



**1963 to 2021 Speeches of  
His Highness the Aga Khan IV  
(Nūr Mawlānā Shāh Kaim Hāzir Imām)**



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## First Anniversary of the Mindanao University

### LOCATION

1963 - Mindanao, The Philippines

President Isidro, Senator Alonto,  
Members of the Faculty,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by saying how very honoured and happy I am to be with you on this great occasion. I appreciated enormously your kind words and wonderful receptions and hope that when I leave you this afternoon you will be sure that you have one more sincere friend and admirer of the University of Mindanao.

Strangely this will be the first convocation at which I will understand the address. When I graduated from Harvard, the laws required that the convocation address should be in Latin, so I had the unique honour of standing in boiling sun for forty five minutes listening to a speech of which I understood not one word. Maybe the Faculty did not appreciate the process of being slowly cooked to the rhythm of Latin words as the year after I left, it was allowed that the convocation address should be in English, a more civilized process, but even Harvard takes time to learn.

Having done my primary and secondary education in Switzerland and then gone to University in America, I have had perhaps a unique occasion to compare the standards of education of the Western world with those of the Middle East, Asia and Africa. As a result I am now deeply convinced that man's position in society, wherever he may be,

will depend less and less upon his cultural or family heritage and more and more on the power and development of his mind.

In every Society I have seen, it is the intellectual elite which is capturing the outstanding offices, the most interesting work, the best situations. The trend is, in fact, bound to be the case, so long as the world population continues to increase and we are forced to deeper and deeper specialization.

The great Omayyad and Abbaside Khalifates were created through the spread of the message of Islam and the conquering power of the Muslim armies, but once the waves of conquest were over, once the Muslim religion had spread from Arabia westwards to Southern France and eastwards to China, there arose the problem of organizing and running the State.

If this state had been weak internally, I submit that it would have been rapidly overthrown. On the contrary, it lived for centuries.

What was the power, what were the centres of force which provided the Khalifates with the material to govern? From whence came the unifying force which allowed these immense empires to weld together peoples of different languages, ethnic origins and cultures.

The Khalifates drew administrative machinery from some of the greatest centres of learning which have ever existed. The Universities in Damascus and Baghdad, and later those of Cairo, Tehran Cordova and Istanbul were centres of learning unparalleled anywhere else. Even in those days, once the brute force of the armies had been withdrawn, it was the power of the intellectual elite which took over and governed, ran and maintained the State.

During the two Khalifates, the Muslim Universities were producing the best scholars, doctors, astronomers and philosophers. Today where are we? Have we institutions of learning which can compare with the Sorbonne, Harvard, Yale, Cambridge, Oxford, M.I.T.?

Throughout my journeys I have been deeply pained to see the lack of initiative which my brother Muslims have shown in educational matters. In some circles there may have been a fear that modern education would tend to lessen the sharpness and deepness of our Faith. I am afraid that I must reject this with vehemence.

God has given us the miracle of life with all its attributes: the extraordinary manifestations of sunrise and sunset, of sickness and recovery, of birth and death, but surely if He has given us the means with which to remove ourselves from this world so as to go to other parts of the Universe, we can but accept as further manifestations the creation and destruction of stars, the birth and death of atomic particles, the flitting new sound and light waves.

I am afraid that the torch of intellectual discovery, the attraction of the unknown, the desire for intellectual self-protection have left us. I fully realize that one needs today tools with which to extend the realms of man's knowledge, and that generally speaking these tools are the possessions of the more advanced essentially Christian parts of the world. But what is the point in undergoing untold of misery for political independence if

the result is no better than abject dependence intellectually and economically on one's old political masters.

Here you have at your disposal a tool which is being fashioned into an instrument for self-perfection. But it must never be thought, I submit, that this tool is or will become perfect. It will take all the vigilance of the founders, the faculty and the students to see that your standards are continually raised, that your instrument for learning is continually ameliorated so as to render you greater service at less cost in time and energy.

I hope that those students who came to this University, and that those students who will leave it for further studies, will approach their work with sharp vengeance – vengeance for the torpor and indifference of the past; vengeance for having temporarily lost their rightful position amongst the intellectual elite of the country.

We must, I suggest, use every opening available to us to make good the time and learning which we have lost, no matter if we turn to institutions steeped in foreign cultures so long as it is for our own improvement and in the process we do not lose our own identity. Not so long ago, after all, these cultures were turning to us.

If I have come to be with you today, it is to prove to you that you have brother Muslims in other parts of the world who are fighting the same battles as you if anything in more difficult circumstances under governments which are not always made up of Ahl-al-Kitaab or people of the Book, and that these Muslims are deeply conscious of the battle which you are waging. Their interest, however, is not limited to a simple consciousness of your difficulties; they wish to help you and to give you morally and materially all the support which they can muster.

Let us, therefore, put our backs to the wheel and show the state in which we live that we are determined to become first class citizens, nay leaders, not for the futile glory of leadership but to help this country become a better place in which to live and ensure that, even if we cannot reap the fruit of our labour, our children will be born to brighter horizons.





## **Honorary Doctorate (Honoris Causa) at Peshawar University**

### **LOCATION**

1967, Peshawar, Pakistan

Mr Chancellor, Mr Vice Chancellor, professors, students of this university and distinguished guests,

I am deeply moved by the kindness of your welcome and by the outstanding honour this University has done in bestowing an honorary degree upon me today. I speak these words in no formal sense, but from the heart. I do this especially because, as a Muslim it will remain a proud memory that the first such academic honour I have received has been given to me by this renowned Islamic seat of learning in Pakistan.

This degree is all the more precious because of the illustrious personages who have been earlier recipients of your honour, and because this University is situated in one of the most historically awesome sites on earth. Speaking to you today, I cannot fail to recollect the names of people, places, and civilisations which light the glittering past of this region. Peshawar is not only the gateway of Central Asia, but much more it is a jewel box of history. The walls are nature's mountainous fortifications and the key is the Khyber Pass. Inside are the names of many of history's most precious jewels: Gandhara, the Greeks, the Buddhists, the Huns, the Brahmins, the Ghaznavids, the Mughals, the Sikhs, the Afghans, the Iranis, the Uzbeks, the Tajeks, the Afridis, the Aryans, Alexander the Great, Darius, Genghis Khan, the Sassanians, Kandahar and many more. Few cities of learning can boast such a variegated and colourful past.

I have had the good fortune to have seen much of this world since I travel more widely than most people, and my responsibilities bring me into contact with the advanced industrial societies of the West, and with the less developed, newly independent nations in Asia, and Africa. Some of the contrasts I have observed have convinced me that by no means do all the advantages and hopes for the future lie with the wealthier developed nations of the world.

Leaders of newly independent nations often comment, sadly or angrily as the case may be, on the widening gap between the rich nations and the poor. But there are two ways of looking at this, either in the absolute, in which case even the poorer nations are making considerable progress, or relatively where the gap between the two groups in living standards and technological progress continues to widen at a frightening speed.

The explanation for all this is well enough known to you. We have the population explosion, the shortage of human skills and material capital, the problems of political stability, and so forth. The list is a long one and the solutions will not quickly or easily be found.

One particular problem which is endemic to most countries and to which the President of Pakistan refers in his recent illuminating autobiography, is inevitably more keenly felt in newly independent nations. After generations, sometimes centuries of foreign rule, ordinary people find it hard to associate themselves and their own fortunes with those of their Governments. For so long "they", the rulers, have been quite literally a race apart, remote and distant from the ordinary activities of daily life.

The moment of independence may release this mental vacuum for a while, but it takes a great deal of time-consuming work by already hard-pressed leaders to stop the old habits of apathy creeping back again.

However, in all these complex and some times well-worn arguments, I often find myself on the side of the optimist. I do not believe that the scales are irretrievably loaded on the side of the rich, developed nations of the West. Even in a purely material sense the newer nations have more assets than they sometimes realise.

The very fact that the younger nations are experiencing rapid social and economic change after independence, makes their people more adaptable to new machines and new techniques. They should realise this, seek out the facts, identify them and then fully exploit what they can offer. This may involve training a small team of experts whose single task is to keep a constant watch on the opportunities arising from research and new developments overseas.

In many cases new industrial and production processes can be tested more thoroughly and less expensively in the developing countries than in the Western world where labour is costly and unionisation often chokes young and new ideas before they can reach maturity. Here in Pakistan many new industrial ventures are utilising processes which are at least partially experimental. This enables your youth to be in permanent contact with the vanguard of industrial developments and such an adventurous spirit must be encouraged. I fear less the inability of young countries to create new ventures than the rapid assassination of new projects by obsolescence.

Material progress apart, I do not think it should ever be assumed that only the smaller, poorer nations are faced by apparently insoluble problems. Western Europe and North America possess much that can be envied. They also face social and moral conflicts which are far more daunting than known in Asia or Africa. Increasingly, I believe, thinking people both in Europe and America are asking: Where is this all prosperity leading us? Are we any happier? Do we get as much satisfaction out of living as did our fathers and forefathers?

These indeed are relevant, urgent questions. There has been a fundamental challenge to the traditional and in this case, mainly Christian religious values. The younger generation has almost completely forsaken its churches. The pressure of an acquisitive society has made quite frightening demands on family life. Mothers with younger children go out to work in the millions. The juvenile crime rate soars upwards, homes are broken, and the family unit itself is undermined at its source.

The working family in the West can earn all the money it needs in four or five days a week - and then with only six hours work a day. Its capacity for leisure is growing every year. But what does the family do with it? Look at television? Perhaps. But what will be seen on television? Are they any nearer the complete and contented man of all our dreams?

Few would risk an affirmative answer to these questions. What has been called the permissive society where anything goes, nothing matters, nothing is sacred or private any more, is not a promising foundation for a brave and upright new world. This fearful chase after material ease must surely be tempered by peace of mind, by conscience, by moral values, which must be resuscitated. If not, man will simply have converted the animal instinct of feeding himself before others and even at the expense of others, into perhaps a more barbaric instinct of feeding himself and then hoarding all he can at the cost of the poor, the sick and the hungry.

It would be wrong and very foolish not to recognise that the developed industrial countries also have much from which the new nations can learn. The picture is not all dark but it might well deteriorate.

The West has achieved, on the whole, a degree of political stability and administrative efficiency which other parts of the world cannot but envy. The West has won the freedom to enjoy, and at times often slips into the licence of abusing, the pursuits of leisure and culture. They have won this freedom, not for a privileged few, but for the great mass of their people.

Two questions arise. First, do we wish for the developing nations of the world similar freedom to enjoy a more prosperous life? There can be no doubt that the answer is "yes".

The second question is more delicate. If the developing nations succeed in raising the standards of living to such an extent that there is far greater freedom and privilege to enjoy leisure, how is this leisure to be used, and what values will govern its use?

It is here that the East, that Asia, nay that this very University can contribute something of primordial and everlasting value. It is my deepest conviction that if Islamic society is



to avoid following blindly the course of Western society without taking the trouble to raise guards against the latter's weaknesses and deficiencies, a thorough rediscovery, revitalisation and reintegration of our traditional values must be achieved.

They must be drawn forth from under the decades of foreign rule which have accumulated like thick sets of paper that have rested for generations on top of the finest oriental painting making the edges turn yellow, but the centre piece remaining as colourful and lively, for us to discover, as when it was originally completed. In all forms of art, painting, calligraphy, architecture, city planning; in all forms of science, medicine, astronomy, engineering; in all expressions of thought, philosophy, ritualism, spiritualism, it is of fundamental importance that our own traditional values and attitudes should permeate our new society.

It would be traumatic if those pillars of the Islamic way of life, social justice, equality, humility and generosity, enjoined upon us all, were to lose their force or wide application in our young society. It must never be said generations hence that in our greed for the material good of the rich West we have forsaken our responsibilities to the poor, to the orphans, to the traveller, to the single woman.

The day, we no longer know how, nor have the time nor the faith to bow in prayer to Allah because the human soul that He has told us is eternal is no longer of sufficient importance to us to be worthy of an hour of our daily working, profit-seeking time, will be a sunless day of despair.

It is eminent seats of learning such as this that can synthesise and transmit to the younger generations the proper balance between the Western search of well-being and the Eastern spiritual, human and cultural traditions. I believe the future does reserve better standards of living for us than what we have at present, but in order to enjoy them fully, we must know today what will be the fundamental principles of our lives tomorrow.

I render sincere and high tribute to Peshawar University that has set out to fulfil this essential and monumental task.

May Allah crown your efforts with brilliant success.



## **Honorary Doctorate of Laws from the University of Sindh**

06 February 1970, Sindh, Pakistan

Mr. Vice-Chancellor,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have paid my family a great honour by inviting me here today to receive an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from this famous centre of learning. I am most grateful to you all, and as a Muslim, it makes me especially happy that this ceremony should be taking place at a university whose development has been so intimately linked with the historic province of Sind.

As you pointed out in your very generous tribute to my forbearers, and particularly my grandfather, both my family and the Ismaili Community have enjoyed close associations with Sind over many centuries.

Today I am addressing an intellectual elite which, very soon no doubt, will hold in its hands, the destiny of Pakistan. I propose therefore to talk briefly about one of the major problems facing Muslim countries everywhere in the world today. It is clearly an important and

sensitive topic so that I speak with real humility and no little apprehension. Indeed, I appeal at the outset to your generosity should I falter, and I am fully aware that no single person can claim to offer a complete solution. At most, I can attempt merely to stimulate further thought and discussion, but leading very soon I hope to purposeful action.

The issue, very simply, is this: what kind of nation states do we hope will emerge in the Muslim world during the next century? What are we looking for? What do we want of our society? What kind of institutions should we seek to create?

These questions will have to be answered. And they must be answered by you. Indeed, within thirty years, you will be living in the twenty-first century. You are already living in the largest Muslim country in the world.

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, most of the Muslim world was in one form or the other subjugated by the will of the West. England and France between them controlled most of the Middle East including Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, Iraq, the whole of North Africa with Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Libya; most of those parts of Africa south of the Sahara which had substantial Muslim population such as Nigeria, Senegal, Dahomey, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zanzibar; and finally most of those parts of Asia which were totally or substantially Muslim, including the Indian subcontinent, and Malaysia. Thus at the dawn of the twentieth century, practically no Muslim areas of the world were self-governing. This is a startling fact, but none the less true.

One of many consequences was that the concept of Muslim statehood was broken in time and in action to be replaced by concepts which were western in inspiration as well as in practice. The art of government no longer directly involved the Muslims of the world. Those who did concern themselves were never in the position of testing their ideas against the harsh realities of nineteenth and twentieth century power politics. I suggest therefore that there has been a very prolonged vacuum in Muslim responsibilities in this field and that this vacuum in turn provoked a deep apathy towards problems of Islamic statehood. Few men in their daily lives have time to worry about other peoples' problems, and at the dawn of the twentieth century, problems of Muslim statehood were completely dormant.

Within the last 30 years, most of the Muslim world has regained its independence, and now is totally in control of its own affairs. But the loss of control of government in the recent past has left the Muslims of today in a situation either of prolonging the inherited forms of Western Government or of adopting a pragmatic approach, the results of which are impossible to forecast.

If the Muslim countries had controlled their own destinies over a longer and more continuous period of recent history, there is little doubt that appropriate institutions would already have evolved in a form which would have come to terms with this technological and materialistic age. So far, however, there simply has not been enough time.



In the Muslim world of the twenty-first century, what is going to be the accepted form of government? What institutions will be best suited to provide the Islamic world with stable, progressive government which will have a strong and dynamic sense of direction?

The questions I ask particularly concern Pakistan. It is first of all the largest Muslim state. Secondly, with general elections due here within a matter of months, it is a question you will soon have to answer in any case. Thirdly, Pakistan takes its place in one of the most forward-looking and dynamic regions of the Muslim world which, with Iran and Turkey, and especially through the agency of RCD, is certain to play an increasingly important role in the destiny of Muslims everywhere.

Let us for a moment review, as it is today, the Muslim part of the world: the Arab Middle East has been torn apart and has been in turmoil for years. The sheer pace of events, political and economic, does not seem to have given time and peace enough for the local leadership and society as a whole to develop stable governmental institutions. Largely for the same reasons, regional cooperation under the prevailing conditions in this area has been faced with a virtually impossible task.

North Africa has in my view been a great deal more successful than is yet generally realised: regional cooperation is well underway, the economies of Tunisia and Morocco are developing well, and there has been political stability coupled with dynamic leadership. But the population of North Africa is truly minimal in comparison with that of the RCD and this is why I repeat that it is here in Pakistan, and in the RCD, that lies the most essential area for the development of Muslim statehood which must stem from a society, the goals of which have been clearly established and universally accepted.

Pakistan was conceived by Muslims and for Islam. Everyone here will agree with me, I am sure, that the source of national motivation in the future must continue to be our faith. But once this is said, how is it to be achieved? If institutions are born from society, then I affirm that it is to our society that we must turn, and ask ourselves: if Islam is to be the source of inspiration, how do we transform this inspiration into practical terms of everyday life? And how do we do this and at the same time continue to make material progress which, as I have said earlier, very often has its origins in the Western, Christian world? These questions have a special urgency and relevance in a democratic society such as Pakistan is now seeking to create. It is society which gives birth to its institutions in democracy – and not the institutions which shape and impose themselves upon society.

I am convinced that our faith and our heritage contain all the indicators that we shall need. More than this, I am convinced that it will take relatively little effort to isolate those elements which, through the centuries, were responsible for the amazing development of the Muslim Empire. And once we have identified these basic elements, we should be able, without difficulty, to use them to our advantage.

Let me take as an example one of the most important and fundamental aspects of our everyday lives: the buildings we live in. For five centuries, Muslim architecture led the world in concept, in design, in finish and even in structural ingenuity. Millions of non-Muslims every year visit Islamic monuments in the Middle East, in the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent, and in North Africa. And yet what is being done today to develop our own Islamic architecture of the twenty-first century? Practically nothing. Our office buildings, our schools, our hospitals, our banks and insurance companies – nearly all are copies, monkeyed and mimicked from styles and designs which have been imported. I ask you today to think about this: is it really impossible to adapt for our modern needs those magnificent finishes and building materials so widely used in our past? If our historic buildings used red stone, tile and marble, must we really now use concrete and glass? Must we abandon the remarkable wooden and stone carved trellis work that is so typical of our artistic heritage? And what of the fountains that have been so intimately connected with Muslim architecture at all times and in all parts of the world? Are we powerless to build a fountain as a decoration to our most imposing buildings? Is it really beyond our powers to revive traditional concepts of landscaping? Must the gardens of Shalimar remain just a beautiful historic curiosity?

Let me turn to another aspect of Islamic society: our intellectual elite. In the past, much of the dynamism of Muslim society was born from the leaders of the faith: the Imams, the Pirs and Mullahs. This identity between the leaders of the faith and the empire's intellectual elite was a continuous source of strength both to the faith and to those whose duty it was to govern the empire. How many aspiring Mullahs or Imams today enter secular universities and obtain degrees in secular subjects? And vice-versa, how many university graduates, after completing their degrees, turn their lives to directing the flock of the faithful? Let me not be misunderstood – I criticise neither Pirs nor Mullahs nor Imams nor degree holders: I simply state that in future I believe it will be in our society's interest to have a much wider platform in common between our religious and our secular leaders. Our religious leadership must be acutely aware of secular trends, including those generated by this age of science and technology. Equally, our academic or secular elite must be deeply aware of Muslim history of the scale and depth of leadership exercised by the Islamic Empire of the past in all fields.

It is through the creation of such a new elite, inspired by and widely read in everything related to our heritage, that there must come about a revival in Muslim thought. The whole approach to education, without becoming archaic, should begin now to re-introduce, as widely as possible, the work and thought of our great Muslim writers and philosophers. Thus, from the nursery school to the university, the thoughts of the young will be inspired by our own heritage and not that of some foreign culture. Again, let there be no misunderstanding: I am not in any way opposed to the literature or the art or the thought of the West. I simply maintain that the Islamic heritage is just as great and that it is up to us to bring it to the forefront again. When our nursery school children first begin to read, why should they not let their imaginations build upon the prowess of the Great Khaled rather than Wellington or Napoleon? And if the student of philosophy seeks a degree, should he not be encouraged to read about even Al-Hallaj rather than Hegel or Kierkegaard?

This has been described as the age of technology and blessed may be those who through their technological discoveries have enabled man to conquer space and to hope one day to draw sufficient food from the earth and the sea to feed himself. Blessed also may be those who have helped eliminate from this earth such crippling diseases as poliomyelitis and perhaps one day cancer. But through all this development, hand in hand and side by side with it, the spirit of Islam must survive. A society without a strong sense of its own identity has time and again in human history proved to be well on the way to decay.

I do not pretend to know an infinitesimal part of the answers to the problems facing the Muslim state in the twenty-first century. But I believe that its inspiration and its institutions must come from a Muslim society which has a clear understanding of the pillars of Islamic greatness in the past.

We are still in the process of disentangling ourselves from a long period of foreign rule, and although the early years of independence have provided immense problems to successive governments, almost a generation has now passed. We must renew our resolve and determination to complete the revival of our own Islamic heritage so that it may become the stepping stone to a brilliant future. The need to break finally with the immediate and largely alien past, and to rebuild on the foundations of our historic greatness is more than a condition of further progress; it has now become an urgent necessity throughout the Muslim world.

## Swiss-American Chamber of Commerce in Zurich

### LOCATION

Zurich, Switzerland (14 January 1976)

I would like to begin by expressing my appreciation of the opportunity you have given me today to speak in this important city of Europe. The business and financial institutions of Zurich have made it one of the great symbols of private initiative in the industrial world, and I am happy to be able to address you on a subject which extends the horizons of individual enterprise to the developing world.

Many people have a somewhat enigmatic image of the Aga Khan, and a rather hazy idea of the Ismaili Muslim Community. In order for you to understand more clearly the purpose and framework of my involvement in various fields of private initiative, let me outline briefly the background of the Community which I lead and the office which I hold.

Islam, like the Protestants and Catholics in Christianity, is divided into two major branches: the Sunni and the Shia.

The Sunni Muslims are by far the more numerous. The Shia of which the Ismailis are a part tend to be concentrated in the non-Arab countries and, with the exception of Iran, are rarely in the majority.

Thus the Ismaili Community is a minority of the population in every country, Muslim or otherwise, where it lives and this is no doubt one of the reasons why private initiative has always played such an important role in my community.

Soon after the Founder of Islam, Prophet Mohammed, died, issues concerning the religious and secular leadership of the Muslim Community arose. By and large, the Sunni Muslims maintained that after Prophet Mohammed's death each Muslim was left to interpret and practice his faith according to his understanding although every Mosque has its own Imam to lead the prayers. The Shia Muslims, on the other hand, believe that the successor to the leadership of the Muslim Community both in spiritual and temporal matters was the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, and that this leadership was to continue thereafter by heredity through Ali in the Prophet's family.

Like any hereditary institution, the Shia Muslim Imam has been subjected to the strains and stresses of family rivalry, hostile external pressures and the vagaries of time, and the Ismailis are today one of the few Shia sects led by a hereditary Imam.

Seen against the background of Christian religious tradition, it might appear incongruous that a Muslim religious leader should be so involved in material and mundane matters of this world. It is not an Islamic belief, however, that spiritual life should be totally isolated from our more material everyday activities. The nature of the religious office which I hold neither requires nor is expected by the members of my Community, to be an institution whose existence is restricted to spiritual leadership. On the contrary, history and the correct interpretation of the Imam require that the Imam, while caring first of all for the spiritual well being of his people, should also be



continuously concerned with their safety and their material progress. It is about my work in this latter field that I address you today.

The Ismailis live mainly in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and consequently it is with the countries of these areas that the Imam is primarily concerned and to which I will mainly refer. In some of them, foreign private initiative has suffered all the slings and arrows of nationalisation, denationalisation and renationalisation. It has been managed and mismanaged, taxed beyond reason, expropriated and confiscated. Without forewarning staff localisation has been imposed, control of investments weakened the status of companies altered, land and buildings taken over, trade preferences rescinded, dividends and interest withheld. Worse still, private enterprise has sometimes had to contend with country-wide chaos or civil war or invasion.

Elsewhere, private initiative, both local and foreign, has found outstanding wisdom and statesmanship as well as evolving political institutions which have consistently respected the role and interests of private enterprise. Foreign investments have received constitutional protection and a panoply of other incentives: high returns for small capital exposure, labour regulations written to ensure output, localisation imposed with consideration, modernisation has been possible without confrontation, education and medicine have expanded, without erosion of standards, law and order, and individual human rights have been upheld.

Many of you, like me, have been working for the past 20 years in this climate of extremes. The challenging question is: what is the role, and what are the true interests and responsibilities of private initiative in today's situation in the developing countries?

In your Western world, time and experience have equipped you with political and financial institutions and an immense body of law which have become a framework within which private enterprise makes a major contribution to your progress without harming the interests of the nation as a collective whole. In the developing world, a substantial part of private enterprise is either overtly or covertly foreign controlled which automatically makes it a matter for caution by local governments. Much of the sizeable and indigenous enterprise that exists has been developed over a short period of time and, all too often, with the fear that one day a wave of political instability will sweep everything away. Even when this has not occurred, local private enterprise has tended to grow in the hands of a very small number of people with a maze of interlocking operations and more and more undesirable characteristics.

Thus it seems to me that both foreign and indigenous private enterprise in developing countries should pay particular attention to the delicacy of their situation. Free enterprise will only survive if individual corporate self-discipline replaces the rule of long established law and accepted business practice. This, of course, is equally as true of social institutions as it is for business ventures: many philanthropic organisations, foundations and trusts have lost their existence due to questionable involvement in political or sectarian affairs.

The past 20 years have shown a growing trend towards making all forms of private initiative indigenous. More and more, developing countries have sought to strengthen their independence through total control of the key areas affecting their national life, and

I have no doubt that this trend will continue and, indeed, accelerate in the future. Whatever the motivation of this trend, the problems of foreign investment are certainly more understandable to the West now that various petro-dollar nations are seeking to invest in some of the most powerful and sensitive private corporations of the industrial world. The point I wish to make today, however, is that private initiative, and especially foreign private initiative, can only expect to survive in developing countries if it recognises the true dynamics of their national independence.

If independence means the option to choose, then bilateralism or a special “favoured nation” relationship with the former colonising country is a matter increasingly of the past. Thus private initiative – and especially foreign private initiative – is going to have to search for political acceptability through genuine international effort. Bringing together what private initiative has to offer of the best from various countries has many attractive aspects to developing countries but also I suggest to promoters: individual financial risk is reduced, the sources from which to draw qualified manpower are multiplied and political acceptability is increased manifold. Indeed, it would seem to me that these advantages outweigh many of the evident management problems which may follow. Finally, and this is no doubt the most important point, the fate of private initiative channelled through international effort is infinitely less exposed to the ups-and-downs of individual bilateral political relationships.

Since assuming the responsibility of the Ismaili Imamat, I have been involved with a number of international development projects and I would like to mention two of them today.

In 1957, Kenya was still a British colony and it appeared to me important that the country should have a responsible press of its own as early as possible. I therefore decided to enter the publishing field in association with the best newspapers in the free world who would join with me in this exciting if risky idea. I was fortunate to be able to associate, in our initial launching of the project, the London Sunday Times, the Canadian Toronto Globe and Mail and the Times of Ceylon. In those days, the only newspaper in existence in Kenya was strictly colonial, written by and for the white minority of the country. We started publishing both in English and Swahili, later on even in Luganda, the local language of most of Uganda, and we deliberately set out to voice the national viewpoints of the still unborn East African countries. To sustain this venture financially, we attached to it a commercial printing and packaging industry. Today, Nation Printers and Publishers is one of the biggest free newspaper and publishing groups in independent black Africa and its voice is regarded by newspapers around the world as a reliable reflection of African political thinking expressed by Africans in a country which has permitted a degree of press freedom unusual in developing nations. The timely creation of a national press through private initiative in Kenya may well have helped to make it possible for the Kenya Government to maintain a free press, one of the rare exceptions in developing countries. Once financial success has been achieved, we put a substantial part of the shareholding at the disposal of the public through the medium of the Nairobi Stock Market. Today there are some 4,000 individual shareholders, the great majority of whom are African. Here then is an example of foreign enterprise completing a full circle: first it introduced modern newspaper production techniques for a product in great demand by people on the brink of

independence. Then it established itself, not without difficulty, as a major national institution, staffed and managed almost entirely by local people. Finally, it became sufficiently profitable to be launched as a public company with a substantial African shareholding and thus an integral part of indigenous free enterprise.

The second international effort, this one more recent, which I would like to refer to today was conceived as a regional Tourism Development programme to operate in the East African Common Market of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. The programme has to be shelved in Uganda and Tanzania due to circumstances beyond our control and thereby lost its regional framework, but in Kenya progress was good and today our own development and financial institutions have been joined by Lufthansa, British Airways, East African Airways, the Intercontinental Hotel Corporation, Avis, the Kenya Tourism Development Corporation and the World Bank's International Finance Corporation in completing the development of one of the largest chains of hotels and lodges in the country.

If the international approach to new development is one which we have used with some success, it should not be forgotten that when my grandfather died in 1957, I inherited a long history of self-help and private initiative. Many financial institutions launched with the funds from my grandfather's widely remembered Jubilees, and ranging from financing houses to insurance companies to hospitals, had to be adapted to the dynamics of independence in the developing world. For years the Diamond Jubilee Investment Trust operating throughout East Africa had provided extremely soft long-term loans to housing cooperatives, thus enabling almost all the poorer Ismaili families in that area to acquire an apartment or a house of their own. Once this task had been completed, I decided to transform the institution into a modern finance house and to put its shares on the Nairobi Stock Market. Thus a national institution was created with thousands of shareholders, many of whom are African. Similarly, our insurance companies in Pakistan and East Africa founded by my grandfather from the Jubilee funds to promote family security in my Community, have been modernised and expanded and now fulfil many of the more important national needs. Today the vast majority of policy holders are indigenous. What were once small Community enterprises have now become national institutions.

However, as the process of decolonisation gathered speed and the impact on my Community became clearer, it was patently evident that adjusting our existing institutions to the dynamics of independence would not be sufficient to meet our new and often unsuspected requirements. We therefore decided to take a new approach to the promotion of development through the creation of a group of development corporations called Industrial Promotion Services or simply I.P.S. These companies, an important one of which operates from Switzerland, presently exist in seven countries, and between them they have launched some one hundred enterprises in areas where my followers live. I.P.S. not only invests in such ventures but provides the whole range of services which is needed to map out new industries and to monitor their continued success. They usually work in association with other private investors – both foreign and local – as well as with Government, parastatal and international statutory bodies. Their main aim is to marry technological expertise with local know-how under the umbrella of a financial consortium suitable for the specific project involved. I.P.S.

projects today cover everything from textiles to tourism and have heavily contributed to the substitution of imports, the promotion of exports from developing countries and the generation of foreign funds. As a general rule, I.P.S. mobilises for its projects from foreign, local or governmental parties, five times its own investment. Thus they are true generators of development and investment in developing areas.

Every developing country I know has been faced with the choice of planning for mass progress at slow speed or selective progress at high speed. No doubt each case must be judged on its merits, but it seems to me that private initiative has a particularly important role to play in setting, maintaining and improving national standards. Whether it be in medicine, education or industry and commerce, quality is expensive but it is as essential to the long-term future of developing countries as it is to the wealthier parts of the world. The search for quality, because it is selective, will inevitably provoke envy, but unless key sectors in the developing countries are allowed to seek the highest standards and remunerate manpower accordingly, I can see no other solution to the vital need to build up a reservoir of national skill. Our developing countries must recognise this and, although selectivity in the search for progress may be politically unappealing, the alternative is an indefinite commitment to mediocrity and thereby to stagnation.

This is why during the past 20 years immense effort has gone into the development of good Ismaili educational institutions in Africa and Asia from nursery schools, through college and on to teacher training. Education, however, is one of the more sensitive fields for private initiative as it is often thought to be a means of propagating religious or political views. If private schools are in a unique position to aim for and maintain a true excellence of educational standards, the pressure on third world governments to broaden the base of their school systems is also tremendous and it is almost inevitable that private schools are called upon to integrate with the national system. When this occurs, it nearly always leads to a decline in teaching standards. In Africa, in the 1950s, it was clear that the traditional role of Ismailis as small traders and shopkeepers would meet fierce competition from indigenous African people, and in order to resolve the problem, education was given the highest priority, including encouraging a large number of Ismaili students to attend overseas universities. This was not done simply to prepare them for harder times ahead, but to expand their career prospects into the professions and industry and also enable them to make a greater contribution to the task of nation building when their countries did achieve independence. Our expenditure on education expanded rapidly as more and more Africans took advantage of the facilities which our schools offered them. Uganda failed to benefit from this source of educated manpower when President Amin decided to expel everyone of Asian origin from his country almost overnight, but we had good reason to be thankful for the efforts which had been made in our schools. Hundreds of young Ismailis were now academically qualified to start entirely new lives in distant corners of the globe, and to support their families who were often unequipped to settle elsewhere.

If education is unfortunately a sensitive area for private initiative, medicine raises many less questions. Platitude thought it may be, it is nonetheless true that little progress can be achieved with widespread ill health, and as a result we have devoted an immense amount of time, effort, and money to developing our own medical institutions. Today we

are running hospitals in Bombay, Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu and are building a major 600 bed teaching hospital in Karachi. All these hospitals are designed to act as central referral points for minor medical units which are widely spread to provide medical services to the remotest parts of each country. In Pakistan, for example, we have 72 such health centres and, as and when it becomes necessary, these units are upgraded to provide obstetric and minor surgical services. An interesting aspect of this work is that the development of these units and the level of service that they provide is discussed in detail with the national governments so as to be properly integrated into the overall National Health Programmes. This also applies to preventive medicine which is particularly well suited to the joint effort of private initiative, government collaboration and assistance from international agencies. With the help of the Government of Pakistan and supplies from UNICEF, we have recently been able to send teams of volunteer doctors and nurses into the remotest parts of the Himalayas to immunise the people living there against polio, cholera, smallpox and tuberculosis.

While political cooperation is more forthcoming in medicine than in education, the management of private medical institutions in developing countries is considerably more complex. It has taken us years to develop the know-how to prevent our institutions and programmes from becoming an unreasonable financial burden. Much of the management required is provided by the Aga Khan Foundation in Switzerland and its branches abroad.

I have attempted today to give you an outline of some of the experiences we have had and some of the conclusions which we have drawn from our private initiative in the developing countries. Some of our efforts have been successful but we, like many others, have also had to face setbacks and failures. In Burma, in the 1960s, and Uganda and Bangladesh more recently, we have had to suffer heavy losses in all the fields which I have mentioned to you today. In other areas where we have substantial programmes, even the slightest change in political orientation could expose us to all sorts of difficulties.

I believe that there is much which private initiative can do to improve its acceptability to developing nations such as adapting to the dynamics of independence, maintaining a high level of discipline and integrity in enterprise, pooling means and know-how through international effort, maintaining outstanding professional standards, particularly in the social services, but when all is said and done, it is first and above all else, up to the governments of developing countries to recognise that they can never – now nor at any time in the future – be a total substitute for the individual private initiative which they have at their disposal locally and abroad. The meaning of independence is questionable if it is to be synonymous with a process which goes: first the localisation of all foreign private enterprise, second the elimination of private enterprise altogether, third awareness, too late and without the means for reversal, that government has burdened itself with enterprises which is incapable of running successfully and, finally, confronting the people with losses instead of profit, high taxes instead of relief and lower quality of services instead of improvements. Several Western countries around us today, even, supported as they are by large experienced bureaucracies and immense revenue from the taxation of national wealth, are groaning under the burden of deficitary nationalised industries and I fail to see how developing nations can expect to resolve these problems

more successfully. Only time will tell if private initiative is to be given the role which I believe it must have for the benefit of the developing countries themselves. However, I think I may be right in detecting among those that I know, a growing awareness of these realities.





## **Presidential Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the International Seerat Conference.**

11 March 1976, Karachi, Pakistan.

**“Rather than let force of circumstance impose upon us through our default in not having suitably prepared ourselves for the future, ways of life which are not or should not be ours, we must ourselves design the path we should tread.”**

Mowlana Kausar Niazi, Your Excellencies, eminent scholars,

When Mowlana Kausar Niazi invited me to preside at today's gathering of the Seerat Conference, I felt both trepidation and joy, trepidation because few subjects could be more awe inspiring for any Muslim to speak on, joy as few subjects could give greater happiness to be involved with. Let me add that I am also deeply appreciative of the occasion offered to me by Mowlana Kausar Niazi to meet and greet you all. Few conferences can have gathered

so many men of outstanding intellect, who have devoted so much time and wisdom to the study of Islam and the life of the Holy Prophet, peace be upon him.

In addressing you shortly today, I will begin by making a request: One hundred and seventy two eminent scholars from forty-eight countries have gathered in Islamabad, Lahore, Peshawar and Karachi to present the results of their research and reflection on various aspects of the life of the Holy Prophet. From all these exchanges, from all the private debates which have preceded and succeeded the presentation of each paper, will have come an immense range of new thoughts, new ideas and new understanding of the Prophet's life. I sincerely request that you have available to all Muslims a complete printed record of these papers and the subsequent debates.

In your high intellectual world many of you are fortunate to have the time to reflect on the great aspects of Prophet Muhammad's life. It is a blessing that many a Muslim would wish for, but due to circumstances beyond his control, indeed the very nature of modern life, he cannot have.

The poorer countries of Islam have ahead of them years of increasingly hard work if they wish to progress materially to acceptable standards of every day life. The richer countries, especially those that have new means, will rapidly find that this wealth, blessing that it is, will impose upon them heavy new responsibilities. They will have to administrate this wealth wisely, in the best interest of their citizens, but also keeping in mind that they have a heavy responsibility to their less well endowed brother Muslim countries, and indeed to the human race at large. Thus it is my profound conviction that Islamic Society in the years ahead will find that our traditional concept of time, a limitless mirror in which to reflect on the eternal, will become a shrinking cage, an invisible trap from which fewer and fewer will escape.

I have observed in the Western world a deeply changing pattern of human relations. The anchors of moral behaviour appear to have dragged to such depths that they no longer hold firm the ship of life: what was once wrong is now simply unconventional, and for the sake of individual freedom must be tolerated. What is tolerated soon becomes accepted. Contrarily, what was once right is now viewed as outdated, old fashioned and is often the target of ridicule.

In the face of this changing world, which was once a universe to us and is now no more than an overcrowded island, confronted with a fundamental challenge to our understanding of time, surrounded by a foreign fleet of cultural and ideological ships which have broken loose, I ask, "Do we have a clear, firm and precise understanding of what Muslim Society is to be in times to come?" And if as I believe, the answer is uncertain, where else can we search then in the Holy Qur'an, and in the example of Allah's last and final Prophet?

There is no justification for delaying the search for the answer to this question by the

Muslims of the world, because we have the knowledge that Islam is Allah's final message, the Qur'an His final book and Muhammed His last Prophet. We are blessed that the answers drawn from these sources guarantee that neither now, nor at any time in the future will we be going astray.

As the demands on his time increase, every Muslim will find it more and more difficult to seek for himself the answer to the fundamental question of how he should live his life for it to be truly Muslim. It is men such as you who will have to bring forth the answers, answers which will have to be practical and realistic in the world of today and tomorrow. Rather than let force of circumstance impose upon us through our default in not having suitably prepared ourselves for the future, ways of life which are not or should not be ours, we must ourselves design the path we should tread.

In seeking to define what our Islamic Society should be in times ahead, 50 and 100 and 200 years hence we should, I believe, be aware that the Muslims of this world cover such an amazing range of historical, ethnic and cultural backgrounds that a completely monolithic answer may not be found. I am convinced on the other hand, that we do want to avoid so much diversity that our Muslim countries are in conflict amongst themselves or that they are so divided that they are incapable successfully of facing common enemies, be they cultural, religious, national or otherwise. This is why I so applaud Pakistan for having organized the first Muslim Summit Conference, and now this Seerat Conference, for it is only through dialogue, personal contacts and continuous exchanges that the great diversity of cultures, knowledge, outlook and resources can be co-ordinated and brought to bear fruit for the Muslim world.

Let me return, now, to the question of what Muslim Society should seek to be in the years ahead. Islam, as even non-Muslims have observed, is a way of life. This means that every aspect of the individual's daily existence is guided by Islam: his family relations, his business relations, his education, his health, the means and manner by which he gains his livelihood, his philanthropy, what he sees and hears around him, what he reads, the way he regulates his time, the buildings in which he lives, learns and earns.

I cannot think of any time in Islamic history when Muslims have had a greater opportunity to unite, and to ensure that the society in which they live is that which they have defined and chosen for themselves.

Not only are all forms of human communication easier than ever before in history, but rarely, if ever has the Muslim world had such means to ensure its future. Conferences such as this seeking inspiration from the life of the Holy Prophet could render no greater service to Islam than to assist in defining what steps can be taken, where, and how, to ensure that our people can live in the years ahead in greater peace, greater prosperity and in an Islamic Society which will not be overrun or simply taken by surprise, by forces, pressures or concepts which are totally alien and may damage us irretrievably.

In our search for a solution, I am convinced that we must call upon our own men and women, who have achieved positions of eminence anywhere in the world, and persuade them to return, for us to benefit from their knowledge, their learning and their work. All too often in my journeys I have met or learnt of outstanding Muslim scholars, doctors, scientists, and architects who have remained abroad, or who, when they do come home, have failed to receive the support and encouragement necessary for them to bring to their nations' benefit their Muslim outlook on key areas of modern progress.

Any meaningful human endeavour, any original thinking, any authentic research, will require moral encouragement and material support. This we must provide, not only during the individual's initial years of learning, but equally when he leaves the restricted life of his academic centre to enter into the wider world of national or international activity.

The Holy Prophet's life gives us every fundamental guideline that we require to resolve the problem as successfully as our human minds and intellects can visualise. His example of integrity, loyalty, honesty, generosity both of means and of time, his solicitude for the poor, the weak and the sick, his steadfastness in friendship, his humility in success, his magnanimity in victory, his simplicity, his wisdom in conceiving new solutions for problems which could not be solved by traditional methods, without affecting the fundamental concepts of Islam, surely all these are foundations which, correctly understood and sincerely interpreted, must enable us to conceive what should be a truly modern and dynamic Islamic Society in the years ahead.



## **Speech by Mawlana Hazar Imam at the Foundation Ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, London**

6 September 1979, London, UK

Your Excellencies,

My Lords,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am particularly happy to welcome our distinguished guests this morning and to thank them for their presence on this occasion which is one of special significance to members of my community. Your presence is to me a symbol of the friendship which the different countries and institutions you represent have shown to Ismailis all over the world, to my family and to me personally.

It gives me deep satisfaction to be here today at the Foundation Ceremony for the new Ismaili Centre in London. Not only do I welcome most warmly the creation of this important focus for the religious and social life of the community, but I also appreciate the strengthening of the traditional ties with Britain which it represents. For while there is a



substantial number of Ismailis permanently resident in the United Kingdom, many more come to London from all over the world, and particularly the Commonwealth, to renew old bonds of friendship, language and culture dating from numerous and close associations in the past.

The Ismailis are grateful to the British people for their understanding, especially at the time when so many of them arrived as refugees after their expulsion by ex-President Amin from Uganda not so long ago. Ismailis are proud of their reputation for industry and self-help which I think is correct; but none of their achievements, including the new Centre which we shall soon see rising from this ground, would have been possible without the faith and cooperation of their neighbours.

In this connection, I should like particularly to thank the Greater London Council for all their care and patience in helping us to acquire this site. I am also grateful to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 and the local amenity groups for making it possible to construct a building here which, by its nature and location, must seek to bridge the cultures of East and West.

In drawing up their plans, the architects faced a new and unusual challenge as this Centre must serve the requirements of the Ismaili community as well as to establish a presence worthy of its proximity to the distinguished public and historic buildings which surround us. The mass and silhouette of the new structure are therefore strong and simple and in no way attempt to compete nor interfere with, the varied and imposing façades of the neighbouring buildings. The Ismaili Centre, being designed for a Muslim community, must reflect, even if only discretely, an Islamic mood whilst being sympathetic to the character of its surroundings. In this endeavour, I have been patiently and constantly helped by the architects and other participants who are too numerous to name individually. To all of them, I express my deepest thanks for the imagination and sheer hard work with which they addressed a singularly unusual commission.

The building will rise three stories and the second floor will be a large hall for prayer. The remaining floors will accommodate a library and reading room, areas for education, social rooms and a roof garden. There will also be space available for a public art exhibition gallery and for use by the institutions of the Ismaili community in the United Kingdom.

It is my conviction that the building of this Centre is symbolic of a growing understanding of Islam. For some centuries past, the Muslim world has lived in shadow as far as the West was concerned. Muslim civilisation and society were poorly understood, or not understood at all. Apart from a few exceptional and dedicated men, there was no communications and almost no desire to be informed. Now we see that conditions have changed. This building and the prominence of the place it has been given indicate the seriousness and the respect the West is beginning, to accord Muslim civilisation, of which the Ismaili community, though relatively small, is fully representative. May this understanding, so important for the future of the world, progress and flourish.



I sincerely believe that when this Centre is completed, it will be, both by its presence and the function it fulfils, an important addition to the institutions of London, a source of pride to all who took part in its creation, and a pledge and token of understanding between East and West.

Few men alive today have done so much in breaking down historic and traditional national barriers and replacing them by common objectives in the hope of a better future than Lord Soames. He is not only a very close family friend but his achievements as a statesman bring to this ceremony today its special significance.

His outstanding contribution to Britain's entry into the European Common Market is known to all, but that would never have been possible had he and those who worked with him, not also convinced the Commonwealth Nations, particularly those of the developing world, that such a partnership would eventually be as much in their interests as of Europe's and of Britain herself. It is as a highly creative internationalist, and in the best and broadest sense, a Man of the World, that I welcome Lord Soames today, and request him to perform this Foundation Ceremony.

## Asia Society, Islamic architecture: a revival

25 September 1979, New York, USA

Mr Talbot,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Honoured guests and,  
Members of the Asia Society,

By the Islamic calendar we will in just a few months enter the 1,400th year of our faith. In the Christian accounting of time, we stand on the brink of the 21st century. It seems fitting to reflect, to consider what Islam has been and what it is to become in this new age. It is a time to speak out about hazards and about visions.

An overwhelming array of questions face all of us both East and West in the challenging years that are upon us. Political, social, economic and spiritual problems surround us and must be addressed with all the compassion and commitment we can summon.

In my own commitment to the well-being of the Ismaili community, I have come to be ever more concerned with the physical form that the Islamic world of the future will take. The houses we live in, our places of work, the institutions that serve us, the gardens and parks where we rest, the markets and, of course, the mosques.

How will they look? And how will they affect our perceptions of the world and of ourselves? As descendents of the magnificent builders of Islam's golden age, how will we build the Islamic world of the future? Indeed will the Islamic environment of tomorrow be identifiably ours?

These are not frivolous questions: all beings are affected positively or negatively by their surroundings but for Muslims it is a particularly critical matter.

