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GLOBAL ALCOHOL STRATEGY REPORT



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Message from our Team

This paper in response to combatting paternalistic lifestyle regulations across the globe. The WHO is currently working on a new Global Alcohol Strategy, which might prove to be a significant departure from its current (pretty good) strategy that focuses on the harmful use of alcohol and recommended harm reduction measures, better healthcare, drink-driving laws, etc

The working document for the new strategy was published recently and it takes a more neo-prohibitionist approach. It focuses heavily on taxation and other pricing measures, and recommends a total ban on alcohol advertising. It stresses the need to reduce overall alcohol consumption, not just harmful consumption. It does not discuss the unintended consequences of regulation and taxation on the illicit trade. It raises the possibility of a global anti-alcohol treaty modelled on the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and even suggests a global alcohol tax 'with the use of the money raised to be governed internationally' (presumably by the WHO).

Compilation and synthesis undertaken to produce this document were done with the Liberty Sparks under the department of Research and Education. The team of three experts volunteers led by Evans Exaud, Elias Mutani and Emmanuel Ulomi run a desk research and reviewing various documents and coming up with this paper.

We thank all of them for their dedication and tireless efforts they put into this work. We made use of different reports and synthesized them to produce this report and made the judgment on what to consider during creation of WHO global Strategy. We take responsibility for and on behalf of Liberty Sparks to defend and present these recommendations to decision-makers and see changes happening.

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Introduction

Already, the alcohol industry today faces relatively many restrictions regarding availability and rules on consumption.

Different countries have set a minimum age, opening and closing hours of pubs and liquor shops, various measures in drink and driving through their alcohol regulations which is guided by the global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol. In Norway, for instance, to buy wine, the minimum age is 18 years. For spirits, it is 20 years. Beer can be available in most shops but is only sold before 8 pm on weekdays or 6 pm on Saturdays. For wine, spirits or strong beer, one must visit one of the Vinmonopolet outlets, found in most large cities and towns. On setting the scene, the working document for the development of an action plan cites an increased number of countries that have written alcohol policy with Africa and the Americas lagging behind. No, much progress happened in 8 years (2010 – 2018), despite many regulations introduced as an option for harm reduction yet the working document, seem to retire all the efforts including its initiative and bring about the new set of strategies that are more harm and limit human choices and doesn't help either developed or developing countries and because of the extreme direct effect of excessive taxation, it would affect the economic stability of countries. While there is room for approach-based change to save foreign investment and world economics.

Focus area :



1: STRENGTHENING RESTRICTIONS ON ALCOHOL AVAILABILITY

The Neo-prohibitionist approach influences the market climate as it is a win-lose approach, and the countries should consider the positive economic impact of the alcoholic industry as seen in Alcoholic Worldwide global survey projections before agreeing to anything. The projections show how the alcoholic industry is important for the economic perspective, irrespective of the health consequences for the consumer. It's time for WHO to stop viewing alcohol in its end-product form. Instead, they should see it's a supply chain with different activities, people, entities and resources. Advocates for strengthening restrictions of alcohol availability should see millions of wheat and barley farmers, manufacturers of fertilizers, the fleet of trucks for supplying resources and distribution, manufacturers of glass bottles and utilities - water, electricity, not to mention sewage services. In 2006, in the European Union (EU), the spirits sector directly employed about 50,000 people and indirectly 250,000 people. On the brewing side, the 2,800 European breweries provided jobs for around 164,000 employees and indirectly 2.6 million jobs (comparable to the total workforce of countries such as Slovakia, Finland or Denmark). For each job offered in the brewing sector, it is estimated that one job is generated in retail, two in the supplying sectors and almost twelve in the hospitality sector (ICAP). Only a few other sectors can employ (direct or indirect) a large part of the population or gain the services from other a few in such huge numbers. Any further restriction on the availability of alcohol will affect employment and welfare of the society.



HARM-BASED APPROACH VERSUS CONSUMPTION-BASED APPROACH

The Global Strategy 2020 shares the mysterious reality that harmful alcohol use has a serious effect on public health and is perceived to be one of the key risk factors for poor health worldwide, harmful alcohol use is a substantial contributor to the global burden of disease and is classified as the third leading risk factor for premature deaths and disabilities in the world and other diseases. It's time now for the WHO to have a clear focus and choose whether to reduce the harmful use of alcohol as a strategy to reduce health-related risk or uses of alcohol? WHO agreed that Informally and illegally production of alcohol amounts to about 25% of total alcohol consumption per capita worldwide, and in some jurisdictions exceeds half all alcohol consumed by the population. 25% is a lot for health and death related source experience. In Tanzania the share of traditional alcoholic beverages, 'homemade' or 'informal-sector' drinks is around 2.4 billion litres a year or more. This accounts for 90% of the alcohol consumed in the United Republic of Tanzania. This illicit business has caused death and other disease-related such as kidney failure and cancer that turn to death. In India, a northern state of Punjab 105 people died from poisoning linked to toxic liquor, In Philippines, a town of Rizal in the province of Laguna, southern of Manila 8 people died because of coconut wine that believed to contain high levels of methanol and 300 were hospitalized. In Mexico, 35 people died after drinking methanol the latest in a series of mass bad alcohol poisoning after the country banned beer and liquor selling. In particular, according to Nikander, et al., (1992) the health problems related to excessive alcohol consumption in Africa seem to differ from those found in the Western countries. This may be because of yet undiscovered reasons, such as genetic or nutritional factors, impurities in local brews, and consumption of alcoholic beverages containing other pharmacologically harmful and even cancer-causing substances that stand as a reality.



