



ABELAC supports fiscal and regulatory equality, based on the scientific evidence that "all drinks are equal"

May 29, 2024 – A central commitment of the Spirits Association of Latin America and the Caribbean (ABELAC) is to support consumer education to reduce the harmful use of alcohol. Evidence-based research and policy are essential so that adults who choose to drink can understand moderation and make responsible choices.

Decades of research into the health impacts of alcohol consumption have dispelled the myth that fermented beverages are less impactful than distilled ones. The alcohol content in a standard drink remains the same across all alcoholic beverages: whether it's beer or spirits, one standard serving contains the same amount of alcohol. The body metabolizes alcohol equally regardless of its source, resulting in identical effects regardless of whether it's consumed as beer or spirits. The metabolism of alcohol depends on factors such as the quantity consumed, the rate of consumption, and recent food intake. Thus, it's the drinking pattern that significantly influences outcomes rather than the specific type of alcohol consumers choose to drink. Given that alcohol is alcohol, regulatory frameworks and taxation policies should operate under the premise that "all drinks are equal."

Promoting regulations and taxing policy based on the false assumption that alcohol in beer is different from alcohol in spirits leads to the misperception that some forms of alcohol are safer than others. This is misleading to consumers and can have negative effects. The latter has been pointed out by [SpiritsEurope](#):

- All drinks are equal: Suggesting that beer is different from spirits misleading for the consumer.
- Responsible consumption: Moderation depends on patterns of consumption, not on the drink.
- Avoidance of market distortions: The differentiation of alcoholic beverages distorts markets and can lead to unsafe practices, even encouraging underage drinking.

The concept of a standard drink is an essential tool for consumers to be able to measure how much alcohol they drink, regardless of the beverage. For example, when consuming 365 ml of beer (with an alcohol content of 4.5%), 118 ml of wine (14%) or 43 ml of distillate (38%), always contains the same amount of pure alcohol, an average of 13 grams regardless of category.

At ABELAC, our commitment lies in disseminating this crucial knowledge and advocating for responsible practices. One avenue through which we achieve this is our [Originating Spirits campaign](#). Among its facets, we prioritize consumer education on moderate consumption, providing informative resources to empower individuals in making mindful drinking decisions.

ABELAC aims to support consumer choices with transparent and accurate information. We are also proponents of fair and non-discriminatory regulations across alcohol beverage categories. We believe this to be a responsibility of all market participants – not only spirits producers. Therefore, we call on all players in the sector to work together in this pursuit.

Jorge Padilla
Executive Director of ABELAC

ABOUT ABELAC

ABELAC aims to discuss and promote activities focused on responsibility and awareness in the consumption of alcoholic beverages, the preservation and valorization of the cultural, social, and economic aspects of spirits, and to fight the illicit trade that harms people exposed to it, local economies, and companies.