



From dialogue to progress:

**Evolving the role of Ministerial Meetings in
the Global AMR governance system**

May 2026

1. Introduction

Effective antibiotics are a cornerstone of modern medicine, yet the increasing problem of bacteria developing resistance to antibiotics is undermining health care and health systems worldwide. Antibiotic resistance¹ already causes more than 1,1 million deaths annually and threatens progress across health, development, and economic sectors.² Despite it being well-established that antibiotic use is a key driver of the resistance development in bacteria, the global consumption and use of antibiotics, by humans, animals and in agriculture, continues to increase globally, while the development of new antibiotics has stagnated. Without far stronger and urgent collective action across sectors, common infections may once again become deadly.

Antibiotic resistance is a global problem which spreads across borders through people, animals, food systems, trade, and the environment. No country can solve the problem alone. Antibiotic resistance requires effective global governance, including coordinated international action, shared rules, sustainable financing, and mechanisms to ensure equitable access and responsible use of antibiotics.

An effective system of global governance for antibiotic resistance is essential to strengthen leadership, galvanize political will, and mobilize both resources and societal engagement to accelerate the world's response, with tangible results visible at national level. A global governance system should ensure robust monitoring of the global response and international legitimacy in the formulation of rules and normative guidelines that are widely regarded as fair, inclusive, and equitable.

Over the past decade, governance mechanisms to address Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) have been established, including the Quadripartite Joint Secretariat (the Quadripartite), the Global Leaders Group (GLG), the AMR Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform (MSPP) and the forthcoming Independent Panel on Evidence for Action against AMR (IPEA). The first Global Action Plan on AMR (GAP) was adopted in 2015 as a normative guideline and "blueprint" for global action and an updated version is in the pipeline in 2026. In addition, the AMR Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) was established in 2019 to catalyze country efforts and progress monitoring is managed through the Tracking AMR Country Self-Assessment Survey mechanism (TrACSS). Despite this progress in enabling more effective global collective action, the global governance system remains fragmented, with often unclear mandates, a lack of clarity of how mechanisms relate to one another and accountability gaps.

The 2024 political declaration of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) High-Level Meeting on AMR included a commitment to "enhance" governance mechanisms³, which underscores the need for further strengthening the oversight and development of the system. This work should include:

- Clarifying the mandates, roles and guiding principles of existing mechanisms, as well as the relational dynamics between them, to enhance their legitimacy and effectiveness.
- Developing a robust accountability framework to better track progress and enable more effective global cooperation in addressing AMR.

Ultimately, in line with the original proposal from the Inter-Agency Coordination Group (IACG) for the AMR Governance system in 2019, Member States should consider whether the current soft law governance model will be sufficient to achieve the targets set out in the 2024 UNGA political declaration, and if so, how to ensure its effectiveness; or whether a more binding international agreement or framework would ultimately be needed to ensure sustained progress, equitable access, and the responsible use of antibiotics across sectors.

2. Exploring the role of Biennial Ministerial meetings

Ahead of the fifth Global High-Level Ministerial Conference on AMR convening in Abuja, this ReAct brief takes stock of the ministerial meeting mechanism as a distinct and increasingly significant element of the global AMR governance architecture. This brief focuses specifically on how the ministerial meeting mechanism has evolved, what previous meetings have delivered, and how this mechanism can be further institutionalized to generate stronger accountability and continuity. It also draws on lessons from the history of AMR ministerial meetings since 2014 as well as comparative experiences from other global health and development areas.

The evolution of Ministerial Conferences on AMR

Since the very first ministerial conference on AMR hosted by the Netherlands in 2014, the platform has incrementally grown in significance within the global governance system on AMR. Each ministerial meeting has contributed, in concrete ways, to the development of governance frameworks and structures. As a result, its objectives and scope have evolved along with its geographical reach and legitimacy.

The first ministerial conference in 2014 focused on building political momentum to develop and accelerate the WHO GAP adopted in 2015 and introducing the One Health approach. In addition to concrete recommendations made in the outcome statement towards the GAP, the meeting served as a catalyst for the first UNGA High-Level Meeting and political declaration on AMR in 2016.⁴ The Netherlands also hosted the second ministerial conference in Noordwijk in June 2019, which aimed to further strengthen and accelerate international cooperation on AMR. Significant governance-related outcomes included the call to implement recommendations from the IACG and the launch of the AMR MPTF to finance national efforts. Some member states already at this time made formal calls for a binding global treaty on AMR.⁵

The third ministerial conference hosted by government of the Sultanate of Oman in Muscat in 2022 shifted the focus from policy to "One Health Action" through the Muscat Manifesto,⁶ which established the first global time-bound targets for antimicrobial use in human and animal health supported by 47 Member States. A new global governance structure, the Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform (MSPP) was established, and the Quadripartite was requested to provide normative guidance for target implementation.

