



ReAct Africa and South Centre Annual Conference 2023

Leave No One Behind: Advancing One
Health Antimicrobial Resistance
National Action Plans implementation
in Africa

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Reflections from
Dr. Mirfin M. Mpundu**
Director, ReAct Africa

ReAct (Action on Antibiotic Resistance) was established in 2005. It is a global network which advocates for the adoption of a holistic view of the problem of antibiotic resistance and is dedicated to solving the problem with solutions that engage all of society. ReAct Africa shares a vision of a World free from untreatable infections and are on the mission to enable collective action that ensures sustainable and equitable access to effective antibiotics for all.

The 2023 ReAct Africa-South Centre annual Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Conference demonstrated the entities' recognition of the significant threat AMR poses to global health and their commitment to combatting AMR through the One Health Approach. This year's conference theme '**Leave No One Behind: Advancing One Health National Action Implementation (NAP) in Africa**', paved the way for a genuine One Health forum.

The 2023 AMR conference drew participation from 35 African countries, in person. It is encouraging to note that the forum continues to grow exponentially, having initially started with only 10 participants drawn from 3 countries in 2015. As with recent years, the conference brought together national focal points, AMR experts from different disciplines, students, youth, community groups, civil society, and media representatives. Participants gained from rich deliberations aimed at identifying innovative solutions to strengthen health care systems, food and animal systems, promote environmental protection as well as support the responsible use of antimicrobials through a multi-sectorial approach. The 3 days' conference highlighted some major milestones achieved by member states in implementing their respective National Action Plans.



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“I am glad that the conference brought out a number of solutions proposed to strengthen implementation of National Action Plans and enhance collaboration at local, regional and international levels.”

It also reflected on the experiences – successes, challenges and lessons learned in the different countries' journeys. I am glad that the conference brought out a number of solutions proposed to strengthen implementation of National Action Plans and enhance collaboration at local, regional and international levels. These solutions include, but are not limited to, increased access to funding, improved policy formulation, enhanced engagement with national leadership, stronger community engagement, better laboratory facilities, promotion of antimicrobial stewardship and fostering collaboration at all levels for sustained strategies on combating AMR.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all our conference supporting partners namely International Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance Solutions (ICARS), Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership (GARD-P), AMR Policy Accelerator, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Fleming Fund. The continued collaborations continue to foster concerted efforts in addressing the AMR pandemic which is now ranked as one of the most pressing challenges in global health.

Finally, on behalf of all partners, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Zambian Government for allowing us the privilege to host the event in Zambia for 2 consecutive years.

DR. MIRFIN M. MPUNDU
Director, ReAct Africa



INTRODUCTION

It is an undisputable fact that over 1 million lives are lost every year as a result of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). AMR arises when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites develop resistance to medicines that were previously effective. Today, it is considered as one of the top ten global health challenges that requires urgent attention in all countries, especially in the Global South. The growing international recognition of the profound, global-scale threat that AMR poses to human and animal health, food security and safety, as well as adverse environmental impacts resulted in the 2016 political declaration at the UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on AMR. This in turn led to the formulation of several interventions aimed at galvanizing the translation of AMR policies and frameworks into action.

Unfortunately, most of these efforts are upstream, at the international level, and to some extent at the regional level, with feeble permeation to national and local levels. In 2019, the then Tripartite developed a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the Global Action Plan (GAP) on AMR. In the same year, financing of AMR received a boost by the establishment of the Multi Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). Furthermore, a key recommendation by the UN's Interagency Coordinating Group (IACG) regarding AMR Governance was actioned via establishment of the AMR Global Leaders Group, whose main role is to advocate and catalyse political commitment and action on AMR. Additionally, IACG's recommendations on strengthened cooperation, coordination and collaboration across different sectors and stakeholders saw the formation of the Multi Stakeholder Partnership Forum, inclusion of UNEP to form the current Quadripartite consortium in January 2022, and most recently, establishment of the Quadripartite One Health Joint Plan of Action in March 2022, which includes action on AMR as part of its six 'Action tracks. ReAct Africa has continued to support country and regional efforts of the Quadripartite and African Union's Agenda on AMR, through the years.