Islam does not deal in dichotomies but in all encompassing unity. Spirit and body are one, man and nature are one. What is more, man is answerable to God for what man has created. Many of our greatest architectural achievements were designed to reflect the promises of life hereafter, to represent in this world what we are told of the next. Since all that we see and do resonates on the faith, the aesthetics of the environment we build and the quality of the social interactions that take place within those environments, reverberate on our spiritual life. The physical structure of Islam is therefore an important concern for me, charged as I am with the leadership of a Muslim community.

As Mr Talbot has told you, we have been involved in construction projects for some time. One of the largest of these undertakings is a 700-bed teaching hospital in Karachi with

allied medical centres throughout Pakistan. We have found it easy to plan for excellence in this institution's services and teaching standards. But when we spoke of the best possible design for the buildings, excellence was not so easily found. I told our architect, who is American and who has specialized in hospital design, that his idiom should reflect the spirit of Islam. How was this to be done? I did not want him to succumb, through nostalgia, to mimicry of the past, adding minarets and domes to his renderings – the sort of bogus orientalism that has produced Alhambra hotels and Tal Mahal bars around the world. Surely we, as Muslims must do better than that.

For the Karachi project, we elected to send our specialised hospital designer through many countries on an extended tour of important Islamic buildings. He was accompanied by a number of people connected with the project, including a fine Iranian architect. After much study, many discussions and several revisions, we have a design solution. But not everyone setting out to build has the time, the funds nor, unfortunately, the motivation to solve design problems this way. Even after all this effort, I am not in a position to affirm that the solution is the right one. We have, on the other hand, identified and addressed ourselves to a fundamental problem for future generations of Muslims, and we have sought a solution. Nothing more.

Our difficulties in discovering what it means to build today in the Spirit of Islam have provoked me into what I expect will be a life-long commitment to identifying and spreading that spirit.

We have sent teams of architectural experts into many countries since the journey of our hospital designer and his group. These observers' reports on the built environment of Islam today are disheartening reading. They tell us that the wonderful distinctiveness of Islamic architecture is disappearing, that much of it today looks like Frankfurt, Bogota or Dallas. There is such homogenized blandness, that one is left with few visual clues to know where one is or who the people of this place might be.

Our reports tell us that the new structural symbols of power in our world have not sprung from our spirit, from our understanding of who we are, or what we believe, but have been merely copied from foreign images of political and commercial power.

Can this be the world of the people who built the mosque of Cordoba? Of the people whose marvellous urban systems in Isfahan are still studied by city planners? The people who created the Mughal gardens of Kashmir? The people who have fashioned the remarkable town architecture of Yemen?

Changes are coming upon Islam faster now than in the age of our greatest territorial expansion. Today the changes have to do not with military conquest or the conservation of new peoples to the faith but with the impact upon us of economic social and technical change, urbanization, population explosions, skyscrapers, automobiles, hotels and airports. Further shock is upon us.

In much of the Islamic world, modern infrastructures are going into place almost overnight. Roads, schools, power plants, hospitals, housing and drainage are needed immediately. In newly wealthy Muslim nations, it is possible simply to import total systems even with the skilled worker to put them together. Government officials rush to deal with the tides of people swamping the cities. They order up a thousand units here, ten thousand there, never getting ahead of the need, no matter how fast they build. There simply is not time for thoughts of the social fabric, of the long-range effects on the minds and spirits of the people being housed.

The pressure is too great. But to build is to affect the world for a long time. Buildings conceived in haste to meet pressing needs will be negative presences for years ahead.

Throughout the Islamic world there is a thirst for the images of modernity, of material progress, the symbols of power. The colonial rulers are gone, the structures they left behind, the courts and residences and legislatures they built and from which the rulers governed, have long been occupied by our own leaders. Now the need is for new symbols and they are being imported complete and intact without adaptation, without filtering out the inappropriate, without perhaps even asking the question whether they could, or should, be different.

There is little time.

The treasures of our past are being destroyed and an ever-quickenning construction boom is bringing us too many buildings that I think we will live to despise. Should we allow future generations of Muslims to live without the self-respect of our own cultural and spiritual symbols of power, to practise their faith without also being reminded of that sense of scale in relation to the universe around us which is so particularly ours?

The field trips I have mentioned are but one part of our quest. A world-wide series of seminars on fundamental issues affecting modern Islamic architecture are assisting us to address the problems.

Eminent scholars of Islamic culture and distinguished architects and designers have met in Paris, Istanbul and Jakarta to discuss the issue and to share their knowledge. The fourth seminar will take place next month in Fez.

In all these journeys and meetings, we have been searching for a definition of Islamic architecture. One of our first conclusions has been that no single definition exists. Islamic architecture has reflected different climates, different times and materials, and thus today, in speaking about a revival, let me underline to you that I am far from referring to a new school! I do not believe it can exist, nor should it be encouraged, because this would stifle that strength which comes from the diversity of the Islamic world, and the creativity of those who will build around us in the years ahead. We have however sought the essentials

that go beyond regional factors of climate and materials and the limitations of period technology. What have we found?

One of our major conclusions centred on the serenity of form. In Islamic design the basic forms are balanced and ruled by geometry. There is a sense of stability, tranquility and equilibrium. And with serenity goes modesty. There is a lack of domination and pride. The superiority of man-made structures over natural environment is a concept alien to Islamic belief.

A second conclusion growing out of the first was the congruence of our traditions with natural forces. There is much Islamic spirit in the current effort in the West to respect and preserve ecological balance. As an example of this, Islamic builders have employed cooling systems in their houses for the last thousand years using only sun and wind for power. Such houses circulated cool air and produced chilled water and even ice.

We found too that the overwhelming unity of Islamic life which sees no division between body and spirit, between this world and the next, was a powerful influence on Islamic architecture. The desire to bring to this world some of the beauty of the hereafter acted as a constant barrier to the discordant or the haphazard in Islamic styles. The calligraphy which adorns so much of what we have built was a constant reminder of spiritual content through its common design, the endless expression of the name of God.

Finally we found that we were able to specify applications of style which expressed our attitudes and beliefs. There is the framing of space for instance. We define each area. We construct a physical context for each activity in daily life. There is always a definite delineation between privacy and community, light areas and areas in shadow, small spaces and large spaces, interiors and exteriors, each is framed and set apart by itself usually with formality. There is further formality, it might even be called solemnity, in the passageways that connect all of these differing spaces.

And we were reminded that Islamic homes are sanctuaries, places of retreat and refreshment from the noise and movement of public life. Those aspects of our idiom that engender this sense of peace should come with us in our designs for the homes of the future. But here we come upon one of the many paradoxes that struck us in our research. How much of the privacy built into a Muslim house was necessitated by the sequestering of our women? When women step out of purda, no doubt the physical form of new households will reflect this change. On the other hand, perhaps the internal orientation of buildings can be most closely linked to the privacy and attitude to the family, the very base of Islam.

There is also a strong kinesthetic experience in Islamic building. There is a play upon the physical senses -- air currents touching the skin, the sound of moving water, the touch of varied surface textures, the richness of colour and the play of light and shade upon the vision, the scent of plants in the courtyards, are touches of the paradise to come.

These then are our findings. What will we do with them? We cannot offer any clear-cut solutions that correspond to the blueprint of the drawing board. Indeed, we do not seek them nor do we believe in them. But we can identify the paths that must be taken if such solutions are to be arrived at in the future. The signposts to these paths are already clearer.

We must begin with a new visual language for our future environment, one generated from within Islam, not devised abroad.

We must foster the growth of a new generation of architects knowledgeable about technology, sensitive to the cultural diversities, regional resources and separate national destinies of their countries and imbued with a renewed sense of pride in the value and dignity of Islamic culture.

We must instil that sense of respect in those who employ architects. The city planners, the government officials, the private clients who commission construction projects must be recognised as the powerful agents of change that they are. They must understand that to build is to exercise power and that their decisions resonate upon Islam.

We must encourage sensitivity to local needs. Labour-intensive construction and the teaching of building skills must be stressed, especially in the many regions where there is great unemployment. We must look for the use of local artisans and craftspeople and of local materials.

This is what we have learned about the problems we face and the ways in which they must be solved. Our assessments, our reflection, our meditation continue. Even so we are acting. Our first steps along the path begin now. To encourage new creative approaches we have instituted the Award for achievements in Islamic architecture. The first of these will be made at the end of 1980. The awarding of prizes, the recognition of achievement is only a part of our objective. We seek at the same time to open communications between Islam and the West and among builders in the Muslim nations. At present the exchange is very limited, indeed, almost nonexistent. An architect in Lahore has little access to news of what is being built in Rabat and if he himself devises a good solution to a design problem, there are no channels through which he can share that solution.

We must also make every effort to see that those who make the journey to study far from home return to their native lands to use their knowledge, to plant the seeds of this revival in the soil of Islam. I might note here that having schools of architecture within the borders of Islamic countries does not guarantee an Islamic architecture. Many architectural schools in the Muslim world have orientated their teaching towards modern Western idioms instead of seeking to revive their own culture. They are often not to blame as the source of their reaching is usually in the West. Yet few of the western schools are informed about the real needs of their counterparts in Muslim countries, fewer still have developed the resources and documentation necessary to meet the needs of Islamic architectural scholarship, whether in Muslim countries or in the West.



I am often asked how better understanding can be developed between East and West, whether bridges can be built and what they should look like. There are as many answers as the number of times the question is asked, but it is my deep conviction that a singular step should be taken, a magnificent relationship developed on which so much could be built if the West will cease to look at the Islamic architectural heritage simply as a matter of scholastic interest and admiration. On the contrary, give to it recognition of a different dimension, a dimension of the future. Enhance it, enrich it and enliven it, put at its disposal your talents, your knowledge and your creativity.

I do not wish to imply that the West is solely responsible for what is happening to Islamic environments. I am saying that you could do much more, as you are already doing for your own architectural heritage, to help revive the culture of Islam. Creativity knows no frontiers: it is not of the East nor the West, of the North nor the South, but it sometimes needs awakening, to be set alight, to be shown a purpose. I believe such a time is now.

The recognition that teaching and communications are of the essence and that for years to come the West's contribution is fundamental to an Islamic architectural revival, led me to create the first major teaching and information programme incorporating all the points I have mentioned.

To fulfil the immediate need for an information base for all who require it, and to move into the action as effectively as possible, this first programme will build upon the existing resources of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University. I would like to share with you my expectation of the clarity that will follow this time of confusion, this time of turning back to rediscover some of the foundations on which to build the future. Before the end of this century, before the fourteen hundred and twentieth year of our faith, I hope to see an Islamic civilization with a strong sense of purpose, that has become clear in its understanding of itself and of the world around it. And with those gifts of strength and understanding, our builders, our governments and our private patrons should be able to create an environment that will personify the Spirit of modern Islam.

I hope that in the years ahead we shall see Islamic cities representing to the world all that the City of God and man can be. Cities of which all Muslims can be proud, where our magnificent heritage and our firm place in this new age, are manifest.

As we work towards that vision of the future we will remember the Sura of Light from the Qur'an. It tells us that the oil of the blessed olive tree lights the lamp of understanding, a light that belongs neither to the East nor West. We are to give this light to all. In that spirit, all that we learn will belong to the world - and that too is part of the vision I share with you.



**Ranjit Sabikhi (left) Indian architect and Ramesh Khosla (right), Canadian designer, posing with His Highness the Aga Khan after receiving the Aga Khan Award for Architecture for their design of the Sheraton Mughal Hotel at Agra, India.**

## Aga Khan Award for Architecture Ceremony, Lahore

23 October 1980, Lahore, Pakistan

Within life's span, there are days of special happiness, days of pride and days of humility. This is such a day for me. It represents the culmination of a vigorous effort, hope, and deep conviction that a significant change can be achieved in the environment in which Muslims live.

This is also a day of gratitude and I express my heartfelt thanks to the President, and the Government of Pakistan, for their encouragement in this endeavour, for offering us one of Pakistan's great national monuments for this occasion. The presence of Mr. M'Bow, the Director of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the world's largest agency for the preservation and support of man's culture, is also a source of strong encouragement. I express my thanks to him for participating with us in this important effort. To the Governor of the Punjab and the people of Lahore, I extend greetings and gratitude for their welcome and hospitality.

We are gathered here today to recognise the work of men and women who, we believe and hope, will have a profound impact on the environment of Muslims in the years ahead.

The first series of Awards in Architecture within the vast Community of Muslims are about to be given. It is well to ponder at this time about what they mean, what questions they raise, what implications they may have for the future as well as for our deeper collective concern for the continuous integrity of Islamic architecture and, through architecture, for the whole of Islamic culture. I trust and hope that over the years scholars, architects, planners, officials at all levels, and users will discuss among themselves the significance of the choices made by the Jury and the Selection Committee among some 180 submitted buildings and architectural ensembles. Many, at time even contradictory, conclusions could and should be drawn from the Jury's decisions and, at the very outset, I would like to share with you some impressions, some thoughts, some queries, perhaps a few worries, about the results of these choices.

First, let me recall that it was here in Pakistan that the idea of this Award was made public, some four years ago. It is in part for this reason that the first recipients of the Award are gathered here to be recognised for their achievements. It is also in Pakistan that this event takes place because, located roughly in the geographical centre of Islam, Pakistan possesses some of the wonders of classical Islamic architecture, like the gardens which surrounds us, some of the most genuine vernacular traditions, as was amply demonstrated in the exhibitions opened yesterday, and some of the most important contemporary efforts within the Muslim world. It is only fitting that this microcosm of Islamic traditions serve as a host for the contemporary achievements within the Muslim world, from the arid shores of the Atlantic ocean to the tropical splendour of Indonesian islands. Here, better perhaps than anywhere else, the richness and glory of the past and the creations of today can be seen in the context of a vibrant and exciting concern for the environment. For it is indeed this concern that we have come to celebrate, and we must recognise that we are not permeating a country, a city, or a building, but the whole Muslim world as it enters into its fifteenth century of existence.

Second, we may well ask whether the permeated projects truly correspond to the great traditions of Islamic architecture. There are no mosques among them, no madrasah, no palace, no garden, no mausoleum, hardly any of the monuments which are visited by millions of tourists, cherished by those who live near them, and utilised by historians to define the Muslims' past. The paradox, however, is more apparent than real. For, great though the celebrated monuments of the past are as works of art, they were only part of the built environment of the past. They were the creations of great and wealthy patrons, often made no doubt for the use and the pleasure of the masses, but rarely lacking in personal or dynastic vanity. All too frequently the settings developed by the masses themselves have been lost or changed beyond recognition. In the contemporary world, the Awards have recognised that other part, perhaps now much more important than in the past, the part of the common man creating for himself and his neighbours a setting for life and for health, preserving and utilising what nature has created, developing ways to maintain his identity rather than accepting the elephantine massiveness of so much of today's world.

This recognition of a human scale, of local decisions (even if they required outside expertise), of local needs and concerns is, I believe, a profoundly Muslim requirement. It is the expression of that social concern for thousands of separate communities within the whole Ummah which is so uniquely a central part of the Muslim message. We have recognised an architecture for men, women, and children, not yet an architecture for history books and tourists. Through architecture we are recognising the quality of life within the Muslim world today. And, by recognising a housing project developed by a whole community or a medical centre, we are preserving for all times the memory of this quality of life.

There is a deeper and more intriguing side to this recognition which forms my third observation. These Awards may indeed illustrate or sharpen an issue which has been side-tracked over the past four hundred years, as scholars and patrons became fascinated with the personalities of architects as artistic and formal creators. The issue is: what architecture are we recognising? Is it the planning and design of master architects? Is it the architecture of the craftsmen, artisans, and specialists of all sorts who put a building together? Is it the architecture of users? Is it the architecture of certain lands with their peculiar physical characteristics? Is it the architecture of a faith which transcends national, geographic, social, or technological limits?

It is easy enough to answer “yes” to all questions and to identify the merits of any one project according to each one of these criteria. In part, the decisions of the Jury have done that. But, in a deeper sense, the important point is precisely that none of these criteria has taken precedence over the others.

The implication is that we are recognising as unique a creative and generative process in which the imagination of one architect or the expectation of Muslim patrons and users interact constantly. Within this continuum no single moment or decision can be isolated like the element of a chemical compound, because its creative life itself, it is the elusive process of human existence which is the winner, not merely a monument.

A fourth observation is that the Jury used the word “search” for nearly all of the projects it recognised. What does this mean? It could mean, no doubt, that no building, no ensemble, no reconstruction or re-use has quite been able to meet some abstract criteria of architectural excellence. This is not surprising. The Alhambra would have probably been received with very mixed reviews by architectural critics and many a source from ancient times is critical of architectural projects which enthral contemporary historians. For, quite often, while historians can, centuries later, understand architectural quality in its purest form, contemporaries often see its social and economic costs and weigh that against the other needs of society. Clearly, architectural excellence is not enough. Therein lies the positive side of the notion of “search”. We are only beginning to grasp the social, intellectual, aesthetic, cultural, historical needs and emotions of the Muslim world. To impose from the very outset of the Award process formal or even social criteria of excellence would not only be an exercise in vanity and folly, but a profound moral wrong.

We only know the issues and the problems. We know that social changes of momentous proportions are taking place everywhere. We know that expectations have risen both for a good life and for a good Muslim life. We know that we are far too ignorant of our past and far too careless in preserving it. We know that Muslim lands are subjected to pressure and temptations from cultures which are not Muslim, even if nearly all Muslim lands are independent of foreign rule.

But the solutions, the answers, to these problems are still unclear. They must be sought and this is why the Award process itself is designed to be one of the means for this collective search. A partial failure can be as important as a unique success. It is in this spirit of common search for solutions to thousands of problems that these Awards will play their part. It is a spirit which is well proclaimed in the Muslim message, for the intention of man (the *niyah*) is a fundamental part of his action.

And, finally, we may turn from the Muslim world to the whole world. Many of the issues which led to the creation of the Awards are not unique to the Muslim world. They are issues found in all new lands, as on our shrinking planet all new countries, or all developing countries grope for a visible self-identification of their own and for the satisfaction of new, worldwide expectations about the quality of their lives. But why think only of new or undeveloped countries? Social problems plague lands with the highest per capita income, and self-identification is a concern of countries with the longest history of independence and expansion. It may be just that, as the Award highlights the search of the Muslim world for an architecture centered on man and proclaiming the potential of life, an example is given to the whole world of how this can be done. In part it is simply that the Muslim message is a universal one and not restricted to a few areas or a few ethnic groups. But, in a deeper sense, what we are trying to achieve, this environment we are looking for, is not only ours. It is also something we want to share with the whole world, not as an exercise in pride or vanity, but because of our belief that the means at our disposal may allow us to sharpen issues, to discover solutions for all mankind to use and understand.

Such are a few observations based on the Awards themselves, on recognised achievements from Senegal to Indonesia, from humble houses to grand hotels, by architects and by masons, by anonymous bureaucracies or specific individuals and collectives, by Muslims and by non-Muslims, yet always for Muslims.

But this is not the end of our effort. It is in fact only the beginning, as we are about to embark on the process leading to the Second Award in 1983, as we seek to extend our network of nominated projects, as we seek to refine the ways in which we judge, as we seek to anticipate issues and problems by organising seminars and other kinds of research activities to help us better to understand the issues involved.

And it is indeed appropriate at this time to mention these issues – or some of them – in public, in front of so many experts and decision makers deeply concerned with this construction of the fifteenth century of Islam. For without your help and cooperation with

ideas, with criticisms, with information, indeed your total commitment and creativity, we cannot succeed in meeting the challenges ahead.

What are these challenges? The first one is perfectly exemplified by the very setting in which we meet, the magnificent Shalimar Gardens. From the very beginning we felt that the Awards should be given in places of overwhelming historical and aesthetic interest. This is to remind us all of the great traditions to which we are the heirs. But what in fact is the relationship of our roots to what we are today? Surely we do not expect of contemporary architects copies or imitations of the past; we know only too well how disastrous such copying has been. There are two things, I feel, we may appropriately seek from the past. One is what I would call our moral right to decide on the environment which will be ours. However useful and essential outside experts may be, however international contemporary architecture has become, our past, our roots, give us the right to say that the choices we make are our choices and that the opportunities we have today will do for the next decades what early Muslims did in Spain, Syria or Iraq, what the Ottoman Turks, Timurids, or Mughals did some five to six hundred years ago in Anatolia, Iran or India: to understand sufficiently well what was available and appropriate in non-Muslim lands in order to create something profoundly Muslim. And this leads me to my second point about the monuments of our past. We must learn to understand them well, not simply to preserve them as museums of past glories, but to feel in every part of them – a stone masonry, a brick dome, a window, an ornament, or a garden arrangement – that unique spirit, that unique way which made these monuments Islamic. Only then will we be able to impart the same spirit to the technical means and to the forms of to-day.

A second challenge is of a very different order. As time goes on, more and more of the major environmental and architectural programmes within the Muslim world will utilise the high technology developed for the most part outside the Muslim world. As airports, office buildings, hospitals, schools, industrial complexes, whole new cities grow in numbers and in quality, they will quite naturally satisfy much less easily the originality of our traditions. The models of the past, even if available, will be technically or economically unsuited to new needs. These new creations will run the risk of becoming homogenised, internationalised, monuments with an occasional arch or dome. But need it be so? While preserving and nurturing the immense variety of our vernacular architecture, how will we be able to channel the necessity of high technology without becoming its slaves? There are areas, perhaps, such as those of solar energy, of water conservation, of thermal control, or of pre-fabrication, where we should become leaders rather than followers, where our needs can revolutionalise the rest of the world.

And, finally, let me mention one last challenge: the challenge of education. Not only do we know too little about ourselves, but we have not yet been able to form in sufficient numbers our own experts and practitioners with the full competence to solve the environmental problems of tomorrow. Too many of our best minds are trained outside their own countries. Why is this so? Is it a matter of equipment and of facilities? Is it a question of teaching staff? Is it a peculiar trust in outside expertise? Clearly we must develop ways to make our own schools of architecture and of planning places to which



others will want to come, and this will require yet another kind of intellectual and practical effort. For, even if we create an architecture worthy of praise, we would have partly failed unless we form ourselves the men and women who will realise that architecture.

I do not claim that these are the only challenges left to us. Others exist no doubt. But, as we celebrate the first Awards and open the way for the forthcoming ones, all these challenges can help us in defining the attitudes we must develop in thinking of the future and the areas of discovery open to us. It is a task we must accomplish together, fully acknowledging our diversities, but knowing, as well, that there is a Straight Path which is that of our Faith.

Let me close, therefore, by reminding you of Attar's great poem, the Conference of the Birds, Mantiqat at-Tayr.

The birds, you will recall, in huge quantities went in search of the Simurgh, the ideal and perfect king. After my tribulations, thirty of them do reach the end of the journey and come to the gate of the Supreme Majesty. The Chamberlain tests them and then opens the door and they sit on the masnad, the seat of the Majesty and Glory. And, as an inner glow came into them, they realised that it is they together who were the Simurgh and that the Simurgh was the thirty birds.

Is this not what these Awards mean? From the travails and labours of thousands, humble masons or expensive experts, there have emerged those works made by us and for us which we can present as being, all together, as an aggregate, as a group, the statement of our hopes and of our expectations as much as of our achievements. It is indeed the way in which Pakistan's beloved poet, Muhammed Iqbal, put in two quotations which better than any speech say what the Awards can mean. Speaking of Islam in his vision for tomorrow, he wrote that it was:

A world eternal, with renewing flames and renewing leaves, fruits, and principle.  
With an immovable inside and an outside of.  
Changing, continuous revolutions.

And, then, in another poem, he said:

The journey of love is a very long journey,  
But sometimes with a sign you can cross that vast desert.  
Search and search again without losing hope,  
You may find sometime a treasure on your way.

On behalf of the Master Jury and of the Award Committee, it is to this search for our new environment that I wish to invite you present here, the immense community of Muslims, and the whole world as well.





## The 30th General Assembly of International Press Institute

02 March 1981, Nairobi, Kenya

Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Mr Irani,  
Mr Galliner,  
Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have rarely spoken publicly in the developing world or in the industrialised nations, or indeed in any international forum about the press. I wish to take this exceptional occasion to pay a deep personal tribute to a truly remarkable African who was himself at one time a journalist, then who led his country's struggle for independence and who finally became the first President of Kenya and an outstanding African statesman. I refer to Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. "Freedom of the Press" are four of the most commonly used and misused words in the English language, but here in Kenya their meaning was given true substance by the late President's personal commitment to the independence of the media. I state this today as I was privileged to experience the depth of his conviction on this matter and because I feel I have a personal, unequivocal commitment to uphold what the Father of Kenya upheld so ardently himself. History is unjust or at least very often incomplete in recording the

work and thoughts of great men. This must not be the case with regard to Mzee's exceptional strength and courage in defending this important foundation of democracy.

Today Kenya is one of the countries of the developing world that has the strongest tradition of a free press. It has an unusually large number of qualified and competent editors and journalists. As the owner of a substantial newspaper organization here for many years, it is right that I should also recall the admiration and respect I feel for the way in which His Excellency President Moi, his ministers and the people of Kenya have continued to uphold this tradition of a free, responsible press.

Ladies and Gentlemen, protocol on these occasions also dictates that I thank Mr Cushrow Irani for inviting me to talk to you today. I have the highest respect of the ideals of the International Press Institute and I have the highest respect for the courage and integrity Mr Irani has shown in protecting these ideals, both for himself and for his great Indian newspaper, "The Statesman". But asking me to speak to you about the complex and extremely sensitive international debate on communications and the third world, I just do not know if I really should thank him. As the French would say, it is like asking me to walk on eggs. Apart from the fact that I will totally crush a large number of them, I have no doubt that by the end of this talk, those that remain unbroken will be used as missiles and your harassed speaker will unavoidably exit with egg on his face. Be that as it may, I thank you most warmly Mr Irani and Mr Galliner and the IPI for inviting me today.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I accepted this invitation to speak after more than twenty years of work, both in the press and in the third world, as I would like to put forward in this important forum some thoughts and some hopes whose only objective is to help move the present passionate and often acid debate toward a new and more constructive beginning.

I have to state unequivocally that many of the grievances and aspirations expressed in UNESCO are sincere and perfectly valid. But this does not imply that I am willing to underwrite all the solutions proposed at UNESCO. Some of them have clearly been motivated by ideology and by an entirely different concept of the press as it is understood by most democracies, including the Republic of Kenya.

To me, many of the arguments set forth in the debate's resolutions and declarations are frankly not related to the practicalities of producing newspapers, radio and television programmes, books and other forms of communications in the developing world. I have worked to build many bridges between the west and the third world in order to solve practical problems in health care, in education, in architecture, in establishing study financial framework for self-help and disciplined private initiative. But in this field of communications, a cornerstone of our hopes for world peace, I am afraid that what exists is not a bridge, it is a wall.

Whatever has happened to this debate, the problems that originally provoked it have gone away. The frustrations of the third world are still there, and in many cases growing. The

most powerful western media concur, some perhaps reluctantly, but nonetheless sincerely, that the third world has often not been dealt with equitably by the present systems of international communication. These media condemn the UNESCO debate, and many of the ideas being proposed in and by UNESCO, but those who are unhappy have so far had only UNESCO to turn to.

In fact there have been some initiatives by the industrialized nations both at the private level through news organizations, through institutions such as your own, as well as through government aid programmes and international agencies, including the World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme. But these efforts have for the most part been isolated, uncoordinated and unpublicized. So hardly anyone knows about them. Certainly, the perception of the developing world is that very little has been done. It seems to them that no strong, orchestrated, supportive, creative, adequately financed alternative has been established. At the risk of appearing naïve, I am still hopeful that the debate can be resolved positively. It seems to me altogether probable that the majority of the United Nations' 153 sovereign states which endorsed less than three months ago UNESCO's continued effort to address the issue, will maintain that support. Discrediting UNESCO will not make the problem go away. If for many of you the present UNESCO approach is so unpalatable, and you are convinced that acceptable solutions cannot be worked out in that forum, then it is imperative that you develop a practical alternative. If you fail to do so, the issue will be lost by default.

How, then, do we create a new beginning? How do we re-establish effective communications between the third world and the industrialised world? To begin with, we must try to isolate the political conflict which always arises over different forms of ownership. I am myself a private owner and I believe that disciplined, mature and responsible private ownership is the most effective means of managing a newspaper. But I submit that the issue is not principally the form of ownership: it is the editorial quality and credibility of the publication.

Second, I think we need much more coherent and comprehensive action by the media and governments of the industrial world to make their managerial and technological know-how available to the developing countries.

Third, we should all accept the need for a structured exchange of editorial expertise. The developing countries can make a contribution here which is just as important as any by the industrialized nations.

Our fourth task is to make journalism a profession in the truest sense, to give it everywhere a status and level of remuneration appropriate to its enormous responsibilities. Like teaching and nursing, journalism in too many areas today is a discredited profession at the very moment when its powers and what the public expects of it have risen to unprecedented heights.

Finally, I realize we have to keep in mind the reluctance of the media in democratic countries to become too closely involved with their governments. This should not be an excuse for failing to create methods whereby much more substantial international resources can be made available to news organizations in the developing nations.

Dealing with each of these issues in turn, let me begin with the question of ownership. Here the debate turns usually to political or ideological considerations. One viewpoint is that government ownership of the media is intolerable. Another argues that private ownership leads too often to excessive commercialism and political or economic manipulation. These two viewpoints appear irreconcilable and paralyse the debate. To make progress we have to evaluate ownership on considerations other than the purely political. The range of possibilities extends from absolute government control at one end of the spectrum to uninhibited private ownership at the other. Government control, as Kenya has always recognized, risks becoming simply an off-shoot of the Ministry of Information. Fewer and fewer people believe in that version of the news or wish to pay for it. In the end everyone does because such publications have to be heavily subsidized by the taxpayers. Co-operative trade union or political party newspapers are other variants of a similar theme. They suffer from similar disadvantages because they tend to be read by the faithful and ignored by everyone else.

The debate on ownership continues here in Kenya with an added dimension – the issue of foreign control. The Nation group has looked most carefully at alternatives to address both ownership and foreign participation. One possibility is a collaborative enterprise still under private control, but with the participation of an international agency or a para-statal organization or any other local institution or collectivity such as a development bank, a municipality or a labour union. We have also looked at a formula that attempts to ensure economic viability but insulates the editorial content from ownership.

We asked the question of what could be the consequences both editorially and economically if the controlling shares of the publishing company were placed in the public through the stock market. No doubt both major publications in Kenya have sought to resolve these issues. So far as the Nation group is concerned almost forty per cent of the equity has been acquired by the Kenyan public through the stock exchange.

Our conclusion on this debate of ownership has been twofold. First, no ownership pattern will protect the public from a bad publication. Secondly, many formulae are possible and acceptable provided the guiding intent is to publish a newspaper of quality. The words “checks and balances” used in constitutional law seek to convey a sense of credibility and equilibrium but when all is said and done constitutionality is insured by people and institutions. My experience in the media of the developing world is the same.

The point I wish to make – and it conditions everything else I have to say this morning – is that there is probably no infallible solution to the problem of media ownership. What matters is that the organization, whoever owns it, develops sufficient resources and is

committed to creating quality newspapers that are responsible, reliable and readable. The ultimate test of ownership is whether it achieves these objectives.

It is the enterprises which have a good chance to meet this objective which the democratic nations should help in the third world. The greater the number of companies that achieve financial independence and professional credibility, the greater the chances of building truly independent press structures in these countries. The greater the number of independent press structures, the greater the chances that we can reduce the present imbalance in the flow of informational news.

In this regard, I know that there are some small projects under way. I wonder if we could not take on larger projects and train whole teams of both journalists and managers at the same time? Specifically there is another idea which is attracting attention and I think it has some potential. We have all heard of twin cities, why not twin newspaper companies and news organizations between the industrial world and the developing world? These could provide mutually beneficial exchanges of managerial, technological and editorial experience and news.

The technological revolution perhaps offers the developing world an exceptional opportunity to succeed. With this technology the manpower necessary is far less and the production quality is extremely high. But as we know, this new technology is highly capital-intensive. The press and governments of the industrialized nations could show their commitment to communications development by quickly making the relevant new technology available for credible projects in third world nations. This should be available on the same preferential financial conditions as any other nations' building programmes. Let me be clear: the time of reconditioned teleprinters and second-hand printing presses is over. I am talking about modern plants that can be established with a real chance of commercial success, and thus of redeploying redundant labour in an expanding or diversifying enterprise.

I want to turn now to one other fundamental aspect of this argument that I feel needs clarification: the problem of how to elevate journalism into a truly desirable and prestigious profession of uniformly high standards. Many journalists in third world countries have left the profession altogether – some even after expensive training courses abroad – because they found they were not respected in their own countries, because of harassment or oppressive official regulations, or because the industry itself was so run down that it offered neither career satisfaction nor the earning potential of other professions.

These are obviously not problems confined to developing countries. Both sides have their difficulties in attracting and maintaining the best people and the highest quality of journalistic standards. Perhaps even more intensive support for schools of journalism and exchanges such as the type envisioned in twin newspapers could broaden everyone's horizons and offer stimulating new challenges to the profession.



In addition, however, I think it is imperative that standards of reporting be elevated as well. A complaint that the North reports the South superficially, condescendingly, sometimes inaccurately and without proper social, cultural, economic and political background often has real validity. To put it another way, there are problems of credibility on all sides. It is here that questions of repeated editorial sloppiness or misunderstanding can result in accusations of evil intent. It is here that this whole debate can quickly descend to emotion, anger and stalemate. Yet it is on this very tender area of editorial content that I feel we must see some quick, significant and visible progress. It is what brought the third world together on this issue in the first place. Many of these countries thought that the industrialized world, largely because of its press, was receiving a distorted image of their young nations and their cultures. They felt that their problems were being magnified, their accomplishments diminished, their aspirations ignored. They felt as though in a nightmare, screaming to be heard but making no sound. The channels and the content of international communications were a monopoly of the North, or so it seemed, and in this respect many people in developing countries felt as powerless as they had under colonial rule.

Ladies and Gentlemen, no matter what happened to this debate at the international level, these basic feelings have not changed. As a Muslim, one of seven hundred million, I live in daily astonishment about the incomprehension of Islam and its peoples.

Some western media have perpetuated misconceptions which stick like shrouds to the bones of historical skeletons, but in most civilizations the dead are buried. Professor Edward Said of Columbia University has recently illustrated this point in a brilliant article entitled "Hiding Islam". The fact is that the quality of reporting from abroad is often unacceptably low. And there is need to rethink how to select and train these all-important foreign correspondents and foreign editors and sub-editors. Can you sincerely claim to be maintaining foreign staffs that are of the highest quality? Can you really reassure those developing countries who feel to the contrary?

I would like to hear some ideas about how the formation and training of journalists and foreign correspondents can be broadened to ensure that they will have both language and area expertise before being sent to explain sensitive issues to your readers. In journalism schools, is all the attention on learning the craft of editing, or is there also enough education on foreign cultures? Are foreign correspondents allowed proper time and encouraged to prepare for their new assignments? In short, are there enough incentives for young men and women to commit themselves to the long process of education and training necessary to shoulder the awesome responsibility of trying to explain other cultures to their readers?

There is a great deal of discontent in developing countries over what is perceived as the failure of the west adequately to respond to the calls for a new world economic order. The call for a new information order is of course linked to these new economic aspirations. It seems to me that efforts on the communications front could prove the West's willingness to try to correct these world imbalances which it recognizes and on which it can have a

significant impact. The high visibility of communications would accelerate this process. Exchanges – as in the twin newspaper idea – having a Muslim, for example, nearby a foreign editor to explain Islamic concepts – could help infuse this process with a new spirit of cooperation. It would be easy to throw up our hands and say we can move no further because of politics and ideologies. This must not be the answer. I have no miraculous solution but I am convinced that the new dialogue must be coolly focused on practical possibilities. I ask that we all go beyond self-defensive positions, and search our conscience. The International Press Institute is one of the organizations best placed to defend and enhance the profession of journalism and to help implement new and pragmatic solutions to the problems I have described. Let me conclude by emphasizing that the new approach must demonstrate to the developing nations that the media and governments of the industrial world are prepared to recognize the legitimacy of many of the third world complaints, that they are ready to re-examine their own performance and to respond in practical terms to the needs of the press in developing nations.

Finally, let us all proclaim – as never before – that the democratic concept of press independence is not only the most desirable but by far the most effective method of national and international communication throughout the world.





## Speech to the Kenyan social institutions in national development

### LOCATION

Nairobi, Kenya (6 October 1982)

Your Excellencies,  
Your Worship the Mayor,  
Representatives of International Agencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a special occasion for me to be amongst such distinguished representatives of Government, non-governmental and private agencies here today: special because my family and I are deeply involved in social welfare and I particularly appreciate being amongst those who commit their time, resource and effort for the benefit of mankind. I hope you will not think its presumptuous of me to offer some thoughts on questions with which we are all concerned.

You may wonder why I am involved in welfare at all. As the Imam of the Ismaili Muslim Community spread over twenty-five countries, I have necessarily become a student of social problems. Islam is an all-encompassing faith and it gives direction to every aspect of one's life. It urges the individual to lead a balanced life, one that strives to accommodate both material progress and spiritual well-being. But no man, woman or child can hope to achieve this balance in sickness, illiteracy or squalor. You are all engaged in the most vital business there is – the well-being of the people of the world – and I too, as the leader of my Community, have become deeply involved in the

provision of basic health and education, which I believe are crucial stepping stones towards mankind's self-realisation and growth.

I would like to quote a statistic with which you may well be familiar, but which is so appalling that it can hardly be quoted too often and which starkly illustrates the task facing the world's welfare organisations. At this moment, less than two decades from the year two thousand when the World Health Organisation aims for health for all, 800 million people are destitute, surviving in conditions of absolute poverty.

I believe profoundly that effective achievements in health services, in education and in welfare generally depend upon a pragmatic approach to the realities which face us. Health and welfare are the predominant items in the governmental budgets of both developed and developing countries. Unhappily avoidable waste and duplication of effort occurs almost everywhere. Our resources, especially in the Third World, are limited. They must be managed as effectively as possible.

My own Aga Khan Health and Education Services, as you all know, operate in the private sector, although they collaborate closely with Governments and with international agencies. Our experience in these fields is considerable.

My grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, was one of the pioneers of immunisation in the 19th Century and the prevention of disease and public health have been major aims of our Health Services ever since. Today our facilities in the developing countries include 112 health centres and sub-centres, 27 medical centres, 18 dispensaries, 5 child care centres, 4 maternity hospitals, and 4 multi-speciality hospitals, excluding the hospital and medical centre currently under construction at Karachi. All are non-profit making. Additionally we use mobile units extensively in the rural areas of India and Pakistan. During 1982 we expect to accommodate 165,000 inpatient days in hospitals and to receive 1,300,000 outpatient visits.

The Aga Khan Education Services were founded in the early 1880s and today constitute a network of educational establishments and programmes in both the developing and, more recently, in the developed world. There are over three hundred institutions in Kenya, Tanzania, Pakistan, India and Syria ranging from day care centres through secondary schools to special schools for the deaf and the dumb. Educational programmes are open to all, regardless of race or religion, and there are currently over 35,000 students enrolled in the five countries, plus over 5,000 recipients of Aga Khan scholarships studying in institutions of higher learning throughout the world.

Utilisation of my schools and health services is today predominantly by other communities. Here in Kenya for example, non-Ismaelis accounted for 95 percent of hospital bed occupancy in 1981 whilst 70 percent of the 6,000 students in our schools were from other communities.

So what have we learnt, during the last quarter century in particular, from these widespread activities? How can waste and duplication of effort be avoided? How can scarce resources be managed more effectively? Are new concepts applicable?

We have learnt the importance of regularly monitoring both the performance of both personnel and equipment to provide early warning of inefficiency or impending

breakdowns. Do medical institutes take action to remedy the agreeing of equipment? Do teachers modernise the content of their lectures? When we travel in an airliner we expect both the machine and the crew to have been checked regularly because our lives are at stake in the plane. In the long run, sometimes in the short, lives and the fulfilment of human potential are just as much at risk if health centres are out of date or teaching is poor.

Unhappily consistent performance monitoring followed by corrective action is seldom normal practice in the Third World. It ought to be.

Attitudes to the application of welfare have changed substantially over the past twenty-five years. In the 1960s the idea was broadly to pump in money and let people fend for themselves. We have now come to believe that we should envelop the individual with support of all kinds. For example, we cannot always tell which aspect of welfare work will be most effective at village level. But we can, as it were, compound our impact by integrating assistance in health, education, sanitation, building, agricultural expertise and other areas. My Aga Khan Health and Education Services are currently working with UNICEF and other agencies on this concept of total support in rural areas of the Indian sub-continent.

Such support obviously includes primary health care. In this context I should mention that here in Kenya only last July our Health Services in Kisumu took an important step forward. Together with Government officials of Kisumu, of Nyanza Province, of the Lake Basin Development Authority, and of the Ministry of Health they jointly undertook a 'think tank' exercise to explore the possibilities of the private sector and Government sector working together to evolve an effective primary health care programme in the Kisumu district. The objective of the seminar was to define what interventions are feasible, and in what manner the initiative of the seminar could be translated into a joint approach to planning a primary health care programme. The seminar concluded that a primary health care programme could be planned, implemented and evaluated jointly through a partnership for progress between the Government and the private sector Aga Khan Health Services.

But above all it seems to me that the challenge of primary health care is one of management. Take patient referral systems. Are there adequate links between the smaller, intermediate and large institutions and between urban and rural health centres? Can the poor afford the costs of being referred to a higher echelon? Do doctors refer patients up the line when they should?

In trying to achieve effective management, do we make full use of the voluntary skills available? Professional people like accountants and lawyers can donate time and knowledge to welfare institutions, injecting valuable professional expertise. Such voluntary work has always been the lynchpin of my own Aga Khan Health and Educational Services at all levels.

Of course social institutions still need upper and middle level full-time management talents, of which there is a severe shortage. Furthermore, if we are to make the kind of all-enveloping approach I have mentioned there can be no distinction between the management standards demanded in social welfare and those required in business. In

neither commerce nor welfare should one put in substantial capital – and the capital required in welfare programmes is substantial – without ensuring that management is capable of dealing with the investment fruitfully, although ways of measuring productivity will of course be different.

Take cost effectiveness in education; the Kenya Government's Harambee Schools, for example, utilise self-help, local enthusiasm and voluntary effort. When a community is involved, there is an automatic process of accountability, as there is in my schools. But is this true at higher levels of State education? In privately run schools accountability is achieved through parent/teacher associations and student and staff evaluations. The parent is a shareholder in the education of his child and in our schools we encourage parents to guide this investment by taking a positive interest in the affairs of the schools.

Furthermore education must be meaningful to the needs of the nation. There must be a relationship between the kind of education provided and the requirements of the country's economy and demography. This in turn demands control both of the curricula offered and of the quality of teaching, especially in profit-making schools.

Now I know that this can be a sensitive subject. In Africa, as elsewhere, the dream of many less affluent parents is to see their children in white-collar jobs, leaping what I might call the development gap in one jump. The ultimate result of this can be unemployed University graduates wandering the streets, while vacancies for plumbers, mechanics and tractor drivers go unfilled.

Developing nations needs, badly need, that wide strata of skilled workers which has long existed in industrial nations. Educational programmes must therefore take account of this and not only within schools – the parents need to be educated to understand what the future can hold for their children in certain occupations and not in others.

This brings me back to the fundamental point that social institutions require trained professional direction. The people employed, whether they are doctors or nurses, teachers or professors, agronomists, or water experts, or architects, must be able to see prospects of career development before them. They are human resources just as valuable as oil or minerals. Managing them, guiding the structure of social programmes, is a career in its own right. Both the public and the private sectors need these managers and the Third World Universities should establish faculties to train them and to run extension courses for voluntary workers in the field.

Furthermore professional managers of social institutions must themselves be offered career development and incentives comparable to what is obtainable in other fields or they will leave for greener pastures.

In other words, they must be provided by Government with an environment which enables them to foresee growth in their careers, stability in their futures, the chance to realise their full potential. Then, in return, they will be willing partners in building the nation.

I shall be speaking elsewhere about the enabling environment in which private enterprise can help develop a country's material resources. Interlocking with it is the Enabling Environment which encourages those people who nurture the nation's fund of

human resource. If Government, through its laws and attitudes, creates a climate of stability, then those professional people will not merely contribute to development, they will of their own volition seek to improve standards. But if the environment is wrong, if it is disabling, then standards will fall, the quacks and the crooks and the corrupt will flourish and the good men and women will despair and leave.

This is why the Third World must create the Enabling Environment for social institutions to develop. For if the doctors and teachers and managers do not remain – and there are many countries which they have left – then no amount of money spent on health and welfare will effectively help the 800 million people who are destitute and miserable in the world today.



## **Dinner hosted in honour the President of Kenya**

### **LOCATION**

Nairobi, Kenya (7 October 1982)

Your Excellency the President,  
Your Excellency the Vice-President,  
Honourable ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I rise to welcome His Excellency President Daniel Arap Moi this evening and to have the opportunity of returning his kind hospitality.

Your Excellency, as you know I spent much of my childhood in Kenya, forming unforgettable bonds of affection for your country and its people. I have returned many times since. So it is particularly appropriate that the first of many visits I am making to my Ismaili Communities around the world in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of my accession to the Imamate should be to Kenya.

This country, as I say, holds a special place in my heart and in consequence the assurances which Your Excellency gave last night, coupled with the speech you made on September 21st, have given me great satisfaction. I most strongly endorse the steps which your Government proposes to take in respect of the country's economy and trade, especially Your Excellency's recognition of the importance of the private sector in the nation's growth, the encouragement you promise to both domestic and foreign investors, your measures to assist industrial development, your new incentives for exporters and not least, your undertaking that all Kenyans, irrespective of their origin,

race or religion, will continue to enjoy the rights guaranteed in the Constitution with equal protection under the rule of law.

Today I have addressed a business audience on themes which related closely to Your Excellency's guidelines and yesterday I spoke to distinguished health, education and welfare experts on ways of strengthening the service of social institutions. Your Excellency has emphasised that everyone must work together to build a stronger Kenya. As the completely non-political leader of an Ismaili Community which has sought to integrate itself fully with the nation I am necessarily concerned with the way in which private sector initiative such as theirs can work in harmony with Government, assisting in the achievement of national policies and objectives.

Last night I was delighted to hear Your Excellency underline the importance of the private sector in Kenya's industrial and commercial development strategies.

What I believe is important now is that decisions affecting the private sector are made promptly and that if there are points of uncertainty in their implementation those points are clarified quickly so that both the national and international response is rapid.

If Government and its agencies can establish an on-going dialogue with the private sector then the private sector will both be able to explain its day-to-day problems to Government and will itself gain a better appreciation of the aims of Government. This process of consultation will help to create the right environment for investment which has been the theme of my speeches this week.

With recession biting deep into the economies of the industrialised nations, forcing them to cut aid budgets, it is more than ever desirable for Third World Governments to utilise private initiative in the development of their countries' resources, both material and human.

