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PAHO/WHO Trinidad and Tobago Country Office MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PAHO/WHO and Ministry of Health Host Workshop to Promote Smarter Antibiotic Use in Trinidad and Tobago

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago – 15 August 2025 (PAHO)— In collaboration with the Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), the Ministry of Health, Trinidad and Tobago, recently hosted the Region of the Americas' first Tailoring Antimicrobial Resistance Programmes (TAP) Workshop.

When bacteria and other microorganisms no longer respond to antibiotics or other medicines, common infections can become harder to treat. This means longer illnesses, more hospital visits, and higher medical costs for individuals and families. The TAP Workshop helps countries, like Trinidad and Tobago, design practical, people-focused solutions to encourage responsible use of antibiotics by doctors, pharmacists and the general population. Therefore, this TAP workshop marks a significant milestone in the regional effort to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR) by ensuring that life-saving medicines remain effective for generations to come.

Developed by the WHO Regional Office for Europe, the TAP methodology is a structured, five-stage approach that integrates behavioural science and cultural insights to help countries design people-centred AMR interventions. The workshop introduced the TAP methodology, highlighted its global applications, and engaged key stakeholders in identifying priority behaviours, target populations, and intervention settings.

Held in Port of Spain, the workshop is part of PAHO's "South-South Solidarity Against Superbugs" project under the Cooperation Among Countries for Health Development (CCHD) initiative. The project helps CARICOM member countries like Trinidad and Tobago, Argentina, and Panama work together to fight antimicrobial resistance. It's supported by the PAHO headquarters AMR Special Program, the Caribbean Subregional office and the Trinidad and Tobago Country Office.

Dr. Franka Des Vignes, PAHO/WHO Subregional Advisor for Disease Surveillance and Epidemiology, noted, "Trinidad and Tobago's leadership and dedication to antimicrobial resistance mitigation through a comprehensive multisectoral, people-centred approach has been recognized by its selection to pioneer the first TAP implementation in the Region of the Americas. This initiative underscores the country's commitment to regional health security and collaborative efforts to combat AMR. "

This pioneering initiative was carried out in close partnership with the Ministry of Health of Trinidad and Tobago, with leadership from Dr. Rajeev Nagassar, Medical Microbiologist; Mrs. Anesa Doodnath-Siboo, Principal Pharmacist; and Mrs. Amanda Helene Mohammed, Pharmacist III.

The multisectoral list of participants included representatives from the Ministry of Health, the Regional Health Authorities, the Pharmacy Board of Trinidad and Tobago, the Pharmaceutical Society, the University of the West Indies and a wide range of civil society organizations. Their collaboration during the workshop was key to shaping the next steps, including the establishment of the TAP Working Group and the development of a research protocol to guide a national, community-focused antimicrobial stewardship programme aligned with Phase 2 of Trinidad and Tobago's National Action Plan on AMR.

The workshop was led by Dr. Sahil Warsi, PAHO/WHO Behaviour Change Consultant and Social Anthropologist, who guided participants through the TAP methodology, drawing on extensive experience in/from Europe and Central Asia.

Also supporting the training was Nathalie El Omeiri, Advisor, Antimicrobial Resistance Response, based in Washington, D.C. "The TAP methodology represents a paradigm shift in how we address AMR by focusing on the behaviours, motivations, and lived realities of people. Because the drivers of AMR are as diverse as they are complex, robust local data is essential to fully understand them and to design more effective and lasting interventions", she pointed out.

Since 2022, PAHO's AMR Special Program has been working closely with WHO/Europe to adapt and introduce this approach in the Region. TAP is grounded in frameworks such as the Capability, Opportunity, Motivation - Behaviour (COM-B) model and the Behaviour Change Wheel. TAP addresses the persistent "practice-behaviour gap" and helps countries to understand why people may not always follow best practices and to sustainable behaviour change solutions that fit their local context.

As AMR continues to pose a global threat to health systems and economies, this workshop signals a critical step forward in the Caribbean's commitment to behavioural science-led, multisectoral action. Trinidad and Tobago's pioneering role sets the stage for wider adoption of TAP across the region.

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Additional Information

About the Pan American Health Organization:

The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) works with the countries of the Americas to improve the health and quality of life of its population. Founded in 1902, it is the world's oldest international public health agency. It serves as the Regional Office of WHO for the Americas and is the specialized health agency of the Inter-American system.

Photos with captions



(Far Left) Facilitator Dr. Sahil Warsi engages in healthy discussions with participants of the during the Multidisciplinary Workshop on “Tailoring Antimicrobial Resistance Programmes” (TAP) In Trinidad and Tobago



(Far Left) Facilitators and Participants of the Multidisciplinary Workshop on “Tailoring Antimicrobial Resistance Programmes” (TAP) In Trinidad and Tobago



Dr. Rajeev Nagassar, Medical Microbiologist delivers his presentation on the Analysis of current AMR epidemiological situation and drivers in Trinidad and Tobago



Some of the participants of the Multidisciplinary Workshop on “Tailoring Antimicrobial Resistance Programmes” (TAP) In Trinidad and Tobago