

*Unofficial Translation*

**First National Health Assembly  
Agenda 3.6**

**Resolution 1/6  
12 December 2008**

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**Strategy in Dealing with the Alcoholic Beverage Consumption Issue**

The First National Health Assembly

Having reviewed the report on Strategies in Dealing with the Alcoholic Beverage Consumption Issue,

*Informed* about the impacts of alcoholic beverage consumption<sup>1</sup> affecting well-being in all dimensions as well as social and intellectual well-being. Alcoholic beverage consumption is the cause for more than 60 diseases and results in up to 2.3 million deaths in 2002. In Thailand, the consumption of alcohol is considered the second highest health risk factor, creating a disease burden of as much as 8.1% in 2004.

*Aware* of the alcoholic beverage consumption situation in Thailand and the tendency for its increased severity in relation to both the average per capita intake amount, the increased consumption frequency, especially among regular drinkers, consumption among youth and young population groups, especially among women and the declining age for first time consumption,

*Comprehending* that alcoholic beverage consumption brings forth issues which have long term effect on the nation's future by creating significant problems for youth and young people groups and create obstacles to human and social development, resulting in impacts that are higher in value than the economic gains received by society and affecting other consumers and non-consumers as well as society at large. The alcoholic beverage consumption burden is mostly born by surrounding persons, the community and society as a whole. In this respect, the state and society may rightfully take control of the alcoholic beverage consumption issue.

*Aware* that alcohol abuse may be controlled through the use of measures in an alcohol policy<sup>2</sup>, which must be balanced and provide enough coverage, consisting of measures at all policy levels, from the community level to the international level. The policy must comprise measures to reduce alcohol consumption, reduce consumption risks and rehabilitate affected persons. The measures must be aimed at the overall population body and risk groups, including youth.

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act, B.E. 2551, alcoholic beverage refers to "liquor according to the liquor law but excluding drugs or active ingredients affecting the mind or nerves, addictive drugs according to the law on drug abuse". According to the Liquor Act, B.E. 2493, liquor refers to "objects or mixtures containing alcohol which may be ingested in the same way as liquid liquor or which may not be ingested but after being mixed with water or liquid may be ingested in the same manner as liquid liquor".

<sup>2</sup> Alcohol policy refers to "any effort or measure by state and private agencies to reduce and prevent problems related to the consumption of alcoholic beverages".

*Informed* that countries having limited resources should concentrate their efforts on measures which are most efficient and cost-effective in minimizing alcohol use issues by employing tax measures and measures which limit access to alcoholic beverages and informed that measures which totally prohibit the advertisement of alcohol produce distinct results in the long term reduction of problems among youth groups while certain popularly implemented measures such as educating youth, self regulation among members of the alcohol industry where there is no legal penalty and providing alternative activities to replace alcohol use have all proved to have little efficiency or cost-effectiveness,

*Concerned* that although Thailand implements various measures and policies which affect the issue of alcohol consumption where there are many responsible agencies at many levels but the available measures have not yet been so effective in controlling the severity of the issue of alcohol use,

*Admiring* developments in the Thai alcohol policy process in the past years and the promulgation of the Alcohol Beverage Control Act B.E. 2551, which stipulates the establishment of the National Alcohol Beverage Policy Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister or assigned Deputy Prime Minister, to be tasked with drafting policies, plans and controls for alcoholic beverages as well as to assume monitoring, assessing and inspecting duties,

*Informed* about the different limitations of the process to limit alcohol use issues in Thailand, especially the lack of strategic plans or policy frameworks to tackle the problem, being in a situation where there is a lack of common direction and objective in related policies and measures, the lack of technical knowledge and limitations in applying that knowledge to the policy process, the lack of transparency and participation as well as the threat of influence from stakeholders in situations of interest conflict,

The National Health Assembly hereby issues the following resolutions:

1. The National Health Commission is urged to
  - 1.1 Announce the control of alcoholic beverage consumption as a national as well as local agenda and ask the Cabinet and the Decentralization Committee to implement their authorized and responsible tasks.
  - 1.2 Strengthen mechanisms on the control of alcoholic beverage consumption as follows:
    - 1) To bring to pass a widely participatory process in which a national strategic plan and policy for alcohol is developed within one year and submit it to the Second National Health Assembly for adoption. The activities conducted shall be based on technical knowledge and support the work of the National Alcoholic Beverage Policy Committee.
    - 2) To support mechanisms for cooperation created by public agencies responsible for handling alcoholic beverage problems to ensure that any development measure and policy that affects or may affect problems driving from alcoholic beverage issues, including trade negotiation, shall focus solely on controlling the problem and/or shall not be used as the condition for and/or obstacle to the control of the problem, e.g. in the signing of a "Memorandum of Understanding" between national and local agencies.

3) Local administration organizations will be the core agency supporting the participatory mechanism involving all sectors and developing policies and measures to handle alcoholic beverage consumption issues at the local level.

2. All State agencies, academia, professional organizations, the private sector, and civil societies at every level, which are free from conflicting interests, and member partners of the National Health Assembly are urged to actively participate in the process of developing the strategy.

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