

Towards a framework convention on alcohol

**Thinking Drinking
Melbourne
22 February 2005**

Peter Anderson





William Barak, Wurundjeri, 1880s

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2. Why might we need a convention?
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1. What is a framework convention?

- ❑ A **treaty** is an international legal agreement concluded between States in written form, and governed by international law;
- ❑ A **convention** (and also a framework convention) is a different name for a treaty;
- ❑ A **protocol** is also a form of treaty. It typically supplements, clarifies, amends or qualifies an existing international agreement, for example, a framework convention;

1. What is a framework convention?

- ❑ A **resolution** is an expression of common interest of numerous states in specific areas of international cooperation.

1. What is a framework convention?

- ❑ **Treaties** are legally binding. The framework convention usually entails more general or limited obligations, while the protocols involve more specific legal obligations.
- ❑ A **resolution** is non-binding and does not normally entail any substantive commitments of a legal nature.

1. What is a framework convention?

- A Framework Convention on Alcohol Policy (FCAP) could be an international legal instrument to reduce the global spread of the harm done by alcohol



1. What is a framework convention?

- This could be done under Article 19 of the WHO constitution, which allows the Organization to develop and adopt such a Convention.



1. What is a framework convention?

- A Convention can be developed by WHO's Member States so that their concerns are adequately reflected throughout the process.



1. What is a framework convention?

Public health purpose of alcohol policy

- ❑ The process of mobilizing local, state, national and international resources to ensure the conditions in which people can be healthy (Oxford Textbook of Public Health 2002)



1. What is a framework convention?

Public health purpose of alcohol policy

- ❑ The central purpose of alcohol policies is to serve the interests of public health and social well-being through their impact on health and social determinants, such as drinking patterns, the drinking environment, and the health services available to treat problem drinkers (Babor et al 2003)



1. What is a framework convention?

- ❑ Alcohol is an important contributor to inequity in health in all societies;
- ❑ As a result of the addictive nature and health damage associated with alcohol use it must be considered as a harmful commodity;

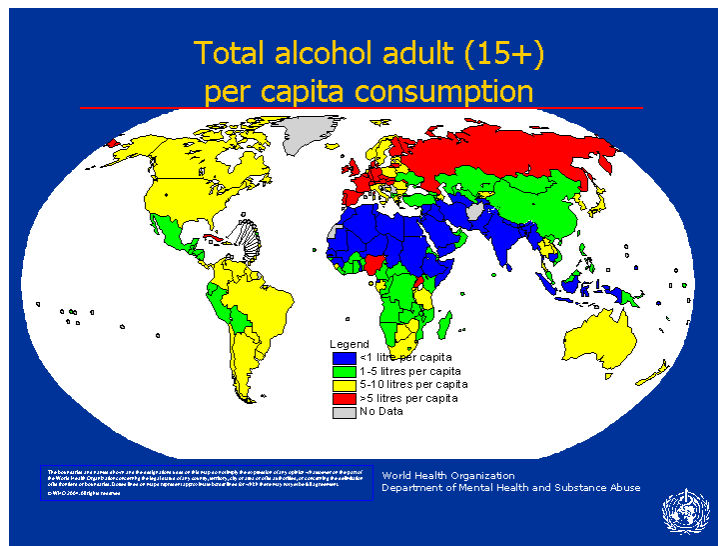


1. What is a framework convention?

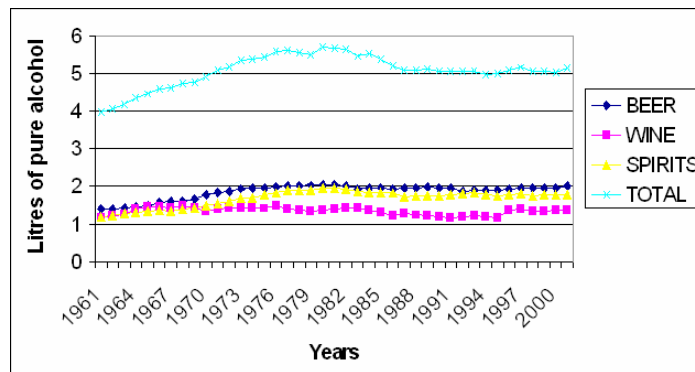
- ❑ The public has a right to be fully informed about the health consequences of using alcoholic products; and
- ❑ The health sector has a leading responsibility to combat the harm done by alcohol, recognizing that success cannot be achieved without the full contribution of all sectors of society.



