



# MEETING REPORT

*First meeting of the Global Network  
of WHO national counterparts  
for implementation of the Global strategy  
to reduce the harmful use of alcohol*



**World Health  
Organization**





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### INTRODUCTION

The inaugural meeting of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Network of WHO National Counterparts for Implementation of the Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol took place at WHO headquarters in Geneva on 8–11 February 2011.

In May 2010, the Sixty-third World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA63.13 which endorsed the Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol. That strategy envisages a network of national counterparts who would oversee implementation of the Global Strategy in their countries and who would gather regularly at regional or global meetings for “technical discussion” of the implementation of the strategy at different levels.

The inaugural meeting of the Global Network brought together national counterparts from 126 Member States of WHO, as well as from the European Commission.



## OPENING

The meeting was opened by Dr Ala Alwan, WHO Assistant Director-General responsible for the areas of noncommunicable diseases and mental health. Citing statistics from the new WHO publication *Global status report on alcohol and health 2011*, Dr Alwan described the harmful use of alcohol as causing a proportion of the burden of disease that was too big to be ignored.



Dr Alwan summarized the various World Health Assembly resolutions on alcohol that led up to the Assembly's adoption of the Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol in resolution WHA63.13 in May 2010. He further outlined the consultation process by which the strategy was developed. He pointed out that, despite the health damage caused by the harmful use of alcohol, effective countermeasures exist, and he stressed that WHO's efforts to reduce alcohol-related harm fit within the Organization's Global Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Noncommunicable Diseases.



Dr Shekhar Saxena, Director of the WHO Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse, elaborated further on the drafting process of the Global Strategy to Reduce the Harmful Use of Alcohol, described its aim and objectives and outlined the strategy's 10 target areas for policy options and interventions available for national action. Summarizing the requests to WHO Member States and to the WHO Director-General in World Health Assembly resolution WHA63.13, Dr Saxena explained that the current meeting would inaugurate the Global Network of WHO National Counterparts for Implementation of the Global Strategy, establish the working mechanisms and plans for the Global Network, elaborate priority areas and implementation plans for reducing the harmful use of alcohol at global level in collaboration with Member States, discuss priorities and plans for implementing the global strategy at regional level, discuss monitoring and reporting on the implementation of the global strategy at various levels, and launch the *Global status report on alcohol and health 2011*.

Following the opening presentations, participants elected two co-chairs for the meeting – Ms Maria Renström of Sweden and Professor Melvyn Freeman of South Africa – as well as two rapporteurs – Dr Carmen Borrego Calzadilla of Cuba and Dr Wei Hao of China.



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