

5 April 2001

Transmitted electronically

To National Spiritual Assemblies

Dear Bahá'í Friends,

As you know, the official opening of the Terraces of the Shrine of the Báb on Mount Carmel will be held in May 2001. The opening events will include a ceremony to be attended by some 3,300 Bahá'ís and many dignitaries and invited guests. The opening offers an unprecedented opportunity for Bahá'í communities around the world to interest the media in the work of the Faith. The beauty and drama of the opening events will lend themselves to coverage by both print and broadcast media, at international, national and local levels.

The Office of Public Information is working with the Inaugural Events Office to co-ordinate an international public information campaign that will facilitate coverage of the May events by the international media and assist National Spiritual Assemblies to generate coverage of the events. In early February a public information training seminar was held at the Bahá'í World Centre for representatives of selected National Assemblies. We are enclosing some of the strategies and materials presented during the seminar in the hope that your National Public Information Officer, or another qualified individual whom you may designate, will be able to undertake a focused media outreach campaign both before and after the opening of the Terraces.

The principal tool for this outreach campaign is the official press kit for the opening of the Terraces, copies of which have been mailed to you separately. The press kit, available in English, French, Russian and Spanish, contains extensive background information about the main opening event, the symphonic music commissioned for the event, the composers and performers, and the architects, as well as general articles about the Terraces, the history of Mount Carmel, the Bahá'í Faith and its Central Figures, and some famous gardens.

Because the press kit was produced in limited numbers, and because of its depth and length, it should be used judiciously and presented only to your most important target media. We also recommend that it be presented only after initial contact has been made with an editor or reporter and interest has been expressed in pursuing a story. The materials in the press kit are available in electronic form on a CD-ROM enclosed with the kit and on-line at www.bahaiworldnews.org/terraces. You should feel free to reproduce and adapt these materials as necessary for broad dissemination among national, regional and local media in your country.

We have enclosed the following reference sheets, which we hope will assist you in the design and implementation of your media campaign:

1. The significance of the opening of the Terraces of the Shrine of the Báb
2. Framing the Terraces story
3. Steps for implementing a media campaign for the opening of the Terraces

4. Answering difficult questions
5. Audiovisual aids for media coverage of the opening of the Terraces

In addition, we have enclosed a list of the names and addresses of the National Public Information Officers who participated in the training seminar. These individuals, representing every region of the planet, should be considered colleagues and helpers with whom you should feel free to consult on any particular matters relating to regional challenges or opportunities for collaboration. Also enclosed with the confirmatory copy is a small brochure about the resources and services available to you from the Office of Public Information, including the Bahá'í World News Service, The Bahá'í World Web site, *The Bahá'í World* annual volumes, the One Country quarterly newsletter, and the Bahá'í World Centre special visitors program.

The Office of Public Information has begun efforts to reach international media, defined as media with an impact that reaches across national borders, in consultation with the relevant National Assemblies and Bahá'í media professionals. These influential media include wire services, such as Reuters, the Associated Press (AP) and Agence France-Presse (AFP); prestigious newspapers, such as *The New York Times*, the *London Times* and *Le Monde*; and certain television, radio and cable networks like the BBC, TV 5, and CNN. Coverage by international media often has the effect of prompting other media to cover a story or event, and we will be sure to alert you to any coverage by these influential media. We are also making approaches to the foreign press corps in Israel, which includes representatives of hundreds of the most influential media in the world.

We are thrilled by the possibilities this historic event presents for unfurling the banner of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh before the eyes of the people of the world. Your efforts to attract the attention of the media in the coming months will add to the cumulative impact of the message of hope and transformation heralded by the completion of the Terraces of the Shrine of the Báb. We stand ready to assist you in any way we can and hope you will be in close touch with us in the weeks and months ahead.

With loving Bahá'í greetings,

Office of Public Information

cc: International Teaching Centre
Continental Boards of Counsellors
Counsellors