2. Why might we need a convention?



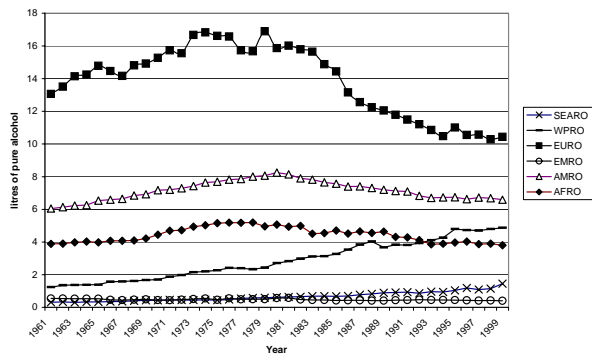
2. Why might we need a convention?



Adult global alcohol consumption



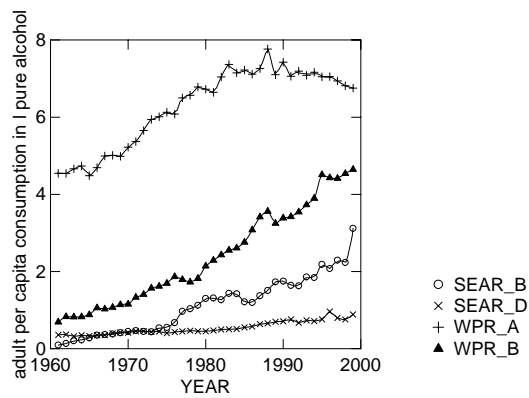
2. Why might we need a convention?



Adult alcohol consumption by WHO Regions



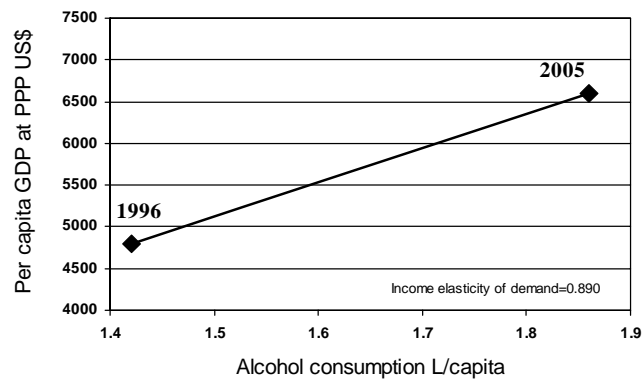
2. Why might we need a convention?



Adult alcohol consumption by 4 WHO sub-Regions



2. Why might we need a convention?

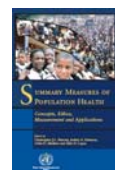


Alcoholic drinks in Asia Pacific, excluding China; Consumption versus wealth 1996-2005



2. Why might we need a convention?

- ❑ The Disability Adjusted Life Year (DALY) is a summary measure of population health that combines information on mortality and non-fatal health outcomes.
- ❑ It measures a gap in health between the current position and what could be achieved.
- ❑ It is additive across causes to give the total health gap for a population.

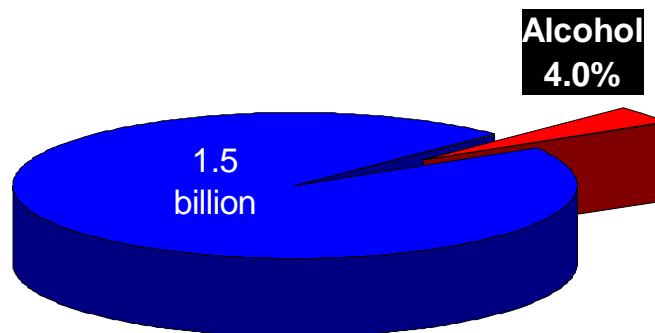


2. Why might we need a convention?

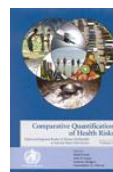
- ❑ Health status is adjusted on a scale that ranges from zero (for a state equivalent to death) to unity (for a state of ideal health), based on surveys on health in more than 60 Member States.
- ❑ The contribution of risk factors is based on epidemiological surveys in different populations (Comparative Risk Assessment).



