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Special Programmes:

UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases: Joint Coordinating Board (JCB) – Report on attendance at the JCB in 2018 and nomination of a member in place of Maldives whose term expires on 31 December 2018

The Joint Coordinating Board (JCB) of the WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases Research (TDR) acts as the Governing Body of the Special Programme and is responsible for its overall policy and strategy. This paper describes the background and composition of the JCB TDR.

Currently, Maldives represents the WHO South-East Asia (SEA) Region until 31 December 2018 under Paragraph 2.2.2 of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Among Member States of the WHO South-East Asia (SEA) Region, Sri Lanka had shown interest in representing the Region for the mentioned period. However, during the Forty-first Session of the Joint Coordinating Board for TDR (JCB TDR), which was held at WHO headquarters in Geneva on 18–20 June 2018, Sri Lanka was elected under Paragraph 2.2.3 of the MoU among Cooperating Parties. Therefore, the nomination of another Member State under Paragraph 2.2.2 is to be considered by the Seventy-first Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia for a four-year period from 1 January 2019 onwards to replace Maldives.

The attached Working Paper was presented to the High-level Preparatory (HLP) Meeting for its review and recommendations. The HLP reviewed the paper and made the following recommendation for consideration by the Seventy-first Session of the Regional Committee:

Action by Member States

- The membership of Myanmar under paragraph 2.2.2 of the Memorandum of Understanding was proposed at the HLP Meeting for a period of four years starting from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2022. The proposal was seconded by Thailand and the HLP Meeting accepted the proposal for the consideration of the Seventy-first Session of the Regional Committee in September.

The report on attendance at the JCB in 2018 and the HLP recommendation are submitted to the Seventy-first Session of the Regional Committee for its consideration.

Introduction

1. The Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) is a global programme of international technical cooperation initiated by WHO and cosponsored by UNICEF, UNDP, the World Bank and WHO. It operates within a broad framework of intergovernmental and interagency cooperation and participation. The two interdependent objectives are developing improved tools for the control of tropical diseases and strengthening the research capability of the affected countries themselves.
2. The TDR is governed by three bodies:
 - The Joint Coordinating Board (JCB);
 - The Standing Committee; and
 - The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC).
3. The relevant governance documents are:
 - memorandum of understanding (MoU);
 - resolutions of the World Health Assembly and the Executive Board of WHO; and
 - procedures for the selection of members of the JCB.
4. The Cooperating Parties are:
 - those governments contributing to Special Programme resources; providing technical and/or scientific support to it; and which are directly affected by the diseases dealt with by the Special Programme;
 - those intergovernmental and other non-profit-making organizations contributing to Special Programme resources or providing technical and/or scientific support to it.
5. WHO is the Executing Agency.
6. Special Programme resources are the financial resources made available to it by governments and organizations through the Tropical Diseases Research Fund, an international fund administered by the World Bank, WHO Voluntary Fund for Health Promotion and other agency funds.

The Joint Coordinating Board

Functions

7. The JCB shall, for the purpose of coordinating the interests and responsibilities of the Parties cooperating in the Special Programme, have the following functions:
 - review and decide upon the planning and execution of the Special Programme by keeping itself informed of all aspects of its development, and consider reports and recommendations submitted to it by the Standing Committee, the Executing Agency and STAC;

- approve the proposed plan of action and budget for the coming financial period prepared by the Executing Agency and reviewed by the Standing Committee;
- review the proposals of the Standing Committee and approve arrangements for financing of the Special Programme in that period;
- review the proposed longer-term plans of action and their financial implications;
- review the annual financial statements submitted by the Executing Agency, as well as the audit report thereon, submitted by the external auditor of the Executing Agency;
- review periodic reports that evaluate the progress of the Special Programme towards the achievement of its objectives;
- endorse the proposals of the Executing Agency and the Standing Committee for STAC membership;
- consider such other matters relating to the Special Programme as may be referred to it by any Cooperating Party.

8. The guidelines for JCB representatives selected by the WHO Regional Committee is given in Annex 1.

Composition

9. The JCB consists of 28 members. Originally, its membership was for a three-year period, but those selected for membership from 2009 onwards serve for a period of four years.

- Twelve members are representatives from governments contributing resources to the Special Programme, selected by the contributors themselves. Each such representative may also serve as a representative of a constituency established by governments under this membership category. Each constituency will develop its own procedure to designate its representative to the Board. In the event that a government intends to serve also as a representative of a constituency on the Board, it shall indicate this in its application for membership, it being understood that each government participating in that constituency shall be entitled to rotate as the representative of that constituency at any session of the JCB (Paragraph 2.2.1 of the MoU).
- Six members are government representatives selected by the WHO Regional Committees from among those countries directly affected by the diseases dealt with by the Special Programme, or from among those providing technical or scientific support to the Special Programme (Paragraph 2.2.2 of the MoU).
- Six members are designated by the JCB itself from among the remaining Cooperating Parties (Paragraph 2.2.3 of the MoU).
- The remaining four members are drawn from the four cosponsors that comprise the Standing Committee of the JCB (UNDP, UNICEF, World Bank and WHO).

