



PRESS RELEASE

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Organising the fight against resistance to anti-infectious agents: a global challenge

The Delegations from Francophone Countries Forum 2018, organised by Leem in partnership with the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF), will be addressing a major public health issue: *fighting and preventing resistance to anti-infectious agents*. Some twenty health ministers from French-speaking countries and nearly 200 participants are expected to attend this event, which will be marking its twentieth anniversary in a special way.

The event will take place on 20 May in Geneva, ahead of the 71st World Health Assembly.

Of the 58.8 million deaths each year worldwide, nearly 15 million are caused by infectious diseases. This burden is likely to increase with the growing resistance to anti-infectious agents (antimicrobial resistance, resistance to antimalarials, antiretrovirals, etc.), as nearly 700,000 deaths each year are already linked to antimicrobial resistance (*source: Review on Antimicrobial Resistance, 2016*).

The alarm has been raised

The World Health Organization (WHO) published in February 2017 a list of 12 families of bacteria for which new antibiotics are urgently needed on account of the risks posed by their resistance to existing treatments. If the international community fails to act, resistant bacteria could kill up to 10 million people each year by 2050 (*KPMG study, 2016*).

The situation for malaria (500 million reported cases each year according to the WHO) is very worrying as drug-resistant strains of malaria are emerging in some countries. If this resistance spreads, it could risk ruining the global efforts successfully undertaken in recent years to combat the disease.

As for antiretrovirals, despite a 10-year increase in the life expectancy of HIV-positive people since the introduction of the three-drug regimens in 1996, the HIV virus is displaying an incredible ability to adapt, regularly thwarting the various attempts to eradicate it.

The need to mobilise international efforts

The issue of resistance to anti-infectious agents is now appearing on the agenda of international policymakers. The final declaration of the June 2017 G20 meeting in Hamburg highlighted the importance of proper antibiotic use and stressed the need to develop internationally harmonised and coherent initiatives and strengthen investment in research and development.

Ministers and experts with a deep commitment to this cause will be invited to participate in two roundtable discussions to share expertise and find common solutions.

Dr Jean CARLET, President of the World Alliance Against Antibiotic Resistance, Mr Alassane SEIDOU, Minister of Health of Benin, Mr André MAMA FOUA, Minister of Public Health of Cameroon, Dr Tim EVANS, the World Bank's Director for Health, Nutrition and Population, and Alexandre MERIEUX, President and CEO of BioMérieux, will be speaking at the first roundtable on the responsible use of medicines. It will then be our pleasure to welcome Dr Raymonde GOUDOU COFFIE, Minister of Health and Public Hygiene of Côte d'Ivoire, Madame NGUYEN Thi Kim Tien, Minister of Health of Vietnam, Mr Thomas CUENI, Director General of the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations (IFPMA), and Dr Jean-Yves MADEC, Research Director at the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Health Safety (ANSES), for the second roundtable on the responsible use of medicines and how to combat resistance to anti-infectious agents.

Dr Tedros ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS, Director-General of the WHO, Madame Agnès BUZYN, France's Minister of Solidarity and Health, and Her Excellency the Right Honourable Michaëlle JEAN, Secretary-General of the OIF, will close the event by sharing their insights.

New treatment pathways ... new models

Pharmaceutical companies have been partnering with the Innovative Medicines Initiative (*IMI*) since 2012 to launch the *New Drugs 4 Bad Bugs* research programme, investing EUR 223 million to spur the clinical development of antibiotics against priority resistant bacteria, through two projects: *Combact* (Combating bacterial resistance in Europe) and *Translocation*, against Enterobacteriaceae. Some twenty French pharmaceutical companies are active in the field of antibiotics: 43 molecules are currently in development.

The discovery and marketing of new medical treatments are undoubtedly a solution that will make it possible to deal with the emergence of resistances. Greater public-private cooperation is needed to meet the significant costs of developing new therapeutic solutions to infectious diseases.

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