

REDUCING HARMFUL USE OF ALCOHOL: BEER, WINE AND SPIRITS PRODUCERS' COMMITMENTS

Preamble

Global producers of beer, wine, and spirits recognise that the harmful use of alcohol has a serious effect on public health and is a risk factor for non-communicable diseases. We are concerned about individuals who abuse alcohol and the negative impact this behaviour has on them, their families and on society. We, therefore, support the WHO Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol and are committed to its vision for improved health and social outcomes for individuals, families and communities. We furthermore take seriously the important positive role Member States have identified for producers, distributors, marketers, and sellers of beer, wine, and spirits in enhancing global action on this important issue.

We remain committed to working with local, national and international stakeholders to combat harmful use of alcohol, building on our longstanding and current efforts and based on the following core beliefs:

- We respect the rights of adults to choose to drink alcohol beverages – or to choose not to drink them.
- We believe that all alcohol beverages sold in a society should be appropriately and effectively regulated.
- We believe that alcohol consumption patterns are strongly influenced by cultural and religious factors.
- We believe the most feasible and effective measures to reduce harmful use of alcohol are evidence-based, take into account drinking patterns and target specific problems.
- We believe that governments, producers and other stakeholders need to work together more vigorously to reduce harm associated with “noncommercial” and unrecorded alcohol, given that it accounts for a significant proportion of all alcohol consumed globally, particularly in many low- and middle-income countries.
- We believe that reducing harmful use of alcohol will benefit society and our businesses alike.

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In response to the call by WHO and Member States, the undersigned companies hereby commit to actions in the following five areas - many of which have been inspired by best practices in various countries - to strengthen and expand existing efforts and contribute to reducing the harmful use of alcohol in our capacity as producers, distributors, marketers, and sellers of beer, wine, and spirits:

- Reducing under-age drinking
- Strengthening and expanding marketing codes of practice
- Providing consumer information and responsible product innovation
- Reducing drinking and driving
- Enlisting the support of retailers to reduce harmful drinking

Recognising that global commitments require local execution (including the co-operation and involvement of local companies and other stakeholders) we will invite other beverage alcohol companies from all parts of the world to join us in implementing these commitments.

The following commitments will be implemented over a five-year period commencing in 2013, acknowledging that some will be put in place with almost immediate effect, whilst others will take significant time to implement.

We will **appoint professionally qualified third-party organisations to audit our compliance** with these commitments and place summaries of their findings in the public domain, and where relevant, encourage independent research to gauge the effectiveness of these measures.

We will **report to the international community** on the progress we are making on an annual basis, beginning at the end of 2013.

1.	Reducing under-age drinking
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We are sensitive to and share concerns about the extent and harmful consequences of under-age drinking as expressed by governments from all parts of the world, the World Health Organization, as well as other international bodies. In most countries, there is a minimum age for purchase and/or consumption of alcohol, yet drinking by those under the minimum age is a concern in many parts of the world and can lead to serious public health consequences.

Under-age drinking is a societal challenge that is only possible to prevent through expanded co-operation among governments, enforcement agencies, retailers, parents, educators and others in the community.

We therefore undertake both through our own enhanced efforts and working together with other interested parties, including retailers, to encourage national governments to set ambitious but realistic and measurable targets **to significantly reduce underage purchase and underage consumption of alcohol beverages by 2018.**

- Recognising that our efforts alone will not be sufficient, we commit to **actively seek enforcement of government regulation of under-age purchase and consumption** in all countries where we are commercially active and where a minimum purchase and/or consumption age has been set. In countries where no such limits exist, we will (either alone or with others who share this objective) encourage **governments to introduce a minimum purchase age and to enforce it.**

In addition, and in connection with the above, we will take other significant and important measures to help reduce the incidence of under-age drinking:

- We commit to strengthening our work with other interested stakeholders, including NGOs and IGOs, to **develop, promote and disseminate educational materials and programmes designed to prevent and reduce underage purchase and consumption**, which either address young people themselves or those known to have a strong influence over their behaviour. This will include consulting experts on the development of best practice educational materials for use by parents, schools and community groups and in social media.

2. Strengthening and Expanding Marketing Codes of Practice

We target our marketing to adults of legal drinking age. Our company and industry codes and processes are designed to ensure that the marketing of our products promotes only responsible drinking. We will continue to strengthen our codes of marketing practice to prohibit those that primarily appeal to underage youth; and to prohibit promotion of our products in ways that encourage excessive and irresponsible consumption; and to promptly address any violations.

These and other provisions have been included in codes of marketing practice of leading companies for several years. We will reinforce them further, building on self-regulatory efforts through our Global Actions on Harmful Drinking initiatives, by expanding them to include all countries in which we actively market our brands.

Digital media is increasingly being used for alcohol beverage marketing, in the same way as it is for a number of other products, simply because it is becoming a way of life for more and more people, who are increasingly using digital sources to gain and exchange information, and in some cases to make purchases.

As this emerging trend continues and technology advances, we accept that care needs to be taken by marketers and sellers of alcohol to limit access by those under-age; and ensure the content of marketing through the digital media is always responsible and does not encourage under-age drinking. Leading companies are already making efforts to address these issues and many codes of marketing practice have evolved to include digital media. We will continue to strengthen and expand these efforts.

- We commit to take independently verifiable measures (using reasonably available data) within the next 12 months so that **print, electronic, broadcast and digital media in which we advertise our products have a minimum 70% adult** audience.

