



# ALCOHOL OBSTACLE TO DEVELOPMENT

How Alcohol Affects the Sustainable Development Goals



## HOW ALCOHOL AFFECTS THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The 2030 Agenda contains 17 Sustainable Development Goals with 169 targets. This comprehensive agenda is a plan of action for humanity to tackle the world's biggest problems – coherently and systematically. The 17 SDGs cover all three aspects of sustainable human development: the social, environmental and economic dimension.

Alcohol is a major obstacle to sustainable human development, adversely affecting all three dimensions of development and reaching into all aspects of society. It is jeopardizing human capital, undermining economic productivity, destroying the social fabric and burdening health systems.

Alcohol kills 3 million people worldwide every year<sup>1</sup>.

Every ten seconds a human being dies because of alcohol. This represents 5.3% of all deaths and more than 5% of the global disease burden. Mortality resulting from alcohol use is higher than that caused by diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and diabetes.

**Alcohol  
harm is of  
epidemic  
proportions  
worldwide.**

Worldwide, alcohol is responsible for 7.2% of all premature mortality. Alcohol harms young people disproportionately<sup>1</sup>. Among people between the ages of 15 and 49, alcohol is in fact the number one risk factor for death and disability, accounting for 10% of all deaths in this age group<sup>22</sup>.

Clearly, alcohol is one of the biggest threats to population health worldwide.

Through its multiple health, social and economic harms, alcohol is a massive obstacle to sustainable human development.

# Alcohol adversely affects 14 out of 17 SDGs and a total of 54 targets

Evidence shows that alcohol is a cross-cutting risk factor in many areas of the 2030 Agenda, such as:

-  Eradicating poverty
-  Ending hunger
-  Ensuring healthy lives for all
-  Ensuring quality education
-  Achieving gender equality
-  Ensuring drinking water for all
-  Promoting decent work and inclusive, sustainable economic growth for all
-  Reducing inequalities
-  Making cities safe and inclusive
-  Ensuring sustainable consumption
-  Combating climate change
-  Protecting terrestrial ecosystems
-  Promoting peaceful and inclusive societies
-  Revitalizing the global partnership for the SDGs.

Alcohol is specifically mentioned in SDG 3 on health and well-being.



Target 3.5 reads: “Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol”

# 1 NO POVERTY



END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE



**SDG 1.1:** By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day

## Vicious cycle of alcohol & poverty

Alcohol has various adverse effects on societies' and people's economic status while economic status in turn affects alcohol use and the relative burden of alcohol harm in many ways.

Rising alcohol consumption in poorer societies or in lower-income segments of populations is an obstacle to achieving SDG 1. The resources spent on alcohol are diverted from more productive and sustainable uses and the harms from alcohol use often include impoverishment as well as ill-health<sup>1</sup>.

Alcohol can push people into poverty and lock them, their families and entire communities there over generations. The direct costs of alcohol harm to the household are often considerable and frequently underestimated – and put a big burden on development.

# 1 NO POVERTY



END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE



**SDG 1.2:** By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.



**When the poor become a consumer market, purchasing commercial brands of alcohol takes a larger toll on personal and family income than it does in other social classes. The poor are also more vulnerable to the public disruption, violence and health-related harms that come with increased alcohol consumption.**



Room et al., 2006; Schmidt & Room, 2012

- Latin America: alcohol has become the leading cause of male death and disability threatening further progress and sustainable development<sup>3</sup>
- South Africa: the health and social costs of alcohol are ca. US\$1.2 billion per year, which is double the amount the government receives in alcohol excise tax revenue<sup>5</sup>
- A study in Sri Lanka found that over 10% of male respondents reported spending as much as or more than their regular income on alcohol<sup>4</sup>



## END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY



**SDG 2.1:** By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations

# Vicious cycle of deprivation, alcohol, hunger

Especially in poorer communities, in families affected by alcohol use disorder, and in Low- and Middle Income Countries (LMICs), alcohol tends to crowd out other more productive household spending, for example on education, health care and healthy food.

Both recognized and unrecognized alcohol expenditures have highly

damaging effects on the most deprived families and communities. Desperately needed resources are taken away from the little available for food and other basics.

- Socio-economically exposed people are less able to avoid adverse consequences of their behavior due to a lack of resources<sup>6</sup>
- People in poor and vulnerable communities have less extensive support networks, i.e. fewer factors or persons to motivate them to address alcohol problems<sup>7</sup>
- Globally at least 237 million men and 46 million women have alcohol use disorders, with the highest prevalence of alcohol use disorders among men and women in the European Region and the Region of Americas<sup>1</sup>

# 2 ZERO HUNGER



END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY



**SDG 2.2:** By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition

## Alcohol is a serious risk factor for malnutrition

People with lower socio-economic status are more exposed and more vulnerable to tangible problems and negative consequences of alcohol use. This vulnerability is often passed on through generations. Thus, alcohol harm often contributes to the vicious cycle of deprivation, vulnerability and hunger.

Alcohol displaces protein-, vitamin-, and mineral-containing foods in the diet, and chronic alcohol consumption results in maldigestion and malabsorption of essential nutrients.

In addition, alcohol exerts direct toxic effects on both the liver and gut, resulting in structural alterations in the intestine and the development of fatty liver, alcoholic hepatitis, and cirrhosis<sup>8</sup>.



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.1:** By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ration...

## Alcohol use during pregnancy risks mother's and newborn's survival, health

There is an urgent need to improve the health of pregnant women and their infants by identifying factors that place them at greater risk and providing interventions to improve their outcomes.

Alcohol use during pregnancy is a significant risk factor for adverse pregnancy outcomes, including stillbirth, premature birth, intrauterine growth retardation and low birth weight<sup>9</sup>.

- Maternal alcohol use is associated with higher mortality rates for pregnant women and infants<sup>10</sup>
- Alcohol use during pregnancy is associated with increased morbidity and mortality in infants and children<sup>10</sup>

# 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.2:** By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under five (...)

Alcohol is a potent teratogen with a range of risks to the fetus, including low birth weight, cognitive deficiencies and a range of lifelong conditions known as fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD)<sup>1</sup>.

A 2017 landmark study showed that the global prevalence of alcohol use during pregnancy in the general population amounts to almost 10%. The study estimates that one out of 13 women who consumed any alcohol at any point or frequency during pregnancy delivered a child with FASD. Globally, nearly eight out of every 1 000 children in the general population is estimated to have FASD<sup>11</sup>.

