

# Report of the Standing Committee

## **118th SC meeting**

17 October and 19 November 2025,  
held virtually

## **119th SC meeting**

16 and 17 April 2026, WHO  
Headquarters, Geneva

Dr Iris Cazali, JCB Vice-Chair

# 118th SC decisions and recommendations

## Follow-up to the recommendations of the 48th JCB session

- Welcomed the update on the recruitment process for the new TDR Director and discussions with Director-General as well as on the overall WHO restructuring process. Welcomed the appointment of TDR Director as of 1 March 2026 from the list of candidates recommended by the selection panel.
- Reiterated that the new TDR Director shall prioritize resource mobilization, enhanced partnership with all global health stakeholders and sustainability of the programme upon their arrival.

## Brief update on TDR activities

- Recommended to continue active engagement with WHO departments that directly align with current strategic goals as well as with all co-sponsors. Recommended that a new assessment of common goals and priorities be conducted as all global health agencies, including TDR co-sponsors, are currently going through transformative processes.

# 118th SC decisions and recommendations (cont.)

## Programme and risk management updates

- Requested a reduction in the direct reporting burden on the Director within the Director's Office and across the Programme, to enable greater focus on the prioritized areas identified above.
- Requested that the Director's Assistant role be fulfilled promptly, either through shared or reassigned staff, and that the Administrative and Finance Officer position be addressed via consultancies or other options in order not to put the financial management at risk.
- Requested zero-cost staffing measures, such as that technical officers from DIR provide support or be re-assigned in areas affected by newly frozen vacancies within RCS and IMP.
- Recommended a comprehensive review of options to enhance integration between the strategic areas of Capacity Strengthening and Implementation Research.
- Requested to consider assigning additional responsibilities to the role of the Manager, Partnerships and Global Engagement to serve as Senior Advisor, ensuring stability, providing additional support, and deputizing for the new TDR Director as needed.

# 118th SC decisions and recommendations (cont.)

## Financial and Programme management update and revised planned cost

- Requested that immediate steps are taken to temporarily freeze hiring for newly vacant positions and issuing / renewal of new temporary contracts. Requested an update during the spring meeting of the SC on staff positions.

## Governance

- Welcomed and approved the submission from the Government of Switzerland for a seat on JCB starting on 1 January 2026.

# 119th SC decisions and recommendations

## Welcome and opening remarks

- Welcomed the arrival of Dr Marcus Lacerda as the new Director of TDR and to his first session of the Standing Committee (SC).
- Expressed special thanks to Dr Garry Aslanyan for serving as Director a.i., as well as to Dr Michael Mihut and all TDR staff for their steady support during the transition period.

# 119th SC decisions and recommendations (cont.)

## Follow-up to the recommendations of the 118th session of the Standing Committee and the 48th session of the Joint Coordinating Board

- Reiterated that this transition period has demonstrated the strength of TDR's governance model, its co-sponsored nature, and its strong commitment to achieving the goals of the Special Programme.
- Requested that these positive reflections be widely shared with members of the JCB, donors and other stakeholders, and that they be included in the upcoming letter from the Chair to JCB members, observers and other stakeholders.
- Requested that the Secretariat draft lessons learned from the transition experience in advance of the next session of the SC in November 2026, to inform a discussion on further strengthening the Programme, especially during times of uncertainty.
- Requested that all follow-ups to recommendations from previous meetings be tracked, and that recommendations still underway be incorporated into the next cycle of reporting at the next SC session.
- Requested that several key actions be prioritised, including promoting and safeguarding TDR's autonomy within WHO, supporting the Director in having time to focus on the resource mobilization drive, and appointing a Deputy Director.

# 119th SC decisions and recommendations (cont.)

## Update on TDR activities

- Requested continued efforts to refocus capacity strengthening activities toward supporting institutions and research ecosystems in countries considering the evolving global health environment.

## Financial, Programme management and risk management update

- Requested that the 2028–2029 budget scenario levels are presented to JCB as following: working level at \$40M, target level at \$50M and contingency level at \$32M.
- Requested that TDR's fundraising efforts are further strengthened, expanding to new potential partners and funders. Requested that fundraising efforts remain distinct from WHO's broader resource mobilization efforts, to ensure targeted support for implementing TDR's strategy and the biennial workplan and budget approved by the JCB.

# 119th SC decisions and recommendations (cont.)

## Future of global health architecture and TDR's role

### Governance and partnerships update

- Requested that the Secretariat and the Chair of the JCB work with the SC and others to help organise a special panel focused on evolving global health architecture and TDR's role in the future global health ecosystem.
- Requested a specific discussion at the next SC session on strengthening co-sponsor engagement, including division of labour, complementarity, and joint resource mobilization for TDR.