

Statement on Provisional Agenda Item 4.3

Policy for Recovering Progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals with Equity through Action on the Social Determinants of Health and Intersectoral Work

30th Pan American Sanitary Conference and 74th Session of the Regional Committee

Honorable Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

The Coalition for Americas' Health (CLAS), representing more than 200 civil society organizations, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, Corporate Accountability, ASH Action on Smoking and Health, Movendi, and NCD Alliance, congratulates PAHO and member states for their renewed commitment to accomplishing the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with a focus on equity and the goal of leaving no one behind.

In line with this priority, we request action regarding the prevention of NCDs, which have underlined not only the losses from COVID-19, but are implicated in poverty, hunger, and reduced educational outcomes, among other determinants of health.

NCDs are highly preventable and have profound negative impacts on the economic, social, and health situation of our countries, particularly among the most vulnerable communities.

IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE HEALTH OF OUR REGION, WE SUGGEST:

- Supporting the regulation of industries that promote harm: the tobacco industry and its front groups, the sugar-sweetened beverage industry, the ultra-processed food industry, and the alcohol industry; and
- Reforming the food system to promote sustainability and healthy food.

TWO SIMPLE, LOW-COST THINGS THAT CAN BE DONE NOW:

- Increase taxes on unhealthy products. This will lower healthcare costs, increase fiscal revenues, and improve people's health; and
- Use Art 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) on the protection of tobacco public health policies from vested interests of the tobacco industry as a useful model. Similar mechanisms may be extended beyond tobacco to all unhealthy product industries. Decision makers should develop conflicts of Interest management roadmaps since COI obstruct, weaken, and delay measures to improve public health.

The pandemic of NCDs is slow, unrelenting, and by far the greatest danger to economies, public health, and equity. For NCDs, there is no virus, no vaccine, but requires political leadership.