

## OPEN LETTER

May 2023

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,  
Director-General,  
World Health Organization

Dear Dr Tedros,

Across the world, the most important thing is the health and wellbeing of our families and communities.

This is why the work that the World Health Organization (WHO) does to 'give everyone an equal chance at a safe and healthy life' is so vital.

Alcohol causes significant harm to so many people. Alcohol kills 3 million people globally, representing 5 per cent of all deaths. Alcohol also drives 5 per cent of all disease globally.

Among young adults aged 20 to 39 years, one in seven deaths are a result of alcohol. Alcohol is the greatest risk factor for disease burden among people aged 25 to 49 years.

This makes action to prevent and reduce alcohol harm vital to WHO ensuring that everyone has an equal chance at a safe and healthy life.

But alcohol companies and their lobby groups work relentlessly to undermine policies to prevent and reduce harm. They also work to undermine the health and safety of communities at the local level.

In Mexico, alcohol companies take millions of litres of water from drought ravaged communities to produce their beer, forcing communities to protest for the basic human right to access water. In Australia, the largest alcohol retailer fought for five years while they tried to build one of the biggest bottleshops in the country near a dry Aboriginal community in an area with high levels of alcohol harm, forcing the community to fight back. In Ireland, alcohol companies have lobbied at every step to undermine the Public Health Alcohol Action Act, watering down its impact and delaying many measures. In many African countries, multinational alcohol companies are deploying unethical practices to drive alcohol use, including using "beer promotion girls" and aggressive marketing that exposes children to alcohol promotions.

Right now, the WHO meets with the biggest global alcohol companies and their lobbyists formally once a year. These closed-door meetings are used by alcohol companies and their lobbyists to try to undermine health policy and programs at the global level.

This engagement needs to stop if we're going to prevent the significant harm that is caused by alcohol.

This is why we have come together as public health, community, family violence, children's rights and First Nations organisations to call on you as the leader of WHO to stop engaging with alcohol companies and their lobbyists.

Alcohol companies and their lobbyists should not have a seat at the table where policy and programs to progress community health, wellbeing and safety is being developed, assessed or evaluated.

The health, wellbeing and safety of our families and communities is far too important.

