

The Antimicrobial network across the world is marking the World Antimicrobial Awareness Week 2022, which starts today Friday, 18 to 24 November with the slogan Antimicrobials; Handle with Care.

The global healthcare event is focused on preventing the emergence, and spread of antibiotic resistance; and promoting best practices among the public, health workers, and policymakers by raising awareness of the issue worldwide during the week of November 18 to November 24.

This year's campaign is aimed to increase global awareness and understanding of Antimicrobials resistance (AMR) and promote best practice among One Health stakeholders to rescue emergence and spread of drug-resistant pathogens.

New global research reports that bacterial AMR has become a leading cause of death worldwide and is killing about 3,500 people every day. If left unchecked, deaths are expected to reach 10 million per year by 2050.

AMR occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites no longer respond to antimicrobial agents. As a result of drug resistance, antibiotics and other antimicrobial agents become ineffective and infections become difficult or impossible to treat, increasing the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death.

Because AMR threatens humans, animals, plants and the environment, the week-long campaign – under the theme of “Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together” – brings together leaders and communities across various sectors who are working to preserve antimicrobials and protect the health of people, plants, and animals.

In Rwanda, different activities which include radio talk shows, online social media campaigns will be carried out to mark AMR Awareness Week.

In collaboration with other partners, Oasis Health, a Rwandan voluntary Youth-led organization that aims at boosting access to health information and services is preparing an Antimicrobial Resistance awareness seminar slated on Wednesday November 23rd in Kigali.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the aim of the campaign among others is to promote the responsible use of antimicrobials, strengthen infection prevention and control in health care facilities, farms and food industry premises,

ensure equitable access to vaccines, clean water, sanitation, and hygiene and to implement best practices in food and agriculture production

The Quadripartite – the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH, founded as OIE) – have unified for the campaign to advance solutions to the challenge of AMR.

The Quadripartite organizations are launching the AMR Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform, which aims to create a diverse, global movement for progress on AMR.

The objective is to drive global action, bringing together over 200 representatives from across governments, international and intergovernmental organizations, civil society, academia, and the private sector.

One of the new strategies to tackle antimalarial resistance in Africa is to address the threat to malaria treatments, and WHO is set to publish its new strategy to counter the growing problem of anti-malarial drug resistance in Africa.

Artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACT) has been the mainstay of malaria care in Africa and has played a significant role in lowering the burden of malaria over the last 2 decades.

In recent years, however, WHO has been concerned by reports of emerging drug-resistant malaria in Africa.

Parasites in several areas have developed partial resistance to artemisinin – the core compound of ACTs – and there are worrying signs that they may also be resistant to other drugs that are commonly partnered with artemisinin. Vigorous measures are needed to protect their efficacy.

World Antimicrobial Awareness Week will conclude with the Third Global High-Level Ministerial Conference on Antimicrobial Resistance, hosted by the Sultanate of Oman, in Muscat from 24-25 November 2022.

The conference will bring together health, agriculture and environment ministers to discuss the Muscat Manifesto, which sets out targets on AMR, with clear indicators and milestones for antimicrobial use in both the human and animal sectors.

The conference outcomes will inform commitments to be discussed at the forthcoming UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting on AMR in 2024.

In addition, WHO plans to publish a new Global Antimicrobial Resistance and Use Surveillance System (GLASS) report early December.

This report will provide the latest updates on AMR rates in common bacteria and invasive fungi, as well as data on antimicrobial consumption in humans for the first time.