The fourth and most recent ministerial conference hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Jeddah, November 2024, focused on translating the 2024 UNGA political declaration into practical steps via the Jeddah Commitments. Key governance highlights included further specifying the role of the Quadripartite, a commitment to establish the IPEA in 2025, and the creation of a "Troika system" of ministerial meeting hosts (involving past, present, and future hosts) to ensure continuity, predictability and accountability between biennial ministerial meetings.⁷

These ministerial meetings have been instrumental in the incremental but steady development of the global governance system. Since the inaugural meeting, participation has nearly tripled, expanding both in the number of countries and the sectors represented. The meetings have also gained legitimacy and political weight through their role as convening bridges between UNGA high-level meetings, and by advancing quantitative targets and political commitments. Their evolution and track record of achievements are important to keep in mind as world leaders convene for the fifth ministerial conference in Abuja at a time where multilateralism and global cooperation are being tested.

At the same time, the practical impact of these evolving governance mechanisms on the global AMR response and particularly the extent to which they have driven implementation in countries requires deeper analysis. A major constraint remains the limited financial resources dedicated for AMR and the lack of robust mechanisms for coordinated resource mobilization. Progress will require significantly increased financing and stronger coordination mechanisms, alongside political commitment and an accountability framework.

Lessons from ministerial processes in other areas

Ministerial meetings for global development often serve as high-level diplomatic platforms for setting policy, fostering international cooperation, and mobilizing resources to address global development challenges. Experiences from tuberculosis (TB) governance and climate governance provide relevant lessons for how the AMR ministerial process could evolve into a more mature and institutionalized accountability mechanism.

In the global TB response, the 2017 Moscow Declaration as a key outcome from the WHO Global Ministerial Conference on TB called for the development of a multisectoral accountability framework at country, regional and global levels.⁸ This framework was subsequently reinforced through the 2018 and 2023 UN High-level Meetings on TB, which called for high-level multisectoral mechanisms reporting directly to the heads of state.⁹ The TB experience illustrates how a ministerial declaration can serve not merely as a political statement, but as the starting point of a sustained accountability cycle that is progressively strengthened across successive political milestones.

The climate governance experience under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) offers complementary lessons. The Conference of the Parties (COP) process is built around a structured cycle of national reporting, international review, and periodic Global Stocktakes. Outcomes from each COP are consolidated into formal decisions that provide a shared reference for assessing progress and guiding subsequent implementation efforts.¹⁰ While the legal and political context differs substantially from AMR, the underlying institutional logic is relevant: regular and structured reporting against agreed commitments, linked to recurring high-level political moments, can generate cumulative accountability over time. For AMR, where the 2024 UN Political Declaration has set targets, the iterative, politically anchored accountability from the COP model points to what the AMR ministerial cycle could aim to institutionalize: regular reporting, review and political follow-up.

3. Further evolving the ministerial meetings: governance ambition for Abuja and beyond

The 2024 HLM on AMR marked a significant step in formalizing the role of biennial ministerial meetings, as one of the global AMR governance structures to be “enhanced”, and indicated that the meetings should contribute to facilitating multisectoral exchange, best practices and assessment of member state progress.¹¹ This was reinforced at the following ministerial meeting where the Jeddah Commitments, apart from introducing the Troika System, also stated that the ministerial meetings should serve to “hold Member States accountable on the commitments and progress made”, to convene funders and build a financial roadmap to curb AMR, as well as formalizing the meetings further.¹² The important question for the upcoming Abuja ministerial is what this means in practice and how it will be implemented in ways that generate real accountability rather than procedural continuity alone.

Building on these recent commitments, ReAct recommends the following strategic areas to further develop the ministerial platform and strengthen its long-term contribution to the global AMR governance architecture.



