About the Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance

The Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance is comprised of world leaders and experts from across sectors working together to accelerate political action on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) based on the One Health approach. Its mission is to collaborate globally with governments, agencies, civil society and the private sector to advise on and advocate for political action for the mitigation of drug-resistant infections through responsible and sustainable access to and use of antimicrobials. The GLG is co-chaired by Their Excellencies Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh, and Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados, and is jointly supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

About AMR

AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change over time and no longer respond to medicines, making infections harder to treat and increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death. In addition to its impact on human health, AMR poses threats to the health of terrestrial and aquatic animals, plants and environmental ecosystems, as well as to food safety and food security. Its potential to undermine economies and livelihoods places millions of people at risk of poverty.

Why AMR should be included as a substantive element of the pandemic instrument

- AMR is already a silent and insidious pandemic that has been spreading for decades and was associated with almost 5 million deaths globally in 2019. The prevalence and impact of drug-resistant pathogens of pandemic potential will steadily and inevitably grow without a sustained, long-term response.

Position Statement by the Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance

April 2022

How the pandemic instrument can have co-benefits for AMR and pandemic prevention, preparedness and response

The GLG is of the view that AMR should be included as a substantive element in the pandemic instrument in its own right, should such an instrument be developed.

Additionally, the following guiding principles should be included as substantive elements so that the instrument has broad co-benefits for AMR and for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response:

- The instrument should be grounded in the multisectoral One Health approach needed to tackle multiple health threats that can arise at the human-animal-environmental interface, including infectious and zoonotic diseases, AMR, climate change, biodiversity loss and food insecurity;

- The instrument should promote stronger and more sustainable systems for human, animal, plant and environmental health through a strong focus on infection prevention and control to prevent and mitigate infectious disease and AMR risk across sectors (including key interventions such as water, sanitation and hygiene, biosecurity, vaccination and waste minimization and management); and

- The instrument should promote more equitable and appropriate access to anti-infective agents broadly as global goods, including access to new and existing antimicrobials (particularly antibiotics), vaccines, diagnostics and waste management tools.

The following additional substantive elements are important within the pandemic instrument and can with minimal effort be formulated so that they mutually benefit pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and the response to AMR:

- Governance: The instrument should contribute to improved One Health governance for both pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and AMR, including better coordination, monitoring and accountability across the human, animal, plant and environmental sectors and broad engagement of stakeholders including civil society and the private sector. It should also define links between the new instrument and other relevant frameworks in the context of One Health.

- Financing: The instrument should ensure that mechanisms are in place to sustainably finance the measures required under it and to further support One Health leadership and collaboration by the Quadripartite organizations (FAO, OIE, UNEP and WHO).

- Surveillance: The instrument should strengthen and support harmonized, multisectoral One Health approaches to surveillance, data-sharing and communication across sectors in ways that co-benefit pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and the response to AMR, and include surveillance of antimicrobial consumption and use. It should also promote innovation in surveillance such as genomic sequencing, sewage monitoring and environmental surveillance.

- Capacity building and risk assessment: The instrument’s monitoring framework should address One Health capacity and risk assessment in ways that co-benefit pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and AMR, with a focus on core functions such as governance, surveillance and infection prevention and control, and include measures to build countries’ capacity in these areas through mobilization of financing and technical support.

- Research and development: The instrument should promote and facilitate a One Health, needs-driven model of research and development for anti-infective agents, including new antimicrobials (particularly antibiotics), vaccines, diagnostics, waste management tools, safe and effective alternatives to antimicrobials, and better and more sustainable measures for growth promotion, while also ensuring equitable and sustainable access to these products, for example, through “push and pull” incentives for research and development, approaches to technology sharing and increased transparency and diversification of supply chains and manufacturing capacity.

- Responsible and sustainable use and oversight and control of counterfeit medicines: The instrument should promote responsible and sustainable use of global goods including antimicrobials (particularly antibiotics) and vaccines, for example, by requiring that these are only used in humans and animals under professional oversight, and by requiring Member States to prohibit production and use of counterfeit drugs. To achieve optimal impact, provisions in the instrument relating to responsible and sustainable use and oversight, and surveillance of antimicrobial consumption and use, should be legally binding on Member States.

For more information on the Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance, please see www.amrleaders.org or contact amr-glg@who.int