

Date
Time
Place

May 23, 2022
12.30pm-2.00pm CEST
Rue de Vermont 37-39, 1202 Geneva
Permanent Representation of Slovenia

TOWARDS AMBITIOUS ALCOHOL POLICY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Co-sponsors:



Background

The decade after the adoption of the WHO Global Alcohol Strategy has not yielded significant progress in the development of alcohol policy solutions and reductions in alcohol harms.

Alcohol's contribution to the global burden of disease has been increasing. In high income countries alcohol use is the second fastest growing risk factor and in LMICs it is the fourth fastest rising risk factor for the global disease burden.

Alcohol is the second largest risk factor for disease burden in the age group 10-24 years. Alcohol is the largest risk factor for disease burden in the group 25-49 years.

With some notable exceptions, most countries have failed to develop public health oriented alcohol policy in the last decade. Modelling forecasts that global targets to reduce alcohol use and harm will not be met.

- Without action, Africa could see an increase in both the absolute number and proportion of people consuming alcohol, the amount consumed per capita and heavy episodic alcohol use.
- Southeast Asia has seen a 29% increase in per capita alcohol use since 2010.
- Out of 51 countries in the WHO European Region, only 16 reached the target of a 10% reduction of overall alcohol consumption between 2010-19. But 17 countries saw increases in alcohol use. Almost no progress was achieved since 2016 in the implementation of Best Buys alcohol policy solutions.
- Alcohol remains highly affordable in the WHO Americas region. Between 2012-16, per capita consumption among alcohol users only increased, with 1 in 5 alcohol users consuming heavily.

In the consultation process for the development of the draft WHO Global Alcohol Action Plan many countries have expressed the need for more ambitious and concerted action on alcohol to reach the NCDs and SDGs targets.

During the coming years, implementation of the new WHO Global Alcohol Action Plan will provide opportunities, but also challenges to save lives and improve health. The action plan is set to be adopted by the 75th World Health Assembly.

Objectives

This event aims to take stock of key challenges in developing and implementing evidence-based and ambitious alcohol policy solutions. How can those challenges be overcome?

The event will map the opportunities for advancing public health oriented alcohol policy with the help of the new WHO Global Alcohol Action Plan. What's the role of alcohol policy to help build back better after COVID-19 and to help achieve the sustainable development goals?

The discussion will chart benefits of cross-border and international collaboration among member states, and the potential of technical support and normative guidance from the World Health Organization.

The event will outline the role of communities in the implementation of the global alcohol action plan to help ensure ambitious action and achieve progress that benefits all.

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PROGRAM

Moderator: Prof. Ilona Kickbusch, founding director and chair of the Global Health Centre at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva

Welcome and opening by the host

Janez Poklukar Minister of Health of Slovenia **Opening remarks**

Prof. Ilona Kickbusch Moderator **Setting the scene**

High-level segment with introductory remarks: Why does alcohol policy matter?

Tanel Kiik Minister of Health and Labour of Estonia

Dr. José Ruales Viceminister of Governance and Public Health Surveillance, Ecuador

Dr. L. S. Somatunga Additional Secretary, Public Health Services of the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka

Daniels Pavluts Minister of Health of Latvia

Dr. Emmanuel Ankrah Odame Director Policy planning Monitoring and Evaluation, Ministry of Health Ghana

Dr Roshan Pokhrel Ministry of Health and Population, Nepal

Interactive panel discussion with perspectives from Member States and civil society: How to take the global alcohol action plan forward: Gaps, challenges, opportunities, solutions?

Dr. Vesna Kerstin Petric Director-General, Directorate for Public Health, Ministry of Health, Slovenia

Dr. Chawetsan Namwat Director, Division of Disease Control in Emergency Situation, Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand

Audrius Ščeponavičius Director of Public Health Department, Ministry of Health, Lithuania

Prof. Jozef Šuvada Prime Minister's Adviser on Health, Advocacy and Science, Slovak Republic

Kristina Sperkova International President, Movendi International

Simon Schönbeck Board Member, UNF, Sweden

Dag Rekve Senior Technical Officer, Alcohol, Drugs and Addictive Behaviors, World Health Organisation

Prof. Ilona Kickbusch Moderator **Wrap up and Closing**

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