2. Strengthening and Expanding Marketing Codes of Practice (con't)

- We commit to **develop during 2013 a set of global guiding principles for alcohol beverage marketing in digital media** that will require the content of any online marketing to meet the same high standards that apply to our traditional marketing activities. With respect to digital 'social media sites', **where we are engaged in direct interaction with consumers**, we also commit to **put in place, where possible, controls to limit under-age access and operate a consumer age affirmation mechanism**. We will invite relevant social media providers to work with us to achieve this.

- Over the next 5 years, **we commit to take steps to enable non-industry participation where none already exists in self-regulatory processes that enforce code standards**, and will undertake to abide by the decisions made.

- We commit to include **appropriate contractual language in our agreements** with our advertising agencies, where practicable and legal, **that will require them to abide by our responsible marketing and promotional codes for our products**.

3. Providing consumer information and responsible product innovation

Product and packaging innovation brings consumers choices, can promote better use of environmental resources, improves product quality and fosters robust marketplace competition.

Increasing beverage choice is responsive to different drinking patterns, including introducing beverages with lower alcohol strengths when possible and where there is sufficient consumer demand for them.

When developing new products, our internal processes are designed to avoid those that primarily appeal to under-age or that imply they should be consumed excessively.

We recognise that public health concerns have been expressed about certain alcohol beverage product innovations: producing or promoting alcohol beverages containing excessive quantities of added stimulants, such as ingredients featured in 'energy drinks', use of some flavours and some types of packaging.

We also believe whether a product is responsible or not depends on a combination of factors including its name, packaging, presentation and marketing.

- We commit **not to produce any beverage alcohol products that contain excessive amounts of added stimulants**, such as caffeine, guarana and taurine, **and will not market any beverage alcohol product or promote any beverage alcohol combination as delivering energising or stimulating effects.**

3. Providing consumer information and responsible product innovation (con't)

We also plan to take steps to communicate certain information about alcohol beverages, such as alcohol strength, as well as information reminding consumers about the risks of excessive or inappropriate drinking on their health to help them decide what to drink and when and whether to drink or not.

- We commit to develop in 2 years a **standard set of easily understood symbols** or equivalent words to discourage (1) drinking and driving (2) consumption by those under-age and (3) consumption by pregnant women **to be applied globally (except where similar information is already legally required, prohibited or already provided by voluntary agreements)**. **Over the next 5 years these symbols or words in these three areas will appear individually or in combination on our packaging.** To supplement those already in existence, we will also create a dedicated website with additional information, including alcohol product strength and reminders about the dangers of excessive drinking on health, with details of how to access the website on our packaging. We will invite contributions and comments from public health experts in developing the website content.

4. Reducing drinking and driving

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed 2011-2020 the Decade of Action for Road Safety. The UN Road Safety Collaboration has developed a global plan for the Decade of Action. Pillar 4 of the plan provides an overall framework for activities which focus on improving road safety behavior of road users, including reducing drink driving. The plan specifically invites governments, international agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector to use the plan as a guiding document for their activities. In this context, we acknowledge the preventable contribution that drink driving makes to road traffic crashes and fatalities. Road traffic injuries affect all age groups but their impact is most striking among the young, as the WHO Global Status Report on Road Safety 2009 illustrates.

We believe that working with governments and civil society partners, we have an important role to play in helping to prevent and reduce both drink-drive morbidity and mortality and we have already demonstrated our willingness to enter into partnerships to achieve this goal.

We therefore encourage governments to enforce existing drink-drive laws and regulations, and we will actively advocate for the introduction of effective drink-drive laws, including a BAC limit and lower BAC limit for novice drivers, backed by appropriate enforcement, where these do not already exist in countries where we are commercially active. We will work with public health and road safety partners, including NGOs, who share these objectives.

We have a long history of engagement around the world in programmes to discourage drinking and driving, including the existing six Global Actions drink-drive pilots in China, Colombia, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia and Vietnam (www.global-actions.org).

- At the end of 2014, we commit to assessing these pilots and decide which are successful and locally sustainable. We also undertake to **replicate those which prove to be successful in at least six additional countries, covering all continents, but focusing on the developing world**, in the next 5 years.

5. Enlisting the support of retailers to reduce harmful drinking

We share the view with public health experts that it is essential to involve retailers in efforts to promote safe drinking environments and prevent harmful use of alcohol. We are mindful of the complexity of this engagement, given the large number of retail outlets, their independent ownership, their diversity (bars, cafes, restaurants, hotels, nightclubs, supermarkets, specialty and grocery stores) the different types of retail outlets (on- premise consumption versus purchases for home/take away consumption) and the great differences in retailing practices and establishments in the developing world.

- We commit to **invite leading international retailers with whom we have commercial relationships to join us in launching a responsible retailing initiative.** The primary aim of the initiative will be to **create 'guiding principles of responsible beverage alcohol retailing'**, which will focus on identifying and cataloguing best practice guidelines for responsible beverage alcohol retailing (including discouraging irresponsible promotions to the extent legally permissible; encouraging responsible point-of-sale marketing and promotion in retail establishments; appropriate retailer undertakings on responsible sale of our products and other measures to reduce alcohol-related harm). The initiative will also encourage local **responsible retailing initiatives to implement the guiding principles** focusing on measures to prevent under-age drinking through, eg, proof-of-age requirements, and on the training of retail staff in how to identify, prevent and manage intoxicated drinkers.

Signatories:

Anheuser-Busch InBev; Bacardi; Beam; Brewers Association of Japan; Brown-Forman; Carlsberg; Diageo; Heineken; Japan Spirits & Liqueurs Makers Association; Molson Coors; Pernod Ricard; SABMiller and UB Group.

October 9, 2012