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# GLOBAL ACTION PLAN ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE





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WHO Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance.

I. World Health Organization.

ISBN 978 92 4 150976 3

Subject headings are available from WHO institutional repository

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The definitive version of the Global Action Plan can be found in the official records of the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly (document WHA68/2015/REC/1, Annex 3.)

Design and layout: [www.paprika-annecy.com](http://www.paprika-annecy.com)

Printed by the WHO Document Production Services, Geneva, Switzerland



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## Foreword

Antimicrobial resistance threatens the very core of modern medicine and the sustainability of an effective, global public health response to the enduring threat from infectious diseases. Effective antimicrobial drugs are prerequisites for both preventive and curative measures, protecting patients from potentially fatal diseases and ensuring that complex procedures, such as surgery and chemotherapy, can be provided at low risk. Yet systematic misuse and overuse of these drugs in human medicine and food production have put every nation at risk. Few replacement products are in the pipeline. Without harmonized and immediate action on a global scale, the world is heading towards a post-antibiotic era in which common infections could once again kill.

Alert to this crisis, the May 2015 World Health Assembly adopted a global action plan on antimicrobial resistance, which outlines five objectives:

- ▶ to improve awareness and understanding of antimicrobial resistance through effective communication, education and training;
- ▶ to strengthen the knowledge and evidence base through surveillance and research;
- ▶ to reduce the incidence of infection through effective sanitation, hygiene and infection prevention measures;
- ▶ to optimize the use of antimicrobial medicines in human and animal health;
- ▶ to develop the economic case for sustainable investment that takes account of the needs of all countries and to increase investment in new medicines, diagnostic tools, vaccines and other interventions.

This action plan underscores the need for an effective “one health” approach involving coordination among numerous international sectors and actors, including human and veterinary medicine, agriculture, finance, environment, and well-informed consumers. The action plan recognizes and addresses both the variable resources nations have to combat antimicrobial resistance and the economic factors that discourage the development of replacement products by the pharmaceutical industry.

An all-out effort is needed. WHO will work with the United Nations to tackle antimicrobial resistance at the political level. Our strong collaboration with FAO and OIE will continue. A framework for monitoring and evaluating national activities is being developed. The objective is to have multisectoral national action plans in place by the 2017 World Health Assembly.

Antimicrobial resistance is a crisis that must be managed with the utmost urgency. As the world enters the ambitious new era of sustainable development, we cannot allow hard-won gains for health to be eroded by the failure of our mainstay medicines.

**Dr Margaret Chan**  
*Director-General*  
*World Health Organization*



## Introduction

1.

When microbes become resistant to medicines, the options for treating the diseases they cause are reduced. This resistance to antimicrobial medicines is happening in all parts of the world for a broad range of microorganisms with an increasing prevalence that threatens human and animal health. The direct consequences of infection with resistant microorganisms can be severe, including longer illnesses, increased mortality, prolonged stays in hospital, loss of protection for patients undergoing operations and other medical procedures, and increased costs. Antimicrobial resistance affects all areas of health, involves many sectors and has an impact on the whole of society.

2.

The indirect impact of antimicrobial resistance, however, extends beyond increased health risks and has many public health consequences with wide implications, for instance on development. Antimicrobial resistance is a drain on the global economy with economic losses due to reduced productivity caused by sickness (of both human beings and animals) and higher costs of treatment. To counter it needs long-term investment, such as financial and technical support for developing countries and in development of new medicines, diagnostic tools, vaccines and other interventions, and in strengthening health systems to ensure more appropriate use of and access to antimicrobial agents.

4.

The goal of the global action plan is to ensure, for as long as possible, continuity of successful treatment and prevention of infectious diseases with effective and safe medicines that are quality-assured, used in a responsible way, and accessible to all who need them. It is expected that countries will develop their own national action plans on antimicrobial resistance in line with the global plan.

5.

To achieve this goal, the global action plan sets out five strategic objectives: (1) to improve awareness and understanding of antimicrobial resistance; (2) to strengthen knowledge through surveillance and research; (3) to reduce the incidence of infection; (4) to optimize the use of antimicrobial agents; and (5) to ensure sustainable investment in countering antimicrobial resistance. These objectives can be attained through the implementation of clearly identified actions by Member States, the Secretariat, and international and national partners across multiple sectors. The actions to optimize use of antimicrobial medicines and to renew investment in research and development of new products must be accompanied by actions to ensure affordable and equitable access by those who need them.

6.

With this approach, the main goal of ensuring treatment and prevention of infectious diseases with quality-assured, safe and effective medicines is achievable

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