Submission to The Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, xenophobia, and related intolerance for the 2022 report on climate and racial justice to the General Assembly

Climate and racial injustice have led to many ills in the world – from the perpetuation of poverty to undermined public health outcomes to increasing food insecurity. That such ills exist at a time of unparalleled global material prosperity is unconscionable. Moreover, when one considers that society can be conceived as an interdependent social body in which every individual and group derives its well-being from the well-being of the whole, the time for substantive change is well past due.

Correcting the longstanding ills stemming from injustice will demand a renewed focus on the foundational concept of justice itself, in its broadest sense. It must be acknowledged that the instruments of society - individuals, communities, and institutions - possess agency and room for advancement in establishing racial and climate justice. As individuals, justice will demand that we overlook self-interest for the betterment of all and view the world through a lens of equity. At the community and institutional level, justice will require a level of action that looks beyond society’s current proclivity to negotiate and compromise, often settling upon the least poor option instead of engaging in an ongoing, principled, fact-based consultative process to arrive at the best possible outcome.

Justice requires universal participation in creating and benefiting from shared prosperity. Further, it demands coherence between rhetoric and action. No longer can we allow well-meaning words to take the place of righteous deeds. Instead, the practice of true justice could serve as a building block of a trusting, interconnected society.

To overcome these challenges, change is needed at multiple levels. First, the relationships that bind together various societal actors must be characterized by trust, mutual support, and cooperation. Collectively, society must recognize the essential dignity and latent potentiality of every human soul and, further, enact structural changes at the level of law and policy that seek to protect and empower current and future generations.

Reference:
[One Planet, One Habitation: A Baha'i Perspective on Recasting Humanity's Relationship with the Natural World](https://www.bic.org/statements/one-planet-one-habitation-bahai-perspective-recasting-humanitys-relationship-natural-world)
[The Heart of Resilience: The Climate Crisis as a Catalyst for a Culture of Equality](https://www.bic.org/statements/heart-resilience-climate-crisis-catalyst-culture-equality)