Developed countries can more easily absorb such inflationary factors as the high oil prices which have savaged the Third World's scarce reserves of foreign exchange. Developed countries do not have the same explosive population growth. They do not depend on basic commodity prices for their living. Even where the levels of aid the developing nations receive are maintained, worldwide inflation reduces the value in real terms.

It is also inescapable that the demography of the Third World countries is different from that of the developed ones. The former are primarily rural and this in itself places a further burden on them. The geographical spread of their populations forces their governments to spend heavily on roads and communications, on irrigation, schools, primary health and welfare. Governments are compelled to make these improvements to the quality of life in rural areas if they are to fulfil the expectations generated by political independence and achieve standards their citizens consider acceptable. This, of course, involves the whole package of basic social support services.

If these expensive improvements are not made, then rural workers drift to the towns, both depriving agriculture of labour and forming a discontented mass of unemployed in the slum fringes of cities.



The only answer for the Third World, in my view, is for it to become more productive and the way to achieve that is by encouraging both local and international investment, especially in rural development. State owned enterprises can seldom be a total substitute for private sector initiative in building the infrastructure of a nation's economy, the whole mass of small businesses, skills and professions which service a productive society. Furthermore, as Your Excellency has observed, a developing country cannot afford the burden of loss-making parastatals.

By contrast, there are many positive aspects in attracting what private initiative can offer from other countries and by linking developing nations with developed ones. Among these aspects are the reduction of financial risk and a very much wider offering of qualified manpower and appropriate technology.

If given the right environment private enterprise can do a great deal more than simply invest, it can introduce competition and stimulate growth. Indeed its successes have tended to highlight the weakness of public sector monopolies, not least in the industrialised nations of the West. Private enterprise can develop the managerial skills and organisational structures necessary for effective economic growth.

Trained managers are needed to mobilise any nation's resources and this is especially so in the Third World, where both human and material resources are scarce. Good managerial techniques are equally vital to the organisation of social institutions – hospitals and health programmes, schools, community developments, public administration – as to business.

Health and welfare are the predominant items in the budgets of most countries. Huge amounts of money can be wasted on them if management is poor.

Yet at the present time there is a definite lack of training in social welfare management in the Third World. Such training should be a systematic and continuous process to impart knowledge, skills and values relevant both for professionals and volunteers. Furthermore the professionals must themselves be offered career development and incentives or they will depart for greener pastures.

This brings me back, Your Excellency, to my earlier point about the environment. Both the development of the economy and the success of social institutions depend on the creation of the right environment for progress, an environment which enables both businesses and people to realise their full potential.

This Enabling Environment is created by various things, confidence in the future. Reliance on the rule of law and a system of laws which itself encourages enterprise and initiative. Democratic institutions. Protection of the rights of citizens. These are what encourage investment, encourage good managers to remain, encourage doctors and nurses and teachers to want to serve their country, rather than to emigrate as soon as they are skilled. The creation and extension to all areas of the nation's life of this Enabling Environment is the single most important factor in Third World development. It is as critical to national growth as sunlight is to the growth of plants. Such an environment has been provided in the newly industrialised countries of South East Asia and in barely a generation those countries have successfully leapt across the development gap.

Your Excellency, because of the wisdom of its policies and the stability of its institutions, Kenya has fared better than other African nations since independence. Unhappily recent troubles have been superimposed of the long term ones of world recession. The rapidity with which both are overcome will be directly related to the speed with which all sections of the nation perceive that the Enabling Environment for renewed momentum is being created and respond to it.

Your Excellency, the statements you have made in recent weeks have contributed substantially to the revitalising of the Enabling Environment here in Kenya. They have created a sense of expectation and the implementation of your new policies is now eagerly awaited. As this implementation proceeds I feel confident that you will meet a constructive response both nationally and internationally. It would be only right that all citizens of Kenya should respond and you will not find us wanting.



## The private sector in economic development

### LOCATION

Nairobi, Kenya (7 October 1982)

It is a double pleasure to address so distinguished an audience of Kenyan Government and business leaders this afternoon: doubled because this is also the first visit of my world tour to celebrate the 25th anniversary of my accession to the Imamate. My grandfather, Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan would, I am sure, be proud to see the progress of the companies who are our hosts at this luncheon, as two of them, Jubilee Insurance and Diamond Trust, were founded by him. The two companies were in fact established at the time of his Golden and Diamond Jubilees respectively to advance the economic development of the Ismaili Community.

In those days, I need hardly remind you, Kenya was a Crown colony and the British administrators encouraged each community to develop its own separate institutions. Kenyan society was almost totally compartmentalised on racial lines.

In the intervening years, independence changed the situation dramatically and our own community institutions have changed too. Today they operate in the mainstream of the nation's commercial activity.

Our other hosts, Nation Printers and Publishers, Industrial Promotion Services and the Serena Group, are relative newcomers having been set up by me after I became Imam. The fact that they have done so well is a source of great joy and I thank them for their kindness and consideration in hosting today's luncheon.

Since you are all concerned with commercial activity, I feel I should comment briefly on the after-effects of the unhappy events of August 1st, in which in addition to the tragic

loss of life many in the business community suffered severe material losses. Although order was quickly restored by the Government of His Excellency President Daniel Arap Moi, these events were a very earthshaking experience for all citizens of Kenya – earthshaking both psychologically and figuratively. If the earth is shaken around the roots of a democratic society, then immediate action must be taken to restore the soil, or the plant of democracy will die.

I, therefore, welcome President Moi's recent plea for assistance to business which suffered on 1st August and his further assurance that the Kenyanisation policy is not intended to be discriminatory against any race or community and his firm statement yesterday evening that all Kenyans, irrespective of their origin, race or religion, will continue to enjoy the rights guaranteed in the Kenya Constitution. This follows in the footsteps of policies established by Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, whose strength and courage in the defence of democracy were an example to the whole of Africa, and I fully endorse President Moi's call for all to work together to help build a stronger Kenya.

I referred a few moments ago to this being the 25th anniversary of my assuming the leadership of the Ismaili Muslim Community. Although some of you are already well informed about the Ismailis, it may be appropriate for me to say a few words about the office which I hold.

Ismailis are Shia Muslims who believe that the successor to the leadership of the Muslim Community, after the death of the Prophet Mohammed, was the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, and that this leadership, in both spiritual and temporal matters, was to continue by heredity through Ali in the Prophet's family. Today, we are one of the few Shia sects led by an hereditary Imam, my grandfather having been the 48th and I myself being the 49th.

Ismailis live in over 25 different countries, including India, Pakistan, Syria, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and of course, Kenya. In all these countries they are minorities and this is, no doubt, one of the reasons why private initiative has always played such an important role in their lives.

My own involvement with this private enterprise, which may seem curious to those raised in the Christian ethic, derives from the fact that Islam is a total religion touching on all aspects of a Muslim's life. Therefore the Imam, whilst caring first of all for the spiritual well-being of his people, should also be continuously concerned with their safety and their material progress. He is involved in the encouragement of enterprise, though in the spirit of Islam, he must warn that it is unacceptable without a social conscience.

Here I must emphasise the institutional nature of both my grandfather's and my own role in initiating Third World investments. The criteria applicable to these (investments) are not those of private business, but of an important Muslim institution concerned substantially more with economic development than simple entrepreneurial profit.

Nonetheless our investments, although within the framework of national economic development planning, are not parastatal and are not intended to require continuing subsidies. The aim rather is that the benefits of their commercial performance should be re-circulated within the Third World, thus assisting the material well-being of which I

have just spoken. Necessarily the social service institutions, as opposed to those who are our hosts today, do often require subsidising.

In the economic sphere, we are making moves of considerable significance. As has already been mentioned, two of the organisations who are our hosts today – IPS Kenya and Diamond Trust of Kenya – have recently announced plans involving major restructuring and a re-orientation of their respective activities. In each case influential new shareholders, foreign and local, are bringing in both expertise and substantial fresh capital. Such joint ventures between private and governmental institutions from both the developed and the developing world illustrate how new concepts of collaboration can be realised in practical terms.

Just as our social institutions today devote the majority of their activity to benefiting other communities, so have our commercial groups widened the base of their involvement. Two thirds of the Jubilee Insurance's business is with non-Ismailis, while over 80 percent of the Diamond Trust's loans are to members of other communities.

The development of effective financial and capital markets is also essential if private enterprise is to play its full role in the economy. Here Kenya is fortunate in already having a good institutional framework on which to build. Already two of the five commercial groups with which I am associated are quoted on the Nairobi Stock Exchange and it is my sincere hope that the others will follow the same path in due course, since broad based local ownership is another factor to which I attach considerable importance.

However, both foreign and local investors should understand and respect the requirements and priorities of Government, because Governments in the developing world have an obligation to ensure that scarce resources are channelled into areas where they will be most productive.

This said, Governments should equally endeavour to provide the climate for such collaborative investment. I call this an 'Enabling Environment', that is to say the combination of confidence, of security and a philosophy and application of law which will enable commerce to flourish. It is now more than ever in the interests of Governments to create this enabling environment. Let me explain why.

Twenty-five years ago, when I assumed the responsibilities of the Imamat, the wind of change was blowing through Africa and change, both political and economic, did follow. Some developing countries sought to strengthen their newly won independence by taking total control of the key areas affecting their national life, even if this meant expropriating businesses and property. International aid was readily available. Different benefactors could be played off one against each other. Political ambitions could be indulged without reference to economic reality. One result is noted in the latest annual World Development Report of the World Bank, made public last month. This shows that in the 1960s and 1970s nine African countries showed a decline in gross national product per capita. A decline despite the aid they received. Eight showed an increase in GNP of only one percent a year. In more than half of the countries of Africa the average person found his situation either worse or only slightly better than at independence.

But the wind does not blow in the same direction for ever. With the present recession in the industrialised countries, a cold blast is cutting into aid budgets for the developing nations and the international banking system is under severe strain. Even where aid levels can be maintained, inflation reduces the value in real terms. Explosive population growth means that what remains is distributed more thinly. Rising oil prices have savaged scarce reserves of foreign exchange, while falling commodity prices and the rising cost of manufactured imports further attack the budgetary planning of the developing nations. Even countries with significant oil and mineral resources are running into trouble.

Unhappily the impact of these factors falls far more heavily on the developing nations than on industrialised countries, whose economies are better able to ride out the stormy effects of recession.

Because of the wisdom of its policies and the stability of its institutions, Kenya has fared better than most other African nations. Nonetheless, the message is still clear. As President Moi noted in his September 21st speech, private investment, both local and foreign, will be essential if this country is to maintain the momentum of its development and I welcome his undertaking yesterday evening to provide the necessary incentives for it.

What have we learnt from our experience about encouraging private sector investment? First, perhaps, that a positively enabling and constructive environment is essential. Investment and enterprise, at least the kind of long-term investment which the Third World needs, requires political stability, democratic institutions, a framework of law which protects all citizens and a constant dialogue with Government and parastatal organisations on national objectives. This is the environment which enables business to develop and benefit the entire nation.

Given this Enabling Environment, private initiative can go much further than simply developing material resources. It can help develop a nation's human potential. It can explore how best high technology can be adapted to local circumstances. It can create and consolidate an indigenous entrepreneurial class, with the managerial skills and organisational structures necessary for effective business growth. In other words, it can participate in forging the human capital, which is the bedrock of a nation's development.

Bringing together the best what private initiative has to offer from various nations has many attractive aspects to developing countries. Individual financial and monetary risk is reduced, the sources from which to draw qualified manpower are multiplied and political acceptability is increased. Public, or State owned, enterprises can never be a complete substitute for private enterprise in building a nation's economy and in bridging the development gap.

What local and foreign investment can achieve is exemplified by the growth of the companies who are our hosts this afternoon.

During the first twenty years of Kenya's independence these companies have been transformed from small entities serving a specific segment of the nation's population into national entities with influential international associates, many of whose representatives I am delighted to see among the audience this afternoon.



If, as I hope, an Enabling Environment is maintained here through the next two decades then I am confident that these companies will broaden their horizons still further in both human and capital terms, achieving greater international status and contributing powerfully to Kenya's future.



## Luncheon in honour of the President of Kenya

### LOCATION

Nairobi, Kenya (12 October 1982)

Your Excellency the President,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

To be in Kenya again in my Jubilee Year, remembering vividly my Takhtnashini, which seems only yesterday, is a most moving experience.

You, Sir Eboo, were the leader of our Community in East Africa then and today your responsibilities are far greater, extending beyond Africa to Europe, Canada and The United States. I must pay a warm tribute to your untiring devotion to the Community's institutions both under my grandfather; Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah and throughout the twenty-five years of my own Imam.

Such links with my Councils are a great source of happiness and strength. Indeed this Silver Jubilee is a symbolic affirmation of the ties between myself as Imam and the Ismaili Community of fifteen million people spread among twenty-five countries.

Since I assumed the Imam there have been fundamental political and economic changes in many places where Ismailis live, not least in Kenya. Twenty years ago Mzee Jomo Kenyatta saw that independence must mean all communities pulling together so that their combined talents and resources could build the nation, a policy which you Your Excellency have reinforced.

This bridge building, both domestic and international, in business as well as health, education and welfare, is what I would like to talk about this afternoon.

The last few years have brought a distressing polarisation between the industrialised nations and the Third World, between economic and political philosophies and within faiths. Such polarisation divides the rich nations from the poor, divides socialism from free enterprise, divides religious beliefs including my own faith. It is achieving the exact opposite of the brotherhood of man, and makes it crucially important that communities and nations should try harder to learn from each other and to understand each other.

My grandfather, who was the President of the League of Nations, knew this well. I believe he would have been very pleased to see the education and health services which he initiated in the 1880s on their way to becoming an internationally linked system of voluntary, non-profit, Muslim institutions, which through its welfare activities helps to foster understanding between peoples.

Let me recall briefly some highlights of these institutions' history here in Kenya.

The first Aga Khan school opened in Nairobi in 1905. After the end of the first World War in 1918 my grandfather began the establishment of an educational network in East Africa. Because the colonial administration maintained traditional structures and these tended to keep communities separate, our school's expansion up to the 1950s was primarily for Ismailis. However, our first African teacher was recruited in 1957 and since my accession to the Imamate we have steadily broadened our intake of pupils and extended the scope of our activities. Today more than 70 percent of the staff and students in the Aga Khan schools are non-Ismailis. Over 6,000 students of all denominations receive education through the Community's network of nursery, primary, secondary and special schools, as well as bursaries when they are leaving school.

I cannot emphasise too strongly that this network could neither have been created nor been managed and improved without the boards, the committees, and the other volunteers, young and old, who contribute their time and effort, unpaid, for the benefit of society. The voluntary worker is the lifeblood of our institutions, both in education and in health.

Our health services, like our education ones, have adapted themselves to accord with Government's aims and policies. They are based on three centres of population where my grandfather founded institutions: a maternity hospital in Mombasa in the 1940s, the Kisumu Medical Centre in 1952 – which we are now enlarging – and my grandfather's Platinum Jubilee Hospital which opened in Nairobi in 1958 and was the first non-racial hospital in Kenya. Today over 85 percent of our patients are from other communities.

We can be proud that just as our social services now primarily serve other people, so have our economic institutions expanded to meet national needs, 80 percent of Diamond Trust of Kenya's loans are to members of other communities as is two thirds of the Jubilee Insurance's business.

I emphasise the phrase 'economic institutions', because Islam is a total religion touching on all aspects of a Muslim's life. As Imam, I am concerned with material well-being as

well as spiritual and the Imamat's Third World investments are concerned substantially more with economic development than simple profit making.

In this economic sphere we have recently expanded our commercial activity in a way which should benefit Kenya. The companies concerned are Industrial Promotion Services Limited and Diamond Trust of Kenya.

I.P.S. is part of an international group of private companies established since 1963 to be an agency of the Imamat's economic development in the Third World. Its aim is to stimulate enterprise particularly in the field of industry by marrying international capital and know-how to local resources. On July 29th this year I.P.S. Kenya signed an agreement giving equity participation in it to three major financial corporations: the World Bank's International Finance Corporation; Finance for Industry, which is owned by the Bank of England and the United Kingdom clearing banks; and the Kenya Commercial Finance Company. This participation will bring I.P.S. an additional Shs 19.3 million capital and enable it to re-orient itself as a venture capital company.

A venture capital company is one which puts money direct into the companies it is assisting, taking a shareholding as well as providing management and technical expertise. So it has a very real stake in those companies, unlike a bank making a loan, which is usually concerned to take as little risk as possible. But risk is inevitable in building a business, especially if new techniques are involved. Hence the importance of venture capital companies for a developing country.

I referred earlier to Diamond Trust of Kenya, which is one of the country's leading financial institutions, with assets exceeding Shs 500 million. D.T.K., too, is being restructured, so that it can enter the field of merchant banking. It is doing this in collaboration with the World Bank's International Finance Corporation, the London Merchant Bank of Samuel Montagu and Company and the United Nations Pension Fund. This is incidentally the U.N. Pension Fund's first investment in Africa.

As a merchant banking house D.T.K., in addition to providing loan finance, will be able to help growing companies raise permanent capital by 'going public': that is, by selling shares to the public through the stock exchange. D.T.K.'s ability to underwrite such share issues will represent an important step forward in the orderly development of Kenya's financial and capital markets and extend the base of local ownership. Equally D.T.K.'s new partners will bring international and local expertise into collaboration to the benefit of both local and foreign investors.

In my view this kind of collaboration between developing and industrialised countries is essential for progress. The Third World cannot wholly rely on aid programmes for development, especially not in the present world recession. Instead private enterprise can assist by providing a constructive partnership in which foreign and local expertise and resources work together, drawing on the best available from both sides.

May I quote some local examples of this philosophy in action? Tourism Promotion Services Limited will shortly be completing extensions to both the Mara Serena and Mara Amboseli Game lodges, which will mean they are two of Kenya's largest lodges. Among several projects IPS is promoting one to grow jojoba beans and extract a whale oil replacement from them. This is in collaboration with Dutch and German development

banks and will bring much needed employment to the Taita area. Another I.P.S. project is for a new tannery with Belgian and Italian cooperation. Both these schemes are strongly export oriented.

I would also like to mention an example of the international bridge building which is so vital to the Third World. This is the twinning just announced between the Nation Newspapers Limited and the Times Publishing Company at St Petersburg, Florida, publishers of the American award winning St Petersburg Times.

Publishing a newspaper day after day is a hectic, high pressure business. Errors of fact in newspaper stories are more usually the product of lack of time and organisation than of ill-will. It has seemed imperative to me that Kenya's leading newspaper should aim for the highest professional standards. The St Petersburg Times has introduced management techniques which have been shown to work. The aim of this twinning is to exchange expertise in editorial organisation, advertising, circulation, technology and other areas, but I emphasise without affecting the editorial independence of either group. Additionally we hope the twinning will give both sides a closer understanding of each other's cultural environment and attitudes.

It may surprise some of you here today to learn that similar exchanges between the industrialised and the developing countries are now taking place within the Aga Khan Foundation, which I set up in 1967 in Geneva as a private, non-communal, social welfare institution and with which my Health and Education Services have strong links. For example the Aga Khan Foundation Canada, as a registered non-governmental organisation can raise funds for the Third World in a way which the Aga Khan Foundations in Kenya, India, Pakistan or Bangladesh cannot.

The Foundation also works in conjunction with such international agencies as the World Food Programme, the World Health Organisation, UNICEF, the Ford Foundation and the Canadian International Development Agency. Where appropriate the Foundation utilises the management resources of my Aga Khan institutions, for example in organising the Food Aid Programme in the Hymalayyas of the Northern Pakistan.

In financial terms the Foundation's largest project is the Aga Khan Hospital and Medical College currently under construction in Karachi. This constitutes part of a private Aga Khan University and we are actively exploring the possibility of its having faculties in other countries, so as to broaden its connections even further.

Thus the Aga Khan Foundation functions internationally, running education, health, nutrition and rural development programmes and Ismaili experts return from developed countries to assist in less developed ones, as hospital staff have done in Mombasa and in Pakistan. The I.P.S. is an international development agency linking the industrialised nations with the Third World. The Aga Khan University intends to become international and address fundamental issues of the Third World. At all levels our Community's activities are becoming internationalised.

I referred at the beginning of this speech to the dangers of polarisation in the world today, between rich and poor nations, between political philosophies and within faiths. These dangers are acerbated by recession. I hope it is only a passing phase.

Your Excellency, please do not misunderstand the Ismaili's community links. Ismailis are loyal to the countries they live in and to Governments responsible for their well-being. However, they are united in their common religious faith. What the examples I have given illustrate, I think, is how a relatively small community, acting in accordance with the social conscience of Islam, can exercise an influence for the benefit of mankind out of proportion to its numbers for the reason that its members are able to pool their knowledge and to collaborate.

I believe the Ismaili Community and its Imamat's commitment to the brotherhood of man and the quality of his life can contribute to countering the dangerous polarisation of our world and of our times.



## **The conference "The role of hospitals in primary health care"**

### **LOCATION**

Islamabad, Pakistan (22 November 1981)

Your Excellency President Zia-ul-Haq,  
Your Excellency Dr Jogejai,  
Dr Mahler,  
Mr Perinbam,  
Distinguished Guests,

To you all I extend a warm and sincere welcome to the inaugural session of this Conference on The Role of Hospitals in Primary Health Care.

I am particularly grateful to His Excellency the President of Pakistan for having accepted to open this Conference. We are well aware of the pressure upon his time and particularly during the next few days. I interpret his presence with us therefore as further official as well as personal confirmation of the President's commitment to the development of effective health delivery systems. This is also an appropriate time for me to express to His Excellency President Zia-ul-Haq, my warm gratitude for the support and encouragement he has given to the extension of our health care institutions in the remotest parts of Pakistan as well as to the new Aga Khan University of Health Sciences.

The World Health Organization has achieved remarkable results in many countries and it required no introduction from me. I wish to express my gratitude however to WHO for sponsoring this Conference with the Aga Khan Foundation and to Dr Mahler personally



whose support has made these following days of discussion possible. I am told that Dr Mahler is very rarely able to spend more than two nights in the same place and I express our gratitude to him for devoting to us so much of his time.

The New Economic Order is clearly of the greatest importance to us all but I venture to say that few industrialized nations of the North have been so consistently supportive of the concept than Canada. Prime Minister Trudeau has participated in every conference of import and I would like to pay tribute to the Canadian International Development Agency for being, in my view, a leader in its field. It is a pleasure to collaborate with it and I am most happy that Mr Perinbam is present today.

I do hope that all of you here will forgive me if I stray into your professional territory for a few moments before you begin your deliberations. Those of you who work in the area of health may consider it presumptuous of me to do so. However, as the Imam of a Muslim Community spread over twenty countries I have of necessity become something of a student of health care. To me, basic health, education and housing are crucial stepping stones in the process of personal and national self-realisation and growth. In the area of health I am convinced that where health interventions are planned and designed to achieve specific objectives within an overall development effort then these interventions will support and reinforce Government social and economic investments and lead to substantial benefit in the development process.

Like yourselves, however, I have found that there is no unseen hand in health and primary care that will provide easy answers to the hard questions about equity, planning, costs, personnel distribution and a host of other areas related to health and primary care. Certainly one of those areas most debated is the role and function of hospitals – and it is for this reason that we have invited you, our distinguished guests from 27 countries to this gathering. Are there answers? Can we learn from each other? Are there models or approaches from each other's countries which we can adjust to our own? I would hope so and trust that through the exchange of information and experience that we would improve our knowledge in this important area and that each of you will return to your work with a renewed enthusiasm and a greater understanding of this vital component of health care.

Before you start your meeting I do have a set of four impressions or perhaps questions which I wish to share in the hope that later this week I can return to discuss these issues with you.

First, it seems to me that the challenge of health care in both the developing and developed worlds is one of management – rather than values. None of us questions the right of every person to good health and to health care. Three members of my own Community were official delegates to the Alma Ata Conference and we shared in its deliberations and conclusions. Yet in at least one area which is so basic to primary care there now seems to be a real shortfall. Why is this? Personally I believe that any person who is admitted to any hospital – including those in the Aga Khan Health Services – who have malaria, tuberculosis, typhoid, polio, or a host of other preventable diseases, represent a failure in our health care efforts. Whenever a bed is utilized by a patient whose disease could have been prevented, our efforts in the area of public health and community health have been confounded. Initial efforts made by my

grandfather working in health were entirely in preventive and public health. It is in this area where the bulk of our work still takes place. Yet frankly, I feel that we must find new and better ways of rekindling our enthusiasm and dedication to this area. How can the hospitals help? I am thinking not only of the developing world where hospitals are relatively few in number, but also of the industrialized world where we must seek to prevent such self-destructive behaviour as smoking and drug addiction, and other such illnesses.

Secondly, I look to you for some assistance on hospital and patient referral systems. I have just returned from a fascinating visit to the People's Republic of China. Their hospitals are organized into a system from rural to municipal not only by specialty needs but by integrating "traditional" and "Western medicine" resources. I am told that in certain areas of that vast land, referral links between the hospital at different levels are well defined and exceptions are clearly understood and recognized. Unhappily I have found few examples of these systems elsewhere – at least in the Third World. Within the Aga Khan Health Services we have literally hundreds of small institutions, dispensaries, health centres, three and four-bed maternity homes and the like. We are attempting to forge links between the smaller, intermediate and large institutions and between rural and urban centres. As we move ahead in our efforts I do think we need the reassurance that these referral systems do indeed work efficiently and effectively and I will ask your advice on how we can improve in this field. Can the poor afford the increasing costs of being referred to a higher echelon and do local health care practitioners really refer patients up the line when they should? These are basic questions which relate to the linking of hospitals to rural and primary care activities.

Thirdly, this Conference has received considerable help and support from a number of wise and farsighted groups and individuals from Canada, some of whom, such as Mr Perinbam, are with us today. One of their astute countrymen noted three years ago, with regard to the health care industry:

"There is no reasonable way in which we can estimate the benefit of this (health) system. Without a way to estimate the benefit, we have nothing to compare the cost. Yet to estimate efficiency we need some sort of cost benefit ratio. When worthy politicians, administrators and pundits tell us that they have a "gut" feeling that hospital budgets are fat or lean, one should remember that the gut is poorly designed for thought".

As I move from country to country, talking to health administrators and Government officials about collaboration I do find increasing concern – indeed alarm – at the rising cost of health care and health delivery systems both in and out of hospitals. Technology is expensive and people's expectations in the curative area are now high. However, costs are difficult to identify and quantify. We need greater precision and better answers in the area of cost benefit and cost effectiveness research and I do hope that in your deliberations this week you will keep "the bottom line" in mind. Perhaps one area in the cost equation which we might not forget is the private (non profit) health care sector. How can our efforts in this area complement Governments' efforts? Most developing countries are fortunate in having innumerable private and semi-public philanthropic agencies but I am under the impression that in

many instances they do not know of their mutual existence and certainly have been unable to coordinate their efforts, neither amongst themselves nor with the public sector in order to become more effective.

I do believe that we will make a greater impact by collaborating with each other by combining our efforts and by planning together. Just as we must do this in each country where the private health sector has a major share of the action so too must the international donor community do a better job at setting priorities and avoiding duplication and wastage. The questions of costs and hospitals are not easily resolved but I do hope in your efforts at model-building this week you will keep them in mind and provide some guidelines as to how private institutions can assist Governments' efforts.

Fourth and lastly, I would suggest that we come to term with the definition of the word "hospital". The institution has fallen into disrepute. It is said that hospitals work in a closed circuit, far removed from the health priorities of the countries where they are located. It is often claimed that hospitals are not adapted to the major needs of the countries where they serve. Nevertheless hospitals continue to be built, they do serve, they employ, they cost, they work in a variety of areas. Thus when we criticize them, what really are we criticizing? Is it the regional teaching hospital, the local hospital, the general or specialized, the urban or rural? I ask you specifically to give us guidelines as to what these hospitals can do in the area of logistics, health education, community development, prevention, applied research, etc .... There is no point being negative. Hospitals are here and there will be more of them. I look forward to your suggestions in this area.

I think it will be particularly important to ensure that the time and material effort which clearly must be devoted in the years ahead to primary health care do not accelerate what I consider to be an increasingly rapid and perilous collapse in the standards of many existing hospitals. What I suspect of being an impending crisis of hospitals' performance is compounded by at least two issues which it will be difficult to bring under control promptly.

The first is that the rhythm of development of medicine in the industrialized world is provoking an increasingly rapid availability of new medical equipment and the cost of this equipment is inflating even more rapidly than inflation in the industrialized world itself. There is a real risk of increasing obsolescence in the equipment of existing hospitals.

The second issue is the unavailability of newly-qualified management manpower available to the Third World for hospitals or for that matter for primary health care. If I am correct in saying that the management of all aspects of hospitals and primary health care is becoming increasingly specialized and complex, then the provision of this manpower at the right level and as promptly as possible must be a central theme for this Conference.

Your Excellency, distinguished guests, I have mentioned only four areas of my concern related to hospitals. Given your background in primary care, I am sure you have many more. Many of the problems you will discuss this week are generic and controversial. However, we must be united in our research for creative and constructive

solutions. The year 2000 is only nineteen years away and your deliberations here this week will be crucial elements in assisting all of us in our efforts to achieve health for all by the year 2000.



## Speech concerning the Aga Khan social and development institutions

### LOCATION

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (25 November 1982)

Mr Chief Justice,  
Honourable Minister,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a particular pleasure for me to be among distinguished representatives of Government, of international agencies and of business here today. Not only am I celebrating the Silver Jubilee of my accession to the Imamate of the Ismaili Community. I am deeply involved in social welfare and appreciate being amongst those who commit their time, effort and resource for the benefit of mankind. From the very start, the Aga Khan Health and Education Services have depended substantially upon the untiring devotion of volunteer workers and I could not address you without paying a generous tribute to those volunteers in Tanzania who assist the running of the hospital, health centres, schools and hostels. They are the lifeblood of the Aga Khan social welfare institutions.

Equally the managers and staff of IPS deserve recognition for the great efforts they are making to offset the effects of current economic problems, efforts which deserve sincere acknowledgement.

I referred a few moments ago to this being the 25th anniversary of my assuming the leadership of the Ismaili Muslim Community. Although some of you are already well

informed about the Ismailis, it may be appropriate for me to say a few words about the office which I hold.

Ismailis are Shia Muslims who believe like all Shias throughout the world that the successor to the leadership of the Muslim Community, after the death of Prophet Muhammed, was the Prophet's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, and that this leadership, in both spiritual and temporal matters, was to continue by heredity through Ali in the Prophet's family. Today, however, we are one of the few Shia sects led by a hereditary Imam, my grandfather having been the 48th and I myself being the 49th.

Ismailis live in over 25 countries, including India, Pakistan, Syria, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Kenya and, of course, Tanzania. In all these countries they are minorities and this is, no doubt, one of the reasons why private initiative has always played such an important role in their lives.

The Imam's involvement with this private initiative, especially in the economic field, deserves explanation to anyone educated in the Augustinian Christian philosophy which tends to divide the spiritual from the material. Islam, by contrast, is a total religion guiding all aspects of a Muslim's life. The faith establishes the moral framework within which material endeavour is to be encouraged and a 'social conscience' has always been a key part of our lives. Hence, as Imam, I am concerned with the encouragement of all forms of endeavour and – further – with the quality of its performance, because that affects the quality of human life. What is done must be done honestly, sincerely and well.

We cannot afford to be incompetent, because if we are we damage the people we seek to serve.

This is equally true in the field of material endeavour, where the Imam's economic development agencies, such as IPS, seek to operate in a genuinely entrepreneurial environment, yet obeying the dictates of social conscience. The Third World investments initiated by my grandfather and expanded by myself are of an institutional nature and, as I explained at the dinner I gave for the President last Sunday, their activity should not be confused with the less desirable aspects of unrestrained capitalism. The Ismaili Imam has no single home country and so its activities are international and institutional as opposed to governmental. But all the Imam agencies and services seek to identify themselves with the objectives of the developing countries and the aim is that the benefits of their performance should be re-circulated, thus assisting the material well-being of which I have just spoken.

Performance, as I have already indicated, is to me a key word where both social institutions and commercial enterprise are concerned. Standards of performance need to be monitored and in both spheres a careful and reasoned approach to productivity can help maximise achievement. By productivity I mean the effective application of both human and material resources to the job in hand. It can be as relevant to social institutions as to business.

You can send teachers on in-service courses to up-date their teaching techniques; introduce control procedures for the distribution of drugs to rural health centres; establish proper career structures for staff; in a more wide ranging way you can

introduce social audits to schools and hospitals so as to evolve more efficient operating criteria. Furthermore you can transfer lessons learnt from one country to another and from one institution to another, so that knowledge of both successes and failures is utilised.

I believe profoundly that effective achievements in health services, in education and in welfare generally depend as much as businesses upon a pragmatic approach to the realities which face us. Health and education are the predominant items in the governmental budgets of both developed and developing countries. Unhappily, avoidable waste and duplication of effort occurs almost everywhere. Our resources, especially in the Third World, are limited. They must be managed as effectively as possible and this is more than ever true in the present world recession.

In the President's keynote speech to the CCM Party's National Conference, outlining the Structural Adjustment Programme, he is reported to have said 'Of particular importance for us is the development of better means of economic management.'

This point can scarcely be over-emphasised.

In the past one and a half months I have visited Kenya, Uganda, Senegal and Mauritania. Between January and March I shall be visiting India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Singapore and Dubai and I am receiving a constant flow of reports from those countries. The conclusion I have reached from these short but intensive visits, and from the preparation for them, is that the impact of world recession on the developing countries is significantly greater than media coverage suggests or most people realise. The economic problems facing Tanzania are not unique to Tanzania. Every Third World country is seeking solutions to them.

I have asked myself why the impact of the recession is so much greater than was forecast and have come to a conclusion. This is that when recession hits a developing country the effect on all areas of the nation's life is compounded into something infinitely more overwhelming than can be perceived by analysis of any single social or economic factor.

You can look at coffee production, for instance; note that world prices have tumbled since 1979 and that there are serious outbreaks of coffee berry disease, and realise that a catastrophic fall in foreign exchange earnings is certain. At the same time hospital services may appear to be functioning adequately because shortages of supplies have not yet affected them. Thus you would get two different readings from two different sectors and consequently a false impression of balance, because in practice recession and foreign exchange shortage have bitten far deeper into the country's economy than would be the case for example in a developed, Western State. But the total impact has not been realised.

I have also asked myself whether it is possible to detect any clear trends in the ways Third World countries are responding to world recession and seeking to diminish its impact.

While I would not say there are any definite moves towards fundamental changes in political thinking – that the 'isms' of the past are out and new ones becoming



fashionable – and while each country seems to be responding individually to its own economic problems, there is a rapidly increasing premium being attached to the work of creative people and creative institutions.

The response of the Third World in trying to make people, institutions and enterprises more productive, is perfectly logical but I have never seen it pursued so vigorously as it is today.

In fact not only is a premium being put on creativity, there is a premium on locating it, and on harnessing it to the national endeavour. This premium includes providing a new legal framework in which creativity can operate: what I would call an Enabling Environment.

Let me give you some examples which, interestingly, cross national frontiers, ideological outlooks and span differing areas of endeavour.

In Kenya, Pakistan and many other countries, the recession is causing Governments to look again at their social services, their nationalised schools and health institutions, to invite existing voluntary agencies as well as new ones to contribute their resources in support of national programmes.

Sri Lanka is actively seeking investments of all kinds to widen the spectrum of national economic activity.

Burma is in the process of a major re-consideration of economic policy.

Guinea has completed part of such a re-consideration and is implementing it.

India is inviting investment from abroad, in order to accelerate the development of specific areas of its economy.

All these countries are aware, and are keeping in mind even if they do not say so publicly, that it is of fundamental importance to the Third World to widen the spectrum of activity of creative people, and of creative enterprises and initiatives. They are also aware even if they do not say that publicly that this can be overdone, with undesirable results. But to a greater extent than I can ever recollect before, they recognise that creative activity is needed and that the only way to stimulate it is by providing an environment which enables it to flourish.

If there is indeed a premium on identifying creative institutions then perhaps those of the Imamat can be recognised as such.

As Aziz Husain mentioned in his introductory speech of welcome, IPS is one of the Imamat's agencies for economic development in the Third World and has acquired considerable experience which is relevant to today's problems. It has obtained this experience in two ways.

First, through the direct promotion of IPS companies here, in Kenya, The Ivory Coast, Zaire, Bangladesh and Pakistan. This network of IPS companies increases our understanding of Third World economic problems and strengthens our ability to transplant successful concepts from one country to another. However, IPS is not only involved in conceptualising and financing projects, but also in providing management

expertise and supervision. Therefore it has, of necessity, developed a flexible and innovative management approach, which is now one of its greatest strengths.

The second area in which IPS has been active is the promotion of and participation in the creation of new institutions; for instance a Tourism Development Bank in Tunisia, a housing development finance company in India and a very recent venture capital company in Bangladesh.

In the immediate future, the Imamat's institutions can help Tanzania by making available increased resources, optimising management performance, and responding pragmatically to problems which have intensified in certain areas.

One such area, is the unavailability of foreign exchange and we will specifically seek to obtain a foreign exchange credit line for the IPS companies in Tanzania which will enable them to import essential raw materials without using up Tanzania national foreign exchange. We would do this, subject to the necessary agreements, until such a time as the foreign exchange problem becomes more manageable and where possible our industrial projects have converted satisfactorily to use of local raw materials.

This decision will I hope help to safeguard 4,500 jobs as well as ensuring the availability of many products Tanzania requires.

Additionally I think this is very important we will encourage utilisation of local financial liquidity for the establishment of new production activity. These would be enterprises exploiting local raw materials to produce goods with potential national and international markets, aiming through the latter to further improve Tanzania's foreign exchange position.

I think we must be careful, however, not to react to current pressures by developing local raw materials which, in better times, will prove so expensive as against imported ones that the finished products made from them will be too high priced to continue commanding a local market, or of achieving export sales.

Finally, in the field of social institutions, we will continue to provide material and management support to those social services in whose operations we have expertise, notably education and health.

We are prepared to help both institutions we ourselves run and, in special cases, those we do not, but which are seeking support from us.

This morning I launched an extension programme for the Aga Khan Hospital here in Dar es Salaam and I am happy to confirm that a preliminary study for a scheme to provide support for upgrading the Government hospital at Dodoma is beginning today.

Obviously a small Community like mine in Tanzania cannot produce a major response, but I believe we can show a willingness to respond quickly, pragmatically and effectively.



## Lunch given by Industrial Promotion and Development Company

06 January 1983, Dhaka, Bangladesh

Honourable Minister,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today among such distinguished representatives of Government of international agencies and of business. We have been particularly fortunate to listen to both the Minister for Industries and Commerce, the Honourable Mr Shafiula Azam, and to Dr Hans Wuttke, the Executive Vice President of the International Finance Corporation, who is so closely associated with development projects in many parts of the Third World.

The establishment of the Industrial Promotion and Development company of Bangladesh has been the result of initiatives going back to the late 1970s and I am happy and proud to have played what Mr Al-Husaini has been kind enough to call a pivotal role in bringing together the five partners involved in this collaborative venture.

Because Islam is a total religion, guiding all aspects of a Muslim's life, as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims I am not only concerned with the spiritual well-being of my followers, but also with their material welfare. This, inevitably, covers a wide range of endeavour from the provision of health care and educational facilities to decent housing and employment. Without honest work a man's life lacks purpose and dignity. Our faith acknowledges this and established the moral framework within which material endeavour is to be encouraged.

This is why, as well as adding to the schools and medical centres established by my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, I have also set out to expand the Third World investments which he initiated. Since 1963 I have established the Industrial Promotion Services companies to act in various countries as an agency of the Imamate for economic development. Their activities should not be confused with the less desirable aspects of unrestrained capitalism. All the Imamate agencies and services seek to identify themselves with the objectives of the developing countries and the aim is that the benefits of their performance should be re-circulated within the Third World. Hence my pleasure that Industrial Promotion Services, Switzerland, has become a partner in the IPDC of Bangladesh, in the cause of furthering economic development here.

We are, indeed, no strangers to this country. At one time our jute mills employed 17,000 people and IPS Pakistan was originally established in Dhaka rather than Karachi because we felt the need for investment to be particularly pressing in what was then East Pakistan.

The Honourable Minister for Industries and Commerce has just outlined Bangladesh's present need for growth and development with admirable clarity and I welcome both his assurances regarding foreign investment, and his adoption of my phrase "the enabling environment". The New Industrial Policy is indeed a major step towards creating the right environment for expansion and I fully endorse his view that there could be a more appropriate time for the IPDC to start its work of identifying and promoting viable new industrial projects, so broadening the base of the nation's economic activity. Mr Al-Hussaini has already indicated some of the opportunities available and I have no doubt that those projects the IPDC selects for sponsorship will flourish.

I also hope that the comparatively long time it has taken to bring the IPDC into being will be followed by a rapid assumption of active operations in support of industrial development in Bangladesh.

However, opening the doors to private initiative cannot be one sided affair. It demands a worthwhile response from the private sector to the opportunities the State is offering. Entrepreneurs must be prepared to take this opportunity, to pass through the doors which have been opened, and to demonstrate that their objectives in doing so deserve the support of the State and of the IPDC.

My own Industrial Promotion Services companies have acquired wide experience in this type of operation, acting within the dictates of our social conscience.

They have promoted manufacturing companies in Kenya, Tanzania, the Ivory Coast, Zaire and Pakistan, producing a variety of goods from soap to galvanised iron and sponsoring enterprises as diverse as tourist hotels, insurance and merchant banking. They have helped conceptualise and finance these projects, going on to provide management expertise and supervision. In a second area they have participated in the creation of new institutions, for instance a Tourism Development Bank in Tunisia, a Housing Development Finance Company in India and a venture capital company in Kenya. I am particularly happy that all three of these have been promoted in collaboration with the International Finance Corporation.

In my view this kind of collaboration between the developing and the industrialised countries is essential for progress in the Third World, with private enterprise assisting development by creating a constructive partnership in which foreign and local expertise and resources work together, drawing on the best available from both sides. This is especially necessary during the present recession.

In the past three months I have visited Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Senegal and Mauritania. Between now and March I shall be going to Singapore, India, Pakistan and Dubai, and I am receiving a constant flow of reports from those countries. The conclusion I have reached from these short but intensive visits, and from the preparation of them, is that the impact of world recession is hitting the developing countries much more significantly than has been recognised by world opinion, principally because the full picture has not been adequately presently.

That impact is worst in Africa, whilst other parts of the developing world are responding better, some Asian countries particularly so.

Nonetheless the economic problems now facing Bangladesh are not unique to Bangladesh. The depressed world market conditions and the general degradation of the terms of trade which have attacked the value of this country's jute exports are mirrored by low prices received in Kenya and Tanzania for coffee. Every Third World country is seeking solutions to problems of recession, which are more damaging to Third World countries because their predominantly rural demographic make-up presents them with special problems and they lack the diversified economies of the industrialised nations.

I have asked myself whether it is possible to detect any clear trends in the ways Third World countries are responding to recession and seeking to diminish its impact.

While I would not say there are definite moves towards fundamental changes in political thinking – that the 'isms' of the past are discarded and new ones becoming fashionable – and while each country seems to be responding individually to its own specific problems,

there is a rapidly increasing premium being attached to the work of creative people and creative institutions.

In fact not only is a premium being put on creativity, there is a premium on locating it, and on harnessing it to the national interest. This premium includes providing a legal and administrative framework in which creativity can operate: that same enabling environment which the Honourable Minister obligingly introduced you to earlier.

Let me give you some examples which, interestingly, span national frontiers, ideological outlooks and different areas of endeavour.

Sri Lanka is actively seeking investments of all kinds to widen the spectrum of national economic activity.

Burma is in the course of a major re-consideration of economic policy.

Guinea has completed part of such a re-consideration and is implanting it.

India is inviting investment from abroad.

Here, in Bangladesh, you have introduced the New Industrial Policy simplifying procedures for private investment and offering incentives for improved production. Significantly a major thrust of your policy will be to create additional jobs in the rural areas through the development of rural and cottage industries.

Making rural populations more productive is, in my view, a key to successful development in the Third World. The urgency of this was highlighted for me by demographic surveys carried out in the mid 1970s in various parts of the Indian sub-continent. Some 400 researchers took part and their reports proved to be a dramatic statement of the poverty differential between rural and urban populations.

I had already appreciated – who could not - that the bulk of Third World rural populations are poor, undernourished, under-employed and social disadvantaged. I had not realised just how far rural incomes fall below urban ones and that the differential between rural and urban dwellers living standards is almost as acute as the much more widely publicised North-South poverty gap in the World as a whole. In consequence, I most wholeheartedly endorse His Excellency General Ershad's remark in his speech on December 5 that the path to economic emancipation in Bangladesh can be found through the nation's vast reserve of manpower and its huge area of fertile land.

Whether we are looking at the new Industrial Policy here in Bangladesh, at revised economic policies in Sri Lanka, India and Burma, or at the longer established pragmatism practised in Thailand, South Korea and Singapore, we see the same trend. This is a trend to

acknowledge – sometimes openly, sometimes only by implication – that it is of fundamental importance for the Third World to widen the spectrum of activity of creative enterprises and initiatives if the quality of its citizens lives is to be improved. I believe profoundly that effective achievements in all fields of endeavour – in business, in health care, in education and in Government – depend upon a pragmatic and creative approach to the realities which face us.

The enabling environment is made up of many elements. Political stability and confidence in the future. Reliance on a system of laws which encourage enterprise and initiative. Protection of the rights of citizens. These are the kind of factors which attract investments and stimulate the creativity of people in all walks of life. These are what encourage qualified managers, doctors, teachers, nurses and other professional people to stay and serve their country and which persuade those who have left to return. In my view the creation and extension to all areas of the nation's life of this enabling environment is the single most important factor in Third World development. It is as crucial to national growth as sunlight is to the growth of plants.

Obviously taken the steps to provide this environment will not produce miracles overnight. Growth, whether of plants or national economies, demands time. The newly industrialised nations of South East Asia have leapt the development gap with amazing success, but it has still taken them a generation to do it. Nonetheless they have demonstrated that if an enabling environment is kept on course long enough, it will yield sound, stable, long-term benefits for a nation.

I am confident that Bangladesh will create such an enabling environment and that the sponsors of the IPDC will find that the objectives they have set for their new commitment to Bangladesh are fulfilled, both in terms of the intrinsic quality of the institution they have created and equally in the beneficial role it plays in the nation's economy.

Thank you very much for inviting me here this afternoon.





## Dinner in celebration of Aga Khan's Silver Jubilee, New Delhi

14 January 1983, New Delhi, India

Your Excellency Madam Prime Minister,  
Your Excellencies,  
Honourable Ministers,  
President Morani and  
Members of my Federal Council for India,  
Distinguished Guests,

It is a great pleasure, Madam Prime Minister, for me to be able to thank you and your Government for inviting me to India during this Silver Jubilee of my accession to the Imamate of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. Twenty-five years ago I celebrated my Takhtnashini in India and I have returned nine times since. As before, the hospitality which has greeted me has been heart warming, and I would particularly like to thank you for the many courtesies your Government has extended to my wife, my brother and myself, which have already helped to make this Jubilee visit most memorable.

