



# **THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES**

ST. AUGUSTINE, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, WEST INDIES

**FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

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October 15, 2018

**Re: Debriefing Note on Presentations and Discussions at the 12<sup>th</sup> Caribbean Conference on National Health Financing Initiatives held at the Hotel Torarica in Suriname, October 8-10, 2018**

## **1. Background**

Heads of Caribbean Social Security Organizations, meeting in Belize City in 2005, decided to establish a Conference or forum for activities to build capacity in designing, strengthening and managing national health financing initiatives.

Following previous Conferences in Turks and Caicos Islands (2006); Aruba (2007); Trinidad and Tobago (2008); St. Maarten (2009); Belize (2010), Bermuda (2011); Curacao (2012); Jamaica (2013); Trinidad and Tobago (2014); Turks and Caicos Islands (2015) and Bonaire (2016), the 12<sup>th</sup> Conference (originally set for but postponed from Anguilla in 2017 due to hurricanes) was convened at the Hotel Torarica in Suriname from October 8-10, 2018.

## **2. Objectives**

The overall objectives of these Conferences are to share knowledge, increase understanding, test ideas, enhance national expertise and deepen regional collaboration in designing and managing national health financing initiatives. In keeping with previous Conferences which selected specific issues for deeper analysis, the 12<sup>th</sup> Conference continued the focus of the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference on 'Health Financing—Strategic Planning, Spending Wisely-2'.

## **3. Host**

The Conference was hosted by the Stichting Staatsziekenfonds (SZF) or State Health Foundation of Suriname in collaboration with The University of the West Indies HEU, Centre for Health Economics (UWI-HEU), St. Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago.

## **4. Planning Team**

The Conference planning and logistics team included Dr. Stanley Lalta and staff members of the UWI-HEU, Centre for Health Economics and Mr. Rick Kromodihardjo and staff at the SZF.

## **5. Participation**

The Conference attracted more than 80 full-time participants from 16 countries and 10 organizations. Participants included:-

- Honorable Minister of Public Health of St. Maarten;
- senior officers in Caribbean Social Security Organizations;
- senior managers from Ministries of Health;
- senior officers from national/social health financing plans;
- representatives of local and international organizations in financing, health insurance, actuarial science and health services management;
- representatives of universities, hospitals and health consulting firms; and
- representatives of sponsoring firms.

## **6. Program Content**

### **a) Opening Session**

Chaired by Ms. Claudine Amattabri of the SZF, the Opening Session was attended by more than 90 persons including participants and specially invited guests from the government, international organizations, public and private sectors in Suriname.

Speakers at the Opening Ceremony included Mr. Rick Kromodihardjo, CEO of the SZF; Ms. Charmaine Metivier on behalf of Professor Karl Theodore, Director of the HEU, Centre for Health Economics; Mr. Pieter Deigen on behalf of Mr. Angel Bermudez, CEO of the Medical Insurance Office in Bonaire, St Eustatius and Saba and host of the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference; and Mr. Timothy Hodge, Director of the Social Security Board of Anguilla.

Dr. Stanley Laita, Conference Program Coordinator, emphasized the theme of the Conference – ‘Health Financing: Strategic Planning, Spending Wisely-2’ (following up on concerns addressed at the 11<sup>th</sup> Conference) and highlighted the major issues to be discussed, targeted presentations to be made and outcomes expected.

The formal address was delivered by The Honorable Minister of Health of Suriname, Mr. Antoine Elias. He drew attention to the importance of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) globally and locally, as well as the role of appropriate health financing strategies to achieve equity and efficiency in UHC programs. He also pointed out some of the major steps undertaken by Suriname on the road to UHC and the need for closer collaboration among countries as they grapple with common health challenges. He then formally declared the Conference open.

The Vote of Thanks and introduction of the Conference support team was offered by Mr. Rick Kromodihardjo of the SZF.

### **b) Conference Feature Presentations**

- The Honorable Mr. Emil Lee (Minister of Public Health, St. Maarten) on ‘General Health Insurance in St. Maarten’;
- The Honorable Dr. Jennifer Geerlings-Simons (Speaker of the House of Parliament in Suriname) on ‘Universal Health Care and the Economy: Facing the Challenge’;
- Professor Henk Bilo (ISALA and University of Groningen, The Netherlands) on ‘Controlling the Health and Financial Impact of Diabetes’.

