Ref.: CL/4548

Subject: **2027 Call for nominations for the UNESCO-Al Fozan International Prize for the Promotion of Young Scientists in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)**

Sir/Madam,

It is my honour to invite your government to submit nominations for the third edition of the UNESCO-Al Fozan International Prize for the Promotion of Young Scientists in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Established by UNESCO's Executive Board, this Prize is awarded every two years to five talented young people under 40, from each of UNESCO's five geographic regions for their contributions to research, education or scientific cooperation. The laureates will each receive US$50,000 to help launch their careers and share their ideas more widely. I therefore encourage you to participate in this call for nominations by sharing it with all relevant organisations and institutions, as well as with eligible candidates who may submit their applications online.

Applications may be submitted by candidates until **30 November 2026 (midnight, UTC+1)** along with the nomination by Member States in consultation with their National Commissions to UNESCO, or by non-governmental organisations in official partnership with UNESCO and active in relevant fields covered by the Prize, UNESCO Chairs, category 2 centres, international scientific unions and universities.

The application and nomination process will take place online, starting 5 May 2026, via the following link: https://unescoalfozanprize.org/. The Secretariat of the Prize is available to answer any questions you may have (unescoalfozanprize@unesco.org).

Please accept, Sir/Madam, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Khaled El-Enany

Encl.: 2

Annex I – Statutes of the Prize
Annex II – Financial Regulations

To Ministers responsible for relations with UNESCO

ANNEX I

STATUTES OF THE UNESCO-AL FOZAN INTERNATIONAL PRIZE FOR THE PROMOTION OF YOUNG SCIENTISTS IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS (STEM)

Article 1 – Purpose of the Prize

1.1 The purpose of the UNESCO-Al Fozan International Prize for the promotion of young scientists in STEM is to promote young researchers in the field of STEM.

1.2 The UNESCO-Al Fozan International Prize for the promotion of young scientists in STEM, financially supported by the Al Fozan Foundation, aims to strengthen STEM research, STEM education and international cooperation to confront the global challenges addressed by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Such a Prize will give recognition to the achievements of young people that are conducive to socio-economic transformation and development on a global scale while also increasing the interest of young people, particularly girls and women, in science so as to promote gender equality, scientific literacy and the choice of a scientific career.

1.3 The Prize recognizes and rewards achievements that are conducive to capacity building, the development of scientific careers and socio-economic development at the national, regional, and global levels.

1.4 The Prize will also serve as a lever for strengthening global capabilities in STEM, as well as giving visibility to STEM role models that are capable of attracting youth towards STEM studies and careers.

Article 2 – Designation, periodicity, geographical distribution and amount of the Prize

2.1 The Prize shall be entitled "UNESCO-Al Fozan International Prize for the promotion of young scientists in STEM".

2.2 The Prize shall be funded by the Al Fozan Foundation, and shall consist of a recurrent payment of USD $1.65 million for the total duration of a cycle of six-years period from 2022 to 2027 ($550,000 per biennium), which shall cover both the monetary value of the Prize and the costs of administering the Prize. A diploma and a medal will be given to each of the recipients. Any interest that may accrue shall be added to the overall contribution.

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 administration and public information activities, and the overhead costs to be applied and charged against the funds in the special account, estimated at USD $ 900,000 for three biennia ($300,000 per biennium) shall be fully covered by the Al Fozan Foundation. The related special account is to be established under the financial regulations for the Prize.

2.5 The Prize shall be awarded every two years to five individual prize-winners from the five UNESCO geographical regions at each edition, on an initial basis for three biennia (three editions of the Prize in total).

2.6 The Secretariat of the Prize will be located in the Natural Sciences Sector of UNESCO, the date and place of venue of the prize-giving ceremony, which will be held in alternation on UNESCO's premises at Headquarters (whenever possible during the Executive Board or General Conference), in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or any other venue as decided by

UNESCO and the donor. Outside UNESCO Headquarters, the award-giving ceremony shall be covered through in-kind contributions from the Al Fozan Foundation.

Article 3 –Conditions/Qualifications of candidates

3.1 Prizes may be awarded to five individuals only who have promoted STEM advancement in education, research, or international cooperation for societal development. Candidates must be less than 40 years old at the time of applying for the Prize and, must be actively involved in STEM at the time of application to the Prize.