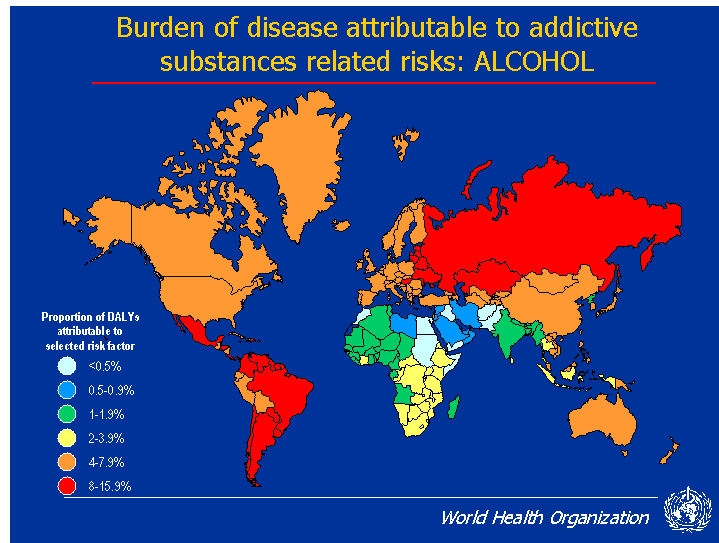
2. Why might we need a convention?



Proportion of total DALYs caused by alcohol



2. Why might we need a convention?



2. Why might we need a convention?

Cross border issues:

- Taxes
- Smuggling
- Duty-free travellers' allowances
- Advertising and sponsorship
- International standards for defining alcoholic beverages

2. Why might we need a convention?

1991 French 'Loi Evin' provides a clear framework:

- Definition of alcoholic drinks
- Places and media of advertising
- Content of advertising

2. Why might we need a convention?

Definition of alcoholic drinks:

- ☞ All drinks > 1.2% by volume

2. Why might we need a convention?

Places and media of advertising:

- ☞ No advertising is permitted on TV and cinema
- ☞ No sponsorship is permitted

2. Why might we need a convention?

Content of advertising:

- ☞ Messages and images should only refer to the quality of the product
- ☞ A health message must be included

2. Why might we need a convention?

The United Kingdom Government took the French Government to court, alleging that the Loi Evin, by prohibiting alcohol advertising on hoardings visible during the retransmission of bi-national sporting events on TV, entail restrictions on the freedom to provide advertising services and television broadcasting services

Basically, it stopped the re-transmission of football matches with alcohol advertising on hoardings filmed outside of France



2. Why might we need a convention?

1. The French rules on television advertising are appropriate to ensure their aim of protecting public health
2. They do not go beyond what is necessary to achieve such an objective



2. Why might we need a convention?

3. They limit the situations in which hoardings advertising alcoholic beverages may be seen on television and are therefore likely to restrict the broadcasting of such advertising, thus reducing the occasions on which television viewers might be encouraged to consume alcoholic beverages



3. What could a convention bring?

- The process of developing an FCAP would help to:
- ✓ Mobilize national and global technical and financial support for alcohol control;
 - ✓ Raise awareness among several ministries on global alcohol control, as well as various sectors of society directly concerned with the public health aspects of alcohol;



3. What could a convention bring?

- ✓ Strengthen national legislation and action; and
- ✓ Mobilize NGOs and other members of civil society in support of alcohol control.

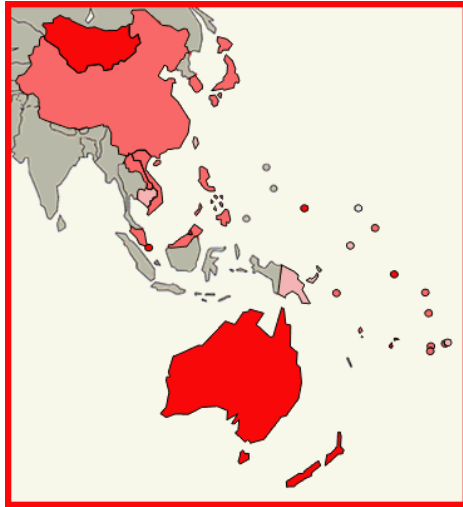


3. What could a convention bring?

- The Framework Convention Alliance (FCA) is an alliance of non-governmental organizations from around the world who are working jointly and separately to support the development, signing, and ratification of an effective Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) and related protocols.
- http://fctc.org/about_FCA/

The Framework Convention
Alliance for Tobacco Control

3. What could a convention bring?



To date, 26 countries in the Western Pacific have signed the Framework Convention and 13 have ratified.

