Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Antimicrobial Resistance

Minutes of the introductory meeting, 4 March 2021, online

Participants are listed in Annex 1

Process of the Meeting: WHO convened the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group on Antimicrobial Resistance (STAG-AMR) for its virtual inaugural introductory meeting on 4 March 2021. During the meeting, twenty STAG-AMR members plus staff from WHO Headquarters and Regional Offices joined to discuss AMR priorities, challenges and opportunities and in preparation of the official STAG-AMR meeting to be held 22-24 June 2021, which is also expected to be held online.

The Assistant Director-General, AMR Division opened the meeting, thanking members for accepting to be part of the new STAG-AMR, highlighting the current challenges of AMR in light of the COVID pandemic and providing a summary on the AMR three level structure of WHO. The STAG-AMR has the mandate of advising Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General and the AMR Division on overall global policies and strategies to address AMR within the context of human health, while considering relevant World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions and decisions.

All STAG-AMR members who attended the virtual meeting submitted declarations of interests, which were assessed by the WHO secretariat. Three members reported relevant conflicts of interest. It was noted by the secretariat that the interests disclosed did not constitute a conflict for the purpose of the STAG-AMR meeting.

The ADG for AMR introduced the Chair Professor Gunnar Kahlmeter and the Vice-chair Dr Sabiha Essack of the STAG-AMR. The Chair called on each of the twenty STAG-AMR members to provide a brief self-introduction, by name and position and indicating what part of the world they were currently in (Annex 1). Dr Wail Ahmad Hayajneh was unable to attend the meeting. Detailed biographies of the STAG-AMR members are available at: https://www.who.int/groups/strategic-and-technical-advisory-group-on-antimicrobial-resistance.

Haileyesus Getahun, Director of the Global Coordination and Partnership (GCP) department presented the structure and areas of work of his department, including i) the Impact Initiatives and Research Coordination (IRC) unit leading the work in the areas of research and development (R&D); ii) the Tripartite Joint Secretariat (TJS) on AMR leading and coordinating the global response to AMR, guided by a joint work plan across the One Health spectrum; and iii) the Antimicrobial stewardship and awareness (ASA) Unit.

Kitty van Weezenbeek, Director of the Surveillance, Prevention and Control (SPC) department presented the structure and areas of work by focusing on three broad areas: i) increasing the evidence base for the
AMR response; ii) country capacity building and iii) innovation (tools and interventions) and related policy development. She suggested the following areas for future STAG-AMR guidance: i) AMR burden estimates; ii) surveillance of AMR/AMU in primary healthcare (PHC)/communities; iii) AMR laboratory network design and diagnostic stewardship; iv) introduction of new tools and innovations; and v) National Actin Plan 2.0 development and associated country policy goals and targets. Both presentations have been shared with the STAG members.

The Chair presented the results of the survey completed by the STAG members prior to the meeting in which they had been invited to indicate their priority areas and areas of special interest that would frame future STAG discussions. AMR in low and middle-income countries, One Health collaboration, Antimicrobial Stewardship and AMR response strategies (national and/or international) scored highest in terms of special interest among the members (>10), followed by Research (10), Surveillance (10), Epidemiology (9), IPC (9), Advocacy and communications (8), Civil Society engagement (8) and Laboratory proficiency and capacity (7). Lowest scores were for Modelling (3), Community health (4), Health economics (4), Health education (4), AMR in high-income countries, Regulatory systems (5), and Clinical management (6).

Main points raised during the discussion to provide guidance on agenda topics for the June meeting

1. Data collection and sharing: Issues related to the importance of data for addressing AMR were emphasised. Challenges in the quality of the data, importance of laboratory strengthening as well as data sharing were highlighted. This area was considered critical for the future STAG meeting.

2. Determining the burden of disease in countries: Burden estimates and strategies to address the economic impact are needed to mobilize the AMR response and to trigger funding for the implementation of the National Action Plans. However, such estimates do not exist. The importance of translating AMR data into economical and financial cost for the non-health ministries was highlighted as critical for government buy-in and to ensure the understanding of its urgency. The point was made that disease burden as well as implementation research on economic and policy impact would resonate better with the financial decision makers.

