

Time to deliver on social inclusion:
How alcohol taxation helps reduce
inequalities and promote social
development

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Time to Deliver on Social Inclusion: How Alcohol Taxation Helps Reduce Inequalities and Promote Social Development

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Co-sponsors:

IOGT International, International Federation for Family Development, New
York Alcohol Policy Alliance
Government of Estonia (TBC)
Government of the Philippines (TBC)

Side event title:

Time to Deliver on Social Inclusion: How Alcohol Taxation Helps Reduce
Inequalities and Promote Social Development

Side event description:

Goal 10 of the SDGs calls for actions to reduce inequalities between and within countries – including the reduction of inequalities in outcomes by, inter alia, promoting appropriate legislation and policies as well as empowering and promoting the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

The 2018 WHO Global Status Report on Alcohol details unimpeachable scientific evidence about how alcohol frequently fuels inequalities between and within countries, hindering the achievement of SDG 10, which calls for inequalities to be reduced.

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Beyond its adverse effects on SDG 10, alcohol is a serious obstacle to development adversely affecting a majority of the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda recognizes this by including target 3.5 to “Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.”

Latest evidence clearly shows that alcohol is a barrier to social development, fueling inequalities and social exclusion.

For example, harms from a given amount of alcohol consumption are higher for people and their families from lower socio-economic groups than for people, families and communities with more resources. This pattern of greater “harm per litre” is found for many different harms caused by alcohol. Furthermore, young people bear a disproportionate burden of alcohol harm. But these are just two examples of the many inequalities that alcohol harm is causing in societies and communities around the world.

Alcohol harm is pervasive worldwide but it hits hardest those people, families and communities who are already marginalized and vulnerable. Children from families with parental alcohol problems; young people; women; or people from the poorest communities in the world, often suffering from co-morbidities – the list of especially vulnerable populations is long.

Such a list shows the serious barrier that alcohol is for social inclusion and equality in our societies. But there are effective solutions that should be part of the efforts to promote social development.

This side event will explore the evidence-base and the potential of a powerful measure to tackle alcohol as hinder to social inclusion and equality: alcohol taxation.

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The panel discussion will elaborate on a variety of aspects regarding how alcohol taxation helps improve the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society.

Line-up of speakers:

Moderator:

Kristina Sperkova, International President, IOGT International

- 1) Setting the scene with scientific evidence: Alcohol and inequalities, WHO
- 2) The case of Estonia: Alcohol policy to reduce inequalities in Estonia (TBC)
- 3) The case of the Philippines: Alcohol taxation to fund universal health care and promote social development
- 4) Alcohol and social exclusion in the context of the SDGs, Kristina Sperkova, International President, IOGT International
- 5) Impact of alcoholism on shared responsibility at home, Ignacio Socias, Director of Communications and International Relations, International Federation for Family Development
- 6) The potential of alcohol taxation for social development: local and national examples of implementation, Robert Pezzolesi, Public Health Expert
- 7) Q&A, Discussion and wrap-up