

The Director-General

Ref.: CL/4543

Subject: **Call for nominations for the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes 2026**

Dear Minister,

I hereby have the honour of launching the call for nominations for the 2026 edition of the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes, on the theme “**Literacy for People, the Planet and Prosperity**”.

Established in 1967, these Prizes are sponsored by the Republic of Korea and the People’s Republic of China, and respectively reward the three laureates of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prizes, and the three laureates of the UNESCO Confucius Prizes for Literacy. They are awarded every year to individuals, governments and non-governmental organizations, in recognition of their distinguished contribution to the promotion of literacy.

Nominations must take into consideration this year’s theme, as well as the vision of each Prize, which is “mother-language-based literacy development” for the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize, and “the promotion of literacy, including functional literacy, leveraging technological environments, in support of adults in rural areas and out-of-school youth” for the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy.

The nomination process will take place via our online platform. Candidates are first invited to submit their applications to their National Commissions for UNESCO by completing the [online application form](#).

National Commissions for UNESCO will then select up to three nominees for each Prize to represent their country in 2025, and transmit these nominations, in English or French, to UNESCO, by **1 June 2026 at the very latest**.

UNESCO invites you to widely disseminate this call for nominations in your country among local public authorities, public and private learning and training institutions, NGOs, companies and other stakeholders involved in literacy programmes.

Further information on the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes and the nomination process can be found on the [dedicated website](#).

Any enquiries regarding the nomination process can be addressed to the Secretariat of the Prizes (Section of Youth, Literacy and Skills Development, Education Sector, tel.: +33 1 45 68 08 59; e-mail: literacyprizes@unesco.org).

Please accept, dear Minister, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Khaled El-Enany

Enclosures:

- Statutes of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize
- Statutes of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy
- Leaflet on the nomination process

cc: Permanent Delegations to UNESCO
National Commissions for UNESCO
UNESCO Institutes for Education
Field Offices of UNESCO

To Ministers responsible for relations with UNESCO



STATUTES OF THE UNESCO KING SEJONG LITERACY PRIZE

Article 1 – Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize is to reward the efforts of institutions, organizations or individuals for their contribution to the fight against illiteracy in commemoration of King Sejong who invented the Korean alphabet.
- 1.2 The objective of the Prize is in conformity with UNESCO's policies and is related to the programme of the Organization in its pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 in view of achieving education for all.

Article 2 – Designation, amount and periodicity of the Prize

- 2.1 The Prize shall be entitled "UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize".
- 2.2 The Prize shall be funded by the Donor, the Government of the Republic of Korea, and shall consist of a recurrent minimum payment of US \$150,000 per year. As determined by the Director-General and in consultation with the Donor, the Prize shall consist of three awards of US \$20,000 each, a silver medal and a certificate for the each of the three recipients. For the 2020 edition of the Prize, the Republic of Korea shall make a payment of US \$107,000 and the Prize shall consist of two awards, in line with the previous Statutes of the Prize.
- 2.3 All funds received and the interest accrued thereon shall be kept in a special interest-bearing account for the Prize (see Financial Regulations in Annex II).
- 2.4 The full staff support and operating/management costs of the Prize, including all costs related to the award ceremony, the International Jury, public information activities, such as the production and dissemination of publicity materials, knowledge management, such as analytical studies and knowledge sharing activities and overhead charges, estimated at a minimum of \$90,000 shall be fully covered by the Government of the Republic of Korea. In addition to the annual financial contribution, a staff may be seconded by the Government of the Republic of Korea to the UNESCO for activities related to literacy including the Prize, whose cost will be covered by the Government of the Republic of Korea in a separate arrangement. To this end, the Director-General shall determine a mandatory overhead cost amount to be applied and charged against the funds in the Special Account, which is to be established under the Financial Regulations for the Prize.
- 2.5 The Prize shall be awarded annually, on an initial basis of six years.

Article 3 – Qualifications of candidates

Candidates shall have made a significant contribution to effective results in literacy and post-literacy activities in their integration in basic education programmes, in particular mother language-based literacy development. Prizes may be conferred upon individuals, institutions, other public or private entities or non-governmental organizations.

Article 4 – Selection of the prize-winners

The prize winner shall be selected by the Director-General of UNESCO on the basis of the assessments and recommendations made by a jury.

Article 5 – Jury

- 5.1 The Jury shall consist of five independent members, being personalities with recognized reputation in the field covered, while also taking into consideration the need for equitable

geographical distribution, gender equality and the principle of non-payment of honoraria. They shall be appointed by the Director-General for two-year periods for a maximum period of six years. Representatives and alternatives of Members of the Executive Board cannot be appointed as jurors. Jurors involved in a real or potential conflict of interest shall recuse themselves from further deliberations or be asked by the Director-General to do so. The Director-General may replace members of the Jury for reason.

