
Accelerating action to reduce the harmful use of alcohol



The NCD Alliance welcomes a momentous decision agreed at the 146th WHO Executive Board that will support Member States to accelerate action to reduce alcohol harm.

We applaud Member States' dedication to negotiations to secure a [decision](#) [1] which lays out a strong way forward, and we particularly commend the leadership of Thailand and other co-sponsors of the decision. The decision, adopted by consensus, will **ensure alcohol harm will be given greater time and attention by the WHO and Member States**. Now is indeed the time to do better, and the time to deliver action that will dramatically reduce the loss of lives and livelihoods attributable to alcohol.

We are particularly pleased to see the EU co-sponsor the decision and call on all EU Member States to walk the talk by **tackling alcohol as a carcinogen in the EU cancer plan announced earlier this week on World Cancer Day**. The [EU Cancer Plan](#) [2] which so far overlooks alcohol as a major risk factor for premature death, in the heaviest alcohol drinking region in the world.

The [Global Alcohol Strategy](#) [3], now 10-years old, requires much stronger implementation if the world is to achieve NCD and SDG targets for alcohol harm reduction. The proposed new Action Plan holds great potential to **provide a stronger whole-of-government and inter-agency framework for accelerated action, accountability and impact**. It is also an opportunity to address barriers to progress, such as by ensuring a robust monitoring and accountability framework and providing guidance on managing alcohol industry conflict of interest and interference.

It is important that the Action Plan **addresses industry interference as a barrier to alcohol policy progress**, as it has been acutely apparent that throughout recent months and days, the alcohol industry were actively lobbying Member States in efforts to dilute existing evidence based recommendations policies which are known to reduce alcohol harm, as well as undermining efforts by Member States to secure a stronger global response to alcohol. It is paramount that the alcohol industry are **not allowed to dilute the enormous potential of the forthcoming Action Plan to save lives from their products**.

We are also very pleased to see that attention will be given to the impact of cross-border alcohol marketing, particularly its impact on youth and adolescents. Marketing of health harming products such as alcohol and unhealthy food and drinks is insidious and inadequately regulated.

The evolving marketing and sponsorship landscape demands far greater scrutiny and regulation to protect the health and wellbeing of people across the life-course.

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We look forward to working with WHO, governments and other relevant stakeholders without vested interests to protect millions of people from alcohol-related harms including NCDs like cancer, cardiovascular disease, neurological disorders and mental health conditions.

The time is up for overlooking alcohol's dire impact on health and development - it's time to act and save lives.

Learn more about the decision, statements, deliberations and context in this [article by Movendi International](#) [4].

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- [1] http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB146/B146_CONF1-en.pdf
- [2] https://ec.europa.eu/health/non_communicable_diseases/events/ev_20200204_en
- [3] https://www.who.int/substance_abuse/activities/gsrhua/en/
- [4] <https://movendi.ngo/news/2020/02/10/who-countries-request-accelerated-action-on-alcohol-harm/>
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