

NCD Alliance statement in response to Worldwide Brewing Alliance event at the UNGA on “the role of the beer sector in advancing the SDGs”

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26 Sept, New York - On Tuesday 25 September, the NCD Alliance received an invitation to attend a side event being held in the margins of the 73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly inside UN Headquarters, entitled ‘Advancing the SDGs: A Partners [sic] Perspective.’ This invitation-only event is co-hosted by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations and the Worldwide Brewing Alliance, and will be held on Wednesday 26 September, the day of the first UN High-Level Meeting on Ending Tuberculosis and a day before the third UN High-Level Meeting on Noncommunicable Diseases (NCDs). Alongside a speaker from the UN Institute of Training and Research (UNITAR), the event gives a platform to representatives from AB In-Bev, Heineken, and Molson Coors.

The NCD Alliance has declined the invitation to participate in the dialogue, and again calls on all UN agencies and national governments not to engage in partnerships with the alcohol industry, on the grounds that the alcohol industry persists with concerted lobbying against the World Health Organization’s (WHO) recommended measures to reduce health impacts and societal harm attributable to their products.

Alcohol use is a major risk factor for premature death, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like cancer and cardiovascular disease, injury including road crashes, disability and violence, including gender-based violence, and communicable diseases including tuberculosis. The 2018 [Global Status Report on Alcohol and Health](#) [1] reported that approximately 3 million people die every year as a result of alcohol consumption, equivalent to 1 person every 10 seconds. The harm caused by alcohol use is a major obstacle to sustainable development around the world, as outlined in a report “[Trouble Brewing](#) [2]” released in advance of the 3rd UN HLM on NCDs on 27 September.

The WHO has defined a package of Best Buy policy measures and recommended interventions to significantly reduce the harms to health and society caused by alcohol, these include taxation, regulating availability (e.g. age restrictions) and advertising restrictions. The alcohol industry systematically lobbies to prevent, delay and undermine the adoption of these effective, tried and tested measures worldwide - calling instead for less effective voluntary measures.

Katie Dain, CEO of the NCD Alliance, commented “*This is a shameless attempt by the beer industry to position themselves as part of the solution to sustainable development. But it is painfully clear that they*

remain a major part of the problem, in their attempts to fend off and dilute tried and tested measures and to dissuade governments from taking action to curb the many harms caused by alcohol. We regret that UNITAR continues to fall for this ruse, taken straight from the pages of the tobacco industry playbook. They must call time on these incompatible partnerships which obstruct health and development.”

For more on NCD civil society’s position on partnerships with the alcohol industry, please refer to IOGT International’s [joint open letter](#) [3] concerning UNITAR partnering with AB In-Bev from March 2018 and a [joint open letter](#) [4] from IOGT International, the Global Alcohol Policy Alliance, the NCD Alliance and an additional 70 global health organisations on The Global Fund’s proposed partnership with Heineken from February 2018.

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Links

[1] http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/global_alcohol_report/en/

[2] <https://ncdalliance.org/news-events/news/trouble-brewing-four-major-global-health-organizations-warn-that-countries-are-ignoring-the-harms-of-alcohol-consumption>

[3] <http://iogt.org/open-letters/joint-open-letter-concern-unitar-partnering-alcohol-giant/>

[4] <https://ncdalliance.org/news-events/news/civil-society-concern-regarding-the-global-fund-partnering-with-heineken>

[5] <https://old.ncdalliance.org/taxonomy/term/186>

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