- The prevalence of FASD among children and youth in the general population exceeds 1% in 76 countries<sup>11</sup>

- Alcohol use increases the risk of fetal exposure to alcohol due to delayed recognition of pregnancy. This can have severely negative implications for newborns<sup>12</sup>

## Alcohol use during pregnancy risks child's health, development



**ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE  
WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES**



**SDG 3.3:** By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS,  
tuberculosis (...)

# Alcohol fuels the HIV/ AIDS and tuberculosis epidemics

Alcohol is widely established as a structural driver of both the tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS epidemics.

- Alcohol use has been shown to increase the risk of infectious diseases by increasing the risk of transmission (resulting from an increased risk of unprotected sex) and by increasing the risk of infection and subsequent mortality from HIV/ AIDS and tuberculosis (TB) by suppressing a wide range of immune responses<sup>11</sup>



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.3:** By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis (...)

## Alcohol major risk factor for HIV/ AIDS

Alcohol use is associated both with an increased risk of acquiring HIV infection and with negative effects on people living with HIV/AIDS in terms of treatment outcomes, morbidity and mortality<sup>13</sup>.

Alcohol has a negative impact on HIV infection and transmission in three main ways:

- Alcohol increases the risk of HIV transmission, through risky sexual behaviour such as inconsistent condom use and engaging in multiple sexual partnerships<sup>1</sup>

- Alcohol has a negative impact on HIV treatment, including alcohol–drug interactions, toxicity and/or reduction in treatment adherence and by increasing the risk of resistance to antiretroviral medications<sup>1</sup>
- Alcohol weakens immune responses, leading to increased biological susceptibility to infection through deterioration of various pathways of the immune system<sup>1</sup>

Causal relationships exist between:

- Alcohol consumption and HIV incidences
- Alcohol consumption on HIV/ AIDS patients' adherence to antiretroviral treatment
- Alcohol use and HIV/ AIDS disease progression among patients who are not yet on antiretroviral therapy<sup>14</sup>



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.3:** By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis (...)

## Alcohol is a major risk factor for TB

Alcohol use is a strong risk factor for the development of tuberculosis<sup>1</sup>.

- Alcohol consumption can suppress the immune system, which is documented in individuals with heavy alcohol exposure<sup>15</sup>
- The risk rises with the increase in levels of alcohol consumption. The risk of TB is three times higher in people with a diagnosis of alcohol use disorder<sup>1</sup>
- Alcohol use negatively affects the absorption and metabolism of tuberculosis drugs and increases the risk of chemically-driven liver damage<sup>1</sup>
- People with alcohol use disorders are at greater risk for poor treatment adherence, treatment failure and drug-resistant tuberculosis infection<sup>1</sup>

# 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.4:** By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being

## Alcohol fuels the global NCDs tsunami

Alcohol is a major risk factor for NCDs, including mental ill-health. There is a strong link between alcohol and NCDs, particularly cancer, cardiovascular disease, digestive diseases and diabetes, as well as mental ill-health<sup>16</sup>.

- Alcohol consumption caused an estimated 1.7 million NCD deaths in 2016<sup>1</sup>. This equals: 4.3% of all NCD deaths and 65.5 million NCD DALYs\*

\*DALYs = Disability-Adjusted Life Year (DALY) One DALY can be thought of as one lost year of "healthy" life. The sum of these DALYs across the population, or the burden of disease, can be thought of as a measurement of the gap between current health status and an ideal health situation where the entire population lives to an advanced age, free of disease and disability. DALYs for a disease or health condition are calculated as the sum of the Years of Life Lost (YLL) due to premature mortality in the population and the Years Lost due to Disability (YLD) for people living with the health condition or its consequences: DALY = YLL + YLD



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.4:** By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being

## Alcohol causes cancer

In 1988 the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) established: "Alcoholic beverages are carcinogenic to humans."<sup>17</sup>

Alcohol consumption is causally related to oral cavity, oropharyngeal, hypopharyngeal, oesophageal (squamous cell carcinoma), colon, rectal, laryngeal, liver and intrahepatic bile duct, and breast cancers<sup>1</sup>.

- For cancer, there is no safe amount of alcohol use. The cancer risk increases steadily with greater volumes of alcohol consumption<sup>18</sup>
- Globally, of the 9 million cancer deaths, ca. 0.4 million are due to alcohol use. This means 4.2% of all cancer deaths are attributable to alcohol<sup>1</sup>
- Data shows that only 47% of consumers in the UK, or in the US only 39% of consumers are aware that alcohol causes 7 types of cancer<sup>114, 115</sup>

# 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.4:** By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being

## Alcohol is a massive risk factor for CVDs

Alcohol use is overwhelmingly detrimentally related to many cardiovascular outcomes, including hypertensive heart disease, haemorrhagic stroke, ischemic heart disease, cardiomyopathy and atrial fibrillation<sup>1</sup>.

- Alcohol directly increases blood pressure and the risk of stroke<sup>19</sup>
- Alcohol use increases the risk of atrial fibrillation, heart attack, and congestive heart failure<sup>20</sup>
- Globally, alcohol causes a net cardiovascular disease (CVD) burden of 593 000 deaths<sup>1</sup>



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.4:** By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being

## Alcohol is a major driver of mental ill-health

There are associations of alcohol use and alcohol use disorders (AUD) with almost every mental disorder, including depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and suicide<sup>16</sup>.

- In the UK studies show that adolescents admitted to hospital with alcohol-related injuries face a five-times increased risk of committing suicide<sup>21</sup>
- Globally an estimated 283 million people aged 15+ years had an AUD. That equals 5.1% of all adults worldwide<sup>1</sup>



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.5:** Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol

## Alcohol and global death, disease and disability

Alcohol kills 3 million people worldwide every year. Every 10 seconds a human being dies because of alcohol. This represents 5.3% of all deaths and more than 5% of the global disease burden. Mortality resulting from alcohol use is higher than that caused by diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and diabetes<sup>1</sup>.

