

GAPA recommendations on the Global Alcohol Action Plan 2022-2030 to strengthen implementation of the Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol

Global Alcohol Policy Alliance (GAPA) is a network of non-governmental organisations and people working in public health promoting science-based policies independent of commercial interests to reduce alcohol-related harm worldwide. GAPA, along with its regional alliances, supported the adoption of the *WHO Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol* in 2010. Alcohol consumption constitutes a major trigger for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), communicable diseases, violence, and injuries and we note with great concern, the uneven and limited progress made to reverse the current trend since 2010. More importantly, contrary to industry claims, recent research has shown that there is no safe level of alcohol consumption¹ and there is no safe level of alcohol consumption for the heart.²

The present draft Alcohol action plan will be discussed at the World Health Assembly (WHA75) 22-28 May 2022. It is a compromise document developed in a consultative process with Member States and Non-State Actors over two years and recommended for adoption by the WHO Executive Board meeting (EB150) in January 2022. GAPA and its regional alliances have contributed actively to the consultations. Given this background and its bundling into the NCD suite of documents, we support the adoption of the compromise text as it is. If, however, the matter is opened for negotiations in the WHA, GAPA recommends promoting the following in the action plan:

1. regular reporting to the WHA: *GAPA recommends that a report to the World Health Assembly be made biennially to assess the progress made, as is the case with the tobacco status report.*
2. strengthening support for Member States to manage interference in policy making by the alcohol industry: *It is our opinion that economic operators have no place in the action plan. GAPA calls instead for WHO to develop specific guidance to Member States on how to protect alcohol policy development, implementation, and evaluation from alcohol industry interference, given the industry's deliberate efforts to water down the Action Plan.*³
3. protecting recommendations for the Best Buy alcohol policies and the WHO SAFER measures: *GAPA recommends a more ambitious action plan including the most cost-effective regulatory and fiscal measures to reduce harmful alcohol consumption. We further call for health impact assessments of trade agreements, as a key necessity to protect, promote and prioritize public health over commercial interests.*
4. and reinstating the target of a 20% reduction in alcohol per capita consumption (APC) by 2030. *GAPA strongly supports returning to the target of a 20% reduction in APC, but as a minimum the present element of alcohol per capita consumption in the composite indicator needs to be protected.*

¹ GBD 2016 Alcohol Collaborators. (2018). [Alcohol use and burden for 195 countries and territories, 1990–2016: a systematic analysis for the Global Burden of Disease Study 2016](#). *Lancet* 392:1015-1035.

² World Heart Federation. (2022). [The impact of alcohol consumption on cardiovascular health: Myths and measures](#).

³ Dwyer R, Room R, O'Brien P, Cook M, Gleeson D. (2022). [Alcohol industry submissions to the WHO 2020 Consultation on the development of an Alcohol Action Plan: A content and thematic Analysis](#). A report for The Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education.