

The Universal House of Justice

15 December 2009

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

We are pleased to inform you of the significant advances that have been made recently in the restoration and further development of the majestic edifices on Mount Carmel raised up by Shoghi Effendi more than five decades ago.

With the successful completion of a three-year-long programme for its restoration and improvement, the International Archives Building has been reopened for visits by pilgrims to the holy relics and historic objects displayed there. The exterior stonework has been repaired through thirty thousand hours of meticulous work over a two-year period by the members of a dedicated restoration team. The foundations of the building have been waterproofed, and the entire structure made earthquake resistant through incorporation within it of a reinforced concrete and steel frame, not visible to visitors, extending from the foundations to the roof level. Interior improvements include installation of an attractive granite floor at the main level; use of high-quality display cabinets similar to the original cabinets, designed to ensure preservation of the objects on display far into the future; development of basement facilities for receiving pilgrims; provision of means for persons with a physical disability to have access to the building; and installation of complete environmental, safety, and security systems.

No less significant has been the progress made with the restoration of the edifice of the Shrine of the Báb. A comprehensive programme for the structural reinforcement of the original building and the superstructure for earthquake resistance is nearing completion. The stone-restoration team is proceeding well with repair to the exterior stonework and the ornamental metal balustrades. Work is advanced on the preparation for use by pilgrims and other visitors of the three rooms on the southern side of the Shrine, and arrangements are being made for restoration of the dome and replacement of its golden tiles to recover the original lustre. Installation of a new electrical and environmental control system is in progress.

As this vital project on Mount Carmel proceeds, work is also continuing in the 'Akká area, in both the Riḍván Garden and the newly acquired land surrounding the resting-place of Bahá'u'lláh, the Qiblih of the Bahá'í world.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]