# WHO Working Document of an Action Plan to strengthen implementation of the Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol

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In February 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) Executive Board requested that the WHO Director-General develop an action plan to effectively implement the ‘*Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol’* (2010) as a public health priority. This would be done in consultation with member states (including Australia) and relevant stakeholders (including FARE and other civil society NGOs), for consideration by the 75th World Health Assembly in 2022. As part of its response, the WHO Secretariat held an online consultation on the Working Document for during November and December 2020.

The vision behind the 2010 Global Strategy is improved health and social outcomes for individuals, families and communities, with considerably reduced morbidity and mortality due to the harmful use of alcohol and the ensuing social consequences. However, the implementation of the Global Strategy has been uneven across the WHO regions. Between 2010 and 2018 no tangible progress was made in reducing total global alcohol consumption per capita.

The overall burden of disease attributable to alcohol consumption remains unacceptably high. In 2016, the harmful use of alcohol resulted in three million deaths worldwide. Alcohol products remain the only psychoactive and dependence-producing substance that exerts a significant impact on global population health that is not controlled at the international level by legally-binding regulatory instruments. Without a clear Action Plan, the Global Strategy remains unrealised and the health and economic harms of alcohol product use will remain high and continue to be an obstacle to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Working Document provided a sound starting point for the development of an Action Plan, particularly where it focussed on the evidence-based high-impact strategies and interventions known as the SAFER initiatives. However, the Working Document also needed strengthening to prioritise actions, clarify roles, improve governance and enhance language.

**FARE recommended:**

**Recommendation 1. Prioritise actions:** Reduce and restructure the number of prioritised actions and having a greater focus on the SAFER strategies.

**Recommendation 2. Clarify roles:** Clarifying the role of actors, particularly ensuring that alcohol corporations and lobby groups that have a conflict of interest in financially benefiting from the sale of alcohol products are not involved in policy development.

**Recommendation 3. Improve governance:** Having a greater focus on governance, resourcing, review and implementation.

**Recommendation 4. Enhance language:** Changing the way that alcohol use and harm is referred to throughout the document by moving away from references to the ‘harmful use of alcohol’.

[view the submission](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/FARE-submission_Global-Strategy-on-Alcohol-Harm_feedback.pdf)

### Metadata

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