

OUTLINE of TOPICS
To promote your further study

From: THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
To: The Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellors
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Sections:

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A. Introduction

Paragraph:

1. New capacities and achievements will eclipse the past and fortify the community.
 - In a ¼ century the institute raised our capacity to learn, to grow and to serve.
 - Those bright achievements must be eclipsed.
 - New capacities (scarcely glimpsed) must be acquired that will fortify the community.
2. We came forth from nothingness to apply the Teachings for betterment of the world.
 - Bahá'ís welcome all who labour alongside us for concord and harmony.
 - Our vibrant, outward-looking communities seek both spiritual and material progress.
 - We contribute to discourses that influence the direction of progress.
3. Each Protagonist (individuals, communities, institutions) holds society-building power
 - By strengthening their dynamic relationship, their powers will combine and multiply.
 - Cooperation and mutual assistance manifest greater advances in progress and prosperity.
 - These relationships endow the body of the Cause with moral vigour and spiritual health.
4. Enkindled souls will promote harmony and welfare for individuals and society as a whole.
 - These souls know that Bahá'u'lláh's teachings are the "sovereign remedy for every disease".
 - Enkindled souls promote harmony, consultation, noble qualities, science, oneness.
 - Religion transforms hearts and everyone can become a potential partner to collaborate.
 - They are clear on what they have learned through action and reflection to transform society.

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B. The movement of clusters

5. By diffusing the light of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation, clusters grow in quantity and quality.
 - Society building power will be released by further advances in the process of entry by troops.
 - During this 25 year series of Plans, we will see intensive growth in ALL clusters in the world.
 - Rapid progress toward this goal must be achieved during the present Nine Year Plan.

6. Counsellors will assist NSAs and RBCs to adjust number of clusters as needed.
 - A cluster defines an area where activity can be stimulated in a manageable & sustainable way.
 - Current clusters may be divided, reduced, or even enlarged as need be.
 - Areas with sparse population will adopt some elements of the framework for action that apply.

7. Clusters develop along a continuum with 1, 2, and 3 milestones as previously defined.
 - This will remain the basic model for expansion & consolidation.
 - 6,000 clusters have programs of growth; 5,000 have intensive cycles; 1,300 are large scale.
 - Counsellors will work with NSAs and RBCs to forecast progress during the 9YP.

8. Clusters at the 3rd milestone have immense value to accelerate other clusters.
 - Within the 9YP, it is imperative that every country and every region have one such cluster.
 - This is one of the Plan's chief objectives requiring the ITC to implement several strategies.
 - Teams of international and homefront pioneers will be deployed for a significant number of years.
 - NSAs and RBCs will encourage souls to arise and ensure the Faith shines brightly everywhere.

9. Anticipate open and inclusive declarations of Faith by families and groups of peers.
 - Last 5YP saw an increase in capacity to engage in conversations on spiritual themes.
 - Whole families or peer groups can thus awaken interest in the vision coming from Bahá'u'lláh.
 - Such groups begin to identify themselves with Bahá'í community life through service.
 - It is a distinctive step to accept Bahá'u'lláh, with the privileges & responsibilities of membership.
 - The atmosphere of community building enables everyone to take this step with relative ease.
 - A sense of shared collective identity enables groups to take this step together.
 - LSAs must adopt a mindset that allows for such developments.

10. Counsellors and ABMs periodically help believers learn effective ways to share this Gift of faith.
 - They fan a passion for teaching that attracts confirmations from the Divine Kingdom.
 - They teach believers to seek in every place, and at every moment, a hearing ear.

