

IOGT International Official Statement WHO EB 144

5.1 Proposed Program Budget

23.01.2019

Honorable Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, Director General, I thank you for the opportunity to address you today.

This statement is delivered on behalf of IOGT International supported by the NCD Alliance and Vital Strategies. We commend the Secretariat for highlighting the need to support countries in developing and implementing **pro-poor and pro-health fiscal policies**. However, these measures should not be considered **additions** to mass media and health literacy campaigns but as **corner stones of public health policy making**, domestic resource mobilization and cost-effective investments in health promotion. For instance, alcohol taxation is a triple-win measure with untapped potential to improve health, promote sustainable development and contribute to economic productivity.

We call on Member States and WHO to ensure adequate resource allocation to meet **increasing demand for technical assistance** regarding health promotion taxation.

The members of IOGT International are deeply troubled by the role the program budget assigns to the private sector in general and the alcohol industry in particular in reducing risk factors they create in the first place. This fundamental conflict of interest is not addressed.

The alcohol industry **derails, obstructs, undermines WHO's best buys**, such as health promotion taxation, to protect their private interests. The alcohol industry earns major profits from the harmful use of alcohol, with 65% of sales in high-



income countries and 76% of sales in middle-income countries resulting from Heavy Episodic Alcohol Consumption.

Engagement with the alcohol industry should thus **remain limited to their core roles** as stipulated by the WHO Global Alcohol Strategy and should by no means extend to opening up national engagement mechanisms. We urge the Director General, the Secretariat and Member States to **reconsider and rephrase**. We also urge the Secretariat to improve language that is not using the correct technical terms.

IOGT International pledges to **continue and increase our support** to build technical capacity in countries to implement the best buys and we welcome the new WHO-led SAFER initiative as an important development that will help achieve the triple billion target.

I thank you for your attention.

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