Antimicrobial Resistance

The WHO South-East Asia Region has recognized antimicrobial resistance (AMR) as a serious threat to public health and has been addressing the issue by advocating to governments of Member States to take this as a cross-sectoral national priority. Several sessions of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia have adopted resolutions on the prevention and containment of antimicrobial resistance, with the last one being in Dili, Timor-Leste, in September 2015. In 2011, all health ministers of the Region had committed themselves to concerted action by adopting the Jaipur Declaration on Antimicrobial Resistance, whereby all Member States were encouraged to have in place multisectoral national plans to combat AMR. In 2014, the Regional Director identified AMR as a Flagship Priority with focus on clear deliverables at both regional and country levels. In May 2015, the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly endorsed a global action plan (GAP) to tackle AMR. Governments of Member States have committed to have in place by May 2017 national action plans (NAPs) on antimicrobial resistances that are aligned with the GAP.

The development of the NAP was confirmed as a priority action at the high-profile ministerial meeting organized by the Government of India in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia in New Delhi, India, in February 2016. The meeting proposed a roadmap for the development of NAPs that would be owned across ministries by May 2017. The process would be supported by a nodal institution on AMR and a multisectoral coordination body. A situation analysis that identifies challenges and needs would be conducted in each Member State of the South-East Asia Region before developing the NAP.

Finally, the NAP would incorporate essential components of the Global Action Plan on AMR, including: (i) a comprehensive multisectoral approach; (ii) an operational plan with adequate budgeting; and (iii) an embedded monitoring and evaluation system. Timeframes on deliverables for implementing the NAP will be adapted to each country’s context and circumstances.

WHO SEARO is pursuing its support to the region to develop Global action plans (GAPs) – aligned National Action Plans (NAPs) for AMR through workshops, in-country situation analyses and specific technical support as appropriate. There are currently two major global initiatives including (1) a political advocacy document to support the development of NAPs and catalyse on the GAP-AMR as an outcome of the next UN’s High-Level Meeting (September 2016); and (2) the global development and stewardship framework for AMR (preservation, new technologies and promotion of affordable access).
The HLP Meeting held in July 2016, discussed this topic and made the following recommendations:

**Actions by Member States**

1. Continue the development of NAPs aligned with the GAP and its implementation to meet the May 2017 deadline for having such plans in place, participate in the situation analysis process and establish baseline data against which progress will be measured.

2. Provide inputs to the United Nations General Assembly Political Declaration on Anti-microbial Resistance (AMR) and support activities such as participating at the high-level session of the United Nations General Assembly.

3. Continue to support development of multisectoral collaboration aimed at operationalizing the One-Health approach.

**Actions by WHO**

1. Continue to support situation analysis activities across the Region in line with efforts to develop NAPs aligned with the GAP.

2. Provide the specific technical support needed in the areas of surveillance, laboratory capacity, human resources, and research and development.

3. Develop and implement a strategy on One-Health for the Region aligned with the efforts already under way in several countries.

4. Provide information and facilitate support for efforts to further the global development and stewardship framework for antimicrobial medicines.

Introduction

1. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a widely recognized serious public health threat that requires national cross-sectoral responses. At the Sixty-ninth World Health Assembly in May 2016, two major agenda items were discussed including the development and implementation of national action plans (NAPs) by Member States and the further development of a global development and stewardship framework for antimicrobial medicines (preservation, new technologies and promotion of affordable access).

2. The WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia supports the development of NAPs in the Region that are aligned with the WHA-endorsed Global Action Plan (GAP) on AMR, and is committed to monitoring the development of such NAPs and establishing the baseline data of national AMR control programmes to measure progress.

Situation analysis: Current response and challenges

3. All Member States of the Region have widely recognized the need for a comprehensive national plan or strategy on AMR.

4. The current status of NAP in SEAR is that Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia Myanmar, Nepal and Thailand have NAPs in development. The challenge is to ensure that they are in line with the GAP-AMR.

5. The first World Antibiotic Awareness Week (16–22 November 2015) was marked by Member States in every WHO region, and will become an annual event.

6. Several countries in the region participated in workshops on the development of NAP and its alignment with GAP-AMR supported by WHO.

7. As part of the NAP development process, a situation analysis is required. Situation analysis was first conducted using SEARO tool in Indonesia in May 2016. Clarification was provided by WHO at the HLP Meeting in July 2016 on the principles and process of joint situation analyses. These are multisectoral processes in which WHO facilitates the process of reaching consensus on the phase of implementation of AMR activities.

8. The Global Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System has been launched with technical partners, laboratory networks and WHO collaborating centres around the world. Member States are requested to contribute surveillance data to a global system through a dedicated platform for digital information.

9. Two global initiatives were discussed during the HLP Meeting in 2016:

   (1) Requests were made for regular updates, and clarification when needed, as the work on a global development and stewardship framework progresses.

   (2) It is intended that countries will also work on a political declaration on AMR at the upcoming United Nations General Assembly. The negotiations process is facilitated by Mexico, with active participation from the South-East Asia Region provided by Indonesia and Thailand. It was suggested that support for a strong declaration could potentially originate from the upcoming Regional Committee Meeting.
Proposed Strategic Actions by the WHO Regional Office

10. **Goal**: To minimize the morbidity and mortality due to antibiotic-resistant infection and preserve the effectiveness of antibiotics in the treatment of common bacterial infections.

11. **Strategic objectives, activities and deliverables in support of Member States**:

   (1) **Reporting on the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the NAP-AMR (as mandated by the Sixty-eighth World Health Assembly in 2015)**
   
   - Determine system-wide baseline data from which progress and impact can be measured.
   - Monitor progress made, including (i) AMR situation analysis, and (ii) implementing NAPs.
     - Deliverables: Country profiles presented in the form of an annual and regional AMR progress report.
   - Support the development and/or operationalization of national action plans aligned with the GAP-AMR via NAP development workshops, expert consultants and/or strategic guidance where appropriate, and monitoring of the same.
     - Deliverables: NAP developed and phased in.

   (2) **WHO providing advocacy, capacity-building and technical assistance, as well as supporting resource mobilization and leveraging other resources and partnerships**
   
   - The three levels of WHO will provide technical support through a coordinated and comprehensive approach.

12. **WHO will**:

   - Provide support through evidence-based technical guidance, i.e. tailor-made support, to each SEA Region Member State following the AMR situation analysis results.
   - Document technical support to Member States and seek opportunities to document proof of evidence for advocacy and fundraising.
   - Strengthen collaboration and information sharing with partners (e.g. USAID, GHSA, US Centers for Disease Control) and WHO collaborating centres.
   - Identify and collaborate with Member States willing to undertake interventions within the NAP (presumably the GHSA countries including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Thailand) that will demonstrate measurable outcomes or impact.
   - Develop the “One-Health” regional strategy in collaboration with World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other partners to take the AMR-related agenda ahead.
• Foster centres of excellence in the Region, which includes:
  
  – Collaboration with WHO collaborating centres in the Region: Currently SEARO is close to designating Siriraj Hospital under Mahidol University in Bangkok, Thailand, as a WHO collaborating centre for AMR prevention and containment.

  – Mobilize resources and leverage with partnerships—current identified partners for this include Fleming Funds UK, GHSA with the US CDC and USAID.