



CARIBBEAN PUBLIC HEALTH LAW FORUM

NEWSLETTER

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Reflections of the 10th plenary session of the CPHLF

Webinar on Climate Change and Health

On Friday, 28 June 2024, the **Caribbean Public Health Law Forum (CPHLF)** held its Tenth Business meeting and celebrated its **third anniversary** with a timely and excellent webinar on the theme **Climate Change and Health: critical considerations and developments**.

The webinar featured keynote presentations from Dr. Karen Polson-Edwards, the Regional Advisor for Climate Change and Health at the Pan American Health Organisation, and Dr C. James Hospedales, the Executive Director of EarthMedic and EarthNurse Foundation for Planetary Health.



Dr. Karen Polson-Edwards

Regional Advisor, Climate Change and Health Pan American Health Organisation

In her presentation on Building Climate Resilient Health Systems, **Dr. Polson-Edwards underscored the link between the social determinants of health and the impact of climate change**, noting the region's vulnerability and the steps we can take to mitigate climate change and its impacts. Dr Polson-Edwards also highlighted the steps taken at the regional and international level to address climate change and climate change governance.



Dr. C. James Hospedales

Executive Director, EarthMedic and EarthNurse Foundation for Planetary Health

Dr. C. James Hospedales, in his presentation on Climate change expertly **showed the linkages between climate change, the changes to our environment, and the impact on health**. Food insecurity and malnutrition, more respiratory challenges from air pollution, increase in mental illness and other non-communicable diseases are among the challenges the region and the world face. **Dr. Hospedales also highlighted the changed behaviour of hurricanes resulting from climate change** including rapid intensification, more category 4 and 5 hurricanes and more devastation.

Just a few days later, we witnessed aspects of the lessons from the presentations through the manifestation of Hurricane Beryl, which was then a tropical depression with winds of 35 mph, churning in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean. By Monday, 1 July 2024, Hurricane Beryl made history by becoming the earliest category 5 hurricane on record in the Atlantic Ocean. In addition to loss of life, there was significant devastation to homes and livelihoods, and displacement of people in several Caribbean islands. Hurricane Beryl's frightening quick intensification was chilling.

Both presentations highlighted the importance of climate resilient health systems to national and regional development and charged the audience to help make a change.

To see the presentations, please click or copy the following link into your browser:

<https://youtu.be/1ipHWTCOGOo>

Business Meeting of the CPHLF

Following the webinar presentations, the meeting transitioned to the business discussions with registered forum members. From webinars and newsletters to promotions, Dr. Audrey Morris, Chair of the CPHLF Steering Committee, provided the “year in review” of the CPHLF’s activities, and underscored the significant contribution of the CPHLF and its members to developing a resilient healthy region. The meeting received the reports of the working groups which included the challenges experienced by those working groups and the proposal that the working groups should be led by country representatives rather than organisations. Through the established voting procedures, **the CPHLF confirmed that Dr. Shana Cyr-Philbert and Miss Shyra Wattle, Attorney-at-Law, should serve another term as chair and vice chair, respectively, of the business sessions/plenary of the CPHLF.** It was agreed that the working groups on tobacco control and on food policy and nutrition should continue. In that regard, the meeting agreed that Miss Kadian Birch should continue as chair of the food policy/nutrition working group. Miss Kesaundra Alves should continue to chair the tobacco control working group until a country representative nomination can be made and validated by the CPHLF. It was also underscored that vice chairpersons and rapporteurs are elected by working groups. The meeting concluded with notices pertaining to the next plenary session.



**Dr. Shana
Cyr-Philbert**



**Miss Shyra
Wattle**

Climate-Justice Insights

from the CPHLF steering committee plenary chair



“...we could say that there are two aspects to environmental justice. (1) Substantive aspects: fair and equitable exposure to environmental risks and benefits. Fair treatment means no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences. Justice requires equal treatment. (2) Procedural aspects: meaningful involvement in environmental decision-making, access to public participation and information about the environment, and access to justice to litigate environmental issues. Justice requires equal participation”

Excerpt from remarks by **The Honourable Mr Justice Winston Anderson, Judge of the Caribbean Court of Justice and Chairman of the CCJ Academy for Law** at the Workshop on Climate Litigation and Access Rights: Strengthening environmental justice in the Caribbean, Kingston, Jamaica 25 June 2024.

Summary of key capacity-building sessions in which Forum members participated

Workshop on the legal drafting of regulatory tools to eliminate industrially produced trans fatty acids (iTFA) and implementing sodium reduction targets for packaged foods.