President Morani has informed me that the donations gathered by the Jamat in India for the Society for the Commemoration of my Silver Jubilee amount to the magnificent total of Rs 25 million. They are the measure – the very generous measure – of the unstinted loyalty and devotion which the Jamat has always shown me and I am deeply appreciative of it. The relationship between the Imam and his Jamat is a deep and continuing bond. But the outside world may only appreciate the depth of it on such happy occasions as this.

I have told the leaders of my Indian Jamat that I wish the objectives of my Silver Jubilee year to be set in consultation with them and that I hope the celebration will result in a positive contribution being made to the quality of life of the people of India: not only to the life of our own Community, but of all the communities that make up this great nation. We will not let bigotry, communalism or sectarianism make our lives inward-looking and increasingly meaningless.

There are more than 500,000 villages in India, where 80 percent of the population lives. Of the working population 70 percent is directly engaged on the land, yet their incomes are 50 percent lower than in other sectors of the economy, and the number of landless poor is increasing. The global population will exceed 6,000 million by the turn of the century, of whom 80 percent will be in the developing countries. By definition, most of these people will be rural. These statistics speak for themselves.

The Government has shown itself well aware that the bulk of the rural population is poor, undernourished, underemployed and socially disadvantaged. The current Five Year Development Plan includes a substantial integrated Rural Development Programme, particularly directed towards employment and income generation for those below the poverty line.

Nonetheless, as I have no need to remind you Madam Prime Minister, there is always more to be done. Rural people have to be shown that they and their children have a future on the land and from the land.

This means that the objective in rural areas must be to stabilise the population – I do not mean only in numerical terms – by increasing individual earning potential and making the quality of rural life more acceptable in comparison with that of the cities.

This is, of course, no new idea. Our earliest health care efforts, initiated by my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, a hundred years ago, were directed towards health care in India's villages. We have never lost sight of this need and during 1975 and 1976 teams of researchers carried out a series of demographic surveys among my own Community in various parts of this country. The resultant reports proved to be a dramatic statement of the poverty differential between rural and urban dwellers: a differential almost as acute as the much more widely canvassed North-South poverty gap in the world as a whole.

I am sure all of us have seen very young children playing aimlessly in the dust of villages in Asia or Africa. The surveys underlined how little effort was being made for such children's physical or mental development. Accordingly we began establishing day care centres to provide pre-primary education, nutrition and health care, including immunisation, for children up to 5 ½.

This was done only as a pilot scheme among our own Community. Nonetheless the 25 day care centres we set up had a tremendous impact, even leading to mothers demanding adult literacy classes. In consequence the centres are now being up-graded and becoming springboards for other rural development activity.

Although this trial experience applied only to one end of a wide spectrum of rural needs, it did prove that a carefully thought out scheme addressing as well identified area of potential improvement could produce a worthwhile response. Therefore, knowing that your Government, Madam Prime Minister, is encouraging private initiatives in tackling rural support problems, I have agreed to my Jamat's which that an Aga Khan Rural Support programme should be established. I hope it will make an innovative and effective contribution to the application of effort and resources in the rural areas, both through its own work and by example.

The AKRSP is intended to be a catalytic agency, helping to identify income generating opportunities and to develop plans of action. We are well aware, as I indicated earlier of the many existing programmes being carried out by central Government, by State Rural Development Corporations and by voluntary agencies. It is our aim to work in collaboration with them, not in competition. Our programmes will address the coordination of such factors as: the effective use of irrigation; making waste land productive; the introduction of new crops or seed varieties; the local processing and marketing of crop and livestock production; the establishment of cottage industries. If developed in harmony, these can create a revitalised rural environment.

It is a constant complaint of international donor agencies, financial institutions and commercial banks that there is a shortage of properly prepared projects for funding. One of the AKRSP's main functions will be the professional preparation of viable project proposals which will assist in channelling new resources, both financial and human, into the areas concerned.

We naturally hope that the AKRSP will submit suitable proposals to your recently opened National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development. Equally funding may come from overseas sources, with the help of the Aga Khan Foundation.

The Aga Khan Foundation, for those of you who are not aware of its activities, was established in 1967 in Geneva to the Imamat's principal agency for philanthropic social development programmes to build further on the network of welfare services established by my grandfather and to help resolve social development problems in the Third World. It

now has affiliates in seven countries, including India, where we have been most grateful to you, Madam Prime Minister, for your assistance in helping it to establish its philanthropic role.

The Foundation collaborates with many other international agencies, such as UNICEF and the WHO, and was officially recognised by the United Nations Development Programme in 1980. Perhaps because it is a comparatively young organisation, and does not devote unnecessary time to public relations effort, it is not widely known. However, I am told that today it is among the larger international foundations when measured in terms of its yearly commitments in the developing world. I am sure its technical support will be of great value to the AKRSP organisers here.

We equally believe that the worldwide connections of the Foundation will be of assistance in mobilising international financial backing for the AKRSP's programmes. The Foundation has been registered in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom, as well as in India, for two main reasons.

One is that this enables it to harness substantial resources which are not available to philanthropic institutions registered in the Third World. For example, when the Aga Khan Foundation Canada assists a project financially, it can obtain matching grants from Canadian Government or State agencies.

Secondly, many members of my Community have settled in the Western World, as have many other Asians. Since Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom do not have exchange control regulations, the Foundation provides our new citizens of those wealthy, industrialised countries with a recognised tax-exempt vehicle enabling them to contribute to our efforts in the Third World.

I am particularly pleased by this development; because I am confident that there are many who will donate most generously to the Foundation's programmes in the future. Indeed some may even give of their professional skills in the form of personal service for a number of years, helping to establish projects for which their experience is relevant.

The AKRSP will initiate programmes of its own; for example in local training and education, in agricultural information services, and in research, it will also help other development organisations to become self-sustaining including those it has created itself. When this has been achieved and its own programmes in the original areas chosen have been passed on the time will have come for the AKRSP to expand into other parts of India, because one of its aims is to acquire experience applicable elsewhere.

That, however, is for the long-term future. Today, I have the greatest pleasure in formally agreeing to my Community's recommendation that the funds collected by the Society for the Commemoration of my Silver Jubilee should be utilised to provide the financial corpus of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme in India.



## Speech to the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce

### LOCATION

New Delhi, India (14 January 1983)

Honourable Minister,  
Mr President,  
Members of the Committee,  
Distinguished Guests,

It is an honour to be invited to address such an influential business audience here today. Your Federation, Mr President, and your host of members, play a most significant role in the industrial and economic development of India, both at State and at national level. It is a tribute to your energy and perspicacity that you have done this so successfully for so long. It is also, I suggest, a mark of the quality of democracy in this great country that the Government listens to your advice – even if it does not always accept it.

Disseminating information on current Indian problems and commenting on them from the practical standpoint of businessmen, is part of your function, you do it extremely well and it is not my intention this afternoon to trespass on your ground.

You have been kind enough, Mr President, to congratulate me on my Silver Jubilee and to remark on my contribution to various development activities, both social and economic, I greatly appreciate your compliments.

At the same time I must admit that I am quite regularly asked with the Ismaili Imamat has concerned itself, both during my grandfather's lifetime and now during my own, with the material and mundane issues of economic development. Why have we involved



ourselves with such fields of commercial endeavour as you mentioned: banking, insurance, industry and tourism?

Equally often I have asked myself why that question is put. The reason, I think, is that in many parts of the world there is a feeling that religious authorities should not become entangled with the mundane matters of everyday life, let alone with the basic material issues of enterprise. People feel that the world's highest moral institutions endanger their authority by entering the evil domain of materialism.

Perhaps this perception stems partly from the strong Augustinian tradition of Christianity. But, in any case, whatever the cause, my grandfather's and my own understanding of Islam convinced us of a substantially different premise. He believed, as do I, that the correct interpretation of our office, and of the faith which guides it, is that man must not shy away from material endeavour in the name of his faith. On the contrary, he must be enterprising, contributing of his best to his family and the society in which he lives, so long as the content of his endeavour is within the terms of our social and moral conscience and so long as the objectives of the enterprise are equally acceptable.

In simple terms, the question is less one of whether a man is successful in business or his profession than of the way in which he is achieving success and the purposes for which his achievements are utilised. This, therefore, is the premise which has instigated my grandfather and I to become involved with issues of Third World economic and social development, covering a wide range of endeavour, from the provision of health care and educational facilities to decent housing and employment. This is why, as well as adding to the network of schools and medical centres established by my grandfather I have also set out to expand the Third World development investments which he initiated.

At this point you may understandably ask whether the Imam operates according to two sets of standards, one for the social institutions, another for economic development. Can the same concepts of management and performance be applied to both?

The answer, in my view, is that they can and very often should be.

Quality control is generally thought of as an industrial concept, but surely it is equally if not more desirable to apply it to the standards of a hospital. Again, personnel performance appraisal systems are most commonly used in business, but are they not just as applicable to monitoring what teachers offer their students?

If professions like nursing or teaching are allowed to slide into neglect, then they become a liability in the national balance sheet.

The Aga Khan Foundation's largest current project is the Aga Khan Hospital and Medical College in Karachi, which will become the Aga Khan University. Its first stage has been a nursing school, which by setting high standards of teaching has already had a significant effect on the social status, pay and morale of nurses in the rest of the country.

Rural populations, if they are under-paid, under-nourished, under-employed and socially disadvantaged, equally become a liability to the nation. This why we are planning a rural

support programme to identify and promote income generating opportunities for the poor in India's villages. The aim here again is to raise standards, in this case of rural productivity, so as to improve the quality of life of the people concerned.

I believe that quality control is every bit as important to social institutions as it is in business.

We can only achieve it by discarding the concepts of the past and introducing modern management methods; by monitoring results through proper reporting systems and establishing performance benchmarks.

An inventory of someone else's activities is always boring. However, in order that you will understand the basis from which I draw my next conclusions, please bear with my giving a quick and perforce incomplete picture of some current undertakings in key sectors of our endeavour.

The Aga Khan health and educational network in Asia and Africa includes 200 health care units from major urban teaching hospitals to village dispensaries in the Himalayas. They treat more than a million and a half outpatients every year. Our 300 educational establishments span the spectrum from pre-primary schools to the Aga Khan University, which has just admitted the first students to its faculty of health sciences. At any given time over 5,000 students are pursuing higher educational courses on Aga Khan scholarships.

Where the Foundation functions as the primary agency for these health and educational activities, our Industrial Promotion Services are at present the agency of the Imamat's economic developments in the Third World. This promotional work has taken two forms: direct participation in projects and the co-sponsoring with other development agencies of specialised development vehicles.

The direct participation has been in fields as diverse. As urban and resort tourism, industry, venture capital companies, banking and insurance.

In the creation of new agencies we have collaborated in promoting institutions as varied as a tourism development bank in Tunisia, a venture capital development company in Bangladesh and the Housing Development Finance Company here in India.

So, you may ask, what conclusions do I draw from all this? Have I learnt anything worth passing on to you from the range of social and economic projects with which the Imamat is concerned?

I have come to certain conclusions about the present recession in the Third World, and about the ways in which the countries of Asia and Africa are addressing the issues of world recession.

First, while each country seems to be responding individually to its own specific economic problems, there is a generally increasing premium being attached to the work of creative people and creative institutions in the Third World today.

Whether we are looking at the New Industrial Policy in Bangladesh, at revised attitudes to private sector investment here in India, in Sri Lanka and in Burma, or at the longer



established pragmatism practised in South Korea, Thailand and Singapore, we see the same trend. This is a trend to acknowledge – if sometimes only by implication – that it is of fundamental importance for the Third World to widen the spectrum of activity of creative enterprises and initiatives.

Effective achievements in all fields of endeavour depend upon this approach no matter whether it be in business, in health care, in education or in Government.

Second, there is an increasing awareness of the importance of raising standards. A pragmatic view of the economic progress of a great country like India shows clearly that effort must focus on this.

One cannot give a sense of direction and purpose to any enterprise, whether it is a hospital or a factory, without constantly seeking to improve standards: the standard of the product, the performance of one's management, the quality of the careers one is offering that management, the working conditions of the labour force. A proportion of one's profit or of one's subsidy must be re-invested to ensure this. If you lose sight of standards in the desire to maximise profit or reduce loss. You jeopardise the long-term future.

In India as in much of Asia it is possible to produce industrial goods more cheaply than the industrialised nations of the West. Consequently there is a tendency to imagine that qualitative improvement of the product is unnecessary. In my view this is a most dangerous fallacy. Sooner or later – and with the recession it will probably be sooner – the industrialised nations' consumers will seek competitive quality as well as competitive prices.

The Japanese have appreciated this. Their industries at first fought a price war with the manufacturer of the Western world. Now they have switched to fighting on the battleground of technological competence. Their success needs no underlining.

Thirdly, the past 25 years have shown that the pace of development and efficiency have to improve in all sectors if developing countries are to make substantial progress. This means that more people reaching the peak of their productive lives have to be harnessed to the national effort, which in turn means eliminating the generation gap at present existing in certain professions. Young qualified, talent needs to be attracted into fields that have become depressed, like nursing, teaching and the broader field of communications. This will only happen if they see viable careers in those professions with good pay and working conditions which reflect the importance of their work to the general well being of the society they serve.

However, and this brings me to the final point I wish to make, creative activity and higher standards can only flourish if the national environment enables them to do so. This environment, which I call the 'enabling environment', is made up of many elements. Political stability and confidence in the future. Protection of the rights of citizens. Democratic institutions such as India enjoys. A system of laws which encourage initiative and enterprise. A civil service which is performance oriented and answerable for its action on all fronts including the economic one. These are the kind of factors which attract investment and stimulate the creativity of people in all walks of life.

The disabling factors are familiar to all of us. Bureaucratic rules and regulations. Laws which set out to restrict the dishonest, but which in practice simply impede desirable enterprise, or make it more costly. Nationalisation of companies without true compensation. Expropriation or confiscation of property, the withholding of dividends, unreasonable taxation. All these must go if prosperity is to be achieved.

World recession seems likely to exert such pressures on Third World economies that some of these disabling factors will indeed be removed. But my happiness in addressing you today stems from the fact that national organisations such as your Federation can be major contributors, not only in underlining how very disabling such factors are, but in pointing clearly and consistently to those positive elements which create an enabling environment.

The creation and extension to all areas of the nation's life of this enabling environment is the single most important factor in Third World development. It is as crucial to national growth as sunlight is to the growth of plants. I am confident that your Federation will promote it successfully.



## Opening of the Aga Khan Baug, Versova

17 January 1983 Mumbai, India

Your Excellency the President,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me profound pleasure to be in Versova again to open the housing project which I inaugurated here almost exactly five years ago and to be performing the ceremony in the presence of such distinguished guests.

The Trustees of the Muniwarabad Charitable Trust and I are most happy and honoured to have His Excellency the President with us this morning. It is indeed a privilege and a very great encouragement to have him here.

I also warmly welcome His Excellency the Governor of Maharashtra and Mr H.T. Parekh, Chairman and guiding spirit of the Housing Development Finance Corporation, with which I am proud to be associated, as well as many other important citizens of this great metropolis.

We are appreciative that they have given their time, on which there is such constant pressure, to come here today and so acknowledge an important duty which we all share: the duty to offer both our efforts and our resources for the benefit of the poor.

There are those, as I said when I inaugurated this project, who enter the world in such poverty that they are deprived of both the means and the motivation to improve their lot. Unless these unfortunates can be touched with the spark which ignites the spirit of individual enterprise and determination, they will only sink back into renewed apathy, degradation and despair. It is for us, who are more fortunate, to provide that spark.

That is why declaring the Aga Khan Baug ready to receive the first of the 344 needy families who will eventually fill its apartments means so much to me. This occasion is not only a part of the Silver Jubilee celebrations, marking the 25th anniversary of my accession to the Imamate of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. It is a milestone in the Muniwarabad Charitable Trust's hopes of making a positive contribution to India's housing efforts and of improving the quality of life for some of this great city's urban poor people who might otherwise see no glimmer of hope in their futures.

Bombay, as many of you here will know, is a city with which my family has very long established links. It was to Bombay that my ancestor, Aga Khan the First, Aga Hassan Ali Shah, came in 1845, two years after his arrival in India from Persia, and it was on Malabar Hill that the official residence of the Aga Khans was built. This is the property which was sold in 1980 to provide the bulk of the funding for the Muniwarabad Charitable Trust and so for the buildings we see completed here today. I am sure you will appreciate that this gives a particular emotional intensity to today's ceremony so far as my family and I are concerned.

Malabar Hill was the home of my great grandmother, Lady Ali Shah. From her it passed to my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah. It was from Malabar Hill that he was sent to be India's representative at the Geneva disarmament conference in 1931 and 1932, and again it was from there that he departed to take office as President of the League of Nations in 1938. It was where I stayed during my Takhtnashini in 1957. Malabar Hill has been a place of marvellous memories for our family.

You may wonder why we decided to relinquish a place so close to our hearts. With the passing of time Malabar Hill had become less and less used by us. A developing country like India cannot afford under-utilised assets. I feel confident that if the previous generations of my family were alive today, they would have agreed with my feeling that the value of such assets ought to be released for better purposes. That is why, despite the sentimental attachment of all my family and the Jamat to Malabar Hill, we decided to donate the property so that it could be sold and the proceeds devoted to re-housing the poor. At the same time we gave land in Pune to the Muniwarabad Charitable Trust.

A moment ago I mentioned the soul-destroying poverty into which many children are born, in which they grow up, live as adults, and in which, often prematurely, they die.

The demographic surveys which we carried out in 1971 showed conclusively that families of immigrants to the city can rarely succeed in generating enough income to meet the most basic urban needs within the whole lifetime of the head of the family concerned. The gulf between the way such families live and the lowest acceptable standards can seem unbridgeable? They live in appalling conditions, they easily fall prey to disease, their children cannot achieve a proper education. Not only are they miserable the social and economic cost of their plight is enormous.

This is what convinced us that the best way to assist these unfortunate people is through a policy of all-enveloping support: improving health care, educational facilities and housing. One of my earlier concerns in social welfare in India was with housing. As I said at the inauguration ceremony five years ago, the visual, physical and emotional impact of a decent home can light the spirit of human endeavour. A proper home can provide the bridge across that terrible gulf between utter poverty and the possibility of a better future.

If a man is enabled to buy or rent a reasonable roof over his head he will have been provided with the first ingredient of his self-respect. He will feel it worth working harder to have a little more to spend on food and clothing. If he has children he will be more inclined to educate them and take proper care of their health. Perhaps more important than anything, his children will grow up against a secure background, with all that implies. By building new homes we lay the social foundation of man's betterment.

This belief has governed the activity of the Muniwarabad Charitable Trust and the Ismailia Central Housing Board, which provides the Trust's housing development and other projects with professional and technical expertise. The buildings we now see before us are the first completed result of their endeavours and in this connection I must pay a warm tribute to the voluntary assistance the Housing Board has received from such distinguished experts as Mr Charles Correa and Mr Ruston Dubash, Mr Akber Merchant and Mr Farouq Chinoy.

I need not repeat the construction details of the Aga Khan Baug given in his introductory speech by the Chairman of the Trust, Mukhtar Munjee, whose own contribution to the project together with that of Salim Maladwala and their respective Boards, has been invaluable. However, I would like to mention that the building specifications have improved on the basic standards set by the Urban Land Ceiling Law. Four water taps instead of one per dwelling, glazed tiles in the bathrooms, more electrical points and such qualitative differences as cross ventilation and two rooms instead of one per family, have, we must admit, increased construction costs. But they will also add much to the quality of life enjoyed in the Baug.

It is my belief, and a very strongly held one, that where the climate degrades the fabric of buildings more rapidly than elsewhere and land is at premium, new housing must be

conceived and executed in such a way that it will provide permanent, valid, homes for many successive generations. This is especially so in view of the near-certainty that net disposable incomes in India will not grow fast enough to out space constructional costs and so eventually enable the present owners of apartments of their children to sell and purchase substantially better accommodation. Their families are likely to remain in the Baug. Tomorrow's children will demand higher standards. So far as is practicable, we must build for the future as well as the present.

Here, of course, one enters upon the familiar arguments concerning housing for the lower income groups. As we all know, low cost housing can escalate into becoming so high cost that the people it is intended for cannot afford the end-product offered. Yet too strong an emphasis on economy can equally reduce quality to such an extent that ten years later an apartment block degenerates into a slum and living standards become little better than those in the hutments and dilapidated dwellings from which the unhappy occupants were originally moved.

Somehow a correct balance must be struck. In the case of the present project, costs were pushed up by a number of factors, including long delays in obtaining cement and unexpected price rises. I have already mentioned the limitations on the growth of the net disposable incomes of the poor. It would be unwise to imagine that the people who will take over the apartments here are ever likely to achieve sufficient growth in their incomes to be able to repay the true costs of the property they are acquiring.

Accordingly we are subsidising the selling prices and will help the purchasers to obtain loans, an approach which we believe offers the best solution to assisting the urban poor whom we want to re-house in the Baug. At the same time, we must recognise that those housed here will be taking possession of an inflation proof capital asset and we will not look kindly on any who try to convert this subsidised housing into an immediate windfall profit.

It might be argued that there is more urgent need to give increased support to the rural populations and dissuade them from seeking to become urbanised – a need which we are planning to address through our new rural support programmes. But this does not alter the scale of the existing problems of the urban poor and it is most desirable for the Trust to continue this work.

The Trust does, however, feel that, in any future housing developments, efforts should be made to achieve a reasonable social mix so that the better educated and better-off people allotted space can provide stimulus and guidance to those people who are less socially advantaged. The better-off allottees would be both prepared and capable of paying a price closer to the "market" and if this were permissible, the Trust would charge different prices to the different income groups. The intention would not be to develop any property at a profit but simply to achieve the 'greatest good for the greatest number' by varying the degree of subsidy according to need.

You can see, here in front of you, what the Trust is capable of building. Yet housing is the most difficult area of social development to appraise in terms of human, as opposed to architectural, results. It is far easier to quantify the effects of providing better education or health care facilities against their costs. How do you measure the benefits of a family having a decent home, of the father's dignity, of the mother's pride, or the children's sense of security, of better family and better work potential? Nonetheless the beneficial impact can be tremendous.

I am deeply convinced that improved housing has a substantial multiplying effect from generation to generation and I intend to encourage our institutions to make even greater efforts in the housing field in the years ahead.

Thank you very much.





## Acceptance of the Charter of the Aga Khan University

### LOCATION

Karachi, Pakistan (16 March 1983)

Your Excellency, The President  
Your Excellency, The Governor of Sindh  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,

In this Silver Jubilee year, celebrating my twenty-fifth anniversary to the accession to the Imamate of the Ismaili Muslims. I have been called upon to make many speeches on many subjects, in countries as diverse as Portugal, Singapore and Tanzania. But important and happy as these Jubilee occasions have been, this is the event which can with the greatest certainty be called historic. Modern communications, the radio, the newspapers, all the media, urge us to believe that each day brings momentous events. Happily this is not so, or we would be producing far more history than we can comfortably consume. Today, however, is historic in the true sense. The Charter which His Excellency the President has been gracious enough to grant the new Aga Khan University creates the first university inspired by my family since Al Azhar was founded enterprise, in which individual endeavour is encouraged and in which citizens can feel secure and confident of improvements in their future prospects.

When the principles of the Aga Khan University were presented to Your Excellency, you espoused them and made them your own. You have always listened to proposals, both on this and other subjects, with great open-mindedness. No one could have been more willing not simply to find mutually acceptable solutions to problems, but also to

implement agreements promptly. In so far as the creation of the Aga Khan Medical College and the transformation of that college into the Aga Khan University were concerned, Your Excellency has epitomised how the enabling environment can be created. Without your understanding and encouragement we would not be assembled here today.

Although this University is new, it will draw inspiration from the great traditions of Islamic civilisation and learning to which Your Excellency has referred.

At the height of this civilisation, academies of higher learning reached from Spain to India, from North Africa to Afghanistan. One of the first and greatest research centres, the Bayt-al-Hikmah established in Baghdad in 830, led Islam in translating philosophical and scientific works from Greek, Roman, Persian and Indian classics. By the art of translation learning was assimilated from other civilisations. It was then advanced further and in new directions by scholarship in such institutions as the Dar Al Ilm, the Houses of Science, which during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries spread to many cities; through colleges like those of Al Azhar in Cairo; Qarawiyin at Fez in Morocco; Zaytouna in Tunis; and the eminent Spanish centre of Cordoba, founded between 929 and 961.

Everywhere, whether in the simplest mosque schools or in universities, teaching was regarded as a mission undertaken for the service of God. Revenue from endowments provided students with stipends and no time limit was set for the acquisition of knowledge. Above all, following the guidance of the Holy Quran, there was freedom of enquiry and research. The result was a magnificent flowering of artistic and intellectual activity throughout the Umma.

Muslim scholars reached pinnacles of achievement in astronomy, geography, physics, philosophy, mathematics and especially in medicine. The great British scientist, Sir Isaac Newton, remarked that if he was able to see further than his predecessors, it was because he stood on the shoulders of giants. Among those giants, who made possible the scientific revolution in Europe, were Ibn Sina, whose 'Canon of Medicine' was a standard text for 500 years; Al-Idrisi, the geographer; Ibn Rushd, the philosopher, and a host of other Muslim scientists who had produced the notion of specific gravity, refined Euclid's theories, perfected solid geometry, evolved trigonometry and algebra, and made modern mathematics possible by developing Indian numerals and the concept of the zero as a numeral of no place, an invention crucial to every aspect of technology from that time onwards to the present day. Their Socratic principles of education, so sympathetic to Muslims and so characteristic of the great Islamic teaching institutions of the golden age, are still – and are likely to remain – universally accepted practices of advanced teaching.

It is no exaggeration to say that the original Christian universities of the Latin West, at Paris, Bologna and Oxford, indeed the whole European Renaissance, received a vital influx of new knowledge from Islam: an influx from which the later Western colleges and universities, including those of North America, were to benefit in turn. It is therefore most fitting that Harvard, McGill and McMaster Universities should today be associated with the Medical College which is the first faculty of the Aga Khan University, and that President Bok and other members of the Harvard faculty are advising us on the

development of the University as a whole. Making wisdom available from one country to another is truly in the finest tradition of Islamic learning.

Your Excellency has paid tribute to the contribution which my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan, made to the University of Aligarh. Aligarh's achievement rested on engendering true Muslim values, in particular the maintenance of a balance between the spiritual and the material in all matters. In Islamic belief knowledge is twofold. There is that revealed through the Holy Prophet (Salla'llahu Alayhi Wa Aliyi Wa Sallam) and that which man discovers by virtue of his own intellect. Nor do these two involve any contradiction, provided man remembers that his own mind is itself the creation of God. Without this humility, no balance is possible. With it, there are no barriers. Indeed one strength of Islam has always lain in its belief that creation is not static but continuous, that through scientific and other endeavours, God has opened and continues to open new windows for us to see the marvels of his creation. For many of my generation the greatest technological miracle of this century has been sending men into space and a remark by an astronaut on one of the first flights in space has always remained in my mind. Looking down upon the earth he had just left he said emotionally 'It's one world'. He was not a Muslim. But his remark substantiated two fundamental aspects of our Faith: the limitlessness of God's power and the brotherhood of man.

This is the inspiration which guided the great Islamic centres of learning in the past and which must guide the Aga Khan University in the future.

This vital point established, what form should a Muslim Third World University take? What considerations should shape its role? Are historical precedents valid?

At various times and various places in history there have emerged societies which have combined impressive tangible achievements with broad and coherent visions of the meaning and purpose of the world and of humanity. In these periods great universities have appeared and flourished. That they have both risen and fallen with civilisations is because they are expressions of the purpose of those civilisations. However they have not been solely concerned with the ultimate philosophical and theological questions underpinning civilisation. They have characteristically been the training ground for the many professions serving the day-to-day needs of mankind. The importance of this function has been one of the major reasons for the Third World's rapid creation of new Universities in recent decades.

Indeed, during the second half of the twentieth century universities have been internationally recognised as influential to an extent unparalleled since the fourteenth century. They have become focal points of national expectation, especially in the Third World, where political leaders, eager to reinforce independence with locally-based economic growth, have looked to them to provide the necessary professional manpower. Equally, ordinary citizens have seen universities as the direct route to advancement for their children.

The result has been a vast expansion in institutions of higher learning. Third World enrolment in them rose on average ten percent a year during the 1960s and even faster during the 1970s, though here in Asia the rate of expansion has moderated. Worldwide,

the pressures which have ensued have proved inexorable and, in many cases, uncontrollable. Universities have consumed a heavy proportion of national expenditure. The supply of qualified teachers has fallen short, while secondary schools have often put forward students who are insufficiently prepared for the higher intellectual demands of a University.

Above all, most Third World Universities have found themselves face to face with a fundamental problem: how to reconcile local needs with loyalty to international standards.

All too often they have failed on both counts. They have allowed students to pursue arts or law degrees irrespective of either long-term national requirements or immediate job opportunities. At the same time academic standards have declined under the weight of numbers, cost and poor tuition.

Today disillusion has set in. Courses are disrupted by student unrest; academic criteria are challenged; failure is attributed to modern Western models of Universities being inappropriate to developing countries with additional blame being thrown on Western materialism for corrupting values. Where does the truth lie?

The truth, as the famous Islamic scholars repeatedly told their students, is that the spirit of disciplined, objective enquiry is the property of no single culture, but of all humanity. To quote the great physician and philosopher, Ibn Sina:

'My profession is to be forever journeying, to travel about the universe so that I may know all its conditions.'

It is these journeys of the mind which our students must make, for what is the study of science but man's endeavour to comprehend the universe of God's creation, the immediate world around him and himself? The laws of science are not bounded by cultures, nor should there be any basic conflict between loyalty to high academic standards and service to practical development needs. A good doctor, lawyer, economist, manager or engineer is not simply a person committed to social good; he or she must have acquired the searching curiosity and the disciplined habits of mind which enthusiasm and commitment cannot alone supply, but which the modern university can. There is no weakness in principle with the university as it has evolved today. The weaknesses lie rather in universities having resources too limited for their task, in the kind of faculties they have established, in the curricula they have offered, above all in the standards they have set themselves.

The overall aim of the Aga Khan University will be to make clear and rational judgements as to which foreseeable future needs of the developing countries require new educational programmes and, having identified those openings, to address them by the appropriate means, setting the highest standards possible, whether in teaching, in research or in service.

The progress of the School of Nursing has already been mentioned. Its concept illustrates our aims and methods. The school derived from the serious shortage of qualified nurses in Pakistan, a shortage partly attributable to their low standing. The architectural quality of the school's buildings is a visible affirmation of the inspiration of

Islamic design and of the importance we attach to the nursing profession. The training programmes have been evolved with generous aid from Canada. Thus we have drawn successfully on the human and technical resources of both East and West. We hope next to introduce something which has never before been available in Pakistan, namely a degree in nursing. So the school is fulfilling precisely those aspirations which I have outlined for the University. It is meeting a carefully identified requirement, raising standards and introducing new concepts.

Having decided upon the curricula, our approach to learning will be in the high traditions of intellectual enquiry I have already described, teaching students not simply to memorise factual knowledge, but to use that knowledge to identify and to solve problems. We hope that the habit of applying logical and disciplined thought to questions and the appreciation of research will remain with our graduates throughout their lives.

The Charter which His Excellency the President has granted us establishes a number of important principles. The Aga Khan University will be open to all-comers regardless of colour, creed, race or class and my wish is that the only criteria which will count for admission will be merit and potential for leadership. The Charter further lays down that the purpose of the Aga Khan University will be the promotion and dissemination of knowledge and technology and that it will be a fully autonomous corporate body with freedom to govern its academic functions and the right to grant degrees.

Academic freedom is in the truest spirit of Islam. Without it excellence cannot be achieved. From the start of my grandfather's association with the Muslim University of Aligarh he insisted that it should 'preach the gospel of free enquiry, of large hearted toleration and of pure morality.' That ideal will never lose its validity and I commend it to the Trustees of the Aga Khan University.

However, academic freedom also imposes responsibilities, both to the University's defined academic mission and to society. Freedom must not be allowed to degenerate into licence, whether in universities or in society as a whole. When it has so degenerated it has invariably destroyed the very civilisations which gave it birth.

Throughout man's history there have been periods when political stability and seemingly assured economic growth have tempted educational institutions to stray from their true academic tasks, and give rein to political involvement, social ambition or moral indulgence: in other words to allow freedom to lapse into licence. To maintain one's own integrity at such times may be difficult and unpopular, but only by maintaining it can an institution of this kind justify the privileges it has been given and the faith placed in it by its founders.

The Aga Khan University has a number of constituencies to which the Charter encourages it to respond and with which it must keep faith: the Pakistan nation; the Islamic Umma; including my own Community; the Third World countries of Asia and Africa. As I have already indicated it must address itself to subjects relevant to the development and civilisations of these constituencies, if possible responding to challenges in an international context.

This is why the Charter specifically allows the University to establish faculties abroad. Whilst it is too early to say where these might be, it is my wish that this should become an international university, able to mobilise resources from other countries, to coordinate international research and to encourage the exchange of ideas between nations. We may find it appropriate to teach or research such subjects as the administration of social institutions; education, rural development; communications, in all its aspects; and architecture. Equally, we may wish to assist men and women who have successfully established themselves in politics, in government, in business or in the social services and who want to return to an academic institution briefly for advanced courses in political theory, public administration or any other of the many subjects directly related to improving their capability in the senior positions they occupy.

Such possibilities make it essential for the faculties and the curricula to be flexible. Accordingly the Charter permits the University to expand as need arises.

I have spoken of new initiatives and present deficiencies. Inevitably priorities will alter as the years and time and history unfold, and the University must be able to adapt itself to change. But one thing will remain constant: the mission of preparing graduates, men and women, to play constructive, worthwhile and responsible roles in society.

Your Excellency, it is with great emotion and pride that I have today accepted the Charter of the Aga Khan University from you. My hope is that this institution will bring credit upon the country which has given it birth and the men and women who have made it possible, first among them Your Excellency.

In everything we do we must look to the future, seeking always to think creatively, to innovate and to improve. I urge all those who are involved with the Aga Khan University now or in the years to come, whether they be Trustees, Faculty staff or students, never to forget that the future is in their hands. IT will be upon them that the performance and reputation of this University will depend and it will be through them that the University will, or will not, achieve the position among the world's institutions of higher learning which its founders have envisaged. With their help let us pray that we should develop a guiding light, a light to be added to those many others which seek to illuminate the path to a better life for Pakistan for the peoples of the Umma and of the Third World.

Thank you.



## **International seminar sponsored by the Association of Builders and Developers (ABAD) on "Shelter for the Homeless"**

### **LOCATION**

Karachi, Pakistan (16 March 1983)

Your Excellency the President,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
Dr Ramachandran,  
Distinguished Guests,

It is an honour for me to have been invited here today to participate in the inauguration of this important international seminar and I have welcomed the opportunity because the issue of improving the living conditions of the poor has long been of the deepest concern to me, just as it was to my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah.

The problem of providing shelter for the homeless is a global problem, as the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka pointed out at the 35th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1980. The concern which his initiatives at the United Nations stimulated have led to the dedication of 1987 as an international Year of Shelter for the Homeless and the organisers of this Seminar are to be congratulated for the contribution they are making to thinking on the subject.

As we approach the year 2000, international interest is rightly being focussed on the conditions in which mankind is inescapable. The world population will be substantially



larger. Between 1950 and 1975 it grew from 2,500 million to 4,000 million. By the turn of the century it will exceed 6,000 million. Over 80 percent of these people will be in the developing countries, and despite the rapidity of urban growth, the large majority will be in the rural areas.

This is why, although the International Year for Shelter for the Homeless is dedicated to both urban and rural populations, I would like to direct my attention particularly to the rural poor. If present conditions are any guide, these people will continue to have lower incomes and suffer greater deprivation than urban citizens. In India, to take only one example, agricultural incomes are 50 percent lower than in other sectors of the economy, and the number of landless poor is increasing.

Such basic international aims as the W.H.O.'s target of Health for All by the year 2000 cannot be achieved while a massive proportion of Third World poor live in the appalling conditions that are so unhappily familiar throughout Asia, Africa and South America. Furthermore if they are not given improved conditions and some hope for the future they will swell the ranks of those seeking opportunities in the cities.

Even today I am under the impression that an insufficient amount of development effort is directed towards improving the quality of life of the rural populations of the Third World and I also note that worldwide, in both poor and rich nations, decisions are generally in an urban environment.

Establishing a free, constructive and continuing dialogue between the rural and urban populations of the Third World appears to me quite as important an objective as the more popularly canvassed one of achieving a dialogue between North and South.

At present many millions of these unfortunate people enter the world in such poverty that they are deprived of both the means and the motivation to improve their lot. Not only are they miserable, the social and economic cost of their plight is incalculable. Adequate accommodation is a principal factor in human health and well-being. It can bridge that terrible gulf between utter poverty and the possibility of a better future.

To talk of 'adequate accommodation' when the international community has been forced to lower its aspirations and speak only of shelter, not housing, may seem out of context, even absurdly optimistic. But practicality must be fired by hope and I would draw your attention to an element in the situation which is often ignored, although to its credit, the Commission on Human Settlements of the United Nations has recognised its existence.

That factor is individual enterprise, the determination of ordinary people to improve their own circumstances by whatever means possible. The Executive Director of the Commission has referred to the 'inherent ingenuity and capacity for survival' of the poor, and he is right. God has given even the least privileged among us the blessing of his spirit and that is a more important resource than any other available to man. The question is, how we can bring it to bear on the problem of shelter?

In the developing countries the vast majority of rural homes constructed in the foreseeable future will be self built, as is the case now. I am speaking not of shacks and hutments, but of more substantial, longer lasting dwellings. One way to improve the village housing situation must be for Government, possibly in collaboration with

international and non-governmental agencies, to provide the basic services and technical advice for village housing schemes, the labour and much of the materials being supplied by the people themselves.

The 'site and service' idea is not new, although perhaps in the rural context it would be more appropriate to refer to 'technology and service', bearing in mind that the likelihood of the many millions of rural people having access to contractors, architects and engineers is unimaginably remote. However, long established traditions of collective construction exist in China, Indonesia and other areas, often using locally made materials, and the concept is rightly attracting attention today because, when re-thought in a modern context, it can provide a low cost solution to rural housing needs.

In my view, rural co-operative housing societies have seldom functioned as well as they might. More often than not they have been undercapitalised from the start and there has been insufficient management expertise either within them or available to them. Given better access to outside resources and outside expertise, they could – and indeed should – play a significant role in the financing of rural housing.

Obviously no kind of 'technology and service' or co-operative scheme can be carried out economically on a single unit basis. Such schemes involve the provision of water and water-borne sanitation services to each chosen development site in accordance with an overall plan drawn up by technical advisers, who might offer a small number of basic house designs and give instruction to the villagers in the elements of structure, sanitation, ventilation, and the more effective use of local materials. The latter could be particularly important.

The resolutions associated with the International Year of Shelter call for 'new approaches and methods' and 'for innovative policies'.

President Nyerere of Tanzania, whose country I recently had the pleasure of visiting again, remarked in 1977 that 'the widespread addiction to cement and tin roofs is a kind of mental paralysis'.

Both cement and corrugated iron are expensive and I agree with President Nyerere that at times architects planners and legislators tend to be excessively influenced by technology and consequently underrate local know how and materials. I have seen for myself what is being done to utilise local resources in China. In Indonesia the Islamic pesantren schools include carpentry and masonry in their curricula. Many other Third World communities have long established building techniques.

Education is therefore needed at all levels. Exposure to new concepts for some officials, basic education in sanitation and health for the adult villagers, education in basic building skills for schoolchildren, I have mentioned the pesantren schools in Indonesia. Could not more schools and hostels in rural areas teach the craft of simple building, if necessary out of normal school hours?

In so short a speech at this, the most I can do is project a few ideas for others to investigate. But one concept needs no further research. The poor are not mere inanimate, unmotivated, units of deprivation. They are living, thinking, feeling people like the rest of us and the closer we can come to making a synthesis between that which

they are capable of doing for themselves, and that which the State or voluntary agencies can provide, the closer we shall be to achieving shelter for the world's homeless.



## Luncheon hosted by AKF and Aga Khan Social Welfare Institutions

22 March 1983, Islamabad, Pakistan

Honourable Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
President Ramzan Merchant,  
Distinguished Guests,

It is a special and very welcome occasion for me to be amongst such distinguished representatives of government, of foreign countries and of international agencies here today: special because my family and I are deeply involved in social welfare in the widest sense and I particularly appreciate being amongst those who commit their time, resources and efforts for the benefit of mankind.

When I assumed the responsibilities of the Imamate 25 years ago I too became involved, as leader of the Ismaili community, in that most vital business, the well-being of ordinary people.

Islam, as I scarcely need to remind an audience here, is an all-encompassing faith. It gives direction to Man's life, urging the individual to achieve a balance between material progress and spiritual well-being. But no man, woman or child can hope to achieve such a balance in sickness, illiteracy or squalor.

My grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, initiated education and health services on this sub-continent in the 1880's because he believed that basic education and health are crucial stepping-stones towards mankind's self-realisation and growth.

Today, members of my community are spread through 25 countries. We have many hundred health care units, ranging from teaching hospitals down to village dispensaries and more than 300 education establishments from pre-primary to university. These are on their way to becoming an internationally linked system of voluntary non-profit, Muslim institutions serving all communities, which through their welfare activities are contributing to improving the quality of life in many parts of the Third World.

These institutions are also beginning to fulfil an aspiration which I have always had for them: namely that they should help bridge the gulf between the developed and the developing worlds. This role is particularly appropriate to the Ismaili Imamate because of its commitment to broad social objectives without political connotations, save in its concern for the fundamental freedom of its followers to practice their faith.

At the apex of both our medical and our educational institutions is the Aga Khan University in Karachi, the charter of which was granted to us by His Excellency the President last Wednesday. The first faculty of this University, the Faculty of Health Sciences, will form part of a major medical complex, including the School of Nursing which opened in 1980, a medical college and a 721-bed teaching hospital.

The project as a whole is associated with the Universities of Harvard, McGill and McMaster in North America, and generous grants have been made by the Canadian International Development Agency towards the training of nurses and staff at the nursing school.

One of my greatest aspirations has been that the people of Pakistan would consider the University as an institution of their own and that all segments of the population would give it their support. I am, therefore, particularly gratified by the very generous donations we have been receiving for the University from numerous institutions and individuals in this country, and I am happy to confirm that we have now established an Aga Khan University Foundation to administer the corpus of funds being provided for the University, to reinforce its financial stability, and provide for its future operating costs.

The overall aim of the University, as I told those present at last week's ceremony, will be to make clear and rational judgements as to which foreseeable needs of the developing countries require new educational programmes and, having identified those openings, to address them by the appropriate means, setting the highest standards possible whether in teaching, in research, or in service.

To do this, the University needs to be an international one and we plan for it to have faculties in other countries.

Viewing problems in an international perspective has become an increasingly strong characteristic of the Imamat's activities. Indeed this is fundamental to the work of the Foundation, which now has affiliates in eight countries. It was officially recognised by the United Nations Development Programme in 1980 and by the World Health Organisation this year. It is today among the largest when measured in terms of its yearly commitments in the Third World.

The Aga Khan Hospital and University has been the largest project sponsored by the Foundation. But although its other activities range widely, it would be impossible for the Foundation to address the complete spectrum of Third World needs. Indeed, rather than diffuse its activities by disposing them too widely, it has selected four major themes to pursue. This also means that, since the Aga Khan University is oriented towards specific themes and towards problem solving, the two institutions have a degree of shared purpose and may in the future contribute to each other's expertise.

The first theme inspiring the foundation is seeking new, cost effective ways to improve the quality of education in developing countries.

Population and budget pressures on schools in the Third World have led to overcrowded classes and a scarcity of textbooks. Teachers have low social status and poor pay. The result is a serious dilution of the education provided for most children, especially in the rural areas and a decline in standards, often resulting in a refusal by industrialised nations to recognise academic qualifications given in the Third World.

The ways in which the Foundation is tackling this problem are numerous. They include efforts to make curricula more relevant to the local environment and the improvement of teaching standards, for example by giving technical assistance to schools in Tanzania.

The second theme centres on community oriented health development.

Because of high cost, the majority of people in developing countries do not have access to conventional medical and health services. The Foundation promotes community-based health, nutrition and medical programmes which emphasise what communities and families can do to improve their health.

Thus in Bangladesh it is supporting the field testing of a new rice based formula for the oral re-hydration treatment for intestinal disorders, the major cause of infant mortality in the Third World, it organises a highly successful goitre control programme in the northern areas of Pakistan, through the distribution of iodised salt, in Kenya, it is working with the government and other international agencies to plan and operate a comprehensive primary health care scheme in Nyanza Province. The latter project is a direct outcome of the seminar on 'The Role of Hospitals in Primary Health Care' which the Foundation and the World Health Organisation co-sponsored in 1981 in Karachi.

The third theme is that of generating employment and income in rural areas. If rural populations are to have hope for the future and not drift in despair to the already overcrowded cities, more productive job opportunities must be created for them. The Foundation has initiated wide-ranging rural support programmes both in Pakistan and in India.

The Foundation's fourth theme is improving the management of the Third World's natural resources, for example by helping a large-scale re-afforestation scheme in India.

All four of these themes are directed to improving the qualities of life in those developing countries in Asia and Africa where populations are under the greatest pressure and living in the most straightened circumstances. Frequently the practical application of the themes interlocks, as it does in the ambitious community basic services programme currently being undertaken here in the northern areas in co-operation with UNICEF and the Pakistan Government.

Along other elements, this programme will provide drinking water supplies and basic sanitation to 150 villages over the next few years. As well as contributing to the funding, the Aga Khan Institutions are concerned in the educational, health and building aspects. The central health board is training traditional birth attendants, our central education board is holding teacher refresher courses, and the housing board will be training artisans for self-help construction.

The rural support programme is helping underpin the whole project by identifying and promoting new income generating opportunities for the villagers, so that they are better able to contribute to their own welfare. Thus a whole family of contributing institutions is involved, including an international agency and government.

Nearly all the Foundation's programmes involve integrating resources from different parts of the World in collaboration with governments, with such international agencies as UNICEF and the World Health Organisation and with other private agencies.

Inevitably, and rightly, this experience has led us to certain conclusions about ways of handling international aid. Indeed we are learning all the time.

Our conclusion is that in the past too much investment has gone into capital assets and not enough into making people productive. Not least, investments has gone into projects which have a high public relations value to the donor and appear to confer prestige on the recipient country, but have little relevance either to identified needs or to the rural inhabitants who make up 80 percent of the Third World's population.

In the end, when the donor agencies' teams have departed, the assets they have supplied will have to be run by local people and funded locally. Yet have we not all seen projects



initiated without proper research into their future validity? Schools are built without sufficient thought being given to how the operating costs will be met, where the teachers will come from: or whether the proposed curriculum will contribute to the future manpower needs of the country. Hospitals are constructed without regard for the very high operating costs and without demographic surveys to ascertain the profile of the populations in the hospitals catchment area, or of likely changes in that profile. The question of how expensive equipment is to be renewed when it becomes obsolete or worn out may be disregarded entirely.

