

## Global Conference of Human Fraternity

Abu Dhabi 3-4 February 2019

### *Panel discussion: "Joint Responsibilities to Achieving Human Fraternity"*

#### Bani Dugal remarks

1. Thank you. I'm so pleased to be among those who have been invited to explore a concept as timely and important as human fraternity. Strengthening the bonds of reciprocity, solidarity, and genuine affection among people around the world is one of the most pressing issues before humanity. Indeed, in many ways, our continued collective development depends on it. As Baha'u'llah, the Founder of the Baha'i Faith, wrote in the 19th century, "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established."
2. This panel's focus on joint responsibilities seems particularly appropriate. A better world does not come about simply because we want it, nor even because we call and advocate for it. New and more mature patterns of relationship will emerge only to the degree that we proactively arise and take steps to build them. A great moral responsibility thus falls on each one of us. Every individual must evaluate what his or her own response should be to the pressing needs of the current historical moment. Nobody can do this on our behalf.
3. Yet our responsibilities toward the advancement of civilization are also *joint* responsibilities, and discharging them is a task to be shouldered not just by individuals, but by communities, societies, and ultimately, by the entire human race, in its infinite diversity and richness.
4. Building new patterns of collective life that reflect more fully the highest aspects of human nature, such as generosity, compassion, honesty, and nobility is a task that calls for the talents of all segments of the human family. A world of true justice and prosperity will never be built by one group alone, according to its particular preferences and perspectives. Rather, every nation, group, and individual will, to a greater or lesser degree, contribute to the emergence of the world civilization towards which humanity is irresistibly moving.
5. Over a century ago, Baha'u'llah declared to the peoples of the world, "Ye are the fruits of one tree and the leaves of one branch." In an age characterized by intense political division and rivalry, He explained that "the earth is but one country and mankind its citizens." For Baha'is, these are spiritual realities. But they are also social imperatives that must be translated into practice. If consciousness of the oneness of humankind is indeed a prerequisite for human progress today, then every form of prejudice and discrimination must be abolished, whether on the basis of gender, race, or any other

characteristic. Age-old divisions must be healed and long-standing injustices rectified. Unity of purpose and a vibrant sense of shared endeavor must be fostered among ever larger groups of people.

6. Human fraternity, in its countless forms and embodiments, is inseparable from these objectives. In neighborhoods, towns, and villages around the world, Baha'is and their like-minded partners are working to foster unity, harmonize seemingly divergent views, and deepen appreciation for the fundamental oneness of humankind. This is work that we believe is vital not just to Baha'is, nor even to people of faith, but to every person of conscience and good will. This is the work of human betterment today, the joint responsibility that lies before all of us. And my hope is that our discussion here today can stand as a small but lasting contribution toward a world that increasingly draws on the power of a united human family for the advancement of progress, prosperity, and universal human well-being.