Having regard to the COTED/COHSOD commitments of member states in 2022 regarding the elimination of Transfats, in March 2024, PAHO convened a four-day workshop in Barbados for public health and legal experts from six Caribbean countries. The focus was on the **legal drafting of regulatory tools aimed at eliminating industrially produced trans fatty acids (iTFA) and implementing**

sodium reduction targets for packaged foods in each country. The workshop also aimed to develop and discuss a roadmap to approve and implement the regulatory tools and to strengthen regional partnerships with the **Caribbean Community (CARICOM), CARPHA, the UWI Cave Hill Faculty of Law, Law and Health Research Unit, HCC and Resolve to Save Lives.**



More information

<https://www.paho.org/en/regional-workshop-legislation-and-legal-drafting-regulatory-tools-industrially-produced-trans-fatty>

WHO QualityRights Workshop



PAHO convened a total of 30 mental health professionals from 18 Caribbean countries and territories on the first Caribbean-focused QualityRights training-of-trainers workshop between May 7 and 10, 2024. **The workshop sought to empower Caribbean countries to**

adopt a rights-based approach to mental health care. QualityRights aims to improve existing mental health services by reorienting services from a purely biomedical approach to a holistic, comprehensive, and participatory approach that values and places emphasis on empowerment, autonomy, recovery, and an integration into the family and community. To maximize reach, WHO has also developed the QualityRights e-training on mental health, disability, human rights, and recovery. The e-training can be accessed at <https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/policy-law-rights/qr-e-training>.

More information

Update on the process to remove Front of Package Labelling from the Draft Revision of the CARICOM Regional Standard for the Labelling of Pre-Packaged Food

The CARICOM Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) took the step of removing the Front of Package Labelling (FOPL) from the Regional Standard of Pre-packaged foods; after a second round of voting in December 2023 did not result in support for the warning label.

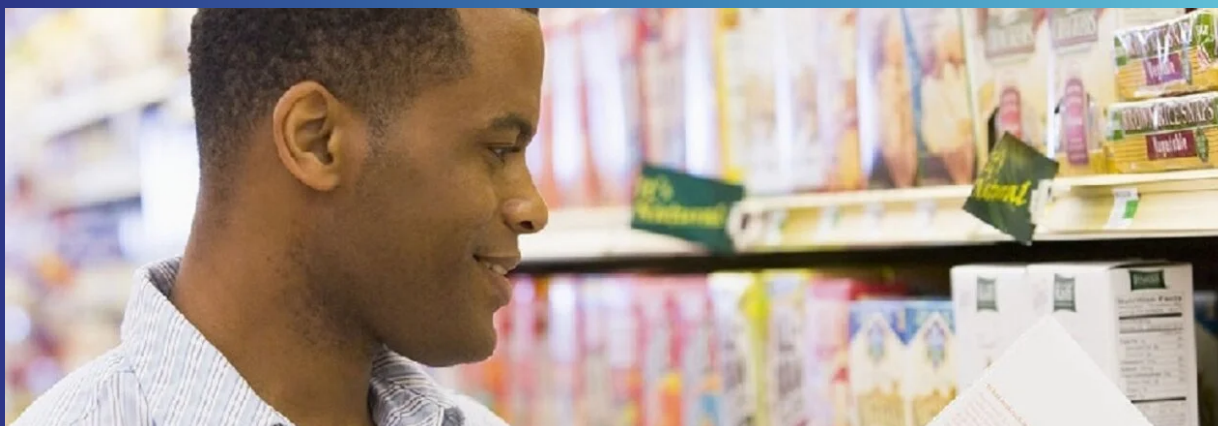
The revision of CRS 5:2010 to incorporate front-of-package labeling (FOPL) specifications began in 2018 in a process led by CROSQ. At various stages, consultations have taken place at country level through National Mirror Committees (NMCs) established by the National Bureaus of Standards. The NMCs report to a Regional Technical Subcommittee (RTSC), which is responsible for reviewing and consolidating comments into a draft standard. **The RTSC is comprised of 11 CARICOM Member States (Antigua & Barbuda, Barbados, Bahamas, Dominica, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, Suriname and Trinidad & Tobago), with Suriname as chair.**

Following the December vote, member states were asked to submit a position on whether the standard, including the FOPL, should be revised, or the FOPL should be removed from the standard. Based on their responses, with the majority being in favour of the latter, **the CROSQ Council accepted the decision of the RTSC for the removal of the FOPL references and informative annexes from the draft standard, before recirculating for voting.** It has been proposed that simultaneous with the removal of the standard, there would be a request to CARICOM to develop a Regional Noncommunicable diseases (NCD) Policy and Strategy with a special focus on front of package labelling. A recommendation was also made that a joint meeting of the COTED/COHSOD should be held, **to receive a presentation from CROSQ on the 2023 voting results of the Draft Revision of the CARICOM Regional Standard on Labelling of Pre-Packaged Food - Specifications, current status and the way forward.**



More information

<https://www.paho.org/en/events/webinar-what-happening-food-labels-caricom>



FOPL is one of the key policy tools to regulate products that contain excessive amounts of critical nutrients (sugars, total fats, saturated fats, trans fats, and sodium). FOPL is useful in indicating to consumers which products have high amounts of these nutrients to assist them in making healthy food choices. Research carried out in Jamaica by PAHO in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Wellness and the University of Technology (UTech) in 2020-2021 showed that the **octagonal warning label** performed best in helping consumers to understand nutrition information and choose the options least harmful to health^{1,2}. More recently, research carried out in Barbados has indicated that implementation of mandatory FOPL could prevent at least 16% of deaths from diet-related NCDs and save the country USD 732.8 million in mortality costs.³ Public health advocates have raised concerns around the regional process documented in a [report](#) released earlier this year.