One corollary of this that more men and women of wide experience are needed to train local leaders, men and women who are motivated to come to grips with all aspects of a development proposal and who will not start implementing it simply, or even naively, out of goodwill and blind faith in the future, or as a result of political pressure, until the project has been fully evaluated.

Many thousands of people in Pakistan care deeply about the life of their fellows and an immense amount of voluntary action is undertaken here, but it often lacks coordination. To be effective and avoid wasteful duplication of effort, different agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, must work together. This is not to denigrate the service given by voluntary workers. Far from it. The volunteer is the lifeblood of our own central institutions. However, voluntary effort does need to be set in a professional frame, in order for it to be as effective as possible.

In my view, it might also be desirable for non-government organisations with a proven track record to be allowed wider scope by governments, for example by permitting them more direct relationships with international agencies. Both governments and philanthropic agencies would benefit from a more complete understanding of what problems are being addressed by what agencies in a given land. In the countries of the developing world with which I am familiar it is impossible to obtain even a simple but complete list of the agencies addressing a specific problem, such as health, education or rural development. Such information would greatly help non-governmental organisations in getting together to exchange and make better use of scarce and expensive expertise, possibly to exchange manpower.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the resources available to any developing country, whether human or material, are so limited that the maximum effective use must be made of them.

In this time of world recession, when both governments and non-governmental agencies are rigorously scrutinising aid budgets, it is an inescapable fact that aid will first go to those who are prepared to help themselves.

The Aga Khan Foundation aims to make professional analyses of local development needs in areas where the will exists among the inhabitants to contribute to their own future: to

produce viable project plans on the basis of these analyses: to ensure that the plans fulfil identified national requirements: and then to marry them to outside funding.

I believe this integrated approach is a dependable way forward both Pakistan and for the Third World as a whole.



## Lunch given by the Aga Khan Foundation, Toronto

### LOCATION

Toronto, Canada (27 April 1983)

Honourable Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
My Lord Chief Justice,  
Distinguished Guests,

It is a great pleasure both to be here in Toronto and to be addressing an audience whose concern with development questions in the Third World is far from academic. The activities of CIDA, of CARE, of OXFAM Canada, of AMI, of Canadian UNICEF, of such Provincial organisations as Alberta Aid, and of many non-governmental organisations and church groups, have rightfully established worldwide esteem for Canada's strong sense of mission in helping less fortunate nations. The Aga Khan Foundation is happy to be able to collaborate with these organisations in its own programmes to promote development and social welfare in Asia and Africa.

Obviously, although the Foundation's activities range widely, it is impossible for it to address the complete spectrum of Third World needs. Therefore, it has chosen its areas of endeavour with considerable care and has always sought to analyse problems and to look for their root causes before developing responses. By the nature of the Ismaili Community's demography – members of my community live in large numbers in many parts of the Third World – the Foundation is in daily contact at all levels with both urban and rural citizens. So, although the Foundation's efforts are directed toward the welfare of all communities, these grass roots contacts do give an added dimension to the

surveys we carry out and assist in evaluating plans and programmes against the background of national planning in the countries concerned.

Not surprisingly, since the Foundation was established in 1967, we have come to certain conclusions about how to make aid more effective and I hope that you will forgive me if, in explaining our thinking, I go back briefly to the basic considerations which face us.

As we approach the year 2000 international interest is understandably being focussed on the conditions in which mankind will find itself during the twenty-first century. One fact is inescapable. The world population will be substantially larger. Between 1950 and 1975 it grew from 2,500 million to 4,000 million. By the turn of the century it will exceed 6,000 million. Over 80 percent of these people will be in the developing countries. Despite the rapidity of Third World urban growth, the huge majority of them will be rural dwellers and, if present conditions are any guide, they will have lower incomes and suffer greater deprivation than urban citizens.

You may well comment that there is nothing very new about this. Enough has been said and written about the North South dialogue for the citizens of a country as committed to overseas aid as Canada to be well aware of the demographic differences between the industrialised world and the developing nations of Asia, Africa and South America.

But there is another dialogue which is in every way as important as the north south one and that is the inter-action within the Third World between rural populations and the predominantly urban national decision makers.

I am under the impression that in most African and Asian countries insufficient efforts have been made to create a permanent, constructive and effective dialogue between the rural populations and national planners.

No matter how intellectually compelling we find such international objectives as "Health for all by the year 2000" of the "International Year of Shelter" scheduled for 1987, or the concept of universal primary education, these worthy objectives will not be achieved – not even be approached – if the world's rural populations do not participate in them. Equally, the objectives will remain unattainable if the drift to the cities is not stemmed by improvements in the quality of rural life sufficient to persuade rural people to stay on the land. It is a tremendous task, and it can only succeed through involving rural people, materially and emotionally, in programmes to generate employment, improve basic living conditions and provide education.

This genuine participation by the people whom schemes are intended to benefit is an essential ingredient of the projects we undertake. So is a multi-disciplinary approach, tackling rural development problems of education, health and productivity in an integrated way. Even with the kind of grass roots contacts we enjoy, it is simply impossible at the launching of a rural support programme, to determine exactly what elements will eventually have the greatest impact on the largest number of people. Consequently, in my view, the greatest chance of making a programme effective lies in giving it as all-enveloping an approach as possible.

Needless to say, we did not arrive at this concept in a blinding flash of inspiration. It derived from experience. We learnt very early of the importance of a professional approach to management of social welfare projects and the need to train local people as managers; and, remembering that our resources will always be limited by comparison with the intimidating scale of Third World needs, we arrived at four main themes to pursue in our programmes.

The first is seeking new, cost effective ways to improve the quality of basic education in developing countries. The second centres on community-oriented health development, tackling the fact that, because of the high cost involved, the majority of people in developing countries do not have access to conventional medical and health services. By “community-oriented” I do not, of course, mean only the Ismaili community but all communities at village level, for example our programmes for primary health care in the Nyanza province of Kenya. Thirdly, the Foundation is endeavouring to generate employment and income in rural areas through rural support programmes in which CIDA and Alberta Aid are interested. Fourthly, we are concerned with improving the management of the Third World’s natural resources, for example by helping re-forestation schemes in India, which stop the spread of erosion and consequent loss of arable land.

Frequently, the practical application of these themes interlocks, as the Community Basic Services Programme which we have instituted in the Northern Areas of Pakistan, in collaboration with UNICEF and the Pakistan Government. These mountainous districts are among the poorest and most backward in the sub-continent and our programme’s aspects include providing drinking water and sanitation to villages, training birth attendants and introducing schemes for curriculum development and teacher training in schools.

At the same time the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme in the Northern Areas – also a programme in which Alberta Aid and CIDA are interested – is underpinning the whole project by identifying and promoting income generating opportunities for the villagers so that they are better able to contribute to their own welfare. It is our hope that the Support Programme will eventually work itself out of a job because it will have made the local population’s endeavours self-generating.

This brings me to what I believe is an extremely important point. Until recently too many aid programmes have been capital intensive and geared to the type of Western urbanised economies with which the donor countries are familiar. Programmes which would make rural people more productive have all too often been pushed into the background.

Yet consider the nature of ordinary dwellers. In our experience they are extraordinary resilient and – like most Third World people – possess remarkable determination to improve their own circumstances. A major turning point is reached in any family’s outlook when it feels confident of its future and able to save for that future. In the Third World we are not talking about saving for refrigerators or cars. We are talking about the ability to buy proper clothing and to send children to primary school, to live in a house – however primitive – rather than a hovel. We are talking about improvements which do not require large amounts of money but do require a genuine understanding of the

impediments to improving the quality of life of rural people. We are talking about stimulating a personal adaptability which does not feature often enough in the terminology of many western planners.

Once rural people have adopted a concept – as in Northern Pakistan they have adopted ideas for the self help construction of village schools – they will often carry it through construction far faster than planners would expect.

When confidence in development programmes is established, it may also be possible to unlock reserves of rural wealth which are at present unutilised. In the Third World rural people do not have bank accounts – at best they may have access to co-operative banks. They invest their savings in gold and silver, in small, portable, high value items which they can easily pass on to other members of their families. But this wealth might, given progress and stability, be persuaded into productive investment, into tractors and other implements, into seeds and fertilisers.

I have noticed that the countries in Asia have begun to create rural wealth, whereas Africa is slower to do so. But in both those parts of the world I have discerned a new sense of pragmatism, a new realism and openness in the discussion of economic problems. Ten years ago the prominence of political ideas in Third World economic planning at times prevented the white elephant scheme of development being discussed. Today, serious questions are being asked as to what to do with them and interestingly one solution frequently proposed is to offer them to the private sector.

The recognition of private sector capabilities, which in the past have often considered politically unacceptable in developing countries, is extending into the sphere of social institutions. More and more countries are questioning why it was ever necessary to nationalise competent private schools and medical facilities. In Pakistan, for example, private schools are now being returned to their former owners.

Such moves are without doubt the product of the recession and of lack of resources. Developing nations have observed how the industrialised nations are dealing with the recession and have themselves accepted economic restraints which they would have thought intolerable a few years ago. Along with this new pragmatism has come an increasing search for better management – for the tools of evaluating economic benefit and for the management personnel to operate them.

Overall, I would say that the emotional and psychological context in which the Third World is discussing development is more rational today than it has been for many years. The question is how long this environment will last and how the industrialised countries are going to react to the potential for effective development which this situation offers.

My sincere hope is that as the industrialised world pulls itself out of recession it will give the Third World increasing access to its know-how and make available increasing material support. In the present context, this support will land on fertile soil and substantial results will be achieved.

If the industrialised world does not do this in the relatively near future, but builds barriers to protect itself against any recurrence of economic crisis, then the world recession will do even more damage than it has already done to Third World economies. The

pragmatists will be overtaken by failure of performance and their countries will return, through sheer frustration, to the strident conflicts of the past, and rational reflection will once again become endangered.





## Presentation of Academic Awards, London University

07 July 1983 London, UK

Dr Taylor,  
Professor Lawton,  
Distinguished Guests,

It gives me very great pleasure to be here today and to accept Dr Taylor's invitation to present the first Awards resulting from a collaborative programme which holds considerable promise for the future. The Institute of Ismaili Studies is indeed fortunate in being able to extend the scope of its cooperation with a University which is renowned for its international outlook and whose Institute of Education is held in such very high esteem throughout the world. Nor can I let this occasion pass without adding my sincere congratulations to Dr Taylor on his becoming Principal-Designate of the University and to Professor Lawton on his promotion to be Director of the Institute. You have both shown our Institute a consideration and helpfulness for which we shall always be grateful and we all wish you both the greatest success in your new appointments.

Dr Taylor has been kind enough to refer to the network of Aga Khan educational institutions in the Third World. At the apex of this educational structure stands the Aga

Khan University, a major aim of which is to identify the openings for new educational programmes in the developing countries and in addressing those openings to set the highest possible standards. This pursuit of excellence is the inspiration of our schools at every level and an important factor in achieving it is the interchange of ideas and skills with suitable institutions in the Western World. The new joint course which starts this month between the University of London Institute of Education here, our own Institute of Ismaili Studies and McGill University in Canada will be a prime example of how beneficially these interchanges can be organised. Future students who qualify from this course will take new ideas and techniques to invigorate our schools in the Third World, and to bring about the transformations which current problems demand, as I hope will you, who are about to receive your awards today.

This is therefore an appropriate moment to reflect briefly on the present role of education in the Islamic world.

The Islamic world, as we all know, is being compelled to face two challenges at the same time: that of dealing with the Islamic countries' own indigenous problems and that of adapting Twentieth Century Western technology to those countries' development needs. How we meet these challenges will condition our ability to make progress both within our own context and in the context of the World as a whole. Education is crucial to this, because education determines people's approach to the widest problems facing civilisation. Both my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mohammed Shah Aga Khan, who created the basic structure of the Aga Khan institutions, and I myself, in building on that structure, have been deeply aware that education is the key to such widely ranging endeavours as creating a modern economy; as adapting the system of Islamic jurisprudence to present day conditions; as improving the role and status of women in society; as creating a physical environment of buildings which are sympathetic to Islamic culture and tradition. Education is the key to all this and more. It is fundamental to rural progress. It will equip the youth of Islam for the future, whether at village level, in nations, or in the Umma as a whole. This is why the traditional educational patterns which we have inherited need to be analysed and, where necessary, re-structured.

I have often discussed education with leading Muslim thinkers and asked such questions as how the traditional Koranic school or Madrassah can continue to coexist successfully with modern secular educational systems which are often rooted in a basically alien colonial mould. How can this duality be resolved?

Some ways towards resolving it may emerge from the course the students here today have completed. You have been educated in both religious studies and in teacher training. In particular – and I attach high importance to this – you have studied the development of curricula in schools and you have qualified to teach other subjects besides religion. You have made use of special option to study contemporary Islamic questions and how education can address them. You will have an important role in maintaining and

modernising the standards of education in our schools, as well as in the training of future generations of teachers.

Let me conclude by reminding you that ultimately the future of education in our Aga Khan schools will be in your hands and the hands of those who follow in your footsteps. You have been lucky to be the first to benefit from what I hope will be a long and fruitful collaboration between us and this eminent University. We have a great deal for which to thank the University of London Institute of Education: not least the thoughtful and detailed advice of Professor Peter Williams on the re-acquisition of our schools in Pakistan. Indeed personally I have a very long-standing reason to respect the high intellectual achievements of London University and it is something I know London University does not know about. As an undergraduate at Harvard my required reading included the works of Bernard Lewis, who was until 1974 Professor of the History of the Near and Middle East at the University's School of Oriental and African Studies. London University has given all of you qualifying today a great opportunity and I am sure that you will justify the trust which we all are placing in you.



## Aga Khan Award Ceremony, Istanbul

04 September 1983 Istanbul, Turkey.

Your Excellency, The President,  
Your Excellencies,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished Guests,

Three years ago the first Aga Khan Architectural Awards were announced in the fabled Shalimar Gardens of Lahore. Today we are honoured that the Turkish Government has so generously invited us to hold the second prize giving at the no less legendary Topkapi Seray, the grand palace from which, for over four centuries, the Ottoman dynasty ruled most of Western Islam. To be here is particularly significant for us because from the start of the search for excellence with the Award represents, we have felt that the recognition of contemporary architectural achievement is strengthened by association with major examples of the Muslim heritage, in which both Istanbul and this country as a whole are so very rich.

Equally, we have wished to interest the governments of today in the Award's efforts. Architecture is of primary importance to all of us, from ordinary citizens to national leaders, because it affects every aspect of our daily lives. Both the Steering Committee and I

are delighted that Your Excellency has found time to be here today and so demonstrate that you share our concern to improve the built environment.

Your Excellency, this country, a modern secular state the majority of whose citizens are Muslims, is not only the keeper of many of mankind's and the Islamic world's greatest treasures. It is at the forefront of present day architectural thinking. Indeed the activity of Turkish architects was reflected in our 1980 Awards, when three of their projects were premiated as outstanding achievements and it is a happy coincidence that today's award ceremony is taking place in the centennial year of the first Turkish school of architecture, now the Mimar Sinan University.

Few of the other nations with which the Award is concerned are so fortunate. In the Third World especially, where most of them have only emerged recently from colonial rule in the last quarter of a century, architecture has long tended to be dominated by imported aesthetic ideas as well as by Western technology and materials. Even countries which have controlled their own political destinies for generations have accepted international canons of architecture which are in essence alien. In consequence, the revaluation of national inheritances which has been so strong a characteristic of recent decades has confronted many Islamic countries with a difficult dilemma. How can they maintain or revive their traditional cultures without losing the benefits of modern technology?

Different countries necessarily respond to this dilemma in different ways. In certain circumstances perceptions of the conflict involved may be acute. Urban communities, for example, may instinctively associate traditional building methods with poverty and a past from which today's citizens seek to escape, while Western technology and its associated values are seen as modern, desirable and cost effective. By contrast rural populations are less likely to feel international techniques applicable to their needs, or to consider them affordable financially. But, variable as such responses may be, the conflict between technology and traditional cultures is indisputably an important issue in the Islamic world today.

Nor are the countries of Islam alone facing this problem. Nations as far apart as Japan and Spain, as the Philippines and France, are attempting to reconcile the conflicting demands of maintaining their own cultural identities and yet achieving technological progress.

From the inception of the Award we have been concerned to help analyse and reconcile this conflict and to motivate a search for solutions to it. We have hoped to inspire a new sense of direction, stimulating fresh thinking and creativity at the same time as appreciating the value of historical tradition and what can be learnt from the past. We have endeavoured to promote confidence in the architectural languages of the peoples of Islam, languages which, through years of neglect, have until recently come perilously close to losing their identities.

In premiating projects which demonstrate excellence at all levels, the Aga Khan Award has endeavoured to encourage those who build to meet both the cultural and the functional needs of the people who will use their constructions.

We have now been pursuing this aim through six years of continuous activity by the Steering Committee, by the Convenor, by technical review members, by the Master Juries and not least by field trips. In support of our aims we have conducted Seminars on different aspects of Architectural Transformations in the Islamic world. The outcome of these labours has been that the Master Juries have premiatted 26 projects, 15 at the first ceremony at Lahore in 1980 and 11 which are being given prizes today. At Lahore I stressed how profoundly wrong it would be to impose formal criteria of excellence upon the Award at its inception. Our mission had to be one of collective searching for solutions in a spirit of open-mindedness. Today, three years on, it may be appropriate to ask what we have learnt, in which areas the Award may have had a constructive impact upon the way in which the built environment is dealt with, in which areas we may have failed and in what directions we should look forward.

At the start, in 1977, we set out to bring together a wide spectrum of professional talent, both Muslim and non-Muslim, to consider whether there was a case for seeking to invigorate and perhaps reorient the built environment of the Islamic world. This was a task of global dimension, in which we had to recognise the immense diversity of the countries involved and to accept that the only theoretical base underpinning modern architecture in the world of Islam – as in most of the Third World – was a passive acceptance of the ‘International architecture to which I have already referred and of its materials and its methods. Thus there was indeed a base, but was it the right one?

Among our most important aims therefore, was to instigate a multiplicity of thinking processes, viewing architectural problems in the light of many factors: aesthetic, historical, economic, practical. For example, here in Istanbul one cannot fail to be struck by the powerful effect of domes and minarets on the skyline of the city. But does that mean that the architects of today must continue to incorporate those formal elements in their structures and, if it does not, what replacements will prove symbolically and aesthetically satisfactory, as well as being of use? In addressing such questions we have aimed to stimulate free ranging discussion, without encouraging any particular polarisation of views.

So what have we learnt and in what areas may the Award claim to have had a constructive impact.

I believe that the Award has established the case for seeking to invigorate the built environment of the Islamic world; that we have helped to highlight the complexity of the influences which buildings of all kinds have on the societies that use them; and that we have raised the level of consciousness about these issues both among members of the



public and within the architectural profession, especially the younger generation of architects working in Islamic countries.

In eight Seminars organised by the Award, bringing together talented architects, planners and thinkers from many parts of the world, has helped clarify issues and priorities in a number of specific areas. One might compare the overall problem to the search for solutions to a pyramid, each block of which is analysed in turn by a seminar, so gradually achieving a better understanding of the whole. In these Seminars we have always aims to learn rather than assuming the pretension of teaching.

Linked with this search has been a concern to make national decision-makers aware of the aesthetic and technical options in the built environment which they may not have considered in the past when international design appeared to most people to represent the totality of improvement available. In fact, concepts of progress and of an improved quality of life can now be adjusted into idioms much closer to appropriate cultural traditions than was thought possible twenty-five years ago.

Thus, the Award has occupied itself with both issues and people, premiating projects which are of catalytic value in the evolution of a new cultural and environmental sensibility, as well as for their design merits. In so doing we have endeavoured to illuminate the inner mechanisms of contemporary Muslim civilisation and to do this within the universal human guidelines of our Faith.

The Master Juries' decisions are entirely their own, as they must be if they are to retain international respect. The first Jury three years ago selected and premiated in terms of a series of searches for social, aesthetic and historic objectives. The second Jury has attached more importance to visual quality and architectural impact. Its eleven choices are taken from some 220 nominations, which as it has commented in its statement, reflect the scope and diversity of the Muslim world with its myriad challenges.

The projects which the Master Juries have premiaded are not intended to represent absolute solutions to these challenges, but rather to be valid steps in the process of search. The built environment of the Islamic world has always been developed in the main by craftsmen who work without the benefit of the latest professional training and their efforts are certain to continue side by side with the transformations of architects commanding the full resources of modern expertise. Thus the Award has responded to the technology of the twenty-first century displayed by the Hajj Terminal at Jeddah and equally the traditional craftsmanship of the master builder of the Niono Mosque in Mali. We have premiaded a low income housing project in the Medina in Tunis, the domestic spaciousness of a house here in Turkey and the rejuvenated pride of indigenous Malaysian design created by the Tanjong Java Beach Hotel. I am delighted that a significant proportion of the prizes reward the talents of the younger generation of architects.



In several instances projects premiated are the result of Muslim and Western architects working in collaboration, while this time three prizes have gone to projects which have constructed or preserved historic buildings that are part of the Islamic heritage, thus emphasising the importance of learning from the past. It is only by appreciating how old environments are seen and understood by both decision makers and the general public in their own cultural context – whether it is a monument, a house, a village or a city – that the willingness and the means will be found either to preserve them, to adapt them for new uses or even, at times, to abandon them.

Here I am, of course, simplifying a complex issue which inevitably has economic and financial implications as well, and which has, I know, troubled the present Master Jury. How far is it justifiable to draw on a developing nation's limited resources for the expensive research and educational effort involved in restoring a building tradition?

However, the central question is cultural. We have to maintain our cultural heritage and one of the continuing aims of the Award must be to help discover acceptable mechanisms for eliciting valid responses to problems not only of restoration but of city planning, of rural growth and of housing. These are not specifically Islamic problems, they are universal, but in considering solutions we must recognise that there are differences between Muslim and Western outlooks on life and on man's relationship to the universe. Furthermore climatically and demographically most countries where Muslims live are different from those in which contemporary planning concepts have evolved. It is profoundly desirable that the environment we build for Muslims should reflect their individuality, their civilisation and their needs.

This brings me back to my earlier query. I have indicated some areas in which the Award has made progress. Are there also areas in which we have failed? In what directions should we now be looking?

The Master Jury's selections are merely the most visible aspect of a large number of activities which are designed to impact upon as many as possible of the constituencies influencing the built environment: constituencies which include not only architects, planners and engineers, but academics, the media, the civil servants who formulate policy, the intelligentsia, the financial institutions who lend money for construction and, as I have said before, national leaders.

Here we still have a long way to go. During the next few months the staff and the Steering Committee will scrutinise the methods and results of the past three years work and we shall be asked, as we have before, if it is sufficient for our search to be purely reflective. Should we not be seeking to articulate new directions ourselves, rather than simply identifying the trends and thoughts which come from those who build? If we wish to invigorate the built environment, should we not allow our concern for the future to take more active forms?

The answer is that the Award only seeks to premiate new directions taken by others: to encourage, not to direct. It is the task of the Award to maintain a balance between its own aims and objectives, the judgements of outsiders, and the multifarious activities and accomplishments of the whole Islamic world. It is not a School of Architecture, nor an executive agency engaged in the restoration or the development of sites. Were it become activist in its approach, it could too easily lose its independence of judgement.

What we can do is to improve and supplement the Award's process of contacts and information in order to address its chosen constituencies more effectively. The seminars, the publications, the informal contacts made during field trips, the lectures and writing of people associated with the Award – all these enable it to act as a catalyst and a motivator, which was the role on which the case for its existence rested originally and still rests.

The Award will, I hope, now build on this catalytic role, by becoming a medium for the exchange of information and reflection through which everyone concerned with the built environment can gain the stimulus to think about the deeper implications of what they are doing.

Thus at the highest level of the Award we should be able to assist the decision makers of today to become more aware of current concerns and ideas, since, as I have already indicated many more exciting and challenging options are available now than existed a generation ago. At the level of research we could enlarge its contribution to the international discourse about architecture. At the academic level we could utilise the dossiers resulting from nominations, which are in themselves a valuable if not unique record of contemporary thought and practice, to assist those institutions where the professionals of the future are trained.

The Award is concerned with planners, engineers and builders, with the whole spectrum of people involved in construction, and especially with young architects, whose technological competence specially in regard to cultural awareness are so important for the future. We should say to them, as to all people who build for the Islamic world. 'Your cultural heritage is unique and universally admired. Enhance your traditions and project them into the 21st Century. Move ahead within your own idiom and culture. If you want to change course, do so. It is man's privilege to control what he does with his own built environment. If you are uncertain, we will help you, because it will be your achievements which are the key to our long-term success.'

What will be the appropriate mechanisms for thus enlarging the Award's catalytic activity has yet to be decided. To evolve them will be the task of the Steering Committee during the next two years, but I hope they will encompass the objectives I have just outlined. If we are to respond adequately to the challenges facing us, we must always look to the future. The search for solutions is a voyage of discovery on which we must neither fail to gain from experience nor fear to explore further.

Meanwhile, through the second series of Awards being presented here today we are moving one step further towards our aim – and I do not deny that it is an ambitious one – of recognising and promoting what is worthy in the built environment of the lands where Muslims live, and of propagating what is good now so that those who follow may be inspired towards excellence.

Thank you.



## Lecture at the University of Virginia

13 April 1984 Charlottesville, Virginia, USA

Dean Robertson,  
Members of the Faculty,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Earlier today I became the proud recipient of the 1984 Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation Medal for Architecture on the greatest honours this historic University can bestow and one that it gave me immense pleasure to accept.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am about to repay that honour by addressing your School of Architecture on its own subject when I have no architectural training myself. Worse still, of all days which to take such a liberty, I am taking it on Friday the Thirteenth.

I doubt if anything can excuse such behaviour, even being a graduate of Harvard.

However, there is an entirely serious and deep-rooted reason for my concern with architecture and it is one which your University's founder would, I think, have appreciated.

The built environment which we inhabit affects the qualities of all our lives, whether we are Muslims or Christians, whether we live in the West or the Third World.

The architectural questions with which I have increasingly occupied myself are universal, although as a leader of a Muslim community my primary interest has naturally been with Muslims and because Islamic countries are almost entirely in the Third World, my attention has been focussed there.

Since the arts and architecture of Islam are possibly unfamiliar to some of you, it may be appropriate for me to begin by setting the historical scene of the Islamic world, which is both geographically and demographically far more diverse than many people in America and Europe realise.

The Muslim Ummah is a world community of the faithful, some 800 million strong, which extends as far east as Indonesia and as far west as Morocco. The heartland of Islam is of course the Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan, but there are Muslims in western China, in southern Russia and in Yugoslavia, while the peoples of many West African countries – Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Senegal and others – became converted to the Faith when they were accessible to civilisation only by the desert route across the Sahara. Kano, a major Muslim city of northern Nigeria, has a recorded history stretching back a thousand years.

At the height of Islamic civilisation, Muslim academies of higher learning reached from Spain to India and from North Africa to Afghanistan. Muslim scholars reached pinnacles of achievement in astronomy, geography, physics, philosophy, mathematics and medicine. It is no exaggeration to say that the original Christian Universities of the Latin West, at Paris, Bologna and Oxford, indeed the whole European Renaissance, received a vital influx of new knowledge from the Islamic world: an influx from which later Western Colleges and Universities were to benefit in turn, including those of North America.

Along with this civilisation came a magnificent flowering of the arts and architecture: the buildings created by the great Islamic Empires rank among the finest monuments of civilisation in any part of the globe.

From the Dome of the Rock completed in Jerusalem in 692 to the Taj Mahal and the Pearl Mosques constructed by the Moghul emperors in India in the seventeenth century, from the Topkapi Seray in Istanbul to the glories of Isfahan, from Cordoba and Toledo in Spain to the Gur-I-Amir in Samarkand, architectural triumphs signposted the development of Islamic civilisation, many of them designed to reflect the promises of our Faith.

Here I must explain the importance of the Faith to every aspect of a Muslim's life, including his physical environment: all beings are affected positively or negatively by their surroundings but for Muslims it is a particularly critical matter.

Muslims believe in all-encompassing unity of man and nature. To them there is no fundamental division between the spiritual and the material, while the whole world, whether it be the earth, sea or air, or the living creatures that inhabit them, is an expression of God's creation. The aesthetics of the environment we build and the quality of the social interactions that take place within those environments reverberate on our spiritual life, and there has always been a very definite ethos guiding the best Islamic architecture.

At their simplest these social interactions affecting buildings revolve around the family being a closely knit entity with an internal momentum and rhythm of its own, the family living and working within a wider brotherhood of people of the same faith.

Thus, although in time the great Islamic Empires fell, as did the Empires of Greece and Rome, of China and Japan, the Muslim culture they sustained was not affected in a parallel way to those others, since the Faith itself remained strong and for many Muslims the concepts of what desirable in a building continued to be inspired by the Faith.

Nonetheless there was of course a profound effect upon Muslim culture when centrifugal forces fractured the material power and economic strength of the Islamic Empires, for example when the Fatimid dynasty was destroyed in Egypt in the twelfth century, the Moghul power was broken by the British conquest of India in the nineteenth, and finally the Ottoman Empire collapsed as a result of the First World War.

However, the spirit behind the culture was not broken. Rather one could say that in succeeding centuries, different areas of Islamic civilisation went into eclipse, almost into hibernation, until a whole series of new nation states emerged from colonial rule during the present century, some like Syria and modern Turkey, between the two World Wars, but most of them after the 1939-45 war: Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Gulf Emirates, the numerous states of North Africa, Central Africa and West Africa.

Only a few of these states, Saudi Arabia being one, had not experienced foreign rule and all found themselves facing political, social and economic challenges that were immensely more complex and potent than had been current in those earlier centuries when Islamic architecture had flowered.

During the long periods of interregnum between the destruction of empire and the re-attainment of sovereignty, Islamic culture – already, as I have said, forced into hibernation – was further weakened but the West becoming the focal point of international economic development, with a resultant emphasis on Western cultural and artistic values.

Even when the Islamic states did recover political independence, sometimes within freshly-drawn frontiers, they were brought into being as reflections of Western concepts of nationhood. The most obvious example of this was Turkey, which Atatürk re-shaped from the remnants of the Ottoman Empire as a secular state in the belief that the adoption of

Western patterns would enable his country to achieve a western degree of economic development.

The impact upon architecture, first of colonial rule and then of modern Islamic nations obtaining their impetus for economic development from the West, has been all but overwhelming. It has affected both the monumental, or what one might call opinion-making, structures – government buildings, hospitals, corporate offices, industrial complexes, airports – and the vernacular traditions of rural construction.

This is not to say that the architectural legacy of colonial rule was necessarily bad. The Secretariat buildings in New Delhi, completed in the early 1930s by the British architect, Lutyens, incorporated elements of Indo-Islamic tradition with Greek classical forms to create a series of monumental edifices which would reflect the grandeur of the British Raj. The result was hardly Indian or Moghul, but remains spectacular and memorably dignified.

At the domestic level, the British developed the traditional Bengali single-storey house with shaded verandas into the new form known as the bungalow, which was well suited to living in heat and humidity and is today characteristic of better class housing throughout the Indian sub-continent.

However, in the vast majority of cases the legislatures and courts and residences created in the Third World, both in colonial days and after political independence have merely been copies from foreign images of political and commercial power. Anyone who visits former French West Africa or British East Africa must be struck by the impact of French and British design idioms in those areas.

At the other end of the scale, the vernacular architecture of rural people, the on-going construction utilising affordable local materials, has been seriously eroded. Imported cement and corrugated iron have taken the place of mud or stone or wood, first because of their intrinsic qualities and secondly because ordinary citizens have tended to see much Western materials as modern and desirable, in spite of their unsuitability for hot climate.

At the higher, or monumental, level there have been attempts to reverse this dependence on alien models. People did ask why the Islamic world should accept them. But in nine out of ten cases the outcome was little more than mimicry of the Islamic glories of earlier periods without regard to crucial differences between those times and the present. Adding a dome and towers to a downtown office block does not make it either Islamic or appropriate.

Not only have social and economic conditions altered. The properties of the available building materials have vastly improved and so has technical knowledge. To give a simple example: for countless centuries the unsupported area of ceilings in Arabian houses was dictated by the average length of a mangrove pole, because mangrove poles shipped by dhow from Africa were the only load-bearing resistant to white ants.



Yet despite such changes, scarcely any effort has been made to re-invigorate the vernacular architecture which is so important to the quality of life and contentment of both rural and urban people.

In this connection, I must stress the size of rural populations in the Third World and the need to improve living conditions in the rural areas, to maintain food production and to stem the flow of those leaving the land.

Between 1950 and 1975 the world's population grew from 2,500 million to 4,000 million. By the turn of the century it will be 6,000 million and of those people eighty per cent will be in the Third World, the vast majority of them rural dwellers. They represent a housing problem of immense dimension.

The populations of the Third World always been predominantly rural, and although Western perceptions tend to be of Islamic architecture as having been urban, in fact many exceptional buildings of its golden ages were in the rural areas. Nor were the few urban centres of Islamic culture under pressure as they are today. Coupled with a vastly higher birthrate, unending streams of refugees from rural poverty now pour into the cities. Jakarta and Karachi have become enormous concentrations of population. Even the recently sleepy port of Dar-es-Salaam in East Africa will have four million inhabitants by the turn of the century. Houses, roads, schools, hospitals and drainage systems are required at a rate far beyond the capacity of government administrators to supply them: even if they had the money.

My own awareness of these issues did not come all at once. It developed over a long time. As the Imam of a twelve-million strong community spread among some 25 countries I have been constantly concerned with the construction of schools, clinics, hospitals, office complexes and indeed ordinary housing. In so doing I have become more and more concerned with the physical form that the Islamic world of the future will take and with how technological experience can be appropriately utilised to assist it. In my view, certain issues need to be addressed with particular urgency.

The movement of people to the cities, which has been an unlooked-for outcome of political independence, desperately requires solutions if urban centres are not to be overwhelmed.

Vernacular architecture must be re-thought because it fails to cater for contemporary aspirations, either in the rural areas or the towns. Eighty percent of the populations of the Third World construct their own dwellings. They must be assisted in a practical way towards better methods and the use of easily available, affordable materials.

Western technology needs to be reconciled with traditional cultures in a creative way, and certain crafts which have dwindled could usefully be revived.

Above all the built environment of the Islamic countries must enable the ethos of their civilisation, to which I have already referred, to express itself, as well as giving the sense of national identity and integrity which political leaders sought at independence.

We who are responsible for the built environment of the Islamic world have to ask ourselves many questions. Islamic architecture has never been monolithic: it has been diverse as the demography of the Islamic peoples, as the slides we shall show in a moment illustrate. How much of its valid and appropriate today?

The mud brick mosques of Mali are still a primary influence in local Muslim lives. Can this form of building survive? Can the tall stone and mud town houses of Yemen adapt to urban change? Have the tile work and plasterwork and magnificently decorated interiors of houses in Morocco and Pakistan an appropriate place in new constructions?

I hope you can bear such questions in mind as you see some aspects of the Islamic tradition and of the problems thrust upon the built environment by changing social and economic conditions.

Before examining the issues further I would like to emphasise two related points.

What happens to the built environment is highly visible. You notice decay and change in it immediately. But it was not only architecture which went into eclipse for a long period, the other arts were also affected: literature, music and painting.

Furthermore, when I speak about Muslims' concern for the built environment in the Islamic world. I am not talking about the extremists, whether they take the most restrictive view of the obligations of our Faith or pursue the opposite line of rejecting everything inherited from the past. I am talking about the silent majority of the world's 800 million Muslims.

As I explained earlier, my awareness that there might be a case for seeking to re-invigorate and perhaps re-orient the built environment of the Islamic world was awakened by the needs of my own Ismaili Shia community. But I decided very early on that to attempt to tackle my own constituency alone could be interpreted as vain and self-serving, and might even isolate us from other Muslims if they did not genuinely share our concerns. The problem appeared generic to the whole Islamic world and if this was confirmed, as indeed it was, it had to be approached in the widest context.

So what, as an individual, could I do? Certainly not set myself up as a judge. What I might do was to become an observer, trying to establish a perception of what was happening so that those responsible for creating or preserving buildings gained greater insight into how their work impacted the quality of Muslims' lives.

It is with the well being of individuals that we must occupy ourselves, whether they be peasants or the intelligentsia. We must be concerned with how they perceive their environment and would like to improve it.

As we all know, things, which we take for granted today, were often unthinkable or simply not thought about thirty years ago. Indonesia and Pakistan became independent Islamic nations in the late 1940s, followed rapidly by other former colonies. Yet in the 1950s and 1960s the question whether the environment of the Third World was being developed in a culturally desirable way was seldom publicly debated, perhaps because architecture was seen simply as a tool of national endeavour.

The key political issues revolved around sovereignty, statehood, and whether the Third World nations could achieve continuity of government without recourse to either Western or Marxist political concepts. To govern successfully meant addressing the key issues of food production and economic survival. The aim of development was to increase productivity, whether by bringing infrastructure services to industry or irrigation to the fields. This was what mattered and so-called international architecture and design was so widely accepted as representing progress that few people considered there was any other alternative.

When I started asking questions in the early 1970s I discovered that my concern was shared by other Muslims at all levels of society, from master masons to Government Ministers, though not necessarily for the same reasons.

At one end of the scale, the fervent believer saw architecture as an expression of his Faith. At the other stood the individual who had no faith, but was of Islamic extraction. This person discerned a continuity in the culture of the Islamic society in which he lived, and wished what was being built to be compatible with that culture. The link between these two opposites was always the desire to change direction and to cease going forward blindly.

Gradually, I realised how essential it was to make the issues publicly understood and to foster the appreciation that there were choices available. This left a further question begging, namely how to select between the choices. We ran straight up against the whole issue of educating the people who influence the built environment so that they would view architectural problems in the light of new and different aesthetic, cultural, historical and economic factors, as well as practical ones.

The more I delved into this area, the more I realised that an immense gap yawned between professional requirements and the cultural content which would enable buildings to match the inherited traditions and social demands of the Islamic world.

Furthermore, time was short. In the newly rich Muslim nations it is possible to import complete building systems, together with the skilled workforce to assemble them. If we

were to create public awareness and impact the teaching of architecture with useful effect, we had to do it by the quickest means.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture was instituted in late 1976 as a vehicle for stimulating awareness of the issues among members of the public, within the architectural profession, particularly the younger generation of architects working in Islamic countries, and amongst the widest possible spectrum of decision makers both at national and international levels. Through it I hoped to encourage an architecture which would enrich the future physical environment of the Muslim world.

A Steering Committee was set up to formulate policy and its executive arm established in Geneva. We chose Geneva because we wished the corpus of the Award to be located in a stable and neutral country. Had we chosen an Islamic location it might have given unintended geographic or political overtones to the Foundation.

The process of the Award includes the surveying of buildings in all parts of the Islamic world. A network of nominators put forward projects for consideration by an independent Master Jury of internationally respected experts. Any project completed within the preceding twenty-five years is eligible, provided it has been in use for a subsequent two years. The Award itself is made every three years, the first ceremony having been at Lahore in 1980 and the second at Istanbul last September.

At the same time international Seminars and field trips have been organised dealing with a variety of themes relevant to Architectural Transformations in the Islamic World. These provide a forum where architects, planners, designers, academics, social scientists and government officials can meet and discuss in a spirit of open-mindedness. The dissemination of information, whether through seminars or publications, is of great importance.

Through this process of the Award we have endeavoured to promote confidence in the architectural languages of the peoples of Islam. By premiating projects which demonstrate excellence at all levels we have tried to encourage those responsible for construction to meet both cultural and functional needs and to seek new sources of inspiration and creativity.

This creativity involves two main components. First understanding the ethos of the Faith and sensing the way Muslims see themselves in relation to their environment. The second component is professional competence in dealing with heat, with light, with climatic extremes, with new materials, new construction techniques, new client requirements.

Some talented architects working in Islamic countries have perhaps failed to understand the ethos. Others may have felt it could not be conveyed in constructions as technically complex as hotels, hospitals or airports.

The outcome of the Award has been that the Master Juries have premiated 26 projects, 15 in the first Awards and 11 in the second, some of which you will see illustrated shortly. The projects chosen have not been intended to represent absolute solutions, but rather to be valid steps in the process of search, while the eight Seminars have helped clarify issues and priorities in a number of specific areas.

Overall the Award has created events which have focussed public attention on the issues and, we believe, acted as a catalyst in the evolution of a new cultural and environmental sensibility. As its work continues I hope it will build on this provocative and catalytic role by becoming a medium for the exchange of information and reflection through which everyone concerned with the Islamic built environment can gain the stimulus to think about the deeper implications of what they are doing.

The Award's activities inevitably focussed our attention on teaching. When speaking about dormant or eclipsed Islamic traditions we discovered from architects themselves that they felt there were domains of knowledge which were never offered to them during their professional training. I came to feel it was essential to invest in impacting the teaching of architecture, but the Award itself could not become a school of architecture.

We decided that we should if possible seek to do this through existing institutions which were in position to influence rapidly as wide an architectural constituency as possible, and particularly those whose work would have the most national and international impact. The result was the establishment in 1979 of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, a joint Program at Harvard University and MIT. Its aim is to promote research and teaching in Islamic art, architecture and urbanism.

We were fortunate to attract such distinguished institutions. Both institutions had strong, pragmatic schools of architecture and excellent libraries, while Harvard had a tradition of authentic research and thinking on Islamic civilisations.

As with the Award, one might ask why this Program was not established at a Third World university or a series of universities.

There were several compelling reasons for establishing the resources the Program would have, at a focal point of research in the West, rather than distributing them between a number of prime, though individually less well-endowed, teaching institutions in the Third World: one reason was that in seeking to stimulate fresh thinking within the architectural profession, we would have to consider what buildings should be the objects of concern. Inescapably among the most prominent would be those of high impact, either in their dimensions or their technology. Such constructions would be the ones to influence opinion outside as well as inside the countries where they would be erected.

A classic example of the kind of high impact structure I am talking about is the American-designed Hajj Terminal at Jeddah airport.

However, Third World schools of architecture are not producing practitioners of high technology, largely because high technology can only rarely be afforded in everyday building in the Third World. Therefore it is a strong probability that western firms will design the more sophisticated structures in the Third World for some time to come.

If we wished to establish a dialogue with such Western firms we had to do so from the reference point of academic institutions which already commanded their respect.

A second reason for our choice was that we wanted to formulate a complex programme quickly and that could far more easily be done within the facilities of Harvard and MIT than in a collaborative effort between schools in say, Morocco, Pakistan and Indonesia. Equally the sheer volume of cultural resources and capability for updating reference material were much greater.

Finally, because of their wealth of resources, we felt we would not be straining Harvard or MIT unduly if the terms of the endowment included assisting institutions in the Islamic world. The Program has already held seminars in Karachi and Tunis, and will conduct another in Singapore this month, as well as organising visiting fellowships and establishing a major visual archive on video disc which will be available to those working in the field. It also plans to distribute teaching materials abroad and arrange exchanges between faculties.

The eventual objective is to strengthen teaching institutions in the Third World and we may start by selecting some which can have a special relationship with the Program, while a further opinion might be to develop the Program to degree-giving status.

Having described the methods by which we have sought to stimulate a search for solutions to how the environment built for Muslims can reflect their individuality, their civilisation and their needs, it may be appropriate to show some of the prize-winning choices of the 1980 and 1983 Master Juries of the Award.

Broadly, the first Jury selected in terms of cultural and historical objectives whereas the second Jury attached more importance to physical environment and to visual and spatial architectonic quality.

Ladies and Gentlemen, you have now heard about and seen illustrated some of the problems facing architects and planners in the Islamic world and I have described some aspects of the search for directions and solutions. I hope that in the future you may take an active interest in this quest. As the Founder of this University remarked, speaking of America's mission in the world, we should be "not acting for ourselves alone, but for the whole human race". It is only by the sum of collaborative efforts of individuals that we can hope to progress.



So, in the concluding part of this talk, I should like to consider briefly where the principal challenges lie: to identify some of the most intractable issues which I mentioned earlier, the issues which demand the attention of anyone who is concerned, as Thomas Jefferson was, with the human condition.

In my view, there are three domains on which reflection is urgently required.

They are rural development: urbanisation: and developing a design language capable of responding to specific high tech requirements.

Let us reflect first on how to make the rural areas of the world a desirable place to live: a subject to which far too little attention has been given in the past.

There is still a tendency today – though it is being corrected – to think in Western urban terms about the requirements of societies that are not urban.

In the Third World, as I pointed out earlier, the great majority of the people are rural. Furthermore, eighty percent of the population construct their own housing. The self-built house is a permanent phenomenon and is certain to continue so, because the cost of employing contractors and architects is totally beyond the means of the ordinary people. At the same time, the vernacular tradition – what has been called architecture without architects – is not being modernised and renewed to keep it desirable.

In rural areas people must be enabled to construct a better environment for themselves, because poor conditions are one major cause of poor health and the flow of villagers to the towns: as are the aspirations which even the most limited access to a money economy stimulates: a basic job giving fuller entry to that money economy; education for children; enjoyment.

Access to materials to start the improvement process is difficult. Villagers often cannot obtain cement and glass. Architects and specialists are reticent about working in the countryside, even when they can be paid. The local carpenters and masons who have always assisted with self-building need to be educated in new techniques and encouraged to make better use of local materials.

At the urban centres, parallel problems exist. The pressure of the birth rate and the drift to the towns are causing a massive, near uncontrollable, demand for urban housing. But the rural people who crowd into the cities do not comprehend the old patterns of urban life which made these cities tolerable, nor the cultural and moral significance of these patterns. To take one example, in the hot, humid Asian city, space is required in different areas and for different purposes: private family living space; doorstep space for contact with one's immediate neighbours; recreation and social open space used by everyone – the Maidan of



Indian towns. When the pattern is broken and is not replaced by a viable alternative, city life becomes intolerable.

At the same time, planners and decision-makers tend to regard town architecture of the past as out-of-date and expendable, as has happened in the old cities of Lahore and Fez and may soon be the fate of Sana'a. Yet even if the funds were available, the cities cannot be restructured fast enough to cope with the influx of immigrants.

Does the knowledge of technology which professional planners and architects possess cause them to under-rate local know-how and materials and their potential?

At the other end of the spectrum, do we think enough about how high technology is applied? Industries, hospitals, universities, atomic plants and airports, all elements of an increasingly technical international culture, are springing up throughout the Third World. To politicians they are often a gratifying indication of economic progress. But are they being conceived and designed in appropriate cultural terms?

Ladies and Gentlemen, during most of the time which I have been privileged to spend with you this afternoon, I have spoken about the particular architectural problems of the Islamic world. Allow me, in conclusion, to offer some ideas of a more general nature.

If we decide that dormant cultures – dormant, I emphasise not dead – should be brought out of eclipse, can Universities contribute to their revival?

I firmly believe that they can and that schools of architecture such as this can bring about a better understanding of the issues at stake.

