

The Universal House of Justice

23 January 1985

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

1986 has been named the International Year of Peace by the United Nations. Considering the dangers surrounding mankind and the remedial prospects of the Lesser Peace to which Bahá'u'lláh has summoned the nations, we embrace this God-sent opportunity to proclaim ever more widely and convincingly the vitalizing principles upon which, as our Teachings emphatically assert, a lasting peace must be founded. The nature and variety of the proclamation activities which the Bahá'í community will undertake, during 1986 and beyond, will be outlined in detail later. We wish now to indicate some of the ideas we are contemplating, so that you may sense what to expect and how to prepare for your own participation.

In addition to projects to be initiated at the World Center, these ideas include:

- Calling upon local and national Bahá'í communities to sponsor a wide range of activities which will engage the attention of people from all walks of life to various topics relevant to peace, such as: the role of women, the elimination of racism, the eradication of prejudice, the promotion of education, the extension of social and economic development, the adoption of a world auxiliary language, the establishment of world government;
- Mounting a publicity campaign which will make use of such themes as “world peace through world religion,” “world peace through world education,” “world peace through world language,” “world peace through world law”—a campaign which could lead to discussion of these subjects in small or large gatherings, at local or national levels, and perhaps in collaboration with organizations promoting such ideas;
- Urging the publishing within and without the Bahá'í community of a wide assortment of literature, posters and other graphic materials on peace;
- Requesting Bahá'í magazines—children, youth, adult—whether intended for internal or external circulation, to carry special features on peace;
- Inviting Bahá'í radio stations to devote particular attention to this theme;
- Asking the Associations for Bahá'í Studies to conduct programs on peace;
- Encouraging Bahá'í artists and musicians to contribute, and consider inviting their non-Bahá'í colleagues to contribute, to the effectiveness of such activities by giving expression through the various arts to important themes relating to world peace.

In effect, we envision a proclamation campaign which will not only involve large public events and the use of the mass media, but will also engage people at the grassroots and at all other levels of society in a broad range of profoundly effective activities through which they will interact with the Bahá'í community in a sustained, worldwide effort to attend to the fundamental issues of peace, aided by the unique insights provided by the Teachings of Bahá'u'lláh.

As you contemplate what possibilities these and similar ideas suggest for your own plans, we advise you to take preparatory steps to hold within your jurisdiction, during 1986, local and national peace conferences to which public officials and other prominent persons should be invited. In those places where national conferences may not be possible, local conferences should certainly be held.

In some regions, neighboring National Assemblies may find it convenient to pool their resources and hold regional conferences instead of national ones. These need not be very large, but should be effective enough to make a good impression on the public as well as on the national Bahá'í communities involved. It is left to the initiative of the National Assemblies, in consultation with Continental Counselors, to hold such conferences.

Simultaneously as you make initial arrangements for the conferences, you will also want to find out what plans are being made by the governments and organizations in your respective countries, so that you will know beforehand how to coordinate your own programs with the programs of others in ways most conducive to the proclamation of the Faith and the mutual benefit of all concerned.

We would welcome any thoughts and suggestions you may have on the activities to be undertaken by you during the International Year of Peace.

Your planning efforts for 1986 must not, of course, interrupt the work of the Seven Year Plan. Indeed, the activities associated with the economic and social development of the Bahá'í community, the observance during 1985 of International Youth Year, and the anticipated activities for the peace campaign to begin a year hence are mutually reinforcing and go far to enhance the teaching opportunities necessary to the successful completion of the Plan. We have every confidence that your continuing exertions to meet the new challenges resulting from the emergence of the Faith from obscurity will be richly rewarded by the Blessed Beauty; and we shall renew our supplications at the Holy Threshold that your brightest expectations may be surpassed by resounding triumph.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]