- Worldwide, alcohol is responsible for 7.2% of all premature mortality<sup>1</sup>



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.5:** Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol

## Alcohol harm is of epidemic proportions worldwide.

- Alcohol harms young people disproportionately. Among people between the ages of 15 and 49, alcohol is in fact the number one risk factor for death and disability, accounting for 10% of all deaths in this age group<sup>1</sup>
- As an intoxicant, alcohol affects a wide range of structures and processes in the central nervous system<sup>2</sup>
- Alcohol is a risk factor for intentional and unintentional injuries, harms to people other than the alcohol user themselves, reduced job performance and absenteeism, alcohol poisonings, interpersonal violence, suicides, homicides, crime and injuries from driving under the influence<sup>2</sup>
- Alcohol is neurotoxic to brain development, potentially leading, in childhood and adolescence, to structural hippocampal changes, and in adulthood to reduced brain volume<sup>22</sup>



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.6:** By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents

## Alcohol fuels road traffic injuries, fatalities

Road traffic crashes are a major source of injury, disability and death throughout the world and road traffic injuries are the leading cause of death among people aged 15-29 years.

- Road users who are impaired by alcohol have a significantly higher risk of being involved in a crash. Driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI) is a key risk factor for 27% of all road injuries. DUI is a massive health and development problem that affects not only the alcohol user but in many cases also innocent victims such as passengers and pedestrians<sup>2</sup>
- Impairment by alcohol is an important factor influencing both the risk of an accident and the severity of the injuries that result from crashes

# 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.6:** By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents

- Globally, alcohol causes 370 000 road injury deaths; of those, 187 000 alcohol-attributable deaths were among people other than drivers<sup>1</sup>
- 1 of 4 road fatalities in the EU is alcohol related. In 2010 nearly 31 000 Europeans were killed on the roads of which 25% of deaths were related to alcohol<sup>23</sup>
- Studies in low-income countries have shown alcohol to be present in between 33% and 69% of fatally injured drivers<sup>24</sup>
- In South Africa, alcohol was found to contribute to 61% of fatalities among pedestrians<sup>25</sup>

## Alcohol fuels road traffic injuries, fatalities

# 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage (...)**

## Alcohol obstacle to UHC and health for all

The health burden caused by alcohol is enormous<sup>1</sup>.

Pervasive alcohol harm puts a heavy burden on health systems and poses a serious obstacle to Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the promise of reaching health for all. The epidemic levels of alcohol harm put a heavy strain both on national budgets as well as healthcare systems.

The disease, social, and economic burden of alcohol is rising, especially in low- and middle-income countries which already can ill afford the associated productivity losses, healthcare costs, and household impoverishment<sup>26</sup>.

# 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



## ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



### SDG 3.8: Achieve universal health coverage (...)

- In Sri Lanka, 80% of General Practitioners were frequently confronted with patients who had alcohol use disorders<sup>27</sup>
- In the United States, alcohol harm costs society \$249 billion, every year<sup>28</sup>
- In Kenya alcohol threatens the “Big 4 Flagship Initiative” that aims to advance sustainable development through bold action across four priority areas: manufacturing, universal healthcare coverage, affordable housing and food security<sup>29</sup>
- Alcohol-related harm often pushes households into the vicious cycles of poverty, marginalization, and ill-health<sup>30</sup>
- Health payments, including alcohol-related, push people into poverty, according to WHO Europe<sup>31</sup>
- The economic burden of alcohol worldwide is substantial, accounting for up to 5.44% of Growth Domestic Product in some countries<sup>32</sup>
- In India, alcohol harm costs more (1.45% of GDP) than the government’s entire health spending (1.1% of GDP) every year – costs that are largely shouldered by households<sup>33</sup>

# Alcohol barrier to reaching health for all



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.8:** Achieve universal health coverage (...)

## Health system ill-equipped for massive alcohol harm

Globally, at least 283 million people aged 15+ years suffer from an alcohol use disorder. That equals 5.1% of all adults worldwide<sup>1</sup>. But health systems are insufficiently equipped to adequately deal with only this specific type of alcohol harm.

- Ca. 1 in 5 patients in the UK hospital system use alcohol heavily, and one in 10 are alcohol-dependent<sup>34</sup>
- Only 14% of countries indicated treatment coverage of more than 40% (not even every second AUD person)<sup>1</sup>
- 28% of countries have very limited or close to zero treatment coverage<sup>1</sup>
- Most countries (40%) do not even know the level of treatment coverage<sup>1</sup>

# 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES



**SDG 3.8:** Achieve universal health coverage (...)



**Raising taxes on alcohol to 40% of the retail price could have [a big] impact. Estimates for 12 low-income countries show that [alcohol] consumption levels would fall by more than 10%, while tax revenues would more than triple to a level amounting to 38% of total health spending in those countries. Even if only a portion of the proceeds were allocated to health, access to services would be greatly enhanced.**



World Health Report, 2010

Promoting and protecting health is essential to human welfare and sustained economic and social development. Reaching “Health for All” contributes both to a better quality of life and also to global peace and security<sup>35</sup>



## ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION



**SDG 4.1:** By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes

# Bottles over books: Alcohol threatens educational outcomes

Alcohol and use of other harmful substances has proven to be linked with a number of negative education-related consequences, including poor school engagement and performance, and school drop-out. There is strong evidence of causation at least from frequent alcohol use to adverse health, social and educational outcomes<sup>36</sup>.

- Alcohol is the most commonly used substance by children aged 13-15. One in four 13 to 15 year olds used alcohol during the past 12 months<sup>36</sup>
- Substance use can affect a child's well-being, and is clearly linked to academic underachievement<sup>36</sup>
- Negative education-related outcomes globally due to alcohol use include poor educational performance, truancy, school drop-out, incompleteness of secondary school and post-secondary education in a diverse array of developed and developing regions and countries<sup>36</sup>



## ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION



**SDG 4.6:** By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

# Alcohol undermines norms and conditions for academic performance

In the family and community setting, alcohol is a major risk factor for poor educational outcomes.

WHO, UNODC and UNESCO list a number of risk factors on the family level: parental substance use, parental mental ill-health, parental abuse and neglect, material poverty.

WHO, UNODC and UNESCO list a number of risk factors on the community level: easy and wide availability of alcohol and other drugs, social norms permissive to substance use and detrimental to academic achievement, lack of positive contact with other adults<sup>36</sup>.

Alcohol clearly fuels all these risk factors<sup>37</sup>, contributing to:

- Parental roles are neglected and abandoned<sup>38</sup>
- Scarce resources are wasted on alcohol, instead of healthy food, leisure time activities and school material<sup>38</sup>
- Resulting health issues even exacerbate the dire situation, and fuel the vicious cycle<sup>38</sup>
- Norms and conditions for academic performance are undermined and eroded<sup>38</sup>



**ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EM-  
POWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS**



**SDG 5.1:** End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

# Alcohol marketing perpetuates harmful norms

The alcohol industry has amassed a vast case library of alcohol ads, commercials and other alcohol brand promotions that perpetuate discriminatory images, attitudes and norms regarding women and girls and their role in society.

