

GLOBAL ALCOHOL POLICY CONFERENCE OCTOBER

The Global Alcohol Policy Conference (GAPC2023), "Investing in People before Profits: Building Momentum towards the Framework Convention on Alcohol Control," will be held from 24 - 26 October 2023 in Cape Town, South Africa.

Media Release

10 OCTOBER 2023

THE 7TH BIENNIAL GLOBAL ALCOHOL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN CAPE TOWN

South Africa will host the 7th Global Alcohol Policy Conference scheduled to take place from the 24 – 26 October 2023 at the Cape Town Convention Centre, in Cape Town, South Africa. The conference will be held under the theme: "Investing in people before profits: building momentum towards the Framework Convention on Alcohol Control".

The biennial gathering aims to emphasise the need for proactive steps at both national and especially global levels to address alcohol harm.

It comprises several plenaries which focus on Gender-Based Violence and Alcohol; Alcohol Pricing Policies; Regulating Digital Marketing of Alcohol; Disrupting the Impacts of Conflict of Interest; and New initiatives in promoting impactful policies and Reducing Industry Influence. These plenaries will be led by some of the world's leading researchers, activists, and scientists. More than 400 delegates from across the globe will attend the alcohol policy conference, the first time to be held in Africa.

Co-hosted by the Global Alcohol Policy Alliance (GAPA), the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), the Southern African Alcohol Policy Alliance (SAAPA), and the Department of Social Development. The conference enjoys the support of co-sponsors including the WHO, DG Murray Trust, the National Department of Health, and SA Tourism. Other funders include the National Research Foundation, the Western Cape Provincial Government and Open Philanthropy.

The mission of GAPA is to reduce alcohol-related harm worldwide by promoting science-based policies.

In South Africa, alcohol is the most widely used psychoactive substance. The country is currently faced with high levels of binge drinking and associated harms.

In alignment with the upcoming conference, the Minister of Social

Development, Lindiwe Zulu will address the conference. The Department of Social Development has drafted a policy framework to address the challenges precipitated by alcohol and other drug use in the country.

The policy was prompted by the changing nature, trends, and extent of alcohol and other drug (AODs) abuse in the country.

The draft policy was approved by the Social Protection, Community and Human Development (SPCHD) Cabinet Committee to be gazetted for public comments. The process to gazette has commenced, and notice will be issued to the public to provide comments in writing.

The draft policy aims to provide a comprehensive framework for addressing challenges faced by the Sector in dealing with alcohol and other drugs, through prolonged interventions aimed at the prevention of, treatment for, and rehabilitation of Substance Use Disorders.

It presents a variety of sectoral interventions founded on three pillars i.e. Demand reduction, Supply reduction and Harm reduction, which involves treatment, rehabilitation, recovery, and packages of care for harm reduction-related activities.

These pillars advocate for science-based initiatives and measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health consequences of alcohol and other drugs. The department is confident that once the policy framework has been approved it will be used to address the devastating challenges of alcohol use in the country, which include amongst others the structural challenges to address alcohol and other drugs use.

The conference has taken a principled position to prohibit all alcohol organisations, their associates and anyone associated with the alcohol industry from attending to create a space for discussing alcohol policy options free from industry influence.

ISSUED BY THE CO-HOSTS OF THE CONFERENCE

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