- 5.2 The Jury shall elect its own Chair and Deputy Chair. Members shall receive no remuneration for their work, but will receive allowances for travel and accommodation, where required. A quorum of three jurors present will be required for jury deliberations to proceed. The working language for deliberations by the Jury shall be English and French.
- 5.3 The Jury shall conduct its business and deliberations in conformity with these Statutes, and shall be assisted in the performance of its task by a member of the UNESCO Secretariat designated by the Director-General. Decisions shall be taken by consensus to the extent possible, and otherwise by secret ballot until a simple majority is obtained. A member shall not take part in a vote concerning a nomination from his or her country.
- 5.4 The Jury shall meet once every year.
- 5.5 The Jury shall send an assessment of nominations and accompanying recommendations to the Director-General of UNESCO no later than seven days after the completion of the deliberations of the Jury.

Article 6 – Nomination of candidates

- 6.1 When UNESCO has received the funding of the Prize, as indicated in Article 2 above, the Director-General of UNESCO shall officially invite the submission of nominations of the Prize to the Secretariat from the Governments of Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, as well as from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) maintaining official partnerships with the Organization and active in relevant fields covered by the Prize.
- 6.2 Nominations shall be submitted to the Director-General by the governments of Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, and by non-governmental organizations maintaining official partnership with UNESCO. Each Government or NGO is entitled to nominate up to three candidates per year. A self-nomination cannot be considered.
- 6.3 Each nomination shall be accompanied by a written recommendation, which shall include, in English or French, *inter alia*:
 - (a) a description of the nominee's background and achievements;
 - (b) a summary of the work or the results of the work, publications and other supporting documents of major importance, submitted for consideration;
 - (c) a definition of the nominee's contribution to the Prize's objectives.

Article 7 – Procedure for awarding of the Prize

- 7.1 The Prize shall be awarded by the Director-General at an official ceremony held for that purpose on the occasion of International Literacy Day (8 September). UNESCO shall present to the prize-winners a check for the amount of the Prize as well as a silver medal and certificate. UNESCO shall officially announce the names of the prize-winners.

- 7.2 If a work being rewarded has been produced by two or three persons, the Prize shall be awarded to them jointly. In no case may a prize amount be divided between more than three persons.
- 7.3 The prize-winner/s, if possible, shall give a presentation on subject relevant to the work for which the Prize has been awarded. Such a presentation shall be organized during or in connection with the Prize ceremony.
- 7.4 The work produced by a person since deceased shall not be considered for the Prize. If, however, a prize-winner dies before he or she has received the Prize, then the Prize may be presented posthumously.
- 7.5 Should a prize-winner decline the Prize, the jury shall submit a new proposal to the Director-General.

Article 8 – Sunset clause – mandatory renewal of the Prize

- 8.1 Six months prior to the agreed term of the Prize (six years), the Director-General of UNESCO together with the donor will undertake a review of all aspects of the Prize and decide about its continuation or termination. The Director-General will inform the Executive Board of UNESCO about the results of this review.
- 8.2 In case of termination of the Prize, any unspent balance shall be returned to the donor(s) unless otherwise agreed, in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Special Account for the Prize

Article 9 – Appeals

No appeals shall be allowed against the decision of UNESCO with regard to the award of the Prize. Proposals received for the award of the Prize may not be divulged.

Article 10 – Amendments to the Statutes of the Prize

Any amendment to the present Statutes shall be submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS OF THE SPECIAL ACCOUNT FOR THE UNESCO KING SEJONG LITERACY PRIZE

Article 1 – Creation of a Special Account

- 1.1 In accordance with the Statutes of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize and Article 6, paragraph 5 and 6, of the Financial Regulations of UNESCO, there is hereby created a Special Account for the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize, hereafter referred to as the Special Account.
- 1.2 The following regulations shall govern the operation of the Special Account.

Article 2 – Financial period

- 2.1 The financial period for budget estimates shall be two consecutive calendar years beginning with an even-numbered year.
- 2.2 The financial period for accounting shall be an annual calendar year.

Article 3 – Purpose

The purpose of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize is to reward the efforts of institutions, organizations or individuals for their contribution to the fight against illiteracy in commemoration of King Sejong who invented the Korean alphabet. The objective of the Prize is in conformity with UNESCO's policies and is related to the programme of the Organization in its pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 in view of achieving education for all.

Article 4 – Income

The income of the Special Account, in line with its Statutes, shall consist of:

- (a) donations from the Government of the Republic of Korea;
- (b) such subventions, endowments, gifts and bequests as are allocated to it for purposes consistent with the object of the Special Account;
- (c) miscellaneous income, including any interest earned on the investments referred to in Article 7 below.