The portrayal of men, as well as women and girls in alcohol marketing fuels harmful masculinity<sup>39</sup>, and the sexualization, objectification and de-humanization of women<sup>40</sup>. It amplifies the common belief of masculine superiority over females and it justifies male demonstration of power over the other gender<sup>41</sup>.



## ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS



### SDG 5.1: End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

- Strong evidence of the link between alcohol use and violent behavior means that cultural and social norms around alcohol use and its expected effects also encourage and justify violent acts<sup>42</sup>
- Alcohol violence is more likely in cultures where many believe alcohol plays a positive role by "allowing" people to transgress boundaries of normal social conduct<sup>43</sup>
- Alcohol use environments that incite narratives of loss of control and hyper-sexuality compromise the ability to counter sexual offending<sup>44</sup>
- Presence of sexually violent advertising within alcohol licensed spaces undermines considerably the call to end gendered violence<sup>44</sup>

# Alcohol marketing perpetuates harmful norms



**ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EM-  
POWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS**



**SDG 5.2:** Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

# Alcohol fuels epidemic of violence against women

There is a strong relationship between alcohol and domestic abuse, intimate partner violence and sexual assault. The relation between all forms of aggression and alcohol use is enormous and unequivocal<sup>1</sup>.

The WHO Global Plan of Action on interpersonal violence identifies “ease of access to alcohol” as a risk factor for the occurrence of gender-based violence, including against children<sup>46</sup>.

Alcohol is seldom the sole explanation for the use of violence, but it’s often the triggering factor. Alcohol use creates a context for violent acts. It is often used as excuse for otherwise socially unacceptable behavior<sup>47</sup>.



## ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS



**SDG 5.2:** Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation

- 65% of women experiencing intimate partner violence in India, Vietnam, Uganda, Zimbabwe, South Africa reported the perpetrator had used alcohol<sup>48</sup>
- There is a strong connection between alcohol use and sexual aggression by young males<sup>1</sup>
- Focus groups in rural Rwanda show that women who are victims of domestic violence rank alcohol as number one factor<sup>49</sup>
- In Argentina, 68% of all cases of domestic violence are alcohol-related<sup>50</sup>
- Men who acknowledged "alcohol misuse" in six middle- and low-income countries in Asia and the Pacific reported higher rates of intimate partner sexual violence<sup>51</sup>

**Alcohol  
fuels  
epidemic  
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against  
women**



ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EM-  
POWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS



**SDG 5.6:** Ensure universal access to sexual and repro-  
ductive health and reproductive rights

# Alcohol jeopardizes reproductive health and rights

Alcohol use has detrimental effects on the health of women and children. Alcohol consumption increases the risk of unintended pregnancies, through its contribution to unprotected sex<sup>52</sup>. Alcohol use during pregnancy is also a risk factor for adverse pregnancy outcomes.

- Stillbirth, spontaneous abortion, and premature birth are some of the adverse pregnancy outcomes, due to alcohol<sup>53</sup>
- Alcohol use during pregnancy is associated with a dose-responsive increase in miscarriage risk<sup>54</sup>
- Evidence from Ghana shows that alcohol consumption is significantly associated with abortion-related maternal deaths. Women who had ever consumed alcohol, frequent alcohol users, and even occasional alcohol users were about three times as likely to die from abortion-related causes compared to those who abstained from alcohol. Maternal age, marital status and educational level are factors that have a confounding effect on the observed association<sup>55</sup>

# 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL



**SDG 6.1:** By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all

## Drinking water or producing alcohol?

By 2025, an estimated 1.8 billion people will live in areas plagued by water scarcity, with two-thirds of the world's population living in water-stressed regions<sup>56</sup>.

785 million people don't have clean water close to home<sup>57</sup>. 70% of the world's water resources are used for agriculture and irrigation, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations<sup>58</sup>.

Alcohol production is a threat to water security in many regions of the world:

- The water footprint of wine is horrible. To get one liter of wine, 870 liters of water are needed<sup>59</sup>
- The water footprint of beer is horrific. Per one liter of beer, 298 liters of water have to be used<sup>60</sup>

# 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



**ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL**



**SDG 6.4:** By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity

## Alcohol production fuels water insecurity

A third of the world's biggest groundwater systems are already in distress<sup>61</sup> and about 4 billion people, representing nearly two-thirds of the world population, experience severe water scarcity during at least one month of the year.

The effects on poor communities are most severe, when scarce resources are drained for the production of alcohol instead of sustaining community life and development.

This is happening at the same time as the alcohol industry is causing major emissions of chemicals into waterways in its production, around the world and is fueling water insecurity.

# 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



## ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL



**SDG 6.4:** By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity



**They export our water in the form of wine.**



**Vanessa Ludwig, CEO of Surplus People Project in South Africa**

- In Uganda, gin distilleries contaminate the Kiiha River, which provided many villages with drinking water, until it was discovered that the water was no longer drinkable, due to discharges from the 600 distilleries located along the river<sup>62</sup>
- In northern Mexico, communities are boycotting AB In-Bev, the world's largest beer producer, over their breweries causing water shortages<sup>63</sup>
- In Cape Town, South Africa, 2018, the drought was so acute that the municipal water had to be turned off, while the wine industry spread over ever larger land areas and used more and more of the water reserves<sup>63</sup>



## PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL



**SDG 8.2:** Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labor-intensive sectors

# Massive economic costs due to alcohol

The economic burden of alcohol worldwide is substantial, accounting for up to 5.44% of Growth Domestic Product (GDP) in some countries<sup>64</sup>.

Costs of alcohol harm have been measured in different regions and are of massive scale:

- European Union: €156 billion yearly<sup>65</sup>
- United States: \$249 billion yearly<sup>66</sup>
- South Africa: Combined tangible and intangible costs of alcohol harm to the economy reached nearly ZAR300 billion or 10–12% of GDP<sup>67</sup>
- India: the burden of alcohol (1.45% of GDP) costs more than the entire spending on health by the government (1.1% of GDP)<sup>67</sup>
- Australia: a conservative calculation of the social costs of alcohol amounted to \$14.35 billion with the highest cost due to productivity losses (42.1%), traffic accidents (25.5%) and cost to the criminal justice system (20.6%)<sup>68</sup>



**PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL**



**SDG 8.6:** By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

## Leaving no youth in NEET behind

Alcohol and use of other harmful substances has proven to be linked with a number of negative education-related consequences, including poor school engagement and performance, and school drop-out.

