THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

25 February 1986

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

The Six Year Plan

On 2 January 1986, on the closing day of the Counselors' Conference, the Universal House of Justice announced certain features of the Six Year Plan and the methods by which the national goals were to be worked out in consultation between the Counselors and National Spiritual Assemblies. Before Riḍván you will receive a message from the Universal House of Justice to the entire Bahá'í world and also one addressed specifically to the Bahá'ís within the jurisdiction of each National Spiritual Assembly.

In the meantime the House of Justice wishes you to begin your consultations on the goals of the Six Year Plan for your country. The preliminary steps in goal-setting have already been taken, namely the assessment of each country's strengths and weaknesses which the National Spiritual Assemblies recently made at the request of the Universal House of Justice, and which will undoubtedly be of great assistance to each one of you as you enter the next stage of the process.

The House of Justice has instructed us to send you the following additional guidelines together with the enclosed statement of the major objectives of the plan at the national level, which includes some suggestions for specific goals to provide a basis for your consultations. You should not, however, confine yourselves to those suggestions.

A special characteristic of the Six Year Plan is that the conceiving of the detailed national goals is itself to be one of the tasks of the Plan, but this fact should not hold up in any way the activities of your communities. With this letter you are being acquainted with the major objectives of the plan and every believer, every Local Spiritual Assembly, and all the national committees can pursue immediately, with increasing vigor, many projects towards their attainment, both projects already in process and others which will be newly conceived, so that when the specific national goals for each community are announced they will be received by a united company of devoted followers of Bahá'u'lláh already in the full flood of activity.

It is the hope of the Universal House of Justice that each National Assembly will be able to meet before Riḍván with a representative of the Continental Board of Counselors so that from this initial consultation a basis will be laid for consultation on the goals at the National Conventions.

Other consultations will no doubt continue following the Riḍván Festival. Their duration will depend on the condition of each national community, its size and the complexity of its circumstances. As soon as specific goals have been formulated and agreed they should be immediately sent to the World Center. They will then be considered by the Universal House of Justice and the International Teaching Centre, and, as soon as possible, the National Assembly will be informed of the approval or modification of its proposal. Each submission will be considered on its arrival; the earlier they arrive the better, and in no case should a submission reach the World Center later than 1 November 1986.

Among the elements of the plan which are not covered by the list of major objectives are the goals for international assistance including pioneering, resident teaching projects, traveling teaching, assistance for development projects, and for the acquisition of properties and vehicles. Notes relating to these elements have been provided to the Continental Boards of Counselors who

will share them with National Assemblies during the process of consultation. Since they are international in nature, these goals will have to be consolidated and approved at the World Center before being generally announced.

Though the institutions of the Faith are responsible for planning the goals and activities of the Cause, for stimulating and encouraging the believers to arise, and for supporting and unifying them in their services, it is, in the final analysis, through the spiritual decisions and actions of the individual believers that the Faith moves forward on its course to ultimate victory. It is the ardent hope of the Universal House of Justice that every faithful follower of Bahá'u'lláh will search his or her heart and turn with full attention and loving self-sacrifice to the consideration of the goals of the Six Year Plan, and determine how to play a part in their achievement.

The prayers of the Universal House of Justice and the International Teaching Centre at the Sacred Threshold will surround the institutions of the Faith in every continent and nation as you assume your weighty task of conceiving the goals which will guide the national communities of the Faith through the next six years.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

The Six Year Plan

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The Major Objectives

The major objectives of the Six Year Plan include: carrying the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the generality of mankind; greater involvement of the Faith in the life of human society; a worldwide increase in the translation, production, distribution and use of Bahá'í literature; further acceleration in the process of the maturation of national and local Bahá'í communities; greater attention to universal participation and the spiritual enrichment of individual believers; a wider extension of Bahá'í education to children and youth and the strengthening of Bahá'í family life; and the pursuit of projects of social and economic development in well-established Bahá'í communities.

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Set out below are suggestions for possible ways of achieving the above objectives to act as a basis for consultation and a stimulus for thinking. National Assemblies should not confine themselves to these points if they feel that there are other matters which deserve attention.

1. **Carrying the healing Message of Bahá'u'lláh to the generality of mankind**

   - Increase the number of believers from all strata of society, identifying as goals of the plan those specific sectors, minority groups, tribal peoples, etc. which are at present underrepresented in the Bahá'í community and which will, therefore, be given special attention during the plan.
   - Increase the number of localities where Bahá'ís reside, opening, in the process, virgin states, provinces, islands or other major civil subdivisions of the country.
   - Seize teaching opportunities by planning projects in areas where receptivity is found, aiming at large-scale enrollment and entry by troops where possible.

- Be alert to opportunities for international collaboration with other Bahá'í communities in the promotion of the Faith through: border teaching projects; the sending of traveling teachers; and the teaching of special groups such as those temporarily abroad for study or work, particularly those from countries which are difficult of access, such as China or countries in Eastern Europe.
- Raise up homefront pioneers and traveling or resident teachers to assist in the fulfillment of teaching goals and plans.
- Utilize mass media systems for greater proclamation.
- Make use of drama and singing in the teaching and deepening work and in Bahá'í gatherings, where advisable.

