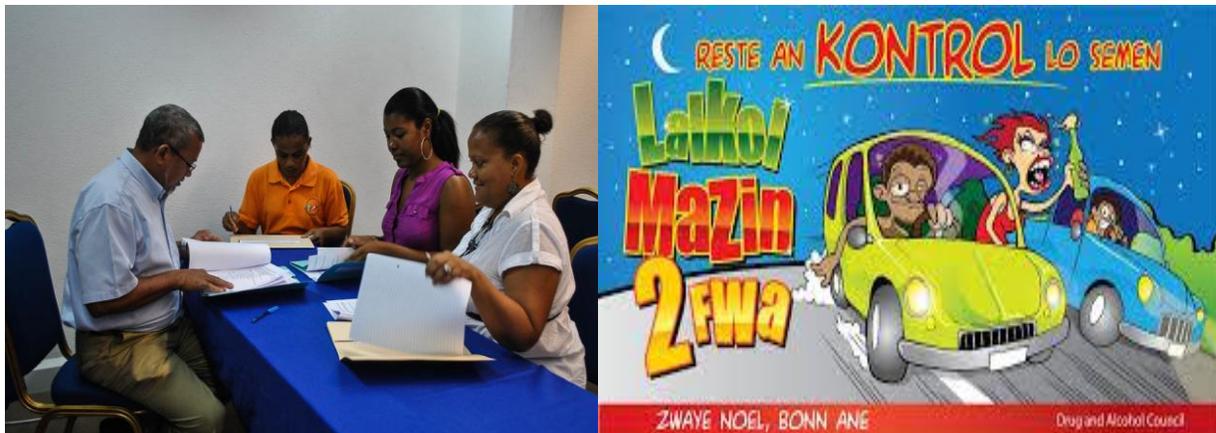




Drug And Alcohol Council

The Seychelles National Alcohol Policy 2014

June 2014



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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CARE	Campaign for Awareness, Resilience and Education against drug and alcohol abuse
DAC	Drug and Alcohol Council
DALY	Disability-adjusted life years
EAP	Employee Assistance Programme
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
ICD-10	International Classification of Diseases, 10 th Edition (WHO)
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
PSE	Personal and Social Education
SBC	Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation
UniSey	University of Seychelles
WHO	World Health Organisation

Preamble

Alcohol consumption is one of the most significant risks to health. Globally, alcohol is responsible for 3.8% of all deaths and 4.5% of the burden of injury and disease as measured in disability-adjusted life years (DALY) lost. It is the third largest contributing factor to injury and disease worldwide, almost equal to tobacco, and in developing countries with overall low mortality, it is now the leading factor.

While overall consumption levels are leveling off in some countries with mature alcohol markets, there are increased levels in others. Patterns of drinking are changing. Heavier drinking occasions, particularly by young people, tend to lead to harm and have increased in many countries (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006; Habgood et al. 2001; Milne 2003). The low proportion of drinkers in some countries and communities masks a tendency for those who do drink to large amounts per occasion (Huakau et al. 2005; Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004, 2005).

Transport-related injuries are strongly linked to the harmful use of alcohol. There also is a close relationship between drinking and violent crime, including domestic violence.

Drinking by young people is of growing concern in many countries. In many countries and areas, young people are beginning to drink at a younger age and heavier occasion drinking is on the rise (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2006; Habgood et al. 2001; Secretariat of the Pacific Community 2004). Seychelles is no exception.

Locally, excessive consumption of alcohol has been associated with negative social impacts, such as violent crimes, including Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and family violence. Furthermore, it has also proven quite difficult to adequately monitor the production and distribution of alcohol as well as measuring its social, economic and health impacts. So far, it would seem that there are some 11 manufacturers with production of about 30 different products. As for home-brewed alcohols, there were as of 30th March 2013, 55 baka and lapire bars and vendors. There are reports that drinking alcohol is a major concern, especially with anecdotal reports about children drinking whenever there are school holidays, parties or any kinds of celebrations at school.

