12th Trilateral WHO-WIPO-WTO Technical Symposium

Concept Note

General Information and Logistics

Date: December 11, 2025
Time: 10:00 am to 4:30 pm
Venue: Centre de Conférence de Varembé (CCV), Room Genève
Rue de Varembé 9, 1202, Geneva, Switzerland
Format: Hybrid (hosted by WIPO)

Title: *Antimicrobial Resistance: Addressing the Innovation Gap, Access Inequities, and Supply Challenges*

Objectives of the Symposium

The Symposium builds on an earlier Trilateral Symposium on How to Foster Innovation, Access and Appropriate Use of Antibiotics, convened by the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2016.

By leveraging the complementary expertise of the three organizations, this event aims to advance practical solutions that can help preserve antimicrobial effectiveness for future generations.

Specific objectives of the 12th Trilateral Symposium include:

1. Examine the current AMR landscape, its health and social-economic implications, and opportunities for coordinated action at global, regional, and national levels.
2. Improve the understanding of challenges and opportunities in addressing the antimicrobial innovation and access gaps.
3. Assess how legal and policy tools, including IP and other incentive mechanisms, can support innovation, timely, global, equitable access, and technology transfer.
4. Discuss the role of trade rules and market dynamics and share insights in addressing shortages, strengthening manufacturing, and supply chains, and ensuring equitable distribution.

Expected Outcomes

1. Enhance the understanding of AMR major issues from a scientific and public health standpoint.

2. Identify concrete policies, strategies, and actions at national, regional, and international levels to address the AMR pipeline and access challenges.

3. Strengthen the commitment to collaboration across sectors and stakeholders, including through an integrated approach supported by WHO, WIPO, WTO.

Background Information and Rationale

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) represents one of the most significant global health threats of the 21st century, with the potential to undermine decades of medical progress. AMR happens when microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites) no longer respond to antimicrobial treatments, like antibiotics. In 2021, bacterial AMR alone was directly responsible for an estimated 1.14 million deaths globally. The latest WHO Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System (GLASS) Report, based on data from over 100 countries shows that resistance is both widespread and increasing. In 2023, one in six laboratory-confirmed bacterial infections worldwide was caused by antibiotic-resistant pathogens. Resistance continues to increase by between 5 percent and 15 every year in key bacteria, and is more widespread in lower-income countries, and in places with little capacity to prevent, diagnose or adequately treat antibiotic-resistant infections. The economic impact is also significant: according to the World Bank, AMR could lead to a 1.1 – 3.8% reduction in global gross domestic product by 2050.

Considering the complexity of AMR challenges, an effective response calls for coordinated action at multiple levels and sectors while promoting dialogue among various stakeholders. In 2016, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) High-Level meeting (HLM) adopted a Political Declaration on AMR. This Declaration called for Member States commitment to address AMR comprehensively and collaboratively. It includes developing and implementing adequately resourced National Action Plans aligned with the Global Action Plan on AMR. The second UNGA HLM Political Declaration on AMR in 2024 set concrete targets for prevention, diagnosis, treatment and financing which should ultimately reduce deaths from bacterial AMR by 10% by 2030 - contributing to the advancement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Fourth Ministerial Meeting held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2024 discussed practical steps to translate the Declaration into concrete actions, reflected in the Jeddah Commitments.

The 2025 WHO Pandemic Agreement and amendments to the International Health Regulations also recognize the need to address the nexus between pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, as well as AMR through policy alignment and coordinated multisectoral action.

As the discussions evolved, the One Health approach recognized that the health of humans, animals, plants, and their shared environment are interconnected and interdependent. This approach promotes collaborative, multisectoral efforts to achieve optimal health outcomes while acknowledging the intricate relationships between these domains. In 2022, affirming the need of an integrated approach to address risks at the human-animal-ecosystems interface, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) expanded the work of the former Tripartite Alliance and created the Quadripartite Secretariat to coordinate global efforts under the One Health approach. This

integrated approach is particularly relevant to AMR, which exemplifies how health challenges can transcend traditional sectoral boundaries.

In parallel, other international organizations have provided forums for debate and action. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has leveraged its expertise and assets to provide evidence-based and technical support to Member States and various stakeholders while prioritizing projects and solutions that bring impact on the ground. Some examples in the area of AMR include WIPO Green—an online platform for technology exchange—, the work of WIPO Global Health on IP strategies and wastewater technologies to address AMR, and WIPO's support to various stakeholders to build their knowledge on the innovation ecosystem and unlock their innovative potential, for instance, through the work of Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISCs) and the development of WIPO Patent Landscape reports.

In addition, Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are extensively working on sanitary and phytosanitary issues and on overcoming trade barriers (WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade and WTO Agreement on Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures) This work plays an important role in preventing and controlling AMR globally. WTO Members have also discussed and implemented mechanisms and strategies to support sustainable and resilient supply chains to avoid shortages, as well as to enhance local and regional manufacturing capacities. In June 2025, the SPS Committee held a thematic session on addressing relevant risks associated with AMR through SPS measures in international trade.

The WHO, WIPO, WTO Trilateral Cooperation provides a platform to address the multifaceted challenges of AMR by helping identify domain-specific solutions and exploring opportunities for enhanced policy coherence to address AMR complex challenges. Additional information on AMR is available at the WHO-WIPO-WTO Trilateral Study on Access to Medical Technologies and Innovation (2nd edition, 2020, p. 152, ss.). The Trilateral Cooperation also provides support for Member States through its Technical Assistance Platform.

Increasing attention to incentives for innovation and to access for both existing and innovative antimicrobial products is necessary to address AMR challenges. Persistent issues—such as limited research and development (R&D) of new antimicrobials, global shortages, weak forecasting, insufficient financing, inappropriate use, and fragile supply chains—particularly affect low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Those challenges continue to hinder progress to reduce death related to AMR. An unreliable supply of existing antimicrobials also increases the risk of substandard and falsified products entering the market.

The global response to AMR requires addressing the above-mentioned multiple challenges through a coherent multidisciplinary approach. It needs to meet multiple objectives that range from promoting innovation and a balanced IP system, facilitating timely global equitable access to health technologies, maintaining open trade while addressing national health security concerns, and supporting sustainable supply chains. Addressing these challenges requires urgent coordinated action that benefits from emerging technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and approaches like One Health.

Format and Target Audience

This one-day Technical Symposium combines an opening session led by the three Directors-General and the keynote speaker, as well as three panel discussions with opportunities for networking and informal dialogue. Each thematic session will include diverse perspectives from governments, industry and civil society stakeholders, followed by facilitated discussions.

The Symposium will be held in a hybrid format, and participation is open to the public. The Symposium will be in English only.

The Symposium target audience includes government representatives from health, trade, IP, industry, and innovation departments / sectors; representatives from private sector; academic and research institutions; international organizations; civil society organizations; and funding agencies.