



**THE 4<sup>TH</sup> UGANDA ALCOHOL POLICY CONFERENCE**

**THEME: ALCOHOL CONTROL POLICIES FOR HOLISTIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

**DISCUSSION ON PREVENTION OF ALCOHOL RELATED HARM BY THE  
IRCU**

**MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, 28/11/2024 (10:30 AM – 11:30 AM)**

Praise God from whom all blessings!

On my on behalf and on behalf of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda we delighted to participate in this 4<sup>th</sup> Uganda Policy Alliance Conference and deliver our remarks on prevention of Alcohol related harm.

This is timely discussion and the issue of alcoholism is a matter of national concern. The recommendations of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda made here are informed by the different opinions of IRCU member bodies, gathered from the different regional consultations by the IRCU in the Rwenzori, Toro, Ankole, Teso, Bugisu, Busoga and Buganda sub regions between 2022 and 2023.

In these consultations all the participants were concerned with the need for regulation of alcoholic and narcotic consumptions. They did request the IRCU to take up this matter as a matter of national importance and for high level advocacy.

The IRCU identifies with a legislative and rehabilitation approach in regulating the consumption of Alcoholic drinks. The IRCU has specifically been engaging with Parliament to achieve reforms regarding the usage of alcoholic drinks and building key partnerships in addressing issues of alcohol related harm.

In considering the discussion at hand, the IRCU Council is mindful of the International and Domestic instruments stipulating on alcoholic consumption specifically those limiting the usage of the same including;

1. **World Health Organization Global Strategy to Reduce Harmful Use of Alcohol.** The WHO through this strategy provides guidance to member states on evidence-based interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm.

2. **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on Alcohol**

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) includes targets related to alcohol control, good health, and well-Being under Goal 3. Additionally, Target 3.5 specifically aims to strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including alcohol abuse.

This target highlights the importance of implementing policies focused on reducing the harmful use of alcohol and ultimately promote public health.

### **3. World Health Organization African Chapter**

The WHO African Chapter recognizes the need for the reduction of public health problems caused by the harmful use of alcohol and the required interventions required by government to control alcohol related harm to populations. The regional strategy objectives include to provide guidance to Member States for the development and implementation of effective alcohol control policies based on public health interests.

**The IRCU recommends the following in addressing alcohol related harm.**

- **Restrictions on Alcoholic Persuasive advertisements;** the IRCU has noted with concern the different advertisements regarding alcoholic drinks on different media outlets. The IRCU advised that just like it was with the Tobacco Control Act, it is important for Government through this Bill to restrict and ban alcoholic drinks persuasive advertisements in both print and audio-visual media. This will deter young people from being attracted to alcoholism.
- **Ban of Sale of Alcoholic drinks packaged in polythene;** The IRCU has noted the continued packaging of alcoholic drinks in small polythene bags, has made it easy for children and the youth, to easily access alcohol. The IRCU therefore recommended a ban on the sale of alcoholic in polythene packages.
- **Regulate the time for sale of alcohol;** the IRCU was alarmed by the fact that those who consume alcohol especially in the rural areas, decide to do so even in the morning hours during the hours of productivity. The IRCU recommends that just like in Kenya and other countries. The time for consumption of alcohol should be earmarked and enforced for example during working days the IRCU recommended 4:00 pm to 12:00 Midnight. A different timeline for weekends and public holidays should also be identified. This will improve on productivity and strength family ties.

- **Restriction of sale of alcoholic in all manner of vehicles;** there is need to restrict the sell and consumption of alcohol in passenger vehicles, cargo vehicles and private vehicles. This will deal with the challenges of drink driving and reduce road accidents.
- **Strict Penalties to sale of alcoholic to certain persons;** the IRCU recommends restricts the sale of alcohol to law enforcement officers in uniform, non-uniformed officers, armed personnel, pregnant women, civil servants, already intoxicated persons, and children below 21 years. There's need to penalize the buyers too.
- **Revise the sale guidelines to persons who are 21 years and above;** the IRCU is of the opinion that selling alcohol to persons ranging from 18 years, is not in morally in order. The proposed age for access to alcohol should be 21 years. This will cater for those still in High school and also align with the age specified in the alcohol policy.
- **License for alcoholic production;** the IRCU noted the need to regulate and restrict the production of alcohol to only those with State Licenses and those who meet the State standards which should be set by UNBS. This is because the IRCU noted the sale of adulterated alcoholic drinks in some regions which resulted into the death of those who consumed the same.
- **Promote Awareness;** There is need to address the low awareness on alcohol related harm in the community.
- **Provision of Health Care services;** To promote the provision of adequate health-care interventions for preventing harmful use of alcohol and managing the attendant ill-health and conditions.
- **Monitoring;** To encourage the creation of systems of systematic surveillance and monitoring of alcohol production, consumption, and harm in countries.

I want to thank the Uganda Alcohol Policy Alliance for working with the IRCU and for considering to invite us for this meeting.

I wish you the best of the deliberations;

**Bishop Andrew Lugoloobi,  
Secretary General-Born Again Faith In Uganda/IRCU Board Member**