REMARKS FROM VIVIANA MUÑOZ- HEALTH INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND BIODIVERSITY PROGRAM COORDINATOR THE SOUTH CENTRE

Dr. Muñoz lauded the formidable partnership that South Centre and ReAct Africa have established over the years. The collaboration has continued to mobilize multi-stakeholders, including the civil society, to advance the cause of combating AMR. ReAct 2023 annual conference further demonstrated this strong commitment from the different stakeholders. In her concluding remarks, Dr. Munoz emphasized that one of the main objectives of the forum was to get input from different stakeholders based on their experiences. This would ensure continued and improved collaboration to successfully address AMR.

REFLECTIONS FROM PROF ROMA CHILENGI, DIRECTOR GENERAL, ZAMBIA NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE

In his remarks, the Director General of the Zambia Public Health Institute highlighted on the Zambia Strategic Program for Antimicrobial Stewardship (ZASPARS), which is supported by ReAct. He also informed the audience of the progress made by Zambia in implementation of its AMR NAP. Prof Chilengi emphasised the need for collaborative efforts on AMR. Given the significant threat it poses to global health, there is an urgent need to regard and engage community members as key stakeholders in the fight against AMR.



REMARKS FROM THE ZAMBIAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH, GUEST OF HONOUR SYLVIA MASEBO

The Zambian Minister of Health; Silvia Masebo officially opened the 2023 ReAct Africa conference on 14th August 2023. In her opening remarks which were read on her behalf by Professor Christopher Simoonga, The Minister of Health acknowledged the threat that Anti-microbial Resistance (AMR) was posing to global health and explained how AMR was a danger to the very core of modern medicines and sustainability of an effective global public health response to infectious diseases. The Minister stated that the World Health Organisation WHO had already declared microbial resistance as one of the global health threats and that in 2019 1.3million deaths were directly caused by AMR globally. The Minister called for concerted effort in combating AMR by collaborating strongly with Human scientists, Animal scientists, Environmental scientists and Plant scientists. The Minister highlighted the 5 objectives of the global action plan by the WHO and indicated that Zambia had a Multi-sectorial Action Plan anchored on the GAP guidelines. The Minister re-emphasised commitment to fight AMR and called for furtherance of partnership among stakeholders.



ABOUT ReAct AFRICA 2023 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The ReAct annual conference is centered on exchange of knowledge, fostering collaboration and developing sustainable strategies to address AMR. The 2023 annual conference took place from 14th August to 16th August 2023 at Ciela Resort in Lusaka, Zambia. The 2023 conference, themed **'Leave no one behind: Advancing One Health AMR National Action Plans Implementation in Africa'**, marked the 8th annual ReAct Africa conference. The apt theme demonstrated ReAct Africa's commitment to embrace and work with different societal stakeholders in advancing the fight against AMR. The focus was on concretising the One Health approach and optimizing the identification and engagement of AMR stakeholders in the region. The conference featured a total of 12 sessions, encompassing main presentations, panel discussions and breakout sessions as outlined below:

- Setting the scene: One Health in AMR overview
- Panel discussion: Progress in National Action Plans' implementation – Lessons from countries (successes and gaps)
- Breakout group discussion: What is needed to sustain AMR agenda momentum across sectors and at all levels
- Case studies from countries that have initiated National Action Plans 2.0 development/implementation
- Global/regional issues around AMR
- Missed opportunities in AMR NAP funding in Africa. How can we increase both domestic and international funding?
- Poster presentations
- Examples of pioneering work on AMR NAP interventions
- Breakout session: Environment and Waste Management in AMR | Framing AMR and People | AMR and Gender
- Scientific session (R&D, diagnostic and access to antibiotics)
- Breakout sessions: 'Lightning Talk' presentations from Youth AMR Champions | Examples of community engagement including responsive dialogue in AMR | Policymakers' ask from the research community for effective AMR policy making
- Leaving no one behind - Integrating other perspectives.