They can provide that “diffusion of light and education” which Thomas Jefferson spoke as “the resource most to be relied upon for ameliorating the condition, promoting the virtue, and advancing the happiness of man”.

There are many great cultures in the Third World and it should be an act of integrity for the architects of the future to learn about them and endeavour to empathise with them before impacting them.

The architects of today are creating the environment of the twenty-first century. They should encourage countries to develop within the terms of their own indigenous cultures rather than allowing external influences to introduce changes so fundamental that they are damaging, perhaps dangerous, and all but irreversible.

The stimulus given from outside needs to be particularly finely tuned, because when it is appropriate it can promote the successful revival of a culture; but when it is inappropriate it has exactly the reverse effect.

Schools of architecture ought, in my view, to incorporate sufficient cultural inputs with their technical curricula to enable students who may later design for societies other than their own to comprehend those societies and to be at home in their cultural contexts. If working in Islam, you need to understand Islam: if in Hispanic societies, to understand Hispanic tradition; if in the Far East, to be able to come to grips with the social and cultural backgrounds of the people of that area.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this may appear a far-fetched suggestion to make to a distinguished school of architecture, whose alumni may well anticipate working only in their home republic. But may I suggest that it would not be inappropriate to your Founder's vision of this University's task?

# Speech by Mawlana Hazar Imam at the Foundation Ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, London

## LOCATION

London, UK

Your Excellencies,

My Lords,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am particularly happy to welcome our distinguished guests this morning and to thank them for their presence on this occasion which is one of special significance to members of my community. Your presence is to me a symbol of the friendship which the different countries and institutions you represent have shown to Ismailis all over the world, to my family and to me personally.

It gives me deep satisfaction to be here today at the Foundation Ceremony for the new Ismaili Centre in London. Not only do I welcome most warmly the creation of this important focus for the religious and social life of the community, but I also appreciate the strengthening of the traditional ties with Britain which it represents. For while there is a substantial number of Ismailis permanently resident in the United Kingdom, many more come to London from all over the world, and particularly the Commonwealth, to renew old bonds of friendship, language and culture dating from numerous and close associations in the past.

The Ismailis are grateful to the British people for their understanding, especially at the time when so many of them arrived as refugees after their expulsion by ex-President Amin from Uganda not so long ago. Ismailis are proud of their reputation for industry and self-help which I think is correct; but none of their achievements, including the new Centre which we shall soon see rising from this ground, would have been possible without the faith and cooperation of their neighbours.

In this connection, I should like particularly to thank the Greater London Council for all their care and patience in helping us to acquire this site. I am also grateful to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 and the local amenity

groups for making it possible to construct a building here which, by its nature and location, must seek to bridge the cultures of East and West.

In drawing up their plans, the architects faced a new and unusual challenge as this Centre must serve the requirements of the Ismaili community as well as to establish a presence worthy of its proximity to the distinguished public and historic buildings which surround us. The mass and silhouette of the new structure are therefore strong and simple and in no way attempt to compete nor interfere with, the varied and imposing façades of the neighbouring buildings. The Ismaili Centre, being designed for a Muslim community, must reflect, even if only discretely, an Islamic mood whilst being sympathetic to the character of its surroundings. In this endeavour, I have been patiently and constantly helped by the architects and other participants who are too numerous to name individually. To all of them, I express my deepest thanks for the imagination and sheer hard work with which they addressed a singularly unusual commission.

The building will rise three stories and the second floor will be a large hall for prayer. The remaining floors will accommodate a library and reading room, areas for education, social rooms and a roof garden. There will also be space available for a public art exhibition gallery and for use by the institutions of the Ismaili community in the United Kingdom.

It is my conviction that the building of this Centre is symbolic of a growing understanding of Islam. For some centuries past, the Muslim world has lived in shadow as far as the West was concerned. Muslim civilisation and society were poorly understood, or not understood at all. Apart from a few exceptional and dedicated men, there was no communications and almost no desire to be informed. Now we see that conditions have changed. This building and the prominence of the place it has been given indicate the seriousness and the respect the West is beginning, to accord Muslim civilisation, of which the Ismaili community, though relatively small, is fully representative. May this understanding, so important for the future of the world, progress and flourish.

I sincerely believe that when this Centre is completed, it will be, both by its presence and the function it fulfils, an important addition to the institutions of London, a source of pride to all who took part in its creation, and a pledge and token of understanding between East and West.

Few men alive today have done so much in breaking down historic and traditional national barriers and replacing them by common objectives in the hope of a better future than Lord Soames. He is not only a very close family friend but his achievements as a statesman bring to this ceremony today its special significance.

His outstanding contribution to Britain's entry into the European Common Market is known to all, but that would never have been possible had he and those who worked with him, not also convinced the Commonwealth Nations, particularly those of the developing world, that such a partnership would eventually be as much in their interests as of Europe's and of Britain herself. It is as a highly creative internationalist, and in the best and broadest sense, a Man of the World, that I welcome Lord Soames today, and request him to perform this Foundation Ceremony.

# Inauguration of the Faculty of Health Sciences and Aga Khan University Hospital, Pakistan

November 11, 1985

Your Excellency the President,  
Your Excellency the Governor of Sind,  
Honourable Chief Minister of Sind,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,

Mr President, your unfaltering encouragement has enabled us to bring the Aga Khan University into being. To give the first private University in Pakistan your support was a bold initiative and one to which I wish to offer the fullest recognition. If Pakistan and the Ummah one day have occasion to be thankful for the existence of this institution, then first and foremost they will have to render honour to the leader who, in answer to my question about the possibility of turning our proposed Medical College into a University, replied without hesitation, "yes". This is your University. Without your help the task of all those hundreds and indeed thousands of others who have been involved with its foundation would have been immeasurably more difficult, if not impossible.

It is my strong personal wish to give a permanent form of expression to the gratitude which everyone connected with this institution feels to you. I should therefore like to mark this most auspicious occasion by announcing the establishment of named endowment funds for both institutions, one of 10 million rupees to provide scholarships for medical students, the other for a similar amount to support health care for the poor at the Hospital. With your approval these funds will be named in honour of your gracious wife Begum Shafiq Zia ul-Haq. They will also, I hope, serve as some recognition of the contribution which her own charitable and humanitarian activity has made to this country.

It may be appropriate today to recall some of the challenges we have faced since the announcement of the project in 1964.

Those 21 years have been turbulent ones throughout the world. Inflation has ravaged currencies. The pattern of health problems on the sub-continent has altered. Pakistan itself has been scarred by war and its land torn by earthquakes.

Necessarily, planning for the University has had to take these influences into account. Major cities are liable to be prime targets in war, while this year's Mexico City tragedy underscores that in time of disaster hospitals above all other buildings must remain intact. The destructive potential of bomb blasts and Karachi's seismic vulnerability forced us to re-evaluate the architecture of these structures in 1975.

During those two decades health experts gradually came to appreciate that the most pressing health problems for 80 percent of Third World populations are ones involving primary health care. Few hospitals had taken this into account, because it had taken so long to come fully into focus. Our planners adapted the project accordingly and we have greatly benefited from those advisers who

improved our comprehension of what was required. As a result our original concept of a small medical college with its own 120 bed hospital attached to an existing university and training doctors for work in urban hospitals was abandoned to be replaced by an independent university, with its own Faculty of Health Sciences and a 721 bed University Hospital devoting one third of its resources to primary health care. These profound changes caused delays and a substantial escalation of the cost of the project, which rose from \$ 10 million at 1964 prices to \$ 300 million in 1980.

The Medical Complex we are inaugurating is profoundly different, and a much more sophisticated project than that which we conceived in 1964.

If the Campus and the Hospital possess an atmosphere of peace and calm, and are aesthetically pleasing, then that is in fact the outcome of hundreds of thousands of man-hours of debate, and sometimes of confrontation, on how Pakistan's changing needs could best be addressed.

These buildings represent the endless travels of experts on hospital architecture and management, on teaching and on health care. They have provoked moments of inspiration, but also of disillusion, exhaustion and even despair, as the project staff analysed and re-analysed what would constitute the most effective deployment of the resources available. You hold in your hands the statistics of physical area, student enrolment, hospital beds and departments, down to a 75,000 volume medical library. What those figures cannot show are the human commitment and endeavour which enabled the Aga Khan University and the University Hospital to evolve in such an exhilarating way. I sincerely hope that those who gave so unstintingly of their efforts, who may have felt they would never witness the projects' completion, will feel themselves rewarded today, and forgive any moments when the stresses may have seemed unbearable, or my own leadership too demanding. When a team of climbers assault a mountain, it is inescapable that the leader determines the route, however arduous it may prove.

To my team goes my deepest gratitude and my prayer that Allah should shower His Blessings upon them.

Many people from many walks of life have contributed to this achievement, including the donors from whom there has been a massive response. A response from individuals and institutions, from Ismailis and other Muslims and non-Muslims, both inside and outside Pakistan. Their generosity has been an object lesson to us. As Muslims we talk about living our lives in an Islamic context, guided by the Faith. We seek this goal and try to achieve it. When I asked who would help me with this project, which was not of their conception but mine, the answer given was affirmative and empathic. These donors have demonstrated that one of our Faith's most fundamental and inspiring concepts – giving for the benefit of others – is still deeply influential. I can say without exaggeration that this response has been a source of inspiration to me. It has given me confidence in the future and further heightened my gratitude to all those who, with me, battled to bring this University into being.

This week we have had the pleasure of appointing a distinguished Board of Trustees under the chairmanship of Shahabzada Yaqub Khan, whose eminence needs no further tribute from me. We are honoured at his hand and the other members willingness to serve our cause. I can affirm that the Aga Khan University and its Hospital will endeavour, with every resource available to us, and under the direction of the Board, to match the high expectations of all those who have made the University's realisation possible.

However, developing a new university into an effective and respected centre of learning demands a far greater span of commitment and time than can ever be available from one man's views, one man's resources and the allotted years of one man's life. In particular, if it is to become an

institution whose excellence and longevity are assured, then it must be guaranteed the capability of meeting its future material requirements. Otherwise it will be merely like a passing comet, which illuminates the sky for a few seconds of eternity, and then is gone.

If the Aga Khan University is unique in Pakistan for self-government accorded by its Charter, I am happy to affirm that it is now no less unique in Asia through being endowed with a corpus of funds, mobilised from many parts of the world, which will ensure that it has the means to fulfil its present objectives. Through the generosity of our donors, targets to be achieved by 1993 have already been attained. The income from this corpus will in part be re-invested each year, so that its earnings will grow, thus enabling the institution to better meet its expanding needs.

Your Excellency, the Charter given us by you on March 16, 1983 laid down the principles which would govern the functioning of the University and identified the constituencies to which it would be encouraged to respond: the Pakistan Nation, the Ummah, including my own Community, and the Third World countries of Asia and Africa.

Whilst open to all, the Aga Khan University is to be an Islamic institution. It will draw upon the great historical tradition of Muslim's learning, the heritage of such philosophers and scientists as Ar-Razi and Al-Biruni, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd. In the true spirit of this tradition, it will also address the higher educational needs of Muslims as they face this new fifteenth century of the Hijra.

This inaugural day is therefore an appropriate moment to reflect upon the nature of those needs and on what the role of this University should be, situated as it is in an Islamic country of world importance, at the heart of the Ummah. The relationship between the intellect of Man and the Faith has always been of fundamental importance to Muslims. How can a modern University respect and reinforce that relationship?

The divine intellect, "Aql Qul", both transcends and informs the human intellect. It is this intellect which enables man to strive towards two aims dictated by the Faith: that he should reflect upon the environment Allah has given him and that he should know himself. It is the light of intellect which distinguishes the complete human being from the human animal, and developing that intellect requires free enquiry. The man of Faith who fails to pursue intellectual search is likely to have only a limited comprehension of Allah's creation. Indeed, it is man's intellect that enables him to expand his vision of that creation.

Eleven hundred years ago, Al-Kindi wrote "no-one is diminished by the truth, rather does the truth ennoble all".

I quote that great Muslim scientist and thinker because his words are as relevant to higher education today as they were during the first flowering of Islamic civilisation. There was not then, and is not now, any conflict between intellectual attainment and the Faith of Islam. If the frontiers of physics are changing, it is due to scientists discovering more and more about the Universe, even though they will never be able to probe its totality, since Allah's creation is limitless and continuous.

I apprehend that in certain educational institutions respect for tradition has restricted academic study to the accomplishment of the past. However, our Faith has never been restricted to one place or one time. Ever since its revelation the fundamental concept of Islam has been its universality and the fact that this is the last revelation, constantly valid, and not petrified into one period of man's history or confined to one area of the world.

Islam is for all places and all time. This is why there is a role for a modern Islamic University which can draw inspiration from the Faith and from the past in addressing the opportunities of the future.



The Holy Koran's encouragement to study nature and the physical world around us gave the original impetus to scientific enquiry among Muslims. Exchanges of knowledge between institutions and nations and the widening of man's intellectual horizons are essentially Islamic concepts. The Faith urges freedom of intellectual enquiry, and this freedom does not mean that knowledge will lose its spiritual dimension. That dimension is indeed itself a field for intellectual enquiry.

I cannot illustrate this interdependence of spiritual inspiration and learning better than by recounting a dialogue between Ibn Sina, the Philosopher, and Abu Said Abul-Khayr, the Sufi Mystic. Ibn Sina remarked "whatever I know, He sees", to which Abu Said replied "whatever I see, He knows".

Today more than ever, the Ummah of nearly one billion believers, spread across so many lands, needs the leadership in education which universities most particularly can provide. Unhappily many Islamic institutions of higher learning, operating under severe pressures of numbers or of financial constraints, are unable to articulate relationships with their equivalents in other Islamic countries. We must seek to open windows, not only upon other civilisations, but also between peoples of our own Faith in different lands.

It is therefore appropriate that in establishing the curriculum of the Faculty of Health Sciences we have consulted with academics both inside and outside Pakistan: with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Pakistan; with institutions in other countries of the Ummah; with Harvard, McGill and McMaster Universities in America and Canada. Through them the Faculty will, I hope, be able to draw upon whatever available resources of contemporary knowledge are relevant to our pursuit of excellence.

Many difficult decisions have already marked the history of this young University, but there is one which deserves to be spelt out publicly. Numerous colleges and universities provide undergraduate education to substantial student numbers in the Islamic world. Should we attempt the same, or endeavour to expose a relatively few students, to the best that is internationally available in the belief that we will assist both Pakistan and our wider constituencies more effectively by seeking to train leadership for the future?

We have taken a purposeful decision, based on considerable discussion and research, to pursue the latter course: to aim to help raise the standards of medical education. At the time of your decision to grant our Charter, Your Excellency was not only President: you also held the portfolio for Health and you were uniquely well placed to appreciate how the erosion of those standards was affecting Pakistan. You pressed our objective upon us. You agreed that excellence would only be achieved in an institution where the faculty was not overwhelmed by the administrative burdens which large numbers would create and you requested me to ensure that the University should have sufficient resources to underwrite the maintenance of the highest educational standards. Without demonstrable excellence we could neither prepare the next generation for its tasks, nor create an atmosphere of vibrant activity which would stimulate the Faculty, nor encourage research, not by example persuade other teaching institutions to set themselves higher targets.

This policy has already attracted back some outstanding academics who had earlier left this country. They had departed in search of improved facilities, rewards and –most important – personal and professional fulfilment. They returned when the intellectual stimulation they had sought became available here. I hope many more will do the same. Pakistan needs the skills of its own sons and daughters.

Hitherto, many medical schools in Pakistan have trained doctors for western secondary care in cities. This will never cease to be needed. In the near future, we shall introduce graduate training

in the College and we are considering a degree course in nursing. However, the vast majority of the Third World's inhabitants live either in the rural areas or in deprived urban ones. The Faculty of Health Sciences is therefore introducing an innovative curriculum to prepare physicians for work at the community level, which will give student doctors and nurses practical field training, often in demanding circumstances, at small rural and urban health centres. Conversely, those centres will send their own health professionals, such as midwives and health visitors, to the Hospital for further training and refresher courses. Through such interchanges we shall seek to understand more completely and address two of the most intractable problems encountered in providing qualified health care for those many millions of the Third World citizens who live on the land. First, how to prepare urban trained medical staff for rural work, and secondly how to establish stable and satisfying careers for them in those rural environments.

Our own health planners believe that a new and more creative role is possible for hospitals in the Third World. They can address the basic health needs of the population directly by acting as a referral resource for local health centres. The Aga Khan University Hospital will do this, providing support for medical and health units both of the Government and of the Aga Khan Health Services, which operate throughout Pakistan from Karachi to the remotest areas of Northern areas as well as elsewhere in Asia and Africa.

Change is woven inescapably into the texture of men's lives if Universities are to fulfil their roles they must both respond to change and initiate it through research, in the sciences especially.

In the future, the Hospital may broaden its horizons, possibly coupling research carried out at the Faculty of Health Sciences with high technology tertiary care, in health areas determined as being of particular relevance to Pakistan. For example, recent statistics here in Karachi reveal an increase in degenerative diseases. It is the duty of leading institutions always to be aware of such changing patterns.

In what directions, then, might the university as a whole expand?

Of one thing we can be certain: the University will only devote its resources to issues of such importance, size and permanence as demand the most constructive thinking available. More than perhaps any other contemporary type of institution, universities can provide a forum which a creative, enquiring and logical approach can be made to the significant issues of the time. They possess – or should possess – the capacity to bring independent thought and original research to bear on the many challenges facing our civilisation. However, their value is directly proportional to their ability to look further than the immediate landscape of society, to identify which current trends are likely to evolve into major changes and to stimulate thinking about their implications in advance. We must endeavour as much to fly high and see beyond our present horizons as to broaden them.

Two such areas of change can be discerned as of crucial importance to the Ummah and the Third World are the functioning of an Islamic society in the coming century, and the wide ranging issue of development in the Third World.

The relationship of the individual to society constitutes one of the oldest preoccupations of civilised man. I share with other Muslims a sense of frustration that this issue has not been adequately explored in an Islamic context for many decades and I share a desire to react. As your Excellency argued forcefully in your recent speech to Al-Azhar University, we have to ensure that the eternal humanistic values of Islam are properly understood in today's world.

The new technology of information is embracing a growing proportion of the world. Misrepresentation spreads before it can be countered. Individual privacy is invaded.

In the predominantly rural countries of the Ummah urbanisation pounds the social structure of cities, destroying those traditional human relationships which are so necessary to our culture and threatening to provoke explosive reactions. It is essential that we respond to such pressures, not emotionally and intemperately, but with mature and dispassionate analysis, seeking wise long-term solutions, which will enable our societies to evolve and develop within Islam's humanistic guidelines. Communications, urban law, the modernisation of education: these are among pressing issues which might justify the Aga Khan University creating a Faculty of Islamic humanities in the future.

Economic and social development is of compelling urgency throughout the non-industrialised world. The formulation of national policy needs to be in the hands of men and women who have been trained in the demanding tasks of allocating priorities that will affect a country for generations to come. Rural development; the better management of voluntary agencies and their collaboration with public institutions; the overall governance of enterprise in both the public and the private sectors; these are among key policy areas. They have become so over recent years and their importance is increasing not diminishing. A faculty concerned with Development Policy and Management, basing an innovative curriculum on prior field research, could provide courses for those already in development jobs, enabling them when they return to contribute more effectively to problem solving, decision making and day-to-day management.

No matter where such Faculties might eventually be situated, however excellent the academic environment on this campus, however accurate the definitions of the issues to be addressed, or the size of the resources available, the success of the Aga Khan University will come from elsewhere. It can only be born from an enlightened intellectual environment, which gives stimulation to everyone involved, from the most recently arrived young student. That will not be easy, it will demand a strong sense of purpose and a sensitive balance between freedom and discipline. At the Charter Ceremony in 1983 I warned that priorities would inevitably alter with the years. That warning was also a statement of intent.

The Aga Khan University will only succeed in providing intellectual leadership if its members are constantly seeking new paths to progress. I pray to Allah that He may give everyone connected with the University, today and in the future, the Faith, wisdom, and courage to stride boldly towards that challenge.

Your Excellency, it is now my privilege to ask you on this day to which I have been looking forward for 21 years of my life, to perform the inauguration ceremony of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Aga Khan University and of the Aga Khan University Hospital.



## Inaugural session of the Enabling Environment Conference, Kenya

21 October 1986 Nairobi, Kenya

Your Excellency the President,  
Your Excellency the Vice-President,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honour to welcome so many distinguished Africans and friends of Africa to this conference. I am particularly grateful to you, Your Excellency, and to the members of your Government for your willingness to sponsor such a gathering in Kenya, a country to which I have been deeply attached since childhood.

You will remember that it was in your presence that I originally proposed the concept of the Enabling Environment, almost exactly four years ago. During the celebrations of the Silver Jubilee marking the 25th Anniversary of my Imamah, I made two speeches here in Nairobi. The first looked at the role of social institutions in national development. The second explored the potential for the private sector to contribute to economic growth. Those speeches signalled the beginning of my ambition to bring together the leaders of

government, private business and the voluntary sector to discuss concrete steps to define and improve the Enabling Environment in sub-Saharan Africa. It gives me great pleasure to see this ambition realised here in this room, today.

The papers for the conference spell out many of the tragedies that Africa has suffered in the first half of this decade. Aside from the pictures of famine and drought still vivid in our minds, we cannot ignore the chilling fact that per capita incomes in sub-Saharan Africa have declined by one quarter over the last five years.

On the other hand, major factors are changing for the better: interest rates have fallen, with beneficial effects on indebtedness. Oil prices have dropped, bringing relief to importing states. Commodity prices, it is generally agreed, are far more likely to improve than to repeat their dismal performance of recent years. The rains in 1986 have brought respite and opportunity, and economic pragmatism is in the air. So let us concentrate on the opportunities for the future.

Nations and continents can emerge from depression. Men and women of good will and solid intellect can change the course of events. My hope is that the participants in this conference will come up with practical, feasible recommendations for ways in which government and the private sector – both profit and non-profit- can work together to build a better future for this continent.

Africa's genius is her peoples. In their diversity, vitality, creativity and resilience, they represent the greatest of the many resources of this continent. The basic topic of our discussions, therefore, is how to create the conditions of confidence, predictability and mutual trust that will enable people and institutions to realise their full potential.

The conference is focussing on the key interactions between three groups that stimulate, serve and channel the energies of Africa's people. I find that the papers are particularly enlightening in their discussion of the relationship between government and business. I want to devote my comments today – and more importantly my questions – to the relationship between these two sectors and private development agencies.

I am also, perhaps, one the people here who is most actively involved in both the for-profit and the voluntary sectors. As Imam of the Ismaili Community in twenty five different countries, I am traditionally involved, through the Aga Khan Health and Education Services, in the provision of basic health and education to people of all faiths. And as Chairman of the Aga Khan Foundation, I devote a great deal of time to thinking about ways in which a private development agency can collaborate with government and other international and national agencies to assist the Foundation's most important partners in development – the people themselves.

Through my role as Chairman of a new organisation – The Aga Khan Fund for Economic and Development – I am seeking to promote productive and profitable business ventures in the Third World. We all assume that the profit-making sector must be highly professional. I

strongly believe that the voluntary sector must also adopt standards of quality and principles of good management.

But let us concentrate first on what government itself is doing for Africa. I may be a little unfashionable in this era of self-questioning and outside criticism, but I would like us to think for a moment about just how much African governments have achieved in the social sectors in the face of severe difficulties. For Africa as a whole, total school enrolments have risen from 21 million in 1960 to 87 million in 1982. At independence, only five percent of children of the appropriate age groups attended secondary school. Today, the figure is twenty-five percent, making a qualitatively different society, with different aspirations and increased capabilities. In health, average life expectancy has risen from 42 years in the mid-60s to 49 today. In sub-Saharan Africa, the proportion of government expenditure devoted to education, health and social services is startlingly large.

Yet, governments would be the first to recognise that their resources are stretched to the limit – and beyond. They must sprint in order to stand still. The combination of population growth, vast unmet needs and increases in unit costs for the provision of increasingly sophisticated services, puts incredible pressure on the resources of government.

Since government resources for the social sector are unlikely to increase in the foreseeable future, we must search for other approaches. One possibility is to increase the resources from and through the private sector. A second imperative is to improve the management of resources employed. Both are needed. In both, the voluntary sector has a critical role to play, in conjunction with business and government.

The voluntary ethos has been extraordinarily important among the people of Africa. Perhaps ninety percent of African housing is the result of family and community efforts. In Kenyan education, the Harambee movement has been extremely significant and there is an equivalent in Botswana. In health, it is now widely recognised that the future lies in community-based systems. People are willing to invest time, effort and scarce resources in systems that communities can call their own and that respond to the problems which they themselves define. Also important is the propensity of voluntary efforts, sustained by both the Muslim and Christian ethic, to help the disadvantaged. No one really knows the extent of the overall voluntary contribution to African society. A rough indication of its importance can be gleaned from a 1984 estimate that international PDAs alone contributed one billion dollars to Africa, against total net official transfers of only three and a half billion.

The potential contribution of the voluntary sector to improving the management of social sector resources needs to be further explored. Frankly, bureaucracies have not proved adept at innovations in management. The more innovative, risk-taking agencies provide numerous opportunities for experimentation, which are producing worthwhile lessons and models for others to emulate. The voluntary sector, operating on a smaller scale and less encumbered by regulations, is particularly well adapted to the needs and spirit of the villages of Africa and Asia. One recent report has noted, “Some of the most remarkable success stories of improved health status have come from non-governmental organisations

around the world. To a large extent, these organisations have been responsible for developing the model currently being promoted as the way to achieve “Health for all” by the year 2000”.

In Kisumu district, volunteers and professionals are building upon the desire and ability of local community members to supplement more conventional institutional health care. Individuals and families fill essential roles in the Kisumu Primary Health Care Project. Important, lasting improvements, including community water systems, are affecting the lives of 60,000 people in the location. This small example points to a widening future for the voluntary sector.

As we seek new ways to combine resources more efficiently to meet the needs of people, much can be learned from the experience of some voluntary agencies, just as there is still much for this sector to learn. One challenge facing you as participants in this conference is to find specific ways to nurture – and to draw – lessons from – these private experiments with quality and efficient management. In particular, I think there are four questions that deserve your attention:

First, how can the voluntary sector itself find ways to increase its management capabilities? Some parts of the voluntary sector are already well-managed – with a clear vision of objectives and of the means to achieve them. These parts can help to increase the overall management capacities through example, training and through their active encouragement of participation by local communities. Other parts of the voluntary sector need help to improve their management to ensure that their efforts are both effective and efficient.

Secondly, we need to strive for quality within the resources available. From our experimentation, we know that quality improvements in education can be relatively cheap – improving teachers morale and support services, developing better curriculum, providing more books and teaching teachers themselves how to produce good, inexpensive materials. In the health field, we are searching for that combination of mass campaigns, community-based services and hospital back-up that can provide the quality care to the largest number of people.

My third question concerns ways to improve the process of learning from the experiences of the voluntary sector. Traditionally jealous of their independence, many voluntary agencies are cautious about allowing scrutiny and promoting the replication of successful projects on a larger scale. If the potential of private development agencies is to be realised, and confidence in them is to grow, this must change. How can we improve the process of self-analysis, evaluation and the exchange of experiences without diminishing the autonomy and creative initiative of voluntary agencies? How can they learn from their own experiences in order to improve the management of their programmes?

My fourth and final question concerns the financial strength of the voluntary sector. How can we give PDAs the financial stability to meet simultaneously the very real costs of better management and the swiftly growing demands for their services? Some institutions may be able to build substantial physical plants and endowments to advance their purposes; such



social sector investments will warrant the same protection as that needed by business. If governments are constrained from devoting additional resources to the social sector, private business can and should do more. We need to seek imaginative incentives to raise these contributions. Governments can play a part. Fiscal incentives, like the tax policies being adopted by some industrialised countries, can encourage companies to increase their contributions – through direct education and health programmes for their workers and families, through gifting a proportion of profits to voluntary agencies, and through donations of equipment and supplies. The prerequisites, of course, are economic growth, profits and incentives from government for companies and for individuals.

But I am also interested that this conference should explore other, less traditional, contributions from business to the voluntary sector. I believe that the majority of the scarce managerial talent in Africa resides in private business. How can we apply some of that talent to the broader social and economic problems the continent faces? My own network of social service organisations derives a large part of its strength from businessmen and women who volunteer their time and expertise to oversee the management of these organisations. In India, some of the large industrial houses are prepared to second managerial staff to work with rural development and health programmes in the voluntary sector. The donation of employees' skills can surely in some cases be as valuable as their corporate shillings.

I believe we can go further. The essence of management is combining resources more effectively to produce higher quality products at lower cost. Business has tools and techniques to do this. These are urgently needed in the voluntary sector. Can we not devise ways in which this transfer of experience and skills could take place? The voluntary sector needs effective ways to measure its impact and to identify precisely the costs of alternative ways to achieve that impact. Could business help in designing management systems for this purpose?

Business should also take note that the voluntary sector is increasingly involved in promoting income-generating activities, particularly for women and for the very poor. The potential contribution of private business is enormous. For instance, the Aga Khan Foundation is supporting a project to improve women's incomes in a Karachi slum. What that project really needs is not so much funds and equipments as access to sub-contracts from textile manufacturers and better quality control. Out grower schemes, sub-contracts, processing facilities, assistance for quality control and marketing are just some of the areas in which business could play a highly positive role, at little cost.

If business is prepared to accept these challenges, I believe it would find more than adequate rewards. Most responsible businessmen now recognise that they benefit, directly and indirectly, from better health, education and housing for their workers and their customers. Improved social conditions contribute to an environment in which private enterprise can thrive. Literacy improves the productivity and income of African farmers; its impact is well documented. We know that the contribution of education to economic growth is higher in Africa than anywhere else. Evidence also exists on the returns on investment in health.

Throughout these remarks, I have repeatedly stressed the theme of voluntarism. Let me conclude with a personal vision of the human energy contained in that idea. We have all seen examples of God's most wonderful creature, the person – whether in a government bureau, a business, or a private development agency – who is inspired to give generously of himself, to go beyond the mechanical requirements of a task. Such men and women, paid or unpaid, express the spirit of the volunteer – literally the will to make a product better, a school the very best, a clinic more compassionate and effective. Their spirit, generating new ideas, resisting discouragement, and demanding results, animates the heart of every effective society.

I submit that one of our great goals, if we are to create an enabling environment of hope and determination, is to give our volunteers opportunities to become more expert and professional – more rational and skilled – without killing their passion. At the same time, our leaders of government and business must arouse in their professionals the will and conviction of the volunteer. In this way, we must suffuse purpose with structure and structure with purpose.

I have a practical vision of a way that government, business and the voluntary sector might assist in a major initiative to enable Africans and others to contribute to the development of this continent. Although it may take more than four years to see this particular dream realised, I would like to share with you today my idea of a new faculty of the Aga Khan University which would respond to the challenge of “management for quality”. I would like to help build an institution to train managers of social welfare institutions and services as well as managers for business and civil services who would be fully cognisant of the needs of the social sector. Specifically designed to foster development in its largest sense, the new Faculty of Development Policy and Management would be linked directly to particular institutions that could serve as learning laboratories and field training centres. Just as the medical students at the Aga Khan University Faculty of Health Sciences in Karachi are getting first hand experience of community health needs by working in city slums and rural villages, students at the new faculty would be exposed from the beginning to the realities of day-to-day management of social services as well as to business practices and management theory. This could be one contribution of the private sector to the public good. I hope that you will have many other concrete suggestions to put forward.

It gives me a great sense of hope and satisfaction to see gathered here in Nairobi this week, men and women of a calibre and a degree of concern sufficient to take up the challenge of creating an enabling environment. In thanking you heartily for your presence in this room, may I urge you to work hard in the days ahead to come up with practical proposals for ways in which we can – collectively and individually – carry this debate into the reality of Africa.



## Aga Khan Award for Architecture Ceremony, Marrakech

24 November 1986, Marrakech, Morocco

Your Royal Highness,  
Your Excellencies, Ministers of Culture,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

About nine years ago a small group of intellectuals and Muslim researchers met at Aiglemont in France in an atmosphere which was both intimate and very animated. Questions raised concerned the built environment in the Islamic World of yesterday, today and tomorrow. Whereas on the one hand we unanimously affirmed our pride in our heritage, we had on the other hand to raise a multitude of questions on the subject of the present and the future. As to the question of the present, everywhere we looked we found our culture disfigured by modernity; and looking toward the future, we strongly sensed the difficulties in controlling it. Our debate became increasingly complex and issues became elusive under close scrutiny. It could well have been easy to despair. But the question posed opened up so many horizons to reflect upon and to examine and engendered so much scientific curiosity that they aroused the desire of the participants to continue their

enquiries. This quest, which began modestly, did not cease to gain momentum and has since grown through several seminars organised by the Award.

This is what explains our presence here today in Morocco in the presence of His Highness the Crown Prince Sidi Mohamed of Morocco and the Crown Prince Sidi Hassan of Jordan and Ministers from Egypt, Niger, Turkey and Yugoslavia to render homage to the men and women who have courageously and generously broadened their research and provided responses to the questions that we raised almost a decade ago. The Award can today congratulate itself on having encouraged all the efforts, all the willingness directed towards the promotion of an architecture worthy of our Islamic cultural heritage and, at the same time, open to the contributions of modernity. The prestigious capital Marrakech, where we now find ourselves contributes towards the reinforcement of the value of the perspectives opened by the Award. The glory of Marrakech and its cultural influence has extended beyond Morocco's present boundaries, throughout the entire Maghrib, reaching as far as Andalusia.

Ever since our first seminar, we have not ceased to nurture our ambition to recreate links with the great traditions of learning, exemplary cultural achievements, open, tolerant, emancipating humanism and spiritual inspiration which characterise our common tradition. It is of great importance that we continue to testify to this tradition, which has always been part of us – all the more so now that it has experienced and continues to experience great historical discontinuity, destruction, elimination, neglect and alien onslaughts which have weakened, mutilated and distorted it. Hence the origins of our present difficulties in inserting ourselves into a historical process which, at least since the 17th century has unfolded without our participation and frequently against us. Islam has alienated itself from its own humanist achievements, its own culture and at the same time it found itself left behind by a Western World, which, on the contrary, has not ceased to accelerate its course towards modernity. It is not surprising therefore, that in the great void created in the process of a long historical evolution, a negative image of the Islamic World has developed, and which continues to spread.

Consequently one can understand why architecture and planning are the ideal gateways to the important issues which Muslim society must face everywhere.

Addressing a group of architects recently, His Majesty the King said "When you are designing, you are in fact drawing a philosophy of life".

Convinced that architecture is a complete cultural act in itself, involving ethical and aesthetic values, requiring emotional sensitivity, drawing upon the economic potential of a community, the Award aims to help professionals of all disciplines towards accomplishing this total act, the creation of our habitat, the use of space for our daily existence.

Therefore, instead of limiting themselves to a rigid idea of what the character of Islamic Architecture and urbanism should be today, the members of the triennial Steering

Committees and Master Juries have, on the contrary, opened up the field of thinking on what Islamic tradition and modernity represent.

Not everything within tradition is old and outmoded, and not everything within modernity is a vehicle for progress or is highly effective. The difficulty lies in rehabilitating great traditional architectural achievements whilst respecting regional variations and what are particular expressions of Islamic inspiration. But at the same time, it is just as important to take advantage of modern concepts and construction techniques to respond to the new and more diversified needs of our societies.

Having decided to consider architecture, in its richest dimensions and essential functions, the Award has raised a large number of issues illustrated by the winning projects since 1980.

Such an approach is not only valuable for architecture, it equally concerns political institutions, modes of economic planning, law, philosophy, ethics and, of course, religious life in a modern context.

In the field of architecture with which we are concerned, there are two obstacles constantly threatening us: one is modernisation imported from abroad and introduced indiscriminately, and, the other is a form of application of tradition consisting of arbitrarily inserting forms, materials, and elements taken from traditional monuments to give a “style” or general tone assumed to be Islamic. One has the illusion of reviving Islamic culture whereas one is displaying a serious ignorance of the spirit of this culture. This is why it was difficult for the Jury to distinguish carefully between populism and that which is perpetuated by the practice of the people whose culture has not yet been damaged as a result of alienation.

In my mind, this is not a question of returning to bygone days and cultures. The example of the evolution of Almohada, as many others in Islamic cultural history, serves to highlight a fundamental constant in the history of all societies. A culture reaches an optimum level of efficiency, of brilliance, of productivity in the midst of the existence of those who live and make it, when all the activities which it consists of confront each other, interpenetrate and converge towards the general integration of that society.

But we are aware of the obstacles which today are in the way of achieving an architecture which helps such a necessary integration in society. The demands and consequences of economic progress linked with industrialisation and urbanisation have, for a long time, now influenced certain Muslim societies to the point of shattering the humanism particular to the Islamic culture.

The efforts of industrialisation, modernisation of agriculture and urbanisation have in certain countries already reached the limits beyond which social solidarity – in families, groups, villages – and systems of exchange production – upon which rested all the symbolic



wealth of local traditions, enriched and reinforced by an Islamic contribution – are threatened by disintegration and annihilation, and therefore disappear without even having had, as is the case in the secular Western World, a process of re-casting their symbols, of creating cultural institutions and practices capable of maintaining, even of increasing the cultural dynamics of societies.

There is another dimension that further complicates matters and which the Award intends to explore in greater detail over the coming years. Even if, in buildings such as universities, one can discern here and there some symbolic expressions and awareness of cultural creativity, it is still the case that we hardly noticed any progress in those sectors of architecture where the demand is greater still – industrial buildings, high rise blocks (such as skyscrapers) low-income and rural housing.

Architecture must integrate cultural wealth and creative spirit, I would even venture to say the dreams of a society aiming to become itself a force of integration of space and time where all creative and productive activities and human exchange take place. It is true that the power of integration of the classic Islamic culture at one time rested on the recurring spiritual energy which is called faith: faith expressed in ritual behaviour repeated daily but also in ethical rules and laws, the relationship to nature, even with visible and invisible worlds stresses in the Qur'an, thus creating a unity of thought and existence.

It is not a question of imposing a theology, a philosophy, a moral, but of forever encouraging an effort of analysis, understanding and explanation to give present Islamic thought every means of objectively knowing its past and of actively participating in the adventure towards self-renewal. Our ambitions must go beyond what is at present the case with Muslim societies, towards enriching, through the example of Islam, research and realizations conducted in the most advanced countries. In my opinion, it is the only efficient way to control the effects of technology transfer, of economic and cultural example in Islamic countries.

These are, I believe, the most crucial challenges, the most pressing needs of the act of building and structuring space in our towns and our villages in the Islamic World today. We are seeking to reach a clearer awareness of the threats to our societies and of adequate answers which everyone is searching for. These answers, must always be based on accurate information, and an objective assessment of the data of needs and means and on independent thought, as well as a sense of human solidarity.

Nine years ago, we started by asking ourselves questions. We did not yet know any examples of buildings which could have illustrated our theoretical research but we were convinced that the Islamic world would be able to stand up to the most difficult challenges thanks to its human, cultural and spiritual resources. We continue to ask ourselves new questions to which we do not at present find suitable answers. But after nine years of effort, we discover the great vitality of the Islamic World mirrored in the winning projects. Together, we have made an act of faith, and it is not without deep emotion that I can state

today, that our joint efforts have been well rewarded. We can, I believe, regard the future with greater confidence as we draw from previous achievements and from the boundless spiritual dynamics of Islam.





## Aga Khan Award for Architecture Closing Ceremony, Marrakech

25 November 1986, Marrakech, Morocco

I would like to begin by expressing the Award's gratitude to His Majesty the King and the Government of Morocco for having welcomed the Award to have its third Prize giving Ceremony here in Marrakech. I would also like to thank most warmly the Cabinet Ministers of the various countries who have done the Award and the profession and the winning projects. The honour of having come from their countries to participate in these ceremonies and to testify thereby their interest in the work that is being done within their own countries to develop a better environment for the people who live there.

I would also wish on this occasion to thank my Master Jury present and absent – all absent for good reason – and the Steering Committee members for having worked for the last three years very intensively on a domain which is difficult to grasp, which is challenging all the time and in which there is nothing absolute.

Maybe on that particular point I could express a few personal opinions. I think that in the Islamic world today, those who live within it and those who care about it, Muslims or otherwise, must be careful not to seek to live within the terminology of the absolute. Muslims do not believe in the absolute other than in God Himself.

I think that this is an important concept to keep in mind. Because, if, as I think many of us believe, it is necessary for us to discover not a culture but our cultures, then any risk of

stifling inspiration from any source, from any part of the world, is really a condemnation of the whole process of man's creativity. I am concerned about this and that is why I think it is something worth mentioning today, after nearly 10 years of work.

This morning's review of premiated projects, taken altogether, showed a remarkable wealth and breadth of issues that we have tried to deal with in the last 10 years. None of us, I think, and certainly not myself, would say that we have found any perfect answer. We do not believe in perfection in this life, nor do we believe in the absolutism of anything in this life, and therefore we are genuinely in the process of search.

What I hope is that this search, over a period of years, will succeed in re-creating for us nearly a unique inventory of inspiration, of talent, of knowledge, for dealing with issues as they change, because they are not the same from one decade to the other, so that, in the years ahead, the Islamic world is able to draw upon such an extraordinary inventory of creativity design in its physical environment.

I think therefore that the debate of the last 10 years, and the debate which you have all participated in today, has really served to highlight how many different standpoints are legitimate in looking at the issues that we have to deal with, and to me, the question that these starting points might in some way be illegitimate is something which, I think, the Islamic world and certainly the Award have to set aside as being not a part of our process. I think we have to re-commit ourselves to look at all sources of inspiration from all parts of the world so long as their objectives is to serve the purpose of creating a better environment for Muslim peoples around the world, appropriate to their cultures and climates.

I also think therefore, that in my comments today, I simply wish to underline that the freedom to continue to search is perhaps the most important and fundamental value which I hope that you will all stand by and support, because anything which is absolute, I think, would represent, for the future of the Islamic world, nothing less than a horrible prison.

I thank you for having accepted to be here on this occasion and to share with the Steering Committee the concerns that it has been dealing with in the last three years and I hope that you will go home with a sense that the search is not complete but we are beginning to put together a very wide inventory of inspiration, talent, knowledge, which, I hope, we will share with more and more people all around the world, and more and more often in the future.

# International Development Conference

18 March 1987, Washington, USA

Mr Chairman,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am grateful to Mr McPherson for his kind and generous introduction, and I welcome this opportunity to share with a concerned and well informed audience some thoughts on the Third World today. To do so in the presence of my old friend Brad Morse gives me particular pleasure. To me, Mr. Morse is a symbol of a new pragmatism in development thinking that I sense in both the industrialised states and among the heterogeneous group of countries that are confusingly lumped together as the Third World. That term reminds me of a speaker who was explaining the role of UNDP. At the end of the speech, the Chairman thanked the speaker and said how glad he was to understand what UNDP did for the "underworld"!

As a development practitioner, I have a range of institutional responsibilities and interests in both the profit and voluntary sectors in Asia and Africa. While this has given me a broad and unusual perspective on Development issues, it has also given more chances than most to make mistakes! But I know from experience that neither profit nor non-profit ventures can be fully effective in serving societies unless there exists what I call an enabling environment for development.

Last October, the Aga Khan Foundation, together with the World Bank, the Government of Kenya, the African Development Bank and InterAction, sponsored a conference on "The Enabling Environment." The participants sought to determine how government, business and private voluntary organizations could work together to create the conditions of confidence, predictability and mutual trust that enable people and institutions to realize their full potential. It was the first time, to my knowledge, that the three sectors in Africa had met formally to discuss these common concerns. I was greatly heartened by the frankness of the discussions and the openness of all parties. There was excellent African participation, with an especially impressive private sector. It is encouraging to note that the Economic Council for Africa and groups in many countries have picked up this theme.

From these and other discussions, I am convinced we are in the midst of a sea of change in thinking about the development process in the Third World. For three decades, governments were at centre stage. There was almost a blind faith in the ability of government to act as the locomotive of development. Governments were expected not only

to educate the young and care for the sick, but, in many instances, to run vast segments of industry and to produce the savings required for investment.

While we must pay tribute to what has been achieved in much of the Third World during our lifetimes, the locomotive has run out of steam. Government capabilities and resources are stretched beyond the limit. And this is being recognized in all continents.

At the Enabling Environment Conference in Nairobi, there was general agreement on the need for new macroeconomic policies that would set more effective signals to spur the private and public sectors. Such agreement would have been inconceivable even five years ago. An extraordinary range of countries are now working to move towards better sets of prices, to reduce subsidies and market distortions. We have all witnessed the success of the Chinese providing incentives to 100 million farmers.

So the rules of economic life are beginning to change all over the world. In much of the Third World, the changes have been caused by necessity. Old patterns of production, and of providing social services, become insupportable in an age of high debt service and low commodity prices. The force of necessity has been buttressed by the intellectual logic of international development institutions, together with potent examples from Southeast Asia and from such countries as the Ivory Coast.

These policy changes are vitally important. They open the possibility for the release of human creativity and energies in a myriad of forms.

But I must share with you two deep concerns. The first is that the new policy environment in the Third World must be shown to work. It must provide widespread opportunity and benefits - and it must do so quickly. The adjustment processes in the new economic policies are causing hardships. Subsidies are being abandoned; services are being cut back; prices of staple foods and imports are rising. But if all political leaders can offer their peoples an unending series of austerity measures and economic hardships, frankly we may lose the opportunity in this generation to help create broader-based, freer societies.

My second concern is that the policy changes taking place merely set the stage. The central question remains: How can the peoples of the Third World make use of these opportunities? There are many problems. In country after country, institutions have been eroded. Centres of higher education and research, once beacons of a new world, have sunk into a miasma of apathy and political interference. Too many cooperatives are moribund, inefficient or captured by the few. There is an unhealthy emphasis on the narrow interests of particular groups - the tribe, the caste, the sect - at the expense of the broader community. These problems are actually decreasing the capacity of Third World peoples to deal with the major issues of the Twenty-first Century.

So we have an opportunity and a challenge. I am convinced that the way we respond will influence the shape of the Third World for decades to come. I am equally sure that the heart

of the response must be a systematic and sustained effort to foster effective institutions- especially in the private sector. For institutions are the vehicles to unleash the creativity and energy of billions of men and women.

Muhammad Iqbal, the great Islamic poet-philosopher, once said: "For the individual to be bound to society is a blessing: it is in a community that his work is perfected."

Now that we are approaching acceptance of the macro model, we must address the micro mechanisms. It is here, I believe, that the United States has vast experience that is applicable. When the U.S. was roughly the same age as most Third World nations are today, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote: "Nothing, in my opinion, is more deserving of our attention than the intellectual and moral associations of America. . . In democratic countries, the science of association is the mother of science; the progress of all the rest depends on the progress it has made."

It is precisely this "science of association" that must be enhanced in the Third World today, in order to make use of the opportunities opened by the policy changes. We need competent and effective institutions to handle not only today's problems but also tomorrow's challenges. How can many millions of small producers obtain access to inputs, credit, markets and the economies of scale that come about through association? How can we organize our health resources to provide cost-effective primary health care for all?

