

2018 PRIVATE SECTOR DIALOGUE WITH FORUM LEADERS

PRIVATE SECTOR STATEMENT #2

Honorable Leaders, I note that all protocols have been observed. Thank you for the opportunity.

Together with you we acknowledge the NCDs crises.

So what can pacific business do? How can we effectively use the transformational power of the private sector to support our pacific people to make healthier choices and address NCDs?

Honorable Leaders. Your region's private sector is here today, with a firm commitment to recognise our social and ethical responsibilities as employers. To do our part. To take responsibility for our share of the mess. To take, what we believe now needs to be extraordinary measures - that will help combat the NCDs crisis, by working together with governments and civil society in a regional approach that can bring about positive change - in our lives as pacific people.

Prior to this Dialogue, the region's private sector took time out to really explore, and come to understand the grave impacts of NCDs on business productively - including the very real inherent risks upon the sustainable social and economic development of the pacific region.

COMMEND GOVERNMENT ACTION TODATE

- **We thank** our Governments for leading the way, and taking action to date. In all honesty, when you ask business owners to prioritise key issues affecting business - NCDs doesn't normally get a mention.
- **We thank** our Leaders, for making us consider this issue more closely. We acknowledge the work done thus far under the Pacific NCDs Roadmap.

A recent WHO analysis in the Cook Islands, Samoa and Fiji shows that high taxes on tobacco products, sugar and sweetened beverages has led to reduced consumption and/or imports, of the targeted products.

- Across the region, **we commend** national health service providers that have established policies and continue preventative programs for NCDs. We also note examples such as the Tuvalu Government's 2014 policy where public servants are made to take time out between 3pm-4pm for exercise.

SOCIAL AND ETHICAL BUSINESS RESPONSIBILITY

Outsource Awareness, Education and Behaviour Change Programs

However, to reiterate our first speaker, what we face is the adaptive challenge of changing mindsets, attitudes, and habits. So technical solutions such as “sin” or sugar tax measures must be complemented with effective behaviour-change programs.

- **We call** on governments to please, transparently **allocate tax revenues** collected from NCDs-related products towards awareness, education, and behaviour change campaigns.
- **We further call** on governments to outsource awareness and behaviour change programs to non-state actors - such as our private sector organisations, educational institutions, NGOs, sporting bodies and community groups.

DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT HEALTHY CORPORATE WORKPLACE POLICIES

- **We commit** to creating healthy work place environments through the development and implementation of Corporate Healthy Workplace Policies within our respective local contexts. Such policies may include elements such as: support and financing of gym and exercise sessions, facilitating regular medical checks and encouraging or making available healthy food options in the workplace. Here in Nauru, Digicel provides healthy breakfast to their staff every morning.
- **We commit to** healthy food and drink options at corporate functions, **and call on governments to do the same.**

FARM TO TABLE - ENCOURAGE LOCALLY GROWN, NON-PROCESSED FOOD DIETS

- The private sector **calls** for more aggressive measures to revive our natural food security and supports small holder-farmers.
- **We commit** to purchasing locally produced healthy agri-products; and encourage contract farming - where ever possible.
- The region's private sector **offers to support and invest** in domestic agri-business and farming, and work more closely with village councils for example - to bring back village produce harvested from farms and fishing cooperatives – and link this to the tourism value chain essentially taking our people back to our organic diets. We must

together address the situation where locally grown organic produce and fish, costs the consumer more than imported less healthy alternatives.

NCDS AND FREE TRADE

Lastly,

- **We call** on governments to ensure that there is **coherence between trade and health policies**. We must, together, address the negative impacts of product dumping into the Pacific and the issue of not being able to ban products such turkey tails. Samoa had imposed a 300% excise tax on turkey tails 10 years ago which completely removed this health-vice from our diets. Recently, that excise tax which was essentially a ban, was removed, and overnight, turkey tails have snuck right back in to the Sunday brunch menu.

In summary:

We the private sector **commit to:**

- Proactively promote and encourage healthy lifestyle changes as employers.
- Work in close collaboration with NCD taskforces - and to come action-ready.
- Work more closely with communities to revive natural food security.
- Adopt social and ethical business practices to encourage behaviour change.
- To support awareness, education and behaviour change programs.

We the private sector call on our Leaders to:

- Take a regional holistic approach to combating NCDs by working collaboratively with private sector, NGOs, civil society, sporting bodies and the general community.

We call on specific action to:

- Ensure tax revenues collected from NCDs-related products be allocated towards NCDs treatment, awareness and behaviour change campaigns.
- Outsource awareness and behaviour change programs to proven non state actors.
- Establish inclusive, dynamic, ncd committees to facilitate collaborative nation-wide action.
- Provide tax incentives to further support companies that promote healthy lifestyle programs.
- Ensure that there is coherence between trade and health policies.
- Take aggressive measures to revive our natural food security.

Ultimately, this is about the future of our Pacific people. We are here, ready to take action together with you, our leaders, to combat the epidemic of NCDs.

If we do not collectively break the cycle of behaviour now - we leave a bleak legacy for future generations.

We hope to provide an update of our commitments at the next Forum Leaders meetings, and look forward to sharing progress reports as hold each other accountable for taking action.

[ENDS]