More information

<https://www.healthycaribbean.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Public-Health-Decision-Making-in-CARICOM-Strengthening-the-Front-of-Package-Nutrition-Labelling-Standardisation-Programme-HCC-March-2024.pdf>

Member Features

Tamara Bobb

Programme Manager, Health Sector Development, Directorate of Human and Social Development, CARICOM Secretariat



My vision for the Caribbean Public Health Law Forum (CPHLF) is centred on **leveraging the intersection of public health and legal expertise to combat the growing burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the Caribbean Community.** As a representative of the CARICOM Secretariat within the Forum, I am committed to identifying strategic areas where public health law can be a driving force in advocating for policies and regulations that promote NCD prevention and control, enhance public health outcomes, and foster a culture of well-being throughout the Caribbean.

1 <https://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/13/4/e065620>

2 <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/53328>

3 https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/57989/PAHONMHRF230040_eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Members in Action



Forum members in action at the WHO QualityRights training (L-R Kimberley Benjamin and Stephanie Whiteman, HCC; Nicole Foster, UWI Cave Hill Faculty of Law; Sheryl Dennis Wright, PAHO)



Representatives from across the Caribbean at the training on WHO QualityRights, held in Barbados in May 2024



Forum members participating in the TFA elimination and sodium reduction meeting (L-R Abigail Caleb, CARPHA; Nicole Foster UWI Cave Hill Faculty of Law; Maisha Hutton, HCC)



Forum members participating in the TFA elimination and sodium reduction meeting (L-R Abigail Caleb, CARPHA; Nicole Foster UWI Cave Hill Faculty of Law; Maisha Hutton, HCC).



PAHO team members and co-facilitators stike a pose with of the QualityRights Expert, Jasmine Kalha of the Centre for Mental Health and Policy, India. (L-R Felicia Carter, Sheryl Dennis Wright, Catalina Ortuzar-Lyon, Francia Scott, Jasmine Kalha and Dr. Caludina Cayetano).

Public Health and Law Resources

Click or copy these useful links in your browser for important material/updates:

Regional webinar: Experiences and Innovative Strategies to Protect Children and Youth from Tobacco Marketing - June 2024, organized jointly by the Pan American Health Organization, Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, and Corporate Accountability: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aZi9j6e_9nU

WHO webinar series on restricting digital marketing, hosted by the Public Health Law and Policies Unit of the Health Promotion Department at WHO HQ - June 2024

1. Digital marketing of tobacco, alcohol, food and non-alcoholic beverages - Framing the challenges: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NdLhO6DxsY>
2. Legislate - Designing marketing restrictions fit for digital environments: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f5a4qUSat-l>
3. Monitor and enforce - Ensuring compliance with digital marketing restrictions (Passcode: Ne&1T87e): https://who.zoom.us/rec/play/TJLdKS7oUdi7tojeHKPjXNgTWzPhx_VSvCI5z1W5fBVveoAjPJPB4Qw_n9jIodJ4PVZCy5chqiUSftPm.ZCVrml-PTyGBkkSQ?canPlayFromShare=true&from=share_recording_detail&continueMode=true&componentName=rec-play&originRequestUrl=https%3A%2F%2Fwho-e.zoom.us%2Frec%2Fshare%2FwyyuQQwjUaq1aQd-PPspjZzfKbs0PUiWmakeM_Bjgy7fdbUz2PHQoCGUO259_Ykb.FyCjSu2WnuHvNFNX

New WHO publication **‘Restricting digital marketing - tobacco, alcohol, food and beverages, and breast-milk substitutes**: <https://iris.who.int/bitstream/handle/10665/373130/9789240077249-eng.pdf?sequence=1>

“Stronger Together” Campaign - Video from the PAHO and Caribbean Development Bank: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GfvP04dFISU>

PAHO publication regarding the **“Elimination of Industrially Produced Trans-fatty Acids. A Regulatory Drafting Tool”**, which points out the steps and suggestions to be used as model legislation: https://iris.paho.org/bitstream/handle/10665.2/55242/PAHONMHRF210031_eng.pdf OR <https://iris.paho.org/handle/10665.2/55242>

Caribbean Mobilising to Eliminate Industrially Produced Trans Fats: <https://www.healthycaribbean.org/caribbean-mobilising-to-eliminate-industrially-produced-trans-fats/>

Public Health Decision-Making In Caricom: Strengthening the Front-of-Package Nutrition Labelling Standardisation Programme: <https://www.healthycaribbean.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Public-Health-Decision-Making-in-CARICOM-Strengthening-the-Front-of-Package-Nutrition-Labelling-Standardisation-Programme-HCC-March-2024.pdf>

WHO QualityRights e-training on mental health: <https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/policy-law-rights/qr-e-training>