



**2019 WHO FORUM ON ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOURS**  
**Geneva 27-28 June 2019**

**WMA Statement**

The World Medical Association is the global federation of 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 WHO Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol in 2010.

Alcohol consumption constitutes a major trigger for NCDs, communicable diseases, violence, and injuries and we note with great concerns the limited progress made to reverse the current trend since the adoption of the Global Strategy in 2010.

We recommend prioritizing the development of concrete and targeted strategies to prevent and reduce the harmful use of alcohol and related health, social and economic consequences, taking into consideration the following key issues:

1. Social, cultural, environmental and economic factors are major determinants on the quality of life, good health and life expectancy. In tackling the alcohol burden, we recommend a **holistic approach**, beyond the health sector alone, allowing action on those broader factors with the collaborative engagement of multiple sectors such as finance, trade, taxes or education. Strategies to reduce and prevent alcohol abuse require striving beyond the health target of the SDGs 2030 to reach the overall global goals to end poverty and fight inequalities.
2. In order to protect alcohol control measures, we recommend that **alcohol be classified as an extraordinary commodity and that measures affecting the supply, distribution, sale, advertising, sponsorship, promotion of or investment in alcoholic beverages be excluded from international trade agreements**. Health impact assessments of trade agreements constitute a necessity in order to protect, promote and prioritize public health over commercial interests.
3. Finally, **health professionals** as well as medical and social services must be provided with the education, resources and support necessary to prevent harmful use of alcohol and treat people with alcohol dependence. Health professionals also play a key role in education, advocacy and research.

We welcome the SAFER initiative and hope that this new WHO-led roadmap will address those issues and give a new impetus to Member States and other relevant stakeholders to address in a comprehensive way this public health threat.

\*\*\*