Yours sincerely,

**Ms Gianna Gayle Amul**, Secretary  
Asia Pacific Alcohol Policy Alliance,  
Singapore

**Benjamin Anabila**, Director  
Institute of Leadership and Development  
(INSLA), Ghana

**Mr Mahame Andrew**, Founder and  
Executive Director  
Youth for Development and Human  
Rights Advancement, Rwanda

**Mr Adis Arnautovic**, Director  
Center for Youth Education, Bosnia and  
Herzegovina

**Dr Lathika Athauda**, Senior Lecturer  
University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

**Mr Cruz Avila**, Executive Director  
Alcohol Justice, United States of America

**Mr Bernard Basset**, Président  
Addictions France, France

**Mr Lauri Beekmann**, Executive Director  
Nordic Alcohol and Drug Policy Network  
(NordAN), Nordic and Baltic Region

**Ms Munezero Bernadette**, Coordinator  
Burundi Alcohol Policy Alliance, Burundi

**Mrs Florence Berteletti**, Secretary  
General  
Eurocare (European Alcohol Policy  
Alliance), Europe

**Dr Beatriz Champagne**, CEO  
Healthy Latin America Coalition (CLAS),  
South America

**Wilson Chijioke**, International  
Coordinator  
Nigeria Alcohol Prevention Youth  
Initiative, Nigeria

**Dr Nino Chikovani**, Director of the  
Organization  
Good Health and Well-Being, Georgia

**Mr Phillip Chimponda**, Executive Clinical  
Director  
Serenity Harm Reduction Programme  
Zambia (SHARPZ), Zambia

**Dr Regina Ching**, Hon Secretary  
Hong Kong Alliance for Advocacy Against  
Alcohol, Hong Kong

**Ms Brenda Chitindi**, Executive Director  
Tobacco Free Association of Zambia,  
Zambia

**Mr Patrick Cokola**, Partnerships Officer  
Maroy Foundation, DR Congo

**Mr Rick Collins**, President  
Collins Consulting, LLC, Finland

**Dr Laura Cury**, Alcohol Project  
Coordinator  
ACT Promoção da Saúde, Brazil

**Mr Wim van Dalen**, Executive Director  
STAP, Netherlands

**Mrs Aadielah Maker-Diedericks**,  
Secretary General  
South African Alcohol Policy Alliance  
(SAAPA), South Africa

**Mr Minani Diogène**, Legal Representative  
Action Jeunesse contre la Drogue et la  
Pauvreté (AJEDROP), Burundi

**Mr Anuar Djedjo**, President  
IOGT Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Bissau

**Ms Alison Douglas**, CEO  
Alcohol Focus Scotland, Scotland

**Mr Yong Kim Eng**, President  
People Center for Development and  
Peace, Cambodia

**Dr Marcomini Franco**, President  
Eurocare Italia, Italy

**Dr Oscar Garcia-Algar**, Chair  
EUFASD Alliance, Europe

**Dr Sheila Gilheany**, CEO  
Alcohol Action Ireland, Ireland

**Sir Ian Gilmore**, Chair  
Alcohol Health Alliance, United Kingdom

**Ms Caterina Giorgi**, CEO  
Foundation for Alcohol Research and  
Education (FARE), Australia

**Mr Aðalsteinn Gunnarsson**, General  
Manager  
International Organisation of Good  
Templars (IOGT) Iceland, Iceland

**Mrs Ida Oleanna Hagen**, Secretary  
General  
FORUT, Solidaritetsaksjon for utvikling,  
Norway

**Ms Maisha Hutton**, Executive Director  
Healthy Caribbean Coalition, Barbados

**Tomomi Imanari**, Chairperson  
Non-Profit Corporation ASK, Japan

**Mr Alagie B Janneh**, President/National  
Coordinator  
International Organisation of Good  
Templars (IOGT) Gambia, The Gambia