Article 5 – Expenditure

The Special Account shall be debited with the expenditure relating to its purpose as described in Article 3 above and the Statutes of the Prize, including administrative expenses specifically relating to it and management costs applicable to it.

Article 6 – Accounts

- 6.1 The Chief Financial Officer shall maintain such accounting records as are necessary.
- 6.2 Any unused balance at the end of a financial period shall be carried forward to the following financial period.
- 6.3 The accounts of the Special Account shall be part of the consolidated financial statements presented for audit to the External Auditor of UNESCO.
- 6.4 Contributions in kind shall be recorded outside the Special Account.

Article 7 – Investments

- 7.1 The Director-General may make short-term or long-term investments of sums standing to the credit of the Special Account.
- 7.2 Revenue from these investments shall be credited to the Special Account in line with the Financial Regulations of UNESCO.

Article 8 – Reporting

- 8.1 At the end of each financial period, a financial report showing the income and expenditure under the Special Account shall be prepared and submitted to the donor(s) to the Special Account.
- 8.2 An annual narrative report shall be submitted to the donor(s) to the Special Account.

Article 9 – Closure of the Special Account

The Director-General shall consult the Executive Board at such time as he/she deems that the operation of the Special Account is no longer necessary. Any balance upon closure of the Special Account shall be returned to the donor(s) of the Prize unless otherwise agreed.

Article 10 – General provision

- 10.1 Any amendment to these Financial Regulations shall be approved by the Director-General after consultations with the donor(s) of the Prize. The Executive Board shall be informed accordingly of any such amendments.
- 10.2 Unless otherwise provided in these Regulations, the Special Account shall be administered in accordance with the Financial Regulations of UNESCO.

STATUTES OF THE UNESCO CONFUCIUS PRIZE FOR LITERACY

Article 1 – Purpose

1.1 The purpose of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy is to reward the outstanding efforts of individuals, institutions, organizations or other entities for their contribution to the promotion of literacy, including functional literacy, leveraging technological environments, in support of adults in rural areas and out-of-school youth.

1.2 The Prize will contribute to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. The Prize will reward in particular activities that are innovative and/or have far-reaching sustainable impact.

Article 2 – Designation, amount and periodicity of the Prize

2.1 The Prize shall be entitled “UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy”.

2.2 The Prize shall be funded by the Government of the People’s Republic of China, and shall consist of a recurrent minimum payment of US \$200,000 per year. As determined by the Director-General and in consultation with the Donor, the Prize shall consist of an amount of US \$30,000 for each of the three prizewinners, and a study visit to project sites in China, to be jointly decided upon by the Government of the People’s Republic of China and UNESCO, and organized by China’s National Commission for UNESCO, for the winners of the UNESCO Confucius Prize.

2.3 All funds received and the interest accrued thereon shall be kept in a special interest-bearing account for the Prize (see Financial Regulations in Annex II).

2.4 The full staff support and operating/management costs of the Prize, including all costs related to the award ceremony, the International Jury, public information activities such as the production and dissemination of publicity materials, knowledge management, such as analytical studies and knowledge sharing activities and overhead charges, estimated at a minimum of US \$110,000, shall be fully covered by the Government of the People’s Republic of China. To this end, the Director-General shall determine a mandatory overhead cost amount to be applied and charged against the funds in the Special Account, which is to be established under the Financial Regulations of the Prize.

2.5 The Prize shall be awarded annually, on an initial basis of five years.

Article 3 – Qualifications of candidates

Candidates shall have made a significant contribution to the promotion of literacy, including functional literacy, leveraging technological environments, in support of adults in rural areas and out-of-school youth. Prizes may be conferred upon individuals, institutions, other public or private entities or non-governmental organizations.

Article 4 – Selection of the prizewinners

The prizewinners shall be selected by the Director-General of UNESCO on the basis of the assessments and recommendations made by a jury.

Article 5 – Jury

5.1 The Jury shall consist of five independent members, being personalities with recognized reputation in the field covered, while also taking into consideration the need for equitable geographical distribution, gender equality and the principle of non-payment of honoraria. They shall be appointed by the Director-General for two-year periods, with the possibility of renewal for the remainder of the five-year period of the Prize. Representatives and alternatives of Members of the

Executive Board cannot be appointed as jurors. Jurors involved in a real or potential conflict of interest shall recuse themselves from further deliberations or be asked by the Director-General to do so. The Director-General may replace members of the Jury for reason.

5.2 The Jury shall elect its own Chair and Deputy Chair. Members shall receive no remuneration for their work, but will receive allowances for travel and accommodation, where required. A quorum of three jurors present will be required for jury deliberations to proceed. The working language for deliberations by the Jury shall be English and French.