3. Building communities of practice and building country skills and capacities: Reflecting on the need to translate policy into practice, the STAG members stressed that while guidelines are important, roadmaps, advocacy and clear messages for target audiences were equally needed and more so during the COVID pandemic as financial and human resources are moved into the COVID response especially in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). It was mentioned that country support for National Action Plan implementation should be based on a realistic list of activities and practical guidance that is context specific to each country and focused on integrating systems. Different ways of support and collaboration were mentioned such as having joint programmes (collaboration between sectors), sponsoring/mentoring and engaging the expertise of professional societies and the private sector. Also related to the importance of building communities, the question was raised on how to better engage the younger generations.
4. **COVID-19**: The value of remote learning within the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic was highlighted and should be maximized to support a targeted systematic approach, where government commitment and ownership is crucial. Challenges on how the economic and financial impact of the COVID-19 response will influence options and potential for success in addressing AMR over the coming years were discussed.

5. **The challenges presented by the One Health approach**: Points were raised on the challenges of working from a One Health perspective. The example of building capacities in stewardship from a One Health perspective was cited, in e.g. animal husbandry, industry in general, production of pharmaceuticals, and much more. The governance structures, such as the Tripartite secretariat hosted within the GCP department, addresses One Health. The example of IPC was used not just as a concern within a health care setting but equally in areas such as the community and at home, but also in agriculture and the environment.

6. **Other points raised:**
   - The alignment of STAG work with other groups e.g. OIE, FAO, UNEP, G7, G20 and civil society.
   - The plan and timing of updating the Global Action Plan on AMR (GAP 2.0).
   - The research and development and diagnostic agenda for AMR.
   - The future of addressing AMR in vulnerable populations, such as multidrug-resistant infections in healthcare facilities and (Neonatal) Sepsis in LMICs.

**Next steps in preparation for STAG-AMR meeting 22-24 June 2021:**

- A meeting invitation will be sent to all members very shortly to block calendars.
- The report of the introductory meeting, the terms of reference for the STAG-AMR, and a 2-pager on the roles and responsibilities of STAG members will be sent to the members.
- STAG members will be invited to be discussants on the topics in the upcoming meeting in June and further guidance will follow with the draft agenda.

**Closure**: Hanan Balkhy, ADG thanked the attendees for their participation and contributions. The STAG-AMR introductory meeting was closed at 16:20 Geneva time on 4 March 2021.
Annex 1. Participants

STAG-AMR Members

- Prof Gunnar Kahlmeter (CHAIR), Professor of Bacteriology, Clinical microbiology, Central Hospital Växjö, Sweden;
- Prof Sabiha Essack (Vice-CHAIR), Professor in Pharmaceutical Sciences. Director Antimicrobial Research Unit, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa;
- Dr Jameela Al Salman, Infectious disease consultant, Salmaniya Medical Complex, Kingdom of Bahrain;
- Dr Laura Isabel Barcelona, Professor of Infectious Diseases, Bernardo Houssay Hospital, Vicente López, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Prof Hanene Tiouiri Benaissa, Head of the Infectious Diseases Dept, University Hospital Rabta of Tunis, Tunisia
- Prof Kirsty Buising, Infectious diseases physician, Deputy Director of National Center of Antimicrobial Stewardship, Royal Melbourne Hospital and Doherty Institute for Infection and Immunity, Australia
- Ms Vanessa Carter, Patient advocate, Healthcare Communications and Social Media, South Africa
- Dr Sujith Chandy, Dept of Pharmacology & Clinical Pharmacology, Christian Medical College, Vellore, India
- Dr Tim Eckmanns, AMR Lead, Robert Koch Institute, Berlin, Germany
- Prof. Wail Ahmad Hayajneh, Professor of paediatric infectious disease, Jordan University of Science and Technology, Jordan
- Prof Mukesh Kapila, Professor of Global Health and Humanitarian Affairs, University of Manchester, United Kingdom
- Ms Otridah Kapona, National AMR Focal Point and Coordinator, Zambia National Public Health Institute, Zambia
- Prof Samuel Kariuki, Director of Research and Development, Kenya Medical Research Institute, Nairobi, Kenya
- Dr Lawrence Kerr, Director, Office of Pandemics and Emerging Threats, Office of Global Affairs Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C., United States of America
- Prof Constance Schultsz, Department of Global Health-AIGHD, Amsterdam University Medical Centers, Netherlands
- Dr Nandini Shetty, Consultant Clinical Microbiologist and Infection Specialist, Reference Microbiology, National Infection Service, Public Health England, United Kingdom
- Dr Dawn Sievert, Senior Science Advisor on AMR, National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United States of America
- Dr Viroj Tangcharoensathien, Health policy analyst, Ministry of Health of Thailand, Thailand
- Prof Timothy Walsh, Professor of Medical Microbiology and Antibiotic Resistance, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY, University of Oxford, United Kingdom
- Dr Yu Zhang, State Key Laboratory of Environmental Aquatic Chemistry, Research Center for Eco-environmental Sciences, Chinese Academy of Sciences, China
WHO Regional AMR Focal Points

