

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1 June 1998

To selected National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

Recently a number of questions have been raised regarding the deputization of institute teachers and coordinators, and the Universal House of Justice has instructed us to bring to your attention the passage below from its Ridván 1996 message and to comment on it as follows.

“Center your energies in the propagation of the Faith of God,” Bahá'u'lláh thus instructs His servants, adding, “Whoso is worthy of so high a calling, let him arise and promote it. Whoso is unable, it is his duty to appoint him who will, in his stead, proclaim this Revelation...” Just as one deputizes another to teach in one's stead by covering the expenses of a pioneer or traveling teacher, one can deputize a teacher serving an institute, who is, of course, a teacher of teachers. To do so, one may make contributions to the Continental Bahá'í Fund, as well as to the Local, National and International Funds, earmarked for this purpose.

Referring to this passage in its letter of 6 August 1996, the House of Justice informed the Bahá'í world of its decision to contribute US\$300,000 for the deputization of institute teachers, to be divided among the five Continental Funds, and expressed the hope that the friends, especially those with means, would follow suit and would give adequate attention to this area of urgent need. In that letter, it was indicated that the Counselors would be asked to keep their Auxiliary Board members apprised of the level of deputization required by institutes in various regions so that they could make this information available to those who wished to pursue this new possibility.

Clearly, the individual believer has a number of options available to him or her in complying with Bahá'u'lláh's injunction. Funds can be given directly to a specific believer who has been selected to act as one's deputy or can be contributed to one of the various Funds of the Faith, as mentioned above. However, for the deputization of institute teachers, the House of Justice wished to ensure that contributions and needs would be matched in such a way that national communities whose resources are meager would benefit from the assistance of those in communities with more resources at their disposal, whether in the same continent or another. Since the Continental Boards of Counselors are in the best position to know the needs of institutes in various regions, it was felt that contributing to the Continental Fund is an efficient way for an individual believer to perform this service.

With this in mind, the House of Justice requested the International Teaching Centre to compile and organize the necessary information and to share it with all Counselors. Accordingly, the Teaching Center identified three figures around which the deputization needs worldwide seemed to be clustered: US\$1,200, US\$3,600 and US\$7,200 per staff member per year. It also drew up a list of countries, in groups by continent, where institute teachers and coordinators could benefit from deputization. It was suggested to the Counselors that they provide this list and the figures to the Auxiliary Board members to use in their consultations with those wishing to support one or more staff members of an institute for a given period of time, allowing the friends to choose the region to which their funds should be channelled. The Trustees of the Continental Funds were asked to see to it that the appropriate amounts would reach institutes in the designated regions. This scheme was approved by the Universal House of Justice, and it is

envisioned that the Teaching Center will bring the list of countries up to date from time to time and revise the figures as necessary.

While the Auxiliary Board members are not being asked to solicit funds, they are expected to go beyond the general promotion of deputization among the believers and to discuss the specific details with them when it is appropriate to do so. The arrangements needed to ensure that the contributions reach the proper Continental Funds vary from country to country. Therefore, you may wish to consult with the Counselors to determine what measures can be taken to advance this important endeavor in your community.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat