



“The Youth and Drugs: Resolutions of the 2nd National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Conference”

Policy Brief No. NAC/9/2013

Background

The National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA) is a State Corporation established under The National Authority for the Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse Act, 2012 of the Laws of Kenya.

In order to strengthen the country’s capacity to campaign against alcohol and drug abuse, NACADA convened a 2nd National Conference on Alcohol and Drug Abuse on 10th to 13th June, 2013 at the Moi Sports Centre Kasarani Gymnasium. The theme of the conference was “*The Youth and Drugs: A Call for Action.*”

The objectives of the conference included:

1. To provide a platform for key stakeholders to share their experiences in undertaking drug-related programmes
2. To provide a platform for dissemination of ADA research findings and documentation of priority areas for further research
3. To document best practices in the prevention, control, treatment and rehabilitation of persons with substance use disorders

Conference Organization

The presentations that guided the four day discussions were grouped into two (2) categories; the plenary presentations by renowned personalities in the campaign against alcohol and drug abuse and the breakaway presentations by researchers and implementers of ADA programmes identified through a national call for scientific and case study papers in ADA preventive strategies, socio and economic consequences of ADA, ADA

policy, legislation and implementation and treatment and rehabilitation themes.

The conference provided a much needed opportunity for participants to share their experiences in undertaking drug-related programmes and to document best practices in the prevention, control and mitigation of alcohol and drug abuse.

The conference drew participants from a multi – sectoral and multi – disciplinary interest groups such as researchers, journalists, lawyers, policy makers, implementing agencies, civil society organizations including faith based organizations and representatives of international non-governmental organizations among others.

Conference Resolutions

The delegates attending the 2nd National Conference on Alcohol and Drug Abuse held at the Moi Sports Centre Kasarani Gymnasium, on 10th – 13th, June 2013 deliberated and articulated the following resolutions to guide the next phase of ADA implementation programmes in the country;

Aware of the challenges facing the country in the fight against alcohol and drug abuse in the respective jurisdictions;

Acknowledged the achievements made by various actors in the campaign against alcohol and drug abuse;

1. **Taking** note of the Opening Statement by His Excellency the President, Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta, C.G.H., and acknowledging the limitation of resources and the need to scale up the campaign against alcohol and drug

abuse, participants re-affirmed their commitment to promote efficient utilization of existing and available resources including public and private health insurance schemes to strengthen the campaign against alcohol and drug abuse to ensure attainment of maximum results.

2. **Acknowledging** the value of the lessons learnt during the conference, participants resolved to accelerate implementation of the resolutions of this conference.
3. **Cognizant** that some sections of the Kenyan youth have special needs that may hinder access to information and services on ADA, the forum resolved to ensure that all ADA programmes pay special attention to the vulnerable and hard to reach populations such as youth and other persons with disabilities at both policy and programme levels.
4. **Aware** of the need for information exchange among the youth in the field of alcohol and drug abuse, the forum recommended that NACADA facilitates exchange of information in this field using appropriate media and forums including Facebook, Twitter, National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Conference and any other forum. The representatives of NACADA present committed to facilitate this resolution.
5. **Acknowledging** the importance of creating a formal mechanism for educating children and youth about alcohol and drug abuse and as stated in **Resolution No. 2** of the National ADA Conference of 2012, the forum restated that NACADA and the Ministry of Education should spearhead inclusion of alcohol and drug abuse issues in the school curriculum right from kindergarten to university level. The representatives of NACADA and the Ministry of Education present committed to ensure that this is prioritized.
6. **Recognizing** the critical role parents and communities play in socialization of children and youth, the forum recommend that parents and communities should play their obligatory role in guiding the youth on life skills as well as the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse. All participants present committed to ensure that this is realized.
7. **Noting** that the problem of alcohol and drug abuse is multi-faceted for any one single institution to address adequately, participants recommended support to youth forums as well as strong partnerships between NACADA and organizations serving the children and youth in different parts of the country.
8. **Acknowledging** the success of alcohol and drug abuse mainstreaming in the public sector in Kenya, and as stated in **Resolution No. 6** of the National ADA Conference of 2012, the forum recommended replication of the ADA workplace programme in the private sector and civil society organizations. The private/informal sector and civil society organizations present committed to ensure that this is prioritized.
9. **Observing** the key role played by the media in the dissemination of information and modeling behavior, the forum resolved to involve the media in sensitizing the public in general and the youth in particular on alcohol and drug abuse as well as drug trafficking. The representatives of the media present committed to upscale dissemination of ADA messages.
10. **Appreciating** the need for clear understanding of various drugs and their effects, the forum recommended more research on critical areas such as chemical composition of *miraa*, *shisha* and other emerging drugs. The researchers present committed to pursue this resolution.
11. **Noting** that some communities rely on *miraa*, tobacco and traditional brews as a means of

livelihood, the forum recommended promotion of alternative sources of livelihood to such communities as a strategy towards supply suppression. All participants present committed to explore possible alternatives in partnerships.

12. Appreciating that positive attitude, beliefs and values are instrumental in engagement towards abuse of alcohol and drugs, the delegates resolved to promote and advocate for value-based approaches and strategies to fight alcohol and drug abuse.

13. Cognizant that alcohol and drug abuse affects parents, youth and children, the forum committed to facilitate review of relevant legislations such as the Children Act, 2001 to ensure inclusion of ADA issues as well as strategic integration of children in youth programs.

The legislators and policy makers present resolved to provide leadership towards realization of this resolution.

14. Observing the numerous legislations and policies on alcohol and drug abuse, the forum resolved that all alcohol and drug abuse related legislation and policies be consolidated for ease of implementation, coordination and enforcement and that existing laws should be fully enforced. The legislators and policy makers present committed to pursue this resolution.

15. Acknowledging the central role of learning institutions in prevention and control of drug abuse among students, the forum recommended that institutions of learning be empowered to enforce policies, laws and strategies aimed at curbing consumption of alcohol and drugs among students including establishing and strengthening guidance and counselling units and peer-to-peer support systems. The representatives of NACADA, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health present committed towards ensuring that learning institutions become drug free zones.

16. Noting that faith based organizations and the civil society have a central role to play in the fight against alcohol and drug abuse, the forum recommended that these institutions design a clear strategy for incorporating young people and other groups in the fight against drug abuse. The religious leaders present committed to ensure this resolution is realized.

17. Recognizing the emergence of new and effective therapies globally, the forum recommended designing of a comprehensive harm reduction strategy that includes effective treatment therapies. The health workers and policy makers present resolved to facilitate this process.

18. Acknowledging the devolved system of government and the magnitude of drug addiction, the forum recommended that county governments should prioritize evidence based campaign against alcohol and drug abuse and facilitate the setting up of affordable treatment and rehabilitation services appropriate for different groups in every county as well integration of ADA in primary health care. The leaders of the County Governments present committed to provide the necessary support.

19. Acknowledging the negative effects of alcohol advertising on initiation of alcohol and drug abuse, participants resolved to support legislations banning alcohol advertisement in the media and any other forum.

20. Noting that conclusion of cases involving narcotic drugs take a long time to be concluded, the forum recommended that the judiciary establishes special courts where cases involving hard drugs are determined expeditiously. Further, participants recommended that storage and disposal of all seized narcotic drugs be reviewed to ensure full accountability.