Negative education-related outcomes globally due to alcohol use include poor educational performance, truancy, school drop-out, incompleteness of secondary school and post-secondary education in a diverse array of developed and developing regions and countries<sup>36</sup>.

- In 2013, over 14% of 16 to 24 year-olds in England (almost 900,000 youth) were not in employment, education or training (NEET)<sup>74</sup>
- The concept of NEET carries potential to address a broad array of risk factors among adolescents, and youth, including issues of unemployment, early school leaving and labor market discouragement<sup>75</sup>



## PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL



**SDG 8.8:** Protect labor rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

# Alcohol workplace harm and lost productivity

Alcohol consumption is highly relevant to SDG 8, according to the WHO Global Alcohol Status Report 2018.

Globally, alcohol is the world's number one risk factor for ill-health and premature death amongst the 15 to 49 year-olds, the core of the working age population when people are typically at their most productive economically<sup>69</sup>.

Alcohol use disorders likely result in billions of dollars of lost wages each year<sup>70</sup>.

Alcohol is a significant risk factor for absenteeism and presenteeism at work, largely in a dose response manner, with a relationship between societal and individual level of alcohol consumption and sickness absence<sup>71</sup>.

- In the UK, as many as 89 000 people may be turning up to work hungover or under the influence of alcohol every day. The cost to the economy is up to £1.4 billion<sup>72</sup>
- 35% of 1300 UK construction workers surveyed had worked alongside people under the influence of alcohol<sup>73</sup>



## REDUCE INEQUALITIES IN AND AMONG COUNTRIES



**SDG 10.2:** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all (...)



**SDG 10.3:** Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome (...)



**SDG 10.4:** Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

# System of exploitation: Big Alcohol fuels inequalities among countries

Alcohol frequently fuels and fortifies inequalities between and within countries, hindering the achievement of SDG10, according to the World Health Organization<sup>1</sup>.

The global alcohol industry is the driving force behind a confluence of factors that lead to rising alcohol use through increased alcohol availability and a weakening of alcohol control policies in developing countries<sup>76</sup>. Alcohol problems are already at high levels in many low- and middle-income countries<sup>1</sup> and health and social systems are ill-equipped to deal with those problems.

# 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



## REDUCE INEQUALITIES IN AND AMONG COUNTRIES



**SDG 10.2:** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all (...)



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As alcohol consumption has largely stagnated in saturated markets of high-income countries, the thirst for ever more profits has made developing countries the target of multinational alcohol corporations – that are mainly located in Western Europe and North America<sup>77</sup>.

The result is an increase in alcohol availability, alcohol consumption and higher levels of alcohol-related harm. Contrary to the trend in economically developed countries, alcohol use is increasing in the developing world, threatening the SDGs.

- Alcohol per-capita consumption increased dramatically in Asia-Pacific, for example in India by 38% (from 4.3 to 5.9l) and in Vietnam by 90% (from 4.7 to 8.9l) between 1990 and 2017<sup>78</sup>
- Asia-Pacific is on track to miss ALL sustainable development goals<sup>79</sup>
- The African region carries the proportionately biggest alcohol burden, already<sup>1</sup>



## REDUCE INEQUALITIES IN AND AMONG COUNTRIES



**SDG 10.2:** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

# Alcohol and inequalities within countries: Greater harm per liter

Inequalities in alcohol-related harm exist based on factors including economic status, education, gender, ethnicity and place of residence. Harms from a given amount of alcohol consumption are higher for poorer alcohol users and their families than for richer alcohol consumers<sup>7</sup>.

In general, lower socioeconomic groups consume less alcohol overall and are more likely to be abstainers, but they experience higher levels of alcohol-related harm than wealthier groups with the same level of consumption<sup>80</sup>.

Big Alcohol also fuels inequalities within societies. People with lower incomes are more likely to live in closer proximity to alcohol outlets, compared to those who are financially better off and living in areas that are better resourced<sup>81</sup>.

# 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



## REDUCE INEQUALITIES IN AND AMONG COUNTRIES



**SDG 10.2:** By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status



**In developing countries we find a general trend towards the greater availability of alcohol around the clock, and a shift towards the commercialized production of European-style beverages by increasingly globalized producers. In some cases, these changes in alcohol production play a direct role in generating economic disparities [...]**



WHO Global Alcohol Status Report 2018, p. 18

Experiencing multiple aspects of socioeconomic disadvantage amplifies inequalities in alcohol-related harm.

- In the UK, health inequalities are estimated to cost £32-33 billion per year<sup>82</sup>
- In Sweden, manual workers are 2–3 times more likely to experience alcohol-related harm than civil servants, even when alcohol consumption levels were similar<sup>83</sup>
- The poor are more vulnerable to the public disruption, violence and health-related harms that come with increased alcohol consumption<sup>1</sup>
- Greater “harm per litre” is found for many different kinds of alcohol harms: chronic diseases such as liver cirrhosis; injuries both to the alcohol user and to others around the user; infectious diseases<sup>1</sup>



## REDUCE INEQUALITIES IN AND AMONG COUNTRIES



**SDG 10.3:** Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard

# Alcohol's harm to others

The harms to health are only part of the total alcohol-related damage. Harms from alcohol use occur not only to the consumers themselves, but also to those around them – to others in the family or household, to relatives and friends, to colleagues in the workplace and to strangers on the street<sup>1</sup>.

Alcohol's harm to others (AHTO) has a range of negative consequences in terms of

- Health (injury, anxiety, depression transmission of infection)
- Social aspects (assault, nuisance, feeling scared/restricted in public/ nightlife)
- Economic aspects (property damage, ill-spent household resources, healthcare costs)

Negative impacts on children due to parents' alcohol use are an example where all dimensions of alcohol's harm to others form a "perfect storm".

