



## CONSULTATION OF THE AMERICAS MINISTERS OF EDUCATION

A NEW CULTURE OF HEALTH IN SCHOOLS - 2012

### **DECLARATION OF THE CONSULTATION OF THE AMERICAS 2012**

#### **MINISTERS OF EDUCATION:**

**“A NEW CULTURE OF HEALTH IN THE SCHOOL CONTEXT”<sup>1</sup>**

***BARBADOS, CUBA, GRANADA, GUATEMALA, GUYANA, HAITI, HONDURAS,  
MEXICO, PANAMA, PERU, SANTA LUCIA, TRINIDAD Y TOBAGO, SURINAM &  
URUGUAY***

**Considering and Reaffirming** the First Meeting of Ministers of Health and Education to Stop HIV and STIs in Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Mexico in 2008, the Ministerial Declaration on the Prevention and Control of Chronic Non-communicable diseases, held in Mexico in 2011, the 64th World Health Assembly, held in Geneva, Switzerland, the United Nations high-level meeting on Non-communicable diseases prevention and control, held in the framework of the United Nations 66th General Assembly held the City of New York in September 2011, the Declaration of the Pan American Forum for Action on NCDS (PAFNCDS) held in Brazil 2012 and the Global Obesity Forum, held in the City of New York in June 2012;

**Noting** with concern that childhood obesity is one of the most serious public health problems in the XXI century and in 2010 it was estimated that there are 42 million overweight children worldwide, of which about 35 million live in developing countries where Non-communicable Diseases are the leading cause of mortality, premature mortality, acquired disabilities and are an epidemic in the Americas;

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<sup>1</sup> The Canadian and Jamaican delegations also participated in the elaboration of this document.



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**Considering** that overweight or obese children are more likely to remain obese in adulthood and suffer Non-communicable Diseases such as Diabetes or Cardiovascular diseases, at younger ages.

**Concerned** about rising levels of obesity in the Americas, affecting approximately 139 million people in 2005 (25% adults) and a rapid growth of 289 million in 2015 (39%) is projected, generating a deeply concern of the increasing rates of obesity in children.

**Motivated** by the need to strengthen the culture of obesity prevention at all education levels transversely reaching society as a whole;

**We represent the most important Group of Public Education in The Americas;** students, teachers, researchers, parents; physical education, health, communication, science and technology professionals; sportspersons, Non-Governmental Organization, political leaders, ministers, etc., representatives from 14 countries, so in total there are more than 900 million people in The Americas.

**Considering that** obesity, chronic diseases, addictions, sexually transmitted diseases, etc., **are critical preventable disorders**, the school context is an excellent environment for their prevention,

**Understanding that childhood obesity is an issue of public and health education, originated by multifactorial causes:** behaviors, education and the environment, where only cross sectorial actions are effective.



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**Aware that the lack of a culture and Public Education on disease prevention and health promotion is an economic issue** and its effects on health and welfare, may jeopardize the economic system of families and States.

**Understanding** that to stop and prevent the childhood obesity epidemic it requires sustained political commitments and collaboration of the various stakeholders, both public and private, Governments, international partners, civil society, Non-Governmental Organizations and the private sector have a key role in creating healthy environments and conditions of affordability and accessibility of healthier dietary choices for children and adolescents;

**We assume** our responsibility on Public Education, and we can make meaningful changes in the school context by implementing programs, actions, research; by relating key players linked to social, public, and private organizations that contribute to our objectives. Inserting a culture of prevention within the regional, multilateral and National Agendas.

**We know that among the main challenges of Health in the Public Education Context in The Americas the ones which stand out are:** *1. Physical Activity; 2. Healthy Eating; 3. Prevention of Addictions and 4. Sexual and Reproductive Education,*

**We agree that the School Community-Based Programs (SCBP) are sustainable and represent a successful solution for promoting healthy lifestyles and the culture of health, with a scientific qualitative and/or quantitative basis.** And it also has an effect



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on the family, environment, social cohesion, economy. They must be intersectorial, include the public, social, private, and local institutions which share a common view and are interested in sharing abilities and experience for the achievement of the objectives,

**We understand how important it is that the SCBPs' actions are adapted to the vulnerable population,** (visual, auditory, motor and mental) handicap, indigenous, migrating, and other populations.

**We confirm that** the promotion and practice of physical activities and sports (football, baseball, running, long walk, bicycling, among others) are factors which protect persons, groups, schools, families and which promote healthy social networks.

**The Ministers of Education and their representatives:**

**Take responsibility for continuing to work commitments in the above mentioned declarations, as well as to promote in The Americas the SCBPs locally, across the states, and regionally in a constant, sustainable, and long-term way by:**

1. Develop a common network of implementation, evaluation, which supports the long-term progress and sustainability of the SCBPs, generating information based on evidence, in the interests of everyone.



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2. Create interventions, guides and better teaching practices, specific for handicapped, indigenous students, and especially for populations in vulnerable situations.
3. Support and facilitate the exchange of information and communication policies and practices relate to the SCBP through entities, existing regional frameworks and mechanisms.
4. Encourage collaborative conversations and actions between ministers, experts, teachers, students, and parents, and representatives of the public, social, and private sector.
5. Support and encourage the leadership of the school authorities in the prevention and development of the well-being on students, teachers, and families.
6. Promote the practice of *1. Physical Activity; 2. Healthy Eating; 3. Prevention of Addictions and 4. Sexual and Reproductive Education*, through its inclusion as a core element of the educational curriculum.
7. Alert political entities about the impact of prevention at schools through SCBPs, a beneficial impact in all senses for our states.

**With the purpose of fairly achieving a sustainable, effective prevention, all the ministries of Public Education of the Americas are invited to support and sustain for the long-term the School Community-Based Programs SCBP.**