H.E. Mr Mogens Lykketoft  
President, United Nations General Assembly  
UN Headquarters  
405 East 42nd Street  
New York, NY, 10017

Basel, 15 September 2016

Open letter to the United Nations to work towards setting binding targets and taking concrete action to effectively fight antimicrobial resistance

Dear Mr. President,

The European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) is a non-profit organization that has been committed to improving the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of infection-related diseases for more than 30 years. ESCMID wants to express its deep concern about the 10 million annual deaths antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is projected to cause by the year 2050.

ESCMID therefore welcomes the decision by the UN Secretary General to hold a high-level meeting at this September’s General Assembly to address this complex problem, which is threatening to hamper the path towards reaching the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals.

AMR has been at the core of ESCMID’s activities – at its study groups, committees, courses and conferences over the past years. Its experts have been committed to developing hands-on solutions by supporting and promoting research and training to tackle AMR around the world. These range from offers of professional training and programmes on antibiotic stewardship, infection control and surveillance resistance to the development of medical guidelines, policies for antimicrobial use, and initiatives to promote novel diagnostics and therapies.

The society organizes the world’s largest and most comprehensive congress in the field of AMR - ECCMID, bringing together more than 11,000 experts from clinical microbiology, infectious diseases, infection control and public health every year to discuss strategies to fight this urgent problem.

In addition, ESCMID leads the European Committee on Antimicrobial Susceptibility Testing (EUCAST), a standing committee jointly organized by ESCMID, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and European National Breakpoint Committees. EUCAST deals with breakpoints and technical aspects of phenotypic in vitro antimicrobial susceptibility testing and functions as the breakpoint committee of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and ECDC. At present, most antimicrobial breakpoints in Europe have been harmonised by EUCAST.
ESCMID is convinced that a coordinated response by the international community is urgently required to successfully tackle this global threat. Therefore, the society is urging the Secretary General to work towards setting binding targets and taking concrete action to effectively fight AMR. Measures should include improving surveillance of resistance, regulation of the appropriate use of antimicrobial drugs in human medicine and animal farming, education and public campaigns on overuse as well as incentives and funding systems to promote the development of new medicines, new diagnostics and innovative interventions to improve antibiotic use and infection control.

As one of the most experienced players in this specialized field, ESCMID is offering the support of its experts to help policy makers develop and implement effective measures to tackle the problem. The society not only has more than 7,000 active members on all continents, but also reaches every expert in the AMR field through its extensive global network.

Sincerely,

Mario Poljak, MD
ESCMID President

Jesús Rodríguez-Baño, MD
ESCMID President-elect

Murat Akova, MD
ESCMID Past-President

Cc: Director-General Margaret Chan, World Health Organization