

Policy Brief: A sustainable inclusive regional roadmap for the Americas
1st Regional AMR Meeting
Brazil, March 2026

Antibiotic resistance is an urgent and escalating global threat to health, development, equity, food systems and food security, integrity of ecosystems, and planetary well-being. Globally, it causes over 1 million deaths each year, and the World Health Organization (WHO) estimated in 2023 that up to 1 in 6 bacterial infections in people worldwide are now antibiotic-resistant. Countries with lower diagnostic capacity and surveillance coverage have higher rates, and pathogens resistant to last-line antibiotics are increasing¹.

The Americas recorded approximately 150,000 deaths directly attributable to antibiotic resistance in 2019². Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has the world's highest mortality burden relative to population with 322,000 deaths in 2021 projected to reach 650,000 by 2050³. Most countries in the region have National Action Plans (NAPs) developed, 45% of countries still lack national surveillance and monitoring systems for antimicrobial use in human health. In 2022, the Americas represented 30% of global antimicrobial use in animals, according to World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)⁴, but reporting is only regional, masking country level realities. The data gap is even more critical for the environmental domain, where no official aggregated data exist; evidence from isolated studies however, warn of multidrug-resistant pathogens across LAC ecosystems⁵. This fragmented data availability weakens public health surveillance and hinders informed action by professionals and civil society⁶.

The regional capacity to respond to antibiotic resistance is also impacted by many other urgent and serious crises: deep inequities, environmental pollution, climate crisis, and migration – all of which are accelerating the development and spread of antibiotic resistance, and giving it a systemic character⁷.

Building on two decades of community-based work on antibiotic resistance in the LAC region, ReAct Latin America (part of the global network ReAct – Action on Antibiotic Resistance) together with Idec (the Brazilian Institute for Consumer Defense) encourage governments present at this 1st Regional Meeting on AMR to draw on the rich expertise, capacity and experience of communities and civil society when shaping the region future response to antibiotic resistance.

This convening offers an opportunity for the Americas and the region to pivot from fragmented responses to a unified, sustainable, equity-driven and community-engaged regional strategy. The regional roadmap should reflect LAC realities: policy relevant, responsive in practice, and grounded in communities and civil society to ensure sustainability of actions. Toward this end, ReAct and Idec recommend inclusion of the following points in the regional roadmap:

- I. **Recognition of antibiotic resistance as a systemic issue** that demands structural change across sectors and of the dominating economic system. Addressing antibiotic

¹ <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240116337>

² [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanam/article/PIIS2667-193X\(23\)00168-0/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanam/article/PIIS2667-193X(23)00168-0/fulltext)

³ [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(21\)02724-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(21)02724-0)

⁴ www.woah.org/app/uploads/2025/05/en-woah-amu-report-2025-final.pdf

⁵ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12982-026-01617-7>

⁶ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s13756-025-01629-z>

⁷ <https://www.paho.org/pt/publicacoes/resistencia-aos-antimicrobianos-na-regiao-das-americas>

resistance effectively and sustainably is tied to reducing poverty and inequities (between countries and within them), promote sustainable food production systems, and ensuring universal public health systems that guarantee access to safe, effective, quality antibiotics and care;

- II. **Recognition of antibiotic resistance as a direct consequence of failing systems.** Antibiotics are used today as palliatives for underfunded health services and overly intensive agriculture, fueling excessive and unnecessary use in a model that is unsustainable and incapable of responding to current social and environmental challenges;
- III. **Communities and civil society are not passive recipients of policy, but essential co-creators of solutions;** empowering communities and including them enhances relevance, ownership, and sustainability of interventions. Taking a “whole-of-society” approach-backed by transparency on action, data, strategies and effective mechanisms for social engagement and accountability- builds awareness, enables accountability, and supports informed consumer choices;
- IV. **Incorporate the environmental dimension into prevention, control, and response strategies in the region.** The ‘One Health’ nexus of understanding that human, animal and environmental health are interconnected is central to addressing antibiotic resistance, poverty, and inequities in an era of polycrisis. Environmental surveillance and other specific interventions must be prioritized alongside actions in the human and animal health sectors;
- V. **Promote the integrated analysis of multisectoral data on antibiotic use** and move towards integrating surveillance systems to facilitate regional cooperation, guided by data governance plan that protects the sensitive information, especially patient and consumption data;
- VI. **Support technology transfer, know-how exchange and Intellectual Property (IP) licensing as essential tools for improving access to antibiotics, diagnostics and other health technologies for preventing and responding to antibiotic resistance.** Ensure the protection of a legal space in which these mechanisms are not merely voluntary, but instead actions that promote access by governments and strengthen public production capacity, including through compulsory licensing and other mechanisms beyond IP. This is important for the region which has production capacity, but may depend on technology transfer, know-how and licensing to ensure timely, affordable and equitable access to medicines;
- VII. **Reaffirm support for new ways of financing the development of new antibiotics which “delink” costs for research and development from the end product price and the volume of sales.** This principle was highlighted in the UN Political Declaration on AMR from both 2016 and 2024;
- VIII. **Promote sustainable agrifood practices to reduce the need for and misuse of antibiotics.** Strengthen biosecurity, hygiene, and infection prevention measures across food production systems in LAC, supported by educational, technological, and culturally appropriate approaches, including community wisdom. Prioritize wastewater management, regulation of industrial discharges, and environmental monitoring, including community-based surveillance.