The 2023 conference, themed **'Leave no one behind: Advancing One Health AMR National Action Plans Implementation in Africa'**...





CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES



To bring together AMR experts, CSOs, academia, government ministries, research institutions, intergovernmental institutions to discuss regional successes, challenges, approaches to addressing AMR and the next steps in NAPs review and implementation.

To assess the progress of AMR NAP implementation, including the integration of activities, governance issues, financing, and ongoing challenges.

To examine entry points and strategies for synergizing efforts for various stakeholders and corresponding linkages to facilitate a One Health approach in AMR NAP implementation.



EXPECTED OUTCOMES

1. Strengthened partnerships among AMR experts, civil society organizations, academia, government ministries, research institutions, and intergovernmental institutions to address AMR in Africa using a One Health approach.
2. Enhanced understanding and awareness of the current status, challenges, and opportunities in implementing AMR NAPs across African countries.
3. Facilitate networking opportunities among participants, promoting future collaborations and partnerships in the field of AMR.
4. Identification and promotion of best practices, lessons learned, and innovative strategies in AMR NAP implementation, as shared by participating countries and stakeholders.
5. Synergies and linkages among various stakeholders will be identified, promoting a unified One Health approach to the implementation of AMR NAPs.
6. Development of a comprehensive conference report summarizing key discussions and recommendations.





OVERVIEW OF CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING AMR IN AFRICA

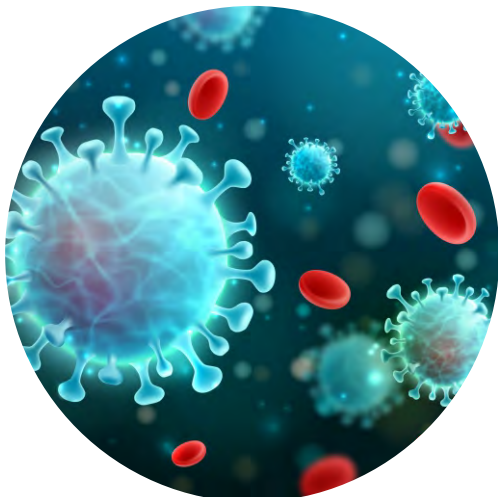
The conference highlighted the persistent challenges in the Sub – Saharan region and Africa at large in addressing AMR which are;

- The high rates of infectious diseases and limited healthcare resources in the communities
- The overuse and misuse of antibiotics due to lack of diagnostic tools and inadequate regulation
- Limited access to clean water and sanitation contributing to the spread of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
- Insufficient coordination among relevant ministries results in multisectoral coordination challenges. This hinders the effective implementation of the One Health approach, extending to the community level.
- Technical expertise gaps which are further compounded by situations where individuals in the National AMR Secretariat hold multiple roles or job descriptions, and by the attrition of skilled health care staff at facility level.
- Weak healthcare systems, characterized by lax regulation and insufficient surveillance data, as well as limited research, continue to challenge AMR NAP implementation in the region.
- Limited awareness and comprehension of a faceless pandemic [AMR] in many African states. The forum emphasized the need for continued and more pronounced advocacy to policy makers since politicians often address visible problems recognized by the public.
- Conflicting country priorities and funding gaps were another key topics highlighted at the conference, as participants aimed to address funding gaps for AMR in relation to other existing health issues. For instance, Member States, faced glaring AMR funding gaps against the backdrop of an existing 50% financing shortfall estimated for the TB National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2019-2023. Furthermore, the lack of political will was identified as a major factor leading to leadership challenges in the fight against AMR. Participants called for the need for improved budgetary allocations and accountability in line with governance concerns. This should also entail inclusion of Ministries of Finance or Treasury in the NAP development and implementation processes.

