



PARALLEL SESSION 1.3

THE COMMERCIAL DETERMINANTS OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES



| BACKGROUND

Key risk factors of NCDs are strongly associated with patterns of consumption and easy access to unhealthy products. Corporate influence is usually exerted through five main channels: increasing control over production and investment by large corporates; increasing control over marketing, particularly marketing to children, to increase the appeal and acceptability of unhealthy products; lobbying, which can negatively influence policies related to plain packaging and minimum drinking ages; corporate social responsibility strategies, to enhance positive image and extensive supply chains to exert influence all over the world.

From the NCD perspective, health outcomes are determined by influencing the social environment in which people live and work: the availability, cultural practices and prices of unhealthy products. Hence, the rise of non-communicable diseases is a manifestation of a global economic system that currently prioritises wealth creation over health creation. Many problems and solutions to address the risk factors lie outside the health sector, in the domains of finance, trade and investment policies.

Commercial determinants of health are a sub-set of the social determinants of health with which they interact, such as education, occupation, income, ethnicity, race, access to healthcare and structural determinants (socio-economic and political context) and affect individuals throughout the life course, as they shape disease risk factors and ultimately disease across the life span. The life-course approach to analysing the social determinants also provides an opportunity to identify potential entry points for action.

This session will entail a detailed analysis of the key commercial drivers of NCDs. It will present the main strategies and approaches used by the private sector to promote choices detrimental to health. These will include marketing, trade and foreign direct investment. The session will also examine the role played by different institutions in facilitating or regulating these, especially Governments, as well as other stakeholders including multilateral organizations and civil society.

| OBJECTIVES

- To analyse the role industry plays in the commercial determinants of NCDs, including food/beverage, tobacco, alcohol and extractive industries
- To showcase a few exemplary interventions that have successfully addressed selected commercial determinants (E.g. regulation of marketing, including to children, and labelling of sugary beverages, unhealthy foods, tobacco and alcohol; enactment of regulations to contain pollution from mines, power plants, factories and cars).

Some of the questions to address may include:

- What are the commercial drivers influencing the risk factors of NCDs in different contexts? What is the role of industry (e.g. food and beverage, tobacco, alcohol, extractive industries) in influencing the commercial determinants?
- What are the common strategies of marketing to children and adolescents (e.g. particularly digital marketing) and mechanisms to reduce exposure to NCD risk factors, notably alcohol, tobacco and unhealthy foods and beverages?
- How have governments engaged with industry to mitigate the risk to health and enhance public health benefits? What has worked and what has not?
- What is the role played by different institutions in facilitating or regulating the commercial determinants, including Governments, and other stakeholders such as WTO, multilateral organizations and civil society?





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Nicholas Freudenberg is Distinguished Professor of Public Health at the City University of New York Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy, where he also directs the CUNY Urban Food Policy Institute. For the last 40 years, he has developed and evaluated policies and programs to improve population health and reduce health inequities in New York City and elsewhere. His recent book *Lethal but Legal: Corporations, Consumption and Protecting Public Health* (Oxford, 2015) examines the health and social impact of business practices such as marketing and retail distribution and political practices such as lobbying and litigation of multinational corporations in six sectors: food and beverages, firearms, automobiles, alcohol, pharmaceuticals and tobacco. He has also worked with young people in East and Central Harlem to design and launch local countermarketing campaigns against unhealthy food. Freudenberg has published more than 150 articles and reports on a variety of topics including corporate practices and health, urban health, social movements and health and strategies to improve urban food environments. His work has been supported by the National Institutes of Health, the US Centers for Disease Control, the New York City Department of Health, the Open Society Institute, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and others. He is also the founder and director of Corporations and Health Watch, a global network of scholars and activists focused on the impact of corporate practices on health.

