

## The Universal House of Justice

31 December 2005

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

As the gathering of the Continental Counsellors in the Holy Land draws to a close, we are moved to share with you the feelings of joy, triumph and confidence which have characterized several days of focused deliberation on the present Five Year Plan and on the global enterprise that will succeed it.

The Hand of the Cause of God 'Alí-Muhammad Varqá opened the conference with a stirring appeal for resolute action, infusing the proceedings with a spirit of unwavering determination. Stories poured forth of the inspiring activities of the friends and the longing and responsiveness of the peoples of the world, conveying assurances that the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh is blossoming more abundantly in all parts of the globe. Persistent questions of how to sustain the process of growth, of how to achieve a balance between expansion and consolidation, that have engaged the Bahá'í community for nearly half a century found clear answers in the experiences shared from diverse clusters on all continents. Accounts of obstacles surmounted, fresh learning acquired, and creative insights discovered made it evident that the Army of Light is prepared to advance towards new horizons.

There can be no doubt that the Plan soon to end marks an upturn in the fortunes of the Faith. We look to the next decade and a half, the final years of the first century of the Formative Age, with great expectations of what will be accomplished. From this vantage point, the Bahá'í world can readily appreciate the significant extent to which the International Teaching Centre provided the impetus so indispensable to blazing the course set over these past few years and can, as well, discern the rich possibilities that its consecrated endeavors portend for the future.

Our message of 27 December addressed to the conference, which has already been transmitted to National Spiritual Assemblies, summarizes the learning about growth to date and delineates the priorities for the next Plan. Careful study of the message by all believers and institutions will be an essential requisite for the upcoming consultations that will take place at every level of the community upon the return home of the Counsellors.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]