

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

13 May 2008

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

At midday on the second of May, the Tenth International Bahá'í Convention drew to its close. Later that afternoon, some one thousand delegates from over 150 countries, in the company of the Continental Counsellors and the friends serving at the World Centre, assembled at Bahjí to celebrate the Twelfth Day of Ridván and to offer prayers of thanksgiving for the blessings bestowed on them. No one present during those six blissful days could fail to apprehend the import of the gathering. That at so turbulent a time on the world stage such a representation of humanity was able to come together in the Holy Land to fulfil so sacred a purpose was, indeed, an accomplishment of singular significance.

Following their arrival here, delegates had the opportunity to refresh their souls in the precincts of the Holy Shrines, preparing themselves to discharge the weighty responsibility of electing the members of the Universal House of Justice. Over the course of the next several days, they took part in five consultative sessions that centred on the progress of the current global Plan. It was a source of inspiration and joy to note the wealth of experience that they brought to the discussions and the unity of thought that distinguished the comments put forward. Their contributions to the consultation were informed, as well, by their study of the document prepared by the International Teaching Centre *Attaining the Dynamics of Growth: Glimpses from five continents*. As suggested by its title, the document describes from an historical perspective efforts to establish intensive programmes of growth in different parts of the globe. What it demonstrates, above all, is how rapidly the process of learning that impels progress is accelerating worldwide. We hope that it will form the basis for much of the discussions at the National Conventions soon to get under way.

As delegates began to depart from the World Centre, the Conference of Continental Boards of Counsellors opened. The observations made by these high-ranking officers of the Cause throughout the meeting further confirmed the efficacy of the strategies being put in place for the expansion and consolidation of the Faith. As we enter the third year of the Five Year Plan, we are delighted to announce that the number of intensive programmes of growth in operation has surpassed the 600 mark. However impressive this accomplishment, it pales before what remains to be achieved. We urge you, one and all, to maintain your focus, to strengthen your resolve and to arise with even greater determination to carry forward the teaching work.

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