

PAHO RCM 2025 AGENDA ITEM 4.5

MOVENDI INTERNATIONAL & CLAS STATEMENT

For delivery updated statement – 2 minutes (250 words)

Thank you, Chair,

We all share a common vision: a world where every person can live a healthy life – free from preventable harm. But this vision is under threat. Alcohol remains a leading driver of the NCD crisis in the Americas.

Movendi International and CLAS welcome the Draft Plan of Action. We support the recognition of alcohol as a leading driver of disease and emphasise the need to address the unequal burden it places on communities and people in vulnerable conditions.

We welcome the inclusion of high-impact alcohol policy measures – such as taxation, regulation of marketing and availability, and brief interventions. These are proven, cost-effective solutions that deliver lasting benefits for people's health, social justice, and sustainable financing.

However, we are concerned about alcohol industry interference because the September version dilutes key provisions compared to earlier drafts. References placing the Region's alcohol burden in a global context have been removed, despite the Americas having the highest alcohol use disorder rates in the world. This erasure only benefits the alcohol industry.

We support the recommendation to structure alcohol taxes to reduce affordability, but the corresponding indicator has been undermined. The removal of WHO Best Buys from alcohol policy indicators also jeopardises effectiveness and accountability.

Finally, we are troubled by the growing use of the flawed term "*harmful use of alcohol*," which contradicts science and perpetuates stigma. PAHO and Member States should discontinue its use.

We urge Member States and PAHO to restore ambitious, evidence-based commitments aligned with WHO Best Buys and SAFER – and to resist pressures, whether from industry or Member States, that risk weakening the Region's response.

Thank you.