

5. Health system resilience and priority actions for antimicrobial resistance

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a priority issue on the global development agenda. AMR threatens the effectiveness of modern medicine and our ability to treat infections.

Containment of AMR requires multi-sectoral approaches to prevent the emergence and spread of resistant infections. Significant progress has been made on the implementation of the *Action Agenda for Priority Actions for Antimicrobial Resistance in the Western Pacific*, which was endorsed in 2014. Six countries in the Region (Australia, Cambodia, Fiji, Japan, the Philippines and Viet Nam) have launched multi-sectoral national action plans. Six others are preparing plans.

To raise awareness, WHO promoted World Antibiotics Awareness Week in November 2015 with the theme *Antibiotics: Handle with Care*. Throughout the Region, 21 countries held national campaign activities targeting the public, health-care professionals and policy-makers.

Laboratory capacity for AMR surveillance was strengthened in several countries, including Cook Islands, Fiji and Samoa. In collaboration with Japan's National Institute of Infectious Diseases, discussions are under way to develop a regional AMR surveillance platform. The initiative builds on Japan's experience strengthening national and regional monitoring and the analysis of antimicrobial-resistant pathogens.



Women in Samoa celebrate World Antibiotic Awareness Week in November 2015 with the theme *Antibiotics: Handle with Care*.

To improve and ensure the prudent use of antibiotics in hospitals, a training package was developed for the implementation of antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) programmes in resource-limited settings. The training package was piloted in the Philippines. Country-specific work plans were developed to establish national AMS programmes in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, the Philippines and Viet Nam.

On 16 April 2016, ministers of health from 11 countries in the South-East Asia and Western Pacific regions signed a ministerial declaration on AMR at the biregional Tokyo Meeting of Health Ministers to reaffirm their commitment. The meeting was hosted by Japan's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare in collaboration with the two WHO regional offices. ■