Locally, law enforcement is also a critical issue to help address national alcohol control. Equipment such as breathalysers, operational measures such as patrols and testing of drivers and efficient court processes are needed to strengthen law enforcement.

In many countries, public health policy responses are either absent, weak or need updating. This situation, together with growing global consumption trends, urgently necessitates that public health-oriented alcohol strategies be taken up at national, regional and global levels. WHO has also finalised the ***Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol***, with a number of recommendations that look at policy options, leadership, awareness and commitment, production, distribution and sale of alcohol as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. The Seychelles seeks to align its own strategy with international standards, evidence from research and the desires of the people of Seychelles to find reasonable and acceptable measures to address the excessive consumption of alcohol in the country.

As the world changes with new Information and Communication Technology (ICT) becoming more important in everyday life, especially that of young people, there is a need to use these new technologies and facilities to enhance the national programmes on awareness, education, communication, behaviour change messages and information through the use of social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, Craigslist, Wayn and others. Some Seychellois have also started a number of Facebook groups which are actively discussing issues of national importance, including alcohol and other drugs. This represents a further opportunity for the Drug and Alcohol Council (DAC) and its partners to work together to reach audiences that may not be reached by traditional methods of radio, television and other Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials such as leaflets, booklets, banners, posters and bookmarks, to mention a few.

The ***Seychelles National Alcohol Policy*** is the outcome of discussions, research, and community and workplace consultations. Alcohol plays an important role in the economy of Seychelles. It generates substantial employment and tax revenue. Alcohol also has an important social role. It is a familiar part of traditions and customs and is often used for relaxation, socialisation and celebration. Alcohol is a drug that can promote relaxation and feelings of euphoria. It can also lead to intoxication and dependence and a wide-range of associated harms. The purpose of this policy is to serve the interest of public health and social wellbeing. It aims to translate the wishes, hopes, and aspirations of all sectors of the Seychellois society as it addresses the issue of excessive consumption of alcohol in the country. The goal of this policy is to prevent and minimise alcohol-related harm to individuals, families and communities hoping to develop safer and healthy drinking cultures.

The **Policy document** balances personal freedoms and civic duty and responsibility, popular views and scientific data, the rights and responsibilities of consumers, distributors, manufacturers and the protection of vulnerable members of the society, such as children and youth. In accordance with the WHO's ***Global strategy to reduce the harmful use of alcohol***, the government takes the leadership role in defining, implementing and coordinating, with national stakeholders, the national response to social, economic and health issues related to harmful use of alcohol. It is also the desire of the government that every Seychellois is well informed and is able to make learned decision regarding their alcohol consumption.

Policy statements regarding alcohol in Seychelles

1. The Government takes the leadership role in the national response to the harmful use of alcohol, recognising the harm caused to individuals, families and society by excessive use. Consequently, the Government encourages abstinence and moderation for reasons of health and peace in families and society.
2. The population in general will therefore be sensitised about the dangers of excessive drinking and education programmes against alcohol in schools, communities and society in general will be reinforced.
3. It is always an acceptable choice to abstain from consuming alcoholic products.
4. Alcohol is a legal consumer product and its moderate consumption by adults is acceptable behaviour.
5. Consumers of alcohol beverages have the right to accurate information, to know what they are consuming so that they could make informed choices. They have the right to safe and hygienic products.
6. Consumers of alcohol products must do so while respecting the right of others to safe roads, workplaces, public places and homes.
7. Sale of alcohol to children is forbidden and the Government will take steps to ensure that the law against the sale of alcohol to minors will be vigorously enforced.
8. The Government is committed to the rehabilitation of victims of alcohol abuse so that they can return to normal life and contribute to national development.
9. The Government is also committed to conducting research into the root causes of alcohol abuse and into ways and means of eliminating these causes.
10. The Government is also committed to ensure that individuals, parents, teachers and other key workers and institutions such as families, schools, workplaces and communities take personal responsibility for their decisions and behaviour in relation to consumption of alcohol. As such, institutions which choose to use alcohol tests for recruitment, performance, advancement and management of their routine work, programmes and activities shall be encouraged to do so within the confines and limits of national laws and regulations.

