



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

The Assistant Director-General for External Relations and Cooperation

25 APR 2008

Ref.: ED/UNP/UNLD/08/MSI/ms/lp/eng/01

Subject: **UNESCO International Literacy Prizes 2008**

Sir/Madam,

As indicated by the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008, and notwithstanding multifaceted efforts, literacy remains an elusive target: some 774 million adults lack minimum literacy skills; one in five adults are still not literate and two thirds of them are women; 72.1 million children are out of school and many more attend irregularly or drop out. Consequently, both of these groups are generally more vulnerable to infection from communicable diseases and are poorly equipped to prevent and treat illness and to adequately care for themselves, their families and their communities.

The UNESCO International Literacy Prizes are awarded every year in recognition of excellence and innovation in the field of literacy throughout the world. This year, UNESCO will award the following International Literacy Prizes: the International Reading Association Literacy Prize (one award), the King Sejong Literacy Prize (one award) and the Confucius Prize for Literacy (two awards).

In compliance with the thematic calendar of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), under UNESCO's coordination, the 2007-2008 biennium focuses on the links between "Literacy and Health". While 2007 focused particularly on literacy and its links with general health care and community development, the year 2008 shall have a strong emphasis on Literacy and Epidemics with a focus on communicable diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, which are considered to be some of the world's most important public health concerns. In this context, your Non-Governmental Organization maintaining formal relations with UNESCO is invited to submit candidatures of projects and programmes that clearly and successfully tackle disease prevention, care and treatment through literacy promotion for the benefit of individuals and their communities in formal and non-formal education settings.

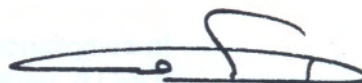
Through this call for candidatures, UNESCO is seeking well-established and innovative practices documenting positive synergies between the development and use of literacy skills and epidemics, whether by enabling individuals to access prevention information and support services or by improving adherence to life-saving medicines through treatment literacy. With regard to beneficiaries, special attention shall be given to young people out of school, who represent a crucial group, particularly with regard to preventing HIV infection and changing attitudes and behaviours in order to protect against this disease.

A maximum of two candidatures should be submitted to the Secretariat of the UNESCO International Literacy Prizes. You will find enclosed the **Guide to the International Literacy Prizes**, which sets out the rules and regulations that must be followed for the submission of candidatures. Applicants should note that the King Sejong Prize gives special consideration to the creation, development and dissemination of mother tongue languages 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 2008 Prizes should address both the designated theme (Literacy and Epidemics) and the criteria pertaining to specific prizes where such criteria exist.

Nomination files should reach the Secretariat no later than **25 June 2008**. The Prizes will be presented at an international ceremony organized by UNESCO on International Literacy Day (8 September).

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), which will be happy to provide you with any further information you may need.

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



Ahmed Sayyad
Assistant Director-General for External
Relations and Cooperation

Enclosures: UNESCO International Literacy Prizes – A guide
UNESCO International Literacy Prizes – Poster