



## ReAct Africa- South Centre Conference

Africa's response to Antimicrobial Resistance: Accelerating One Health National Action Plans implementation for the next 5 years.

25-27<sup>th</sup> July, 2023  
Lusaka, Zambia.









## Overview

ReAct Africa has been hosting ReAct Annual Conferences since 2014 and has grown from an attendance of 5 countries to over 30 countries. For the last 5 years ReAct Africa has been collaborating with the South Centre in hosting the annual conference that provides a platform for dialogue, learning and sharing of best practices on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) issues by key stakeholders in the African region. This year's conference was held as a hybrid event from 25-27 July, 2022 in Lusaka, Zambia and virtually on Zoom under the theme; Africa's response to Antimicrobial Resistance: Accelerating One Health National Action Plans implementation for the next 5 years.

The conference drew participation from a total of 30 countries and representation from human, animal and environment sectors. The Zambia Minister of Health, Ms. Sylvia Masebo officially opened the conference and pointed out that user-friendly communication plays a crucial role for community members – for action to happen.



Photo 1: Zambian Minister of Health, Hon. Sylvia Masebo

## Objectives

To bring together Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) experts and other key stakeholders to discuss regional challenges and approaches in addressing AMR and the next steps in NAP review and implementation.

To assess existing NAP implementation progress and challenges.

To discuss key activities, which will result in catalytic action for the next 5 years.

To provide way forward for countries on how best to implement NAPs on AMR via a One Health approach.

Promote and share evidence-based interventions in addressing AMR within and across sectors.

## Conference Program

The three-day conference comprised 16 plenary sessions, with speakers varying from 2-9 per session. Each session was about half an hour to one hour, followed by 5-10 minutes for questions.

The conference was designed to encourage participants discussion around the core themes of Antimicrobial Resistance: Accelerating One Health National Action Plans Implementation for the Next 5 Years. Following each session, small group debates, minute papers, and full group discussions on pre-prepared questions were held. Each conference day also included one hour for lunch and 30 minutes for morning and afternoon tea, allowing participants to continue their discussions after each session. Each day, time was set aside at the end for a group reflection on the day's discussions. The conference also included 17 poster presentations with research from various sectors and countries.

## Conference Themes

The theme of this year's conference was "Africa's Response to Antimicrobial Resistance: Accelerating the Implementation of One Health National Action Plans for the Next 5 Years." The three-day discussions supported the Quadripartite and African Union Antimicrobial Resistance Agendas, as well as the AMR Global Action Plan (GAP).

Central themes and questions of each session included:

1. AMR in the African Region based on the Global Research on Antimicrobial Resistance Project (GRAM) Report. Wellcome Trust gave a detailed overview of the data from the GRAM report in the first session of the conference highlighting what the data means for Africa and the fact that Sub-Saharan Africa faces the highest burden of AMR.
2. Key areas to be focused for successful NAP implementation and the potential challenges.
3. How does ReAct Africa work in supporting NAP implementation in Africa and what role does regional partners play?
4. Representatives from nine countries shared their reflections on specific GAP objectives on NAP 2.0 objectives.
5. Implementing NAP through a One Health Approach.
6. How other global strategies and goals such as climate change can help with AMR?
7. What does it take to adopt a sustainable AMR solution?
8. How can we strengthen the governance and financing in AMR NAPs?
9. What could be the emerging issues around AMR?
10. Discussing about the successful examples on AMR NAP interventions



## Outcomes

- ReAct is changing their strategic plan for the next five years, from 2023, to focus more on building movement and consensus in order to address AMR collaboratively.
- Highlighting how the Tripartite (WHO, WOA and FAO) endorsed a global action plan in May 2015 emphasising one health approach to combat AMR and this was to be done through strengthening coordination and cooperation. This was further strengthened by incorporating UNEP and forming the Quadripartite in 2022.
- Ghana's national action plan defined specific activities on awareness and risk communication; they have faced challenges in funding, developing targeted messaging materials for campaigns and incentives to work within the AMR space.
- The Liberia AMR National Action Plan and National Action Plan of health security highlighted the importance of creating public awareness and education on AMR. Also underlying challenges like inadequate funding & commitment for implementing the AMR- NAP.
- Many countries have made progress in terms of developing their NAPs. There are 39 countries with AMR NAPs in place according to WHO. However, when it comes to implementation, very few actually get started due to various reasons **like lack of political commitment, lack of local ownership, engagement or behavioural change, lack of financial, human, infrastructural and operational resources.**

