Dearly loved friends,

The National Spiritual Assembly met over the weekend of 29-31 July 2011 and from this meeting there are number of decisions and other matters it would like to share with you concerning the funds of the Faith. These relate to:

1. The establishment of a Guardian’s Resting Place Endowment Fund
2. International Financial Collaboration programme - goal for the UK Baha’i community for the 5 Year Plan
3. Edinburgh Baha’i Centre Fund

1. The establishment of a Guardian's Resting Place Endowment Fund

This community is profoundly blessed by the fact that the resting place of the beloved Guardian, Shoghi Effendi, is situated in London. It is our privilege to maintain this precious trust in a befitting manner, to ensure its safety and to preserve its beauty for the future. It is the desire of the National Spiritual Assembly that every soul who visits this holy spot may experience an atmosphere and environment that makes the visit a sacred and spiritual occasion. To achieve this requires constant effort and outlay of human and financial resources and it is our joy to provide these.

The Universal House of Justice has suggested in a letter to the National Assembly that “in view of the need to establish a more stable means of income in future for the upkeep of this most important holy place” the National Assembly “consider the feasibility of establishing an endowment fund for this purpose.”

In response to this guidance, the National Spiritual Assembly is pleased to announce the establishment of an endowment fund for the maintenance of the resting place of the beloved Guardian.

The National Assembly’s intention is that the fund will be build up over time and will eventually provide a capital sum, the income from which will provide for the upkeep of this holy place. For the current year, the National Spiritual Assembly has set a goal for contributions of £130,000, of which over £30,000 has already been contributed. Of course this goal will be in addition to the £66,000 required for the continuing maintenance and upkeep of the property for the current year.

It is wonderful to reflect that a donation made now to this endowment fund will provide income for the maintenance of the Guardian's Resting Place for generations to come!

2. International Financial Collaboration programme - goal for the UK Baha’i community for the 5
The International Financial Collaboration programme, which was established by the Universal House of Justice, allows those national communities which are materially well endowed to assist other communities which are less well endowed. In a letter to the National Spiritual Assembly dated 17 July 2011, the Supreme Body describes how this programme is "... used to meet a variety of needs: the acquisition of land and buildings for national and local Baha'i Centres and for future Temple sites; the construction and renovation of Baha'i properties, including the repair of buildings that suffered storm or earthquake damage; and the purchase of such items as an electricity generator, an office computer, and a motorcycle." They add further: "Beyond that, the bonds of unity between geographically distant national communities have been strengthened and the worldwide solidarity of the believers enhanced."

The UK Baha'i community has been engaged in this programme for a number of years now. During the last Plan, for example, it assisted with funds for the building of Baha'i Centres in San Salvador, Slovakia and Inari in Northern Finland, as well as the renovation of a Baha'i cemetery in Nepal. The Universal House of Justice has again invited our community to participate in the programme, joining 44 other national communities who will contribute during the current Plan. The House of Justice hopes to raise £1,500,000 ($2,500,000) in this period, and the National Assembly has decided that this community will commit to donating £160,000, which is more than 10% of the total! The Assembly is pleased to say that some £47,000 of this has already been raised, leaving a balance of £113,000 to be contributed between now and Ridvan 2016.

3. Edinburgh Baha'i Centre

In a letter dated 22 May 2011 to the local Assembly of Edinburgh to mark the official opening of their new Centre, the House of Justice stated that

... [t]his occasion marks a significant step forward for the Baha'i community of Edinburgh, no less for the Scottish Baha'i community as a whole. It is gratifying that in a city of such significance, one blessed to have been visited by Abdu'l-Baha nearly a century ago, a property of such distinction has been acquired in the name of the Faith. The House of Justice feels confident that this development will reinforce the efforts of the Baha'is of Scotland to reach out to their compatriots, through the community-building activities in which they are engaged, and share with them the vision of the harmonious, just, and peaceful society that Baha'u'llah's Teachings aim to foster. You may be assured of its prayers for the realization of this lofty aim.

The community can take joy in the achievement of acquiring and refurbishing this beautiful property. But there remains one final hurdle to secure this accomplishment. There is still just over £205,000 to be raised to pay for the refurbishment.

The National Spiritual Assembly recognises that the goals and needs outlined above are substantial, and that they must be met in addition to the funds required by the National Fund to sustain the important and vital activities of the UK Baha'i community. However, the Assembly is convinced that this community, aided by His grace, has the capacity to meet them.

At this moment in history, the UK is a wealthier country than most. This generation of believers in Baha'u'llah has the inestimable privilege of making its mark by outpouring its financial resources for these programmes and projects that are of profound international and national significance for the development of the Cause and the building of the heavenly civilisation promised in the Holy Books of the past and prescribed by Baha'u'llah.

Be assured of the constant prayers of the National Spiritual Assembly for all your devoted services in His path and for the achievement of the goals and challenges outlined in this letter.

With loving Baha'i greetings,

National Spiritual Assembly

Patrick O'Mara,
Secretary

cc. Counsellor Shirin Fozdar-Foroudi
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