

Accelerating action to reduce the harmful use of alcohol

The Executive Board, having considered the report on the political declaration of the third high-level meeting of the General Assembly on the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases,¹ particularly Annex 3, entitled “Implementation of the global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol,” and the report on the findings of the consultative process on implementation of the global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol and the way forward;²

Noting with grave concern that, globally, the harmful use of alcohol causes approximately 3 million deaths every year; and that, despite the reduction of age-standardized alcohol-attributable deaths and disability-adjusted life years and of heavy episodic drinking, the overall burden of disease and injuries attributable to alcohol consumption remains unacceptably high; and emphasizing that there is sufficient evidence for the carcinogenicity of alcohol and a causal contribution of the use of alcohol to the development of several types of cancers in humans;³

Recognizing the continued relevance of the global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol and further recognizing that resources and capacities for its implementation in WHO and some Member States do not correspond to the magnitude of the problems;

Expressing deep concern that alcohol marketing, advertising and promotional activity, including through cross-border marketing, targeting youth and adolescents, influences their drinking initiation and intensity of drinking;³

Noting that some WHO offices do not offer alcohol as a practice to accelerate action to reduce the harmful use of alcohol,

Decided to request the Director-General:

- (1) to develop an action plan (2022–2030) to effectively implement the global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol as a public health priority, in consultation with Member States and relevant stakeholders, for consideration by the Seventy-fifth World Health Assembly, through the Executive Board at its 150th session in 2022;

¹ Document EB146/7.

² Document EB146/7 Add.1.

³ Global status report on alcohol and health 2018. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2018 (<https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/274603/9789241565639-eng.pdf?ua=1>, accessed 7 February 2020).

- (2) to develop a technical report on the harmful use of alcohol related to cross-border alcohol marketing, advertising and promotional activities, including those targeting youth and adolescents, before the 150th session of the Executive Board, which could contribute to the development of the action plan;
- (3) to adequately resource the work on the harmful use of alcohol;
- (4) to review the global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol and report to the Executive Board at its 166th session in 2030 for further action.

Twelfth meeting, 7 February 2020
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