- In the United States AHTO is substantial and influenced by sociodemographics, the harmed individual's own alcohol use, and the presence of a heavy alcohol user in the household<sup>84</sup>

# 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



## REDUCE INEQUALITIES IN AND AMONG COUNTRIES



**SDG 10.3:** Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard

- Younger age increased the risk for all AHTO types
- Women are more likely to report harm due to alcohol use by a spouse/partner or family member
- Men were more likely to report harm due to a stranger's alcohol use
- In England, AHTO affects 20.1% of the population<sup>85</sup>
- In Brazil, 60% of all cases of intimate partner violence are related to alcohol<sup>86</sup>
- In rural Mexico, a \$20 dollar long-lasting increase in the wife's income is associated with a 15% decrease of the husband's alcohol use and a 21% decrease of aggressive behavior<sup>87</sup>
- In the United States, more than 10% of children live with a parent with alcohol problems<sup>88</sup>
- In the EU, 9 million children grow up with parents who have alcohol problems<sup>89</sup>
- Almost  $\frac{3}{4}$  of adults in Australia (10 million people) are adversely affected by someone else's alcohol use<sup>90</sup>

## Alcohol's harm to others



## REDUCE INEQUALITIES IN AND AMONG COUNTRIES



**SDG 10.4:** Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

# Alcohol taxation is pro-poor, pro social inclusion, pro equality

A disproportionate share of the health and economic costs of alcohol falls on poorer households. But they are more responsive to increased prices than richer households.

Therefore, alcohol taxes disproportionately benefit the poor through reducing alcohol use and related harm, such as having fewer sick days, longer and more productive working lives, and spending less on health care<sup>91</sup>.

Increased resources from alcohol taxes can be invested in programs that favor the poor, in this way further strengthening the benefits<sup>91</sup>.

- Increasing alcohol taxes will avert 9 (20% increase) to 22 (50% increase) million premature deaths over a 50 year period<sup>91</sup>
- Over 50 years, a tax that increases alcohol prices by 20% over current levels could generate almost US\$9 trillion in additional revenues; for a 50% increase, the gain could be almost US\$17 trillion in additional revenues<sup>91</sup>



## MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE



**SDG 11.7:** By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

## Alcohol outlet density drives unsafe public space, neighborhood violence

Healthy public space is a cornerstone of sustainable cities. Healthy public spaces are safe, inclusive, enabling and diverse. It is through healthy public spaces that cities truly become cities for all, where social justice, Human Rights, participation and citizenship and well-being are protected and promoted.

- Globally, 90 000 deaths due to interpersonal violence are attributable to alcohol<sup>192</sup>



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- Philadelphia, U.S.: Study shows the more alcohol outlets a neighborhood has, the higher the number of violence cases in the neighborhood<sup>93</sup>
- South Africa: Alcohol-related violence frequently occurs in public spaces and peaks over weekends and festive periods<sup>94</sup>
- In Ireland, 2011, every second person had experienced alcohol-related intimidation, threat or violence
- 45% of Irish people say they decided to walk a different way due to fear of people who had used alcohol, or of places where alcohol use is very common<sup>95</sup>
- Finland: Alcohol-related killings rose by 30% when alcohol became more available from 2017 to 2018<sup>96</sup>
- England, Wales: Half of all incidents of alcohol-related violence occur in or around pubs and clubs<sup>97</sup>
- Cali, Colombia: Closing alcohol outlets two hours earlier reduced homicides by 25%<sup>98</sup>



MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE



**SDG 11.7:** By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

## Alcohol – threat to safe, healthy public space for women and girls

Safe and healthy public space is a Women's Rights issue. Evidence shows that alcohol threatens women's safety and freedom in public space.

- Australia: 40% of all cases of physical and/ or sexual assault of women are alcohol-related<sup>99</sup>
- New Zealand: more than 1 in 10 women aged 14 to 19 reported having been physically assaulted; 1 in 5 women aged 14 to 19 had been sexually harassed in the previous 12 months, by someone who had been using alcohol<sup>100</sup>
- In Cambodia: 83% of beer girls are subject to unwanted sexual contact<sup>101</sup>
- Sweden: Out of 317 000 cases of physical assault 180 000 were alcohol related<sup>102</sup>
- Diadema municipality in São Paulo, Brazil: shortening alcohol-trading hours significantly reduced homicides and made nightlife, public space safer<sup>98</sup>



## MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE



**SDG 11.7:** By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

# Alcohol – barrier to inclusive, enabling public space for children, adolescents, youth

Inclusive public space is a youth rights issue. Evidence shows that alcohol-related exclusion from public space puts a heavy burden on adolescent's health and well-being.

- Sweden: 21% of adolescents say they only use alcohol because there is nothing else to do during leisure time<sup>103</sup>
- Sweden: 87% of adolescents agree/ partly agree that alcohol makes public space unsafe<sup>103</sup>
- 55% of adolescents in Sweden say that they stay away from public space because of alcohol<sup>103</sup>
- Tanzania: High density of alcohol outlets in Dar es Salaam facilitates adolescent alcohol use<sup>104</sup>
- High density of alcohol outlets is associated with increased binge consumption and a range of alcohol harms, such as violence, road traffic injuries or sexually transmitted infections<sup>105</sup>



**SDG 12.2:** By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources

# Alcohol production threatens sustainable use of natural resources

The global importance of cereal crops to the human diet cannot be over stated. Cereals are by many criteria the most important group of food crops produced in the world. They are energy dense, and important sources of dietary protein, carbohydrates, the B complex of vitamins, vitamin E, iron, trace minerals, and fiber. The global cereal consumption directly provides about 50% of protein and energy necessary for the human diet.

- But cereals are also used in the making of alcohol such as whiskey and beer (barley; sorghum), vodka (wheat), bourbon (rye), sake (rice)<sup>106</sup>

Production of alcoholic beverages is very resource-intensive and NOT environmentally sustainable. In addition, climate change threatens to disrupt the supply of agricultural products<sup>107</sup>.



**SDG 12.2:** By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources

# What could be food becomes toxic, addictive, carcinogenic substance

Extreme heat and droughts are expected to keep getting longer and more severe, increasingly affecting high-income as well as middle- and low-income countries.

Water shortages are likely to become increasingly common as the world faces the climate crisis and a growing population.

- Global- and country-level barley supply diminishes progressively in more severe extreme events<sup>107</sup>

Alcohol production is jeopardizing natural resources, especially water, and is causing water shortages:

- The water footprint of wine is horrible. To get one liter of wine, 870 liters of water are needed<sup>108</sup>
- The water footprint of beer is horrific. Per one liter of beer, 298 liters of water have to be used<sup>109</sup>



**SDG 12.3:** By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses

**Already:  
Levels of  
alcohol  
production  
and  
consumption  
are not  
sustainable**

Different types of starchy plants are used for producing beer, including maize (South America), soy (India), millet and sorghum (Africa) and rice (Asia). Beer production using barley malt is the most common brewing process worldwide. Processing barley into malt is an energy-consuming process<sup>110</sup> and barley production itself is highly vulnerable to unstable climate conditions<sup>111</sup>.

