

Antimicrobial Resistance and the SDGs: challenges and opportunities

Report of a briefing event by the UN Interagency Coordination Group (IACG) on Antimicrobial Resistance in conjunction with the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

A side event at the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development organized by the IACG Secretariat in close collaboration with the Permanent Missions of the People's Republic of China, Ghana, Mexico, South Africa and the United Kingdom was conducted on 18 July 2018 in New York at UN Headquarters. The objective of the meeting was to discuss the challenges and opportunities related to antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the context of human, animal, plant health and the environment. The briefing was also intended to provide update on the progress of the ongoing work of the IACG. The meeting was attended by participants from government, diplomatic missions, civil society organisations and the private sector.

The meeting was opened by welcome remarks from HE Juan Jose Gomez Camacho, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the UN who negotiated the outcome of the 2016 High-level Meeting and political declaration on AMR. He underlined the enormous challenge posed by the threat of AMR to the whole of humanity and that it required a comprehensive and complex response, including increased political commitment from Member States along with a more agile, coordinated and effective response from the UN system. Dame Sally Davies of the United Kingdom, who is one of the co-conveners of the IACG, highlighted the complexity of AMR and its response in her opening remark on behalf of the IACG members. She equated AMR with climate change and underlined the lack of recognition of the effect and interaction of environment on AMR in general.

Haileyesus Getahun, the coordinator of the IACG Secretariat, presented on the [current status and next steps of the IACG](#). He mentioned that the IACG was entering into the critical phase of drafting recommendations and the report to the UN Secretary-General through an inclusive process. He particularly underlined the importance of socialising the IACG recommendations as they are developed through stakeholder engagement with Member States, civil society and the private sector. It was only through this transparent process that the IACG recommendations would truly be catalytic of existing recommendations, innovative for breakthrough actions and disruptive for what is not working currently for the global and national AMR response. He also provided the timeline of the IACG and called on stakeholders to actively engage in the public consultation processes of the IACG.

Anthony So of the United States, who is one of the co-conveners of the IACG, introduced the keynote speaker of the meeting, Sabiha Essack of South Africa who presented on [AMR and the environment](#). She highlighted the vital role of the environment in AMR in the context of One Health but underlined that it is less well-understood. The environment was subject to variable weather patterns, particularly fluctuations in temperature, humidity and precipitation that affect the eco-systems of microbes, making environmental AMR an unpredictable and confounding component of the One Health triad. She concluded that the impact of AMR in the environment is inadequately recognized by stakeholders and there is thus minimal effort to understand and contain it. She called for systematic generation of data and evidence on the nature and extent of AMR in the environment, as well as innovative solutions through multidisciplinary, implementation research.

A panel discussion was moderated by Nana Kuo of the UN Secretary-General's office involving HE Gyan Baffor, Minister of Planning of Ghana, HE Juan Jose Gomez Camacho, the

Permanent Representative of Mexico to the UN, IACG members (Simon Bland, Dame Sally Davies, Stefan Peterson and Anthony So), and the keynote speaker Sabiha Essack. During the panel discussion the following key issues were raised:

- The importance of presenting compelling data on AMR and best ways to communicate particularly with policy makers through whole government approach;
- More work is required to make AMR a mainstream political agenda globally and at country level;
- Lack of evidence and guidance for policy makers and programme managers on priority interventions that address the complexity of AMR as it cut across human, animal, plant and environment health;
- It is important to note that drug resistant infections can also be a result of poor access of antimicrobials not only over use of misuse;
- IACG recommendations should not be recycling of already existing recommendations.

Video messages from the Directors-General of [FAO](#), [OIE](#) and [WHO](#) on the launch of the [tripartite report on the county self-assessment](#) to monitor the global AMR response were also shared during the meeting.

The IACG Secretariat