### **c) Conference Sessional Thematic Papers**

- Mr. Dindial Ramrattan on behalf of Dr. Justin Ram (Caribbean Development Bank, Barbados) on 'Caribbean Economic Review and Outlook: Blueprint for Caribbean Economies';
- Mr. Francis Burnett (OECS Pharmaceutical Procurement Service, St. Lucia) on 'Efficiency In Managing Pharmaceuticals: Selection, Procurement and Protocols in the OECS';
- Dr. Javier Asin (ACSION Inc.) on 'Value Based Healthcare and Hospital Efficiency';
- Ms. Claudia Pescetto (PAHO, Washington DC) on 'Optimising Benefits of the PAHO Strategic Drug Fund' and 'Hospital Management—The International Experience';
- Dr. James Hospedales (Caribbean Public Health Agency, Trinidad and Tobago) on 'New Approaches to Managing NCDs: The Pawn and Knight Moves'.

### **d) Select Papers on Health Systems Efficiency and Resilience**

- Mr. Derek Osborne (Morneau Shepell, Canada) on 'Efficiency in Managing the Transition to Universal Health Insurance';
- Mr. Casimiro Canha Dias (PAHO, Barbados Office) on 'Advancing Action from the Sub-regional Dialogue on Health Financing in the Caribbean';
- Mr. Timothy Hodge (Social Security Board, Anguilla) on 'Resilience in Healthcare Systems: Research on the USVI Following 2017 Hurricanes';
- Ms. Samantha Profijt (ACSION Inc.) on 'Road towards Population Health Management';
- Dr. Johanne Perez (Social Security Board, Belize) on 'Update on Elderly Care in NHI Belize';
- Dr. Lex de Jong (FSMA Respaldo, Aruba) on 'Aligning Interests of Health Purchasers and Providers: 5 Crucial Steps to Have Your Health Care System Survive'.

### **e) Panel Presentations**

There were six (6) Panels discussing the following matters:-

#### **I) Panel 1: Addressing the Economic Burden of NCDs**

- Mr. Samuel Gabriel (HEU, Centre for Health Economics, UWI) on 'Economic Models to Evaluate Taxes on NCDs Risk Factors: Applications to Alcohol, Tobacco and Sugar Sweetened Beverages';
- Dr. Leslie Walwyn (Integrated Health Outreach Inc., Antigua) on 'Wellbeing: Redefining the Ounce of Prevention'.

#### **II) Panel 2: Tracking Progress In Countries with New Health Financing Plans**

- Mr. Rick Kromodihardjo (State Health Foundation in Suriname) on 'The State Health Foundation's Progress Towards Universal Health Coverage';
- Dr. Robin Roberts (NHI Plan in The Bahamas) on 'The Bahamas NHI Plan—Progress, Challenges and Strategies to Enhance Performance';
- Mr. Roy Barry (NHI and Social Security Board in UK Virgin Islands) on 'NHI In The UK Virgin Islands: Tracking Progress';
- Mr. Gerbert Spijker (Social Insurance Bank in Curacao) on 'The Curacao Universal Basic Insurance Plan: Evaluation on Objectives, Lessons of Implementation and Experienced 'Best Practices'.

### **III) Panel 3: Optimizing Performance of Pharmaceuticals Management**

- Dr. Anco Ringeling (AZV, Aruba) on 'Pharmaceutical Management in Aruba: Coverage, Distribution, Pricing, Claims processing and Cost-control';
- Dr. Natalia Castillo and Dr. George Gough (NHI, Belize) on 'NHI—Belize Efficiency Gains in Pharmacy Services'.

### **IV) Panel 4: Approaches in Managing Catastrophic Care**

- Ms. Tiara Carlington (Bermuda Health Council) on 'Managing Catastrophic Care in Bermuda';
- Dr. Terese Maitland (NHI Plan in Turks and Caicos Islands) on 'Managing Catastrophic Care in TCI: The Experience of the NHI'.