2. **Greater involvement of the Faith in the life of human society**
    - Develop the proper understanding and practice of consultation among members of the Bahá'í community and in the work of Bahá'í institutions, and foster the spirit of consultation in the conduct of human affairs and the resolution of conflicts at all levels of society.
    - Foster association with organizations, prominent persons and those in authority concerning the promotion of peace, world order and allied objectives, with a view to offering the Bahá'í teachings and insights regarding current problems and thought.
    - Train suitable Bahá'ís to undertake public relations activities.
    - Foster appreciation of the Faith in scholarly and academic circles by developing Bahá'í scholarship, by endeavoring to have the Faith included in the curricula and textbooks of schools and universities, and by other means.
    - Encourage Bahá'í youth to move towards the front ranks of those professions, trades, arts and crafts necessary to human progress.
    - Promote the establishment of Bahá'í clubs in universities and other similar educational institutions.
    - Foster the practice of the equality of the sexes both in the life of the Bahá'í community and in society as a whole and, for this purpose, hold special conferences and training programs for women and for men.
3. **A worldwide increase in the translation, production, distribution and use of Bahá'í literature**
    - Foster the use of Bahá'í literature, especially in local languages, supplemented as need be by tape recordings and visual aids.
    - Improve the distribution of Bahá'í literature by taking specific steps, such as the establishment of regional depots where necessary, and the education of Local Spiritual Assemblies in the responsibilities to acquaint the friends with Bahá'í literature and ensure its easy availability.
    - Produce greater supplies of Bahá'í literature in accordance with well-thought-out plans of translation, production and distribution.

- Produce, where required for translations into vernacular languages, simplified versions of the Sacred Scriptures, the writings of the Guardian and the statements of the Universal House of Justice.
- Establish Bahá'í lending libraries.

4. **Further acceleration in the process of the maturation of local and national Bahá'í communities**
    - Adopt specific programs to assist and encourage the development of isolated enters into groups, and groups into communities with Local Spiritual Assemblies, resulting in a steady increase of such Assemblies.
    - Adopt specific goals and programs to consolidate and strengthen Local Spiritual Assemblies, so that they will:
        - Hold regular meetings with harmonious and productive consultation,
        - Properly organize and conduct the work of their Secretariat and Treasury,
        - Appoint and coordinate the work of local committees for special aspects of their work, such as teaching, child education, youth activities, literature distribution, etc.,
        - Win the respect and confidence of their local communities so that the believers will turn to them for the resolution of problems and advice in their services to the Cause,
        - Where appropriate, acquire and develop the use of local centers,
        - Obtain incorporation or equivalent recognition as a legal entity,
        - Exercise their responsibilities in relation to marriages, births, transfers of membership, marriages and deaths.
    - Adopt specific goals and programs to consolidate communities with Local Spiritual Assemblies so that the believers will be encouraged to:
        - Attend regularly Nineteen Day Feasts and the observances of Bahá'í Holy Days, and enhance the spiritual quality of such gatherings,
        - Pursue local teaching and deepening activities,
        - Foster the realization of the equality of men and women,
        - Develop local activities for children and youth,
        - Support the fund,
        - Carry out extension teaching projects.
    - Develop the functioning of National Spiritual Assemblies, adopting specific plans and programs to:
        - Improve their standard of united, productive, loving consultation,
        - Develop efficiently functioning national secretariats,

— Enhance the standard of the functioning of national treasuries and promote the goal of financial independence of the national Bahá'í community,

— Appoint strong national committees to carry out, under the general supervision of the National Spiritual Assembly, the many specialized aspects of the work of the Cause, including the detailed planning and prompt execution of the work necessary to achieve all the goals of the Six Year Plan.

- Acquire, where needed and feasible, national and local properties, such as Ḥaẓíratu'l-Quds, teaching institutes, summer schools, Bahá'í cemeteries, etc. and ensure their proper care and maintenance.
- Obtain, where legally possible, official recognition for Bahá'í marriage and holy days and exemption from the payment of taxes on Bahá'í institutions and their activities.
- Ensure the rapid and regular dissemination of news to all believers.
- Hold regular, well-planned and well-run summer and winter schools and conferences at costs and in localities which will permit the largest attendance.
- Encourage collaboration between or amongst Local Spiritual Assemblies in mutually agreed projects.
- Develop and administer correspondence courses for teaching and deepening.

5. **Greater attention to universal participation and the spiritual enrichment of individual believers**

    - Promote universal participation in the life of the Faith and an increased sense of their Bahá'í identity among children, youth and adults.
    - Encourage, where feasible, the practice of dawn prayer.
    - Encourage individual believers to adopt teaching goals for themselves.
    - Carry out activities designed to deepen the believers in both a spiritual and intellectual understanding of the Cause.
    - Encourage believers to make greater use of Bahá'í literature.
    - Encourage the believers to enhance their command of language to assist them to understand the Bahá'í writings ever more clearly.
    - Develop and foster Bahá'í scholarship and lend support to the Associations for Bahá'í Studies.
    - Foster obedience to the Bahá'í laws of personal behavior such as abstention from the drinking of alcoholic beverages and from the taking of habit-forming drugs, and inspire the believers to follow the Bahá'í way of life.

6. **A wider extension of Bahá'í education to children and youth, and the strengthening of Bahá'í family life**

    - Encourage the holding of regular classes for the Bahá'í education of children.

- Develop systematic lesson plans and other materials for the Bahá'í education of children.
- Train believers to teach Bahá'í children's classes.
- Establish a program for the guidance of parents, especially mothers, in the care and training of Bahá'í children.
- Sponsor institutes on Bahá'í marriage and family life.
- Encourage community activities involving Bahá'í families.

7. **The pursuit of projects of social and economic development in well-established Bahá'í communities**
    - Encourage Local Spiritual Assemblies and the rank and file of the believers to consider ways in which they can advance the social and economic development of their communities.
    - Establish tutorial schools and preschools where needed and feasible.
    - Encourage and sponsor adult literacy programs where needed, especially for women.
    - Foster collaboration with other agencies involved in social and economic development in areas where the Bahá'í communities can contribute to the work.

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