



World Health Professions Alliance WHPA

Executive Board 134th Session

Agenda Item 10.6: Antimicrobial Drug Resistance

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the World Medical Association, the International Council of Nurses, the International Pharmaceutical Federation, the World Confederation for Physical Therapy and the World Dental Federation, which together form the World Health Professions Alliance -WHPA. The Alliance represents the collective views of more than 26 million health professionals, working together to achieve the highest possible standards of care, ethics, education and health-related human rights for people around the world.

Our organizations welcome the Secretariat's report on Antimicrobial Drug Resistance. We appreciate WHO's efforts to lead the development and coordination of a global action plan on antimicrobial resistance to address this global challenge, which carries significant health and economic costs. We would like to stress several points we believe are not sufficiently covered in the report:

- 1. Emphasize the importance of the emergence of antimicrobial resistance as a consequence of the problem of counterfeit and/or substandard antimicrobial medicines, especially for diseases that are treated with combination therapy, such as tuberculosis, malaria and HIV.** Most treatment failures may be due to administration of counterfeit medicines even when some bacterial agents are still susceptible to common antibiotics. This may jeopardize the public's confidence in their healthcare providers as well as in government agencies involved in drug distribution. Healthcare professionals prescribing practices may also be affected due to false reports of drug resistance and result in prescribing higher priced drugs that are believed not to be counterfeit. In this regard, we underscore the need to promote increased surveillance, regulatory and legal measures along with public awareness campaigns and interventions related to good manufacturing practices to combat the problem.
- 2. "Integration of prevention of antimicrobial resistance into all health systems and practice" as outlined in the report will require considering the problem from the Universal Health Coverage perspective and the inclusion of medicines in the basic package of care for all people.** It is well known, that individuals, who lack insurance, often turn to the Internet or buy drugs on the unregulated black market. The practice can increase the spread of substandard antimicrobials and ineffective treatments that will negatively impact populations' health and escalate healthcare costs.

3. **The WHO-led global action plan should clearly articulate a strategy to improve the rational use of antimicrobials in human medicine and the use of antibiotics only for the treatment of infection in animals.** In many countries, more antibiotics are prescribed to animals than humans, mainly to promote growth, not to treat infection. The practice promotes antimicrobial resistance in bacterial populations. The resistant bacteria may then be transmitted to humans and cross international borders. A multisectoral and multistakeholder action plan should include education, regulation and surveillance of antibiotics use internationally.
4. **Encourage research on poor quality medicines.** There are very few studies on the prevalence of substandard drugs with sufficient methodology including random sampling to evaluate the magnitude of the problem and design interventions.
5. **Involve the pharmaceutical industry as part of the solution.** The need for antimicrobial medicines will be greater than ever with the emergence of multidrug resistance in common pathogens, new infections and the potential of using multi-drug resistant agents in bioweapons. Yet, the development of these agents is declining globally. Solutions are needed for encouraging and facilitating the development of new antimicrobial agents to meet global health needs.

Thank you for your kind attention.