

Foreword



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Foreword by the Secretary for Health

With the ever-increasing infections caused by organisms no longer susceptible to the common medicines used to treat them, the rapid worldwide spread of multidrug-resistant organisms (also known as “superbugs”) that cause significant mortality among patients, in particular the elderly and those with chronic diseases, is especially alarming.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared antimicrobial resistance (AMR) as one of the top ten global public health threats facing humanity in 2019. AMR contributes to almost 5 million deaths per year globally. It poses serious threats to human, animal and environmental health, and severely undermines the sustainability of agri-food systems. The “One Health” concept is based on the recognition that the health of humans is connected to that of animals and the environment, and that AMR must be tackled at all three levels. The WHO promulgated the Global Action Plan on AMR in 2015, which underscores the need for an effective “One Health” approach involving coordination among numerous sectors and actors, including human and veterinary medicine, agriculture, finance, environment and consumers.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region recognises the threat posed by AMR and has all along attached great importance to tackling it. The High Level Steering Committee on Antimicrobial Resistance (HLSC) was set up in May 2016 to formulate the Hong Kong Strategy and Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (2017-2022) for preventing AMR from worsening in Hong Kong with the collaboration and synergy of all professional sectors under a “One Health” framework. Since the launch of the Action Plan, a series of actions against AMR have been implemented by the Government in accordance with the strategies laid out in the Plan. Positive outcomes were achieved in minimising the emergence and preventing the spread of AMR. The HLSC would review the implementation experience of the first Action Plan and draw up the second plan to map out response strategies towards AMR in the next five years.

I would like to express my gratitude to all experts and professionals who have generously contributed their time and provided insights in drawing up the second Action Plan. The Hong Kong Strategy and Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2023-2027 provides an overview of the local situation of AMR and outlines a list of objectives, activities and targets that the Government is planning to pursue to combat the threat of AMR in Hong Kong during the period between 2023 and 2027. Apart from continuing and strengthening the existing objectives and detailed actions, the second Action Plan also features a number of priority interventions and target indicators to enable the Government and stakeholders to focus resources and address the threat of AMR more effectively.

The HLSC and all participating bureaux, departments and organisations will continue to keep abreast of international and local development in AMR such that the Action Plan can be reviewed timely to cope with local needs. I am confident that the second Action Plan can drive steadily towards achieving the ultimate goal of reversing the trend of emergence of AMR in Hong Kong.