10. Members of the JCB serve for a period of four years and may be reappointed. Other Cooperating Parties may, at their request, be represented as Observers upon approval by the JCB.

Membership of the JCB from the South-East Asia Region

11. At present, the following three Member States from the South-East Asia (SEA) Region are members of the JCB:

| Member State | Period | Selected by | Paragraph of MoU | Remarks |
|--------------|-----------|--------------------|------------------|--|
| Maldives* | 2015–2018 | Regional Committee | 2.2.2 | Among Member States of the WHO SEA Region, Sri Lanka had shown interest in representing the Region for the period mentioned. However, Sri Lanka was elected under Paragraph 2.2.3 by JCB at its 41st Session in June 2018. |
| India | 2018–2021 | TDR contributor | 2.2.1 | |
| Thailand | 2018–2021 | TDR contributor | 2.2.1 | |

*Term will expire on 31 December 2018.

- Paragraph 2.2.3 of the Memorandum of Understanding (members selected by the JCB itself from among the remaining Cooperating Parties)
 - Sri Lanka was elected from the SEA Region as a Member under Paragraph 2.2.3 and its term is from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2022.

12. Present and past representatives to the JCB from the SEA Region from 2000 till date are given in Annex 2.

The Standing Committee

Composition and functions

13. The Standing Committee shall comprise the cosponsors, namely UNDP, UNICEF, the World Bank and WHO. It shall have the following functions:

- review the plan of action and budget for the coming financial period, as prepared by the Executing Agency, in time for presentation to the JCB, not less than 45 days before the annual session of the JCB;
- take proposals to the JCB for financing of the Special Programme for the coming financial period;
- approve reallocation of resources between programme areas and scientific working groups of the Special Programme during a financial period, upon recommendation by STAC and the Executing Agency, and report such reallocations to the JCB;
- examine the reports submitted by STAC to the Executing Agency and the comments thereon, make necessary observations and transmit these, with comments as appropriate, to the JCB;

- review particular aspects of the Special Programme, including those that may be referred to it by the JCB, and present findings and recommendations in the form of reports to the JCB;
- inform the JCB, as required, regarding Special Programme matters of interest to it.

Information on the Forty-first Session of the JCB

- The Forty-first session of the TDR Joint Coordinating Board (JCB) was held at WHO headquarters, Geneva, on 18–20 June 2018.
- A summary report of the attendance of JCB members at the Forty-first session is attached as Annex 3.
- Member Governments of the SEA Region in 2018 are: India, Maldives and Thailand.

Dates and venues of future JCB sessions

14. At its Forty-first session, the JCB confirmed that the Forty-second session of the JCB will be held in Geneva on 25–26 June 2019.

Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)

Composition

15. STAC shall comprise 15 scientists and other technical personnel who will serve in their personal capacities to represent the broad range of biomedical and other disciplines required for Special Programme activities. Members of STAC, including the Chairman, will be selected on the basis of scientific or technical competence by the Executing Agency, in consultation with the Standing Committee and with the endorsement of the JCB.

- Members of STAC, including the Chairman, shall be appointed to serve for a period of two years, and will be eligible for reappointment. To maintain continuity of membership, the expiration of the initial terms of office of members of STAC will be staggered.

Functions

16. STAC shall have the following functions:

- review, from a scientific and technical standpoint, the content, scope and dimensions of the Special Programme, including the diseases covered and approaches to be adopted;
- recommend priorities within the Special Programme, including the establishment and dis-establishment of scientific working groups, and all scientific and technical activities related to the Programme; and
- provide the JCB and the Executing Agency with a continuous independent evaluation of the scientific and technical aspects of all activities of the Special Programme.

17. For these purposes, STAC may propose and present for consideration such technical documents and recommendations as it may deem appropriate.

Annex 1

UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) Joint Coordinating Board (JCB): Guidelines for JCB representatives selected by the WHO Regional Committees

Background issues

1. This document is intended to provide guidelines for those selected by the regional committees for JCB membership.
2. Regional representatives are encouraged to participate proactively in discussions at the JCB session. Representatives from disease-endemic countries and other regional representatives can contribute to TDR; to do this, they should play an active role during JCB sessions.
3. To facilitate participation of the regional representatives at the JCB, they need to be briefed about TDR before arriving for their first JCB session. A regional representative should be well versed not only with his/her country's relationship with TDR, but also know about TDR activities in the Region. A good briefing should enable representatives to participate in and contribute to discussions at the JCB session and benefit the cause of TDR.
- 4 The TDR Secretariat and the regional offices will assist with this briefing.