5.3 The Jury shall conduct its business and deliberations in conformity with these Statutes, and shall be assisted in the performance of its task by a member of the UNESCO Secretariat designated by the Director-General. Decisions shall be taken by consensus to the extent possible, and otherwise by secret ballot until a simple majority is obtained. A member shall not take part in a vote concerning a nomination from his or her country.

5.4 The Jury shall meet once every year.

5.5 The Jury shall send an assessment of nominations and accompanying recommendations to the Director-General of UNESCO no later than seven days after the completion of the deliberations of the Jury.

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6.3 Each nomination shall be accompanied by a written recommendation, which shall include, in English or French, inter alia:

- (a) a description of the nominee's background and achievements;
- (b) a summary of the work or the results of the work, publications and other supporting documents of major importance submitted for consideration;
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7.2 If a work being rewarded has been produced by two or three persons, the Prize shall be awarded to them jointly. In no case may a prize amount be divided between more than three persons.

7.3 The prizewinner/s, if possible, shall give a presentation on subject relevant to the work for which the Prize has been awarded. Such a presentation shall be organized during or in connection with the Prize ceremony.

7.4 The work produced by a person since deceased shall not be considered for the Prize. If, however, a prizewinner dies before he or she has received the Prize, then the Prize may be presented posthumously.

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Article 8 – Sunset clause – mandatory renewal of the Prize

8.1 Six months prior to the agreed term of the Prize (five years), the Director-General of UNESCO together with the donor will undertake a review of all aspects of the Prize and decide about its continuation or termination. The Director-General will inform the Executive Board of UNESCO about the results of this review.

8.2 In case of termination of the Prize, any unspent balance shall be returned to the Donor(s) unless otherwise agreed, in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Special Account for the Prize.

Article 9 – Appeals

No appeals shall be allowed against the decision of UNESCO with regard to the award of the Prize. Proposals received for the award of the Prize may not be divulged.

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1.2 The following regulations shall govern the operation of the Special Account.

Article 2 – Financial period

2.1 The financial period for budget estimates shall be two consecutive calendar years beginning with an even-numbered year.

2.2 The financial period for accounting shall be an annual calendar year.

Article 3 – Purpose

The purpose of the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy is to reward the outstanding efforts of individuals, institutions, organizations or other entities for their contribution to the promotion of literacy, including functional literacy, leveraging technological environments, in support of adults in rural areas and out-of-school youth. The Prize will contribute to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. The Prize will reward in particular activities that are innovative and/or have far-reaching sustainable impact.

The amounts deposited in the Special Account shall be used to finance the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy and its operational and related costs.

Article 4 – Income

The income of the Special Account, in line with its Statutes, shall consist of:

- (a) voluntary contributions from the Government of the People’s Republic of China;
- (b) such subventions, endowments, gifts and bequests as are allocated to it for purposes consistent with the object of the Special Account;
- (c) miscellaneous income, including any interest earned on the investments referred to in Article 7 below.

Article 5 – Expenditure

The Special Account shall be debited with the expenditure relating to its purpose as described in Article 3 above and the Statutes of the Prize, including administrative expenses specifically relating to it and management costs applicable to it.

Article 6 – Accounts

6.1 The Chief Financial Officer shall maintain such accounting records as are necessary.

6.2 Any unused balance at the end of a financial period shall be carried forward to the following financial period.

6.3 The accounts of the Special Account shall be part of the consolidated financial statements presented for audit to the External Auditor of UNESCO.

6.4 Contributions in kind shall be recorded outside the Special Account.

Article 7 – Investments

7.1 The Director-General may make short-term or long-term investments of sums standing to the credit of the Special Account.

7.2 Revenue from these investments shall be credited to the Special Account in line with UNESCO's Financial Rules.

Article 8 – Reporting

8.1 At the end of each financial period, a financial report showing the income and expenditure under the Special Account shall be prepared and submitted to the donor(s) to the Special Account.

8.2 An annual narrative report shall be submitted to the donor(s) to the Special Account.

Article 9 – Closure of the Special Account

The Director-General shall consult the Executive Board at such time as he/she deems that the operation of the Special Account is no longer necessary. Any balance upon closure of the Special Account shall be returned to the donor(s) of the Prize unless otherwise agreed.

Article 10 – General provision

10.1 Any amendment to these Financial Regulations shall be approved by the Director-General after consultations with the donor(s) of the Prize. The Executive Board shall be informed accordingly of any such amendments.

10.2 Unless otherwise provided in these Regulations, the Special Account shall be administered in accordance with the Financial Regulations of UNESCO.