



**IOGT International Official Statement**  
**WHA72 Agenda item 11.4**  
**Implementation of the 2030 Agenda For Sustainable Development 21.05.2019**

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Honorable Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, I thank you for the opportunity to address you on behalf of IOGT International. We welcome the comprehensive report and commend WHO for its leadership on all levels to help achieve the SDGs.

We **note with concern** that **progress on several health-related SDGs, among them alcohol, has stalled**, and could even be reversed.

**Alcohol harm is a major obstacle to development**, but remains routinely disregarded. In fact, alcohol consumption and related harm is projected to increase, not decrease, until 2030. This is a serious threat to the SDGs, as sub-saharan Africa already now suffers from the heaviest relative burden of alcohol-related disease and injury. At the same time, an adequate response would generate major benefits across multiple SDGs.

In this spirit, **we propose two urgent actions** for WHO and Member States:

- 1) Ensure that **cross-cutting risk factors** are **systematically** identified and coherently **addressed**. A systematic multi-sectoral approach within and beyond the health sector is still not a reality. But poverty eradication, the elimination of violence, sustainable consumption or building more economically productive societies cannot be achieved without systematically addressing SDG 3.5. We urge WHO and Member States to revise approaches in this regard. The new WHO-led SAFER initiative should galvanize momentum and support.
- 2) **Accelerate the pivot to prevention**. Public policies and other evidence-based prevention measures are **economically smart, scientifically sound and absolutely vital for the SDGs**. For example, the alcohol policy best buys yield a return of \$9 for every \$1 invested. Evidence-based prevention programs help



avert loss of human, social and economic potential and promote sustainable development.

3) **Leverage alcohol and other health promotion taxation** to promote development through reducing the alcohol burden, improving health and investing in comprehensive primary care. **Strengthening the health system's ability to respond to alcohol harm** in people, families and communities helps tackling the NCDs burden, reduce co-morbidities, and mitigate alcohol as obstacle to development.

We call on WHO and Member States for stronger action in this neglected area.

I thank you for your attention.

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