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REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL ON THE ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE OVERALL STRATEGY FOR UNESCO PRIZES

SUMMARY

The present document contains an overview of the Director-General's assessment of the Overall Strategy for UNESCO Prizes, adopted by the Executive Board at its 171st session in 2005 (171 EX/19 and 171 EX/Decision 24).

Its content is based on the lessons learned over the last five years of implementing the Strategy, and on the findings of the internal Thematic Working Group on Prizes that was established by the Director-General in February 2010 to assess the effectiveness of the Overall Strategy and of the new criteria for the creation of prizes in improving the overall impact and visibility of UNESCO Prizes and contributing to the objectives, values and image of the Organization.

Financial and administrative implications: see paragraph 21.

Decision proposed: paragraph 23.

INTRODUCTION

1. UNESCO's prizes have been periodically reviewed on a case-by-case basis since approximately 1994. The last review, conducted by the Secretariat in 2004, produced a comprehensive analysis of all prizes (35 active and 8 inactive at the time) and led to the development and adoption of the Organization's first global strategy for its prizes (presented in document 171 EX/19 and adopted by 171 EX/Decision 24).
2. By 171 EX/Decision 24, the Executive Board also endorsed standard statutes and financial regulations (Annexes I and II) that should serve as models for all future UNESCO prizes; and requested that the Director-General report on the implementation of the Strategy, beginning in 2007.
3. The provisions of the Overall Strategy for UNESCO Prizes (hereinafter referred to as the "Prize Strategy") have been included in the Organization's Administrative Manual under item 13.14. Moreover, in accordance with the decision of the Executive Board, the Director-General has already reported twice to the Board: first in 2007 in document 177 EX/28, then in 2009 in document 182 EX/25. The next statutory report will be submitted to the Board in 2011.
4. The current document (185 EX/38) is not intended as an additional report on the implementation of the Prize Strategy. Rather, it should be seen as part of the Director-General's broader effort to enhance the visibility and prestige of UNESCO's programmes, to reinforce the impact of the Organization's action in all its priority areas and to strengthen the cost-effectiveness and efficiency of UNESCO's operations, as well as enhance transparency and integrity.
5. It should be recalled that the 2005 Overall Strategy for UNESCO Prizes defines a UNESCO "prize" as a distinction that has a global or regional scope. "At the national and subregional levels, a different term than 'prize' shall be used for those distinctions that are to be awarded by UNESCO. Those distinctions awarded at the national/subregional level shall be subject to separate regulations ..." (171 EX/19, para. 5). Accordingly, the Strategy only covers prizes that have a global or regional scope (171 EX/19, para. 5) and a term other than "prize" has been used for distinctions awarded by UNESCO at the national and subregional levels.
6. The present assessment draws on the work carried out by the Thematic Working Group on Prizes, which the Director-General established in February 2010 with the mandate to evaluate the Overall Prize Strategy and criteria¹ for their effectiveness in improving the overall impact and visibility of UNESCO Prizes, and contributing to the objectives, values and image of the Organization. This document also builds on the experience gained and lessons learned over the last five years since the adoption of the Prize Strategy.

Current situation

7. The Prize Strategy was developed five years ago to limit the proliferation of awards and prizes that did not, at the time, conform to any pattern, differing significantly in value, contribution to UNESCO's programmatic objectives and priorities, impact and visibility, as well as in their administrative arrangements and funding.² By establishing a set of criteria for the creation of prizes, the Executive Board endeavoured to introduce a coherent and uniform approach and practice to the management of prizes, which is unique in the United Nations system.
8. On the whole, the Prize Strategy has reached its objective. Indeed, the Director-General considers that UNESCO's Strategy for Prizes has significantly improved the functioning and management of UNESCO's Prizes and the quality of the Secretariat's reporting on their

¹ As adopted by the Executive Board in 2005 (171 EX/19 and 171 EX/Decision 24).

