

THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

25 March 2023

To the Friends Gathered in Kinshasa,
Democratic Republic of the Congo, for
the Dedication of the House of Worship

Dearly loved Friends,

Our joyful hearts turn towards you who have gathered in the city of Kinshasa for an occasion that is of great significance in the history of your community: the dedication of the first House of Worship in your country, the first national House of Worship to be raised in the Bahá'í world. We send you loving greetings and wish for you a celebration that will join together your hearts and souls in praise and thanksgiving for the divine bounty represented by the erection of this House of Worship in a nation that is in the heart of Africa.

The edifice whose doors open today represents an institution inaugurated by Bahá'u'lláh Himself in His Most Holy Book. Charging His followers with building “houses of worship throughout the lands in the name of Him Who is the Lord of all religions”, He exhorted them to make these Temples as perfect as possible and, “with radiance and joy, celebrate therein the praise of your Lord, the Most Compassionate.” This worship and praise of God finds its highest expression in its translation into dynamic and disinterested service to humanity. The House of Worship raised in this Congolese metropolis is thus dedicated to uniting the worship of God and service to humanity, both vital to the regeneration of the world. It emerges, in the words of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, as a “collective centre” for all souls. Open to the followers of all religions, it enables all who inhale the sweet savours of its spirit to become “harmoniously attuned one to another”.

The path that has brought your community to this point has been laid through the sacrifices of generations of devoted believers who have over the past seven decades laboured across your country to convey Bahá'u'lláh's unifying message from one heart to another. Thus has emerged a community so remarkably assured in its mission to contribute to the betterment of society by applying spiritual principles. Today, in a myriad villages and neighbourhoods across your vast nation are unfolding endeavours of significant spiritual and social import. The friends are opening their homes to acts of collective worship; are engaging with everyone in conversations that uplift souls, illumine minds, and connect hearts; are sacrificing to provide for the spiritual and material education of young and old alike; are learning to apply spiritual insights together with scientific knowledge to promote social well-being; and are finding ways to share their resources in acts of humanitarian assistance. They are consecrating their energies to building communities that each succeeding day become truer expressions of the love of God and of human oneness. In these ways, and in many more, they are channelling the spirit of worship and service embodied in the House of Worship and are laying foundations in the towns

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and villages of their nation upon which, in the fullness of time, more Houses of Worship shall be raised.

Let this, your first House of Worship, be a beacon of light. May its walls reverberate with melodies of the Words of God; may it inspire acts borne of true faith; may it offer peace and tranquillity to every soul who enters therein; and may it cast the light of universal felicity across the entire city of Kinshasa and the whole nation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

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