

19th June 2025

Honourable Dr. A. Motsoaledi
Minister of Health
Department of Health
Government of South Africa

Dear Honourable Minister Motsoaledi,

Subject: Urgent Need to Reinstate a National Action Plan and Scientific Advisory Body on Antimicrobial Resistance in South Africa

We are writing to bring to your urgent attention a critical public health issue that warrants immediate action: the current absence of a comprehensive national action plan (NAP) for antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in South Africa and the need for an updated, coordinated strategy to address this growing threat. South Africa's previous NAP (*South African Antimicrobial Resistance National Strategy Framework: A One Health Approach 2017-2024*) has expired.

Signatories to this letter are a diverse group of infectious diseases specialists, clinicians, microbiologists, pharmacists, infection prevention practitioners, pharmacologists, public health experts, academic researchers, and policy experts, who work in the field of antimicrobial resistance.

Antimicrobial resistance poses a significant challenge to global health, undermining the efficacy of antibiotics and other antimicrobial agents. For South Africa, a nation with a diverse and dynamic health landscape, the escalation of AMR is having devastating consequences, including increased morbidity, mortality, and healthcare costs. It poses a significant threat to attaining universal health coverage through National Health Insurance. Without a national framework, efforts to combat AMR remain fragmented and woefully insufficient.

The lack of a robust scientific advisory body limits the government's capacity to develop evidence-based policies. It is crucial to re-instate the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance or establish an equivalent scientific body to provide expert guidance. Such a body would facilitate informed decision-making, foster intersectoral collaboration, and ensure alignment with global best practices.

In light of these concerns, we respectfully urge your department to prioritise the development and implementation of an updated, funded, and

comprehensive NAP on AMR. Additionally, reinstating or establishing a dedicated scientific advisory committee will empower the government to make strategic, data-driven decisions to combat this pressing health threat effectively.

In taking the required actions, South Africa would honour its commitments made as a signatory of the political declaration of the 2024 UNGA High-Level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance, to ensure that *"all countries have developed or updated and are implementing multisectoral national action plans on antimicrobial resistance with national targets informed by analysis of existing capacities and priorities, with inclusive and effective national functioning multisectoral coordination mechanisms, and appropriate and sustainable human and financial resources, according to national contexts and priorities."*

The health and well-being of South Africans depend on urgent, decisive, coordinated action.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to safeguarding public health.

Yours sincerely,

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