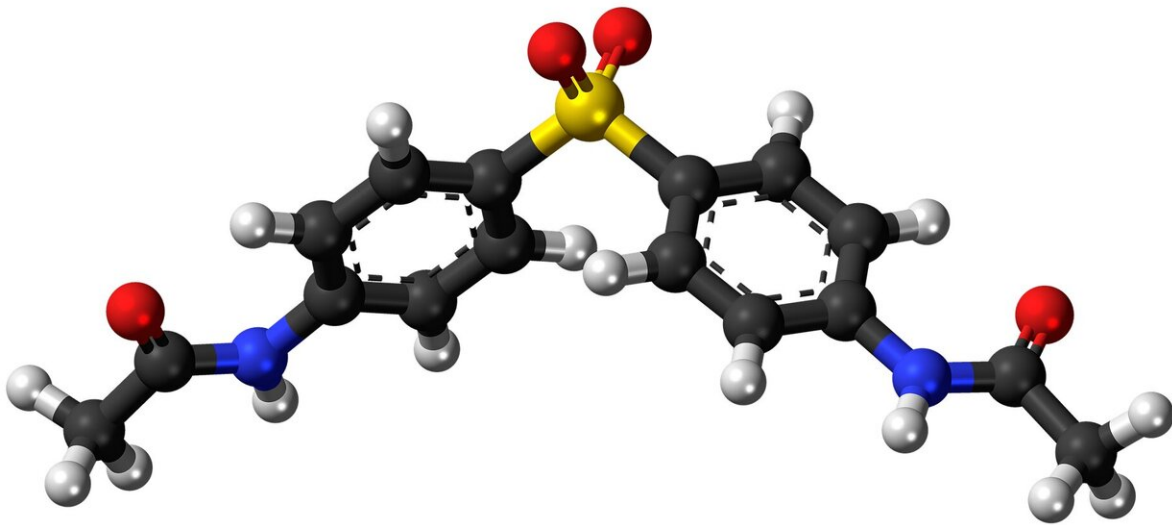


# Urgent action needed to combat antimicrobial resistance: report

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Political leaders are ignoring the growing danger of antimicrobial resistance, which could lead to an unprecedented health and economic catastrophe, a high-level task force warned on Thursday.

"The world now has a limited and critical window of opportunity to respond at the scale and with the urgency proportionate to the rapidly increasing threats posed by AMR," according to a report published on Thursday by the Global Steering Group on Antimicrobial Resistance.

Resistance to antimicrobials (AMR)—antibiotics, antifungals and antiparasitics—is already wreaking havoc, and is the result of the massive use of these products to treat humans, animals and food.

Evidence is mounting that "changes occurring in the natural environment due to the [climate crisis](#) are increasing the spread of infectious disease, potentially including drug resistant infections", the report added.

The report is part of an effort to spur action by global leaders ahead of a meeting in New York on September 26.

## Resistance

Microbes that are not completely eradicated by a given substance can develop [resistance](#) to that product, gradually reducing the arsenal of drugs available to treat infections.

AMR is already one of the world's leading causes of death, directly responsible for 1.27 million deaths a year, including one in five in children under five, mainly in low- and [middle-income countries](#), the report said.

If left unchecked, AMR is expected to reduce [life expectancy](#) by an average of 1.8 years by 2035, leading to unprecedented healthcare costs and economic losses.

Within a decade, AMR is estimated to cost the world \$412 billion a year in additional health costs and \$443 billion a year in lost labour productivity, according to an economic impact study commissioned by the Global Steering Group.

Effective measures against the scourge are expected to cost an average of 46 billion dollars a year but will yield up to 13 dollars for every dollar

spent by 2050, according to the impact study.

## **From local to global**

"We have the tools to mitigate the AMR crisis and these data point to a devastating future if we don't take bolder action now," said GLG President Mia Amor Mottley, who is also prime minister of Barbados.

"Commitment to the fight against AMR must be personal, local, national and global."

The working group is making suggestions both in terms of mobilizing funding—particularly from international financial institutions—and toward finding ways of overcoming the obstacles to researching and manufacturing effective new drugs.

It has established quantified targets for 2023, which it believes are the only way to effectively mobilize the various parties involved.

These include reducing by 10 percent the number of deaths caused by bacterial AMR worldwide, and ensuring that "ACCESS group" antibiotics comprise at least 80 percent of all human antibiotic consumption.

The ACCESS group is made up of antibiotics used for the first- or second-line treatment of common infections with a low risk of contributing to the development and spread of antimicrobial resistance, according to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Another objective is to reduce the quantity of antimicrobials used in the global agrifood system by 30-50 percent compared to current levels.

More radically, the group proposes to eliminate by 2030 the use of

medically important antimicrobials in human and animal medicine for non-veterinary medical purposes, and in plant production and agri-food systems for non-phytosanitary purposes.

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