

IOGT International Official Statement
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Honorable Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

It's an honor to address you today and convey community concerns from our worldwide membership. Thank you for the opportunity.

IOGT International congratulates UNAIDS for the report on barriers to and effective funding of community-led responses but we miss one crucial barrier that is not really addressed.

Let me start with an example: Recently in Uganda, the government adopted a 2% tax levy on alcohol to help fund the HIV/ AIDS programs. To a large part it has been the members of IOGT International, i.e. community leaders for the prevention and control of alcohol-related harm, who made this happen through persistent community-based and community-led advocacy together with other local groups. This example illustrates a reality that is unfortunately not really reflected in the report.

In the reports' findings and recommendations we lack a clear analysis of the need to better address cross-cutting risk factors, such as alcohol, in the community response to the HIV/ AIDS epidemic and to support communities that are doing this.

Evidence, for example from the 2018 WHO Global Alcohol Status Report, shows that alcohol is a major risk factor for HIV/ AIDS. 33.000 HIV/ AIDS deaths are caused by alcohol – and yet the communities, often the most marginalized and vulnerable people in our societies, remain largely left alone with this complex issue.



In the era of the 2030 Agenda, we need a comprehensive approach to cross-cutting risk factors and co-morbidities. Secondly, we need to support community-based efforts where this is already being implemented and scale up best practices. And thirdly, UNAIDS, the wider UN system, donor countries and agencies as well as Member States in general should recognize that investing in alcohol taxation and other alcohol policy best buys are proven investments that generate considerable returns across numerous SDGs, especially SDG 3.3. These returns on investment can and should be used to support community-led efforts to help end the HIV/ AIDS epidemic by tackling risk factors and co-morbidities.

IOGT International stands ready to share our expertise and resources in communities around the world to help advance this urgently needed work.

I thank you for your attention.

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