



Media Release

Global Alcohol Policy Conference [#GAPC2023] Paula Leonard, CEO of Alcohol Forum Ireland to South Africa

27 March 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 newly appointed CEO of Alcohol Forum Ireland, Paula Leonard will be a keynote speaker at the upcoming 7th global alcohol policy bi-annual conference which will take place in Cape Town, South Africa from 24 – 26 October 2023.



Paula Leonard will join the panel on “New Initiatives in promoting impactful policies and reducing industry influence”, focusing on disrupting industry influence at the community level.

Paula Leonard leads the Alcohol Forum Ireland, an independent charity, which provides a range of support and services to individuals, families and communities impacted by alcohol harm while working at the wider policy and advocacy levels to change Ireland’s problematic relationship with alcohol. As the national lead for community action on alcohol over the past seven years there have been many positive developments including the

establishment of the Irish Community Action on Alcohol Network (ICAAAN); the

development of resources, accredited training and advocacy in alcohol licensing as a tool to build safer communities; the initiation of the National County Alcohol profiling project and the development of the ‘I-Mark: Supporting Independence from Alcohol Industry Influence’. The i-Mark is a growing social movement which provides a framework and a toolkit to challenge and counter the corrosive impact of the strategies of the alcohol industry. Having graduated with a Masters in Community Development, Paula initially worked in the area of peace building and reconciliation as part of the Peace Programme in Northern Ireland and the Border Counties and then spent many years working in the area of health inequality with the Irish Traveller and Roma communities. She is a passionate believer in the power and potential of communities to effect positive social change.

The 7th bi-annual conference is co-hosted by GAPA, the SAMRC, and the Southern African Alcohol Policy Alliance (SAAPA). It is co-sponsored by the Department of Social Development, 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:

Additional Information:

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 to 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 [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 [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) [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 [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 comment 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/>

