

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Riḍván 2025

To the Bahá'ís of the World

Dearly loved Friends,

With but a year remaining before the first phase of the Nine Year Plan concludes, we are eager to report on its progress—how, through shining examples of noble endeavour, the vision offered by the Faith is filling more and more hearts with hope.

The process of growth continues to advance. Striking breakthroughs have occurred in varied climes, where significant progress had not previously been witnessed, as the seed of the Faith has yielded new green shoots and the capacity for working with many souls at once has begun to emerge. These advances have often been made possible by devoted pioneers who, hearts aglow with the love of their Lord, have hastened to posts on the home front and abroad in impressive numbers. In clusters where a programme of growth had already begun, renewed attention has been given to applying, with creativity and ingenuity, those recognized strategies and lines of action that will enable the friends to pass the second and third milestones. And in clusters of proven strength, glimmerings of the society-building power of the Faith are becoming more visible, as a vibrant and transformative pattern of Bahá'í life is embraced by a growing company of galvanized souls.

Meanwhile, grassroots engagement with society has taken remarkable strides forward. Community-based initiatives of social action focused on education have multiplied the most rapidly, but other initiatives have progressed too, in fields such as agriculture, health, the environment, the empowerment of women, and the arts. Advances of this kind are most evident in the strongest clusters, where many a village or neighbourhood—even a single street or high-density building—is home to a population that is experiencing the upliftment which comes from translating the principles of the Faith into tangible reality. In places, civic leaders and individuals with responsibility for children's education or social development at the local level are not just turning to the Bahá'ís for perspectives, but are seeking to collaborate in the search for practical solutions. Further, we are pleased to see that at the national and international levels, the Bahá'í approach to certain important discourses is attracting growing consideration and admiration.

The Nine Year Plan relies on a vast, global process of learning that is as effective in the highlands of Bolivia as in the suburbs of Sydney. This process of learning has given rise to strategies and actions adaptable to every setting. It is systematic; it is organic; it is all-embracing. It creates connections, blossoming into dynamic relationships, among families, among neighbours, among youth, and among all who are ready to be protagonists in this glorious undertaking. It raises up communities that brim with potential. It enables the fulfilment of high aspirations shared by people who had been kept apart by geography,

language, culture, or conditioning but have now heard and responded to Bahá'u'lláh's universal call to "ceaselessly strive for the betterment of the lives of one another". And it is wholly reliant on the invigorating potency of the Word of God—that "unifying force", "the mover of souls and the binder and regulator in the world of humanity"—and on the sustained action it inspires.

Against the gloom of a stormy sky, how bright the light that gleams from your devoted efforts! Even as the tempest rages in the world, the havens that will shelter humanity are being built in countries, regions, and clusters. But there is much to do. Each national community has its own expectations for the progress to be made during this, the Plan's opening phase. Time is passing. Beloved friends, and promulgators of the divine teachings, and champions of the Blessed Beauty—your efforts are needed now. Every advance made in the fleeting months before next Riḍván will better equip the community of the Greatest Name for what it must accomplish in the Plan's second phase. May you be granted success. For this we beseech the sovereign Lord; for this we implore His unfailing aid; for this we entreat Him to send forth His favoured angels to assist each one of you.

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