3.2 The candidates shall have earned recognition for their significant achievement/contribution to:

(i) Research in the STEM including the emerging technologies or;

(ii) STEM education, dissemination of research findings, as well as creativity and innovation or;

(iii) International or regional cooperation in STEM.

Article 4 – Designation/Selection of Prize-winners

The prize-winners shall be selected by the Director-General of UNESCO based on the assessments and recommendations made to him/her by an international Jury. Particular attention would be given to women candidates.

Article 5 – Jury of the Prize

5.1 The Jury shall be composed of five independent eminent members being personalities with a recognized reputation in the field of STEM, while also taking into consideration the need for diverse representation of scientific fields, equitable geographical distribution, gender equality and the principle of non-payment of honoraria. They shall be appointed by the Director-General for two-year period 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 shall replace members of the jury for reason.

5.2 The Jury shall elect its own chair and deputy chair. Members of the Jury 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 languages 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 the vote concerning a nominated candidate from his or her country.

5.4 The Jury shall meet once every two years for deliberation on the candidates.

5.5 The Jury shall send an assessment on the nominations and accompanying recommendations to the Director-General of UNESCO at the latest two months before the award ceremony.

Article 6 – Nomination of candidates

6.1 When UNESCO has received the funding of the Prize as well as the staff support and operating/management costs of the Prize, as indicated in Article 2 above, the Director-General

of UNESCO shall officially invite the submission of nominations to the Secretariat of the Prize every two years from the governments of Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, as well as from non-governmental organizations maintaining official partnerships with the Organization and active in relevant fields covered by a prize and by UNESCO Chairs, category 2 centres, international scientific unions and universities.

6.2 Nominations shall be submitted to the Director-General by the governments of Member States, in consultation with their National Commissions, by non-governmental organizations maintaining official partnerships with UNESCO and active in relevant fields covered by the Prize, by UNESCO Chairs, category 2 centres, international scientific unions and universities. 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 candidate's background and achievements;

(b) a summary of the work, publications and other supporting documents of major importance, submitted for consideration;

(c) a description of the candidate's contribution to the Prize's objectives.

Article 7 – Procedure for the awarding of the Prize

7.1 The Prize shall be awarded by the Director-General or his/her representative and the Donor or his/her representative at an official ceremony held for that purpose in alternation at UNESCO's premises at Headquarters and in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia or any other place that might be considered appropriate. For the first edition, the award ceremony shall be held at UNESCO's headquarters in Paris. UNESCO shall present to the prize-winners a financial award of USD 50,000 each, representing a total monetary prize value of USD 250,000, as well as a diploma and a medal. UNESCO shall officially announce the names of the prize-winners and highlight their achievements.

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 lecture on a subject relevant to the work for which the prize has been awarded. Such a lecture 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 a Prize. If, however, a prize-winner dies before he 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 end of the term of the Prize, the Director-General of UNESCO together with the donor will undertake a review of all aspects of the Prize and determine 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 unless otherwise agreed, in accordance with the Financial Regulations of the Prize.

Article 9 – Appeals

No appeals shall be allowed against the decision of UNESCO about the award of the prize. Proposals received for the award of a 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.

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ANNEX II

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS OF THE SPECIAL ACCOUNT FOR THE UNESCO-AL FOZAN INTERNATIONAL PRIZE FOR THE PROMOTION OF YOUNG SCIENTISTS IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATHEMATICS (STEM)

Article 1 – Creation of a Special Account

1.1 In accordance with the Statutes of the UNESCO-Al Fozan International Prize for the promotion of young scientists in STEM and Article 6, paragraphs 5 and 6, of the Financial Regulations of UNESCO, there is hereby created a Special Account for the UNESCO-Al Fozan International Prize for the promotion of young scientists in STEM, 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

3.1 The purpose of the UNESCO-Al Fozan International Prize for the promotion of young scientists in STEM is to promote young researchers in the field of STEM.

3.2 The amounts deposited in the special Account shall be used to finance UNESCO-AL Fozan international Prize for the promotion of young scientists in STEM 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 States, international agencies and organizations, as well as other entities; in particular, the Al Fozan Foundation, which committed an amount of USD 550,000 per edition of the Prize;

(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.