

2018 PRIVATE SECTOR DIALOGUE WITH FORUM LEADERS

PRIVATE SECTOR STATEMENT #1: NCDs

The Private Sector is concerned about the impact on NCDs on our employees, their families and our communities. Having healthy employees ensures that they are more productive workforce who are physically able to provide for their families and communities until retirement age.

- **We commend** Government and regional organisations for the establishment of the Pacific NCDs Road Map, and encourage full implementation of the same.
- We urge Governments to consider investing in a partnership approach with the Private Sector in the fight against NCDs.

In recognising the NCD crisis in our region, the Private Sector proposes a way forward in 3 specific categories:

- **Policy and Regulatory Framework**
- **Social Business Responsibility**
- **Ethical Business Responsibility**

The Private Sector supports the objectives at regional level that aims to prevent and control levels of NCDs and ensure a healthy workforce in our region, specifically in least developed countries.

Statistics supports that taxing high risk products alone will not combat NCDs.

Tax income from high risk products must be allocated towards the fight against NCDs.

In this respect, we urge Governments to consider the allocation of tax revenues collected from tobacco, alcohol and sugar sweetened products, towards NCDs awareness and lifestyle change campaigns.

Tax Incentives for NCD Programs

There are a large number of businesses in the region who proactively promote and encourage healthy lifestyle changes amongst staff. This is a cost factor that business have committed to absorb. For example, Azure Water in Vanuatu finances gym membership for 50 staff, costing in excess VT750,000 Vatu a year.

In this respect, we would offer, Government's consideration for tax incentives to companies that promote healthy lifestyle programs.

Establish NCD Task Forces

We call on our Leaders to actively invest in partnerships with the Private Sector to proactively address NCDs.

This will enable action-based, solution-orientated engagement by the Private Sector that complements Government NCD policies and initiatives.

As a ready-to-go example: our telecommunication companies are able to inform and educate communities on NCD trends, causes, and preventions through regular text messages to all mobile phone users.

As another example, the 1Touch Ministry is changing lives by engaging our People in regular exercise and healthy lifestyle choices through the popular Bootcamp initiative in Samoa and Tonga.

To reiterate. We in the Pacific are facing a crisis. We must employ urgent action: multi-dimensional measures against NCDs, that will effectively change mindsets, attitudes and behaviour.

It is more than taxing products, developing policies, building frameworks or even signing joint commitment statements. The NCD epidemic requires that we take a good hard look at ourselves, and make LIFESTYLE CHANGES.

In summary - we, the region's private sector, commit to work alongside Governments to support national initiatives to combat NCDs.

There is no “silver bullet” for reducing NCDs, but Government should leverage the Private Sector to help achieve sustainable outcomes.

Our Forum theme this year is: Building a Strong Pacific, Our People, Our Islands, Our Will. We would like to include - Our lifestyle, our will to that theme.

Ultimately, management of NCDs is a personal commitment, and the will to change lifestyle choices.

Action must start with ourselves as business leaders, as political leaders, as community leaders.

[ENDS]