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National Spiritual Assembly Launches Volunteer Programme

25th February, 2003

DEARLY LOVED FRIENDS

The National Spiritual Assembly is very excited to announce the establishment of a Volunteer Programme for friends in the Greater London area and South East England who would like to offer their services as volunteers at the National Hazíratu'l-Quds in London and at the National Sub-Office in Tonbridge, Kent.

This programme is being inaugurated following earnest consultation on guidance recently received from the Universal House of Justice on the essential role of volunteers in the running of the affairs of the Cause, as well as the National Assembly's desire to enhance the spirit of service among the friends and their involvement with the important work of the national Bahá'í administration.

As you know, 27 Rutland Gate is an important historic site, unique in the Bahá'í world. The funeral cortege of the beloved Guardian began its journey from this place. The Universal House of Justice held some of its critical first meetings in the council chamber of the National Spiritual Assembly while the Hands of the Cause of God formulated many of the features of the Nine Year Plan (1964–1973) in that same building. Since its refurbishment at the request of the Universal House of Justice, the building has hosted numerous important receptions and events, not least of which was the visit of HRH the Duke of York last July, as well being a first port of call for Bahá'ís from all over the world visiting London.

The National Spiritual Assembly wishes to set up an effective programme of service at 27 Rutland Gate, whereby friends are invited to volunteer as guides, providers of hospitality and welcome, and for bookshop sales. There will be two shifts per weekday, from 09.30–13.00 hrs and from 13.00–17.00 hrs. This role may also include some administrative support including answering telephones, filing, indexing, research and photocopying. We would also particularly like to hear from Persian-speaking friends who would be able to handle calls from other Persian-speakers.

The National Spiritual Assembly believes these roles would ideally suit young people who have some opportunity in their study schedule to offer, say, one morning or afternoon a week, or recently retired friends and senior citizens who would like to offer some of their free time to the work of the Cause.

We would also be interested to hear from any youth who can support themselves financially and are considering offering a year, or shorter period, of service. At the National Sub-Office in Tonbridge, assistance is required on an ongoing basis in general office work, assistance with mailouts and helping with the work of the Finance Department.

The National Spiritual Assembly would also like to appoint a Volunteer Coordinator who, possibly working from home, could manage the rota of volunteers and ensure the programme is adequately and effectively staffed.

The National Spiritual Assembly is confident that the new spirit of service prevailing in the

community will encourage you to arise to assist the important work of the National Spiritual Assembly. If you would like to volunteer your services to the National Assembly and/or to discuss any aspect of the Volunteering Programme in further detail, please contact the Assistant Secretary of the National

Spiritual Assembly, Dr Kishan Manocha.
Email: nsa@bahai.org.uk Tel: 07973 375199

5th March, 2003

WORLD CONFERENCE ON RELIGION AND PEACE

The National Spiritual Assembly has been informed by the Bahá'í International Community's Office of Public Information that the Bahá'í International Community (BIC) has withdrawn its official affiliation from the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP). A letter from BIC explains:

While we greatly value the Faith's association with organisations with purposes akin to Bahá'í aims, we necessarily expect that such organisations adhere to a process of decision-making that consults the members of the organisation before assuming positions, making statements and taking action on their behalf. Regrettably, WCRP has not observed this principle and has published statements without due regard for a consultative process...

While it is the manner in which the organisation is being run that we do not appreciate, WCRP is an organisation with laudable aims and worthwhile programmes. Your Assembly should consider on a case-by-case basis in which activities it wishes to be involved, strictly avoiding any involvement in political positions on controversies of the day. As with involvement in any such organisation, care and wisdom are required for effective participation.

In light of this the National Spiritual Assembly has decided to withdraw from membership of WCRP UK. It should be emphasised that this is no reflection on the conduct of the UK Chapter nor is it a criticism of the aims of WCRP. If any of the friends are involved in WCRP programmes or would like to be so, please contact the Office of External Affairs for advice (tel: 020-7590 8792, email: oea@bahai.org.uk).

Specially-prepared compilation on consultation available

2nd February, 2003

AS PART OF its own ongoing training and deepening the National Spiritual Assembly has been studying a series of quotations on the theme of consultation. They are organised into four short sections so that they can be dealt with on successive occasions.

The Assembly feels the friends might well benefit from this specially-prepared compilation and is making it available in the following ways:

- electronically, as PDF file, from resources@bahai.org.uk
 - in hard copy, from the National Office, 27 Rutland Gate, London SW7 1PD.
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A basic Guide for the protection of children and young people

3rd March, 2003

TO MAKE IT easier for the friends – both as individuals and when acting on behalf of institutions – to understand its Procedures for the Protection of Children and Young People the National Spiritual Assembly has prepared a special Guide document.

This is available on request either electronically (as an attached PDF file) from resources@bahai.org.uk or as hard copy from the National Office.

NOTE: The layout used to convey the information in an accessible form means that the Guide is more than thirty pages long and the PDF file for electronic sending is just under

Unit Conventions

19th February, 2003

Dearly loved Friends,

The National Spiritual Assembly is pleased to announce the dates of this year's Unit Conventions. Further to the recommendations of the Bahá'í Councils, the following dates have been chosen:

- 4–5 October in England
- 18–19 October in Northern Ireland and Wales
- 25–26 October in Scotland

Please make a careful note of the date that affects you. Further details of the venue and timing of your Unit Convention will be shared in due course. In order to maximise attendance at these important gatherings, the National Spiritual Assembly kindly asks the friends not to organise other activities and events during the relevant Unit Convention weekend.

Praise for Venues Committee and friends from Scarborough Leisure Services after Family Festival 2002

The letter below was received by Bob Watkins from the General Manager of Tourism and Leisure Services Department in Scarborough and shows the high esteem with which the friends are regarded.

Dear Bob,

BAHÁ'Í FAMILY FESTIVAL 2002

Many thanks for your letter dated 20 November. I think I have told you previously that yours is one of the most enjoyable events from our viewpoint that we host at the Spa and this year's was no exception. Furthermore, we always appreciate your professionalism in coordinating and conveying to us the myriad of requirements from the various committees and it is a great pleasure to work with you and your team during the weekend.

It is good to know the service and facilities we provided met with your satisfaction and I am really pleased all your hard work was rewarded by such a successful outcome.

Thanks again for taking the trouble to write. Your kind comments have been conveyed to everyone here and we now look forward to welcoming you all back again 7–9 November next year.

Yours sincerely,

Julie Mackenzie, General Manager,
Tourism and Leisure Services Department,
Scarborough Spa Complex,
South Bay, Scarborough

Office of Public Information

THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC INFORMATION hopes to be making available to the friends various items that will help in the public outreach aspect of their work as they carry out the three core activities of the Five Year Plan. Naturally what is used and how it is used is for the Friends to decide and they should give careful thought as to whether to use them and in what way.

To begin the process we are making available a trifold leaflet used in Malaysia to invite people to participate in study circle courses. This is in PDF format so it cannot be edited

people to participate in study circle courses. This is in PDF format so it cannot be edited and should not be regarded as a template, rather as a suggestion and a source of ideas as to how you might set out your own materials.

To obtain it please request leaflet KL from us by sending an email to: opi@bahai.org.uk or by contacting:

Office of Public Information, 27 Rutland Gate, London, SW7 1PD, Tel: 020 7584 2566

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

27, Rutland Gate, London SW7 1PD

Tel.: 020 7584 2566, Fax: 020 7584 9402, E-mail: nsa@bahai.org.uk



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