

## THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

22 July 2018

To the Friends Gathered in Norte del Cauca, Colombia, for the Dedication of the House of Worship

Dearly loved Friends,

It is with hearts brimming with joy that we greet you on this historic occasion, when the doors of the first *Mashriqu'l-Adhikárs* in Colombia are opened to all. The Temple that has been built through strenuous effort over four years is now ready to assume its divinely-ordained function—a place “solely designed and entirely dedicated to the worship of God”; “a place of great happiness and joy”; “a collective centre for men’s souls” which “forgeth bonds of unity from heart to heart”; “a means for the exaltation of the Word of God”. What is being celebrated here today is not only the culmination of the construction of a physical edifice, but a significant milestone in a process of development that has unfolded in this region over the course of many decades.

When the Bahá’í Faith entered this land, it took root in its fertile soil; a few pure souls with the courage to break through social barriers plunged into the living waters of this new Revelation from God and drank their fill. Without hesitation, they embraced the sublime vision of Bahá’u’lláh for the betterment of the world and endeavoured to illuminate heart after heart with the light of His Teachings. In the midst of powerful winds that acted to destabilize a society, they attended to the planting of seeds. Their humble efforts to nurture in the young those qualities characterizing a faithful follower of the Blessed Beauty and to imbue their family and community life with the divine teachings evolved into a process of education that would reach thousands upon thousands. While the fruits of the committed labours of growing numbers are witnessed across the whole of Colombia, the region of Norte del Cauca is blessed with the singular honour of being the site of the first Bahá’í House of Worship in the country.

This House of Worship stands now as a symbol of the beauty inherent in the noble people of this region and its design evokes the generosity of their land. It is a manifestation of the power released through persistent collective action, a centre of attraction for all those longing to work for the renewal of their society, an oasis of hope for the spiritual and material upliftment of a population that has endured the trials of history and emerged with an indomitable spirit. Let all who gather within its walls occupy themselves with the remembrance of the One Creator so that “the melodies of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhikárs* may rise at dawntide to the Concourse on high, and the songs of the nightingales of God may bring joy and ecstasy to the denizens of the All-Glorious Realm”.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]