



WHO FORUM ON ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND ADDICTIVE BEHAVIORS
Geneva 26-28 July 2017

WMA Statement

The World Medical Association is the global federation of National Medical Associations representing the millions of physicians worldwide. We have a long-standing commitment towards the reduction of the harmful impact of alcohol on health and society and we actively supported the adoption of the Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol adopted by the World Health Assembly in 2010. In 2015, the WMA endorsed the Declaration on alcohol which completes usefully its policy in addressing the problem of alcohol related harm.

The WMA notes with concerns the heavy burden of disease and injury associated with alcohol consumption. This is a critical challenge to global public health. To make meaningful reduction of the harmful impact of alcohol and other non-communicable diseases, we believe that it is critical to take action on the broader factors which influence people's health behaviour: these social, cultural, environmental and economic factors are the major influences on quality of life, good health and length of disability-free life expectancy. They also determine the magnitude of health inequalities.

Addressing the social determinants of health that are contributing to the increase in alcohol burden is beyond the health sector alone. Strategies of prevention demand the collaborative engagement of multiple sectors such as finance, trade, education or recreation. It therefore does not limit itself to the health target of the SDGs 2030, but extends to the overall global goals to end poverty, fight inequalities and protect our planet.

We recommend developing all-inclusive policies addressing the root causes of alcohol patterns as well as strengthening health systems to identify and improve a country's capacity to develop policy and lead actions that target alcohol problems.

In addition, we recommend the following priorities:

1. Regulate the affordability, accessibility and availability of alcohol, in particular through rigorous pricing policy and restriction of the alcohol marketing;
2. Support and promote the role of health and medical professionals in early identification, screening and treatment of harmful alcohol use;
3. Raise awareness of alcohol-related harm through public education and information campaigns;
4. Foster multi-disciplinary collaboration and coordinated inter-sectoral action.
5. Limit the role of the alcohol industry in alcohol policy development as its commercial priorities are in direct conflict with the public health objective of reducing overall alcohol consumption.
