chillán Viejo, Chile: [Chillanvejanos cuidan su corazón a través de estilos de vida saludable](#) ("Residents of Chillán Viejo care for their hearts through healthy lifestyles." See news brief in Spanish on international award, [Chillán Viejo gana Proyecto Internacional](#))
- United States: [Your Heart, Your Life](#) (in Spanish, [Su corazón, su vida](#))



This article also appears [online](#), with links to background information (see the [January 2008](#) issue of this newsletter).

Contact person and source: Dr. Branka Legetic, PAHO CNCD Team.

Information Resources

PanAm STEPS Surveillance Instrument Updated

The PAHO/WHO Stepwise Approach to Risk-Factor (RF) Surveillance (PanAmerican



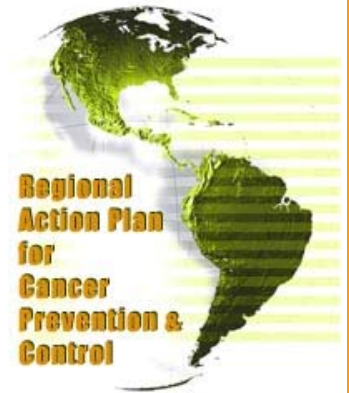
STEPS, or PanAm STEPS for short) is a simple, standardized method for collecting, analyzing, and disseminating RF data in Member Countries.

PAHO has adapted the original STEP methodology and produced the [PanAm STEPS](#) instrument and methodology to respond to the needs of the Region. The instrument has just been [updated](#). By using the same standardized questions and protocols, all countries can use STEPS information, not only for monitoring trends within the country, but also for making comparisons across countries. The approach encourages the collection of small amounts of useful information on a regular and continuing basis.

The methodology offers the instrument itself, a detailed user's manual, and software support for data entry, data processing, and reporting.

Report on Cancer Stakeholders Meeting

To follow up on our [June coverage](#) of the Cancer Stakeholders Meeting held in Washington, DC, 11-12 June 2008, to develop the PAHO Plan of Action for Cancer Prevention and Control, the [final report](#) has been published via the [meeting page](#), which also contains the executive summary derived from the report.



STOP THE GLOBAL EPIDEMIC OF CHRONIC DISEASE



PROMOTE. PREVENT. TREAT. CARE



Integrated Chronic Disease Prevention & Control in the Americas



The PAHO/WHO Chronic Disease Program invites the readers of this newsletter to submit contributions on activities related to chronic disease in the Americas. Send contributions (1-3 paragraphs) to Dr. James Hospedales (hospedaj@paho.org) with copy to Pilar Fano (fanopili@paho.org) and Suzanna Stephens (stephens@paho.org). Letters to the Editor should be addressed to Silvana Luciani (lucianis@paho.org). Instructions and criteria can be found on the homepage for this newsletter at the web link below:

<http://www.paho.org/english/ad/dpc/nc/cronic.htm>