

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE
DEPARTMENT OF THE SECRETARIAT

15 September 2021

Transmitted by email

To all National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

As first announced by the Universal House of Justice in its Ríḍván 2018 message, there will be a sequence of events beginning with two significant gatherings in the Holy Land: one in November marking the centenary of the Ascension of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, to be attended by representatives of National Spiritual Assemblies and Regional Bahá'í Councils; and the other bringing together the Continental Counsellors and members of the Auxiliary Boards in early January. Immediately following these gatherings, a series of conferences are to be held throughout the world over a span of months, concluding by Ríḍván or soon thereafter. We have been asked to provide you with further details about the nature of this series of conferences and how they will be convened.

The conferences will aim at carrying to the friends in every land the spiritual energy released by the gatherings in the Holy Land, as the community prepares for a dynamic thrust forward with the launch of the Nine Year Plan. These conferences, then, will give the participants an opportunity to gain greater insight into the nature of the spiritual enterprise in which they are engaged, a sense of the distance traversed thus far, and a deeper understanding of the exigencies of the current stage in the unfoldment of the Divine Plan. They will strive to enhance appreciation of the privilege of being part of a community that has set its gaze upon the spiritual and material transformation of society, and of the bounty of being connected by bonds of love and camaraderie with brothers and sisters in a global effort, each one labouring within the same framework for action, all united under the sheltering shadow of the Covenant.

Given that millions of people at the grassroots across the globe are engaged in a collective pattern of activity that fosters a vibrant community life in villages and cities, the conferences should be organized such that as many of these friends as possible are able to attend. Varying circumstances of communities will require that the conferences be organized differently from place to place in response to local conditions. In locations where the community-building process is embracing large numbers, a conference could be held for one or several adjacent neighbourhoods or villages. In other places, a conference for a cluster, a group of adjoining clusters, or a region would be more suitable. In yet other situations, several regions or countries may have a single conference. In addition, the duration of each of these gatherings may differ depending on what is deemed necessary to achieve the aim of the conferences. Naturally, restrictions in place due to the pandemic will influence your planning for the conferences. In this regard, it will be important to have contingency plans ready to cover various eventualities that may affect logistical arrangements, require provisions to be made for holding sessions online, or call for other adjustments.

It is envisaged that in preparing the programme for the conferences you will draw from the Sacred Writings as well as guidance contained in relevant messages of the House of Justice, in particular the message to be released at the forthcoming Conference of the Continental Boards of Counsellors delineating the provisions of the Nine Year Plan. It would be advisable for a general format for the programme to be prepared as soon as possible, which can be refined later in light of that message. Early consideration of the artistic and creative components to be incorporated into the programme would allow for some of the preparations for these to be made well in advance. In many places, whole families will participate, and special programmes for children and junior youth will be necessary. Where Regional Bahá'í Councils exist, it will be important for them to be fully involved in the organization of the conferences.

You are encouraged to consult with the Counsellors as soon as possible regarding the details of the programme and logistical arrangements. In addition to providing assistance throughout the planning and preparation phase, the Counsellors and their auxiliaries will naturally extend their support during the full course of these gatherings. Besides the conferences, it is anticipated that national and regional institutional meetings will need to be organized, as has been the case in connection with the launch of previous Plans. Since such institutional meetings may occur during the same period as the conferences, the scheduling of the various events will need to be carefully considered.

You may be assured that the House of Justice will offer its prayers at the Sacred Threshold that the efforts made in preparation for this series of worldwide conferences may attract the confirmations of the Blessed Beauty.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Department of the Secretariat

cc: International Teaching Centre
Boards of Counsellors
Counsellors