

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations



World Health  
Organization

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Opening Remarks

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ORIGINAL LANGUAGE ONLY

## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### AD HOC CODEX INTERGOVERNMENTAL TASK FORCE ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

#### Sixth Session

#### Opening Remark Dr. Awa Aidara-Kane, WHO

Minister Ryu Young-jin, Ministry of 'Food and Drug Safety, Republic of Korea

Professor Park, University of Seoul and Chairman of the Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance

Vice-chair person of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Steve Warne

Delegates to this 6th Session of the Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance

Colleagues of the Korean Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Codex Alimentarius and the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure and honor to welcome the participants of the 6<sup>th</sup> session of the Codex Task force on Foodborne antimicrobial resistance on behalf of WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhamon Ghebreyesus

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the most important public health threats and WHO, as the Global leader for public health has made the fight against antimicrobial resistance a priority.

Recognizing that the root causes of AMR can be outside the health sector, the One Health approach is central in the WHO Global Action Plan on AMR developed by WHO in collaboration with FAO and OIE, adopted by the 68th World Health Assembly in 2015 , and considered as the global blueprint for AMR .

With regards to AMR from the food chain, let me remind the Task Force that the World Health Organization has been consistently addressing the issue since 1997. WHO work focuses on the public and human health aspects of antimicrobial use in animals intended for food while recognizing the ongoing need for antimicrobial treatment of diseased animals. In 2003, a Tripartite FAO/OIE/WHO expert meeting concluded that there is a clear evidence of association between use of antimicrobials in food-producing animals and antimicrobial resistance in human.

The WHO "Global Principles for the containment of antimicrobial resistance in animals intended for food", published in 2000, are an important milestone on WHO activities on the human health implications of non-human use of antimicrobials. They recommended the phasing out use of antimicrobials for growth promotion . They indicated that efforts to prevent disease should be continuously in place to reduce or stop prophylactic use of antimicrobials in food producing animals. The WHO Global Principles highlighted the need to establish surveillance systems on antimicrobial use and antimicrobial resistance in humans and in animals, in order to follow trends over time and monitor the effectiveness of interventions.

WHO is pleased to see that more than 30 countries have discontinued the use of antimicrobials for growth promotion and more and more countries are moving towards drastic reduction in use of antibiotics for prevention in the absence of disease. This clearly shows that it is possible, and more importantly, this is sustainable without reduction in the food animal production. WHO is calling these countries to share their experiences and challenges for the sake of global public health, international solidarity and dissemination of best practices.

In countries where use of antimicrobials for growth promotion is still authorized WHO would like to commend important initiatives taken by the private sectors, especially, food animal producers in taking voluntary action to stop the un-necessary use of antimicrobials in healthy food producing animals.

As said in WHO Global Principles, outcome is more important than process. Voluntary actions are equally important and should to be encouraged as in both cases the final objective which is the protection of consumers' health

Following a recommendation from the WHO/FAO/OIE collaboration Tripartite WHO has undertaken the ranking of Antimicrobials according to their importance in human health. The WHO CIA list and associated

WHO Guidelines can be used by managers to prioritize risk management strategies for responsible and prudent therapeutic use of antimicrobials in food producing animals without compromising the effectiveness of critically important antimicrobials for human medicine.

As of today, the most critical antimicrobial classes that WHO would recommend to reserve for cases where no option is available in the lower categories include : 3<sup>rd</sup> , 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> generation cephalosporins, fluoroquinolones, macrolides glycopeptides and polymyxins (incl. colistin) . It should be noted that most of these classes include a drugs in the Reserve Group of WHO AWaRe classification and are also restricted for therapeutic use in humans .

With regard to surveillance, WHO is pleased to inform the task force that around 40 LMIC countries have now used the AGISAR guidance on integrated surveillance of Foodborne AMR taking a “One Health” approach to strengthen their capacity for integrated surveillance of AMR.

Finally, to address the lack of data from the environment, WHO is finalizing a Global protocol for the surveillance of Extended Spectrum Beta -lactamase E.coli in humans, the food chain and the environment, The so-called “Tricycle protocol” is now being piloted in selected WHO member countries and is expected to be finalized early next year. WHO believe that the Tricycle can provide valuable information to fill some of the gaps identified on AMR surveillance in the environment.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Unfortunately, AMR is increasing and very few drugs are available to replace ineffective ones. Use of antimicrobials in any sector will favor selection and spread of AMR. It is our shared responsibility and every sector has a role to play by:

First, taking a proactive approach to reduce the need for antimicrobials in food producing animals

Second, limiting the use of antimicrobials for therapeutic purposes in human and animals,

Third, when using antimicrobial for therapeutic purposes, paying due attention to the most critical antimicrobials for human health.

As, we are leaving in a globalized world, we should work together to make this happen everywhere.

The Codex Alimentarius gives us another opportunity to address this problem by establishing standards that will help us preserve the valuable resource of antimicrobials in the long term for the benefit of public health.

With that I would like to wish you successful discussions this week. Be ensured that the World Health Organization of the United Nations is fully supportive of this work and stands ready to support not only the development but also the implementation of these important international standards on antimicrobial resistance.