

**Title:**

Current Status of the Alcoholic Drinks Control Bill: Political & Social Landscape, Challenges, Opposition, and Strategies.

**Presented by;**

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at the Strategy Meeting of the Alcoholic Drinks Control Bill, Inter-Religious Council - Uganda)

# Introduction



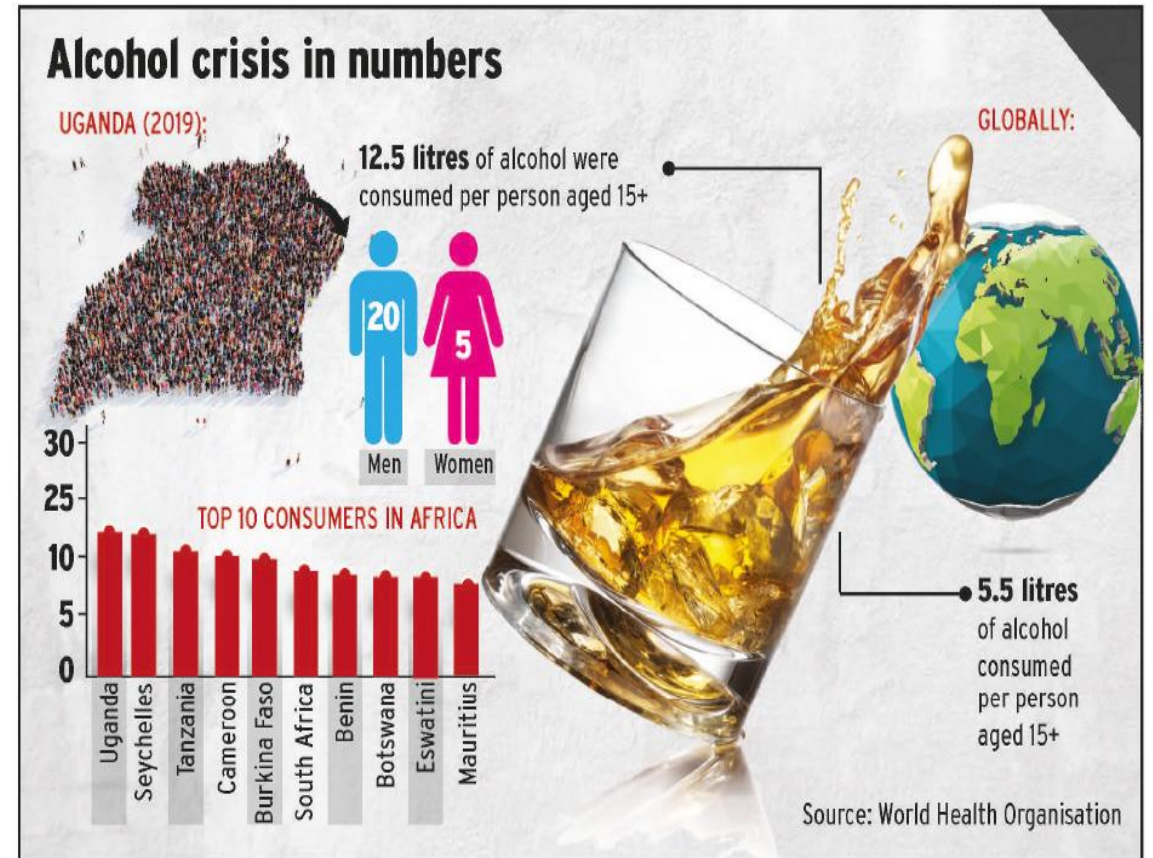
## Curbing Alcohol-Related Harm in Uganda

- Alcohol consumption presents serious public health challenges: domestic violence, road accidents, preventable diseases.
- *Alcoholic Drinks Control Bill, 2023* sought to regulate alcohol manufacture, sale, and advertising.
- The bill's rejection in August 2024 was a setback for public health advocates.

# Purpose of the Bill

## Key Objectives of the Bill

- Regulate alcohol sales: restriction on hours and sale to minors.
- Address illicit alcohol consumption (65% of total consumption).
- Provide public health safeguards and improve regulation.



# Legislative History



## Previous Attempts at Regulation

- Followed Hon. Bakireke Namboze's unsuccessful proposal in the 10th Parliament.
- The bill aimed to replace outdated legislation (Enguli Act & Liquor Act).
- Raised significant concerns from Parliamentary committees and the Attorney General.

# Political Dynamics



## Challenges in Political Environment

- Hon. Sarah Opendi's anti-corruption stance and censure of MPs weakened her political alliances.
- MPs feared political repercussions by aligning with Opendi.
- Ministry of Health's cautious stance weakened the bill's prospects.
- The Role of Religious and Cultural Institutions

# Economic vs Public Health Debate



## The Economic Argument

- Alcohol industry's significant contribution to the economy (UGX 1.5 trillion annually).
- Private sector players like UAIA and Nile Breweries opposed the bill, arguing that regulation would harm the formal sector and increase illicit alcohol use.
- Need to balance short-term economic benefits with long-term public health concerns.

# Opposition Arguments



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## Key Points of Opposition

- Potential loss of revenue and jobs in the alcohol industry.
- Increase in illicit alcohol consumption due to higher prices and reduced accessibility of regulated products.
- Conflicts with existing laws raised by Parliamentary committees and the Attorney General.

# Challenges Faced



## Challenges to Passing the Bill

- Lack of clarity on key issues in the bill.
- Inadequate lobbying and political support.
- Resistance from economically vested interest groups.



# Missed Opportunities

## **Ministry of Health**

- Should have played a stronger role in advocating for the bill based on public health benefits.
- Their cautious political stance undermined their ability to support the bill effectively.

## **•Religious and Cultural Institutions**

- Could have been stronger advocates, leveraging moral and cultural arguments for responsible alcohol consumption.

# Strategic Recommendations (1/2)

## **Strengthening Lobbying Efforts**

- Conduct political mapping to identify key influencers in Parliament.
- Build coalitions with civil society organizations, public health advocates, and progressive industry players.
- Engage the Ministry of Health more assertively in public advocacy efforts.

# Strategic Recommendations (2/2)

## **Countering Economic Concerns**

- Present long-term economic benefits: reduced healthcare costs, improved workforce productivity.
- Collaborate with responsible members of the alcohol industry to promote responsible drinking.

## **•Addressing Illicit Alcohol**

- Advocate for stricter enforcement of regulations on illicit alcohol production.
- Launch public education campaigns on the dangers of illicit alcohol.

# Engaging Religious & Cultural Institutions

## **Leveraging Influence for Advocacy**

- Religious leaders have moral authority to influence public opinion on alcohol-related harm.
- Cultural leaders can promote responsible consumption aligned with cultural values.
- Their endorsement can strengthen advocacy efforts for future alcohol legislation.

# Conclusion

## **A Call for Coordinated Action**

- The rejection of the bill was not the end but a learning opportunity.
- Stakeholders need to build stronger alliances, address opposition with sound evidence, and frame the public health argument convincingly.
- Collaboration with religious, cultural institutions, and responsible industry players is key to future success.