11. The Government also reiterates its commitment to information, education and communication about alcohol for people to make informed decisions about their individual choice to consume the product as adults.

Definitions:

Surrogate alcohol refers to *“liquids usually containing ethanol and not intended for consumption as beverages that are consumed orally ... with the objective of producing intoxication or other effects associated with alcohol consumption.”*

Harmful use refers to *“a pattern of psychoactive substance use that is causing damage to health. The damage may be physical (e.g. hepatitis following injection of drugs) or mental (e.g. depressive episodes secondary to heavy alcohol intake). Harmful use commonly, but not invariably, has adverse social consequences; social consequences in themselves, however, are not sufficient to justify a diagnosis of harmful use.”*

Box 1. Guiding principles for development and implementation of alcohol policies at all levels (WHO, 2010)

(a) Public policies and interventions to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm should be guided and formulated by public health interests and based on clear public health goals and the best available evidence.

(b) Policies should be equitable and sensitive to national, religious and cultural contexts.

(c) All involved parties have the responsibility to act in ways that do not undermine the implementation of public policies and interventions to prevent and reduce harmful use of alcohol.

(d) Public health should be given proper deference in relation to competing interests and approaches that support that direction should be promoted.

(e) Protection of populations at high risk of alcohol-attributable harm and those exposed to the effects of harmful drinking by others should be an integral part of policies addressing the harmful use of alcohol.

(f) Individuals and families affected by the harmful use of alcohol should have access to affordable and effective prevention and care services.

(g) Children, teenagers and adults who choose not to drink alcoholic beverages have the right to be supported in their non-drinking behaviour and protected from pressures to drink.

(h) Public policies and interventions to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harm should encompass all alcoholic beverages and surrogate alcohol.

Aims of the National Alcohol Policy 2014

The aims of the **National Alcohol Policy 2014** are to:

- 1** Reduce significantly alcohol-related harms in the country
- 2** Encourage responsible drinking behaviours by adults
- 3** Ensure that alcohol products are manufactured in stringent hygienic conditions
- 4** Ensure that children (under 18 years of age) are able to make informed choices about whether they will choose to consume alcohol as adults
- 5** Inform and educate adults on the risks of excessive use of alcohol

In eight (8) priorities areas which encompass production, sale, distribution, advertising of locally manufactured and imported alcohol products, as well as impact of excessive alcohol consumption on families, especially children, the workplace and society in general.

Priority Areas for Action



Policy Statements for Each Priority Area

Manufacturers of alcoholic products do so under license, and are under the obligation to provide products that meet set national standards. Manufacturing, distributing, storing, placing of alcohol products Manufactures have a corporate and social responsibility to collaborate with organisations that work to mitigate the adverse effect of alcohol consumption abuses.

Children are the most vulnerable members of the society. Their development and growth are vital to themselves, their own family and also to national development. Alcohol products pose substantial risks for children and interfere significantly with their physical and mental growth and development. Children need to be protected from the nefarious impact of alcohol consumption on their still developing bodies, persona and psyche.

Employees have the right to **workplaces** free of pressure to use alcoholic products. They are also entitled to safe and secure workplaces where colleagues do not endanger their health and life due to intoxication. Moreover, they have the right to workplaces where they are able to obtain education, information, assistance and support when they are experiencing health and social problems as a result of their excessive drinking. Workers have the responsibility to be sober and to be productive.

It is an offence to be **driving under the influence of alcohol**. The citizens of the Seychelles and our guests have the right to free and safe passage on the roads and thoroughfares of the country. Consumers of alcoholic beverages who drive under the influence of alcohol pose a significant risk to all users of these roads. The grave health, social and economic consequences of driving any kind of vehicle under the influence of alcohol warrant decisive action by the sectors concerned.