² See 177 EX/28 "Report by the Director-General on the implementation of the strategy and the development of the overall situation with regard to UNESCO prizes".

development, as well as established a benchmark for the equitable, fair and sound evaluation of all prize proposals.

9. Moreover, the regular reporting on the implementation of the Prize Strategy to the Executive Board has meant that the management of prizes is subject to regular monitoring at the intergovernmental level.

10. Between 2004 and 2010, 20 prizes were abolished and five new prizes were created, reducing the total number of prizes from 43 to 22. Furthermore, all of the prizes³ that remain active correspond to at least one, if not several, of UNESCO's strategic programme objectives and programme priorities. The Education, Natural Sciences, and Social and Human Sciences Sectors have the highest number of prizes. An overview of existing and abolished prizes since the adoption of the Prize Strategy is included in the annex to this document.

11. Most of the prizes created prior to 2005 have been aligned to the Prize Strategy, with the exception of the L'Oréal-UNESCO and Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prizes, for which distinct statutes were adopted by the Executive Board.⁴

12. Among the other prizes, three⁵ have statutes that differ only slightly from the standard criteria with respect to the nominations procedure. In these cases, NGOs not maintaining formal relations with UNESCO are allowed to submit candidatures.

Challenges

13. **Visibility and impact:** Though there is mounting evidence on the positive impact of the various prizes, it remains difficult to measure the full effectiveness of each one as a “modality of implementation” benefiting as they do individuals, organizations, Member States, donors and UNESCO.

14. The impact of UNESCO's prizes on the overall prestige and credibility of the Organization worldwide, regionally or within various countries, is equally difficult to measure. More sophisticated instruments and specialized services and indeed funding may be required to prepare for an impact assessment.

15. It appears that over time the prizes that address global themes and convey a clear and succinct message attract the media and public interest most. The current spread of prizes across a range of specialized areas may make it difficult to further improve the general coverage by the international media.

16. **Programmatic coverage and duplication:** While some prizes address overarching topics of global concern – for example covering issues such as “peace education”, “environmental protection”, “memory of the world” – others are more specialized, focusing on more select topics such as “quality education for persons with intellectual disabilities”, or regions (e.g. “Arab culture” or “the promotion of social science research in Latin America and the Caribbean”). There remain a few overlaps in the programmatic coverage of prizes; for example, two Education prizes address “literacy”, while four of the Natural Sciences prizes, among the longest established in the Organization, are administered by a single Division⁶ that covers but one main programmatic area of the Sector.

17. **Naming and funding source of UNESCO Prizes:** The 2005 Prize Strategy requests that “the title of each UNESCO prize shall carry the name of UNESCO (“UNESCO Prize ...”) and it may

³ Five in Education, five in Science (including one co-managed by the Cabinet), six in Social and Human Sciences, two in Culture and three in Communication and one managed by the Cabinet (CRP).

⁴ Respectively in 180 EX/17 Rev. (Article II (c)) and confirmed in 182 EX/25, paragraph 8.2.

⁵ UNESCO Prize for Peace Education; UNESCO World Press Freedom Prize; L'ORÉAL-UNESCO Prize For Women in Science.

⁶ Science Policy and Sustainable Development Division in the Science Sector.

as well be linked to the name of a donor”,⁷ the latter to be understood as the institution, corporation or individual making the donation. The assessment showed that almost two thirds of UNESCO’s Prizes were named, at the time of their creation, after living representatives of public or private donors. It also showed that there are inherent difficulties in assessing the “integrity of [the] private or individual donor” when creating a prize, as is requested by the 2005 Prize Strategy⁸ and that there is no specific procedure applied when the integrity of a private or individual donor of a UNESCO Prize comes into question.

18. **Feasibility study on prize proposals:** 182 EX/Decision 25, adopted by the Executive Board in 2009, underlines the need to prepare a comprehensive feasibility study before any proposal for the creation of a UNESCO Prize is fully debated and acted upon by the Executive Board. Many prizes adopted before this date did not benefit from such an in-depth study.

