



MARKING OF THE WORLD CONSUMER RIGHTS DAY

March 15, 2016

The past decade has experienced positive change in Kenya's public health sector thanks to concerted Government efforts. Data from the 2010 Demographic and Health Survey reveal that poverty and child mortality have decreased, and a larger proportion of the population has access to better healthcare—including lifesaving antibiotics¹. Despite these improvements, the infectious disease burden in Kenya remains high. This combination of improved access invited an unexpected guest: antibiotic resistance².

Indeed, Kenya is already experiencing high levels of antibiotic resistance, and in most cases, it is worsening. Exactly how high the rates are currently or how quickly they are increasing is not known with any certainty. Third generation antibiotics are losing effectiveness against infectious diseases common in low and middle income countries.

Locally, there is a growing concern about increasing resistance to the second-line agent ciprofloxacin and common antibiotics like cotrimoxazole, tetracycline and ampicillin non-pathogenic *E. coli*³. The intensive use of antibiotics and consequent selective pressure placed on bacteria make hospitals “hotbeds for evolution” of resistant organisms⁴. Transmission of resistant infections can easily take place between patients and from patients to hospital staff when standard infection control precautions are lacking, hindering the ability of hospitals to prevent deaths and cure diseases.

¹ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2010, *Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2008-2009* Nairobi, Kenya

² Global Antibiotic Resistance Partnership – Kenya Working Group, 2011, *Situation Analysis and Recommendations: Antibiotic Use and Resistance in Kenya* Washington DC and New Delhi: Centre for Disease Dynamics, Economics and Policy

³ Kariuki, S., 2009 Antimicrobial Resistance in Kenya: What Surveillance Tells US, Global Antibiotic Resistance Partnership Inaugural Meeting, Nairobi, Kenya, Unpublished Conference Proceeding, Resources for the Future, Washington DC, PowerPoint

⁴ Miralles, M.A. 2010 Strengthening Health Systems to improve Access to Antimicrobials and the Containment of Resistance in Developing Countries. A. Sosa, D.K. Byarugaba, C.F. Amabile-Cuevas et al, Springer



In some developing countries, up to 60% of all infections are due to resistant bacteria⁵. Nonetheless, the growth of resistance rates can be slowed and even reversed as the health of the public is enhanced, by preventing many infections through vaccination; by better targeting antibiotic use for curable bacterial infections rather than viral, fungal or parasitic illnesses.

It is in this regard that The Competition Authority of Kenya joins Consumers International (CI) in celebrating World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) **on March 15, 2016** themed *“Stay Safe, Stop Antibiotic Abuse”*. WCRD is an opportunity to promote the basic rights of all consumers, for demanding that those rights are respected and protected, and for protesting the market abuses and social injustices which undermine them.

In marking this day, we aim to increase consumer awareness through sensitization on the negative role *“hotbeds of evolution”* of resistant organisms⁶, self-prescription, counterfeits, and unscrupulous medical practitioners play in increasing antibiotic resistance.

⁵ Kakai, R. and I. A. Wamola, 2002, Minimizing Antibiotic Resistance to *Staphylococcus Aureus* in Developing Countries, *East African Medical Journal* 79 (11) 574 - 579

⁶ Miralles, M.A. 2010 Strengthening Health Systems to improve Access to Antimicrobials and the Containment of Resistance in Developing Countries. A. Sosa, D.K. Byarugaba, C.F. Amabile-Cuevas et al, Springer