- Alcohol production means – increasingly scarce – natural resources such as cereal crops are wasted for a “luxury good” instead of necessities<sup>107</sup>

# 12 SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



## ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS



**SDG 12.8:** By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature

In 2018 a scientific analysis by Poore and Nemecek showed that lowering alcohol consumption by 20% can help

- reduce land use of alcohol production by 39% on average;
- reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 31 to 46%; and
- reduce scarcity-weighted fresh water withdrawals by 87%<sup>155</sup>
- In 2016, the global beer production amounted to about 1.94 billion hectoliters<sup>112</sup>, up from 1.3 billion hectoliters in 1998
- By some estimates, up to 92% of brewing ingredients are wasted<sup>113</sup>

The negative impact of alcohol production on availability of cereal crops for food, water security and food waste as well as the energy-consuming production processes are causing externalities that are unsustainable.

Levels of alcohol harm<sup>114, 115</sup>, alcohol's harm to others and the economic and social costs of alcohol make consumption levels and patterns unsustainable.

- The alcohol industry receives the bulk of its profits from heavy alcohol use: 65% of sales in high-income countries and 75% of sales in middle-income countries result from heavy episodic alcohol intake<sup>116</sup>. Big Alcohol relies on heavy and excessive alcohol use for major parts of its profits<sup>117</sup>



## TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE



**SDG 13.2: Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning**

# Not green after all: Alcohol fuels greenhouse gas emissions, global warming

Very few people actually think of alcohol in terms of its climate impact. For achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda, a more comprehensive understanding of the alcohol industry is critical.

- The contribution made by the alcohol consumed in the UK accounts for 1.46% of the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions. The share of beer in alcohol's total emissions amounts to 65%<sup>118</sup>
- In a lifecycle analysis of a Spanish beer, production and transport of raw materials used in beer production was found to contribute over one third of the total global environmental impact of the beer production lifecycle<sup>119</sup>



## TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE



**SDG 13.2:** Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

# Alcohol production, consumption fuels climate crisis

Alcohol, particularly beer, fuels the climate crisis, according to calculations of greenhouse gas emissions.

- The yearly amount of Australian beer consumption is equal in emissions to a car driving 1.94 billion km - the equivalent of 48 000 car rides around the world
- Emissions related to beer production and consumption cause the biggest damage to the climate when compared to other beverages such as coffee or tea<sup>156</sup>

Other aspects of the alcohol industry contributing to global warming, greenhouse gas emissions, high energy use, pollution and waste of natural resources are:

- Refrigeration in the hospitality sector,
- Use of fertilizers,
- Water use,
- Packaging,
- Waste,
- Transport of raw material,
- Distribution of the products<sup>120</sup>



PROTECT, RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS



**SDG 15.1:** By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements

# Alcohol production degrades ecosystems and threatens biodiversity

Often permissions for alcohol production are granted without adequate environmental impact studies.

But on the U.S. west coast, in Washington State, activists and experts detail how increased alcohol production will degrade farmland, jeopardize local food production and threaten the ecosystem.

# 15 LIFE ON LAND



PROTECT, RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION, AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS



**SDG 15.2:** By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally



**Kids can't eat claret, and whales can't eat merlot. We must preserve our farmland, rivers and fisheries, not give away their food and futures to the alcohol industry.**



Barbara Lau, Local activist and expert

- King County, Washington State: The alcohol industry adversely impacts rural and agricultural land, locally grown food supply and salmon migrating through local rivers by degrading all agricultural production districts and destroying the Sammamish Valley river ecosystem<sup>121</sup>



PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO



**SDG 16.1:** Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere

## Pervasive alcohol violence

Globally, 90 000 deaths due to interpersonal violence are attributable to alcohol<sup>1</sup>.

Alcohol violence impacts physical, mental and sexual health. It considerably burdens the public health system and other public sectors, making it a major sustainable development issue.

Globally, across all age groups, alcohol is estimated to be responsible for 26% and 16% of years of life lost through homicide by males and females respectively<sup>122</sup>.

- Thailand: The likelihood of domestic violence increases fourfold when one person consumes alcohol; two in five crimes committed by young people involve alcohol<sup>1</sup>
- Norway: 53% of assault victims presenting at an emergency department reported the perpetrator had used alcohol prior to the attack<sup>123</sup>
- USA: up to 86% of homicide offenders, 37% of assault offenders, 60% of sexual offenders were under the influence of alcohol<sup>124</sup>
- England, Wales: Alcohol is involved in ca. 1.2 million violent incidents – almost half of all violent crimes<sup>125</sup>
- USA: 1% increase in state-level excise beer tax resulted in a 0.3% reduction in child abuse rates and a 3% reduction in domestic abuse<sup>98</sup>

# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL



**SDG 16.2:** End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

## Youth suffering alcohol violence

Children, adolescents and youth bear a disproportionate burden of alcohol's harm to others: they suffer alcohol violence perpetrated by adults, often parents.

- USA: 13% of child abusers are under the influence of alcohol<sup>125</sup>
- Europe: 16% of all cases of child abuse and neglect are alcohol-related<sup>126</sup>
- Alcohol fuels and exacerbates child maltreatment, and physical and sexual abuse<sup>98</sup>

- Alcohol is a major factor in domestic violence. Children are more likely to develop aggressive tendencies where there is a lack of parental monitoring, or where parents provide aggressive role models<sup>98</sup>

The impact of youth violence reaches all sectors of society, placing huge strains on public services and damaging communities.

- Philippines: 14% of 15 – 24 year olds reported physically hurting someone through violence in the previous three months. This violence was significantly associated with alcohol<sup>127</sup>
- Among 10 to 18 year-olds participating in the Caribbean Youth Health Survey, having used alcohol in the past year was significantly linked to weapon-related violence<sup>128</sup>

# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL



**SDG 16.2:** End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

## Adverse childhood experiences: Alcohol prevention for SDGs

Parents have an immense influence over their children's behavior during adolescence and on their children's well-being through the life-course. Adolescents growing up with parents who have substance use problems are more likely to turn to self-destructive behaviors such as suicide attempts.