Conclusions

19. Consideration could be given to decreasing the number of prizes while maintaining a balance in the number – both between and within the Major Programmes – in order for UNESCO to be able to focus its communication efforts and resources on the Organization’s overarching strategic priority areas of work.

20. There may be a need to be more discerning in the way that UNESCO Prizes are named, while also applying the rules that already exist.⁹

21. All future prize proposals must be accompanied by a feasibility study from the Director-General which should address the following key elements: the prize’s contribution to the Organization’s strategic objectives and programme priorities; potential overlaps with other prizes; the financial sustainability of the proposal, including the provision of administration costs; the potential impact of the prize on UNESCO’s prestige, profile and visibility; the alignment with the prize criteria and any deviations therefrom; the identity and integrity of the private donor drawing on good practice, such as those set out by the United Nations Global Compact. The study should also contain a recommendation by the Director-General on the advisability of adopting, or not, the proposed prize.

22. Based on the above, only some adjustments to the criteria and prize management procedures appear to be warranted in order to facilitate the effective implementation of the Prize Strategy and ensure that future prizes and existing ones wholly support the strategic objectives and programme priorities of the Organization, as well as improve the overall impact and visibility of UNESCO Prizes within their granted lifespan.¹⁰

Proposed decision

23. In the light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

⁷ See document 171 EX/19.

⁸ In the case of non-governmental, private and individual donors, the 2005 Strategy requests the Director-General to “ensure that all necessary ethical considerations have been undertaken regarding the integrity of the donor before a prize donation is accepted.” (171 EX/19, para. 15(e)).

⁹ See document 171 EX/19, paragraph 15(b): The title of each UNESCO prize shall carry the name of UNESCO (“UNESCO Prize”) and it may as well be linked to the name of a donor.

¹⁰ The Prize Strategy stipulates that “The statutes for each prize shall contain a sunset clause, whereby the longevity of a prize will be capped at six years after which a mandatory renewal will be required based on a review between the donor and the Director-General. The Director-General shall inform the Executive Board through a document summarizing all pertinent developments in this regard.” (171 EX/19).

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 171 EX/Decision 24, by which it established a global Strategy for UNESCO Prizes,
2. Having examined document 185 EX/38,
3. Welcomes the work and progress achieved in implementing the Strategy for UNESCO Prizes;
4. Encourages the Director-General to pursue her efforts aimed at improving the visibility and effective management of UNESCO Prizes as a tool for furthering its strategic objectives, programme priorities, and prestige of the Organization, especially in its domains of competence;
5. Requests the Director-General to continue her efforts to fully implement the overall Prize Strategy and criteria in cooperation with Member States and private donors, as appropriate;
6. Reiterates that, in conformity with 182 EX/Decision 25, future prize proposals should only be adopted after a thorough examination of a feasibility study by the Director-General, which is accompanied by an explicit recommendation by the Director-General;
7. Underlines the importance of securing the financial sustainability, including administrative costs, of UNESCO prizes during the lifespan of the prize;
8. Decides to assess the impact of each prize four years after its creation, based on a report by the Director-General;
9. Emphasizes the important role prizes can play in strengthening the visibility, image and prestige of UNESCO and requests the Director-General to make better use of IT and other technologies and outreach tools to that end.

