



4TH INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE ON  
**Small Island  
Developing States**  
27-30 MAY, 2024  
ST. JOHN'S, ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA

## SIDE EVENT

# ‘By the SIDS, for the SIDS’: Next decade of action on NCDs and mental health

28 May 2024 | 14:00 – 15:30

American University of Antigua, Conference venue, Room 2

[Event webpage](#)

## Background

People living in Small Island Developing States (SIDS) face a disproportionate risk of dying prematurely from noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) and a high burden of mental health conditions. SIDS have emphasized the need for deliberate action on NCDs and mental health in the 2007 Port of Spain Declaration, 2014 SAMOA pathway, and recently the 2023 Bridgetown Declaration on NCDs and mental health. The call is clear: bold action is needed ‘by the SIDS, and for the SIDS’ to accelerate progress towards achieving SDG target 3.4 for a one-third reduction in premature mortality from NCDs and for the promotion of mental health and well-being, by 2030. SIDS Member States are sharing their specific commitments to implement cost-effective interventions (including WHO ‘Best buys’) to accelerate progress on NCDs, mental health, their risk factors and environmental action, in line with national priorities, through an online SIDS commitment page.

However, moving from commitment to action is a shared journey. The next decade of action on NCDs and mental health will require *SIDS-specific tailored solutions, strategic partnerships and investment* to ensure sustained impact. For instance, in the Caribbean, PAHO is launching the Better Care for NCDs Initiative which seeks to strengthen the integration of NCDs in primary health care (PHC). Efforts are being taken to accelerate the prevention and control of NCDs through the SEAHEARTS initiative in Timor-Leste, with further dedicated initiatives to implement the WHO PEN and HEARTS packages through PHC in the Pacific and African SIDS. Strengthening health systems in SIDS remains a key priority to ensure a quality health workforce, effective financing mechanisms, timely data and surveillance systems, essential medicines and diagnostics and context appropriate service delivery models to meet population needs. The important role of human resources for health, as members of multidisciplinary, interprofessional teams, is a priority topic in the discussions on how Member States might pursue their commitment and how health systems might be strengthened. Partnerships between professional groups, government agencies, policy makers and nongovernment organizations are essential in addressing NCDs and mental health conditions.

In this side-event session, heads of state, donors, academia and people with lived experience, will reflect on how the global community is catalyzing attention and investment to achieve progress on SDG 3.4 in SIDS.



## Provisional agenda (90 minutes)

- 10 min**      **Welcome by moderator**  
Dr Kenneth Connell, Vice President, Healthy Caribbean Coalition
- 5 min**      **Video message** by the WHO Director-General
- 15 min**      **Keynote address**  
Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda, H.E. Gaston Browne
- 50 min**      **Panel session: Investing in the next decade of action on NCDs and mental health**
- Heads of State (to be confirmed)
  - Commonwealth Secretary General, The Rt Hon Patricia Scotland KC
  - PAHO Deputy Director, Ms Mary Lou Valdez
  - CSO/academia – (to be confirmed)
  - Lived experience/youth representative – (to be confirmed)
- 5 min**      **Video message from a leader from the Pacific, Sir Collin Tukuitonga**
- 5 min**      **Closing remarks by Hon. Dr Molwyn Joseph, Minister of Health of Antigua and Barbuda**

### The 90-minute session will feature key highlights, including:

- Achievements by SIDS on NCDs and mental health across various cross-cutting themes of primary health care, NCD risk factor control, climate and health, and more.
- Discussion on SIDS Initiatives on strengthening the integration of NCDs and mental health in PHC
- Partnership on addressing health workforce challenges by SIDS government Chief Nursing Officers (potential outcome of a side-event of the [Global Partners Meeting](#) on 23-24 May in Geneva), Chair of HRH Caribbean Commission (TBD)
- Launch of the *Commercial determinants of health in SIDS* publication
- Launch of the 'Voices of SIDS' community and a digital storyboard sharing stories of lived experiences with NCDs and mental health conditions.