

Open letter to Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations and Chair of the United Nations Sustainable Development Group.

Your excellency, we write to you as former members of the ad hoc Interagency Coordination group on Antimicrobial Resistance (IACG-AMR) which you co-chaired. We note with concern the lack of initiatives to mobilize the whole UN system to meet the complex and multi-dimensional challenge of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and ask you to take steps to facilitate a framework to strengthen and broaden the collaboration on AMR among UN agencies.

The IACG-AMR was the result of the political declaration on AMR adopted by the UN General Assembly on October 5, 2016. The group included independent experts and members representing several UN agencies but was a temporary mechanism. The IACG commissioned a [report](#) from the UN foundation on the roles, responsibilities and remit of UN organizations in relation to AMR. In the conclusion, it is stated that “this report provides some rich detail of the enormous potential and willingness that exists across the UN system to take on the AMR challenge. There is significant capacity, expertise, and knowledge in the UN family and among its key partners. What appears to be needed is a significant sharpening of the tools being deployed, to enable a more coordinated, targeted, and effective response”.

Antibiotic resistance jeopardizes the achievement of many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and will reverse century-long progress in global public health and modern medicine unless the world’s collective response to this crisis is rapidly increasing. In 2019, infections caused by antibiotic resistant bacteria claimed 1.27 million lives. One fifth of these deaths were children under the age of five. At the same time, millions of people die every year from preventable common infections due to the lack of access to antibiotics.

The IACG-AMR was tasked to provide practical guidance for approaches needed to ensure sustained effective global action to address AMR and delivered its report [“No Time to Wait : Securing the future from Drug resistant Infections”](#) to the UN Secretary-General in April 2019 with recommendations grouped in five thematic areas 1) Accelerating progress in countries; 2) Innovating to secure the future; 3) Collaborating for more effective action; 4) Investing for a sustainable response and 5) Strengthening accountability and global governance.

Although numerous initiatives have been launched since 2019, there are still major gaps in all the above areas. Only 11 percent of countries have a budget for implementation of the national action plan on AMR. Regular reports from the WHO visualizes the critical gaps in the pipeline for new antibiotics. Support for a broader civil society engagement is weak. Financial commitments made in the 2016 declaration has not been delivered. Among the proposed governance structures, the Global Leaders Group on AMR was initiated in 2021 and the Multistakeholder partnership platform in 2024. However, the proposed Independent Panel on Evidence for Action against Antimicrobial Resistance has not yet been created, despite that the terms of reference for this important mechanism have been developed.

On receiving the IACG report in 2019, the UN Secretary-General called upon Member States for urgent support and investment to scale up AMR responses at national, regional and global levels and recommended that one component of this should be the inclusion of AMR in the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. In 2021, a corresponding [guidance](#) for UN country teams was published, to support the mainstreaming of AMR into national development plans and enable better integration of relevant AMR activities into the strengthening of overall systems. It is urgent that AMR governance comes together in a way that engages the broader systems and development issues.

Your excellency, the global response to AMR is vastly insufficient to manage this crisis. We believe that one important step that must be taken in the short term is to make AMR a priority issue that cuts across the sustainable development areas and galvanize coordinated whole-of-UN response.

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Yours sincerely



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