ANNEX

**OVERVIEW OF EXISTING AND ABOLISHED UNESCO PRIZES
SINCE THE ADOPTION OF THE OVERALL STRATEGY**

24 UNESCO Prizes in 2010 of which 22 are active and 2 are inactive	
22 active prizes (created before and after 2004)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CRP – Félix Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize 2. SC-ODG – L'ORÉAL-UNESCO Prize "For Women in Science" 3. ED – UNESCO/King Sejong Literacy Prize 4. ED – UNESCO/Confucius Prize for Literacy 5. ED – UNESCO/UNESCO-Emir Jaber al-Ahmad al-Jaber al-Sabah Prize to promote Quality Education for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities 6. ED – UNESCO/King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information and Communication Technologies in Education 7. ED – UNESCO/Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Prize for Outstanding Practice and Performance in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Teachers 8. SC – UNESCO/Kalinga Prize for the Popularization of Science 9. SC – UNESCO/Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation 10. SC – Great Man-Made River International Water Prize for Water Resources in Arid Zones presented by UNESCO (title to be reconsidered) 11. SC – UNESCO/Obiang Nguema Mbasogo International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences 12. SHS – UNESCO/Bilbao Prize for the Promotion of a Culture of Human Rights 13. SHS – UNESCO Prize for Peace Education 14. SHS – UNESCO-Madanjeet Singh Prize for the Promotion of Tolerance and Non-Violence 15. SHS – UNESCO/International José Martí Prize 16. SHS – UNESCO/Avicenna Prize for Ethics in Science

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. SHS – UNESCO/Juan Bosch Prize for the Promotion of Social Science Research in Latin America and the Caribbean 18. CLT – UNESCO/Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture 19. CLT – Melina Mercouri International Prize for the Safeguarding and Management of Cultural Landscapes (UNESCO-Greece) 20. CI – IPDC-UNESCO Prize for Rural Communication 21. CI – UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize 22. CI – UNESCO/Jikji Memory of the World Prize
<p>2 inactive prizes</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SC – Carlos J. Finlay Prize (for Meritorious Work in Microbiology) (inactive since 2005 and not yet reviewed, pending the donor’s reply) 2. SHS – International Simón Bolívar Prize (it has been inactive since 2004 and its reactivation is in the process of being negotiated at the donor’s request)
<p>5 UNESCO Prizes created since document 171 EX/19 (9 March 2004)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. ED – UNESCO/Confucius Prize for Literacy – created in 2005 (172 EX/Decision 11) at the proposal of the People’s Republic of China 2. ED – UNESCO/King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of Information Technologies in Education – created in 2005 (172 EX/Decision 56) at the proposal of the Kingdom of Bahrain 3. SC – UNESCO/Obiang Nguema Mbasogo International Prize for Research in the Life Sciences – created in 2008 (180 EX/Decision 57) at the proposal of Equatorial Guinea 4. ED – UNESCO/Hamdan Bin Rashid Al-Maktoum Prize for Outstanding Practice and Performance in Enhancing the Effectiveness of Teachers – created in 2009 (180 EX/Decision 54) at the proposal of the United Arab Emirates 5. SHS – UNESCO/Juan Bosch Prize for the Promotion of Social Science Research in Latin America and the Caribbean – created in 2009 (181 EX/Decision 56) at the proposal of the Dominican Republic

20 Prizes abolished between 171st and 184th sessions of Executive Board	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Noma Prize (for Meritorious Work in Literacy)2. Malcolm Adiseshiah International Literacy Prize3. Nessim Habif Prize4. UNESCO-ROSTSCA Awards for Young Scientists5. UNESCO Prize for Children's and Young People's Literature in the Service of Tolerance6. UNESCO/Françoise Gallimard Prize for Young Writers Expressing the Tensions and Hopes of Our Time7. Pacha Prize8. UNESCO Cities for Peace Prize9. UNESCO Web Prize10. UNESCO Prize for Architecture11. UNESCO Prize for Landscape Architecture12. UNESCO Science Prize for an Outstanding Contribution to the Technological Development of a Developing Member State or Region13. Javed Husain Prize for Young Scientists14. UNESCO International Music Council Music Prize15. Samarkand Taronasi Prize16. UNESCO International Reading Association Literacy Award (for Meritorious Work in Literacy)17. UNESCO Prize for the Promotion of the Arts18. UNESCO Crafts Prize19. Arirang Prize20. Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan Prize