ENFORCE BANS OR COMPREHENSIVE RESTRICTIONS ON ALCOHOL ADVERTISING, SPONSORSHIP AND PROMOTION:

The working document mentions alcohol advertising relatively many times. Whereas the 2010 Global Strategy made recommends about the content of alcohol advertising, the working document proposes a total ban however most people view alcohol in its end product form, in a bottle, employing a handful bartenders with little use of the utility. Only a few can see its supply chain with different activities, people, entities and resources. The taxes extracted from alcohol retailers and produce are enough to for the state not to intervene in their rights to commercial speech and get rewards for the efforts and their investment in this competitive market. In Tanzania, TBL is paying over 504 Billion Tanzania Shillings as tax apart from social responsibilities that a company is doing. In 2018 the company planted 100,000 trees that cost 100,000 USD as part protecting the environment. On the users' side, according to the Hannah Ritchie (2018) Alcoholic Worldwide global survey, the market for alcoholic beverages has seen a secular decline in volume sales in developed markets, although demand in developing economies continues to rise yet there is very little evidence that alcohol advertising leads to an increase in alcohol consumption, let alone an increase in harmful consumption. That makes more sense to say the advertising of alcohol is designed to protect and grow market share for individual brands. If advertising aimed to increase the overall size of the market, then it doesn't seem to work very well. Recent analyses of surveys of youth drinking in Sweden have found a strong decrease both in rates of abstinence and in levels of drinking among drinkers (Raninen, Livingston, & Leifman, 2014). For instance, alcohol consumption among 15- to 16-year-olds has fallen over 50% between 2000 and 2012 (Norström & Svensson, 2014) Similar declining trends of alcohol consumption among young people have been identified in other European countries, North America and Australia (De Looze, Raaijmakers, Bogt, & Pickett, 2015; Hibell et al., 2012; Livingston et al., 2016). The reason behind decrease is said to be behaviour change and increase the use of social media despite how much is spent in marketing. Enforcing bans or comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, sponsorship and promotion will have adverse effects in the economies and deny opportunities to talents when there no other promising sector to fill the gap. Advertisements on alcohol, particularly, offers more sophisticated and captivating messages more than any other campaigns promoting hard-working such as Tusker from Kenya. On the other end, many sports and entertainment activities are made possible only through sponsorship from alcohol industries. From Heineken's sponsorship for UEFA Champions League in Europe to Carlsberg's sponsorship for Liverpool Football Club in England or Serengeti Breweries which has sealed three-year sponsorship for Tanzania women's premier league and the national team, the industry is found in all arena of sports. The total ban on the advertisement will have an adverse effect on the economies and deny opportunities to talents when there is no prospects of other promising sector to fill the gap.



RAISE PRICES ON ALCOHOL THROUGH EXCISE TAXES AND OTHER PRICING POLICIES

Alcohol employs people in bars, restaurants and agriculture sector, it brings in foreign currency for exported beverages and generates tax revenues for the government. Raising taxes on alcohol is not the same as raising the government's revenue from alcohol. Therefore, raising the price will hamper economic growth, resulting in job losses and lower wages (Economic Helps). The alcohol tax increases will hurt workers whose livelihoods depend on the production and sale of alcoholic beverages. The tax increase could cause a permanent job loss through employment losses in the alcohol industry will eventually be offset by employment gains in other sectors of the economy (Kenkel and Manning 1996) A higher price of alcohol can also encourage people to switch to illicit homemade brews, which in several cases is dangerous since it leaves people exposed to alcohol of an unknown quantity and composition. It is also a simple way for some outlets to increase their profits. WHO should put much emphasis on raising awareness on responsible and safe drinking rather than increasing to its policies such measures with adverse effects.

Conclusion

ActivismAction Area 2 in the working document focuses on political activism and the perceived need 'to mobilize different stakeholders for coordinated actions' (WHO 2020: 13). Regardless of the health effects of the alcoholic industry, however, the Noe-prohibitionist solution should not be explicitly implemented by the Member State as it could, on the one hand, help health consequences and produce burned economic consequences that could take many years for the change. The autonomous state must be left alone to decide where to direct the taxpayers' money. It's not the job of the government nor inter-governments agencies to pressurize supports to pressure groups. The taxpayer's money should solve the needs and problems of the people such as the building of infrastructure for their smoothly exchanging. WHO must put the policy proposal before member state and provide a room for the regimes to add to their manifesto and sell it to their voters during election and not forceful taxes alcohol for third party benefits.

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