



Media Release

Global Alcohol Policy Conference [#GAPC2023] welcomes Professor Mindaugas Štelemėkas to South Africa

4 May 2023

Cape Town: The Global Alcohol Policy Alliance (GAPA), the SA Medical Research Council (SAMRC) and the Southern African Alcohol Policy Alliance (SAAPA) and its co-sponsors are pleased to announce that Professor Mindaugas Štelemėkas will be a speaker at the upcoming 7th bi-annual Global Alcohol Policy Conference (GAPC) which will take place in Cape Town, South Africa from 24 – 26 October 2023.

Professor Mindaugas Štelemėkas is the Head and senior scientist of the Health Research Institute (WHO Collaborating Centre for the Prevention & Control of NCDs), Faculty of Public Health, Lithuanian University of Health Sciences.

He will speak on the *‘Lithuanian experience with alcohol marketing legislation’* in the plenary session on Alcohol Digital Marketing.

Mindaugas is also a professor at the Department of Preventive Medicine on the same faculty and a board member of the Lithuanian Tobacco and Alcohol Control Coalition which is an active national non-governmental organization promoting and advocating for evidence-based public health policies in the field of psychoactive substance control (alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs).



His recent research activity involves leading national projects in the field of alcohol and tobacco as well as co-leading (together with prof. Jürgen Rehm) the international project “Evaluation of the impact of alcohol control policies on morbidity and mortality in Lithuania and other Baltic states” which is funded by the grant from National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism of the National Institutes of Health (US).

In the past, he was a Lithuanian representative at various WHO-related activities such as the Lithuanian delegate at the Standing Committee of the Regional Committee (SCRC) at the

World Health Organization Regional Committee for Europe (term 2017-2020). His background education is in Public Health and Health Economics.

The 7th bi-annual conference is co-hosted by GAPA, the SAMRC, and the SAAPA. It is co-sponsored by the World Health Organisation (WHO), South Africa's Department of Social Development (DSD) and the Department of Health (DOH), the National Research Foundation (NRF), the DG Murray Trust and SA National Convention Bureau (SA Tourism). The bi-annual conference theme is *“Investing in People before Profits: building momentum towards the Framework Convention on Alcohol Control”*.

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For more information contact: Mr Julian A. Jacobs on 061 917 9661 (#GAPC2023: Media Liaison)

***Conference website:** <https://gapc2023.samrc.ac.za/index.html>

Note to News desks:

GAPC Co-hosts

1. Global Alcohol Policy Alliance (GAPA) [Co-Host]

It is a network of non-governmental organisations and people working in public health agencies and researchers in academic and other institutions who share information on alcohol issues and advocate evidence-based alcohol policies, free from commercial interests. Regional and national alliances affiliated with GAPA operate in Africa (Southern Africa, East Africa, and West Africa), the European Union, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, the USA, and Western Pacific regions. The bi-annual GAPA conference is the leading forum for the world's alcohol policy makers, advocates, researchers, civil society activists and practitioners. - <https://globalgapa.org/>

2. SA Medical Research Council (SAMRC) [Co-Host]

The SAMRC was established in 1969 with a mandate to improve the health of the country's population, through research, development, and technology transfer, so that people can enjoy a better quality of life. The scope of the organisation's research projects includes tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS, cardiovascular and non-communicable diseases, gender and health, and alcohol and other drug abuse. <https://www.samrc.ac.za/>

3. Southern African Alcohol Policy Alliance (SAAPA) [Co-Host]

SAAPA was established in 2012 as a platform for civil society organisations in the

Southern African region to share resources and experiences in the lobby for evidence-based alcohol policy that promotes the well-being of citizens. <https://saapa.africa/>

GAPC Sponsors:

1. Department of Social Development [Co-Sponsor]

Management and oversight over social security, encompassing social assistance and social insurance policies that aim to prevent and alleviate poverty in the event of life cycle risks such as loss of income due to unemployment, disability, old age, or death occurring. Developmental social welfare services that provide support to reduce poverty, vulnerability, and the impact of HIV and AIDS through sustainable development programmes in partnership with implementing agents such as State-funded institutions, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs). - <https://www.dsd.gov.za/index.php>

2. National Research Foundation [Co-Sponsor]

The NRF is an independent statutory body established through the National Research Foundation Act (Act No 23 of 1998), following a system-wide review conducted for the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST). The NRF promotes South African research and innovation interests across the country and internationally, and together with research institutions, businesses, industry, and international partners, we build bridges between research communities for mutual benefit that contributes to National Development. - <https://www.nrf.ac.za/about-us/>

3. SA National Convention Bureau (SANCB) [Co-Sponsor]

The SANCB is a ‘one-stop solution’ for independent information and assistance, giving neutral advice on all aspects of hosting and organising any business event in South Africa. - <https://www.southafrica.net/za/en/>

4. DG Murray Trust [Co-Sponsor]

The DG Murray Trust (DGMT) is a public innovator that aims to develop South Africa’s potential through strategic investment. Together with other funders, NGOs, and government, DGMT studies and supports work being done in the critical areas of early childhood development (ECD), youth unemployment, school dropout and education quality, as well as innovation in the civil sector. As such, our team is well-placed to share critical insights or provide comments on a range of issues in these areas – or if we are unable to, connect the press to people in our network who can. - <https://dgmt.co.za/>

5. The Department of Health (DOH) [Co-Sponsor]

The Department of Health's vision is for all South Africans to have a long and healthy life. Its mission relates to improving citizens' health status through the prevention of illnesses and the promotion of healthy lifestyles and to consistently improve the healthcare delivery system by focusing on access, equity, efficiency, quality, and sustainability. -

<https://www.health.gov.za/>

6. The World Health Organisations (WHO) [Co-Sponsor]

The World Health Organization leads and champions global efforts to achieve better health for all. By connecting countries, people and partners, we strive to give everyone, everywhere an equal chance at a safe and healthy life. - <https://www.who.int/>