The Framework Convention
Alliance for Tobacco Control

4. What could be in a convention?

A convention on alcohol might start with a definition of an alcoholic beverage

Definitions range from 0.1 to 12.0% alcohol by volume



4. What could be in a convention?

It might define beverage alcohol as a no ordinary commodity and not an agricultural product that in some parts of the world is heavily subsidized or exempt from specific alcohol taxes.



4. What could be in a convention?

It might then identify policy areas for collective action including restrictions or bans on advertising, promotion and sponsorship, elimination of all forms of illicit trade in alcoholic products and consistent, equal and lowered legal blood alcohol concentrations for drinking and driving.

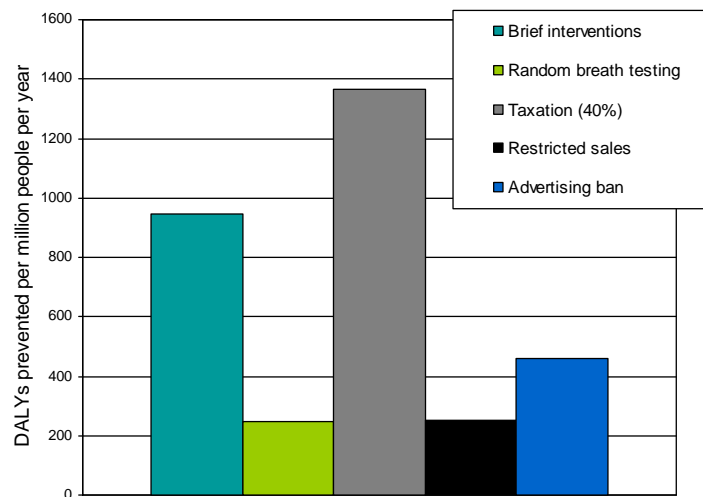


4. What could be in a convention?

It might urge countries to implement effective taxation policies, regulate the availability of alcoholic beverages and promote the uptake of evidence based interventions for hazardous and harmful alcohol consumption.



5. Are we ready for a convention?

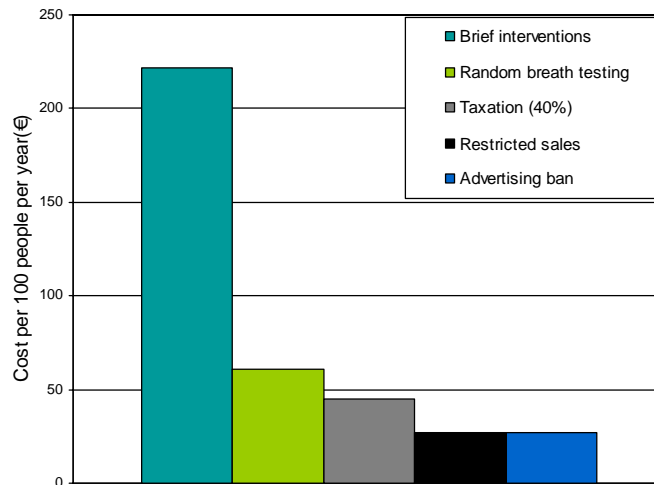


Impact of different policy options in EU

WHO-CHOICE

CHOosing Interventions that are Cost Effective

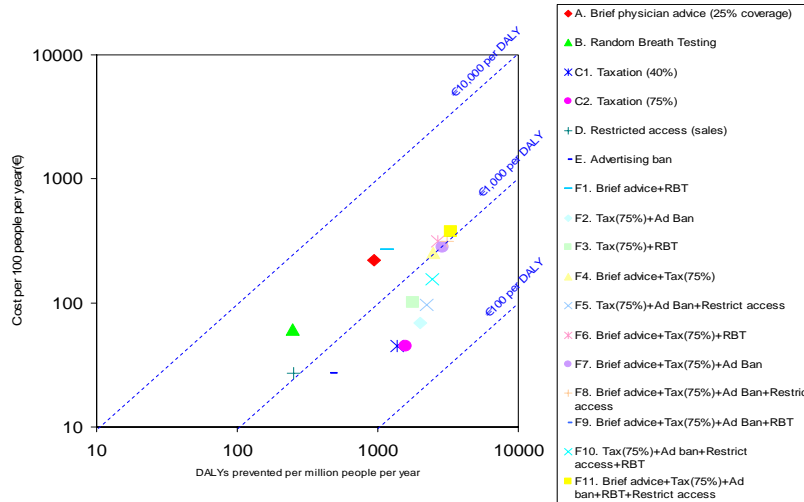
5. Are we ready for a convention?



