THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

4 January 2022

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

We are at this moment with the company of the Continental Counsellors—the great majority of them present in the Holy Land, while some who could not travel here join from a distance—and the sixth and final day of their conference, focused on the upcoming Nine Year Plan, is about to conclude. There is so much that could be shared with you about the spirit of this conference, as seen in its participants. Steeped in experience, they have been eyewitnesses to the rise in capacity in the Bahá'í world, and they brim with confidence about what you can further accomplish. We could not have wished for a keener, more insightful grasp of what is called for in the next Plan than was demonstrated in the consultations of these consecrated souls. But this, of course, is just the beginning. When the Counsellors return to the countries of five continents, they will bring to you and those who serve with you all that they have absorbed. They and their auxiliaries will be at your side as you prepare for this immense collective enterprise—especially through your participation in the wave of conferences soon to sweep across the globe, where Bahá'u'lláh's universal summons to work for the betterment of the world will galvanize the assembled well-wishers of humanity.

A confluence of circumstances in the world at large and within the Faith has made this a charged moment. The global challenges now facing humanity are a severe test of its willingness to put aside short-term self-interest and come to terms with this stark spiritual and moral reality: there is but one, interconnected human family and it shares one precious homeland. At this same moment, the followers of Bahá'u'lláh are examining anew the possibilities before them to release the society-building power of the Faith. This Plan will test their stamina, their willpower, and the strength of their love for those who dwell alongside them. They will help to nurture, in every place, communities of common purpose that recognize the power of unity to heal, to transcend. Within these communities, every soul may find sanctuary, and in the friends' many endeavours for worship and praise, for education, for social transformation, for the development of communities—in all these, every soul may find room to grow and to serve. We are stirred by the promise of 'Abdu'l-Bahá: "The small shall be made great, and the powerless shall be given strength; they that are of tender age shall become the children of the Kingdom, and those that have gone astray shall be guided to their heavenly home."

When Bahá'u'lláh sent forth His glad tidings, the devoted believers who could carry His message to humanity were so few in number. Today, praise be to God, the devotion of the friends is undimmed and their numbers have soared. May their hearts be fortified through the power of His Word and, on every occasion and in every space, may they shine with the light of the splendours of heaven. Such will be the prayer on our tongues and the hope in our breasts when, today, with the Counsellors, we enter the Shrine of the Blessed Beauty to supplicate on your behalf.

[signed: The Universal House of Justice]

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