



PRESS RELEASE

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## **Jim O'Neill welcomes historic G20 summit announcements on action to tackle antimicrobial resistance**

**The leaders of the G20 group of countries yesterday reached an important agreement on next steps in the global battle with so-called 'superbugs' at their summit in Hangzhou, China. The move was applauded by the Chairman of the UK Government-commissioned independent Review on Antimicrobial Resistance, Lord Jim O'Neill.**

In their summit communiqué, the leaders acknowledged the gravity of the threat posed by antimicrobial resistance (AMR) to global health and economic prosperity, and the urgent need to progress international discussions to mitigate rising drug resistance, and to stimulate the development of new antimicrobial drugs. The group tasked the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to work together with three key international organisations – the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) – and to report back in 2017 with concrete recommendations on what further action the G20 should take. These solutions will need to address the economic issues at the heart of the problem of antimicrobial resistance, and in particular the market failure that leads to underinvestment in research and development into new antibiotics and diagnostics by private companies.

These commitments by the G20 leaders are strengthened by their finance ministers' own pledge in July to support G20 work on AMR and to explore measures to address the market failures that exacerbate the challenges of drug resistance. This shows that the efforts of a wide coalition of health experts, academics and civil society advocates have succeeded in establishing the issue as an economic threat as well as a human one.

Responding to the G20 summit outcomes, Jim O'Neill said:

*"It is a rare thing that countries manage to work together to address long-term problems that go beyond immediate crises and short political cycles. Yet that is exactly what the G20 leaders have done by taking action on AMR during this Chinese presidency.*

*I see this is a crucial new step towards lasting, global solutions to drug resistance, and I have every hope that under Germany's presidency next year the G20 will deliver the investment and reforms that are needed for the right drugs and modern diagnostics to be available to the patients who need them."*

In another important development, an even wider group of world leaders will gather in New York on 21 September as part of the United Nations General Assembly to discuss what they need do to fight

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AMR. This High-Level Meeting will consider a wide range of issues including how antibiotics are used in humans and animals and how lower-income countries can be supported in responding to this mounting challenge. To coincide with these unprecedented discussions at the UN, the UK Government – with support from Lord O’Neill’s Review, and alongside the governments of Kenya and South Africa – will be hosting a political side event in New York on September 20. This will explore how governments and the private sector can work together and with the newly announced G20 initiative to support the development of much-needed new antimicrobial drugs, and improve how they are accessed and used.

The UN and G20 meetings reflect AMR’s rapid rise up the global agenda over the past two years, something driven in part by the work of Lord O’Neill’s independent, globally-focussed policy review of the issue. The Review, commissioned by the UK Prime Minister in 2014, worked closely with other groups and experts in a range of countries, and earlier this year published its final report recommending 10 specific actions to reduce the misuse and overuse of antibiotics and other antimicrobials, as well as increasing the supply and availability of old and new drugs. The UN and many of its agencies – such as the UN Environmental Program (UNEP), WHO, FAO, UNICEF, UNAIDS and others will play a crucial role in delivering on these actions or supporting countries in doing so. The focus on the issue by the G20 and UN underlines how AMR sits at the heart of the work going towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: if the world does not tackle drug resistance, many of these development goals will simply remain an aspiration.

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### **Notes for Editors**

1. AMR or ‘antimicrobial resistance’ is the term used to describe drug-resistant infections, sometimes referred to as ‘superbugs’. Antimicrobials include antibiotics (which act only on bacteria), antivirals, antiparasitics and antifungals.
2. Full details of the commitment by G20 leaders to tackle the problems of drug resistance can be found in the summit communiqué, available online [here](#).
3. The UN General Assembly will discuss AMR at a High-Level Meeting being convened on September 21 in New York. This meeting will feature pledges by global heads of government to tackling the issue, and will ratify a detailed outcomes document addressing a range of associated issues, the negotiation of which has been led by the Mexican Ambassador to the UN. Full details of the meeting can be found at on the [UN website](#).
4. The UK Government-led side event on AMR, organised to coincide with the UN General Assembly’s discussions on the topic, will be taking place in New York on September 20, with participation from Lord Jim O’Neill and the UK Chief Medical Officer, Dame Sally Davies. More details of media attendance at this event, and accompanying announcements, will be made available nearer the time.
5. The Review on Antimicrobial Resistance was commissioned by the UK Prime Minister in July 2014 to address the growing global problem of drug-resistant infections. It is Chaired by Lord Jim O’Neill and backed by the Wellcome Trust and the UK Government, although operates and speaks with full independence of both.

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6. Lord Jim O'Neill is the current Commercial Secretary to HM Treasury, as well as the Chairman of the Review on AMR. He is an internationally published economist and until 2013 was Chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management, having previously been the organisation's Head of Economic Research. Before chairing the Review on Antimicrobial Resistance, he led the Cities Growth Commission which played a central role in the Government's decision to devolve significant new powers to large urban centres in the UK starting with Manchester. He is particularly well known for his work in relation to developing and middle-income economies, having coined the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) acronym – meaning that he is especially well-placed to understand the broad range of international interests raised by antimicrobial resistance.
7. The Wellcome Trust is a global charitable foundation that spends more than £700 million a year on advancing human and animal health. It is the second highest-spending charitable foundation in the world, after the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, investing principally in biomedical science, the medical humanities and public engagement. The Trust is providing part-funding for the work of the Review, and hosting the team at its London headquarters.

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