

August 24, 2016

Laurie L. Phipps

International Affairs Adviser on Social, Health and Women's Issues

U.S. Mission to the United Nations

Lawrence Kerr, Ph.D.

Director for Medical Preparedness Policy at National Security Staff

Re: United Nations September 21 High-Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance

Dear Ms. Phipps and Dr. Kerr,

As representatives of consumer, health, and environmental advocacy groups based in the United States who work together to combat the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance, we first want to thank you for your efforts to bring global attention to this issue at the upcoming high-level meeting during the United Nations General Assembly. We are writing to you now to also ask that the United States support a One Health approach to addressing the urgent public health threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) within the resulting Political Declaration of the high-level meeting. The recent discovery of plasmid-mediated resistance in bacteria isolated from both people and animals around the world to colistin, a last line antibiotic rarely used in human medicine but used much more extensively in food animal production globally, clearly points to the transmission of resistance across these sectors. To effectively curb AMR, we will need not only global commitments but also multi-sectoral action.

We ask that the United States recognize the role of agriculture in the selection and spread of resistance and thus promote multi-sectoral action in all areas covered in the Political Declaration from stewardship, to innovation, to surveillance. Stewardship, protecting the efficacy of existing antibiotics, must be the priority of the document which should clearly call for the elimination of the misuse of antibiotics in animal agriculture for growth promotion and disease prevention, and for the elimination of misuse in human medicine. The document must call for the innovation of novel stewardship approaches for transforming health care delivery systems and enabling more sustainable agricultural systems with improved sanitation that do not rely upon the routine use of antibiotics to prevent disease. Innovation must include resources for vaccines, diagnostics, and alternatives to antimicrobials to curb AMR across sectors in addition to calling for resources focused on innovation of new health technologies in human medicine. Finally, the document should call for monitoring antibiotic use, sales, prescriptions, trade, and resistance patterns within

both human and animal health domains to inform the development of country-specific policies to curb AMR and to help identify emerging global resistance health threats.

These areas of stewardship, innovation, and surveillance have already been identified in the United States National Action Plan as critical components for action to be taken to curb AMR. Within the Political Declaration, the United States should align these national goals with international commitments.

We also ask that the U.S. support the creation of a United Nations-level mechanism to support international cooperation and coordination across all United Nations agencies on combating this deadly threat to public health. Such a mechanism could take form as an Inter-Agency Task Force, a commitment to biannual reports on progress achieved on AMR to the Secretary-General, or a commitment to biannual high-level meetings to gauge and build upon progress to curbing AMR. We also support a report-back mechanism both through the United Nations General Assembly as well as through the World Health Assembly. Given the serious public health consequences and staggering costs, we hope that the United States will support stronger and more coordinated international action on combating antimicrobial resistance both in this forum and elsewhere.

Sincerely,

Keep Antibiotics Working

Food Animal Concerns Trust

Consumer Federation of America

Consumers Union

Earthjustice

Antibiotic Resistance Action Center, Milken Institute School of Public Health, The George Washington University

Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

Food and Water Watch

Health Care Without Harm

Center for Food Safety

School Food Focus

Center for Foodborne Illness Research & Prevention