



*Global Alcohol Policy Alliance*



## **Global Alcohol Policy Conference 2015**

### **“Momentum for Change: Research and Advocacy Reducing Alcohol Harm”**

#### **DECLARATION**

We, the participants of the fourth Global Alcohol Policy Conference "Momentum for Change: Research and Advocacy Reducing Alcohol Harm", gathered in Edinburgh, Scotland on 7-9 October 2015, to reaffirm our commitment to evidence-based actions to reduce alcohol-related harm worldwide.

We recognize that alcohol consumption causes 3.3 million deaths per year, is the fifth leading cause of death and disability worldwide, and is the leading cause of death and disability for young people ages 15 to 24 in much of the world. We also recognize the harms alcohol use causes to non-drinkers, including violence and injury, alcohol-related birth defects, and impact on family budgets. Given the adverse consequences of these and other alcohol-related harms for development, we note the importance of a specific indicator of alcohol consumption or harm in monitoring progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

In light of the close relationship between alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm, rising alcohol consumption and alcohol industry marketing activity in populous and rapidly growing economies, and the clear evidence of effectiveness of population-wide measures to curb alcohol consumption in reducing harm, we call on all parties to support global action to implement those measures.

We recognize the rights of children to grow up safe from alcohol-related harm, and call upon national governments to implement their commitments in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other human rights agreements, to ensure that children are protected from alcohol-related harm and that alcohol control policies and legislation reflect those commitments.

Specifically, we call on governments and civil society around the world to support and implement WHO's global strategies on alcohol and on non-communicable diseases, focusing on the most effective and cost-effective actions, including the three “best buys” – increasing the price of alcohol, reducing its physical availability, and restricting its marketing – as well as effective implementation and enforcement of proven strategies for reducing drink-driving.

We note with concern the ramifications of global and regional trade agreements for evidence-based public health policies regarding alcohol, and call on all parties to explore mechanisms for protecting the ability of governments at all levels to implement these policies, through the strengthening of existing instruments or the negotiation of a public health-oriented global agreement to address alcohol-related harm, independent of commercial interests in alcohol, that could be binding on its signatories, and be effective in

preventing and reducing the global toll of alcohol use on human health, safety and quality of life.

We call attention in particular to the urgent need to restrict alcohol marketing in all its forms. The evidence is clear that exposure to alcohol marketing increases the likelihood and quantity of young people's drinking. It normalizes alcohol consumption and encourages the loss of abstinence in growing economies and populations where drinking prevalence has historically been low. We also strongly recommend the implementation and evaluation of minimum pricing for alcohol where appropriate.

We call on Member States, in setting and implementing their public health policies with respect to alcohol control, to act to protect their alcohol policies from commercial and other vested interests of the alcohol industry.

We call on the global philanthropic community to recognize alcohol's significant role in injuries, in infectious diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis, in cancer and a wide range of non-communicable diseases, and in mental health and social harms, and to provide funding to national and international NGOs and research organizations commensurate with alcohol's burden on health worldwide.