

CONCEPT NOTE

Reconciliation and Development Association- RADA

CSO Engagement Workshop on Healthy Food Policy Advocacy in Cameroon: The Health Tax Increase on Sugary Drinks and other Unhealthy Packaged Foods Based on the Evidence for Public and Development Benefits.

June 2, 2025

Background:

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are the leading causes of death and disability worldwide. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2021, at least 43 million people died from NCDs, equivalent to 75% of non-pandemic-related deaths globally, recording about 18 million deaths before age 70. The burden of NCDs increases steadily in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), with more than three-quarters (73%) of NCD-related premature deaths occurring in these countries. According to the 2022 WHO NCD Progress Monitor, NCDs claim between 100,000 and 450,000 lives annually in Africa's most populous nations and between 50% and 88% of annual deaths in smaller countries. It is predicted that by 2030, NCDs will become the leading cause of death in Africa.

In Cameroon, NCDs are among the leading causes of death, responsible for approximately 235,000 deaths, which represents 35% of all deaths among individuals over the age of 50 in 2016, and the estimated probability of dying from a major NCD before 70 years stands at 21.6% (WHO Statistics 2018). Unhealthy diets significantly contribute to the rising burden of NCDs in Cameroon, contributing factors include: rapid urbanisation, increased exposure to processed foods and sugary drinks, and traditional dietary habits rich in starch, oils, and sugars.

Over the years, RADA has been working on Advocacy for Healthy Food Policies in Cameroon, one of its key projects being Advocacy for a Health Tax Increase on Sugary Drinks and Unhealthy Packaged Foods Based on Evidence for Public Health and Development Benefits. This aims to promote public health by discouraging the consumption of unhealthy products that contain excess sugars, salt, fats, and calories, which are associated with an increasing burden of obesity, diabetes, and other chronic noncommunicable diseases in Cameroon. In this regard, RADA is organizing a workshop to leverage the power of civil society organizations as key stakeholders in supporting this advocacy.

Objective:

The main aim of this workshop is to strengthen the capacity and raise awareness of civil society organizations on the importance of the health tax and its impact on the population's health, as well as their role and power in this advocacy and campaign as part of the coalition for the promotion of healthy diets in Cameroon.

Specifically:

- Strengthen capacity, awareness, and understanding of CSOs on the negative effects of unhealthy diets and the importance of the tax in reducing the risk of developing NCDs.
- To emphasize the role of the civil society community in supporting the advocacy of a health tax, and also advocacy for other healthy food policies.

- Engage and build a strong coalition within civil society to support the development of healthier food policies and campaign for them in Cameroon.

Target Audience:

Leveraging on RADAs membership with the Cameroon Civil Society NCD Alliance (CASNA), this workshop will have about twenty to forty (20-30) civil society organizations working on health, both as members and non-members of CNCDA.

Venue: This workshop will be held at the CBC Mvan, Resource Centre in Yaounde.

Date: This workshop is scheduled for June 2, 2025, to begin at 9:00 am.

Content of the Workshop:

This workshop will comprise presentations focusing on the impact of unhealthy diets on the population within the Cameroon context, the importance of the health tax from an evidence-based perspective, the role that civil society organisations have to play in passing out a unified message to key stakeholders, and methods of engagement to support the advocacy and campaign. RADA shall develop campaign materials, messages, and establish campaign engagement mechanisms and methods; engage 40 CSOs to amplify the voices for promoting healthy diets, restricting unhealthy diets and advancing the taxation of the latter to improve public health in Cameroon.

Facilitators

- Ferdinand M. Sonyuy, a CSO Advocate and President of RADA, will highlight the importance of taxing SBBs and UPPs, the work on healthy food policy advocacy, and the role of the Media in Advocacy
- Dr Mappa Clarisse, a Lecturer at the University of Dschang and an epidemiologist Researcher at Hopit, provides insights on the landscape analysis and the importance of this policy advocacy.
- Professor Ndamsa Dickson, Lecturer at the University of Bamenda, and an Economist, will share the Health Economic Analysis of a tax increase on Sugary Drinks and Unhealthy Packaged foods in Cameroon.

Expected Outcomes:

- 1) Increased and improved understanding of the need to tax SSBs and UPPs in Cameroon.
- 2) Increased understanding of the role and power of CSOs in supporting advocacy for taxation.
- 3) Readiness and support of CSOs via a strong coalition on promoting healthy diets.
4. Directly involvement of CSOs in Advocacy and campaigning for the passing of a health tax on unhealthy packaged food products.

Proposed Agenda: Program Coordinator: : Claris Chenwi N.

Registration and welcome- 8:30 am

Opening Prayer-9:00 am

| S/N | Time | Activity | Person Responsible |
|-----|-----------|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | 9:00-9:05 | Opening Prayer | CBC Chaplain |

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| 2 | 9:05-9:25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome /Overview of the Session and Objectives Opening Remarks | Chenwi Claris, Project Coordinator, Taxation, RADA Mr. Ferdinand M. Sonyuy, CEO, RADA |
| 3 | 9:25-9:55 | Presentation of the context and landscape analysis of SSBs and UPPs in Cameroon. | Dr. Mappa Clarisse |
| 4 | 9:55-10:25 | Breakfast | All |
| 5 | 10:25-10:55 | Presentation on the Health Economic Analysis of a tax increase on Sugary Drinks and Unhealthy Packaged foods in Cameroon | Prof Ndamsa Dickson |
| 6 | 11:55-12:15 | Icebreaker | Ngueubou Merveille |
| 7 | 12:15-14: 25 | Session on the importance of taxing SSBs: Campaign and Advocacy Engagement | Mr. Ferdinand M. Sonyuy Ngueubou Merveille Marlen Wango |
| 9 | 14:25 -14:35 | Question and Answer Session | Ferdinant M. Sonyuy Chenwi Claris |
| 10 | 14:35-14:40 | Closing Remarks | -Ferdinant M. Sonyuy |
| 11 | 14:40- 15:00 | Networking session and refreshments | -All |