



DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROGRAMME (DIIP)

Monthly Update

September 2016

HIGHLIGHTS

- On 21 September 2016, a High Level Meeting was held on antimicrobial resistance at the sides of the United Nations General Assembly. It was followed by the adoption of a political declaration. The Policy Brief by Mirza Alas and Viviana Muñoz Tellez, **Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance: Challenges for Developing Countries**, September 2016 addresses both the public health and development challenges that antimicrobial resistance poses for developing countries.
- *Workshop on WIPO Issues in preparation for the 56th Series of Meetings of the Assemblies of the Member States of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)*, held at the South Centre on 26 September. The objective of the workshop was to review the state of discussions on various IP and related issues in the WIPO bodies, in particular the implementation of the WIPO Development Agenda, and also discuss important issues for developing countries in the forthcoming WIPO Assemblies.



POLICY BRIEF
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Tackling Antimicrobial Resistance: Challenges for Developing Countries

By Mirza Alas and Viviana Muñoz Tellez*

Introduction

There is a need to escalate the global public health response to the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Antimicrobials – including antibiotics – are used to treat infections caused by bacteria, as well as by other microbes, such as viruses, parasites and fungi. Globally, millions of people are infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria each year; hundreds of thousands lose their lives. More and more strains of bacteria are resistant to an ever-rising number of antibiotics, and pathogenic species that have become resistant cause infections that can no longer be treated with antibiotics. This seriously jeopardizes not only our ability to treat common infections but also to perform complex medical procedures such as organ transplants and cancer treatments.

Although resistance is a natural process, the inappropriate use of antibiotics causes it to accelerate. The extensive misuse and overuse of antimicrobials both in humans and animals have accelerated the emergence and spread of resistance. Without a radi-

cal change in the current medical practices to reduce infection and rates of inappropriate antibiotic usage, antimicrobial resistance will become one of the greatest threats to humankind; to public health and to the global economy.

This is aggravated by the fact that no new classes of antibiotics have been developed since 1987. There are very few effective, safe options to switch to once resistance develops to existing antibiotics, as the antibiotic development pipeline is nearly dry, particularly for gram negative pathogens. In 1990, 18 pharmaceutical corporations had active programs to address antimicrobial resistance. By 2010, only four remained in this space. There is some progress being made but not significantly or rapidly enough. A new antibiotic substance was found in the human nose, which could potentially be used to treat antibiotic resistant pathogens such as methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* (MRSA).¹ However, for this new antibiotic substance to be ready for human use, many more tests and clinical trials will need to take place to prove it is safe and effective to use. There is also hope for effective alternative treatment for bacterial infections, such as the use of peptide polymers

Summary

On 21 September 2016, a High Level Meeting was held on antimicrobial resistance at the sides of the United Nations General Assembly. It was followed by the adoption of a political declaration. This declaration paves the way for new coordinated actions on antimicrobial resistance backed by higher political commitment, on the basis of the Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (GAP) of the World Health Organization (WHO).

There is enough evidence demonstrating that antimicrobial resistance is already causing untreatable infections all over the world. For developing countries, addressing antimicrobial resistance is both a public health challenge and a development challenge. Tackling antimicrobial resistance in developing countries requires deep understanding of the particular context and needs of the rural and urban populations. In this note, we examine four critical issues for developing countries to design an effective public health response to antimicrobial resistance, and for which international support is needed, in the form of public financing, investment and policy space for implementation.

PUBLICATIONS

Background Notes

- Background Note on Eleventh Session of the WIPO Advisory Committee on Enforcement, September 2016.
- South Centre Comments on the Draft Declaration of the High Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), September 2016.

- Background Note on the WIPO Assemblies: Fifty – Sixth Series of Meetings, September 2016.
- Matrix of Key Issues in the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), September 2016

Statements

- Statement by the South Centre on the Report of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on Access to Medicines released on 14 September 2016

Book Chapters

- Germán Velásquez, Guidelines on patentability and access to medicines, In *Patentamiento farmacéutico, tendencias, políticas y regulaciones*". University of Buenos Aires.

EVENTS/MEETINGS

- 1 September, Working Lunch Meeting on AMR in preparation for the *UN High-Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance* held on 21 September 2016 in New York.
- 14 September, Working Lunch Meeting in preparation for the *Thirty-First session of the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional knowledge and Folklore (IGC)* held on 19-23 September.
- 22 September, Working Lunch Meeting in preparation for the *Meeting of the steering group of the WHO SSFFC*, held on 26-27 September.

PARTICIPATION IN EXTERNAL EVENTS

- 12-16 September, *Training Programme for Judges on Law and Science* organized by the American University and the AIEJ in Washington DC. Prof. Carlos Correa participated and made presentations on seeds protection and Monsanto's patent strategies and on evergreening in biological (insulin and monoclonal antibodies).
- 20 September, *Antimicrobial Resistance: Tackling the Health and Economic Development of Nations*, a Ministerial side event on the global challenge of antimicrobial resistance (AMR); held in New York and sponsored by the governments of the United Kingdom, Australia, Argentina, Japan and Kenya. The event focused on the steps that the public and private sectors can take to tackle drug-resistant infections, a growing global threat that could kill 10 million people a year by 2050. Ms. Mirza Alas and Dr. Viviana Muñoz participated.
- 20 September, *Forum on Sustainable Access to Effective Antibiotics*, organized by the Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics and Policy (CDDEP), held in New York. Themes discussed included: stewardship, conservation, innovation, global accountability and governance. Executive Director, Martin Khor participated in the panel discussion on

stewardship stressing the importance to support developing countries to get action in AMR. Ms. Mirza Alas and Dr. Viviana Muñoz also participated.

- 21 September, *United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) High Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance*, held in New York. The UNGA convened two panels. The first panel was on the relevance of addressing AMR for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals; in particular the health related ones. Mr. Martin Khor was invited to speak in this panel. The second panel was on addressing the multi-sectorial implications and implementation challenges of AMR. Ms. Mirza Alas and Dr. Viviana Muñoz also participated. More information in the *SouthNews* article at <http://us5.campaign-archive1.com/?u=fa9cf38799136b5660f367ba6&id=6ae35604dc>.
- 22 September, *Closed Civil Society Strategy Meeting*, held in New York. The purpose of this closed civil society strategy meeting was to take stock of the global AMR policy landscape and to encourage critical reflections on how Civil Society could contribute in the follow-up of the declaration. Ms. Mirza Alas and Dr. Viviana Muñoz participated.
- 26-29 September, *International Symposium on Bio-ethics, Health and Technology*, organized by the School of Public Health in Medellin Colombia. Dr. Germán Velásquez participated and gave a presentation on “Inconsistencies and problems of the patent system applied to medicines.”
- 27-30 September, *Global Consultation on Farmers’ Rights* organized by the governments of Indonesia and Norway in Bali, The Consultation provided a forum to exchange experiences on the implementation of such rights and the obstacles encountered (seed laws, intellectual property rights, lack of awareness, etc.). The co-chairs were entrusted with the preparation of recommendations to be submitted to the forthcoming Governing Body of the ITPGRFA. Prof. Carlos Correa participated and co-chaired the meeting.
- 30 September, *Public Conference on Clinical Drug Trials* organized by Health Action International and Public Eye The public conference was organized to debate issues related to 1) globalisation of clinical trials and ethics, 2) recent developments on clinical trial data transparency, 3) evidence generation requirements for marketing authorisation and new regulatory paradigms, such as adaptive pathways, and 4) the way forward for needs-driven biomedical research. Ms. Mirza Alas participated.

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