



# Implications of non-implementation of national alcohol policies; the case of Malawi

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# Presentation outline

- Background for development of the Malawi Alcohol Policy
- Alcohol policy development process in Malawi
- Policy adoption and approval by the government
- Public's expectations soon after policy approval
- Country's unwillingness to implement the alcohol policy
- Implications; what is the status of the situation on the ground regarding alcohol consumption
- Recommendations
- Conclusion

# Background for development of the Malawi Alcohol Policy

- ▶ Why Malawi needed Alcohol Policy?
  - Risky consumption
  - Public health concerns
  - Social harms;
    - I. gender-based violence
    - II. Family disruptions
    - III. Diminishing income through diversions
    - IV. Crimes associated with alcohol consumption
  - Economic problems
    - I. Takes away human resources through its harms
    - II. Absenteeism from work and underperformance

# Alcohol policy development process in Malawi

- ▶ Initiated and spearheaded by NGO but adopted and approved by the government
- ▶ Very consultative and inclusion
- ▶ Exclusion of alcohol industry
- ▶ Build based on domestic as well as international needs
- ▶ The final document was internally rated over 75% against WHO alcohol policy requirement
  - Development processes considered as the 'Best Practice' by WHO AFRO office

# Public's expectations soon after policy approval

- ▶ The policy document's implementation roles were mostly assigned to government ministries and departments
- ▶ Expected the government to take lead in the implementation by;
  - Allocations of funds towards alcohol policy implementation during its National Budget sessions
  - Funds meant for policy implementation be distributed to all strategic government implementing agencies
  - Full implementation of the policy

# Country's unwillingness to implement the alcohol policy

- ▶ You will hardly hear government officials talking about alcohol policy in their meetings
- ▶ It is business as usual as far as alcohol consumption is concerned.
- ▶ In other words; Malawi Alcohol Policy is facing a lot of problems for implementation
- ▶ Approved and launched by the government in 2017; it has surpassed its duration for review of 5 years

## Implications; what is the status of the situation on the ground regarding alcohol consumption

- ▶ High level of social problems
- ▶ Rising alcohol related health problems
- ▶ Increased road accidents that happen due to drink driving
- ▶ Slow growth of country economy as most of its resources are diverted to solving alcohol related problems
- ▶ Countries won't develop economically

# Recommendations

- ▶ Advocacy to remind government on alcohol policy
- ▶ CSOs to mobilize financial resources for implementation of the roles assigned to them
- ▶ Mobilization of likeminded people and organization to voice out the concerns on alcohol harms

# Conclusion

- ▶ Alcohol Policy is a tool that has been scientifically approved to be working in reducing problems related to alcohol consumption and therefore a need for countries to develop and implement it.
- ▶ It is a recommendation by World Health Organization to develop and effectively implement alcohol policies by countries hence, needs to be fulfilled as part to World Health Assembly where such resolutions are passed
- ▶ Slow country economic growth if nothing is done to reduce harmful alcohol consumption