

RESOLUTION

OF THE

WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR SOUTH-EAST ASIA

SEA/RC67/R4

SOUTH-EAST ASIA REGIONAL ACTION PLAN TO IMPLEMENT GLOBAL STRATEGY TO REDUCE HARMFUL USE OF ALCOHOL (2014–2025)

The Regional Committee,

Noting the report on Strengthening the Implementation of the Global strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol to support the achievement of the regional targets on noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) prevention and control in the South-East Asia Region,

Recalling the World Health Assembly resolution WHA63.13 on the Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol, the follow-up to the Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting of the General Assembly on the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases, particularly in regard to the adoption of the Global Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases 2013–2020 and the global target on the reduction of harmful use of alcohol as one of the nine voluntary targets,

Also recalling Regional Committee resolution SEA/RC66/R6 on the Regional Action Plan and Targets for Prevention and Control of NCDs (2013–2020), that endorsed a regional voluntary target of 10% reduction in the harmful use of alcohol and recommended to Member States to use total adult per capita consumption as the basic indicator,

Further recalling Regional Committee resolutions SEA/RC54/R2 on Mental Health and Substance Abuse, including Alcohol, and SEA/RC59/R8 on Alcohol Consumption Control: Policy Options, which endorsed the Regional Policy Framework, and document SEA/RC59/15 on providing strategic guidance to Member States,

Concerned that there is a gradual increase in consumption of alcohol among the general population – particularly among adolescents, youth and also women in some Member States – and quite a high prevalence of heavy episodic drinking or binge drinking and unrecorded alcohol consumption in the Region,

Deeply concerned that the South-East Asia Region is an emerging market for the alcohol industry which is progressively investing and marketing in the Region, and that there is a shift in consumption of beverage types from indigenous/traditional to modern beverages such as wines and beers, as well as from ritual use to lifestyle-related drinking,

Recognizing the consequences of trade agreements that facilitate the free flow of and investment in alcohol, which may increase the consumption and negative impact of alcohol in the Region, and may limit the ability of Member States to prevent and control alcohol-related harms,

Concerned that consumption of illicit or informally produced alcohol has additional negative consequences, partly due to a higher ethanol content and potential contamination with toxic substances, such as methanol,

Noting that alcohol consumption leads to many health problems including NCDs such as cardiovascular diseases and cancers, which contribute to a great proportion of the global and regional burden of disease,

Mindful of the concern that alcohol consumption also has a negative impact on people other than those who drink, and also social and economic consequences on the population, in particular the poor,

Reiterating that the basis for prevention of alcohol-related harm in the context of the South-East Asia Region may also include negative social and economic consequences related to productivity loss, poverty, social safety and quality of life, and also take into account social structure and sociocultural norms,

Further noting the progress of work of the WHO Global Network of National Counterparts to implement the Global Strategy, formed in 2011, and their task forces and working groups, as well as the establishment of the South-East Asia Region Network of National Counterparts and other regional initiatives,

Recognizing the commitment to address the harmful use of alcohol as a risk factor for NCDs, in particular the outcomes of the 2012 Bi-Regional Workshop in Bangkok on building capacity for reducing the harmful use of alcohol at the country level in coordination with NCD prevention and control programmes of the South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions,

Acknowledging the need for further strengthening of national and regional capacities, including institutional capacity, and further accelerating the implementation of the Global strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol at the national level, and

Noting the draft regional action plan that was developed through consultations among SEA Network of National Counterparts on Implementing the Global Strategy to Reduce Harmful Use of Alcohol,

1. ENDORSES the Regional Action Plan to Implement the Global Strategy to Reduce Harmful Use of Alcohol for the South-East Asia Region (2014–2025);
2. URGES Member States:
 - (a) to consider setting targets, as appropriate, on the reduction of the harmful use of alcohol;
 - (b) to develop and/or strengthen, as appropriate, a comprehensive alcohol policy framework to reduce the harmful use of alcohol, taking into consideration the Regional Action Plan to Implement the Global strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol for the South-East Asia Region (2014–2025);
 - (c) to develop and/or strengthen, as appropriate, systems and mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of the WHO Global strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol, which may include responsible institutional, human and financial resources, multisectoral collaborating mechanisms, and technical knowledge and information systems;
 - (d) to promote the linkages between the implementation of the Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol and efforts on NCD prevention and control;
 - (e) to strengthen surveillance for alcohol consumption and related harm including integrated surveillance for NCDs, and
 - (f) to consider observing a regional/national non-alcohol day and advocate for global non-alcohol day,

3. REQUESTS the Regional Director:

- (a) to provide technical support and build capacity of Member States to advance the implementation of the Regional action plan for reducing the harmful use of alcohol, in accordance with the implementation of the Regional action plan and targets for prevention and control of NCDs;
- (b) to support capacity strengthening and international collaboration mechanisms, including setting up the Regional Technical Advisory Group on Alcohol and Health, to support the WHO Global and Regional Networks of National Counterparts for Implementation of the global strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol and their subsidiary groups, and to continue the biennial regional forum of key partners from Member States and international partners; and
- (c) to report progress on this resolution to the Seventieth, Seventy-third, Seventy-sixth and Seventy-ninth sessions of the Regional Committee for South-East Asia in 2017, 2020, 2023 and 2026.

Sixth session, 12 September 2014