### **v) Panel 5: New Directions in Health Financing (1)**

- Ms. Claudette James (NHI Project, Grenada) on 'NHI Project: Progress in Preparation for NHI';
- Mr. Timothy Hodge (Social Security Board, Anguilla) on 'Update on Plans for National Health Insurance in Anguilla';
- Honourable Minister Emil Lee (Ministry of Public Health, St. Maarten) on 'Update on Plans for Universal Health Insurance in St. Maarten'.

### **vi) Panel 6: New Directions in Health Financing (2)**

- Dr. Stanley Lalta on behalf of Ms. Roxanne Brizan (HEU, Centre for Health Economics, UWI) on 'Tracking Health Care Spending in Five (5) Caribbean Countries: Findings from National Health Accounts';
- Ms. Jeanine Kook (Ministry of Public Health, Curacao) on 'Un Korsou Salú A Healthy Curaçao: Towards Managing Health and Wellness';
- Ms. Karen Yaw (Ministry of Health, Guyana) on 'Guyana Health Accounts 2016'.

### **f) Lunchtime Presentations by Sponsors**

- Fundacion Cardiovascular, Colombia on 'The FCV Healthcare Ecosystem: An Overview of our Network';
- Finabank, Suriname on 'The Role of Banks in Health Care Financing'.

### **g) Expert Review and Commentary on Presentations at Conference**

The expert reviewers commenting on the Conference presentations, discussions and future themes. The expert reviewers included:-

- Mr. Kennedy Roberts, Lecturer at the St. George's University in Grenada;
- Dr. Ricky Braithwaite, Health Economist at the Bermuda Health Council.

Additional reviews and suggestions were offered by Honourable Minister Emil Lee of St. Maarten and Dr. George Gough of the Social Security Board in Belize.

### **h) Overall Progress since First Meeting**

Dr. Stanley Lalta, Program Coordinator, presented a review of activities and progress over the twelve (12) Conferences (Turks and Caicos Islands, 2006; Aruba, 2007; Trinidad and Tobago, 2008; St. Maarten, 2009; Belize, 2010; Bermuda, 2011; Curacao, 2012; Jamaica, 2013; Trinidad and Tobago, 2014; Turks and Caicos Islands, 2015; Bonaire, 2016; Suriname, 2018).

Based on the perspective of the overall objectives outlined by Heads of Social Security Organizations in Belize in 2005, Dr. Lalta highlighted matters pertaining to participation, key topics covered, expertise identified and issues identified by participants for further consideration at the Conferences.

## 7. Decisions

The Conference agreed:

- a) To broaden participation by including representatives of institutions and Ministries in the French- and Spanish-speaking Caribbean;
- b) To give attention to topics such as 'strategies and communications to influence policy-making and the public'; 'fiscal space'; 'data analytics'; 'the downsides of health financing plans'; and 'economics of closer collaboration' in subsequent Conferences;
- c) To introduce some dedicated discussion workshops for addressing particular issues confronting national health financing systems;
- d) To accept the offer of the Social Security Board of Anguilla to host the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference.

## 8. Acknowledgements

The Conference thanked the hosts—the CEO and staff of the SZF—as well as the UWI-HEU Team for their careful attention to details and excellence in all arrangements for the Conference. Special thanks were also given to the sponsors, both local and external, for their support and displays.

## 9. Access to Documents

Presentations made at the Conference may be accessed by downloads from the Conference website (<http://conferences.sta.uwi.edu/healthfinancing/>).

## 10. Queries and Recommendations for Future Action

Queries on information pertaining to previous conferences and recommendations for future action may be directed to the Program Coordinator, Dr. Stanley Lalta ([Stanley.Lalta@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:Stanley.Lalta@sta.uwi.edu) or [stanleylalta@gmail.com](mailto:stanleylalta@gmail.com)) or to Ms. Charmaine Metivier ([Charmaine.Metivier@sta.uwi.edu](mailto:Charmaine.Metivier@sta.uwi.edu)) or the office of the HEU, Centre for Health Economics (Phone: 1-868-662-9459 or 1-868-645-7351).

Yours sincerely,



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