



18 January 2021

WHO 148th Executive Board session
Item 9 – Antimicrobial resistance

Honorable Chair, Distinguished delegates,

I am delivering this intervention on behalf of the World Medical Association representing 9 million physicians worldwide.

We acknowledge the report of the Director General on Antimicrobial resistance and would like to emphasize the following:

The COVID-19 pandemic has stressed several issues relevant to AMR:

Due to the challenge to find treatments for COVID-19 patients, antimicrobials were used as direct treatment, even when evidence showed already that they do not offer any benefit.

Further antimicrobials were prescribed for possible co-infections, although evidence suggests that bacterial and fungal co-infections are low. Both patterns increased prescribing rates and the use of broad-spectrum antimicrobial agents.

Additional research highlighted a high transmission of multi-drug-resistant organism due to hospitalised COVID-19 patients, and the disruption of health care caused by COVID-19 reduced testing and surveillance of infections. The focus on COVID -19 shifted away funding for AMR.

It is crucial to continue and step up the political and financial commitments to AMR globally and nationally now.

Furthermore, we would like to highlight the urgent need for a global coordinating mechanism to streamline investments into the development of new antimicrobials, diagnostics and AMR products with a focus on access.

Finally, we support the WHO leadership and its continuous commitment to the advancement of the work of the tripartite secretariat.

Thank you,