The effects of parental substance use disorders can lead to the following problems in their children:

- Mental health problems,
- Relationship problems,
- Financial problems,
- Family problems, and
- Imitation of risky behaviors<sup>129</sup>

# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL



**SDG 16.2:** End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children

Parental alcohol problems seriously increase the likelihood that children will develop alcohol problems themselves later on in life<sup>98</sup>.

Millions of adults across Europe and North America (where the problem is recognized and studied) live with a legacy of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs).

- A 10% reduction in ACE prevalence could equate to annual savings of 3 million disability-adjusted life-years (DALYs) or \$105 billion<sup>130</sup>

## Adverse childhood experiences: Alcohol prevention for SDGs

# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE  
SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO  
JUSTICE FOR ALL



**SDG 16.5:** Substantially reduce corruption and bribery  
in all their forms

## Big Alcohol: Corruption and bribery as business practices

The alcohol industry, especially the biggest multi-national corporations of the beer and liquor industries, have a long and appalling track record of using unethical business practices to pursue profits. Cases of corruption<sup>131</sup> and bribery<sup>132</sup> are well documented and seem to be systemic. Just a few examples:

- In 2015, the alcohol industry was involved in a major Big Tobacco bribery case
- In 2016, AB InBev was fined for bribery by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)
- Thailand: Probe Into Diageo Bribery Case, 2017
- Corporate Fraud: Carlsberg Bribed Indian Officials, 2019

# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



**PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL**



**SDG 16.5: Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms**



**Heineken appears to have had an active hand in creating a culture of fraud and corruption [...].**



**Olivier van Beemen in Heineken in Africa, p. 81**

The book “Heineken in Africa” provides a systematic and thorough investigation into the business dealings of a multinational beer giant in Africa. The book details cases of bribery and corruption in countries across the continent, such as Nigeria, Congo and Burundi.

# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL



**SDG 16.7:** Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

## Worldwide problem: Big Alcohol interference in public policy making

The alcohol industry is increasingly challenging fundamental institutions, undermining their responsiveness to the public interest and eroding public trust in the functioning of institutions.

The global concentration of the alcohol industry into a small number of transnational alcohol corporations has powered the industry's capacity to obstruct, derail and undermine alcohol policy at the national, regional, and local levels<sup>133</sup>. This pursuit of their private interest comes at the cost of public health and well-being.

# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL



**SDG 16.7:** Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

Alcohol industry interference in public policy-making is pervasive. Alcohol industry actors seek to influence policy in two principal ways<sup>134</sup>:

1. Framing policy debates in a cogent and internally consistent manner, which excludes from policy agendas issues that are contrary to commercial interests;
2. Adopting short- and long-term approaches to managing threats to commercial interests within the policy arena by building relationships with key actors using a variety of different organizational forms.

Corporate capture of public policy-making processes and involved institutions to prevent and reduce alcohol harm is a reality in countries around the world.

- Documented cases from around the world show how the alcohol industry interferes with public policy-making processes to derail, obstruct, and undermine the formulation and implementation of evidence-based and WHO-recommended alcohol policy best buy measures – often in clear opposition to public opinion<sup>135</sup>



## STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



**SDG 17.1:** Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection

# Alcohol taxation: triple-win measure for financing development

Independent science shows that employing evidence-based alcohol taxation reaps significant benefits across 10 of 17 SDGs<sup>136</sup>. There is strong evidence that raising alcohol taxes is an effective strategy for reducing alcohol consumption and related harms<sup>137</sup>.

Alcohol taxation is a triple win measure:

1. It reduces the burden of alcohol as obstacle to health and development for all
2. It is a critical tool at the disposal of governments to raise domestic resources
3. It promotes health and development by making funds available to be invested in government programs, services and campaigns



## STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



**SDG 17.3:** Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources

Countries like Kenya<sup>138</sup>, India<sup>139</sup> and South Africa<sup>140</sup> illustrate the massive obstacle alcohol poses to reaching the SDGs. The costs of the alcohol burden are massive.

Countries like Thailand<sup>141</sup>, Philippines<sup>142</sup> and Lithuania<sup>143</sup> show how alcohol taxation can be used in an evidence-based, cost-effective way to achieve key SDG targets.

# Alcohol taxation: Key tool to tackle alcohol as obstacle to the SDGs



## STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



**SDG 17.16:** Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships (...) to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries

# Big Alcohol & SDGs: Conflict of interest

The producers of alcohol and other unhealthy commodities are commercial determinants of ill-health, economic harm and under-development<sup>149</sup>.

Alcohol is a major obstacle to achieving the SDGs – and is included in the 2030 Agenda. To effectively curb the commercial drivers of this obstacle to development, alcohol availability, affordability, and marketing (three Best Buys) need to be regulated<sup>150</sup>.

But these public policy goals are a direct threat to the core business interest of Big Alcohol: to maximize profits by increasing alcohol consumption everywhere<sup>151</sup>.



## STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



**SDG 17.16:** Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships (...) to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries

- A growing proportion of the global burden of disease can be attributed to the commercialization of harmful products like alcohol that are driven by industry giants<sup>151</sup>
- Big Alcohol uses aggressive tactics to promote their products in order to maximize profits for their shareholders<sup>152</sup>
- There is an inherent conflict of interest between Big Alcohol's goals (promoting consumption of products that harm health, economy, social fabric and the environment) on one hand and the SDGs on the other hand<sup>153</sup>
- Big Alcohol relies on heavy and excessive alcohol use for its profits<sup>117</sup>.
- UK: Alcohol sales would decrease by 38%, a value of £13 billion, if consumers would NOT use alcohol in excess of recommendations from the UK's National Health Service<sup>154</sup>



## STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



**SDG 17.17:** Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships

# Big Alcohol: No partner for sustainable development

The leading multinational corporations of the beer, wine and liquor industries are significant vectors of an industrial epidemic that threatens sustainable development<sup>144</sup>.

The alcohol industry has often gone and keeps going to extraordinary lengths to undermine and influence public policy in ways that are unethical.



## STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALIZE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



**SDG 17.17:** Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships

Harmful business practices are taken out of the playbook of Big Tobacco:

- Tax schemes by multinational alcohol corporations are exploiting countries, especially in the global south<sup>145</sup>
- Aggressive lobbying seeks to block the implementation of evidence-based measures to regulate alcohol in the public interest<sup>146</sup>
- Marketing often targets children and youth and often depicts women in de-humanized, sexualized ways<sup>147</sup>
- Self-regulatory schemes are systematically violated by the alcohol industry<sup>148</sup>

## Big Alcohol: No partner for sustainable development

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