REACT AFRICA: A SPOTLIGHT ON IMPLEMENTATION EFFORTS

The conference provided a platform for ReAct Africa to showcase its achievements and contributions to advancing the AMR agenda in the continent since its inception. These include, but are not limited to the interventions such as:

- Establishment of and/or support for Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) Programs in Zambia; Kenya; Sierra Leone; Nigeria; Liberia and Tanzania.
- Launch of the Zambia Strategic Program for Antimicrobial Stewardship (ZASPARS). This platform provides different stakeholders with an avenue for collaboration in antimicrobial stewardship work under the One Health approach. A major achievement under this platform has been the development of an online Treatment Guidelines App in Zambia, which aids prescribers in adhering to antibiotic treatment guidelines.
- ReAct Africa's collaboration with ICARS in developing tools for streamlining NAP implementation in the African region.
- A JPIAMR and SIDA-facilitated project dubbed 'SNAP ONE' - Strengthening Implementation of National Action Plans by Estimating the Full Economic Burden of AMR across all One-Health settings – where ReAct Africa is working in partnership with Eden University, Zambia.
- ASLM Partnership under the 'Qualifying the Workforce for AMR Surveillance in Africa and Asia' (QWARs) Communication Module training. Through this collaboration, the capacity to synthesize and translate scientific data into policy documents has been developed among Fleming Fund Fellows in Eswatini, Sierra Leone and Tanzania.
- Community Engagement: ReAct Africa continues to collaborate with the Quadripartite and Africa CDC to amplify the voice of the Global South through engaging the Civil Society Sector. In addition, ReAct Africa directly engages various community members - such as primary school children, university students, religious leaders and others - as agents of change in creating AMR awareness and understanding within their broader communities.



CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS - MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS:

The conference had the participation of over 140 participants representing 35 countries, and around 40 participants joined online. Some of the countries represented at the conference included Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Botswana, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, DRC Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Italy, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The 2023 conference was met with high expectations from the participants who were randomly asked to state their expectations by the moderator. Among the notable expectations from the participants were that the conference would;

- Provide a platform for network support of ongoing efforts in addressing AMR in Africa.
- Address the challenge of simplification of AMR language for the grassroots level and taking a bottom-up approach to AMR.
- Provide innovative solutions for enhancement of skills on antimicrobial stewardship activities.
- Explore the best ways to participate in the implementation of actions against AMR.
- Provide a platform for participation in high-quality debates with high-level experts and discussion of major contributions of the environment to the fight against AMR.
- Provide updates and reporting back on the 2022 RAN-SC Conference action points and resolutions.

The ReAct Africa Director, Dr. Mirfin Mpundu, in his opening remarks, emphasized the gravity of AMR effects on global health. It was highlighted that AMR was directly responsible for an estimated 1.27 million deaths worldwide, and associated with an estimated 4.95 million deaths, in 2019 as established by The Lancet through an article titled; 'Global burden of bacterial antimicrobial resistance' in 2019. The presentations made during the conference revealed a general consensus on the clear increase in the prevalence of resistant strains and a steadily reducing population of susceptible pathogens, as indicated by the resistance data from 2019 to 2021.

Strengthening access to essential, effective antimicrobials in Africa

- The preconditions necessary for success of all models should include the accelerated/harmonized registration and packaging mechanisms agreed stewardship & pharmaco-vigilance monitoring, national forecasting capabilities or support in country to perform these, functioning in-country distribution and cold chain as well as laboratory services and import duty waiver mechanisms as interim before registration occurs.
- The immediate need for access and stewardship interventions for existing antibiotics prone to shortages such as regional stockpile of critical antibiotics with shortage risk, strengthened regulatory requirements for supplier mitigation plans, optimized EML, surveillance of resistance & consumption and prescriber training and stewardship.
- Interventions for New (Reserve) antibiotics such as product introduction strategy to accelerate entry facilitate registration, product indications and quality assurance, supplier guarantees, subsidy or bridge financing to improve affordability, new guidelines and inclusions on National EML prescriber level training and evidence generation and monitoring.

CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS - MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS:

The conference provided a platform for divergent opinions and solutions on the One Health approach in addressing AMR. It also called for stronger partnerships between donors and African countries in research and community action. Practical experiences from countries were shared during the conference, which helped identify opportunities and gaps. Contributing factors leading to the failure or lack of implementation of NAPs at the facility level, including rural-based health facilities, prominently featured in discussions. Participants called for an enhanced platform for the voices of Africa to be harnessed and heard in the spirit of One Health at the UNGA High Level Meeting on AMR in September 2024. The call to understand how minority groups should be embraced was equally echoed by participants.

A call for a unified One Health approach in the implementation of AMR NAPs set the scene for the conference

proceedings. However, It was noted that the main challenge in advancing the One Health Approach in AMR was the lack of coordination among the different sectors, namely human health, animal health, plant and agricultural sectors as well as environmental sectors. Other challenges included limited funding for activities as per objectives, inadequate training on AMR and lack of laboratories' technical support, among others. There was consensus that for effective and efficient One Health approach in AMR NAP implementation, stakeholders must share a common goal, offer support where needed, and recognize great work.

The conference created a knowledge and experience sharing platform from different experts who spoke to the 12 sub-themes. This included panel discussions that shared best practices to achieving the One Health Approach to the challenges faced in implementation of the AMR National Actions Plans.

Global issues and financing around AMR

The session's main objective was to ensure Global Action Plans speak to and respond to the needs of local Action Plans on AMR. Although discussions revealed that there was still a need to strengthen efforts and collaboration amongst agencies across the One Health spectrum, recent evidence showed that many institutions were now aligned to global health issues. Contrary to the past years, additional partners other than the World Health Organisation (WHO), were now providing technical assistance in key areas of global health. However, there was still a need to develop global working groups that could also be replicated at the local context.

Continued high level political momentum on global health issues remain paramount for sustained investment in AMR programs. The session highlighted the need for multi-sectorial approach; the need to mobilize resources, capacity building, integration of AMR to IPC and WASH; and technical skills transfer from the global level to local countries. There was a consensus that advocacy for AMR must be considered during the upcoming high level meetings on tuberculosis and universal health coverage.

Proposed priorities to be advocated for at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) High-level Meeting on AMR planned for 2024 were stated as:

1. Renew political support
2. Review of global commitments
3. Expand and concretize existing commitments, global and national
4. Increase support and resources towards developing countries for local contextualization



Case studies from countries that have initiated National Action Plans 2.0 development/Implementation were presented by Zambia, Uganda and Kenyan AMR Focal Points. They all highlighted strides made in advancing the AMR agenda in as far as revision and implementation of their respective National Action Plans was concerned. For instance, there was recorded progress, albeit in varying degrees, in surveillance and governance structures in all three countries. In equal measure, they acknowledged some of the challenges that were being faced. Common challenges included limited capacity to generate data, few numbers of staff trained in AMR, inadequate law enforcement by regulators, and limited resources for implementation.

The conference provided innovative platforms for sharing experiences and cross-fertilization. For instance, in addition to plenary presentations, poster presentations were utilized to share various implementation and operational research findings from different stakeholders across the One Health sectors. The forum further provided platforms to dissect community engagement challenges that were faced during the implementation of

National Action Plans. Nevertheless, participants were also able to appreciate that Africa stood at the forefront of the battle against AMR. In light of this, progress was noted in the adoption of One Health Coordination, alignment of donor support, improved data generation and overall governance and coordination on AMR in different Member States. The conference further provided parallel breakout sessions for effective debate and discussions. These sessions addressed, among many other topics, the challenge of the upstream nature of most of the efforts around AMR (resulting in feeble permeation of regional/national strategies to local level AMR strategies); AMR and Gender (including other vulnerable populations); people-centred AMR framework; community engagement in AMR; and environment & waste management in AMR.

An educating drama on the dangers of AMR was presented by students from Uganda who are beneficiaries of ReAct Africa's AMR Leadership Program for tertiary level students. (AMRLEP) The award-winning skit amplified the need to embrace and extend antimicrobial stewardship programs to different sections of the community.

Common challenges included limited capacity to generate data, few numbers of staff trained in AMR, inadequate law enforcement by regulators, and limited resources for implementation.

