THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

2 January 1986

The Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

The eager expectation with which we welcomed to the World Center, on 27 December, sixty-four Counselors from the five continents to discuss, with the International Teaching Centre, the challenges and opportunities facing the Bahá'í world community, has, at the conclusion of their historic conference, been transmuted into feelings of deepest joy, gratitude and love.

Graced by the presence of the Hands of the Cause Amatu'l-Bahá Rúḥíyyih Khánum, Ugo Giachery, ʻAlí-Akbar Furútan, ʻAlí-Muḥammad Varqá and Collis Featherstone, the Conference was organized and managed with admirable foresight and efficiency by the International Teaching Centre, whose individual members watched over and served untiringly the needs of the participants and the progress of the Conference itself.

Convened in the concourse of the Seat of the Universal House of Justice as the Counselors of the Bahá'í world entered upon their new five-year term of office, within months of the termination of the Seven Year Plan and the opening of the new Six Year Plan, its aura heightened by the spiritual potencies of the Holy Shrines and the euphoric sense of victory and blessing now pervading the entire Bahá'í world, the Conference attained such heights of consultative exaltation, spirituality and power as only those serving the Blessed Beauty can enjoy.

The organic growth of the Cause of God, indicated by recent significant developments in its life, becomes markedly apparent in the light of the main objectives and expectations of the Six Year Plan: a vast expansion of the numerical and financial resources of the Cause; enlargement of its status in the world; a worldwide increase in the production, distribution and use of Bahá'í literature; a firmer and worldwide demonstration of the Bahá'í way of life requiring special consideration of the Bahá'í education of children and youth, the strengthening of Bahá'í family life and attention to universal participation and the spiritual enrichment of individual life; further acceleration in the process of the maturation of local and national Bahá'í communities and a dynamic consolidation of the unity of the two arms of the Administrative Order; an extension of the involvement of the Bahá'í world community in the needs of the world around it; and the pursuit of social and economic development in well-established Bahá'í communities. These are some of the features of the Six Year Plan which will open on 21 April 1986 and terminate on 20 April 1992.

Riḍván 1992 will mark the inception of a Holy Year, during which the Centenary of the Ascension of Bahá'u'lláh will be observed by commemorations around the world and the inauguration of His Covenant will be celebrated, in the City of the Covenant, by the holding of the second Bahá'í World Congress.

The beloved Counselors, strengthened and enriched by their experience in the Holy Land, will, as early as possible, consult with all National Spiritual Assemblies on measures to conclude triumphantly the current Plan, and on preparations to launch the Six Year Plan. In anticipation of those consultations, National Spiritual Assemblies will receive the full announcement of the aims and characteristics of that Plan, so that together with the Counselors they may formulate the national plans which will, for each community, establish its pursuit of the overall objectives.

This new process, whereby the national goals of the next Plan are to be largely formulated by National Spiritual Assemblies and Boards of Counselors, signalizes the inauguration of a new stage in the unfoldment of the Administrative Order. Our beloved Guardian anticipated a succession of

epochs during the Formative Age of the Faith; have no hesitation in recognizing that this new development in the maturation of Bahá'í institutions marks the inception of the fourth epoch of that Age.

Shoghi Effendi perceived in the organic life of the Cause a dialectic of victory and crisis. The unprecedented triumphs, generated by the adamantine steadfastness of the Iranian friends, will inevitably provoke opposition to test and increase our strength. Let every Bahá'í in the world be assured that whatever may befall this growing Faith of God is but incontrovertible evidence of the loving care with which the King of Glory and His martyred Herald, through the incomparable Center of His Covenant and our beloved Guardian, are preparing His humble followers for ultimate and magnificent triumph. Our loving prayers are with you all.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

This document has been downloaded from the Bahá'í Reference Library. You are free to use its content subject to the terms of use found at www.bahai.org/legal