By Jejje Muhinde;

Leaders at the 26th Commonwealth Heads of States Meeting have agreed that combatting antimicrobial resistance (AMR) requires a 'One Health' approach involving coordinated actions across the human, animal, plant, and environmental sectors.

The event, which was convened by the Global Leaders Group (GLG) on AMR took place on the margins of the CHOGM on Thursday in Kigali.

They said AMR poses a serious threat to human, animal, plant and environmental health, as well as food safety and food security.

Speaking at the event, the WHO Director-General, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, said that the growing threat of AMR threatens to send us back to the time before antibiotics when even a routine injury could kill. Already, AMR is estimated to lead to 5 million deaths every year.

"That is why we can only truly address the major health challenges of our time with a One Health approach. As COVID-19 has demonstrated, shared global threats require a shared response.

"AMR has impacts for every sector, and every sector must be engaged in the response: the public and private sectors, across health, agriculture and environment" He added

Part of their discussions centered around the consequences of inaction on AMR, and the acknowledgment that AMR is not just a health issue, but also an economic one.

Leaders also further agreed on the urgent need to address the growing threat of AMR, including to: support programmes, policies and legislation that drive innovation and incentives for research and development of new antimicrobials.

To integrate the risks of AMR into trade and tourism policy including aligning regional policy and agreements to reduce the economic and public health costs of AMR;

And to develop, strengthen, and implement fully-funded, multisectoral AMR National Action Plans based on a One Health approach supported by domestic financing and investment cases across all sectors.

A **recent Lancet publication** has revealed that AMT infections have caused 1.27 million deaths and were associated with 4.95 million deaths in 2019.

Recent research suggests that at least 5 million reported deaths were associated with AMR globally in 2019, most of which were in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

For context, this figure is greater than the number of people who died from HIV/AIDS and malaria that year combined.