

Report of the Standing Committee

Dr Mandeep Dhaliwal, UNDP
on behalf of the Standing Committee



116th Standing Committee

November 2024

Chair: Dr Karin Källander, Senior Health Specialist
and Team Lead Implementation Research,
UNICEF

117th Standing Committee

May 2025

Chair: Dr Jeremy Farrar, WHO Chief Scientist /
TDR Special Programme Coordinator

Both meetings were held virtually

SC116 Decisions and recommendations

Update on TDR activities

- Requested that TDR continues to demonstrate to funders and partners the return on investments from TDR's activities in countries, emphasizing the critical role of implementation research in catalysing introduction of new tools in countries, including those supported by PDPs.
- Reiterated that funding landscape continues to be challenging and requested that TDR needs to be strategic and proactive in its planning.

Financial and Programme management update

- Welcomed the financial update as of October 2024 and outlook 2024–2027 and requested to continue to plan conservatively and consider any savings as potential for bridging the gap to the next biennium.
- Welcomed the updated version of the TDR Investment Case and requested development of a comprehensive communications strategy to share the examples and cases from the investment case with funders, partners and global community, highlighting the value added of TDR's activities over the years and into the future.

SC116 Decisions and recommendations continued

Governance and partnerships update

- Expressed satisfaction with the high number of applications received in response to the Call for new STAC members for 2025 and beyond. Requested the new slate of STAC members to be presented at the next meeting for review in advance JCB's approval in 2025.

SC117 Decisions and recommendations

Update on recruitment of TDR's new Director and transition plans

- Welcomed the extension granted by WHO to the current Director until the end of June 2025 but expressed concern that the appointment of the Director of TDR has not yet been made.
- Strongly recommended, to ensure a stable transition upon the departure of the current Director, that the Manager of Partnerships and Global Engagement and the Unit Head of Programme Innovation and Management act as interim director from July 2025, with major decisions (kept to a minimum) agreed upon with the Chief Scientist. This is to ensure continuity in TDR governance and financial implementation moving forward.
- Requested WHO leadership, to facilitate appointment of a new Director using the list of top candidates identified through a rigorous process, adhering to WHO policies and procedures. This process was conducted by a Special Panel comprising the Chair of JCB, SC members, and TDR co-sponsor representatives.

SC117 Decisions and recommendations continued

Update on recruitment of TDR's new Director and transition plans (continued)

- Requested the WHO leadership that the appointment is made in time to announce the new TDR Director at the JCB meeting in June 2025 and that the new Director begins as soon as possible to prevent instability and risk to donor commitments.
- Requested the outgoing Chief Scientist to follow up on this request and that the incoming Chief Scientist is briefed before 16 June and attends the JCB meeting in June.
- Recommended reiterating TDR's stable position to implement its 2025 and 2026-2027 workplans. Emphasized that the appointment of the new Director carries no financial liability for WHO but benefits WHO, and strengthens TDR's independence in financing and governance.

SC117 Decisions and recommendations continued

Programme budget and workplan 2026–2027

- Welcomed and endorsed programme budget and workplan 2026-2027 with its two scenario levels and the contingency plan.
- Reiterated the recommendation made at the SC116 meeting to carry over to 2026-2027 the undesignated funds that are not programmed for the current biennium to allow a smooth start of the next biennium's implementation.

Brainstorming on future of global health and global health research and possible scenarios for TDR's role – preparing for JCB discussion

- Recommended that time is set aside during the June meeting of the JCB to hear from members and observers. It is recommended that this session follow the update from TDR co-sponsors to benefit from the trends in the co-sponsoring agencies and to ensure the presence of co-sponsors during this discussion within the wider JCB.

SC117 Decisions and recommendations continued

News from the TDR co-sponsors

- Acknowledged and thanked for the updates from all four co-sponsors, appreciating their sharing of current developments and rich interactions with TDR. It is recommended that the Secretariat continues to closely interact with each co-sponsor to expand the mutually beneficial relationship.

TDR governance and partnerships

- Welcomed the update on the JCB call for nominations and upcoming elections. Acknowledged that existing members requested a short extension of the deadline to allow them to submit their application. Acknowledged the possible vacancies under paragraph 2.2.1, resource contributors. Recommended maintaining existing constituencies to allow new contributors to apply next year. Recommended that resource contributors group allows the Government of Switzerland to apply for JCB later in 2025 and recommended a decision by JCB to be made to that effect. Requested Secretariat to inform WHO Legal Office in advance of JCB.

SC117 Decisions and recommendations continued

TDR governance and partnerships (continued)

- Thanked Dr Sunil de Alwis for his work as the Chair of JCB and acknowledged the end of the tenure of the Chair at the end of the JCB meeting in June. Recommended the nomination of Dr Dirk Mueller as the new Chair of the JCB for a three-year term.
- Thanked Dr Daniel Eibach for his work as the Vice-chair of JCB and acknowledged the end of the tenure of Vice-chair at the end of JCB meeting in June. Recommended the nomination of Dr Iris Cazali as the new Vice-chair of the JCB for a 2-year term.
- Welcomed the results of open call for STAC membership. Endorsed the proposed STAC membership for final approval by the JCB, including the new members recommended by the Director.
- Requested that arrangements be made to facilitate virtual participation at the JCB meeting in June. While recognizing potential limitations, this will enable key stakeholders who are unable to attend in person to connect virtually.