- Laetitia Gahimbere, Regional Office for Africa
- Pilar Ramon Pardo, Regional Office for Africa
- Maha Talaat, Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
- Bassim Zayed, Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
- Danilo Lo Fo Wong, Regional Office for Europe
- Siswanto Siswanto, Regional Office for South East Asia
- Socorro Escalante, Regional Office for the Western Pacific

WHO Headquarters

- Dr Hanan Balkhy, Assistant Director-General, Antimicrobial Resistance Division
- Nienke Bruinsma, Executive Officer, Assistant Director-General’s Office
- Penny Andrea, Technical Officer, Assistant Director-General’s Office
- Katie Zingg, Technical Officer, Assistant Director-General’s Office
- Ellen Attafuah, Assistant to Team, Assistant Director-General’s Office
- Kitty van Weezenbeek, Director, Surveillance, Prevention and Control department
- Haileyesus Getahun, Director, Global coordination and Partnership department.
- Anand Balachandran, Unit Head, National Action Plans and Monitoring and Evaluation, SPC Dept.
- Breeda Hickey, Technical Officer, National Action Plans and Monitoring and Evaluation, SPC Dept.
- Carmem Pessoa Da Silva, Unit Head, Surveillance & Evidence and Laboratory Strengthening, SPC Dept.
- Peter Beyer, Senior Adviser, Impact Initiatives and Research Coordination, GCP Dept.
- Thomas Joseph, Partnerships Officer, TJS, GCP Dept.
- Hatim Sati, Consultant, Impact Initiatives and Research Coordination, GCP Dept.
Annex 2: Agenda

Introductory meeting of the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Antimicrobial Resistance (STAG-AMR)

Agenda for virtual meeting: 14.00-16.00, 4 March 2021

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>LEAD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session one: Opening</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00-14.10</td>
<td>Opening remarks</td>
<td>Hanan Balkhy, Assistant Director-General, Antimicrobial Resistance Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.10-14.15</td>
<td>Declarations of interest and Confidentiality undertakings</td>
<td>Nienke Bruinsma, Executive Officer, AMR Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.15-14.20</td>
<td>Introduction and handover to the STAG chair</td>
<td>Hanan Balkhy, ADG, AMR Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.20-14.30</td>
<td>Introduction of STAG members</td>
<td>Gunnar Kahlmeter, Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session two: AMR Division (Information session)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.30-14.40</td>
<td>Global coordination and Partnership (GCP) department</td>
<td>Haileyesus Getahun, Director GCP department, AMR Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.40-14.50</td>
<td>Surveillance, Prevention and Control (SPC) department</td>
<td>Kitty van Weezenbeek, Director SPC department, AMR Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session three: STAG-AMR agenda brainstorm</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.50-15.35</td>
<td>Discussion on AMR priorities</td>
<td>Gunnar Kahlmeter, Chair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.35-15.50</td>
<td>Q&amp;A on next steps</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Session four: Meeting closure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.50-16.00</td>
<td>Concluding remarks by the Chair and ADG</td>
<td>Gunnar Kahlmeter, Chair &amp; Hanan Balkhy, ADG, AMR Division</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>