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C. Learning from the most advanced clusters

11. These clusters i) focus deeply, ii) enrich widely, and iii) expand through personal networks.
 - Universal participation in the work of community building mobilizes intelligence and creativity.
 - Each person & family can belong to an expanding nucleus that widens a circle of participation.
 - Personal networks are formed at work, studies, a local school or other community hub.
 - Specific populations across a cluster can also be a specialized form of community-building.
12. Intense activities in focus areas require more coordination to cope with complexity.
 - There may be collaboration among families to co-sponsor activities, supported by a few friends.
 - Daily life adapts to a new culture in which worship and service involve many people at once.
 - Uplifting, well-prepared community gatherings involve music and arts, promoting joy and faith.
13. A new frontier is opening where a significant proportion are ready to serve everyone in the vicinity.
 - Bahá'í institutions feel responsibility for spiritual education of an entire generation of children.
 - Stronger relations develop with local authorities for social action, even formal collaboration.
 - ABMs may appoint multiple assistants to lend momentum to one or more lines of action.
14. Local Spiritual Assemblies and agencies will undergo profound change with an expanded vision.
 - Robustly build capacity, support initiatives, preserve integrity of the community's endeavours.
 - The LSA, a highly visible protagonist in society, promotes collective learning about real progress.
 - Diverse groups will come together inspired by Bahá'u'lláh's vision of the oneness of humanity.
15. The challenge is essentially the same everywhere – whether large or small populations of Bahá'ís.
 - Friends read their own reality; and find for every community a goal, and for every goal a path.
 - *“Looking ahead on this path, might we not perceive Bahá'u'lláh Himself, the reins of humanity's affairs in one hand, His other beaconing all to hasten, hasten?”*

D. Contributing to social transformation

16. The Bahá'í focus is always on building the capacity of everyone to serve.
 - Our goal is to improve both the spiritual character and social conditions of the wider community.
 - We believe in the ability of every population to become protagonists of their own development.
17. A common framework is used for responding to social, economic, and cultural barriers to progress.
 - Barriers may relate to education, health care, early marriages, basic needs, prejudices, hostility.
 - Expansion, consolidation, social action, and social discourses form a single unified endeavour.
 - Sharing a common framework brings coherence to the entire pattern of activity.

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18. Social action can address many areas such as environment, arts, agriculture, health and education.
- In villages and in urban settings with local schools, civil society, and government bodies.
 - Specific institute courses will stimulate greater activity supported by the LSAs & NSAs.
 - Bahá'í International Development Organization (BIDO)
19. Public discourses take place at personal, local, national, and international levels.
- Offering perspective on issues based on Bahá'í principles and Bahá'í experience.
 - Via institute courses, personal studies, occupations. National Offices of Public Affairs.
 - Bahá'í International Community (BIC) at United Nations Offices.
 - LSAs will be viewed as a source of moral insight, engaging other leaders to find consensus.
20. There is room for individual, personal initiatives for social progress.
- Some contribute via their vocation, interest groups, projects, or Bahá'í inspired organizations.
 - Grassroots activity based on principle, benefit from counsel of LSAs and NSAs.
 - Variety is seen in diverse, harmonious expressions of faith by devoted followers of Bahá'u'lláh.

E. Educational endeavours and the training institute

21. The centrality of all forms of education to spiritual and social transformation
- “The betterment of all beings dependeth upon it”.
 - The training institute is among the choicest fruits of the previous series of global Plans.
 - Hundreds of thousands have trained as teachers, JY animators, and study circle tutors.
22. We invite you to take a more expansive view of the training institute.
- Its purpose is not just expansion and consolidation of the Bahá'í community itself.
 - It serves ever deeper engagement in the wider community, and progress of the entire society.
 - Existing materials already support social action; new curricula will emerge as experience grows.
23. Enhancing the Quality of the educational experience provided by the institute
- Better understanding of objectives, structure, pedagogy, methods, central concepts
 - Assistance from teams, ABMs, assistants, and experienced resource persons
 - Counsellors ensure essential insights are shared from other countries & regions.
 - The International Teaching Centre is called to organize and disseminate what is known.
24. Constant refinement of the educational system is the concern of EVERY Bahá'í.
- Those once involved as youth can continue to support the institute in other ways.
 - Institutes see young people is a sacred charge; youth are now asked to reciprocate that care.
 - Youth can bring the institute to a higher level in their universities, work, family, and society.