To answer these questions, I believe the voluntary sector has a great role to play. As in the United States, the voluntary ethos in the Third World is enormously powerful. The voluntary sector represents, and can develop, all that is finest in the human potential. It is now believed that 100 million people contribute their time and energies to the voluntary sector, working in health and nutrition programs, caring for refugees, experimenting with new approaches to income generation, and so on. In many countries, the voluntary sector can also stand as a courageous counterpoint to prevailing orthodoxy and to corrupt or tyrannical practice.

Yet the voluntary sector in the developing world is a fragile reed. It generally lacks resources and even self-confidence. Organizations are often too small and too poorly managed to be effective. Governments occasionally try to control or even intimidate them. And this sector has a tendency to follow a "charity" approach rather than directing itself to the major developments and changes needed for the future.

There is another dimension that is also important. Strengthening of individual institutions is not, in my view, sufficient. The development challenges of the next century-cities of 20 million people with their housing and infrastructure needs; feeding and clothing 7 billion people while improving the environment; providing jobs for an additional 100 million men and women each year-mandate an integrated approach. Institutions must find ways to work together more closely, to develop new visions to address these issues.

Let me cite a few examples. There is a tendency to separate the profit sector from the voluntary. But the potential for close and effective links must be enhanced. The business sector has much to offer, especially in terms of management and technology. The majority of the scarce managerial talent in the Third World lies in private business. How can we apply some of that talent to the broader social and economic problems facing the future? My own network of social service organisations derives much of its strength from professional and business men and women who volunteer their time and expertise to oversee the management of these organisations.

This is a considerable problem for the Islamic world in its relations with the West, particularly because of the impact your public opinion has on the decisions of your democratic governments. But rather than to dwell upon this sensitive issue, I would like to illustrate how, in another professional field - architecture - an analogous breach is being filled through an unprecedented joint effort by the Islamic world and the West.

The business and voluntary sectors can work together to unleash the creative energies of the informal sector, the many millions of tiny producers. In the far north of Pakistan, amidst the highest mountains of the world, I have sponsored a rural development program that is creating effective Village Organisations among nearly one million scattered and isolated people. These organisations provide the forum, the skills and the discipline for people to be able to determine their own futures. In four years, they have accumulated nearly \$1.5 million in savings. Infrastructure projects, constructed and maintained by the villagers, have irrigated thousands of acres of new land and built link roads to markets. From each village, representatives have been trained in a range of productive skills. And the Village Organizations are being linked to the modern banking sector and to large companies for input supply, quality control and help with marketing.

It is my profound conviction that steps to strengthen institutions and the linkages between them are critical to the freedom of the individual to be creative and productive in a socially responsible manner. This is the essence of the Enabling Environment. In the textbooks, most discussion of freedom centres on the prevention of absolute power. It is about checks and balances. The time has come to evolve concepts and practices of "positive freedom," the links between individuals and institutions and the rules of the game that encourage mutual trust, promote cooperation, unleash human potentials and make possible a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts.

Clearly, the principal burden of responding to this challenge lies with the Third World itself. The peoples of the developing world have a vast task to define a vision of the future - to design the institutions and systems, the skills and technologies that will permit the vast majority to participate actively in the development process. To this audience, however, I can ask what the West can offer. And I would like to hazard some suggestions.

I believe the Third World deserves strong political support as it embarks on this adventure in freedom and pluralism. Forty years ago, Western Europe was faced with a similar



challenge to that I see for the Third World today. The United States responded with the Marshall Plan. The level of funding was certainly generous. But even more significant was the tangible sense of international solidarity that enabled Europeans to have the courage to invest in their own futures. Today, the Third World needs this kind of psychological boost to mobilize their societal strengths, to withdraw savings from mattresses and bangles and put them to use, and to face up to the difficult decisions ahead.

Second, I would like to see a broadening of the dialogue on the support and strengthening of institutions. For example, much of the strength of the voluntary sector in the U.S. stems from the stability of its financing. Both Europe and the Third World can learn from the experience of fiscal incentive to stimulate the voluntary effort. Again, developing countries are now recognizing that a proportion of their state enterprises are expensive and inefficient milestones. Let us learn more about the Western experience with privatisation and the private provision of effective social services.

I must also re-emphasise the time dimension. These experiments must show results quickly. I am not there to discuss the vital issues of debt finance or aid flows. But I should note that growth is a lubricant for individual and institutional development. It is also clear that efforts to develop private business would be enhanced by an expansion in world trade and a concerted effort to reduce discrimination against the products of millions of small producers from the Third World.

I am impressed by the large and growing number of examples of Western corporations and voluntary organisations that are already providing assistance - particularly in management and technology-to the private sector in the Third World. Just one example in a sensitive area, the Saint Petersburg Times is twinned with Nation Newspapers of Kenya to assist in the development of a competent, free and responsible press in East Africa. But I am convinced that much more must be done. We need imaginative intellectual leadership to make this a mass movement in which a huge range of Western organisations feels they have a stake. Surely, this is a challenge that Chambers of Commerce and associations of voluntary organisations, perhaps collaborating with universities and aid agencies, could take up.

Finally, let me state my conviction that the indigenous voluntary sector must be encouraged to enlarge its role in the development process. These agencies have the potential to draw hundreds of millions of people into direct participation in development. They can be cost-effective and innovative. But I have already noted that indigenous voluntary agencies often have weaknesses. Can we not combine Third World and Western resources in a concerted effort to improve the management, quality of work and effectiveness of indigenous voluntary agencies? Because they have received so little attention in the past, a relatively small effort to nourish this sector could pay high dividends. Above all, these agencies require a solid funding base. Would it not be possible to increase the proportion of aid funds that go directly to them? Would it be reasonable to



suggest that 10 percent of the World Bank's profits should be used to strengthen indigenous voluntary agencies?

The influence of American ideas and of the generosity of its people has been profound over the last 40 years. In a world that is changing, unpredictable and often frightening, there are inevitable temptations to look inward and withdraw. This evening I have tried to share with you my belief that a vital opportunity is at hand. The opportunity exists to create, in much of the Third World, an enabling environment to bring out the very best of the human potential.

An Ayat in the Qur'an says: "Verily, God does not change man's condition unless they change that which is in themselves." We must show greater faith in the ability of the individual to be creative. We may be at a point in history in which the people of the Third World are both willing and able to act. We all share a responsibility to help create an environment to make this possible.



## **Dinner hosted by the Globe and Mail, Canada's national newspaper**

### **LOCATION**

Toronto, Canada (14 May 1987)

Your honour, (Lieutenant Governor)  
Premier,  
Your Eminence, (Cardinal Carter)  
Your honour the Chief Justice,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like, before commencing with my speech tonight, to begin by thanking Mr. Trudeau for his kind words of introduction and for his thoughts on the issues facing the developing world today.

Mr. Trudeau has, personally, represented Canada's admirable humanitarian tradition over the decades. This tradition was so wonderfully exemplified in the 1970's when the people of this country, welcomed defenceless arrivals, including members of my own Ismaili community, who had experienced one of the most racially directed persecutions in African history.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Mr. Roy Megarry for his invitation to speak to you tonight. Mr. Megarry has, with sincerity and distinction, devoted much of his energy to developing a wider understanding of North-South issues. The Globe and Mail today

plays a significant and admirable role in the provision of information about conditions in the developing world. This understanding of the Third World on the part of the newspaper has not only benefited its Canadian reader. I speak here from my own experience. In the 1960's the Globe and Mail provided support and professional assistance as I sought to establish an independent, objective and reliable group of newspapers in East Africa at a time when many were questioning the very feasibility of this ambitious task.

It is in part due to the support received from the Globe and Mail - and indeed other newspaper groups - that the Nation has in 25 years become the leading newspaper in the region. I am, therefore, more than honoured by Mr. Megarry's invitation and I am particularly grateful to him for having scheduled my speech to what is inevitably a hungry and captive audience, before rather than after the meal, when the replete guests are faced with the terrible choice of fleeing - or sleeping.

Trying to convince this influential cross-section of Canada's corporate leadership that they should view the Third World as something more than a distant blur of red tape, debt and misery is a challenge, and it is not through the tired old tactic of moral leverage that we are going to meet one of the truly great duties of our time: the unshackling of the developing world.

Why am I, as the Imam of the Ismaili Muslims, concerned with the development problems?

Islam is not passive. It does not admit that man's spiritual needs should be isolated from his material daily activities. A Muslim must play an active role in helping his family and the community in which he lives. The object is not to achieve status, wealth, or power, but to contribute to society's overall development. This implies a moral responsibility to help its weaker, less fortunate members.

It is in this clear context that I must concern myself with the social and material well-being of the Ismailis and the societies in which they form an integral part in more than 25 countries today.

My Grandfather Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, was in many ways a pioneer in this domain. During His 72 years of Imamatus, He established a network of medical and educational facilities, as well as economic development organizations in Asia and East Africa.

I became Imam in 1957 when the world was in the midst of the rapid passage from Colonial rule to the emergence of the scores of independent sovereign states that we now rather confusingly lump together as the Third World. While the European empires in Asia and Africa were disbanded and these fragile nation states took their place, the Institutions My Grandfather had set up began to focus their energies on the construction of these new societies.

Today, the Aga Khan Development Institutions form one of the larger, and certainly one of the most diverse, non-governmental networks in the world. More than 37,000 young people are educated in our schools and university. Some 200 medical facilities, caring for over one and half million people every year, offer a range of services from primary health care to major surgery. The Aga Khan Foundation, in co-operation with the

Canadian International Development Agency, Alberta Aid and a number of other pre-eminent international development institutions, is engaged in trying to find new approaches to the old conundrums of disease, illiteracy and naked poverty.

I have sought to underwrite our endeavours in social development with initiatives designed to promote economic progress. The two are inextricably linked and must remain so if people are not to be faced with the unacceptable choice between the poverty of the economics of welfare, on the one hand, and raw material greed untempered by any social conscience, on the other.

While most of the international agencies were channelling finance to governments and large public sector projects, I felt that in the face of such vast needs, we could best place our comparatively meagre resources with the private sector. This strategy has met with some success and our activities in the economic development sphere are now grouped under the umbrella of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development. It is from the widening range of its industrial ventures, financial institutions and tourism projects in Africa and Asia that I will draw some thoughts for My address tonight.

Pro-market policies are increasingly the order of the day. In this political and economic climate it has become fashionable to tote the private sector as the panacea for the ills of the Third World. Unfortunately, however, precious few Western entrepreneurs are attracted to invest there in the face of the other accepted wisdom of the day that the developing world is in dire economic straits, beset by huge debt, unstable and obstructive governments and depressed commodity prices.

There may be some truth in this pessimistic analysis. But what I hope to impress upon you this evening is that the outlook is far from universally bleak. Indeed, with thought and care, it can be made rather attractive.

The Third World is, in fact, a deeply heterogeneous group of countries stretching across a tremendous breadth of circumstance from Korea, Singapore and the other "tigers" of the Pacific rim, to some considerable less predatory states in those parts of the world classified as least developed.

One end of this spectrum is now flush with international capital. The other presents a somewhat daunting prospect even to the most risk-oriented investor. But between these two extremes lie a whole swathe of middle and low income countries which offer significant opportunities.

While the most frequently cited statistics on the condition of the Third World inspire caution and even fear among would-be investors, others are a good deal more encouraging. A significant finding in the World Bank's latest development report notes that developing countries now produce a third of the non-communist GNP. GATT's recent assessment of international trade shows that in 1986 developing countries achieved a record 13% increase in the value of manufactured exports, and for the first time earned more from the export of manufactures, than either fuels or other primary products.

I do doubt however, if it is bald statistics such as these that are likely to trigger investment in the developing world. Far more important is the new sense of pragmatism

that circumstances have imposed on both leaders in the South and development practitioners in the North.

What we are witnessing is the dawning recognition that constraints on the Third World's ability to develop are not solely due to their lack of resources and capital, but to the way these are allocated and managed. The market place, not Government is beginning to be seen as the key mechanism in promoting development.

This is a fundamental and exhilarating change in thinking. As it penetrates the policy process it will offer new opportunities not only to the people of the underdeveloped South, but to those of the industrialised North whose own enlightened self-interest should encourage them to seek out investment opportunities in the developing zones of our interdependent world.

A word of caution needs to be sounded however: the beneficial effects of this new pragmatism and the promise it holds will only make themselves felt if they are matched by a deeper and genuine understanding of how circumstances in the South, in terms of demographics, natural resources and concepts of society differ from those prevailing in the North.

While it is axiomatic that first and foremost it is the Third Worlders themselves who must unleash their enormous potential, it is equally certain today that foreign private investment and know-how - personified by audiences such as this - can provided a powerful boost for social and economic advance in many parts of the Third World.

It is here, I think, that the track record of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development, known as AKFED is instructive. Today more than 10,000 people are employed in 65 AKFED enterprises in 12 countries. These companies now have total assets in excess of US \$450 million and a number of them are quoted on local stock exchanges. What is more, over 95% of AKFED-associated companies show a profit, and this has been achieved not in the newly industrialising countries, where most foreign investment tends to flow but in the low income states of Asia and Africa.

If AKFED is an unusual animal, it is perhaps all the more interesting. Because of its status as an Imamat Institution, it can take a longer view of development than most private investors, and has systematically concentrated on the provision of equity capital which makes up three quarters of AKFED's portfolio. The significance of this form of investment over commercial loans is not only that it avoids the build-up of debt, but that it involves greater investor commitment and is more likely to lead to the transfer of technology. It has also done a lot to dissipate the instinctive suspicions that still colour some Third World Governments' attitudes towards private investment.

One of AKFED's more interesting recent ventures is a highly sophisticated new tannery in Kenya. By processing the country's raw hides for export, this industry is both freeing Kenya from its dependence on the volatility of the market for cash crops and earning vital foreign exchange.

Equally interesting as a signpost to the future, is the emerging markets growth fund. This was launched a year ago by the World Bank's private sector arm, the International Finance Corporation, to invest in the emerging securities markets of the Third World.

Already its rate of return compares favourably with that of similar investments made in the industrialised world. More important, it provides AKFED and other investors with an invaluable insight into the dynamic enterprises of the newly industrialising countries in which the funds first investments have been made.

Before any would-be Canadian investor launches into the Third World, he or she will certainly begin by asking some basic questions. Why get involved? What returns can one expect? What are the risks and how can one deal with them? I do not have all the answers; but let me share with you some of our thoughts on these difficult and sometimes frankly unanswerable questions.

Compelling motives for investment in the Third World include a reasonable rate of return, as we have achieved through the emerging markets growth fund, and the desire to plug into new resources bases. There is also a considerable human potential waiting to be harnessed, as the shrinking tribe whose outlook and aspirations were shaped by the colonial experience, gives way to a younger, better-educated and psychologically less-marked generation.

I do not intend to minimise the political, currency and market risks inherent in investment in the Third World. However it must be said that the new enthusiasm on the part of developing countries for international investments has coincided - not entirely by chance - with the introduction of a number of measures that go a long way to mitigating these concerns.

The dangers presented by political instability and disruption have begun to be addressed by such facilities as the World Bank's new Multilateral Guarantee Investment Agency. Once this is fully operational, it will insure private foreign investors against such non-commercial eventualities.

Currency risks are more worrying. Although earnings on equity investments can be far higher in the developing world than in the developed, net returns on hard currency investments can be very much affected by devaluations and exchange controls. But here, too, the outlook is brighter.

A growing number of Third World governments now accept that foreign investments can be maintained in hard currency accounts until the moment funds are drawn down for local commitment. In addition, there is increasing acceptance that a proportion of export earnings can be held off-shore in hard currency accounts to service the initial investment. The possibility of harnessing local equity, a practice that has received a boost from the trend towards debt-for-equity swaps in a number of indebted countries, offers another investment avenue that reduces foreign currency erosion.

Another set of constraints on investment in the Third World is related to the size of local markets. Most of Africa, for example, is made up of countries too small to sustain any large-scale development of indigenous industry. Two approaches may recommend themselves in these circumstances: either to invest in small and medium-sized enterprises, or to focus on regional grouping such as the economic community of West African states, the preferential trade area in East Africa, or the Association of South East Asian nations. In these areas the parameters of national markets have been

expanded through international associations loosely modelled on the European Common Market.

There is one final thought I should share with you. There seems to me to be a correlation between the relative weight of the private sector in any given Third World economy and that country's ability to make stable economic progress. Experience suggests that the private sector must have achieved a certain critical mass - as it has for example in Kenya, Korea and the Cote d'Ivoire - before the necessary common vocabulary can develop between government and entrepreneurs that reduces an investor's risk to a reasonable level.

In my remarks tonight I have concentrated on the important role that foreign private investment can play in fostering economic activity; making up in part for declining aid flows and providing capital to fill the gap left by the retreating commercial banks.

I am not suggesting that the private sector can substitute for the multilateral and bilateral development agencies, such as the World Bank and CIDA, which have played such a crucial part in improving the human condition over the past forty years.

On the contrary, foreign private investment is a vital complement in providing the kind of economic momentum, through its emphasis on quality and management skills, that official development assistance cannot achieve alone.

The challenge before us is one of getting the mixture right.





## Aga Khan University convocation 1989 in Karachi

### LOCATION

Karachi, Pakistan (20 March 1989)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency, the President,  
Your Excellency, the Governor of Sindh,  
Honourable Chief Minister of Sindh,  
Dr Halfdan Mahler, Director-General Emeritus of the World Health Organisation

Honourable Ministers, Your Excellencies,  
Faculty Members,  
Distinguished Guests, and  
Graduating students of the Aga Khan University,

*As-salaam-o-alaikum*

Many days in a lifetime are unremarkable, some are notable, few are unforgettable. In the truest sense only one can be unique. The longer one's life, the more the relativity of a unique day is measured against time gone by. Despite all this, for me, having lived over half a century, this is indeed a unique day.

Years of thought and hope are in front of me this 20<sup>th</sup> of March 1989 to esteem and applaud, in the form of the first class of graduating students from the Faculty of Health Sciences' School of Medicine at the Aga Khan University. These young men and women represent much more, however, than my own vision. They are the personification of the Government of Pakistan's courageous decision to authorise for

the first time a private, fully independent institution of higher education; of faculty from all over the world who have committed their lives and knowledge to educating in this University; of donors who have contributed in unprecedented generosity to secure this institution's future; and of Trustees whose time and wisdom have directed us with immense clarity of foresight.

Mr President, I can say with confidence this morning that the University is meeting its pledge to the people of Pakistan and to its supporters around the world. Al Azhar, Oxford, Heidelberg, and Harvard are in its bloodlines, but it is strongly influenced by its times and its location. It is these intellectual, spiritual, and contextual fields of force that are beginning to define the central ethic of the University.

We are reminded of the University's humane mission: its imperative to respond to the needs of common man. The faculty, I believe, in taking our students to the katchi abadis not only instruct them in the techniques of primary health care for the poor, but also expose them to deeper truths – our common humanity and worth, humility before great suffering, and recognition of dignity and wisdom among simple people. This is an ethical education that must underpin the life of a physician.

But the University must also express vigorous intellectual enquiry – the imperative not merely to apply knowledge, or to confine research to that which is immediately useful. It must embody the fact that knowledge is constantly changing, must endlessly be challenged and extended. This conviction, this buoyant but disciplined impatience, is what makes modern science a metaphor for modern civilisation. Concerned as they are about practical problems of health, faculty must also be encouraged and assisted to work on the frontiers of scientific and medical knowledge. Uncompromising excellence is also an ethical principle. In working on the leading edge of knowledge, here and in the far reaches of the health network, the University participates in the great world of scientific thought; it will help throw off the bonds of dependency, the habits of learning only what is already known, that have stunted progress in the developing world.

In accepting the Charter of the University, I noted that there was no weakness in the model of the university; there was only the terrible weakness of universities having resources too limited for their task. An aspect of this institution which gives me great joy is the outpouring of generosity and commitment that members of my Community and others have shown to the University over the past five years. International aid agencies have contributed, with great sensitivity and wonderful effect, to the establishment of its programmes. It is individual donors, families and corporations, however, who have created the University's endowment – the corpus fund that produces a vital portion of the income that pays faculty salaries, contributes to student costs, and makes sure that the University's daily needs are met.

The private university has freedom, but freedom has its price. That price is courageous leadership, integrity in selecting students and faculty, and creative, disciplined thought in tackling the most pressing problems of mankind. If the Aga Khan University meets that price, if it continues to introduce salient new programmes in Pakistan and other countries of the developing world, I believe it will hold the loyalty of its donors and its graduates and catch the imagination of the world.

Finally, and of very great importance, the University is being drawn toward the field of research and training in health policy and management: the study of health economics, epidemiology, and the management sciences that will be of value to the policy maker as well as to the future manager of health programmes and institutions. This University must aim to produce the leaders in health policy as well as in medicine.

In reflecting on the future, however, my thoughts return constantly to you, our new graduates. To me, as a Muslim, proud of my faith, of its culture, of its humanism and its compassion, you the graduates represent a powerful light: you have been educated by men and women of all beliefs; you are yourselves of different persuasions, you have blossomed in a university which stands for intellectual freedom and expansive enquiry; you have studied the most modern medical curriculum, with all that that means in addressing the moral and ethical questions of life and death in our times. You are the antithesis of the angry face of obscurantism. In this you symbolise, I am certain, the hopes and aspirations of the vast majority of Muslims around the world.

Many of us will not be here to follow to the end your careers of care and help to the sick, the wounded, or the maimed that shamefully our generation will leave behind. Happily today, of one thing we can all be convinced: you will acquit yourselves well, justifying the faith that we have placed in you, and in the principles on which this young university has been built.

If time confirms and consolidates your belief in these principles too, it is my request that you should sustain and defend them as we have done for you.

I pray that Allah may bless and guide you throughout your service to mankind.

Thank you



## Aga Khan Award for Architecture Ceremony, Cairo

15 October 1989, Cairo, Egypt

Madame Mubarak,  
Your Excellencies,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished Guests.

It is with gratitude, leavened by awe, that I open in the city of Cairo, this Fourth Prize Giving Ceremony of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. No setting could press upon us more vividly the power of the Islamic tradition or architecture, than this magnificent citadel rising above us this evening. Madame Mubarak, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests – I thank you sincerely for the understanding and warmth that you and the city of Cairo have demonstrated in welcoming this prize giving ceremony. Many of you have come from far away and I thank you for having journeyed to share with us this important occasion.

Twelve years ago I asked, “is the built environment of Muslims ‘ours’, or is it threateningly, and increasingly not ‘ours’?”. No doubt this concern had been in me, unarticulated, much longer than that, perhaps since my childhood when I first learnt about the glories of Bagdad, Damascus and so many other Islamic cities of light and fame. I was joined, and

have been sustained since, by thoughtful men and women in pummelling the question, bullying it, challenging, dividing, multiplying and expanding it, until it had taken so many facets that it became an aspiration, rather than an enquiry, a vision, not just a hope.

As it began to be embodied as the Award for Architecture, this vision sought to encourage all those concerned with the built environment of Muslim societies, clients, architects, builders and users, to protect, learn from and add to this heritage. It includes the modest wisdom of a vernacular architecture organically linked to a site and a way of life, and the soaring, awe-inspiring achievements of unique architects which have shaped our understanding of elegance, harmony and form. It includes the unique cityscape of the Medina and its individual and collective approaches to the articulation of private and public space.

It includes the diverse structures and styles produced by the genius of Muslim societies from Morocco to Indonesia, from the Soviet Union to Sub-Saharan Africa, and beyond to the more recent creations of Muslim communities now established and growing in the industrial societies of the West. This rich tapestry of human endeavours, despite the tremendous diversity of its forms and manifestations, is linked by the faith and ethic of Islam.

But the scope of the Award, spanning the globe, looking to the future while protecting the past, seeking to broaden the participation and involvement of all those concerned with the built environment, has required that it adopt an approach that is intellectually and ethically demanding. It eschews the simplistic promotion of a simple viewpoint. It seeks instead to create a space of freedom where patient, motivated searches for innovative and culturally adapted solutions to the problems of the built environment of Muslims can be pursued. The Award is determined to premiate excellence wherever it finds it. It holds up as exemplars, efforts deemed worthy of encouragement in this ongoing search.

We strive for appropriate solutions to the problems of today's Muslim societies. Firmly anchored in the present, the best architectural efforts are those that dare to innovate, to start from what we have, and actively invent the future in practical, empowering terms, thereby creating a heritage for the future. Invariably, such efforts do not copy the past, or import solutions developed for other problems and other cultures. What the Muslim world needs today, I suggest, is more of those innovative architects that can navigate between the twin dangers of slavishly copying the architecture of the past and of foolishly ignoring its rich legacy. It needs those who can thoroughly internalise the collective wisdom of bygone generations, the eternal Message and ethic with which we live, and then reinforce them in the language of tomorrow.

Now, in the shadow of the great monuments of the Citadel, we can reflect on some of the Award's lessons of the last twelve years. Three strong "themes of concern" have emerged:

First: protection, restoration and skilful re-use of the heritage of the past, at a time when that heritage the anchor of our identity and a source of our inspiration, is being threatened with destruction, by war and environmental degradation or by the inexorable demographic and economic pressures of exploding urban growth.

Second: addressing the pressing needs for social development and community buildings in a Muslim world all too beset by mass poverty.

Third: identifying contemporary architectural expression of quality, the best efforts at capturing the opportunities of the present and defining our dreams for tomorrow.

These three themes of concern having been defined, in the first twelve years of the Award's life, many are those who will ask what remains to be done?

Where does the Award perceive to be the greatest need and use of its years of accumulated knowledge and its enquiring curiosity?

First, let me comment on what needs to continue to be done: in other words, to reflect with you on areas of knowledge which we have explored in some depth but in which the search must go on.

We have premiated a number of very high quality restoration projects, but we know they are complex and costly. Most of the Islamic world does not have the resources to devote to restoration, and to the upkeep of historic buildings thereafter. Consequently, an extension, or acceleration, of the restoration process can only take place if it can be made economically viable. This means, in effect, that much future restoration, unless we want to multiply empty and expensive museums, must be foreseen as restoration for economically viable reutilisation.

By what criteria must we judge the acceptability, or otherwise, of reutilisation of historic buildings? The answer is central to any extensive, rational, long-term restoration endeavour in most Islamic countries and societies.

We have premiated a number of high technology buildings addressing programmatic needs that have no historical precedent from which we could draw guidance. I have sensed difficulty in most of our juries in making well-founded value judgements on these buildings. Clearly we touch here on the ongoing process of translating the increasingly sophisticated programmatic needs of our times into appropriate and pleasing buildings. Our criteria for making judgements need to be developed further, but perhaps this can only be achieved as our knowledge, understanding and taste with regard to modern buildings becomes rooted in more and more of them.



While these are areas where the Award has made progress, and they should proceed further, there are others where we have not even a sense of direction.

A large part of the Islamic world is striving courageously to develop the economic resources it needs to offer its people an improving, assured quality of life. This endeavour, all the more essential for those economies which are still strongly monoculture, translates incontrovertibly into a need for industrialisation. And yet, in its first twelve years of life, and having reviewed over 2500 nominated projects, not more than a handful – perhaps ten at the very most, have been industrial buildings.

This I believe to be a very serious situation: does it mean that we do not consider industrial buildings worthy of recognition, because they are often not architect-designed? We have received, and indeed have premiated a number of non-architect-designed buildings in the past! Or does it mean that our societies do not believe an industrial building as capable of such quality as to deserve recognition? Or do we believe that the pollution that manufacturing has wrought in the industrial world will somehow, by some miracle, spare the Islamic world, even if we pay no attention whatsoever to it

Here, Distinguished Guests, is a critical area of building which will affect, ever more aggressively, the lives of future generations of Muslims and to which attention, I believe, needs to be turned urgently.

Other transformations also need careful thought. In recent journeys I have been struck how urban land-use concepts, such as the small individual built-up lot, are being transferred to the countryside. Compact villages are being replaced by peri-urban sprawl damaging both the existing social context, as well as agricultural output. Transformation in the rural habitat, where some 70% of the world's Muslims live, is clearly another area of change where the Award will need to make serious progress.

Distinguished Guests, we are here today to recognise a series of outstanding buildings and to express our admiration and gratitude to those who have brought them into being. Honouring these achievements is important, but it is enough. We need to understand why, and how, these buildings and area developments “work” for the communities that brought them into being. Hence architectural consciousness and criticism are a modern pre-requisite for intelligent action.

Stimulating the development of a new architectural conscience is the ultimate hope of the Award. It is why behind the programme that has culminated in this evening of celebration, there is a complex process of discussion and discovery that goes well beyond this competition.

You will remember the 1984 Seminar in Cairo, which approached the phenomenon of the expanding metropolis, specifically the urban growth of Cairo. This gathering of able, committed minds was an important statement of the Award. The meeting consciously



recognised that, in addressing the challenges facing Cairo, it was addressing the problems that would afflict the fifty cities of the world expected, by the year 2000, to have populations of more than fifteen million people.

Similarly, in Malta, in 1987, the Award sponsored a seminar on architectural criticism. It addressed the vital business of developing a vocabulary and a conceptual framework that would enable Muslim people to criticise, appreciate and think creatively about architecture and its role in creating a modern, human environment. A year later, in 1988, the Award sponsored another seminar in Zanzibar. It considered the problem of housing, and the strategies that communities and governments could adopt to address what I believe will be one of the world's greatest problems in the twenty-first century : refurbishment and expansion of the world's stock of human dwellings.

I cite these activities to suggest that the Award – the competition and its seminars – now constitutes a worldwide intellectual network of thinkers and professionals to whom architecture is a vivid, vital instrument in the struggle for human development. Located in universities, architectural firms and agencies of government and development, Muslim and non-Muslim, in the Islamic world and beyond it, such talented, sympathetic minds could not but expand the vision of the Award.

Madame Mubarak, Distinguished Guests, I mention these examples of fresh insights and problems to suggest the vitality and productivity of those who have, in the twelve years of its existence, helped to make the Award a force for creativity and new standards in the architecture of the Islamic world.

Exciting as all this is, it does not yet, however, in my view, measure up to the challenge, unique in recent world history, which lies ahead. We are living in a new and stimulating time of change in East-West relations. It is with eagerness, and immense anticipation, that I visualise the day when the Award will enter into contact with those extraordinary Islamic people, cultures and buildings which till recently have been inaccessible.

How absolutely challenging is the possibility that one day Muslims living in other parts of the world could, as they build their future, draw upon the knowledge, the taste, the traditions, the symbolism, even the materials which have characterised centuries of building history in the East, and which are still so little known to us today. And, in turn, how encouraging is the thought that one day the Award might become, to those Muslims in the East, as it has been to those in other parts of the world, a resource upon which they can draw as they build for their own future. Yes, truly we have only begun our journey toward this end.

Madame Mubarak, Distinguished Guests, again my deepest thanks for joining us this evening.



## **Aga Khan Award for Architecture Ceremony, Samarkand**

19 September 1992, Samarkand, Uzbekistan

Your Excellency the Governor Pulat Majidovich,  
Your Excellencies,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished guests,

It is with delight and appreciation that I open in the city of Samarkand, this fifth prize giving ceremony of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. To be able to join with all of you to celebrate architectural excellence in this magnificent setting, a setting of unrivalled importance to the history of architecture in the Muslim world, is the realisation -- for me -- of a long cherished hope for the Award and its mission.

Your Excellency, you yourself, the government of Uzbekistan, its Ministers, their staff, Mayor Nasirov and his colleagues, Mr Ashrafi, President of the Uzbek Union of Architects and the people of Samarkand have all provided us with extraordinary assistance in welcoming this prize giving ceremony. I want to thank you all most sincerely for this welcome and for your warm understanding throughout the preparations. I would also like

to express my gratitude to you and to all our distinguished guests for your presence here this evening and for the efforts you have made to make this journey to Samarkand.

Three years ago, at the fourth Award ceremony in Cairo, I expressed the hope that we might one day bring the Award into a dialogue with those who design and create the buildings and cities in this incomparable region of the Islamic world. With all your help, we have made that hoped-for journey into a reality far sooner than any of us might have dreamed possible.

For thousands of years Samarkand has been a destination for those who journey with ideas and artefacts. At this time of astonishing change this city has made it clear that it is again ready to host debate and consider the diversity of ideas and values present in any dialogue about contemporary building. We, in turn, are ready to learn from you invigorated by the stimulus that your city provides.

In legend and in reality Samarkand is a source of inspiration to those who love good buildings and great cities. Your city has given to all the world the remarkable legacy of the Timurid expansion. The two generations of inspired building by Timur and his grandson, Ulugh Beg, have shown us how determined patronage and the skills of different schools and practice can be brought together to create great architecture. One amongst many of the rewards for us today of these buildings is their use of colour -- a use not confined to the grand structures alone but seen also in the tombs of humble warriors. Samarkand also carries with it a lasting role as the source from which East and West alike drew objects and ideas of quality. We stand again at a new threshold when this same role can again be taken by your city.

We have made this journey to celebrate -- and understand -- nine buildings and places of outstanding quality. We have also come together to continue an inquiry and debate that will, I hope, strengthen our skills in the making of architecture and cities.

Our journey began fifteen years ago with the establishment of the Award for Architecture as a means to address the concerns and questions of those who build for Muslim societies. These concerns were -- and still are -- about the ways in which the profound humanistic tradition of Islam can inform the design and building task. They were about the finding of apt, modest and inspiring solutions in that task. They were about the need for sensible and unconstrained debate on the merits of diverse solutions. And they were -- and are with even greater imperative today -- about the ways in which an approach, learned through the making of architecture, can be gainfully applied to other realms of culture and human exchange.

We chose to focus our attention on these issues by establishing the Award and asking that it identify exemplary buildings and places made, or re-made, today to serve a Muslim community. We did so to demonstrate that a built environment of high quality can be achieved. We did so to give scrutiny and discussion to the reasons and factors that explain

such a quality, that is, to help us all understand how good buildings and places can be achieved. And we did so to show that hope is not false, that excellence can be achieved and that we need not succumb to despair even in the face of huge difficulties.

In each cycle we ask an independent Master Jury to examine detailed documentation describing hundreds of built projects in the Muslim world. Their viewpoint is inevitably fresh and their energy and rigour of judgement is exhausting. I am extremely grateful to them. The nine projects selected by this fifth Master Jury for a prize in this cycle again provide us with a renewed definition of excellence in architecture.

The projects they have selected call upon us all to recognise the profound opportunity for quality in an architecture of modest demands and in buildings and places that serve all people, regardless of their age, means or circumstance. The winning projects acknowledge the rewarding union of public purpose and professional competence in the restoration of historic city areas and public buildings. The projects also demonstrate in a lively way how outstanding contemporary architecture draws upon the wit and ingenuity of its designer. And again and again we find in these nine projects powerful evidence of the positive influence on good architecture of a demanding and caring client, sponsor or community for building activities.

Indeed, in this context, I cannot fail to draw attention to a feature of this set of nine projects which I am sure deserves attention in our seminar tomorrow. In every case not only is the professional approach to the making of places and architecture one of innovation and invention, but the nature of the sponsoring client or organisation served by the project is also without precedent.

Institutional innovation is as much a feature of these winners as architectural innovation and we need to understand what may lie behind this phenomenon. That such innovation is pervasive presents us with an intriguing set of questions. Do existing institutions in Muslim societies face intractable difficulties in seeking out and achieving outstanding physical settings for their activities? And if so, what are these? Or are these new institutions an entrepreneurial response by individuals and governments to legitimate new demands and changing pressures in these societies? And regardless of the identity or newness of the sponsor, are there timeless and constant expectations that underlie the demands that these projects respond to so well?

Muslim societies everywhere are having to confront complex patterns and pressures of change. The nine projects we will see tonight, and countless others known to the Award, demonstrate that these pressures can be a source of creativity and opportunity. We see our task in the Award to build a space for reflection and debate on the meaning for architecture of these patterns of change within the unchanging humanistic dimensions of Islam. During this past cycle the Award took up these questions very specifically in its seminar in Indonesia on the contemporary expressions of Islam in building. We can draw at least two lessons from the intense discussion at that seminar. One is that the technical issues of the built environment cannot be considered in isolation from the cultural and spiritual values

of a society. The second is that these values have to be related at one and the same time to the historical traditions of Islam, in all their diversity, and these values have to be related to the fresh challenges posed by modernity.

The Award too is taking stock of the new conditions and opportunities it faces after a brief period as fifteen years. As we do so, we are convinced that some of our practices and policies must remain unchanged. We will continue our determination to create a "space of freedom" for the examination of architecture and the built environment. We will sustain our efforts to be comprehensive and rigorous in our documentation of projects to be considered by the Award. And we will maintain our procedures that seek to ensure the independence and integrity of the Master Jury and its processes. These policies and the sustained high quality of management of the Award's affairs are its hallmark and its strength. I am truly grateful to all who have worked to build these qualities.

At the same time there are aspects of the Award which we do believe need to change. For example, our network of correspondents and contributors to the thinking that goes into the Award has expanded into the thousands. We must, therefore, put in place new ways of sustaining our relationships with these many institutions and individuals in ways that are mutually rewarding and efficient. Through a parallel set of initiatives fostered through the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and MIT, we have come to a better understanding of education and scholarship that addresses directly the needs and basis for architecture in Muslim societies. I have begun also to implement a new program intended as a demonstration of, and stimulus to, the upgrading of buildings and public spaces in historic cities in the Muslim world. Our plan is to carry out these projects in ways that are sustainable locally and benefit current, and often very poor, urban residents.

These experiences, combined with the knowledge we have gained about architectural practices through the Award, have caused me to bring together the professionals involved in the Award with those involved in the administration of the education and Historic Cities Support Program. To do this, we have established a new "umbrella" foundation, called the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, which is based in Geneva. The design of the Trust for Culture is intended to ensure that the integrity and independence of judgement of the Award is sustained, at the same time as its growing pool of knowledge and understanding of architecture in the Muslim world becomes a resource to educators and an inspiration for action that benefits historic cities in that world. We see the Trust as a welcoming custodian of knowledge about the practice of architecture serving the entire world and especially practitioners, teachers and students in settings such as yours.

There has been another important new activity undertaken on a special basis by the Award during this past cycle. This activity is one which has brought us much closer to the needs and dreams of your city, Samarkand. Beginning in 1990 the Award began work with the Uzbek and Soviet Unions of Architects and with the city of Samarkand in the capacity of

advisor to, and international sponsor of, the Samarkand International Urban Design Ideas Competition.

Seven hundred competitors from every part of the world submitted entries. The ideas evident in all of them entries, and especially in the winners and honourable mentions, will give your city, we believe, a wealth of excellent possibilities and options to consider as you go forward in the exciting and challenging task of bringing new activity and form to the heart of your city. Our work with you in this competition gave the Award and the Trust a new experience of enormous value. But we are grateful, above all, for the opportunity it gave us to gain a much deeper knowledge and affection for Samarkand and its people.

Your Excellency, distinguished guests, our journey will not stop at Samarkand, though we will travel on much refreshed by your hospitality, your insights and by the memory of this extraordinarily beautiful setting. When we look around us tonight there can be no question about the power of architecture to lift a people's heart. We believe that each of the nine projects that we celebrate will do the same for its users. As we continue our journey, we hope to help others understand how architecture in Muslim societies can be invested with this same power to serve and to move those who experience its form and the places it makes.

We would do well on our journey to remember one of the phrases inscribed in Arabic high in the arch of the Sher Dar to the left. To one side of the lion it is written: "The architect has built the arch of this portal with such perfection that the entire heavens gnaws its fingers in astonishment, thinking it sees the rising of some new moon."

May the light of the heavens and the earth always illuminate Samarkand and guide the people entrusted with this unique city.

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, please accept, again, my deepest thanks for joining us this evening.

Thank you.





## Commencement speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at MIT (USA)

27 May 1994, Cambridge, Massachusetts (USA)

President Vest,  
Members of the corporation of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology,  
Distinguished members of the Faculty,  
Mayor Reeves,  
Happy graduates,  
Even happier parents,  
and others gathered here today

I am pleased and honoured to be with you this morning.

MIT has shown a standard of excellence in education and research that sets a benchmark for universities, everywhere. You who have been at the Institute for years may be excused if you take this in stride, but for me, coming here for the first time in several years, the energy of the place is palpable.

Education has been important to my family for a long time. My forefathers founded Al Azhar University in Cairo some 1,000 years ago, at the time of the Fatimid Caliphate in



Egypt. Discovery of knowledge was seen by those founders as an embodiment of religious faith, and faith as reinforced by knowledge of workings of the Creator's physical world, The form of universities has changed over those 1,000 years, but that reciprocity between faith and knowledge remains a source of strength.

MIT has changed also over its 130 years. This university was initially designed to meet the needs of society in a newly industrialised world. As the world and its needs have evolved, so has MIT's curriculum. Steadily the emphasis on social sciences and humanities has expanded, as the Institute has recognised increasingly that the range of "technologies" that are needed to solve societal problems goes far beyond those of engineering and the natural sciences. The increased richness of education results in an increasingly versatile set of graduates.

As I look out over those gathered here, I see that MIT has changed in other ways. The great continents of the world are now represented in your student body and in your faculty. So, too, are the great religions of the world. MIT seems prepared to take advantage of excellence from all quarters, a fact that is sure to reinforce the Institute's future strength.

When I was thinking about the theme that I should choose for this talk, I considered first that Commencements are occasions to reflect on general truths, truths that will retain their validity over the course of your lives and over the wide range of intellectual interests that you graduates embody. But how is that search for generality to be squared with the very particular point in time that today represents? You and I are here, in a real sense, only because 1994 finds MIT and the world at distinctive stages of their evolution. Still, the particular can provide insight into the general, so my comments today will draw on the particular, in the hope of saying something of value about the general.

I shall talk today about encounters. Encounters. When two people meet. Or two particles. Or two cultures. In that crucial moment of interaction the results of an encounter are determined. In the simplest of encounters -- say, with two billiard balls -- the outcome is a predictable result of position, velocity and mass. But the encounters that interest me most are not so simple. In the encounters of people and cultures, much depends on the path that each has taken to that point. These are not stochastic processes. The subjects have histories. The encounter has complexity and rich dimensionality. The result of an encounter between two people or between two cultures is shaped by the assumptions of each, by their respective goals and -- perhaps most directly relevant to a university -- by the repertoire of responses that each has learned. Encounters therefore have aspects of both the general and the specific. What makes our current time distinctive are the new combinations of people and cultures that are participating in these encounters.

Two ongoing social and political changes illustrate the reasons for these new combinations. The first is the collapse of communism in the USSR and Eastern Europe. You graduates may feel that you have been at MIT forever, but it really is remarkable that the overturning of most of the Communist world has occurred since most of you started your studies here.

You go out into a world where the roles are different from those that held when you entered. Colonialism is moribund. No longer is it enough to decide whether one is aligned with Communism or Capitalism in a bipolar world. Now a full range of complicated choices is opened up to people in the developed and the developing world alike. A massive brake on change has been released. The potential for creative action, for creative encounters, is now much enhanced. This change is a work in progress, however. The potential of the moment must be seized, for conditions for change may not always be so propitious. There is the real possibility that the Soviet Union may reconstitute itself, if the social upheaval that accompanies political disintegration and economic reform is allowed to become less tolerable than the strictures of a totalitarian state.

While these shocks reverberate from the ex-Communist bloc, profound changes of a very different character are to be found in the Islamic world. Here the changes are in both perception and reality, and both of them are works in progress, too. The Islamic world is remarkably poorly understood by the West -- almost terra incognita. Even now, one sees pervasive images in the West that caricature Muslims as either oil sheikhs or unruly fundamentalists. The Islamic world is in fact a rich and changing tapestry, which the West would do well to understand. The economic power of the Islamic world is increasing, not so much because of Middle Eastern oil but because of the rapid growth of newly industrialising countries like Malaysia and Indonesia. Its population is increasing, and already represents nearly one-quarter of the world's total. It is remarkably diverse -- ethnically, economically, politically and in its interpretations of its own faith. The Muslim world no longer can be thought of as a subset of the developing world. Islam is well represented in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and Western Europe -- and that presence is growing.

The religious diversity of Islam is important, and misunderstood by most non-Muslims. This is not the forum to go into the multiple reasons for this misunderstanding. But, for many in the West, the first awareness that there were two major branches of Islam -- Shia and Sunni -- came only with the Iranian revolution. That represents a superficiality of understanding that would be as though we Muslims only just learned that there were two branches of Christianity -- Protestant and Catholic -- and had no understanding of the Reformation, the authority of the Church or the ideas that led to the proliferation of Protestant sects in the 16th and early 17th century. Or as though we thought that most Americans were Branch Davidians.

In the face of such lack of knowledge about one quarter of the world's population, one may reasonably ask what the role of the university is in setting things straight. It seems clear to me that at the most basic level the university is responsible for helping its students to learn not only the simplifying principles that the various learned disciplines have found useful in understanding our world, but also the rich complexity -- of history and language and culture -- that make real life problems interesting and difficult. MIT now teaches both of these lessons well, and vigorously, but it seems not always to have done so. Indeed, I am told that at the opening of MIT, in 1865, one local newspaper reported with a note of triumph that the creation of MIT (quote) "sealed the fate ... of that system by which our

youth waste the best portion of student life in burrowing into the grammars and dictionaries of races less enlightened than their own ...". (unquote). MIT has clearly come around to thinking that those "less enlightened races" have something to teach, and that teaching helps the university fulfil its potential. I would argue, however, that the university's potential is met not just in developing the intelligence of its students but also in bringing them to understand the importance of engaging themselves in solving the problems of the world. The great political and social changes around us are creating opportunities for service that promise to be deeply rewarding to persons with the engaged intelligence to be successful at important but difficult work.

Let me take one example to illustrate the challenging encounters to which today's graduates might apply their intelligence. Tajikistan is a mountainous country in Central Asia of 5 million people, more than 90%~ Muslim. As a republic in the former Soviet Union bordering China and Afghanistan, it had a strategic importance that dwarfed its natural resources. The Soviet Union therefore invested heavily in Tajikistan, building roads and power stations, supplementing food supplies and equipment, developing the educational and health systems. The result was a highly educated, sophisticated but largely rural population that managed its affairs well at home -- by the rules of the game at that time -- and provided well-developed human resources for export to other parts of the Soviet Union. With the fall of the Soviet Union, things changed for Tajikistan. Subsidies, which had provided most of the Republic's budget and, for the remoter parts, 80% of the food supply, were cut off. The result has been hunger, shortages of fuel and clothing and deep uncertainty about the future. Long suppressed ethnic tensions -- between indigenous Tajiks, neighbouring Uzbeks and Kirghiz and immigrant Russians, among others -- became more evident as groups jostled for political and economic control. Religion emerged from private houses, where it had been practised covertly for 60 years, to become a manifest force.

