

Open letter to the Co-chairs of the One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance

H.E. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and H.E. Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley,

On behalf of ReAct - Action on Antibiotic Resistance¹, we congratulate you to your appointment as Co-chairs of the One Health Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

The need for a strong Global Governance mechanism to stimulate action on AMR is evident given the slow progress to act on AMR despite the strong commitments made by all UN Member States in the Political declaration adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2016. The Global Leaders Group (GLG) has the potential to take an important front-facing role and provide much-needed leadership to elevate antimicrobial resistance to the highest level on the global health and development agenda; promote political will; promote mobilization of resources, including targeted investments to address AMR; promote new and urgently needed global collaboration and coordination - while also holding governments and other relevant actors accountable. Strong investment cases, based on the needs in the countries, should be developed for the mobilization and prioritization of financial resources. Given the challenges in many low- and middle-income countries to find resources for even basic interventions that address AMR, it will be necessary to use external catalytic funding for capacity building.

We believe the recommendations from the *ad hoc* Inter-Agency Coordination Group on AMR (IACG) should be a guiding platform for the work of the GLG. We stand firmly behind these concrete recommendations as the best pathway for concrete action by governments, international agencies, donors, business, civil society and professionals to secure sustainable access to antimicrobials globally. The first task of the GLG should be to develop a clear roadmap on its priorities and goals based on these recommendations to which the GLG should hold itself accountable.

The success of the GLG - and global governance for AMR more broadly - will depend on the swift creation and functioning of the two remaining mechanisms proposed by the IACG: the Independent Panel on Evidence to provide robust and authoritative assessments of evidence and options for mitigation, as well as the creation of the multi-stakeholder partnership platform to provide the perspectives and contributions of the broader AMR community. The procedures for how to effectively engage with each other should be developed in jointly between these entities.

The immediate consequences of lack of access to effective antimicrobials goes far beyond human health, animal health and the environment, jeopardizing the fulfilment of many of the Sustainable Development Goals², including poverty alleviation, global economy and development. We therefore urge the GLG to engage a broader group of other UN agencies, intergovernmental and other international organizations in its work to ensure alignment with other major international policy frameworks that are separate but clearly related, including the aforementioned Sustainable Development Goals, the UN political

¹ReAct (www.reactgroup.org), is an international, independent network founded 15 years ago, dedicated to address the multiple system failures that are driving forces behind the global crisis of antibiotic resistance, and with a particular focus on the challenges for low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

² ReAct (2019) When the Drugs Don't Work: Antibiotic Resistance as a Global Development Problem. <https://www.reactgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/When-the-Drugs-Don't-Work-Antibiotic-Resistance-as-a-Global-Development-Problem-Feb-2019.pdf>

declaration on Universal Health Coverage³, as well as any new or modified global policy frameworks that emerges as a result of Covid-19.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created a renewed awareness and understanding of the importance of investing in health and building resilient systems. With this comes the opportunity to highlight the crucial importance of access to effective antibiotics as a fundamental component for both basic and specialized medicine as well as in emergencies, which is today increasingly threatened by resistant bacteria spreading globally as silent pandemics. Covid-19 has also shed light on the need to rebuild the whole research and development ecosystem to make it more need-driven and the responsibility of the public sector to take leadership in doing so. Ensuring sustainable access for antibiotics calls for a new paradigm in this field – an end-to-end approach that addresses the entire lifecycle of a drug, from solving the scientific challenges to ensuring equitable and sustainable access. This will require policy interventions at every stage of the pharmaceutical value chain, as well as public coordination with much more intent.

We anticipate that the GLG will be important to secure political consensus among governments that can direct policy makers to address the challenge of AMR in a holistic manner across different sectors. A governance mechanism will only be as effective as its leadership, membership and ways of operating. It is critical that the work of the GLG is guided by the principles of transparency, independence, avoiding conflicts of interests, and has a set-up that is equitable and inclusive of views of all countries and populations.

We look forward to continued interactions with the GLG, and wish to see GLG making the most of its current Terms of Reference and developing itself into becoming the much needed strong force to drive a global and united response to AMR.

³ ReAct (2019) Antimicrobial resistance and Universal Health Coverage – What’s the deal?
<https://www.reactgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Antimicrobial-resistance-and-universal-health-coverage-Whats-the-deal-ReAct-Sept-2019.pdf>