Guidelines on the roles of representatives

5. A few guidelines on the roles of regional representatives are listed below:
 - recognizing the importance of voicing the needs of the country, the Region and disease-endemic countries in the Board's deliberations, represent both the country and the Region at the JCB session;
 - familiarizing themselves with the work of TDR and regional issues by
 - reading background information provided by the Programme and/or the Regional Office – the TDR website is www.who.int/tdr
 - contacting (or visiting)
 - current and/or past representatives who have attended JCB sessions,
 - key national or neighbouring country scientists familiar with the work of TDR (details to be provided by TDR), and
 - the Regional Office;
 - securing national briefing before the JCB session and providing feedback to the government after the JCB session;
 - securing briefing from the Regional Office before the JCB session and providing feedback to it after the JCB session, with possible attendance at the Regional Committee meeting at TDR's expense if appropriate;
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- participating in the following meetings just prior to the JCB session
 - JCB briefing meeting, and
 - meeting of regional representatives, aimed primarily at disease-endemic countries;
 - participating in the virtual network of regional representatives;
 - keeping JCB dates free to ensure attendance for the whole term of office if nominated by the government for the full period; if not nominated for the full period or if changes occur, briefing the successor and ensuring the availability of suitable alternatives in case of absence and briefing them thoroughly; and
 - providing briefing to the next regional representative at the end of the term of office.
6. It is recommended that all JCB representatives should possess the following qualifications:
- expertise in the field of one or more of the communicable diseases dealt with by TDR, preferably from the research side or with good knowledge of research issues;
 - experience, preferably as a research coordinator in or linked to the Ministry of Health or Science and Technology, with experience in the overall coordination of national health research activities and collaboration with the Regional Office and TDR;
 - fluency in English or French, the working languages of WHO as the Executing Agency for TDR;
 - familiarity with the working of WHO or other UN specialized agencies and past experience related to their governing body and/or international scientific meetings; and
 - knowledge of the work of TDR or willingness to rapidly acquire such knowledge.
7. Cooperating Parties participating as observers should preferably also meet the above-mentioned criteria.

Annex 3

Summary report of the attendance of JCB members at the Forty-first session of the Joint Coordinating Board (JCB) Geneva, Switzerland, 18–20 June 2018

Attendance

Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Comoros, Cuba, DNDi, Fiji, Germany and Luxembourg Constituency, INDEPTH Network, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Nigeria, Norway and Switzerland Constituency, Peru, Republic of Moldova, Spain and Panama Constituency, Suriname, Sweden, Thailand and India Constituency, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America Constituency, Zambia, UNICEF, UNDP, WB, TDR, WHO HQ, Brazil, Italy, Kuwait, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Viet Nam, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Fondation Merieux, Institut Pasteur, IHMT, MMV, Fiocruz, Path, The COHRED Group, Wellcome Trust.

Decisions

- (1) Appointed Dr Ahmed Ouledi (representative of Comoros) as Rapporteur for JCB41.
- (2) Adopted the agenda of JCB41.
- (3) Accepted the declarations of interest as presented to the Secretariat, with no conflicts foreseen.
- (4) Approved the 2017 Annual Report.
- (5) Endorsed the report of the Standing Committee.
- (6) Endorsed the report by Chair STAC.
- (7) Approved the 2017 TDR Results Report.
- (8) Approved the 2017 TDR Risk Management Report.
- (9) Approved the Performance Framework 2018–2023.
- (10) Approved the financial management report 2016–2017 and outlook 2018–2021, including the two budget scenario levels for 2020–2021.
- (11) Approved the Research and Development Pooled Fund Development Phase Financial Report.
- (12) Elections: Resource contributors elected for membership under Paragraph 2.2.1 of the MoU were the governments of:
 - (i) Belgium
 - (ii) China
 - (iii) Japan
 - (iv) Sweden

The Cooperating Parties elected for membership by the JCB under Paragraph 2.2.3 of the MoU were:

- (i) Peru
- (ii) Sri Lanka.

- (13) Approved the proposed membership of STAC.
- (14) Dates of future sessions will be confirmed once the Standing Committee has had a chance to discuss the recommendation by the JCB to consider a different time of the year. The current dates are as follows:
 - JCB42 will be held on 25–26 June 2019 (briefing session 24 June).
 - JCB43 will be held on 16–17 June 2020 (briefing session 15 June).

Both meetings will be held in Geneva.

Recommendations

- (1) Recommended exploring potential indicators to demonstrate the impact of TDR's research and expanding communication of TDR's impact and influence.
- (2) Welcomed WHO's appreciation of the Special Programmes and requested that the decisions made by the JCB continue to be considered within hosting agency policies.
- (3) Welcomed and appreciated the input provided by the cosponsors and encouraged continued engagement of all TDR cosponsors.
- (4) Recommended identifying new ways to ensure the visibility of core fund contributors in specific TDR activities and reporting.
- (5) Requested a further split in the financial report to show the proportion of costs for technical personnel and those for operations support personnel.
- (6) Recommended modifying the wording of the risk regarding funding sustainability to add the risk coming from two major contributors providing almost half of the core funding.
- (7) Welcomed the technical presentations on SORT IT and ESSENCE on Health Research initiative. Encouraged by the engagement of TDR with a broad range of partners such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Requested that TDR continue to engage with such partners to expand its impact on global health.
- (8) Accepted the joint nomination of Sweden and the United Kingdom to represent the resource contributors group and Comoros as the representative of the Disease Endemic Countries (DEC) group for the next 2 years, provided that the Government of Comoros is reappointed by the Regional Committee for a further term on the Board.
- (9) Requested the Standing Committee to explore the possibility of holding the JCB meetings earlier in the year.