Dear colleagues of NGOs in Official Partnership with UNESCO,

It is with great enthusiasm and a profound sense of responsibility that I have submitted my candidacy for UNESCO Liaison Committee for the next two years. With over 20 years of dedicated experience in international cooperation, peace education, and leadership within civil society, I am deeply committed to strengthening the partnership between UNESCO and the global network of NGOs that share its mission.

Throughout my professional journey, I have been privileged to work at the crossroads of formal and non-formal education for just and sustainable solutions to the challenges that affect our interconnected world. One of my core motivations for candidacy for the Liaison Committee is the opportunity to serve as a bridge between UNESCO secretariat and the community of over 400 NGOs that form the backbone of civil society engagement. My work experience in international cooperation and the last eight years as the Executive Director of Peace Education Institute, an organization in official partnership with UNESCO, has equipped me with a comprehensive understanding of UNESCO's priorities and the role of NGOs can have to support UNESCO in its mission. I believe that the Committee can play a pivotal role in creating robust avenues for dialogue, knowledge-sharing, and collective actions among NGOs and UNESCO. I am committed to enhancing the Liaison Committee's efforts in this regard.

My commitment to peace has been a central pillar of my career. I have designed and implemented programs in diverse cultural contexts, focusing on building peace by educational actions focusing on conflict prevention, intercultural understanding, and youth empowerment. These initiatives have not only impacted communities but have also strengthened my conviction that education is the most powerful tool for building a culture of peace. I am eager to contribute my expertise to the Liaison Committee's work in this area.

In addition to my professional experience, I bring a strong track record of governance, strategic planning, and consensus-building. I have led multi-stakeholder initiatives, managed cross-sectoral partnerships, and facilitated capacity-building programs that align with UNESCO's objectives. These skills, coupled with my ability to navigate complex organizational dynamics, position me to contribute effectively to the Liaison Committee's strategic goals and operational responsibilities.

I am particularly inspired by the Liaison Committee's mission to strengthen the cooperation between UNESCO and civil society organizations in addressing global challenges. In an era marked by unprecedented crises, from climate change to rising inequality, it is imperative to harness the collective expertise and energy of NGOs to advance shared solutions. As a member of the Committee, I would dedicate myself to ensuring that the voices and contributions of civil society are amplified, recognized, and effectively mobilized to drive tangible progress.

It would be a profound honor to serve on the UNESCO Liaison Committee, and I am confident that my experience, skills, and unwavering commitment to UNESCO's mission will allow me to make a meaningful contribution to this vital work.

In peace and solidarity,

Riikka Jalonen Peace Education Institute Finland