

The European Commission supports Health Sector Reform in St. Vincent & the Grenadines

Today, the European Union has agreed to provide St. Vincent and the Grenadines with EUR 6.69 million (EC\$23M) from the European Development Fund to assist with the modernisation of the Health Sector.

"We are proud to be associated with this initiative which is in keeping with the EU principles pertaining to the right to health and the focus on fighting chronic non-communicable diseases" said Ambassador Valeriano Diaz, Head of the European Union Delegation to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean.

The aim of the project is to improve the quality and quantity of health care delivery in St. Vincent and the Grenadines by supporting the government's public sector reform process in the health sector, thereby improving the potential of the population to live healthier and more productive lives. This will be achieved through the delivery of better quality as well as increased and more efficient health services.

The national priorities in health in St. Vincent and the Grenadines include a reduction in morbidity and mortality from selected diseases especially the chronic non-communicable diseases; strengthening of health systems management in conjunction with development and implementation of a health management information system; implementation of the health promotion strategy; the development of human resources management and improvement of the health infrastructure.

One critical focus of the reform will be the development and implementation of a Wellness Promotion Strategy by the Ministry of Health targeting the prevention, early detection and, as required, the clinical management of chronic non-communicable diseases by patients and providers. Priority will be placed on obesity, diabetes and hypertension.

Indeed, the challenge to public health in St. Vincent and the Grenadines has evolved from an approach focussed upon control of infectious diseases to one emphasising the control of chronic non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension that are mostly conditioned by lifestyle practices.

This is the first time that the EU becomes active in the Health Sector in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and the project has been designed to complement the programs being implemented by the Pan American Health Organisation/World Health Programme and the World Bank.

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