



## Economic and Social Council

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### **Substantive session of 2012**

New York, 2-27 July 2012

Item 7 (g) of the provisional agenda\*

**Coordination, programme and other questions:  
tobacco or health**

### **Statement submitted by International Center for Alcohol Policies, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council**

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* E/2012/100.



## Statement

### **National capacity to reduce poverty and the World Health Organization alcohol strategy**

The International Center for Alcohol Policies is a not-for-profit organization supported by leading producers of beverage alcohol. We are dedicated to promoting understanding of the role of alcohol in society and to helping to reduce the abuse of alcohol worldwide through dialogue and partnerships involving the beverage alcohol industry, Governments, the public health community and others with an interest in alcohol policy.

As the Economic and Social Council holds its substantive session of 2012, we invite it to recognize the role that reducing the harmful use of alcohol can play in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

In May 2010, the sixty-third World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA63.13, by which it endorsed a global strategy to reduce harmful use of alcohol. The strategy acknowledges the need to focus on the harmful use of alcohol and not on alcohol consumption per se. Furthermore, the strategy represents a portfolio of policy options and measures that can be considered by Member States, taking into account differing religious and cultural contexts and public health priorities. The strategy acknowledges that there is a need for comprehensive action across numerous sectors, including the beverage alcohol industry, Governments and civil society organizations.

The strategy aims to reduce harm and safeguard well-being and health globally, as do the Millennium Development Goals. In her address to the sixty-third World Health Assembly, Margaret Chan, Director General of the World Health Organization, acknowledged that the Millennium Development Goals promoted health as part of an overarching strategy for poverty reduction. Members of the beverage alcohol industry have been involved as legitimate stakeholders throughout the development of the strategy and are committed to playing an appropriate role in supporting Member States in its implementation.

The Center's sponsors believe that the strategy is an important and constructive step forward in helping to address issues related to the misuse of alcohol around the world. They also understand that many factors influence decisions to drink. Social and economic variables such as poverty, malnutrition, health status and drinking culture help to determine drinking choices and, ultimately, outcomes. Studies examining the impact of alcohol production and consumption in developing countries are very scarce. As part of an effort to assist low-income and middle-income countries to identify data gaps, the Center is coordinating studies of illicit and non-commercial alcohol in more than 10 low-income and middle-income countries. The preliminary results of those studies are available on the web page of Global Actions on Harmful Drinking ([www.global-actions.org](http://www.global-actions.org)).

The Center and its members support efforts to build stakeholder capacity to eradicate poverty through sustainable economic growth and to reduce the harmful use of alcohol globally. In order for Member States to better target programmes and policies towards those most at risk, the Center recommends an increase in research conducted into drinking patterns as they relate to at-risk populations throughout developing countries.