

# Global beer, wine, and spirits CEOs back new initiatives to reduce harmful use of alcohol

WASHINGTON, US: Building on their longstanding commitment to public health, the world's leading producers of beer, wine and spirits have agreed to a new series of actions in five key areas that are designed to strengthen and expand existing efforts to reduce the harmful use of alcohol.

Ten targeted actions over the next five years include:

- Reducing underage drinking, via enforcement of current laws and encouraging governments to introduce and enforce minimum purchase ages
- Continuing to strengthen and expand marketing codes of practice that are rooted in our resolve not to engage in marketing that could encourage excessive and irresponsible consumption, with a particular focus on digital marketing
- Making responsible product innovations and developing easily understood symbols or equivalent words to discourage drinking and driving and consumption by pregnant women and underage youth
- Reducing drinking and driving by collaborating with governments and non-governmental organizations to educate and enforce existing laws
- Enlisting the support of retailers to reduce harmful drinking and create 'guiding principles of responsible beverage alcohol retailing'

"I - and my fellow CEOs - believe that this program of actions is concrete, deliverable and, most importantly, capable of being measured and evaluated," said Pierre Pringuet, vice-chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Pernod Ricard. "As the CEOs of our global companies, we want to have a role in working to limit harmful drinking and intend to implement these commitments with the same passion and professionalism that we invest in all of our other business activities and goals."

The commitments will be implemented over a five-year time period beginning in 2013; a professionally qualified third party will audit the companies' compliance throughout this time. In addition, participating companies will report to the global community on an annual basis regarding progress.

## The companies and CEOs making the commitments include:

- Carlos Brito, Anheuser-Busch InBev
- Ed Shirley, Bacardi
- Matt Shattock, Beam
- Akiyoshi Koji, Brewers Association of Japan
- Paul Varga, Brown-Forman
- Jorgen Buhl Rasmussen, Carlsberg
- Paul Walsh, Diageo
- Jean-Francois van Boxmeer, Heineken
- Yasunori Aiba, Japan Spirits & Liqueurs Makers Association
- Peter Swinburn, Molson Coors
- Pierre Pringuet, Pernod Ricard
- Graham Mackay, SABMiller
- Ashok Capoor, UB Group

The commitments build on the signatory companies' longstanding efforts to discourage harmful drinking through initiatives and partnerships around the world, especially in low- and middle-income countries. Pernod Ricard CEO Pierre Pringuet announced the collective pledge at Global Actions: Initiatives to Reduce Harmful Drinking, an international conference

hosted by the International Centre for Alcohol Policy (ICAP). In addition to featuring these future commitments, the event comprehensively reported on the industry actions in support of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol.

## **Two important steps**

Marcus Grant, president of ICAP, and Mark Leverton, director general of the Global Alcohol Producers Group (GAPG), both whom worked with the companies to develop these commitments, agreed that strengthening marketing codes in digital media and working to reduce underage drinking are two particularly important steps.

"Over several years, the leadership of the world's leading producers of beer, wine and spirits have collaborated on a number of initiatives designed to support the WHO's focus on reducing harmful drinking and its impacts, " said Mark Leverton. "Moving forward with a new round of programs to further address challenging issues highlights the commitments that these leading industry members are taking for continued progress in this area."

"Many of these commitments are closely tied to the core functions in how these companies operate, and are being made in addition to the many programs already underway to address critical issues in developing nations such as drink driving, strengthening codes of responsible marketing of alcohol, and studying the health and economic impact of the production of illicit alcohol," noted Marcus Grant. "Equally important is the commitment to rigorous standards of evaluation, which are intended to help assure that these efforts are being put in place in a timely way that meets the intended goals."

## **About the Global Actions conference**

The Global Actions: Initiatives to Reduce Harmful Drinking international conference, a two-day event, began with a comprehensive report on the industry actions in support of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol. The conference was held to offer an opportunity to take comprehensive stock of what has been accomplished by these initiatives, which are being implemented in partnership with governments, civil society and other stakeholders worldwide. On the second day of the conference, October 9, 2012, the news-breaking pledges were made public in front of a live audience.

## **About ICAP**

The International Centre for Alcohol Policies (ICAP; [www.icap.org](http://www.icap.org)) is a not-for-profit organization supported by major international producers of beverage alcohol. Established in 1995, ICAP's mission is to promote understanding of the role of alcohol in society and to help reduce harmful drinking worldwide. ICAP's efforts to foster dialogue and partnerships in the alcohol policy field are shaped by its commitment to pragmatic and feasible solutions to reducing harm that can be tailored to local and cultural considerations and needs. ICAP has been recognized by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC) as a non-governmental organization in Special Consultative Status.

## About GAPG

Established in 2005, the Global Alcohol Producers Group (GAP Group) is a coalition of industry members representing leading international beer, wine and spirits companies. It provides a reciprocal channel for the leading alcohol beverage companies to engage in constructive dialogue on the harmful use of alcohol with the World Health Organization (WHO), Member States and other stakeholders.

Read more about the efforts of major international alcohol producers through Global Actions on Harmful Drinking at [www.global-actions.org](http://www.global-actions.org) and on [Facebook](#). To learn more about ICAP, please visit [www.icap.org](http://www.icap.org), [Facebook](#), and [www.youtube.com/ICAPResources](http://www.youtube.com/ICAPResources).

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>