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25. Importance of education in all forms including apprenticeships and university studies
- Institutions will take responsibility to ensure noble aspirations of youth can be fulfilled.
 - Both community and nation depend upon investment in youth who can ensure social progress.
26. Continued study of "Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous Revelation" is lifelong for every soul.
- This is not limited to institute courses; we study individually & collectively, formally & informally.
 - Seek out implications of the Revelation for countless fields of human endeavour.
 - The Institute for Studies in Global Prosperity (ISGP) offers Bahá'í perspectives on a field of issues.
27. Intellectual rigour & clarity of thought needed to explicate Bahá'í principles in the world of ideas.
- Intellectual life must thrive to respond to calls on how Revelation can advance social progress.
- F. **Raising capacity for administration at all levels**
28. Effective Bahá'í Administration will be essential to release the society-building power of the Faith
- Bahá'í administration will become "the social life and laws of community living." (Guardian)
29. ABMs and assistants help the development of current Local Spiritual Assemblies
- Bahá'ís resident in a locality have primary responsibility to raise up their own Assembly.
 - A sense of Bahá'í identity may form during community building endeavours prior to an LSA.
 - Cultivate awareness of formal aspects of community life and Bahá'í administration.
 - 2010 letter to Counsellors shows how ABMs & assistants can help LSAs on developmental path.
30. Counsellors will help NSAs and RBCs to establish and consolidate more LSAs.
- Expect a rapid rise in number of Assemblies, year over year. Reconsider boundaries of a locality.
31. Sacred nature of Bahá'í electoral process and duty to participate in it
- Atmosphere wholly free of worldly attitudes; new understanding of being "called to serve"
 - Stimulate and sustain conversations, year after year to understand reinforcing dynamism
32. A two-stage electoral process has been approved for use by 22 LSAs in 8 countries.
- This follows instructions given by 'Abdu'l-Bahá to LSA of Tihiran.
 - Similar to national conferences, units in a locality elect delegates -- which then elect the LSA.
 - In the coming Plan, the House of Justice will authorize this process in many more places.
33. LSAs offer systematic support to increasingly complex lines of action.
- LSAs consult regularly with friends coordinating activities across the cluster.
 - LSAs especially learn from centres of intense activity and support teams serving there.
 - As an LSA supports more intense & complex activities, it may need a Hazira and office staff.

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34. NSAs and RBCs will offer more systematic support to LSAs and their officers.
- Periodic meetings with Secretaries and other officers to consult about specific lines of action
35. Growth is promoted by Regional Councils or by a National Growth Committee (NGC)
- 2015 message indicates that every nation needs a structure to help clusters to advance.
 - The NSA will give latitude to the NGC agency to apply what has been learned by RBCs.
 - The NGC can support ATCs, home front pioneers, teaching projects and core materials.
 - The NGC works with the institute, ABMs and the CBC itself, freeing the NSA for other work.
36. Two Auxiliary Boards preserve and fortify vitality of the community.
- They are close to local conditions and anything affecting the spirit of a community.
 - They can help to put aside inherited customs, prejudices, cynicism, or an eye for faults.
 - Sustain eagerness, equality, cast off inertia and apathy via individual initiative
 - Support collective action, harness tech, cherish teaching, reject consumerism
 - Grow in faith, assurance and service to create havens of peace for all to find shelter
37. “Focus” embraces many lines of action simultaneously.
- This calls for an expanded vision of coexisting imperatives, and additional flexibility.
 - Heightened institutional collaboration will enable a vibrant Bahá’í community to shine forth.

G. **A historic mission**

38. This is a 25-year venture, generational in scope and significance (like the 10 Year Crusade)
- It will bring an extensive, rigorous test of all resources both spiritual and material.
 - Friends are summoned in this 2nd century to heights of heroism like the 1st in Formative Age.
39. Establishment of Divine Civilization is “the primary mission of the Bahá’í Faith”. (The Guardian)
- Counsellors and NSAs help friends to keep the perspective of history fully in view
 - Build on unity, trustworthiness, mutual support, collaboration...and all-embracing love.
40. We implore Bahá’u’lláh to make you ever more perfect channels of His ineffable grace.