1. Formalizing the ministerial meetings

In order to ensure structural continuity, the meeting functions should be formalized as a continuous governance mechanism, taking into account the following:

- **Defining clear roles and functions for the rotating Troika** including the establishment of predictable and transparent processes for the organizational arrangements around the ministerial meetings, engagement of member states and non-governmental stakeholders as well as elaboration of outcome statements. These processes should ensure both continuity of a Troika program of work and flexibility for shaping agendas according to time and place, and enable a balanced approach to recurrent stocktaking and ad hoc topics for discussion.
- **Develop a framework of modalities for biennial ministerial stocktaking.** The ministerial meetings should serve as a platform for structured reviews of national and global progress, especially against the 2024 UNGA high-level meeting commitments. While a two-year cycle may limit the scope for comprehensive assessment, reviews could combine overall progress tracking with deeper thematic reviews on selected priority areas, drawing on the model for periodic in-depth review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) model.¹³ The meetings would also provide an important forum for discussing course-correction, identifying gaps and renewing political ambition based on the findings of these stocktaking exercises.
- **Facilitating the operationalization of an accountability framework.** As the updated GAP moves to adoption and implementation, its Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework could become a central component of a broader global accountability framework for AMR, similar to the existing TB accountability framework. The GAP M&E framework will draw on established global indicators and member states commitments, including the SDGs, the 2024 UNGA commitments, and other multilateral frameworks.¹⁴ At the same time, voluntary self-assessment mechanisms such as TrACSS should be complemented by more objective and transparent review processes while remaining aligned with national systems and global platforms to strengthen validity and avoid duplication. The ministerial platform could play an important role in endorsing, supporting and advancing the implementation of such an accountability framework, in coordination with other governance mechanisms.



2. Connecting the Ministerial to the existing and emerging governance architecture

As part of formalizing the functioning of the ministerial processes, its relationships with other existing governance mechanisms should be clarified. This includes the following considerations:

- **The Independent Panel for Evidence for Action against AMR (IPEA):** The IPEA represents an important unfinished piece of the AMR governance architecture. The Abuja ministerial offers an opportunity to reaffirm political support for its establishment and to signal expectations about how it should be designed and connected to the ministerial cycle. IPEA will be most effective when its evidence outputs inform ministerial deliberations and when the ministerial meetings serve as a key venue for political consideration of findings from IPEA. A recent joint brief by ReAct, Wellcome Trust, Global Strategy Lab, GARDP et al.¹⁵ sets out detailed recommendations for member states on how to ensure the IPEA fulfils its mandate, including the importance of a strong, independent Expert Committee, adequate LMIC representation, and clear institutional linkages to AMR governance bodies such as the ministerial conferences. Ministers and key policy makers at the Abuja meeting should support and advance these design principles, and how the ministerial meetings can play an active role in both providing valuable input to IPEA and translating its outputs to policy and practice.
- **The Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform (MSPP):** The MSPP operates as a voluntary, collaborative cross-sectoral coordination mechanism aiming to promote a shared vision and concrete actions for implementation of action plans. While still under development, it has so far been a useful convening platform, not least for multi-stakeholder consultations, for example in relation to the development of IPEA and the revised GAP. During the fourth Ministerial meeting, the MSPP served as a platform for consultations on the draft meeting declaration. The role of the MSPP in relation to the ministerial meetings should be further strengthened and clarified. For example, the MSPP could be formally mandated to facilitate consultations on issues that require more time to build shared understanding and alignment, thereby helping to prepare the ground and maintaining momentum between ministerial meetings. A clearer relationship between the ministerial and the MSPP can also ensure stronger linkage between the political discussion and the implementation level, which is inherently multi-sectoral.
- **The Global Leaders Group (GLG):** The GLG has, like the ministerial meetings, a role in reviewing progress, reinforcing accountability and promoting cross-sectoral alignment. While it has a representation of serving and former Heads of State and Ministers and/or senior government officials, they serve in their individual capacities and the GLG is not an intergovernmental body as such. The ministerial meetings add value through its global representation and ability to enhance the legitimacy of the political processes of generating commitments and facilitating dialogue, among other benefits. Alongside the MSPP, the GLG can prepare the ground for strategic conversations and take forward the outcomes of the meetings through its advocacy and advisory role.



3. Institutionalizing regional governance between global ministerial meetings

One structural gap in the current ministerial model has been the absence of a formal regional dimension between global ministerial meetings. Yet in the months leading up to Abuja, different regions have independently organized dedicated ministerial-level pre-meetings: the East, Central and Southern Africa (ECSA) "Pathway to Abuja" pre-conference in Eswatini produced a consolidated set of actionable proposals, formally endorsed by health ministers and submitted for consideration at Abuja;¹⁶ the Brazilian Ministry of Health organized the first Regional Meeting on AMR in the Americas bringing community voices and grassroots action into a high-level policy space.¹⁷

As regional bodies and individual countries are increasingly willing and able to organize structured regional preparatory engagement for global ministerial meetings, what is missing is a more institutionalized mechanism that embeds the regional tier into the AMR governance cycle, rather than leaving it dependent on the initiative of individual regional bodies or countries in the lead-up to each global ministerial. A more institutionalized regional track in the years between global ministerial meetings could serve three governance functions: 1) sustaining political momentum between biennial global ministerial meetings; 2) deepening LMIC ownership by creating spaces where regional priorities are developed and owned; and 3) feeding structured regional inputs into the global ministerial's agenda and outcome documents in a timely and systematic way.

