

## THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Riḍván 2009

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

A mere three years ago we set before the Bahá'í world the challenge of exploiting the framework for action that had emerged with such clarity at the conclusion of the last global Plan. The response, as we had hoped, was immediate. With great vigour the friends everywhere began to pursue the goal of establishing intensive programmes of growth in no less than 1,500 clusters worldwide, and the number of such programmes soon started to climb. But no one could have imagined then how profoundly the Lord of Hosts, in His inscrutable wisdom, intended to transform His community in so short a span of time. What a purposeful and confident community it was that celebrated its accomplishments at the midway point of the current Plan in forty-one regional conferences across the globe! What an extraordinary contrast did its coherence and energy provide to the bewilderment and confusion of a world caught in a spiral of crisis! This, indeed, was the community of the blissful to which the Guardian had referred. This was a community aware of the vast potentialities with which it has been endowed and conscious of the role it is destined to play in rebuilding a broken world. This was a community in the ascendant, subject to severe repression in one part of the globe, yet rising up undeterred and undismayed as a united whole and strengthening its capacity to achieve Bahá'u'lláh's purpose to liberate humankind from the yoke of the most grievous oppression. And in the nearly eighty-thousand participants who attended the conferences we saw the emergence on the historical scene of an individual believer supremely confident in the efficacy of the Plan's methods and instruments and remarkably deft at wielding them. Each and every soul of this mighty sea stood as testimony to the transforming potency of the Faith. Each and every one was evidence of Bahá'u'lláh's promise to assist all those who arise with detachment and sincerity to serve Him. Each and every one offered a glimpse of that race of beings, consecrated and courageous, pure and sanctified, destined to evolve over generations under the direct influence of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation. In them we saw the first signs of the fulfilment of our hope expressed at the outset of the Plan that the edifying influence of the Faith would be extended to hundreds of thousands through the institute process. There is every indication that, by the end of the Riḍván period, the number of intensive programmes of growth around the world will have crossed the 1,000 mark. What more can we do at the opening of this most joyous Festival than to bow our heads in humility before God and offer Him thanksgiving for His unbounded generosity to the community of the Greatest Name.

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