Ref. : CL/4523

Subject: **Call for nominations for the 21st edition of the UNESCO-Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture**

Sir/Madam,

I am honoured to invite your Government to submit nominations for the 21st edition of the UNESCO–Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture.

Established in 1998 at the initiative of the Government of the Emirate of Sharjah (United Arab Emirates), the Prize honours two laureates each year for their contributions to the promotion and dissemination of Arab culture, in all its diversity.

UNESCO encourages you to nominate candidates, whether individuals, groups of people or institutions, whose literary, scientific or artistic contributions deserve to be recognized in this regard.

The Prize is endowed with a sum of US $60,000, divided equally between the two laureates selected on the recommendation of an international jury of experts. UNESCO is committed to advancing gender equality and promoting youth participation throughout its work and, as such, the nomination of women and young people is strongly encouraged.

Please submit nomination files to the Secretariat of the Prize (prix.sharjah@unesco.org), no later than **28 February 2026**. The Secretariat remains at your disposal for any questions you may have.

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

Khaled El-Enany
Director-General

Encl.: 1

cc: Permanent Delegations to UNESCO
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To Ministers responsible for relations with UNESCO

ANNEX

STATUTES OF THE UNESCO–SHARJAH PRIZE FOR ARAB CULTURE

Article 1 – Purpose

The purpose of the UNESCO–Sharjah Prize for Arab Culture is to reward the efforts of a national of an Arab country and a national of any other country who have contributed through their artistic, intellectual or promotional work, to the development and diffusion of Arab Culture in the world. The objective of the Prize is in conformity with the second and sixth preambular paragraphs and with Article I paragraph 2 (c) of the Constitution of UNESCO according to which the Organization is assigned the task of promoting the mutual understanding of peoples through activities that encourage greater knowledge of the cultures of different peoples and international exchange between the different peoples and between the different cultures. The objectives of the Prize are in conformity with UNESCO's policies/priorities related to the Major Programme IV, Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Dialogue and Major Programme III as regards Intercultural dialogue and the Rapprochement of Cultures.

Article 2 – Designation, amount and periodicity of the Prize

2.1 The Prize shall be entitled "The UNESCO–Sharjah Prize for Arab culture".

2.2 (b) The Prize shall be funded by the Government of Sharjah (United Arab Emirates) and shall consist of a recurrent payment of US $268,426 annually. The amount of the recurrent payment will be reviewed every two years. The contribution from the donor shall be received at the beginning of each year, no later than 15 January, in order to ensure that funds are available well in time before incurring expenditure for the administration of the Prize and for the Prize itself. The amount of the Prize is US $60,000, which will be divided into equal parts between two prize-winners (US $30,000 each).

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 and public information activities, estimated at US $268,426 shall be fully covered by the Government of Sharjah (United Arab Emirates). To this end, the Director-General will 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 once a year, on an initial basis of US $60,000 per year, and shall be shared between two prize-winners in equal parts, (US $30,000 each).

Article 3 – Conditions/Qualifications of candidates

Candidates shall be individual, institutions, other entities or non-governmental organizations that have made a significant contribution to the development, the diffusion and the promotion of Arab culture throughout the world. They should have acquired an international reputation in this field and distinguished themselves by meritorious actions extending over several years. Also, they should have contributed to promoting cultural dialogue and revitalization of the Arab culture.

Article 4 – Designation/Selection of the prizewinner(s)

The prize-winners shall be selected by the Director-General of UNESCO on the basis of the assessments and recommendations made to him/her by a jury.

Article 5 – Jury

5.1 The Jury shall consist of a number of five independent members, being personalities with a 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 a 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 languages for deliberations by a jury shall be English, French and Arabic.

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 a year.

5.5 The Jury shall send an assessment on nominations and accompanying recommendations to the Director-General of UNESCO no later than one week after the annual Jury meeting.

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 to the Secretariat of the Prize, by March of the following year, 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 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 and foundations maintaining official partnerships with UNESCO and active in a field covered by the Prize; as well as former laureates of the Prize; eminent personalities qualified in the opinion of the Director-General, and by any person or civil society organization working in the field of Arab Culture and for the advancement of peace and intercultural dialogue. 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 or the results of the work, publications and other supporting documents of major importance, submitted for consideration;

(c) a definition 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 at an official ceremony held for that purpose at UNESCO Headquarters at a date fixed by the Director-General. UNESCO shall present

to the prize-winners a check the amount of the prize as well as a diploma. 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.

7.3 The prize-winners, if possible, shall give a brief speech 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 (awarded to relatives or institution).

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 period of six year of the Prize, 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 a Prize, the use of any unspent balance of funds shall be determined by the Director-General, in accordance with the financial regulations for the Prize.

Article 9 – Appeals

No appeals shall be allowed against the decision of UNESCO with regard to the award for 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.