Drinking alcohol and socialising are acceptable activities for adults who choose to spend their leisure time in such ways. It is, however, unacceptable for such adults to violate the right of others to peace and quiet, to safe and secure **public places**, such as roads, alleys and shops, to clean and healthy environments, and to protect their children from negative situations.

Baka and lapire are home-brewed alcoholic products that have been part of the Seychellois culture for generations. People have brewed these for their own personal use, to share with friends and neighbours, for celebrations and more recently for sale and commerce.

Home-brewed alcoholic beverages are significant health hazards because their production may not be done in hygienic conditions. They are also potential risk factors socially, especially in families and relationships, when they are consumed excessively.

DAC recognises the highly emotional aspects of the issue of baka and lapire in the Seychellois society and seeks to strike a balance between all sectors involved in this issue. **Advertising** has an impact on people. It does not simply establish a brand name; it also encourages people to consume more of the product being advertised. With alcohol, given the present situation of excessive consumption of the product in Seychelles, it is important that measures are taken to ensure that people are not encouraged to drink more, and that children and youth are not also encouraged to begin drinking alcohol.

Education is the foundation of change and progress. It is imperative that an aggressive campaign be undertaken to educate the people about alcohol and to change mindset about the role of alcohol consumption in their daily lives and social behaviours around alcohol. Each organisation whether educational institutions or workplaces has the duty to educate people about alcohol, as excessive use can have serious impact on the achievement of their set objectives. It is essential to make people aware of the social, economic and health risks associated with excessive consumption of alcohol. It is also important to revamp the Personal and Social Education (PSE) programmes in primary and secondary schools and offer sustained programmes in post-secondary institutions and at the University of Seychelles.

Institutional Framework

The Seychelles already has a range of laws and regulations which give a clear indication of national standards regarding policies, actions and operations about how alcohol should be viewed, manufactured, distributed, sold, and used in the country. Some of these Laws and regulations are highlighted below.

Children Act	Forbids anyone to give alcohol to children
Licenses (Liquor and Outdoor Entertainment Regulations 1998)	Forbid the sale of alcohol to minors
Road Transport Act (Cap 206)	Causing death by dangerous driving contrary punishable under Section 24 (2), 25 & 27 Section 3(1) of the Road Transport (Sober Driving) Regulations (S.I 109 of 1995) and punishable under section 9(1)(a) of the said Regulation as read with section 24(2) of the Road Transport Act, Cap 206.
Chapter 158 Penal Code [1st February, 1955] Act 15 Of 1996	Meaning of intoxication Intoxication as a defense in criminal cases
53A. Drunkenness while at work	Employer's right to require employees to take a breath test or to give a specimen of urine or blood for analysis in accordance with regulations.
Section 2 of the Misuse of Drugs Act (Cap. 133)	Defines controlled drugs
S.I. 72/1976	Prerogative of the President, when he is of the opinion that it is necessary for maintenance and preservation of law and order may prohibit either absolutely or subject to conditions, tapping of toddy, manufacture of baka and sale, exchange, barter or delivery of any liquor, baka or toddy. In this section the words "liquor", "baka" and "toddy" shall have the same meaning assigned to them in regulation 2
S.I. 23/1987 of the Licenses (Liquor) Regulations	Establishes regulations for consuming alcohol and being drunk in public (idle and disorderly)

1. Manufacturers of Alcoholic Products

The strategy of the Seychelles government is to:

- (a) Establish stringent health and hygienic conditions for the manufacture of alcoholic products.
- (b) Ensure that consumers are well informed of the products they are purchasing and consuming. Therefore, clear labeling of products, with ingredients, and a health-warning label is essential, using international standards (for example, *'+18'*, *'Don't drink and Drive'*, *'Excessive alcohol consumption is harmful for your health'* and *'Should be consumed moderately'*).
- (c) Monitor the level of alcohol consumption and reserve the right to issue and or cancel manufacturing licenses for alcohol production.
- (d) Conduct further study of the issue of pre-mixed drinks and alcopops available in small sized plastic bottles which do not meet international standards and to consider a total ban for these products to protect public health.
- (e) Establish international standards for locally produced alcopops so as to reinforce quality control of local alcohols (types of bottles used, standards for the drinks, and probationary period for the drinks to ensure that initial quality sent for licensing has been maintained and international standards for certification of brewers).
- (f) Strengthen monitoring and enforcement mechanisms of the local and imported products and develop a national standard for alcohol content of local and imported beers, in collaboration with national stakeholders.
- (g) Have separate placement for sale of lemonades and alcoholic beverages.
- (h) Introduce refundable bottles for local production of alcohol.
- (i) Introduce a moratorium on the number of licenses given to local manufacturers of alcohol.

2. Alcohol and Children

The strategy of the Seychelles government is to:

- (a) Make it an offense for anyone to procure, to encourage and/or to assist in procuring, sell, give, share any kind of alcoholic product to children under 18 years of age.
- (b) Ensure that children shall be given timely, age-appropriate, easily accessible and accurate information about alcohol to help them make informed choices as adults whether they consume alcoholic products or not. This should form part of the school curriculum programme.
- (c) Ensure that no children under the age of 18 years of age shall appear in any kind of advertising and/or promotion of alcoholic products.
- (d) Keep the legal age for consuming alcoholic beverages at 18 years.
- (e) Establish that in all public sector institutions the workers shall henceforth not use alcoholic products for any kind of celebration being conducted on these premises.
- (f) Establish that activities associated with children and young people, such as sporting events and cultural manifestations, shall not accept sponsorship from alcohol manufacturers, if they are to then advertise or display alcoholic products at the events. They may display the company name.

3. Alcohol and the Workplace

The strategy of the Seychelles government is to:

- (a) Encourage all workplaces to institute **Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP)**, in which they provide their workers with information, and education on alcohol. Employees with alcohol addiction may be helped through this programme.
- (b) Ensure that all workplaces make provision to allow their workers to be treated and to follow rehabilitation programmes in designated centres.
- (c) Enact or amend relevant legislation to permit employers to have workers tested on site if and when they suspect the worker to be under the influence of substances, including alcohol.
- (d) Establish that in all public sector institutions the workers shall henceforth use alcoholic products in moderation for special celebrations and events (e.g., **May Day**, **National Day** and **End of Year social activity**) being conducted on these premises, with the written permission of Chief Executive Officer.

4. Driving Under the Influence of Alcohol

The strategy of the Seychelles government is to:

- (a) Maintain stringent measures by the Police to ensure that drivers operate their vehicles within the legal limit of blood alcohol concentration level.
- (b) Ensure that the Police conduct spot checks, with the use of breathalysers.
- (c) Establish *designated drivers programme* for public workers who are organizing work-related parties and other festivities.
- (d) Ensure that there is adequate training for novice drivers with information on drink driving, speeding, loud noise and music and sessions with the Drug and Alcohol Council, the Seychelles Licensing Authority and the Police.
- (e) Revive the *Road Safety Advisory Committee* to provide a platform for more co-ordinated road safety sensitisation and preventive activities.
- (f) Establish a point system for drivers' licenses.
- (g) That all operators of all types of bars ensure that an already intoxicated client is not served any more alcoholic beverages.
- (h) Enact legislation to increase the penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol and other drugs, with possible suspension of the driving license.

