

**Address by Sujith J Chandy, ICARS' Executive Director at the High-level Ministerial Roundtable: "Accelerating One Health Solutions to combat the "silent pandemic" of AMR to promote better human, animal and environmental health and achieve the SDGs"**

*The spoken word applies*

As we experienced with COVID-19, it is clear that AMR is not just a microbiological problem, but a socio-economic problem that impacts many aspects of our lives. And because AMR hits the world's vulnerable populations harder and has massive financial implications, it is not just a global health challenge but also a global development issue.

And with climate change we are going to see a significant change in water resources, soil and air PH, migration of animals and people, all of which have consequences for bacterial profiles, infections patterns and food security. For this reason there is a need to integrate global challenges such as AMR and climate change with sustainable global One Health Solutions.

In spite of currently 166 countries having developed National Action Plans for AMR, many Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) are now facing difficulties in materializing these plans into prioritized action and change on the ground.

Limited action could be due to the invisible and cross-sectoral nature of AMR which complicates ownership and prioritization at all levels. However, most LMICs are in fact eager to address AMR. We see this in a high demand from LMICs interested in working with ICARS. It is this enthusiasm and momentum that we should not lose for lack of finance or other barriers along the way.

So, what is then needed?

Considering the reality that LMICs are juggling with a multitude of urgent challenges, what is needed to move AMR interventions up the prioritization list is first and foremost evidence. Evidence that an intervention is effective in the local context and most importantly evidence that an intervention is cost-effective. We must demonstrate through models that the business case is there.

At ICARS our mission is to do exactly that. By partnering with government ministries, we support LMICs in developing, testing and scaling-up evidence-based solutions to AMR, that are cost-effective and address local needs across the One Health spectrum.

We are very grateful to the government of Denmark for establishing ICARS in 2019. Since then, ICARS has established partnerships with 15 LMICs and built a portfolio spanning more than 30 projects with many more to come.

Minister Jørgensen already mentioned our partnership with Georgia on stewardship, and I am pleased to say that we see very good progress in implementation with more than 80% compliance in the hospitals involved – and in fact expect that this evidence will inform the national policies for all Georgian hospitals moving forward. Likewise in Tanzania our projects on poultry and treatment of manure are progressing in close partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries. This will reduce the unnecessary use of antibiotics.

In fact, in partnership with Porkcolombia as well as the UK led Global AMR Innovation Fund (GAMRIF) ICARS recently concluded its first project showing that a subsidised diagnostic network is cost-effective in swine production.

Altogether I believe that our expanding project portfolio is not only a testament to the willingness of LMICs to address AMR, but also to the important role that targeted evidence and business cases play in enabling prioritization of AMR action at the national and global level. Just like COVID-19, AMR must be prioritized collectively across sectors, boarders, and all levels of society. This time, we must be prepared. But in order to prepare, and in order to act, one must be aware, and I believe that this event is providing a significant contribution to that endeavour.

It is our hope that the global community will be perceptive to the burden that AMR places on us, rise to the challenge in a truly one health sense, and ensure that we support those in need presently and in the future so that the generations to come can continue to enjoy life and maintain their livelihoods and dignity.

Thank you.