SCOPE OF THE PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS INSTRUMENT

The session on prevention, preparedness and response recovery was of particular interest to the audience. Africa suffers the brunt of numerous epidemics and pandemics such as Rift Valley Fever and most currently Covid-19 and Ebola. These not only adversely affect human health but countries' economies as well. Epidemics and pandemics are associated with increased and inappropriate use of antibiotics, thus fuelling occurrence of AMR. Furthermore, there is a vicious cycle between poverty/inequalities and AMR. Africa must therefore be at the forefront and rise to the challenge of leading efforts on pandemic preparedness and response.

Data from the Global Health Index report showed that many countries were still ill-prepared to deal with pandemics and scored poorly in preparedness. It demonstrated gaps in strategies, and human resources. There is a need for enhanced attention to pandemic preparedness. Both low- and high-income countries need to strengthen global collaborations. For optimal prevention, preparedness and response, it is important to also collaborate with private actors, recognise potential for local solutions, solidify resilience and establish financial reserves for availability of sustained resources. Communities were identified as key players especially to address preventive issues.

Africa CDC presented on their experience in response to pandemics and lessons learned from the approach to the Covid-19 pandemic. The response model that was used would be ideal to adopt in all Member States for future pandemics. It calls for strengthened human resource, locally brewed solutions, rapid response and containment as well as multisectoral coordination and collaboration. They called for Member States to embrace the Africa Union's - Africa CDC's New Public Health Order, which is derived from the experience of the Covid-19.

Further discussions resolved that African states still had challenges with regards to accessing funding for AMR activities. AMR was yet to be considered a priority in national health agendas. Moreover, a stark reminder of the fact that most African states, other than South Africa, fell far short of the budget requirement towards health as committed to in the Abuja declaration prevailed. Worse still, limited quality data on AMR in the continent continued to pose the challenge of effectively lobbying to policy makers and politicians to provide convincing case for dedicated AMR funding; there were also not enough professional bodies lobbying to politicians for AMR financing. It was observed that, in addition to private sector, there was need to engage with other different partners in addressing issues of domestic funding. Other ways of funding AMR was to integrate AMR into other well-funded programs such as WASH and Vaccines' programs. The Accelerator model also viewed as one that needs to be adopted. Countries were urged to consider and take up pooled procurement model to not only ensure availability of affordable therapeutics and diagnostics but also prevent supply chain interruptions witnessed in the continent during Covid-19.

The wrap of the conference saw the unveiling of the new Chairperson for ReAct Africa's Advisory Board as well as recognition and awarding of two AMR champions.

CONCLUSION

The conference was a success as it provided a platform for networking, knowledge sharing, and progress tracking for the implementation of National Action Plans on AMR across the continent. Most countries have made positive strides in the implementation of their National Action Plans. However, challenges with regard to access to funding for AMR activities have remained the critical hindrance to the success of most of these National Action Plans. From the Abuja declaration, it was observed that most African states fell short of the budget requirement towards health except for South Africa, which almost attained the stated 15% of their national budgets. Lobbying to policy makers and politicians remained a challenge as there was limited data to provide a convincing case for funding.

The conference revealed that there were not enough professional bodies lobbying for financing from politicians and leaders on concerns of AMR. The need to engage with different partners in addressing issues of domestic funding and also working with private partners needed to be accelerated by all actors in the fight against AMR. Other proposed ways of funding AMR were the integration of AMR into other funded programs such as WASH and Vaccine programs. The importance of research was amplified as it was necessary for evidence generation if countries are to have appropriate policies and practices around AMR. The general discourse was that there was a need to learn from current specific country experiences and that gaps that were identified needed to have locally generated solutions.

Community engagement was seen to be the biggest challenge hindering awareness despite the interventions that were in place. The discourse expressed concern that AMR interventions were mainly seen to be concentrated at higher levels and were hardly trickling down the community level. Capacitation was seen to be critical for health workers (especially prescribers) to understand the extent of the dangers of AMR fully. Governance systems also need to be strengthened so that they can effectively monitor and regulate the use of antimicrobials.

