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Alcohol in a global perspective:

World Health Organization initiatives to  
reduce alcohol related harm

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Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse

Bled, 24 September 2007



# Different levels for policy action

- (Personal)
- Community
- Regional (sub-national)
- National
- Sub-regional
- Regional
- Global



# WHO governing structure

- **UN specialized agency**
- **193 Member States**
- **The World Health Assembly**
- **Executive Board**
- **6 Regional Committees**
- **Consensus driven**
- **Mostly non-binding**



## Previous resolutions in the World Health Assembly (WHA)

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- *1979: Development of the WHO Programme on alcohol related problems*
- *1983: Alcohol consumption and related problems*
- 1985-2004: Very little political activity (except for Europe)
- 2004: Health promotion and healthy lifestyles
- 2005: Public health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol.



# WHO Secretariat Priority Areas for Implementation of the WHA 58.26

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- Assessment of public health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol
- Reviewing evidence and developing recommendations on effective strategies and interventions
- Developing global and regional information systems on alcohol
- Collaboration with relevant stakeholders
- Constructing an appropriate framework for global activities to reduce alcohol-related harm
- Providing support to countries and regions



# Progress in WHO Regions since adoption of the WHA resolution

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- EURO: Framework for Alcohol Policy in the WHO European Region – resolution adopted by the Regional Committee for Europe, 2005
- AMRO: First Pan American Conference on Alcohol Public Policies, 2005
- SEARO: Resolution on public health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol adopted and policy document endorsed by the Regional Committee, August 2006
- EMRO: Resolution adopted by the Regional Committee (2006)
- WPRO: Regional strategy developed and endorsed by the Regional Committee (September 2006)
- AFRO: Alcohol was on the agenda for the Regional Committee meeting in August 2007 and they now work towards a regional strategy.

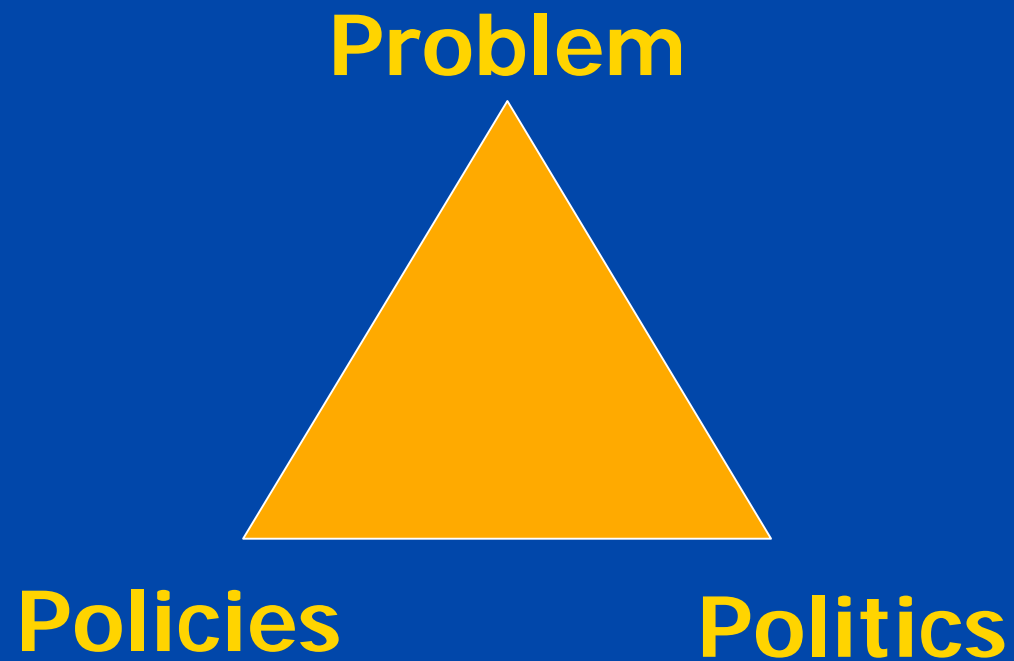


## WHA60 in May

- WHO secretariat produce the report: Evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm, including a global assessment of public-health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol
- One member state tabled a resolution which got cosponsored by 41 other MS.
- Not possible to reach an agreement and the issue will be discussed again in the EB in January 2008.



# Policies vs. politics





# Dates to note

- **21-26 January:**  
Executive Board: 122nd session
- **19-24 May:**  
Sixty-first World Health Assembly



# More information

- WHO HQ:  
[http://www.who.int/substance\\_abuse/en/](http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/en/)
- WHO Regional Office for Europe:  
<http://www.euro.who.int/alcoholdrugs>

