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Page: 1/1

Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

Original: English

## UPDATE FROM THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

### STATEMENT BY THE WHO

This document contains information provided by the WHO at the TBT Committee meeting of 8-10 November 2023 under Agenda Item 4 (Update by Observers).<sup>1</sup>

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1.1. We would like to recall our statement at the TBT Committee meeting of 21 to 23 June 2023, in which we indicated the existing references to labelling measures for alcoholic beverages in WHO instruments.

1.2. In addition, we would like to underline two elements on the evidence about the relationship between alcohol and health risks, in particular for cancer.

1.3. First, alcohol is a group 1 carcinogen and a risk factor for over 200 communicable and noncommunicable diseases. In 2019, 2.6 million deaths were attributable to alcohol consumption and, in 2020, more than 740.000 cancer cases were attributable to alcohol use.

1.4. Second, although alcohol consumption causes substantial health, social and economic consequences, consumers frequently have an inaccurate perception of the risks associated with different levels and patterns of alcohol consumption. Labelling measures across a variety of products, including tobacco products, are widely recognized as increasing consumer understanding and impacting behavior. More specifically, health warning labels on alcoholic beverages can increase consumer awareness, slow down drinking, decrease drinking occasions and reduce purchase occasions. Health warnings have been shown effective during pregnancy. In the European Union, surveys show most people support health warnings on alcoholic beverages.

1.5. Thank you very much for this opportunity to provide additional information to the TBT Committee, with a view to recalling the evidence around the effectiveness of health warning labels and ensuring coherence across the international system.

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<sup>1</sup> In original language only.