

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom

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16 January 2017
18 Sharaf 173 B.E.

To all believers in the United Kingdom

Dearly loved Friends,

In a spirit of great joy and anticipation, the National Spiritual Assembly sends its greetings to each one of you, as you prepare to meet together at unit conventions throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. This year's conventions are being held, at the request of the Universal House of Justice, in new electoral units that reflect cluster boundaries. May we all rejoice at this significant development in the evolution of the Administrative Order now taking place.

Yet for every adult believer it is also a great responsibility to be able to participate in this election at a time when the trials and tribulations suffered by humanity increase with every passing hour. As Bahá'u'lláh Himself observed, "The world is in travail, and its agitation waxeth day by day." We know, however, that, "so long as the remedy prescribed by the Divine Physician is not administered, the tribulations of this age will persist and deepen. An attentive observer of the times will readily recognize the accelerated disintegration, fitful but relentless, of a world order lamentably defective." (Universal House of Justice, Riḍván message 2011)

In electing our delegates, we are each of us playing our part in the rolling out of that new Order for which the Blessed Beauty sacrificed His all. "Well is it with him," The Báb proclaimed, "who fixeth his gaze upon the Order of Bahá'u'lláh and rendereth thanks unto his Lord!" As you may be aware, the National Assembly elected at Riḍván 2017 will, in turn, elect the House of Justice at International Convention in 2018. In participating in this year's election for delegates, every adult believer in the Bahá'í world thus has the privilege of playing his or her part in the election of the Supreme Body.

In rendering thanks unto our Lord, we can be grateful for many achievements since the beginning of the current Plan: there has been a sustained increase in the number of devotional meetings across the United Kingdom, with more than 800 individuals from the community of interest now attending; children's classes continue to go from strength to strength with almost 500 participating children belonging to families of friends of the Faith; more than 300 junior youth from the community of interest are taking part in junior youth groups; and during our first dedicated summer of service, believers of all ages had thousands of spiritual conversations, heightening their capacity to teach. In sum, these achievements have strengthened many clusters and advanced their progress along the path of development in all four regions.

The last few weeks have witnessed the beginning of a new five-year term of service for the Auxiliary Board members and the annual election of the Regional Bahá'í Councils, bringing a renewed dynamism and energy to our community. The thrilling events in Santiago, Chile, as the final continental House of Worship was inaugurated in the foothills of the Andes, left an indelible

impression on the dozens of friends from the United Kingdom who were able to attend, as well as those who joined with the entire Bahá'í world to witness the events via the world wide web. Surely all of these developments have released spiritual forces that we can draw upon to assist us in our efforts.

In addition to electing your delegates at this unit convention, we are certain that you will draw upon the learning of the more advanced communities and neighbourhoods in your cluster, and consult about what you will be able to achieve in the coming months. How can you continue to progress the cluster's movement forward with ever-growing intensity, with a further increase in devotional meetings, in the number of souls entering the institute process, in the quantity and quality of children's classes and junior youth groups that get under way?

Just three cycles now separate us from the Bicentenary of the Birth of Bahá'u'lláh, to be marked along with the Birthday of the Báb on the weekend of 21-22 October 2017. In preparation for this momentous occasion, we are called upon by the Universal House of Justice "to reach out to the widest possible cross-section of society," making "a concerted effort to convey a sense of what it means for humanity that these two Luminaries rose successively above the horizon of the world."

You will also therefore wish to consult about how you can reach out locally to friends, family, neighbours, colleagues and strangers in the few months left, to lay a foundation for a "tremendous flourishing of activity" to mark these auspicious occasions. As the Supreme Body has told us, the "steps taken during these months, and the achievements that come as a result, will constitute an offering of ardent love, yielded collectively to Him Who is the Unifier of the world on the bicentenary of His Birth."

May our wholehearted participation in the voting and consultation at the forthcoming unit convention be a further demonstration of the unifying influence of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh to remedy the illness of our sorely afflicted world.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick O'Mara', written over a horizontal line.

Patrick O'Mara,
Secretary

cc. Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi
All Auxiliary Board members