

**The Assistant Director-General
For Priority Africa and External Relations a.i.**

To all Permanent Delegates and
Observers to UNESCO
National Commissions for
UNESCO

19 March 2026

Ref: SC/EES/NBC/26/1825

Sir/Madam,

I am pleased to invite the submission of applications for the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Young Scientist Awards (YSA) 2026, which recognizes young researchers carrying out interdisciplinary research in line with UNESCO's MAB Programme.

The criteria and conditions for selecting award winners are enclosed for information.

I am also pleased to recall that in 2022, UNESCO and the Principality of Monaco reached an agreement to award five (5) additional prizes to studies focusing on marine, island and coastal issues in biosphere reserves per year, thereby reinforcing the contribution of the MAB Programme towards the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. These additional prizes are known as "MAB Young Scientists Awards - Prince Albert I of Monaco." We encourage the submission of research proposals in this area.

Candidates are invited to send their applications using the enclosed form **before 07 May 2026** on the platform: <https://surveys.unesco.org/612476?lang=en>. All applications must be endorsed and signed by the respective MAB National Committee before submitting them to the MAB Secretariat. In countries where MAB National Committees do not exist or are not fully operational, the selection at the national level may be ensured by the country's National Commission for UNESCO.

To facilitate the selection of the awards by the Bureau of the MAB Programme, the MAB National Committees are invited to endorse only candidates who meet the criteria and also take gender balance into consideration. Further information on the award may be found here: <https://en.unesco.org/mab/awards#young-scientists>.

I would like to thank you for your continuous support of the MAB Programme and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M.F.", written over a light blue circular stamp.

Mohamed Elfarnawany