

**150TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE WORLD
HEALTH ORGANISATION: JANUARY 24, 2022**

**AFRICAN REGIONAL STATEMENT DELIVERED BY KENYA ON
AGENDA ITEM 7 POLITICAL DECLARATION OF THE THIRD HIGH-
LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE
PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES
(G) AND (H)**

Thank you, moderator, and thank you chair.

1. Kenya is making this statement on behalf of the 47 Member States of the Africa Region.
2. Non-Communicable Diseases are conditions of great public health concern and a hindrance to long-term economic growth particularly in the developing world. We note that NCDs disproportionately affect low- and middle-income countries, and the worst affected being the poor, vulnerable and marginalized populations. Despite this, we further note with concern that these conditions remain overwhelmingly neglected by domestic and development financing.
3. Chair, we congratulate the Secretariat for developing **the global action plan (2022-2030) to effectively implement the global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol as a public health priority**, and appreciate the extensive consultative process undertaken by the Secretariat. We note with concern that the implementation of the global strategy has been uneven across WHO regions as well as within regions and countries since its endorsement in the Sixty-third World Health Assembly in May 2010. As such, few countries have written national alcohol policies to prevent and reduce the harms caused by alcohol at the local level.
4. While rates of people who use alcohol are falling in other regions of the World, the African Region has not shown a decrease. Instead, there is an increase in the use of alcohol and heavy episodic drinking among young people, beginning as early as 13 years of age.
5. We therefore hope that this Action Plan will effectively address the challenges in implementation of the global strategy, particularly in supporting countries to

develop and implement effective alcohol policies. We welcome the sharpened focus of the action plan and recommend that the Director-General report to the World Health Assembly biennially on the progress of implementing the Global Action Plan.

6. In view of the foregoing, The African region recommends adoption of the Global alcohol action plan and we look forward to receiving support for its implementation with particular attention to addressing the challenges specific to the African Region such as informal and illicit brewing and consumption of alcohol; juvenile alcoholism; and interference by the alcohol industry to influence policy decisions.
7. Chair, Regarding the **intersectoral global action plan on epilepsy and other neurological disorders 2022–2031**, the Africa Region is concerned that disorders of the nervous system continue to be among the leading cause of disability and death globally. At present, the African Region accounts for 85% of the global burden of epilepsy. Stroke is also the leading cause of the neurological burden in the African Region and globally.
8. Key challenges in the African Region include: lack of financing for neurological disorders; a dire shortage of the neurological workforce, with the few available professionals concentrated in urban areas; chronic shortages of medications; and, lack of guidelines for the management of neurological disorders.
9. We therefore acknowledge and support the proposed strategic approaches to improve access to care and treatment for people living with neurological disorders, prevent new cases and promote brain health and development across the life course.
10. We urge WHO and partners to support the implementation of the priority actions at all levels, particularly in implementing context-specific actions at the local level. The Region also calls upon Member States to ensure domestic allocation of resources to support the global action plan, including capacity building at the local level, as well as support to health systems to manage epilepsy in the routine health systems at all levels of care.
11. In conclusion, Chair, the African Region recommends that the WHA adopts the draft intersectoral global action plan on epilepsy and other neurological disorders, and looks forward to supporting its implementation, with particular attention to addressing the key challenges highlighted in our statement.
12. I thank you