

Statement of Young People Against Alcohol Harm

On behalf of the young people in the Western Pacific Region, we, the participants of the Regional Forum on Protecting Young People from the Harmful Use of Alcohol, held in Hong Kong (SAR), China this 30 April, 2016:

Recognize that:

- Alcohol is related to more than 200 diseases and injury conditions and the world's third- largest risk factor for premature mortality, disability and loss of health;
- Young people can reach their potential and play a significant role in society if given the proper support from families, governments, international agencies and civil society.

Are concerned that:

- The potential of young people is compromised by the harmful use of alcohol, the single biggest risk factor for deaths in young people aged 15-29;
- Alcohol consumption may lead to misbehaviours that can harm oneself, other individuals and the society;
- Early onset of drinking is strongly associated with the development of alcohol use disorder;
- More young people are exposed to the promotion of alcohol drinking through various marketing strategies of the industry without effective regulations, which now includes digital media and on-ground events;
- In some countries, social norms and culture directly or indirectly influence the harmful use of alcohol among young people; and young people can readily access alcohol beverages due to its commercial and public availability and cheap prices.

We, therefore, encourage

- Young people and their families, government, international agencies, civil society and media to join forces for the institution of policies and laws that protect young people from the harmful use of alcohol. These include, but are not limited to, the regulation of commercial and public availability of alcohol, restrictions or bans on alcohol advertising and promotion, and pricing policies such as increasing tax on alcoholic beverages;
- Young people in the region to actively raise public awareness on the harmful use of alcohol, and contribute to changing social norms that encourage this risky behaviour, by using social media and other effective communication channels;
- Young people in the region to initiate and participate in formal or informal information exchanges within and across countries, to share and learn experiences and practices in alcohol harm reduction and prevention.