

SABMiller expects African beer consumption to grow 'significantly'

SABMiller, the world's second-largest brewer, expects beer consumption in Africa to grow "significantly", saying this optimistic view is underscored by the rise of the middle class and strong economic growth.



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Mark Bowman, managing director of SABMiller Africa, says he believes SABMiller is best-placed to capture this opportunity.

"Africans drink nine litres of beer per head per year, compared with a global average of 45," Bowman said.

"So as Africa develops and levels of disposable income increase we expect the rate of beer consumption to grow significantly. Additionally we anticipate strong GDP growth in Africa which supports our optimism," he said.

"Consumer access to affordable, formal alcohol and developing brands that tap into local pride and unlock the aspirations of the growing middle class who are seeking more premium brands will be the key drivers of top-line growth for our business across Africa," he said.

Bowman said the informal market continued to dwarf formal alcohol in Africa.

"While homemade or illicit alcohol poses a potential health risk to consumers, it is considerably cheaper so our challenge is to ensure that we provide price-sensitive consumers with affordable, high quality alternatives," he said.

African alcohol consumption, including formal and informal alcohol, was in line with the global average at 6.2 litres of pure alcohol per person per year.

"The potential for growth by bringing consumers into the formal alcohol market is substantial," Bowman said.

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