Dear Sir or Madam,

Applications are now open for the 2020 “Liberté-Égalité-Fraternité” Human Rights Prize of the French Republic, awarded by the Prime Minister of the French Government.

This Prize, created in 1988, is awarded in recognition and support for the completion of individual or collective projects carried out in the field, in France or abroad, regardless of nationality or borders, to promote and protect human rights.

1 – The non-governmental organizations or individual candidates, regardless of nationality or borders, should submit an application corresponding to one or two themes in 2020. This application should contain field activities or a project to be implemented in France or abroad.

• **Theme 1: The right to health and the fight against exclusion**

The global health crisis has shed cruel light on the particular difficulties faced by vulnerable and marginalized persons when it comes to the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, as enshrined by Article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

This right to the highest attainable state of health encompasses both freedoms and rights, including not being subject to unconsented medical treatment or experiment – the right to integrity of the person – and the right to a policy of prevention and the right of access to healthcare, which is open to everyone.

The right to health requires that a number of social criteria conducive to the health of everyone are met, including the availability of health services, free access to healthcare services, a policy of prevention, and affordable medicines. The right to health is closely tied in with other human rights, including the rights to food, housing, work, education, non-discrimination, information and participation.

Vulnerable or marginalized groups are often less likely to enjoy the right to health. The most deadly diseases affect the world’s poorest populations first and foremost. Within countries, certain populations, such as indigenous communities and people living in disadvantaged areas, face many obstacles to accessing healthcare.
The fight against exclusion is a fight for human dignity. It involves access to healthcare, adaptation of prevention policies and fighting extreme poverty, as well as protecting whistle-blowers and working to lift barriers to the full and effective participation in society of people with disabilities, on an equal footing with everyone else. It also requires gender mainstreaming, to address health issues affecting women and girls.

Whistle-blowers have sought in many countries, including in the field of health, to release information to protect the public interest, at the risk of undermining the economic interests of the large pharmaceutical companies. Because they inform the authorities and the public of warning signs, those who warn of disasters to come are essential guardians of our risk prevention and management systems. They should therefore be supported and protected.

The Human Rights Prize aims to reward any project aimed at improving access to prevention and healthcare access policies for vulnerable or disadvantaged persons, with the goal of fighting exclusion. Organizations working to protect whistle-blowers in the health field may also be eligible.

- **Theme 2: Defence of the environment and biodiversity**

  Linking human rights and the environment is crucial in today’s world. Human rights and a healthy environment are closely and tangibly interrelated. Firstly, violations of human rights are aggravated by deterioration of the environment, with a particular impact on vulnerable groups, such as indigenous peoples and those in extreme poverty. Secondly, damage to the environment and climate change impacts lead to violations of human rights, including the right to health, the right to water, the right to food, the right to housing and the right to life. Globally, the impact of climate change on human rights is particularly visible and well documented, to the extent that the recognition of a right to a healthy environment has become an imperative. Similarly, the defence of biodiversity appears to be a condition for the fulfilment of human rights.

  The United Nations have identified the following phenomena as having an impact on human rights: environmental impacts on the atmosphere, environmental threats such as land degradation, deforestation and desertification, degradation of the marine environment, dangerous waste, contamination by chemicals and pollution, biodiversity erosion and, lastly, natural disasters.

  Defenders of the environment and biodiversity are people and groups who non-violently defend the right to a healthy environment and protection of the living world, with the aim of promoting, protecting and implementing civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, based on a universal approach. Some communities have a special relationship with nature, and some young people and a great many women actively defend the environment and biodiversity.

  Defenders of environmental rights are defined as such above all for their tangible activities to protect the environment and biodiversity, rather than on the basis of their status. While they are often journalists, activists or lawyers who condemn and oppose the destruction of the environment or land-grabs, environmental defenders may also be ordinary people who live in isolated villages, forests and mountains. In many other cases, they are indigenous leaders or members of the community defending their ancestral land from damage caused by
major projects such as mines and dams. Risking murder, harassment and denigration, the
defenders of the right to a healthy environment and biodiversity are the rights defenders who
pay the highest price. They need to be supported in their action to support the environment
and biodiversity.

In this spirit, applications are open to persons or non-governmental organizations with one
or more advocacy or field projects aimed at defending the environment and biodiversity, as
well as those aimed at protecting whistle-blowers and environmental defenders, particularly
women and young activists.

2 – The five prize winners will be invited to Paris for the official ceremony. They will receive
a medal and share a total sum of €70,000, awarded by the CNCDH and to be used to
implement their projects. They will be able to say that they are 2020 laureates of the Human
Rights Prize of the French Republic.
Five runners-up will be awarded a “special mention” medal by the French ambassador in their
country of origin.

3 – Applications must comply with the prize rules.
The prize rules are available upon request. They can also be found on the CNCDH website:

4 - The application, which must be written in French, must include:
   a) A letter of application presented and signed by the president or legal representative of
   the NGO concerned, or by the individual candidate;
The application form, which is attached to this call for applications and can be downloaded
   from the CNCDH website:
   https://www.cncdh.fr/sites/default/files/formulaire_de_candidature_2020_0.doc
   This form should present, in detail, the actions conducted by the association or individual.
   b) A presentation of the NGO concerned (statutes, operations, etc.), where appropriate.
   c) The postal address and bank details of the NGO or individual candidate.

Candidates must send their complete application before the deadline of 18 October 2020 to
the Secretary-General of the CNCDH:
   – CNCDH – À l’attention de Magali Lafourcade, TSA 40720 – 20 Avenue de Ségur,
     75007 PARIS – France
   – or by email to: cncdh@cncdh.fr

Once the panel has announced the results, the 2020 Prize will be awarded in Paris by the
Prime Minister, around 10 December 2020.

Please circulate this call for applications widely.

All information concerning the Human Rights Prize and application rules are available on the
CNCDH website: https://www.cncdh.fr/fr/prix/prix-des-droits-de-lhomme

You can share the call for applications and keep up with Human Rights Prize news on social
media using the hashtag #PrixDH.
The CNCDH is on Twitter (@CNCDH), Facebook (@cncdh.france) and LinkedIn.

Yours faithfully,

Magali Lafourcade
Secretary-General of the CNCDH