



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

03/05/2009

Ref.: CL/3876

Subject: **Call for nominations – UNESCO International Literacy Prizes 2009**

Sir/Madam,

Every year, UNESCO launches a call for nominations for the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes. These prestigious Prizes are awarded to individuals, governments or governmental agencies, and non-governmental organizations in recognition of effective practices and successful results in the field of literacy throughout the world.

Promoting literacy requires strong commitment. To be effective, it needs high quality delivery and monitoring systems, as well as rich and appropriate literate environments that enable people to use their recently acquired skills in their daily life.

Despite some remarkable results, the challenge remains global: an estimated 776 million adults, approximately two-thirds of whom are women, lack the basic literacy skills needed to participate fully in society. Furthermore, 75 million children are out of school and many more attend irregularly or drop out. If current trends continue, there will be over 700 million adults unable to read or write in 2015.

In 2009, UNESCO will award the following International Literacy Prizes:

- the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize (two awards); and
- the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy (two awards).

The Prizes, which comprise a monetary award, a silver medal and a diploma, are awarded at an international ceremony organized by UNESCO on International Literacy Day (8 September).

In accordance with the thematic calendar of the UNESCO coordinated United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), the 2009-2010 period will focus on the links between "Literacy and Empowerment".

For this reason, the Literacy Prizes will this year reward well-established and innovative practices documenting how literacy skills (basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy) contribute to empowerment, enabling people to better direct and control their lives and enhancing their chances in life.

I am pleased to invite your Government to submit nominations for a maximum of two projects or programmes that promote literacy as a means for nurturing inclusive societies.

The *Guide to the International Literacy Prizes* – enclosed – sets out the rules and regulations that must be followed for the submission of candidatures. The King Sejong Prize gives special consideration to the development and use of mother tongues in developing countries, while the Confucius Prize aims at rewarding outstanding activities in the field of literacy for rural adults and out-of-school young people, particularly women and girls. Candidatures for the 2009 Prizes should address both the designated theme (Literacy and Empowerment) and respond to the criteria pertaining to each specific prize.

Nomination files should be forwarded in hard copy and, if possible, electronically, to the United Nations Literacy Decade Unit, Division for the Coordination of United Nations Priorities in Education (tel.: +33 1 45 68 09 52; fax: +33 1 45 68 56 26/27; e-mail: literacyprizes@unesco.org) **no later than 30 June 2009**.

Accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General

Enclosure: UNESCO International Literacy Prizes – 2009 Guide

cc: National Commissions for UNESCO
Permanent Delegations to UNESCO