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OFFICIAL STATEMENT

WHO EB146 AGENDA ITEM 7.2:

REVIEW AND WAY FORWARD, WHO GLOBAL ALCOHOL STRATEGY

(EB146/7 and EB146/7 Add.1)

05.02.2020

This is a historic conversation. It matters. And it's personal. For me. For our members around the world. And probably for many people here. That's the nature of alcohol harm: it's of such magnitude that it affects us all, directly or indirectly.

Consider that a 10% reduction of overall alcohol use would reduce alcohol-related cancer deaths by 9% - meaning 57,300 fewer deaths.

But our governments are not even achieving this modest target. Trends are going the wrong direction.

Over the last 10 years, since the adoption of the Global Alcohol Strategy, we have seen one conflict play out time and again: private interests versus the public interest. Private interests seek to undermine WHO's normative guidance and alcohol policy best buys in pursuit of profits. The public interest seeks to protect women from alcohol violence, or create broad awareness of the alcohol-cancer link.

This is also due to interference by the alcohol industry. Evidence is overwhelming that the alcohol industry has not acted responsibly in the last decade; they continue to rely on heavy alcohol use for most of their profits.

To ensure that the future is more successful, we recommend WHO and Member States the following:

1. End the dialogue meetings with the alcohol industry and pave the way to a global binding treaty;
2. Make alcohol control the priority it should be – through better resourcing, better mainstreaming alcohol policy across health topics,

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- better supporting Member States with technical guidance and protection against industry interference;
3. Create a sustainable global and regional infrastructure – consisting of focal point networks, best practice exchange, country missions, and high-level events;
 4. Promote public awareness of alcohol harm and policy solutions.

These proposals are best operationalized through the development of a global action plan and through the work of an expert group.

But urgent action must be taken and commitments should be stepped up immediately - by WHO and Member States.

I thank you for your attention.

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