- Tanzania launched the National Action Plan in 2017, which aligns with the One Health approach. They have developed a policy guideline for antimicrobial stewardship and developed a medicine and therapeutic committee guidelines. Existing data are showing progressive increases in antibiotic usage which need prompt responsive actions.
- The conference highlighted the importance of overcoming the challenges across sectors to meet goals for antimicrobial prevention & control and biosecurity.
- The conference emphasised the importance of data and economic analysis in promoting action by policy makers.
- There is a need to improve domestic commitment and political will in the African region.
- There is a need for effective multi-sectoral strategies and collaboration.
- There is need for surveillance data and implementation to be context specific.
- There is a need to invest more in research for solutions to antimicrobial resistance and identify a more sustainable funding mechanism in the region.
- There is need for measures and approaches for locally relevant partnerships – that can ensure sustainable change in the region.



## ZASPARS LAUNCH

- As part of ReAct's work in aiding countries in NAP implementation, the Director General of the Zambia National Public Health Institute (ZNPHI) Professor Roma Chilengi, launched the Zambia Strategic Program for Antimicrobial Stewardship (ZASPARS).

The program is an adaptation of the Swedish strategic programme against antibiotic resistance (STRAMA) which has led to a significant reduction of the inappropriate use of antibiotics in Sweden since its introduction in 1995.

“ZASPARS will be at the heart of Zambia's AMR National Action Plan implementation under a One Health approach. It will be a platform for learning and sharing of best practices and advocacy work between clinicians, microbiologists, infectious diseases physicians, pharmacists, veterinarians, clinical officers, environmentalists, and community members.



**ReAct**  
AFRICA

**ZNPHI**  
ZAMBIA NATIONAL  
PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE

**The Zambia Strategic Program for Antimicrobial Stewardship  
(ZASPARS)**

**Officially launched by Prof. Roma Chilengi, Director  
Zambia National Public Health Institute and  
Co-Chair of the Antimicrobial Resistance Coordinating  
Committee on  
26th July 2022  
Lusaka Zambia**

## Way Forward

- A bottom-up approach is important – complementing the implementation efforts of National Action Plans on AMR.
  - Health systems strengthening is necessary for sustainable efforts to manage antibiotic resistance
  - Strengthening and streamlining international collaborations on AMR with donors and partners is key.
  - Engage media practitioners to utilise communication to promote AMR awareness among key stakeholders.
  - Networking and collaboration among key stakeholders to promote investments for AMR activities, research and innovations
  - Engagement & advocacy with policy makers & partners to mobilise resources should be an activity carried on by all AMR Champions.
  - Strengthening One Health Platform at sub-national level for AMR surveillance in humans, animals, food and environment. Often the sub-national level is left out.
  - Establish an intersectoral expert group on integrated AMR surveillance.
  - Financial and technical support to secure sustainable funds for implementation of the AMR NAPs.
  - Strengthening advocacy & community engagement through proper education and awareness campaigns.
  - Provide a forum for South-South and North-South exchanges and networking within the One Health sector, as well as inter-country networking.
  - Standardise data analysis and information management in human, animals, food and environment
- Develop strategic interventions to reduce impact of AMR on the environment as this is the sector that is often neglected



Photo 2: Group Photo

## Conclusion

The shared learning from cross-country experiences developed during this type of conference aids in moving national action plans to the next level of practical implementation. These yearly ReAct Africa conferences have contributed immensely in AMR capacity building in the African region. It also serves as a platform for identifying opportunities for individual, organisations and countries across the region to collaborate on common activities such as exchange of knowledge and information among the attendees and key stakeholders and mentoring them regarding the AMR NAP implementation. Areas around One Health are discussed such as integrated surveillance, IPC, biosecurity, access to treatments and diagnostics, including ongoing research on AMR from various disciplines.

Additionally, conferences like this serve as an opportune time to provide stakeholders with information on their work's contribution to the achievements and challenges encountered in the implementation of the national action plans on AMR over the last five years, as well as lessons learned that will contribute to their revision. Annual conferences like this one bring together experts and non-experts from all over the world to discuss the major issues surrounding antimicrobial resistance. The attendance and support from partners like Wellcome make this progress on AMR mitigation in the African region a reality. The attendance of the Quadripartite and other UN agencies, the Africa CDC and participants from Europe, North America and Asia showed just how relevant this conference is yearly.

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If community members do not understand the language we use when addressing AMR, we have done nothing.” There is need to have user-friendly AMR communication.

Sylvia Masebo  
Minister of Health  
Zambia



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