Overall, aside from providing a knowledge and experience sharing platform, the conference sessions highlighted several key challenges such as

Consider including the challenges regarding:-

1. Insufficient R&D
2. Inadequate Infection Prevention and Control
3. Weak health systems
4. Public Awareness Gap
5. Over-the-counter Availability
6. Inadequate Surveillance and Data Collection

RECOMMENDATIONS/WAY FORWARD

Key recommendations from the conference included:

- **Strengthened Collaboration:** There's a pressing need to strengthen collaboration at global, regional, and local levels to effectively address AMR.
- **Holistic One Health Approach:** AMR shouldn't be viewed solely through the lens of human health. The One Health approach is crucial, and lessons from Covid-19 have underlined the significance of multisectoral collaboration for efficacious health interventions.
- **Political will and high-level engagement:** Political will and high-level engagement were underscored as essential for prioritizing AMR programs both locally and globally. Moreover, strengthening governance systems to effectively monitor and regulate antimicrobial use is a crucial step in enhancing accountability.
- **Financing to address AMR:** Funding challenges for AMR initiatives necessitate urgent redress. Engaging political leadership and aligning other health programs with AMR activities can be instrumental in navigating these challenges.
- **Prioritizing Preventive Actions:** Prioritize programs such as Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) as a key preventive measure against the spread of infections and the subsequent risk of AMR.
- **Laboratory and Capacity Enhancement:** There's a pronounced need to upgrade laboratory infrastructures and enhance the capacities of healthcare workers, especially within the Global South.
- **Multi-stakeholder Collaborations:** Collaborations among multiple stakeholders, including public and private sectors, CSOs, and faith-based organizations, are essential to accelerate AMR control efforts. Additionally, engaging lawmakers to shape policies and regulations is a crucial component.
- **Gender-inclusive AMR strategy:** The conference underscored the need for a gender-inclusive AMR strategy, recognizing the differential impact of AMR on men and women. This involves assessing the unique vulnerabilities, needs, and strengths of different genders and ensuring policies and programs reflect these considerations. Cultural sensitivity and local customs must also be considered when promoting AMR awareness and practices.
- **Research-Driven Policy Development:** Policymaking and interventions concerning AMR should be firmly rooted in research. Collaborations with international research institutions are vital in formulating and implementing evidence-based policies.
- **Harnessing Pooled Procurement:** The benefits of pooled procurement, which can ensure sustained access to cost-effective health products and technologies in the continent, need to be considered.

RECOMMENDATIONS/WAY FORWARD

Other recommendations from the conference were:

- **Integration with International Instruments:** It's essential to incorporate AMR into the international instrument on pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, as well as the International Health Regulations (2005).
- **Community-based preventive interventions:** Community-based preventive interventions and active engagement of marginalized populations in AMR control measures were noted as key components. Empowering community health workers as AMR ambassadors at the grassroots level is crucial for bridging the gap between communities and health institutions. In addition, involving the faith sector as a key entry point to the community in Africa was also emphasized.
- **Promote Data and Product Innovation:** Emphasizing the significance of data and product innovation can help drive advancements in research, development, and implementation of effective strategies to combat AMR.
- **Strengthen Regional Coordination:** Stakeholders in AMR are encouraged to leverage regional coordination to diversify and strengthen initiatives to act on antimicrobial resistance.
- **Strengthen Surveillance and Laboratory Networks:** There is a need for the enhancement of regional integrated surveillance and laboratory networks.
- **Youth Engagement:** The conference also stressed the need for youth engagement, leveraging their energy, creativity, and digital skills for awareness and innovation.



It becomes abundantly clear that there is an immediate and pressing need for resources, both financial and technical, to address AMR comprehensively. It's not just about health; it's about ensuring a sustainable future for Africa. ReAct will continue to work towards being a catalyst for transformative change, ensuring that as we advance in the fight against AMR, truly no one is left behind.

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS IN PHOTOS





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