The Abuja Ministerial is well placed to anchor what is already happening in the regions and take a first step towards formalizing the emerging regional preparations with a defined pathway for regional inputs to reach the global level in the years between global ministerial meetings.



4. Integrating a convening of funders for AMR acceleration

The ministerial meetings provide important opportunities for strategic dialogue on financing the AMR response and for translating political commitments into stronger coordination, collaboration, and joint resource mobilization. This ambition was reflected in the Jeddah commitments which encouraged the Troika of the fourth ministerial meeting to convene funders such as the World Bank, major multilateral financial institutions and development banks, as well as bilateral donors and philanthropies to contribute to sustainable financing initiatives, including the MPTF. The Jeddah commitments also included a call to support the building of a common long-term financial roadmap as well as multi-annual funding for National Action Plans.¹⁸

Since the Jeddah meeting, the world has seen dramatic changes in the geopolitical landscape. Many countries' National Action Plans, particularly in the Global South, remain significantly underfunded, and the financing gap risks widening amid a deteriorating global health financing landscape marked by major aid cuts from traditional donors. This challenge is compounded by the fact that 40% of African countries now spend more on debt servicing than on healthcare. Despite this, or possibly because of this situation, there is an urgent need for strategic discussions about how to mobilise and structure financing of the global response to antibiotic resistance. The cross-sectoral gathering of ministers, including finance ministers, provides a unique opportunity to strengthen coordination of international AMR financing (across development banks, funds and other sources)¹⁹, better align resources with country needs, and advance cooperation toward the USD 100 million catalytic funding target for the MPTF. The upcoming ministerial meeting in Abuja should be optimally used to launch such discussions.

4. Concluding remarks

Towards more coherent and integrated AMR Governance

To strengthen the global governance of the AMR global response, ReAct recommends formalizing ministerial meetings as a continuous governance platform by defining "Troika" roles and establishing structured biennial stocktaking. This evolution should contribute to operationalizing a robust accountability framework that complements voluntary self-assessments with objective reviews. Furthermore, the ministerial platform must be strategically connected to existing architecture, specifically using IPEA evidence for policy-making and the MSPP for multistakeholder alignment.

To sustain momentum, the regional tier should be institutionalized into the governance cycle to deepen country ownership. The platform must also be leveraged to convene funders, coordinating international resources to meet the USD 100 million MPTF catalytic target. Ultimately, the evolution of the ministerial meeting platform should be considered as part of a broader assessment and strengthening of the global AMR governance system. This should aim to clarify and align all the roles and interactions of existing mechanisms to strengthen coherence, effectiveness, and impact.

Strengthening AMR governance should also be viewed within the wider context of global health and development reform, including the UN80 initiative and broader global health architecture discussions. These reforms reflect important shifts: from disease-specific approaches toward primary health care, universal health coverage, and One Health; and from globally driven programs toward more country-led and sustainable approaches supported by regional and international cooperation.²⁰ These transitions are also reflected in the global governance of AMR through the normative guidance of the revised GAP, which is driving a shift toward integrated, cross-sectoral One Health implementation supported by sustainable financing.

In order to truly build policy coherence and overall political will, the narrative for AMR should be reframed as a systems issue and a development challenge. The global governance mechanism for AMR will ultimately need to enable a broader remit of action and engage with a wider set of relevant policy agendas on sustainable development.

Upcoming Ministerial meetings would provide a useful platform to set the direction for how AMR governance best can evolve in this direction.

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About ReAct

ReAct (Action on Antibiotic Resistance) is a global independent network created in 2005, with the aim of transforming antibiotic resistance from a technical medical issue into a high-priority political and social crisis. ReAct works towards strengthening governance of the AMR response by mobilizing stakeholders, bridging science and policy, and supporting national action plans, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). This policy brief is part of a comprehensive ongoing analysis of the global AMR governance system carried out with support from the Global Challenges Foundation.

End notes

1. Antibiotics vs. Antimicrobials: Antimicrobials include antibiotics, and therefore antimicrobial resistance (AMR) also includes antibiotic resistance. ReAct focuses solely on antibiotic resistance. In the global landscape, while the focus is usually on antibiotics, the broader term of AMR is often used to ensure resistance to other antimicrobials (viruses, parasites, fungi) is not excluded or forgotten. As a result, much of our work in this report is described under the overarching term of antimicrobial resistance.
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