



REGIONAL COMMITTEE

Provisional Agenda item 12.1

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UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases: Joint Coordinating Board (JCB) – Report on attendance at JCB in 2022 and nomination of a Member in place of Myanmar whose term expires on 31 December 2022

The Joint Coordinating Board (JCB) of the WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Disease 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 of TDR.

Currently, Myanmar represents the WHO South-East Asia Region until 31 December 2022 as a Member under the terms of Paragraph 2.2.2 of the Memorandum of Understanding. The Seventy-fifth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia in 2022 will be called upon to decide on a Member from the Region that will replace Myanmar for a four-year term commencing 1 January 2023. Among Member States of the WHO SEA Region, Sri Lanka expressed interest to apply for membership under Paragraph 2.2.3.

Currently, Sri Lanka represents the SE Asia Region as Member of JCB under Paragraph 2.2.3 and it has re-applied for membership in the same category. However, the elections could not be organized in 2022, and Sri Lanka's term of membership was extended by one year till 31 December 2023.

The Forty-fifth Session of the Joint Coordinating Board for TDR (JCB TDR) was held virtually on 15–16 June 2022. The report on attendance of Member States from the Region at the JCB session in 2022 is attached as Annex 3

During the HLP Meeting, the distinguished delegate from Thailand proposed Bangladesh as Member to replace Myanmar as a Member in the JCB to represent the WHO South-East Asia Region under Paragraph 2.2.2. Sri Lanka seconded the proposal to designate Bangladesh as a Member of JCB to represent the WHO South-East Asia Region under Paragraph 2.2.2. The proposal was approved unanimously. The HLP Meeting made the following recommendation to the Organization:

Action by WHO

- (1) Recommend to the Seventy-fifth Session of the Regional Committee that Bangladesh be nominated as a Member of the JCB of TDR to represent the WHO South-East Asia Region under Paragraph 2.2.2.

The Seventy-fifth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia is expected to take a decision on the JCB Membership of Bangladesh for the period 2023 to 2026 under Paragraph 2.2.2 to replace Myanmar.

This Working Paper and the HLP Meeting recommendation are submitted to the Seventy-fifth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia for its consideration and decision.

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, and “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:
 - Joint Coordinating Board (JCB);
 - Standing Committee; and
 - Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC).
3. The relevant governance documents are:
 - Memorandum of Understanding (MoU);
 - relevant resolutions of the World Health Assembly and the Executive Board of WHO; and
 - procedures for the selection of members of JCB.
4. The Cooperating Parties are:
 - those governments contributing to the Special Programme’s 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 the Special Programme’s 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, the 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 next financial period prepared by the Executing Agency and reviewed by the Standing Committee;
- review the proposals of the Standing Committee and approve arrangements for the financing of the Special Programme during 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; and
- consider such other matters relating to the Special Programme as may be referred to it by a Cooperating Party.

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

Composition of JCB

9. The JCB consists of 28 members. Originally, 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 to the Special Programme's resources, selected by the contributors themselves. Each such representative may also serve as a representative to the 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 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 the 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 of the JCB (UNDP, UNICEF, World Bank and WHO) that comprise the Standing Committee.

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

Membership of JCB from the South-East Asia Region

11. Currently the following four Member States from the South-East Asia Region are members of JCB:

Member State	Period	Selected by	Relevant paragraph of MoU	Remarks
Myanmar*	2019–2022*	Regional Committee	2.2.2	The WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia to decide on a new member to represent the Region for a period of four years from 1 January 2023.
India	2004–2025	TDR contributor	2.2.1	
Thailand	2010–2025	TDR Contributor	2.2.1	
Sri Lanka	2019–2023	The JCB itself	2.2.3	Term extended by one year by JCB at its June 2022 meeting.

12. Present and past representatives from JCB from the South-East Asia Region from 2000 till date are given in Annex 2.

Information on the Forty-fifth Session of the JCB

13. The Forty-fifth Session of the TDR Joint Coordinating Board was held virtually on 15–16 June 2022. The summary report of the attendance of JCB members at the Forty-fifth Session is attached as Annex 3.

14. The Member States from the Region during 2022 are India, Myanmar, Thailand and Sri Lanka. However, only Myanmar and Sri Lanka participated in the Forty-fifth Session and India and Thailand were not represented.

Dates and venues of future JCB sessions

15. At its Forty-fifth Session, the JCB confirmed that its Forty-sixth Session will be held in Geneva on 14–15 June 2023.