Cost of implementing same policy options per 100 people per year (€) in EU

WHO-CHOICE
 Choosing Interventions that are Cost Effective

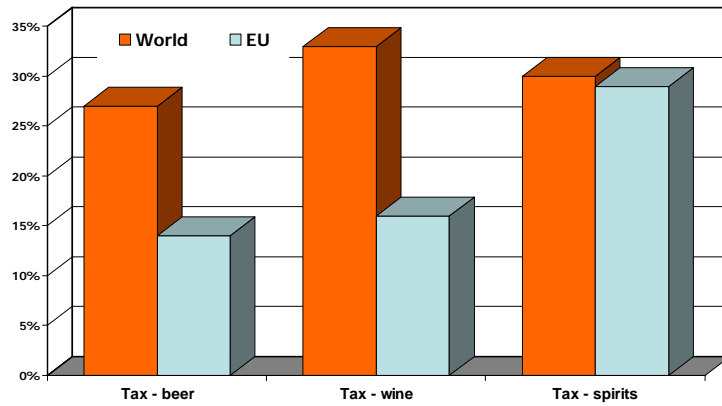
5. Are we ready for a convention?



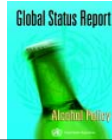
Cost, impact and cost effectiveness of implementing policy options in EU

WHO-CHOICE
 Choosing Interventions that are Cost Effective

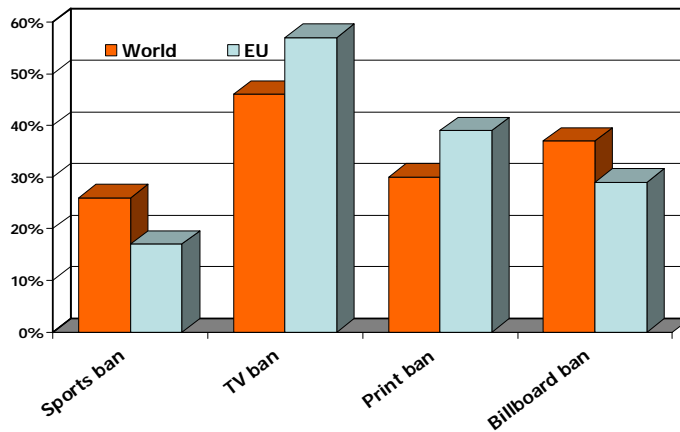
5. Are we ready for a convention?



Prevalence of tax >30% of price (beer and wine) and >50% of price (spirits) in EU and rest of world



5. Are we ready for a convention?



Prevalence of advertising ban for at least one beverage type in EU and rest of world



5. Are we ready for a convention?

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS of 5 June 2001 on a Community strategy to reduce alcohol-related harm (2001/C 175/01) INVITES the Commission to put forward proposals for a comprehensive Community strategy aimed at reducing alcohol-related harm.



5. Are we ready for a convention?

Covering fields such as research, consumer protection, transport, advertising, marketing, sponsoring, excise duties and other internal market issues



5. Are we ready for a convention?

The Executive Board, meeting in January 2005, RECOMMENDS to the Fifty-eighth World Health Assembly, which will meet in May 2005, the adoption of a resolution, which requests the WHO:



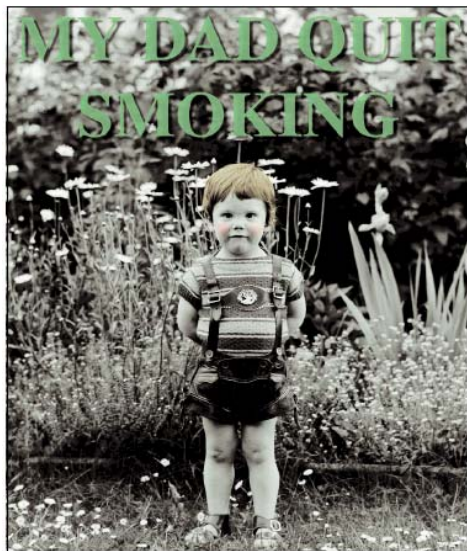
5. Are we ready for a convention?

- (2) To intensify international cooperation in reducing public health problems caused by the harmful use of alcohol;
- (3) To produce a report on evidence-based strategies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm;
- (4) To draw up recommendations for effective policies and interventions to reduce alcohol-related harm



Overview:

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Thomas Ruff, 2000

From the first idea, it took 15 years to get the framework convention on tobacco control...