

# Antimicrobial Resistance in Africa: Progress and Prospects

## Virtual Symposium Report

Online (Zoom), Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2023, 9.00-11.00 GMT / 12.00-14.00 EAT

This virtual symposium was co-hosted by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) and The Global Health Network (TGHN), in celebration of World AMR Awareness Week (WAAW) 2024. The event brought together experts in AMR from across Africa, to share ongoing research and initiatives seeking to address the urgent health challenge of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in the region, and to provide a forum for discussion on the path forwards. A recording of the meeting is available [here](#).

### Panel

#### Chairs

**Fowzia Mohamed Sheikh** - Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

**Dr Chifundo Msokera** - The Global Health Network, University of Oxford

#### Speakers

**Dr Yewande Alimi** – One Health Unit Lead, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

**Dr Ryan Walker** – AMR Knowledge Hub Coordinator, The Global Health Network, University of Oxford

**Dr Emiliana Francis** – National AMR Coordinator, Ministry of Health of Tanzania

**Julian Nyamupachitu** – Program Manager, ReAct Africa

**Dr Leandre Ishema** – One Health Specialist, Rwanda Biomedical Centre

**Stella Nanyonga** – Chair AMR Committee, The Pharmaceutical Society of Uganda, and DPhil Candidate, NDM Centre for Global Health Research, University of Oxford

### Participants

The symposium attracted 207 attendees from 44 countries, 84.5% of whom were based in Africa. The 5-most represented countries were Kenya (13.5%), Uganda (12.1%), Nigeria (11.1%), Ghana (6.3%) and India (4.8%).

### Agenda Overview

The meeting began with introductions from Dr Yewande Alimi, Africa CDC and Dr Ryan Walker, TGHN AMR Hub Coordinator on progress made to date in the field of AMR by Africa CDC and TGHN, respectively. Then followed a series of presentations;

- Dr Emiliana Francis presented on progress in AMR surveillance in Tanzania, including an overview of the national AMR burden, the national AMR surveillance programme, examples of resistance patterns identified by the programme, and how this data has guided policy and treatment guideline development.
- Julian Nyamupachitu shared innovative approaches to youth engagement in AMR awareness, based on insights from ReAct Africa's work in the African context. This included an overview of the ReAct network, ReAct's AMR sensitization projects targeting primary school and tertiary level students, including the AMR leadership program, and additional strategies to engage young people in AMR research, including engagement in WAAW and the use of art, drama and sport in raising awareness.
- Dr Leandre Ishema discussed a One Health approach in addressing AMR, emphasizing the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental Health from the Rwandan perspective. This included insights on the implementation of Rwanda's AMR National Action Plan and AMR surveillance system, the inclusion of One Health in Rwanda's AMR surveillance, health policy and health governance, and Rwanda's decentralised approach to sample testing.

- Stella Nanyonga spoke on a patient-centred approach to optimising antimicrobial use in the management of upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs) through antimicrobial stewardship in community pharmacy practice in Uganda. This included a background of the role of community pharmacies in accessing antimicrobials in Uganda, and the findings of a recent study exploring patients’ use of antimicrobials, knowledge of pharmacy staff regarding AMR and URTIs, challenges experienced and lessons learnt.

### Meeting Themes

The following shared themes emerged from the panellists presentations and subsequent panel discussion.

<p><b>Collaboration</b></p>	<p>Reflecting the overarching message of WAAW week 2023, ‘<i>preventing antimicrobial resistance together</i>’, multi-sectoral and international collaboration was repeatedly identified as a driver of success in current initiatives tackling AMR in Africa. Opportunities for further success included greater inclusion of representatives of the private, primary healthcare, environmental and animal health sectors in AMR research, policymaking and policy implementation.</p>
<p><b>One Health</b></p>	<p>Compelling progress was noted in some settings (Tanzania and Rwanda) regarding the adoption of One Health principles to guide AMR-related policy development. Whilst encouraging groundwork by the animal, agricultural and environmental health sectors regarding AMR was noted, there was acknowledgment that more must be done to advance the AMR efforts of these sectors in Africa, in order to the match the progress made in human health.</p>
<p><b>AMR Surveillance</b></p>	<p>Good progress was noted in the establishment of successful national AMR surveillance systems in Africa (Tanzania and Rwanda). Building on the success of these systems, making greater use of surveillance data was identified as an opportunity for future success.</p>
<p><b>Public Engagement</b></p>	<p>Multiple successful initiatives to increase community/public and youth engagement in AMR activities were highlighted across Africa, including innovative approaches to build awareness of AMR via the media of art, drama and sport. Nevertheless, a need to increase public engagement activities in AMR initiatives was highlighted, with particular focus to understanding and tackling public perceptions of antimicrobial use.</p>
<p><b>Antimicrobial Stewardship</b></p>	<p>A focus on antimicrobial stewardship amongst AMR-related research and policy development in Africa was noted. A need for progress in addressing public attitudes concerning the rationale use of antimicrobials was highlighted, in order to ensure the success of future stewardship activities in Africa.</p>

### Next Steps

Attendees were encouraged to [register as a member of The Global Health Network](#) to be kept up-to-date on future collaborative AMR research opportunities in Africa. Participants’ attention was also directed to the upcoming [United Nations General Assembly High-level Meeting on AMR \(2024\)](#), and the launch of Africa CDC’s [Framework for One Health Practice in National Public Health Institutes](#). The meeting concluded with thanks expressed to all speakers and participants, and a commitment to mitigate AMR in the African Continent, ‘leaving no-one behind’, by driving concerted action between all relevant stakeholders, and carry forwards the partnerships and discussions established in this meeting.