Membership from the WHO SE Asia Region

16. The membership of Myanmar under Paragraph 2.2.2 (Member selected by the Regional Committee) ends on 31 December 2022.
17. During the HLP Meeting, the distinguished delegate from Thailand proposed Bangladesh to replace Myanmar as a Member in the JCB to represent the WHO South-East Asia Region under Paragraph 2.2.2. Sri Lanka seconded the proposal to designate Bangladesh as Member of JCB and it was carried unanimously.
18. The Seventy-fifth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia is expected to take a decision on the JCB Membership of Bangladesh for the period 2023 to 2026 under Paragraph 2.2.2 to replace Myanmar.

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 Committee

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 TOR 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;
 - 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 2

Past and present representatives on the JCB from the WHO South-East Asia Region (2000–2023)

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Annex 3

Summary report of the attendance of JCB members at the Forty-fifth Session (virtual) of the Joint Coordinating Board (JCB), 15–16 June 2022

Attendance

Members: Belgium, Burkina Faso, People's Republic of China, Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi), Ecuador, Fiocruz, Georgia, Germany and Luxembourg Constituency, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Panama and Spain Constituency, Peru, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America Constituency, Zambia;

Co-sponsors: United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, World Bank;

Other participants: Palestine;

Observers: Barbados, Cuba, Greece, Mozambique, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, South Africa, Tunisia, Türkiye, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Health Ministers' Council for Gulf Cooperation Council States, INDEPTH Network, Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV), Pasteur International Network Association (PINa), PATH, SightSavers, the COHRED Group (Council on Health Research for Development).

Decisions

- (1) Appointed Dr Tomás López-Peña (representative of Spain) as Rapporteur for JCB45.
- (2) Adopted the agenda of JCB45.
- (3) Accepted the declarations of interest as presented to the Secretariat, with no conflicts foreseen.
- (4) Endorsed the 2021 *TDR Results Report*.
- (5) Endorsed the 2021 *TDR Risk Management Report*.
- (6) Endorsed the *Financial Management Report 2020–2021* and *Outlook 2022–2025*.
- (7) Endorsed the certified financial statement for the year ended 31 December 2021.
- (8) Elections: Resource contributors agreed to elect or re-elect for membership by acclamation under Paragraph 2.2.1 of the Memorandum of Understanding the governments of:
 - Belgium
 - People's Republic of China
 - Japan
 - Nigeria
 - Sweden.

JCB agreed to extend the membership under Paragraph 2.2.3 of the Memorandum of Understanding of the following cooperating parties:

- Peru
 - Sri Lanka.
- (9) JCB approved the proposed membership of STAC from 1 July 2022.
- (10) Dates of future sessions will be confirmed:
- JCB46 will be held on 14 and 15 June 2023 (with a briefing session on 13 June).
 - JCB47 will be held on 12 and 13 June 2024 (with a briefing session on 11 June)

Both meetings will be held in Geneva.

Summary of the 2022 JCB session

The members and observers of TDR's Joint Coordinating Board (JCB) met virtually on 15–16 June 2022. Over 80 participants from TDR's key stakeholders from over 34 countries were involved in reviewing the achievements of the Special Programme during the past year, and its adaptation to the new environment in countries affected by the ongoing pandemic.

Participants welcomed the agility and flexibility of various activities that are responding well to the changes, including successful virtual capacity-building activities, laser-focused research in support of public health and disease control implementation, as well as the increased global visibility of TDR's role in global health through the highly successful *Global Health Matters* podcast.

Participants also welcomed the report of the Seventh External Review of the Special Programme, which reiterated the fit-for-purpose organizational structure and focus of TDR's strategic priority areas. Over the next few months, JCB members, TDR's co-sponsors (WHO, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank) and the Secretariat will further review and implement the recommendations made (view the report at <https://tdr.who.int/publications/m/item/seventh-external-review-of-tdr>).

JCB45 was also an opportunity to sketch the path for the development of the new strategy for 2024–2029, and agree on key next steps in the consultation, development and finalization of the new strategy in time for the next meeting of the Board in 2023.

Inclusive and engaged governance oversight is key to the success of any global health programme or initiative. The JCB's broad representation of donors, policy-makers, research leaders and managers, as well as public health practitioners, allows for continued focus on making sure TDR serves the needs of public health systems in countries. Participants also appreciated the efforts of the Secretariat staff in organizing this third virtual session of the Board. The session was chaired by Dr Vic Arendt from Luxembourg.

<https://tdr.who.int/groups/joint-coordinating-board>