5. Drinking in Public Places and in Public View

The strategy of the Seychelles government is to:

- (a) Encourage consumption of alcohol in designated places. It is our profound belief that people can drink alcoholic beverages in a controlled and civilised manner, can socialise and refresh themselves, without being a nuisance and a menace for members of the public and especially children.
- (b) Implement active community policing.
- (c) Ensure that the Seychelles Licensing Authority (SLA) shall withdraw the liquor license of any shop owner and keeper that allows clients to consume alcoholic beverages on their premises.
- (d) Ensure that the SLA considers introducing hours for the sale of alcohol and opening hours for shops and baka and lapire bars.
- (e) Introduce regulated and standard-level Class B bars for consumers who are not able to afford drinks sold in hotels and restaurants.

6. Production and Sale of Baka and Lapire as Licensable Activities

The strategy of the Seychelles government is to:

- (a) Control and limit the number of *on licensed premises*, in recognition of the need to limit the availability of the product and for better management and control of licensees.
- (b) Introduce hours of sale for the baka and lapire bars.
- (c) Establish that the limit of baka and lapire kept for personal use in the home is reduced from 20 litres to 5 litres.
- (d) Review the laws regarding minimum fines for the illegal production and sale of baka and lapire.
- (e) Establish that the Seychelles Bureau of Standards (SBS), the Seychelles Licensing Authority and the Ministry of Health Environmental Health Unit conduct more on-site visits and spot checks, as team, rather than as separate entities. The officers need to be adequately trained to conduct their duties.
- (f) Ensure that adequate monitoring is done on the baka and lapire outlets, more personnel, where needed, is recruited, trained and deployed.
- (g) Consider having wholesale outlets vested with only a production license and not retail license for sale to individuals.. Persons granted a license for sale of baka and lapire on permitted premises are to buy from those permitted wholesalers and they are not given a production license.
- (h) Establish a special unit to monitor and enforce the laws/regulations.

7. Advertising of Alcoholic Products

The strategy of the Seychelles government is to:

- (a) Introduce either limits (such as, *Once a year only, duration of fewer than three months or use of adults who look like 25 years olds in advertising materials*) or actual bans on games and promotional games and competitions (where a number of caps or other items to be collected) and/or free public distribution of advertising materials of alcoholic beverages (caps, t-shirts, umbrellas, towels, etc.) encouraging increase in purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages are to be banned in all forms and media.
- (b) Establish that no alcohol manufacturer shall associate its alcoholic products in any form (video, audio, written, etc.) with any activity (sports, cultural shows, music shows, etc.) where children and youth are prominent participants. They may use the company name, but they will not be allowed to advertise alcoholic products at the events.
- (c) Ensure that no government educational, social welfare and health institutions shall display any kind of promotional products for alcoholic beverages (calendars, mouse pads, notebook covers, pens, pencils, etc.) Instead, these institutions should use materials that have positive and healthy messages for their workers.
- (d) Closely regulate, monitor and assess the advertising of alcohol to ensure that there are no violations of established codes by the Seychelles Licensing Authority (SLA).
- (e) Strictly limit the advertising of alcohol on the public-funded television station, the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation (SBC), with a ban for the advertising of local products and restrictions, when technically possible, of advertising of alcohol during live international broadcasts.

8. Educational and Health Issues

The strategy of the Seychelles government is to:

- (a) Include alcohol education in the training programmes of health, law enforcement and education professionals.
- (b) Introduce alcohol studies at the University of Seychelles (UniSey) and a comprehensive alcohol module with assessment of knowledge and attitudes for all post-secondary institutions
- (c) Ensure that systematic and well-resourced alcohol sensitization programmes are conducted in all schools, including post-secondary institutions and workplaces.
- (d) Establish training and or sensitisation sessions for vendors and bar owners and bartenders.
- (e) Establish a national guideline, such as that of WHO, for drinking limits for men and women.

Conclusion

This Policy is a working document that will be reviewed periodically. It must be kept current with developments of both local and international issues related to all areas of alcohol. It is the primary responsibility of the Drug and Alcohol Council to monitor the implementation of this Policy to ensure that its aims and intentions are being achieved within the context of changing dynamics regarding substance use, abuse and misuse in the Seychelles.

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