



## Southern African Alcohol Policy Alliance (SAAPA)

+260 211294316    saapa.za@gmail.com    Website: saapa.net  
Mobile: +260 976 -246-927/ 974-595-950/ +27-82-338-8308

### Healthy Nation Empowered Communities

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SAAPA, along with the Public Health Association of South Africa (PHASA), Sacowach and Schools of Public Health across South Africa voiced our strong concern about SAB's use of hunger to market their products under the guise of donating the proceeds from sales of an 8-pack beers to Stop Hunger Now Southern Africa. Following public condemnation of this cynical exploitation of hunger to sell more beer, SAB had given notice that it has decided to withdraw their marketing of the "Beers for Africa" campaign.

SAAPA welcomes this decision.

We agree that feeding hungry children and students remains an important intervention in the context of poverty experienced in South Africa. However, initiatives to raise money for this important need should not promote the sale and consumption of potentially harmful products like alcohol.

Marketing alcohol in bigger quantities, supposedly to address hunger, will, over the long term, contribute to aggravating hunger and problem drinking.

Bigger packages and large quantities makes alcohol more accessible, which will add to the existing challenge of binge drinking. Students are well recognised as a risk population for binge drinking.

Despite the fact that less than 50% of people in South Africa drink, those who drink, do so at extremely dangerous levels – we have some of the highest rates of problem drinkers in the world:

- In 2001, 25% of drinkers engaged in binge drinking;
- 130 people die every day from alcohol related injury or disease;
- 25% of intentional and 16% of unintentional injuries are alcohol-related
- Amongst children under the age of 13 years, a shocking 11% report drinking in the past month.

Promoting purchase of alcohol to address hunger will, in fact, divert money from feeding children. In 2016, statistics indicate that 13.4% of individuals reported going hungry every day. Encouraging people to buy more alcohol means less money for food and education, which will increase dependency on external agencies to provide a safety net for basic needs and reduce self-reliance and individual agency. According to Stats SA, 44.8% of households received at least 1 social grant in 2016.

We call on government to (i) adopt the proposals of the Draft National Liquor Bill, (ii) unlock the stalled legislation on alcohol advertising and (iii) ensure that tax on alcohol that can be ring fenced to address health and social problems, including the problem of hunger in South Africa.

### CORE VALUES

Public Health: Collective Action: Gendered: Accountable: Development Centred and Autonomous

For more information, contact:

Aadielah Maker at [saapa.za@gmail.com](mailto:saapa.za@gmail.com)

Maurice Smithers at [saapa.southafrica@gmail.com](mailto:saapa.southafrica@gmail.com)