**Mr Mahendra Jayasinghe**, Director  
Healthy Lanka Alliance for Development,  
Sri Lanka

**Michael Jensen**, Team Leader  
Alcohol and Society, Denmark

**Mr Prabhakaran Ravi Kandiah**, Director/  
Advisor  
Foundation for Innovative Social  
Development (FISD), Sri Lanka

**Mr Bobson Alie Kargbo**, National Director  
IOGT – Sierra Leone, Sierra Leone

**Ms Irma Kilim**, Head of Drug Policy  
IOGT-NTO, Sweden

**Mrs A.Kodees**, President  
Thiruvalluvar Community Center, Sri  
Lanka

**Ms Sophia Komba**, Executive Director  
Centre Against Gender Based Violence,  
Tanzania

**Mr Matej Košir**, Director  
Institute for Research and Development  
“Utrip”, Slovenia

**Mr Samuel Kumwanje**, Programme  
Coordinator  
NCD Alliance Malawi, Malawi

**Dr Helen Lasimbang**, Chairwoman  
Apam-Sabah, Malaysia

**Mr Frank Lindemann**, Officer for Alcohol  
Policy and International Affairs  
Guttempler in Deutschland e.V., Germany

**Ms Blanca Amalia Llorente**, Research  
Director  
Fundación Anáas, Colombia

**Mr Lusanth**, Director  
Nethra Community Development  
foundation, Sri Lanka

**Ms Natalia Maciejczyk**, President  
IOGT Poland, Poland

**Dr. Norman Maldonado**, Director  
PROESA-Universidad Icesi, Colombia

**Mr Chief Malema**, Coordinator  
Center for Mental Health Education,  
Counseling and Empowerment (CMHEE),  
Malawi

**Dr Miguel Malo**, Member  
Cosavi, Costa Rica

**Mr Kanagarathinam Mathiyalakan**,  
Manager  
Vadamaradchy Organization of Good  
Templars, Sri Lanka

**Professor Richard Matzopoulos**, Unit  
Director  
South African Medical Research Council,  
South Africa

**Mr Guilherme Messas**, Coordinator of  
the Committee  
Committee for Alcohol Regulation, Brazil

**Dr Juha Mikkonen**, Executive Director  
Finnish Association for Substance Abuse  
Prevention EHYT, Finland

**Mr Pradip Mohanti**, Director  
Sarvodaya Samiti, India

**Ms Kaluba Evelyn Moloka**, Executive  
Director  
Anti Alcohol and Drug Abuse Zambia,  
Zambia

**Mrs Mphonyane Mofokeng**, Founder and  
Director  
Anti-Drug Abuse Association of Lesotho,  
Lesotho

**Dr Justina Murray**, CEO  
Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and  
Drugs, Scotland

**Mr Musa**, Director  
Media advocacy and technologies  
Center, Nigeria

**Mrs Maud Mwakasungula**, Executive  
Director  
Women's Coalition Against Cancer  
(WOCACA), Malawi

**Mr Winstone Mwale**, National  
Coordinator  
Drug Policy and Harm Reduction  
Platform (DPHRP), Malawi

**Nkatha Mwenda**, Chairperson  
Graceful Youth Recovery Centre, Kenya

**Ms Juliet Namukasa**, Country Director  
LMI International, Uganda

**Dr Timothy Naimi**, Director  
Canadian Institute for Substance Use  
Research, Canada

**Ms Van Nguye**, Project Officer  
Research and Training Centre for  
Community Development, Vietnam

**Ms Veronica Nkhata**, Senior Programs  
Officer  
Drug Fight Malawi, Malawi

**Mr Juan Nuñez**, Coordinator  
Coalición México Salud-Hable, Mexico

**Ms Naomi Nyalusi**, Project Coordinator  
Iringa Development of Youth Disabled &  
Children Care (IDYDC), Tanzania

**Mr Joshua Oiro**, Executive Director  
Value Health Africa, Cameroon

**Ms Carolina Piñeros Ospina**, Executive  
Director,  
Red PaPaz, Colombia

**Professor Charles Parry**, Director:  
Alcohol, Tobacco & Other Drug Research  
Unit  
South African Medical Research Council,  
South Africa

**Mrs B.A.G.Chandralatha Piyaseeli**,  
President  
Success for Life Organization, Sri Lanka

**Ms Monirath Prak**, President  
Khmer Youth Association, Cambodia

**Mr Srinivasa Vara Prasad**, President  
AmarDeep, India

**Dr Maria Luisa Marin Puig**, President  
Associacio Rauxa, Spain

**Dr Bolormaa Purevdorj**, Chair  
Population Health Research Center,  
Mongolia

**Md. Arifur Rahman**, Chief Executive  
YPSA, Bangladesh

**Dr Leanne Ramsoomar**, Public Health  
Researcher  
South African Medical Research Council  
(SAMRC), South Africa

**Mrs Elsa Ribeiro**, Social Worker  
SAAP - Sociedade Anti-Alcoólica  
Portuguesa, Portugal

**Kikome Ruth**, Executive Director  
Recovery Solutions Treatment and  
Counselling Centre, Uganda

**Professor Zila Sanchez**, Chair of the  
Department of Preventive Medicine  
Universidade Federal de São Paulo,  
Brazil

**Mr Diego Rodriguez Sendoya**,  
Coordinator  
Centro de investigación para la epidemia  
del tabaquismo (CIET), Uruguay

**Mr Sampath De Seram**, Executive  
Director  
Alcohol and Drug Information Centre  
(ADIC) Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka

**Dr Katherine Severi**, Chief Executive  
Institute of Alcohol Studies, United  
Kingdom

**Dr Adam Sherk**, Scientist  
Canadian Institute for Substance Use  
Research, Canada

**Mr S.Kapila Kumara De Silva**,  
Programme Coordinator  
Mithuru Mithuro Movement, Sri Lanka

**Ms Sanja Sisovic**, Program director  
CAZAS, Montenegro

**Mr Marian Sperka**, Vice-Chair  
Movendi SK, Slovakia

**Ms Kristina Sperkova**, International  
President  
Movendi International, International

**Professor Tim Stockwell**, Scientist  
Canadian Institute for Substance Use  
Research, Canada

**Mr Maguette Thiandoume**, Chairperson  
RESOPODEV, Senegal

**Mrs Sumnima Tuladhar**, Executive  
Director  
Child Workers in Nepal Concerned Centre  
(CWIN), Nepal

**Dr Franklin Umenze**, Chair  
West African Alcohol Policy Alliance, West  
Africa

**Ms Kate Vallance**, Research Associate  
Canadian Institute for Substance Use  
Research, Canada

**Mr Kristjan Variksoo**, Chairman of the  
Board  
Juvente Estonia, Estonia

**Mr Teera Watcharapranee**, Manager  
Stop Drink Network, Thailand

**Mr Bandula Wijesinghe**, CEO  
Forum for Rural Income & Environment  
Development Services (FRIENDS), Sri  
Lanka

**Ms Rebecca Williams**, Acting Executive  
Director  
Alcohol Healthwatch, New Zealand

**Mr Scott Wilson**, CEO  
Aboriginal Drug and Alcohol Council  
(AADC), Australia

**Mr Nelson Zakeyu**, National Coordinator  
Malawi Alcohol Policy Alliance, Malawi

**Dr Jinhui Zhao**, Senior Data Analyst  
Canadian Institute for Substance Use  
Research, Canada

**Mr Tungamirai Zimonte**, Executive  
Director  
Youth against Alcoholism and Drug  
Dependency (YADD), Zimbabwe

**Mx Ronie Zuze**, Executive Director  
Intersex Community of Zimbabwe,  
Zimbabwe