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PRESS RELEASE

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Growing Coalition to Intensify Efforts to Address Global Antimicrobial Resistance

The South Centre supports increased global and national level advocacy for policy change and action to prevent the post-antibiotic era from becoming a bleak reality. This effort is being strengthened with the recent addition of five leading environmental and public health organizations to the [Antibiotic Resistance Coalition \(ARC\)](#). The ARC is an independent coalition of members from six continents working in health, agriculture, consumer, and development sectors.

[Since its formation in 2014¹](#) ahead of the 67th World Health Assembly when the initial resolution to draft the global action plan on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) was adopted, ARC has amplified the voice of civil society across countries and sectors at several policy fora. Through coordinated efforts, the Coalition has engaged intergovernmental organizations and national governments on the development and implementation of the global action plan on AMR; briefed United Nations agencies, country missions, and other stakeholders in advance of the High-level Meeting on AMR; and called on stakeholders including food retailers and health facilities to change their sourcing practices towards curbing drug resistance.

This past January, at the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board Meeting, ARC members delivered an intervention calling on the agency to ensure that the final global development and stewardship framework supports a sustainable ecosystem for antimicrobial innovation through open, collaborative models of R&D and public-private partnerships that ensure fair returns on public investment. Additionally, the Coalition called for a commitment of adequate financial and technical resources from WHO and its partners for development and implementation of national action plans, particularly in developing countries. ARC also called on the WHO to ensure that their efforts across countries and globally are aligned with public health interests and inclusive of all stakeholders, including civil society.

Joining the Coalition and further expanding its ranks to drive strategic change to effectively address AMR are:

- [Ecumenical Pharmaceutical Network \(EPN\)](#), a Kenyan-based nonprofit, independent network of almost 100 members across 30 countries worldwide from Christian health associations, faith-based medicine supply organizations, to church health institutions and other stakeholders committed to providing quality pharmaceutical services towards achieving global goals and targets for health and access to medicines – the network also houses the ReAct Africa node;
- [Natural Resources Defense Council \(NRDC\)](#), a leading environmental agency in the United States that works across a number of issues including antimicrobial resistance, particularly in food animal production -- the organization has worked alongside many ARC members to call on food retailers to change their practices and source meat products raised without the routine use of antibiotics;

- [MedAct](#), a UK-based organization working to mobilize and organize health professionals to be “more effective social agents for social change” through strategic research analysis, education, and campaigns across a number of issues including antimicrobial resistance -- during World Antibiotic Awareness Week, MedAct partnered with the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics, an ARC member, to mobilize 12 medical professional societies in the UK to call on the government to set regulations to curb the overuse and misuse of antibiotics in food animal production;
- [American Medical Student Association \(AMSA\)](#), the oldest, largest independent association of nearly 40,000 physicians-in-training in the United States that has throughout its history, harnessed the voice of the next generation to drive public health change from areas including pharmaceutical conflict of interest to mobilizing medical student associations worldwide to advocate against harmful free trade agreements that would restrict access to medicines; and
- [U.S. Public Interest Research Group \(US PIRG\)](#), a consumer advocacy organization with a strong network of over 400 researchers, advocates, organizers, and students across 47 states that address issues from product safety to public health to consumer protection - a key priority for US PIRG continues to be their campaign on “[Stop the Overuse of Antibiotics](#)”, calling on major restaurants to stop sourcing food animals raised with the routine use of antibiotics for which they’ve collected over 100,000 petitions from citizens and families and built a coalition of over 20,000 concerned health professionals.

Ahead of its formation, the founding organizations of ARC drafted the [Declaration on Antibiotic Resistance](#), outlining a series of principles and actions necessary to “urgently avert the looming post-antibiotic catastrophe.” The Declaration addressed three key thematic areas including curbing excessive use while ensuring access for people in need; tackling excessive non-human use in food and agriculture; and developing an effective innovation system for new antibiotics, diagnostics, and other tools that support health, access and rational use.

In this document, the coalition also put forward recommendations for international action and cooperation to be taken forward by governments and international organizations including the WHO, FAO, and OIE to effectively address and monitor progress towards curbing drug resistance across sectors. All members of the Coalition are signatories to the Declaration on Antibiotic Resistance, committing themselves to the principles and actions.

“The new members reflect the essence of ARC with its regional diversity and the interface of health, food and agriculture and environment, and we are particularly excited that student activists who started their own movement have joined forces to further strengthen this unique coalition,” said Yoke Ling Chee, program director at Third World Network.

Across several policy fora, ARC has called for international action and leadership to, in part promote new, needs-driven and open R&D models based on the principles of de-linkage (divorcing R&D costs from both price and sales volume), phase out the non-therapeutic use of antimicrobials in food animal production, and drive investment towards innovation of novel technologies as well as of novel stewardship practices that transform healthcare delivery and enable sustainable agricultural systems.

Annually, the Coalition has convened a [WHO-NGO Dialogue, moderated by the South Centre](#), where members directly address the WHO AMR Secretariat on specific issues around the development and implementation of the global action plan on AMR as well as the commitments outlined in the UN Political Declaration on AMR. ARC members have also provided extensive comments to the draft global action plan as well as joint interventions at WHO meetings, offering concrete recommendations to both

intergovernmental agencies and governments on addressing AMR. The Coalition has also played a key role in raising AMR as a critical issue at the UN General Assembly. In June 2016, ARC members participated in a briefing hosted by ReAct-Action on Antibiotic Resistance, the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, and the *Every Woman Every Child* initiative within the UN Secretary-General's office on "[Meeting the Multisectoral Challenge of AMR](#)" ahead of the first High-level Meeting on AMR at the 71st UN General Assembly.

"True accountability comes from moving from words to deeds. But not all solution paths place the public's interest first nor lift up those in greatest need," said Dr. Anthony So, Director of the ReAct-Action on Antibiotic Resistance Strategic Policy Program and IDEA (Innovation + Design Enabling Access) Initiative in the Department of International Health at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. "What makes the voice of the Antibiotic Resistance Coalition important are their shared principles for ensuring equity and social justice in tackling AMR."

The members of the Coalition also work together to hold other key stakeholders accountable in addressing AMR. Organizations including Consumers International, Food Animal Concerns Trust, NRDC, and US PIRG have led the global call urging food retailers to source food animal products raised without the routine use of antibiotics. Other organizations such as Health Care Without Harm and NRDC have worked with healthcare facilities and schools around the globe to change their procurement practices to address AMR. ARC members such as the Alliance to Save Our Antibiotics, MedAct, AMSA, US PIRG, among others also work closely with health professionals to raise awareness on the multisectoral nature of drug resistance and promote the adoption of evidence-based stewardship guidelines.

Each month, a [newsletter describing ARC member efforts](#) in addressing AMR as well as timely policy and research items is released – to receive this communication, please [sign up here](#).

ⁱ *The Antibiotic Resistance Coalition consists of numerous civil society organisations and stakeholders from six continents working in the health, agriculture, consumer and development sectors. It advocates for policy change and action to prevent the post-antibiotic era from becoming a bleak reality. The Coalition resulted from a series of discussions and meetings organised by the following steering group members: Anthony So (ReAct / Duke University's Program on Global Health and Technology Access), Niclas Hällström (What Next Forum), Martin Khor (South Centre), Tim Reed (Health Action International), Peter Maybarduk (Public Citizen), Eva Ombaka (ReAct / Health Action International) and David Wallinga (Healthy Food Action). Initial funding for the formation of the Coalition was provided by ReAct and the South Centre.*