Tajikistan has become the focus of one of the most interesting encounters of the day. It is here, and in the other Central Asian Republics, that three great cultures encounter one another: the ex-Communist world, the Muslim world, and the Western world. It is here that those three cultures could forge a success that would contrast starkly with the brutal failure in Bosnia. The result of the encounter in Tajikistan may determine much about the way history unfolds over the coming decades, so it is worth thinking a bit about the stance that each of these cultures might take in preparing for this encounter. That thought might lead one to ask what it would take for this, or any, encounter to be constructive. I suggest that there are four pre-requisites for success. For each of the cultures, the result should, first, draw on its strengths and, second, be consistent with its goals. Third, the result should be a sustainable improvement in the current situation. And fourth, the transition should be humane.

Each of these three cultures has something to bring to the solution of the problems of Tajikistan. The West has many strengths, but prominent among them are science and democracy (with their public mechanisms for self-correction) and also private institutions, liberal economics, and a recognition of fundamental human rights. The Muslim world offers

deep roots in a system of values, emphasising service, charity and a sense of common responsibility, and denying what it sees to be the false dichotomy between religious and secular lives. The ex-Communist world, although it failed economically, made important investments in social welfare, with particular emphasis on the status of women, and was able to achieve in Tajikistan impressive social cohesion. These are a powerful array of strengths and goals. Just how to combine them to solve Tajikistan's problems is not clear. But if the outcome is to be sustainable, it seems necessary to concentrate resources on the development of private institutions, of accountable public institutions, and of human potential.

But how to get from here to there without inflicting cruel damage on a people already buffeted by shortages and change? Again, the way is not entirely clear, but one should strive to retain the powerful ties of mutual support that -- in different ways -- bind individuals together in Muslim and Communist societies. And one should see that the impressive gains in health and education are not lost in the transition, for it would be unconscionable to allow, for example, the equality of men and women that has been achieved in Tajikistan over the last 60 years to be erased in the transition to a market economy.

These are the prerequisites that I hope the representatives of these three important cultures will keep in mind as they have their encounter over Tajikistan. If the encounter of the Muslim world, the West and the ex-Communist world takes account of the need for each to draw on its own strengths, to be consistent with its goals, to strive for a sustainable, improved outcome and to ensure a humane transition, then the encounter will have been as successful as it is important. Indeed, the importance of Tajikistan has, if anything, increased in recent years, as events in neighbouring countries continue to remind us.

Turning back now to today's graduates, I hope that these four prerequisites applied equally to the encounter that you are just completing with MIT. Knowing the quality of faculty and students here, I have no doubt that the encounter between you and the faculty has drawn on your respective strengths. I hope each of you kept consistent with your goals, even as they may have evolved over your time here. The quality and sustainability of the outcome will be determined over the course of your lives. But reading the smiles among the graduates, I judge that the transition -- your time at MIT -- must have been tolerably humane.

In conclusion, I would recall the words of former MIT President James Killian Jr. Nearly 50 years ago he said (quote) "We need better linkages between science and the humanities, with the object of fusing the two into a broad humanism that rests upon both science and the liberal arts and that does not weaken either. We need bifocal vision to thread our way among the problems of modern society." (unquote). That need to use the power of complementary academic disciplines remains true today. What is now clear is the need also to draw on the wisdom of different cultures in solving those problems.

Thank you, and please accept my best wishes for a lifetime of constructive encounters.



## **Aga Khan University's tenth anniversary, Karachi**

### **LOCATION**

Karachi, Pakistan (19 November 1994)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency the Prime Minister,  
Your Excellency the Governor of Sindh,  
Honourable Chief Minister of Sindh,  
Dr. Geraldine Kenney-Wallace, President of McMaster University,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
Trustees,  
Faculty Members,  
Distinguished Guests,  
and Graduating Students,

*As-salaam-o-alaikum*

The University is honoured this morning by the presence of two women of very considerable distinction. With our Chief Guest, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, I gladly share an alma mater and a devotion to the advancement of this country. With our Keynote Speaker, Dr. Kenney-Wallace, we share a continuing collaboration of committed universities.

We are gathered here today in celebration -- celebration of the success of the graduates who have completed their rigorous courses of study and of a university that has survived its own early challenges and, like the graduates, shows promise of important

future work. That celebration should be both joyful and reflective -- joyful because of success and promise, reflective in the search for a deeper understanding both of the needs of the people of the Muslim world and the developing world and the role of institutions like this university in meeting those needs.

The university can be a distinctly powerful institution. By its very design, it brings together the most advanced knowledge and adds to that knowledge. It trains the next generation of leaders of a society. The university builds on, but goes beyond, other important institutions. It adds to the education that a child has received in the family, formalising the educational process and providing the student access to expertise in the various disciplines. It adds to the education provided in schools, advancing the level of sophistication through an erudite faculty and adding the critical element of research. It enriches the potential of libraries, adding to those repositories of existing knowledge a community of scholars engaged in the public process of advancing knowledge.

An institution dedicated to proceeding beyond known limits must be committed to independent thinking. In a university scholars engage both orthodox and unorthodox ideas, seeking truth and understanding wherever they may be found. That process is often facilitated by an independent governance structure, which serves to ensure that the university adheres to its fundamental mission and is not pressurised to compromise its work for short-term advantage. For a Muslim university it is appropriate to see learning and knowledge as a continuing acknowledgement of Allah's magnificence.

As one looks back over the history of learning and of advancement, one sees time and again that centres of learning flourished in strong, outward-looking cultures. Great universities and libraries benefited from the nurturing conditions provided by self-confident civilisations and in turn gave back to those civilisations the useful products of scholarship. The strong university was not a sign of government's weakness, but rather of its aspirations and its strength. In the great expansion of the Muslim culture from the 8th through the 11th century, centres of learning flourished from Persia to Andalusia.

I do not have to tell this audience about the glories of Al-Azhar established 1000 years ago by the Fatimids. This audience knows full well about the foresight of al Ma'mun and the Timurid Empire in taking knowledge from all quarters and using it to benefit their society. As Ibn Khaldun wrote, and I quote "the Muslims desired to learn the sciences of foreign nations. They made them their own through translations. They pressed them into the mould of their own views. They took them over in their own language from the non-Arab languages and surpassed the achievements of the non-Arabs in them."

We see today in North America and Europe the benefits of strong and independent universities that can harness the horses of knowledge, from whatever country, to the chariot of progress. The host country is not threatened by ideas from abroad. Far from it. The benefits that accrue from exposure to new knowledge and from the fullest training of the new generation dwarf the little inconveniences that may arise from time to time from the independence that must be accorded those institutions to enable them to function effectively.

All universities may do good, but some may do more good than others. At its best, the university is linked to the welfare of the society in which it is based. While taking



knowledge from all quarters, such a university applies that knowledge to the solution of the pressing problems of the world, both at home and abroad.

Pakistan, like other countries in the developing world, does well to consider the contribution that universities can make to the development of the country. One often hears the argument these days that, in the developing world, universities are either luxuries that serve the elite or of such low quality that they serve no one. Some agencies champion the view that elementary schools are far more cost-effective than universities, and so have urged governments to shift resources away from higher education. The thoughtful policy maker must consider whether this is the enlightened path towards national development. The path, indeed, has some things to recommend it. Elementary education is very important, for general citizenship and good parenting, not to mention preparation for university. It must be universal and effective, not compromised by shifting of funds to universities. And indeed, many universities in the developing world neither provide a good education nor forward research of quality or relevance to the developing world. But the present shortcomings of some universities are a very different matter from the need for, and potential of, universities generally. The policy maker must look beyond the present to envision the desired future, and then, consider how to get from here to there.

If in the desired future Pakistan were to be a leader in higher education, a generator of knowledge, a country of well developed human capital, just how might one get to that future goal without exceeding the resources of a poor country? One way would be to seed the field with examples of excellence in higher education. If those examples could be created with limited cost to the state, so much the better. The private university can serve as just such seed corn. Private universities are freer than their public counterparts to experiment, to take chances, to explore new ways of reaching the full potential of the university in a country in great need of having that potential fulfilled. The state is not asked to risk much, because the capital and the bulk of the operating expenses of such institutions are put up by private well-wishers. The state is only asked to create a fiscal and policy environment that enables the innovation to take place -- to prepare the soil and provide a bit of the nourishment.

The Aga Khan University is the earliest of these innovations in Pakistan. The trial is only ten years old, so it may be too early to draw firm conclusions about the results. But we should consider whether the early evidence is promising, because, if it is, one might conclude that more innovation should be encouraged. We might consider whether giving to the university the right to set its own standards of admission has enhanced the quality of the student body. We might consider whether the protections so kindly granted by the government of Pakistan to the university in its Charter have shielded it from undue interference. We might consider whether the independence and international character of the governing board of the university have strengthened its educational programmes and the constancy with which it pursues its mission. We might consider whether access to private sources of funding has enabled the university to mount more effective programmes of research and education that target the problems of Pakistan and the rest of the developing world. It is not for me to answer these questions for you, but for each of us -- policy maker and citizen -- to answer these questions for her or himself, for it is in that process of examination and reflection that a

country builds good citizenship and good policy. It is in that process that the country's educational programmes can be matched to national needs.

This process of identifying needs and matching educational programmes to them is not a task for national government only. It is a critical task for this university. Two years ago I asked a group of thoughtful people to look seriously at the directions in which the Aga Khan University might develop over the next 25 years -- the important problems that need to be addressed, the comparative advantages that a private, international university might have in addressing them, the lessons that should be learned from the university's first ten years. This group, named the Chancellors Commission and chaired by His Excellency Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan, has recently given me its report.

At the time that I gave the charge to the Chancellor's Commission, I did not know the extraordinary outpouring of support that the university's current fund raising campaign would release. I am deeply moved by the generosity of the friends of the university, many of whom are here today. You combine in overflowing measure the fine Muslim traditions of love of education and readiness to help others.

I should like to tell you some of the Chancellor's Commission's thoughts, for I think that its members have shown real insight into the role that a university like this can play in addressing the needs of the Muslim world and the developing world.

Looking broadly at the state of higher education and research, the Commission struck several themes. It advised that in the overcrowded field of university education, the Aga Khan University could only justify its worth through distinctive quality. With growing concern about poor quality elsewhere, however, AKU had an increasing opportunity to influence practice through adherence to the highest standards of education and management.

The Aga Khan University has established itself as an autonomous university with a particular focus in health sciences. Recently it has extended into education, with the opening of the Institute of Educational Development. The thrust of AKU's work in its first decade has been on professional education. Elsewhere in the world many institutions of higher education have not grown beyond one or two professional faculties. Without denigrating their utility and accomplishments, it must be said that universities of high distinction have broader concerns. In the modern world, the sciences have come to have a particular importance. It is doubtful that any university can now be genuinely distinguished without being strong in the sciences, and this of course means that they must be strong in scientific research. The weakness of research in the developing and Muslim worlds is well documented. AKU has made important early steps toward the creation of a strong research programme. In the future development of AKU, however, a concentration on graduate study and research would further its ambition to be an international university of wide consequence for the developing and Muslim worlds.

Events both within and outside the Muslim world in the last decade have meant that AKU faces a more challenging vocation as a Muslim university than it did at its founding. Activist Islamic movements have voiced their principled opposition to the Western world, its values and personal behaviour. The antipathy of militant Islamic movements to forms of government in Muslim countries built on Western models has likewise been profound.

These reactions seem related to frustrations over failures, and disappointments at the benefits, brought by modern secular knowledge and institutions. The force of religious ideas is welcome and can be expected throughout the world in the coming decades. But the need for enlightened expression of what it means to be Muslim in the 21st century will be, if anything increased. A Muslim university could usefully counter some of the stymieing tendencies that have appeared in the last years by emphasising more enlightened and tolerant conceptions that from our beginning have been mainsprings of Muslim culture and world outlook. AKU, as a Muslim university, could be a useful model for those seeking to combine secular education with Islam.

The Commission suggests that this goal might well be met by the creation of an Institute for Islamic Civilizations located in Europe. Is it not by locating such a faculty in the Western world that we can best affect the Western world's view of us? Such an institute would be the locus not just of education in the accomplishments of Muslim societies in regards to the arts and humanities, but also research and analysis of many matters that now gravely concern the Muslim world and the world at large. Such matters as the building of civil societies in Islamic contexts, the special problems of governance in Muslim societies, or the relationship of Islamic values to economic, scientific and technical performances which are of fundamental importance. They have not received as thoughtful and persistent attention from within the Muslim world as they must. The utility of this Institute ought not be confined to the Muslim world and its own problems. There is the potential in the Islamic heritage to help modern societies cope with the confusions, the disillusionments and moral vagaries that afflict them.

The Commission outlines other academic disciplines that the university might in time take on: economic growth, human development, the liberal arts, architecture. They will be the stuff of good discussions within the faculty and with the Board of Trustees in the coming months. But I do wish to emphasize some important themes that cut across the specific disciplinary boundaries.

The Commission reaffirms the importance of addressing the challenge of development in each of the specific areas of its activities. The problems of development will not soon disappear from the countries of Asia and Africa in which AKU has particular interest, so these problems will continue to be worthy objects of dedicated work. The Commission points out the need for the university to take full advantage of the potential of modern communications and information handling in developing this institution in the coming years. As the university develops programs in other countries, the need to be on modern "information highways" will be all the more evident. The university must also avail itself of modern technology and understanding of learning methods so as to develop superior educational support in the institution. Finally the university must continue its vigorous commitment to improve the professional opportunities and status of women and understanding of their situation and problems in contemporary societies. The School of Nursing has been a leader in Pakistan and the developing world in this regard, but we must ensure that the problems of women and the wisdom of women permeate the work of all parts of the university.

We are building here on a great tradition of Muslim education and engaged in important work. Those many of you who have contributed of your labour and your intellect and

your substance to this effort can take some considerable satisfaction in what has been accomplished to date. Indeed I want to emphasize my deep thanks for that dedication and generosity, just as I want to congratulate today's graduates. But a distinguished university is not built in a decade, nor indeed in a generation. The task of educating the next generation is never over. The solution of one set of society's problems only opens the possibility of solving the next. The ongoing nature of the challenge is a sign not of failure but of success. We should celebrate today, and reflect, using the time of reflection to gather our energy for the great but worthy task ahead.

Thank you



## **Aga Khan Award for Architecture Ceremony, Solo**

25 November 1995, Solo, Indonesia

Your Royal Highness,  
Honourable Minister,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,

It is with a very special sense of happiness that I open today the sixth prize-giving ceremony of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. Since the birth of this Award, eighteen years have passed, and if that is the age of adulthood, then all of us gathered here this evening are witnessing an inspiring event: the growth into maturity of a vision. This vision like the tantalising mirage of water across desert sands, was, in reality a search, and that search was inspired by one question: how to develop new, better, and more appropriate directions for building the physical environment of Muslims and those amongst whom they live.

Let me welcome you all, then, to this celebration. I am particularly happy to see in our midst so many distinguished representatives from the Central Asian Republics, repositories of so much of our built cultural heritage. I thank them and you all for having agreed to join in our rejoicing. It is hard to imagine a setting more engaging than this palace for a

ceremony that celebrates the humanity of an inspired architecture. I am deeply grateful, Your Royal Highness, to you, your family, and the members of Karaton, for your enormous generosity in making it possible for us to be here this evening. I am also most grateful to the President and the Government of Indonesia, to its Ministers and their staff, to the Indonesian Institute of Architects, and to the people of Solo and Yogyakarta who have helped us in so many valuable ways.

If this Award was born, as I have said, from a notion of search, it mirrored in many ways the forces that drive mankind to explore: a sense that what is already there is somehow insufficient, and a conviction that new endeavour will discover what might be more desirable. Eighteen years ago I shared with a small number of Muslim thinkers a simple, but multifaceted question: have the Muslim civilizations of today lost the capability to produce great architecture?

Every three years we gather, in a special and important setting in the Muslim world, to highlight publicly our Award winners, those premiated beacons which have best responded to our search for great architecture; and to renew our understanding of the goals to be sought in our travels.

The twelve projects being honoured tonight bring to sixty-nine the total number of buildings and places to have received the Award since we began the journey. Our debt to those responsible for these projects is incalculable. The architects, planners, builders, crafts people, and sponsors of these projects have provided us all with hard evidence that excellence and relevance in the built environment are achievable goals all over the Islamic world. I congratulate them most sincerely.

The master juries in every cycle of the Award act with singular independence, energy, and imagination. They challenge, and challenge anew, earlier notions within the Award, as well as those of the constituencies the Award addresses. I am grateful to the members of the Master Jury for this sixth cycle who have reinforced and greatly enhanced this tradition. In the selections they have made, we will see buildings and places that are humane, resourceful, and eloquent. They have eschewed monumentalism. The projects they have selected address central concerns in Muslim societies, indeed problems that also face other societies throughout the world. For this cycle, the Award's Steering Committee made the task of the Master Jury even more challenging by bringing forward for the Jury's consideration nearly twice as many nominated projects.

This Master Jury has also requested that an important departure be made in this cycle. They asked that their proceedings be transcribed and available to scholars in the future as evidence of the Jury's discourse and debate. Excerpts of this debate are available in published form today, and they reveal the fascinating and serious path of challenge and response that led to the Jury's selection. This new transparency, of the debate that underlies the Jury's decision is novel and welcome. Beyond transparency, the intention is to highlight the multiple levels on which the significance of the winners can be appreciated. It is a strong reminder that the broader value of the Award winners is not as final, definitive

solutions to be replicated, but as triggers to fire enriching debate, and to generate other exciting solutions.

Finally, the members of the Master Jury make a crucial and extremely positive proposal. They state that the directions for architecture and the built environment that you will see tonight in the twelve winning projects are directions that should be examined throughout the world, and not only within the Muslim world. They first argued persuasively that there are universal issues facing the world at this time. Everywhere we seem to find rising inequities in societies, an emerging urban under-class, homelessness, and strife between neighbours, as well as growing environmental degradation, the sense of alienation in megacities that are no longer humane, and the avalanche of images that destroy identity.

The Jury believes that these issues, which are felt with particular force in the Muslim world, can be fruitfully addressed through the critical social and architectural discourse reflected in these winning projects.

It is important to understand that we should not take the message to be that architecture can, of itself, be a remedy or solution to these issues. Rather, we should understand that such remedies or solutions will be gainfully informed by a critical social and architectural discourse that is conducted with comparable values, at as deep a level, and within the same space of freedom, as led to the creation of these winning projects. I am deeply heartened by this message, as I am by the Jury's second statement, which concerns architecture itself, as practised throughout the world: More emphatically than ever before in the history of the Award, the Jury is affirming that the projects they have selected demonstrate the ability of the Islamic world to address with deep competence the major thematic challenges and problems of change in the built environment of our entire world:

The rehabilitation of historic urban spaces, the rejuvenation of their economic base, the integration of different communities, and the opening up of incremental opportunities to the homeless, all addressed by our winners, indicate directions on how to replace urban decay and social chaos with humane environments. The thoughtful symbolism of architectural language from office building to Mosque to rural hospital, all engage our emotions and our dreams. This is what these winners show.

They do not, therefore, represent solutions developed within the Muslim world and exclusively specific to it, but constitute very high-quality solutions to universal problems from which even the most economically advanced societies may take example and profitable insight.

I interpret this view of the Jury to mean that during the lifetime of the Award - 18 years - some of the approaches and solutions of the Muslim world, as judged from those premiated buildings of this cycle, have reached the competence and sophistication to deserve worldwide recognition. It is a statement of cultural strength and quality in the built environment of Muslims, which must have immense importance for the Islamic world, its



view of itself, and the way non-Muslims will view it today and in the future. It illustrated that by using its inherited cultural talents from its built environment, and those of other cultures appropriately harnessed, and by using its own ethical vision, and its artistic, ethnic, and geographic plurality, the Muslim world can reinvigorate its historical architectural and art forms, such that they once again represent a significant contribution to world culture.

This could be a massively powerful message of hope to our Muslim world. It deepens the legitimacy of the Award's attention to pluralism across the world. It validates our unflinching confidence in the creativity of Muslims and others, to design for that world in a way that will inspire the future without resorting to mimicry of the past. It deepens our conviction - along with that of the Jury members - that spirituality and architecture, together, become a force that can build bridges between people and communities, and empower them to build a more harmonious and humane future.

I believe that such a message of hope, predicated on the outstanding examples of what has been achieved in the built environment of the Muslim world, can be extended to other central themes in the lives of Muslims today, their societies, and their countries. The proper application of the premises which the Award has demonstrated, a trust in pluralism, a confidence in unfettered debate, a rejoicing in innovation, a deep respect for cultural and physical resources, could well be the basis for developing new approaches to other central needs in these same societies. I have in mind such issues as the appropriate role of civil society; or the desirable size and qualities of modern pluralistic government; or the establishment of new premises for ethical social and economic attitudes in the world's free market economies of tomorrow.

Let me draw my remarks to a close by paying special tribute to the architects, planners, authors, and activists who brought such extraordinary skill to the creating of these twelve projects which we honour today. Let me also salute the wisdom and tenacity of the communities and clients that sponsored these projects.

Tonight the twelve projects we premiate are recognised for their own remarkable qualities. But that is not all. These winners have been judged by eyes and minds deeply respected throughout the world. The Jury has, through its choice and wish, elevated the debate on architecture for Muslim societies to a world level, recommending that those addressing worldwide issues of physical change seek inspiration from tonight's winners. Buildings for Muslims - after many decades of eclipse - are once again in the front row of thinking and design in man's endeavour to improve and embellish the buildings and spaces in which he lives and works. Perhaps today, therefore, we are witnessing the coming of age of the Muslim world's rejuvenated ability to build exceptionally. And with this feat, the Award too has achieved adulthood, and therefrom greater strength to pursue its journey.

Your Royal Highness, Honourable Ministers, your Excellencies, distinguished guests, please accept again my warm thanks for joining us this evening.

Thank You



## Commencement ceremony at the Brown University

26 May 1996, Providence, Rhode Island, USA

President Gregorian,  
Faculty Members,  
Post Graduates and  
Graduating students,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

President Gregorian, thank you for your very generous words. It is a great honour for me to be at this Commencement Ceremony at Brown, as Brown represents much of what is best in Western liberal education. Let me also congratulate the graduating students for whom the memory of this day, I am sure, will remain with them throughout their lives.

Looking around this colourful gathering, I recall helping in the choice of the Aga Khan University's regalia. Our research into Islamic traditions of academic dress revealed that an academic's rank determined the height of his hat. The higher the rank, the taller the hat. The senior most professors, therefore appeared taller than their students even when sitting down. I have just learnt that my friend Neil Rudenstien, the President of Harvard has given instructions that all Harvard hats are to be heightened by at least a foot. This has caused havoc in the Ivy League which is now debating resolution MAHH96, standing for Maximum

Allowable Hat Height. My academic standing and that of President Gregorian, should be evident from the hats that we are presently wearing.

One of the things most often said to university students on their graduation day is that they must now prepare to face the “real world”. You should be glad to hear that I am not going to tell you that, but as someone who has been living and working in the real world for a very long time, I can tell you this: the world is now a different place.

It is different from what it was forty years ago, five years ago, different even from last month’s world. It is different because we are witnessing a massive acceleration in the rate of global change. Today’s world is a living environment in which you will have to adapt much faster than your parents did in order to have a positive and constructive impact on the future. Having said this, the means at your disposal to achieve such an impact have multiplied exponentially during the last decade. Never before has there been so much knowledge available about so many different people; never before have we known more about the physical world in which we live; never before therefore have the opportunities been greater to make a better life for more people around the globe.

For the last fifty years, our planet has been frozen by a paralysing bi-polar political vortex which we call the Cold War. During those years, many allowed their views to stagnate and harden into notions so dependable that they became unrevisable dogmas: My capitalism versus your communism, your Eastern bloc versus our Western bloc, and left versus right. But like the Berlin Wall, our old bi-polar system was dismantled almost overnight, and with it the black and white world to which we had grown accustomed. Unfortunately, views and thought habits, although intangible, are less easily broken than bricks and politics. Learned human behaviour dies hard.

The world has become a hurtling place in which change occurs constantly and in which we need to learn again, to evolve. Free now, from an artificial tug-of-war in which most were only expected to identify with the rope, we are facing a world of doubt and questioning, and universal uncertainty, the new hallmark of our time. Growing from our thawing earth today, is the unsure and uncomfortable process of discovering and learning about mobility and change. In all societies, disconcerting but pertinent questions are being asked: Who will lead in the process of change? What beliefs should guide us? Will they be scientific statements and data, or philosophical visions? What constraints or opportunities will shape our future? What are the priorities that we must address first, and why should they be priorities? That these questions are asked and answered correctly should be a source of concern to us all. Because if the responses do not come principally from those of us fortunate enough to have been educated, fortunate enough to have food and medicine and shelter, who can make progress in providing these things to the less fortunate, the responses will come from the contestations of the excluded. In short, the responses should come from you.

In this new and challenging environment, the people and nations which were paralysed by someone else's struggle for supremacy are free now to hope. Despite global acceleration, America still benefits from the intellectual liberty and hope for the future on which this nation was founded. But these elements, too easily taken for granted by those who are used to them, are of primordial concern in many other societies. In Algeria, Bosnia, Rwanda, Tajikistan, people are fighting and dying because their lives can finally be changed. Those nations that used to be part of the Third World, have become an obscure "South" and "East" that in emerging from obscurity, are increasingly present. Indeed, the world you are about to enter is a fluid one in which you will have to be flexible.

President Gregorian tells me that I am the first Muslim ever to give the Baccalaureate address at a Brown Commencement in the school's illustrious two hundred and thirty two year history. This makes the occasion a very special honour for me. It also carries the considerable, even intimidating responsibility to speak about the place of Islam and of Muslims in the world today, about their hopes and aspirations, and about the challenges that they face. It is also my responsibility, and indeed a pleasure for me, to speak about what might be done, and some things that are being done, to respond to these challenges. My position, since 1957 as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims bears no political mandate, it is an independent one from which I can speak to you openly.

Today in the Occident, the Muslim world is deeply misunderstood by most. The West knows little about its diversity, about the religion or the principles which unite it, about its brilliant past or its recent trajectory through history. The Muslim world is noted in the West, North America and Europe, more for the violence of certain minorities than for the peacefulness of its faith and the vast majority of its people. The words "Muslim" and "Islam" have themselves come to conjure the image of anger and lawlessness in the collective consciousness of most western cultures. And the Muslim world has, consequently become something that the West may not want to think about, does not understand, and will associate with only when it is inevitable.

Not only is this image wrong, but there are powerful reasons that we cannot overlook, for which the West and the Muslim world must seek a better mutual understanding. The first of those reasons is that with the Eastern bloc weakened militarily, financially and politically, the Muslim world is one of only two potential geopolitical forces vis-à-vis the West on the world stage; the other being the East Asian Tigers. There are large Muslim minorities living in, and impacting many European countries. The Muslim world controls most of the remaining fossil fuel reserves. There is a resurgence of Islam in countries of strategic importance to the West such as Turkey. Several Muslim states have nuclear ambitions. The Gulf War proved that events in the Muslim world do have a direct impact on global economics and security. The West should ignore neither the evolution of the Muslim Central Asian Republics nor their interplay on the future of Russia. Much of sub-Saharan Africa, is Muslim, and none of us can turn our backs on this continent in need.

The second reason why the Islamic world and the West should seek increased mutual understanding is that in the wake of the Cold War, it has become obvious that violence and cruelty of all ilk are a plague gaining ground around the globe. It can be military, or para-military and brutal, or it can be structural and inconspicuous, and no less brutal. It ranges from suicide bombings to ethnic cleansing to the forgetting and abandoning of large segments of society, even by industrialised nations such as this one.

Against this worrying global background it must be made utterly clear that in so far as Islam is concerned, this violence is not a function of the faith itself, as much as the media would have you believe. This is a misperception which has become rampant, but which should not be endowed with any validity, nor should it be accepted nor given any credibility. It is wrong and damaging. The myth that Islam is responsible for all the wrong doing of certain Muslims may well stem from the truism that for all Muslims, the concepts of Din and Duniya, Faith and World, are inextricably linked. More so than in any other monotheistic religion. The corollary is that in a perfect world, all political and social action on the part of Muslims would always be pursued within the ethical framework of the Faith. But this is not yet a perfect world. The West, nonetheless, must no longer confuse the link in Islam, between spiritual and temporal, with that between state and church.

With the deaths of King Charles the First, and Louis the Sixteenth, Western culture initiated a process of secularisation which grew into present day democratic institutions, and lay cultures. Islam, on the other hand, never endorsed any political dogma. So the historical process of secularisation which occurred in the West, never took place in Muslim societies. What we are witnessing today, in certain Islamic countries, is exactly the opposite evolution, the theocratisation of the political process. There is no unanimity in the Islamic world on the desirability of this trend but it would certainly be less threatening if the humanistic ethics of the faith were the driving force behind the processes of change.

The news-capturing power of this trend contributes to the Western tendency to perceive all Muslims or their societies as a homogeneous mass of people living in some undefined theocratic space, a single "other" evolving elsewhere. And yet with a Muslim majority in some 44 countries and nearly a quarter of the globe's population, it should be evident that our world cannot be made up of identical people, sharing identical goals, motivations or interpretations of the faith. It is a world in itself, vast and varied in its aspirations and in its concerns. Is there not something intellectually uncouth about those who choose to perceive one billion people of any faith as a standardised mass?

It is possible that the near-total burden, unfortunately, of under-development from which only a few Muslim countries have yet been able to extricate themselves, unites us in the eyes of the West and thus sets us apart from it. No world faith, perhaps, has such a high concentration of people living in poverty and fear, from disease to political disenchantment, to the defencelessness of national integrity, from the loss of cultural identity to confusion in the face of the new forces of pluralism, free market economics and meritocracy. No reasonable or equitable mind, could question either the logic or the



justification for our fear of occidentalisation, or the loss of our Muslim identity. No one could question our fear of the disassociation of our belief and practice from our secular lives, of our difficulties in producing and managing wealth, of our need to create a system of laws compatible with the ethics of our faith, but no less compatible with today's world and the needs of tomorrow.

The Muslim world, once a bastion of scientific and humanist knowledge, a rich and self-confident cradle of culture and art, has never forgotten its past. The abyss between this memory and the towering problems of tomorrow would cause disorientation even in the most secure societies.

You may ask, and justly so, what has happened to that world, and why has it reached such an advanced stage of fragility? Many contemporary problems in the Islamic world are the result of punctual political conflicts, prompted by the end of colonialism and the Cold War. Are the roots of the conflict in Kashmir not anchored in the partition of India in 1947? Are not the civil wars in Afghanistan and Tajikistan due more to the political convulsions of the dying Cold War than to religious conflict between Muslims themselves? Is the conflict in Algeria caused by differences in interpretation of the faith among Algerians, or by an attempt at political change which, put to the test, has failed? These conflicts are some of the less fortunate legacies of Islamic states having been used, like others, as pawns and proxies in the Cold War.

Yet many problems facing the Muslim world now, have existed for centuries. From the seventh century to the thirteenth century, the Muslim civilisations dominated world culture, accepting, adopting, using and preserving all preceding study of mathematics, philosophy, medicine and astronomy, among other areas of learning. The Islamic field of thought and knowledge included and added to much of the information on which all civilisations are founded. And yet this fact is seldom acknowledged today, be it in the West or in the Muslim world, and this amnesia has left a six hundred year gap in the history of human thought.

It was during the 15th century that Muslim civilisation began a period of decline, losing ground to European economic, intellectual and cultural hegemony. Islamic culture began to be marginalised, and worse yet, its horizons narrowed until it lost its self-respect, and pursued no further the cultural and intellectual search on which it was embarked. Even as Muslim learning was studied in the greatest universities in Europe, La Sorbonne, Oxford, Bologna, it was being forgotten in all Muslim societies from the fourteenth century on. Little of what was discovered and written by Muslim thinkers during the classical period is taught in any educational institutions. And when it is, due credit is not given. This gap in global knowledge of the history of thought, and the faith, of a billion people is illustrated in innumerable ways, including in such diverse worlds as that of communication and of architecture. Our cultural absence in the general knowledge of the Western world, partially explains why your media sees the Islamic world and its thought as an ideological or political determinant in predominantly Muslim cultures, and refers to mere individuals

affiliated with terrorist organisations as Muslim first and only then by their national origin or ideological or political goals.

This is a considerable problem for the Islamic world in its relations with the West, particularly because of the impact of your public opinion on the decisions of your democratic governments. But rather than to dwell upon this sensitive issue, I would like to illustrate how, in another professional field - architecture - an analogous breach is being filled through an unprecedented joint effort by the Islamic world and the West.

Since 1957, the Aga Khan Development Network has been involved in building a large number of schools, hospitals and range of other buildings, housing estates, etc. and other constructions in the Muslim world. It became clear that whilst the use of the building was usually adequately defined, they had less and less to do with the architectural traditions of the societies that they were to serve. I found that others too were facing the same questions. Together, we enlarged our questioning, and it became starkly apparent that across the whole of the Muslim world, practically without exception, its great traditions of architecture had disappeared from its cultural expression. Once the issue had been identified, some of the greatest architects in the world, from some of the finest schools, and men and women from all disciplines and all religious backgrounds — Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist — joined me in creating an Architectural Award and educational programmes to help address the crisis in our own built environment. The aim was to widen for people of all backgrounds, the sources of knowledge and inspiration for the design languages of Islamic societies. After two decades the best buildings and spaces of the Islamic world, evaluated by international juries of the highest calibre, are exceptional once again. Designed and used by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, they now address some of the most intractable problems of our age: urbanisation, management of the built environment and shelter for the very poor.

This exemplifies the kind of remarkable outcome that educated men and women, from around the world, can achieve, in as little as twenty years, to begin reversing the hundreds of years of decay which have eroded our cultural identity.

Much of the West's knowledge, and intellectual potential, is concentrated in universities such as Brown, that have, in recent years, worked their way much deeper into their wider societies. They have developed global objectives addressing global issues, thus becoming more accessible as partners in the development efforts of the Third World.

The Aga Khan University was founded thirteen years ago in Pakistan with planning assistance from Harvard. It was the first private self-governing university in that country of 125 million people. Medical Science was the initial field of engagement. As Pakistan had one of the lowest ratios in the world of nurses to doctors, and the nursing profession was mired in mediocrity, social unacceptability and low pay. Nursing became our priority. With the assistance of McMaster University in Ontario, a curriculum was designed and a School of Nursing launched. In addition to becoming a leading academic institution, it has



transformed the role of women in society by providing them with new educational and professional opportunities. This solution to some of Pakistan's most pressing health care problems, which has also enhanced the social self-worth and professional status of women in the country, may soon be replicated in other areas. Under the University's international charter, the Nursing School now envisages the creation of an Institute of Advanced Nursing Studies in East Africa to extend the same professional and societal opportunities to the women of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and further afield.

So, first-world knowledge can be introduced and creatively absorbed into third-world environments to assist in resolving some of its most challenging development problems. Success will depend, at least partially, on the adaptability of the knowledge to be shared, and the willingness and receptivity of the social structures that will be affected. The knowledge exists and its adaptability is proven, the material resources can be found, but the social and cultural empathy which prepare any successful long-term process of human change from one society to another, are still deeply lacking.

The same consideration also applies to ideas. Concepts such as meritocracy, free-world economics, or multi-party democracy, honed and tested in the West may generally have proven their worth. But valid though they may be, responsible leadership in the Islamic world must ask if they can be adapted to their cultures which may not have the traditions or infra-structure to assimilate them. There is a real risk that political pluralism could harden latent ethnic or religious divisions into existing or new political structures. There is a real risk that market place economics could lead to ruthless competition, and increased concentration of wealth, further marginalising the existing poor. There is a real risk that meritocracy could exacerbate, for example, the existing problem of equitable access to quality education and sophisticated health care. Although the modern page of human history was written in the West, you should not expect or desire for that page to be photocopied by the Muslim world.

You the graduands, are entering your own society at a time when it is questioning many of its own determinants, and seeking stability, direction and inspiration from its own ethical and cultural roots. In the Muslim world we are doing the same. No doubt you are seeking to prepare yourselves, as well as you can, for the risks and opportunities of the suddenly globalised environment in which you will live and work. In the Muslim world we are doing the same. As globalisation unfolds, the Islamic world will be there in myriad ways. Multitudinous encounters are inevitable. It is time for all of us to ask: How can we ensure that these innumerable contacts will result in a more peaceful world and a better life? We should be seeking out and welcoming these encounters and not fearing them. We should be energising them with knowledge, wisdom and shared hope. But this will be enormously difficult to achieve unless the civilisations and faith of the Islamic world are part of the mainstream of world culture and knowledge, and fully understood by its dominant force which is yours in the West.

In this exhilarating new world of unprecedented knowledge, freedom to use it outside worn out dogmas, and immediate global communication, it should be a matter of serious concern to the West and the Islamic world, that such a deep gulf of misinformation and misunderstanding subsists. That gulf conditions the way we perceive each other. Its omnipresence damages our capacity to build a better world for ourselves. And it has no basis in logic. The great Muslim philosopher al-Kindi wrote eleven hundred years ago, *“No one is diminished by the truth, rather does the truth ennoble all”*. That is no less true today.

It is only here in the West that governments, intelligentsia, media, entrepreneurs are all, in some way, linked to your universities. They impact, or actually create, much of our world’s general and specialised knowledge. They challenge what may be wrong and validate what is correct. They research what they do not know. Is it not time for you to use these tools to build a bridge across the gulf of knowledge which separates the Islamic world from the West? Do you question that we will be by your side? No, if I can judge from my own experience.

We have much to build with. A common Abrahamic, monotheistic tradition. Common ethical principles, founded on shared human values. Common problems of yesterday, resolved together. Common challenges of tomorrow that we can best face together. These, and all that much more that I cannot enumerate, but are fact, are the materials with which to build a bridge. Enlightened by sound intellect, I see its structure strongly built from the realities of our world. But any structure requires bonding, and of all the bonds that can link societies, America epitomises the strongest. It is called hope. The right to hope is the most powerful human motivation I know. Its importance has been paramount in the history of this nation. It is a reasonable expectation that the next generation will be better equipped to address the challenges of life than the present one. How beautiful that bridge of hope would be between the West and the Islamic world.

Thank you.



## **Speech by His Highness The Aga Khan At the Inauguration of the Restored Baltit Fort**

Sunday, 29 September 1996

Your Excellency President Leghari, Honourable Ministers, Your Excellencies, Dear Guests

We gather today to celebrate the completion of one important element in the critical and ambitious undertaking of protecting the historic core buildings of Karimabad. The restoration of the Baltit Fort and its handover to the Baltit Heritage Trust represent the culmination of an enormous amount of work, over three and a half years of time, by several hundred people in many and varied backgrounds. I congratulate and admire them. To each of them in person, I express my gratitude for the expertise, the time and the energy they have contributed to the array of efforts represented by the restored fort. Let me also recognise, in the same terms, the many men and women who have made possible this ceremony and its related events, here and in Gilgit.

I would like to express my special thanks to His Excellency President Leghari for making time in his busy schedule to attend these proceedings. I am very grateful for the warm welcome and hospitality he and the Government of Pakistan have extended on this occasion. I hope that my remarks will elucidate my convictions about the larger significance of this project for the people of Karimabad, Hunza, Pakistan and those in

similar communities around the world, and thereby justify the efforts that His Excellency has made to be with us today.

But before turning to those matters, I would also like to thank Mir Ghazanfar Ali Khan and his family for donating the Fort, thus making the restoration project possible. Your donation of the Fort is a shining example of generosity in which the gift and the act of giving are ends in themselves. But ends which, I hope, will mark the beginning of a new trend in community participation in, and in sustenance of, local tradition and cultural identity here in Pakistan, and around the developing world.

We live in a fast changing world. And the nature of change today is different from what it ever has been. It is different because it is taking place at an exponentially accelerating pace. It is different also in that, for the first time in history, the change is global in scale and impact, reaching even the most remote areas and populations of our planet. Today's world is a shifting environment in which everybody must adapt much faster in order to learn to manage the external forces of change, and ultimately mould them around specific values and traditions. Paradoxically, it is the most isolated, best preserved and least changed individuals, communities, and places that are most vulnerable to the tendency of so-called progress to erase tradition, local identity and values. For these are the places most surprised by sudden economic liberalisation, commercialisation, industrialisation, by the globalisation of travel, enterprise and service industries, and by growing communication technologies.

People are on the move as never before. And necessarily, with change and movement come problems, and even the threat of chaos. Prevention of these crises should be at the top of our agenda. The needs of the world's populations for shelter, health, and sustenance are immense. No government, no international organisation and no corporation has the power to meet all those needs on its own. The lessons of the development effort of the last forty years also show that even when working together, governments, international organisations and corporations have not been able to create conditions in which most, if not all, of the world's population is able to live in dignity.

This brings me to the first proposition I would like to put before you for consideration today. It is that only when government, non-government, and commercial organisations come together in, and especially with, a community that the necessary resources can be generated and change can be sustained. This is a guiding principle for the work of the institutions which make up the Aga Khan Development Network, and it is exemplified in its work in the Northern Areas. Sustainable development requires village organisations, the empowerment of those organisations, and the creation of partnerships between them and the government, local and non-governmental organisations, and experts from the leading centres of research and teaching around the world.

Allow me to place a second proposition before you. It is that the satisfaction of needs for medicine, food, education, and housing, even if accomplished, is not enough for the health of any community or society.

Values and ideals, and the identities to which they relate and give form, have always been important for humankind. They give direction and points of reference in the face of rapid change. Successful development requires community engagement and mobilisation, but it also needs to occur in a cultural context which preserves individual local values and ideals.

Culture takes many forms and is expressed in many ways. The three-dimensional, physical aspect of a particular cultural context is architecture. Maintaining cultural identity and tradition in the physical environment is a central and integral part of preserving the identity of a place or a community, and it is the physical environment that is most directly affected by rapid change.

The Aga Khan Development Network has a long history of involvement in Pakistan: The Aga Khan Rural Support Programme has provided help in social organisation, technical know-how, and economic support to rural areas, enhancing local income generation. The Aga Khan Health Services have provided primary health care to a large number of people, improving health management and making secondary health care available to many. The Aga Khan Education Services have provided modern schooling to youngsters, particularly girls, who did not have access to it before, and have improved teaching standards.

Since the 1980s, these various, but definitely interrelated, activities have developed, expanded and been replicated elsewhere with the generous support from at least a dozen external agencies -- public and private, bilateral as well as multilateral -- and valued cooperation from the Government of Pakistan. While I cannot list them in detail, I want to give my warmest thanks and public recognition to all those agencies, many of which are represented here today. They have contributed immeasurably to increasing both the reach and the effectiveness of the Aga Khan Development Network in working with the peoples of Northern Pakistan to improve the quality of their lives. Today, as many of you know, the Network stands on the threshold of an exciting new phase, the main objective of which is to create innovative local institutions and resource bases, such as a new Development Bank, an Enterprise Support Company, a Professional Development Centre for Teachers, maybe even a front line hospital -- which will complement the accomplishments to date. We aim to bring new levels of sophistication, stimulation and sustainability to benefit the resilient hard-working peoples of this area.

The Network recognises the need to maintain historical physical integrity in those places which will be affected by the strong forces of change. The Network, Pakistan and the Northern Areas cannot settle for an acceptable present, but must also prepare for, seek out, and bring about a brighter future. This implies that we must fight the degradation of our traditions in all fields.

The Baltit Fort is a perfect metaphor for tradition, history, and a cultural legacy. Over the last seventy years it has been decaying slowly, until it was decided that the Fort should be restored and reused in an environment-conscious way. In other words, the

future of the Fort has been improved. Without the help of all the people gathered here today it could only have decayed further; in future, it could only have worsened.

This project will complement all the Aga Khan Development Network's initiatives in health, education, rural support, and economic development, by starting to reverse the hundreds of years of decay which have eroded our cultural identity and to provide some anchors with which we can face the strong currents of change. It will do so in a way that emphasises self-sustenance, which is a keystone concept in the Aga Khan Trust for Culture's work.

By recognising architecture as an important instrument of cultural identity, the Trust seeks to encourage renewal processes which are based both on local traditions and a sensitive integration of contemporary facilities and techniques, and to premiate projects of outstanding quality. It is the Trust's conviction that architectural heritage and environmental values can be assets for use by local communities as they look forward and reach out to take control of their own futures.

The settings in which the Trust works are particularly challenging. The historic cores of cities in the developing world have been neglected for decades. Rural communities affected by rapid change have neither the trained manpower nor the institutions to grapple with the powerful forces at work around them. Both settings are inhabited, for the most part, by populations without much by way of material resources or political influence. The Trust has taken up the task of demonstrating that cultural concerns and socio-economic needs are intimately linked, and that in interaction they can act as catalysts for improvement in every dimension of development. Planning is a key element in this approach. Designing plans and planning processes that build community consensus about the use of available space, the restoration and reuse of existing buildings, the location of major structures and infrastructure, is as important to the Trust as identifying the most up to date technique to solve a restoration problem in a community's most precious monument.

To achieve these goals, the Trust's Historic Cities Support Programme is now testing new strategies which combine state-of-the-art restoration, conservation, and urban development principles with community-based institutions and fresh entrepreneurial initiatives. By supplying financial aid through the Karimabad Town Management Society, by mobilising community resources, providing incentives, and demonstrating evidence of short- and long-term benefits for the local inhabitants, the Programme seeks to trigger a process which should lead to the economic and financial self-sustainability of each project. The Programme's intention is that each project also serve as an opportunity for enhancing local skills in conservation, restoration, planning, economics, and other related disciplines. A strong, field-based network is thus developed within each and around every project.

Before concluding, let me say a little bit about the Karimabad project as one of the first attempts of the Trust to deal actively with these interrelated issues. The planning efforts

came about as a natural extension of the conservation of the Baltit Fort started by the Trust in 1990. The prime historic landmark of Hunza, the Fort, is also a major tourist attraction and a potential source of income for the local community. It can therefore be expected that the restoration project itself will act as a dynamic factor of change, benefiting from the improving accessibility of the Northern Areas. Accordingly, the planning projects for Karimabad set out to assist the community in the assessment of available development choices, with a view to preserving and managing cultural and environmental values, while at the same time benefiting from accrued economic opportunities. It is a particularly complex planning exercise since it applies to an environment which is in full transition, moving from a traditional rural community towards an increasingly urban way of life. The corresponding changes in notions such as good or bad neighbourliness applied to urban rather than agricultural land may not always be explicit, but may cause a completely new value system to be born.

In closing, I would like to return to two points I made at the beginning.

I spoke of this event as the commemoration of the completion of one important element in a critical and ambitious undertaking. I was very conscious of the use of the term "ambitious". Our aspirations are to develop models and techniques that will enable societies throughout the world to rescue, restore and reutilise monuments, structures and spaces that are products of their own distinct histories and therefore central to their identities, and essential reference points in the face of potentially disorienting change. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture is dedicated to working in societies where Muslims have a significant presence. But it seeks to develop, or at least stimulate thinking about, models for all parts of the world.

I also characterised the completion of the restoration of the Baltit Fort and its handover to the Baltit Heritage Trust as "one element in a process". It is not a beginning -- work on the Fort and the associated planning started some years ago. But neither should it be viewed as an end. This project will be a success only if the Fort is maintained into the future by the Baltit Heritage Trust and the people of Karimabad, and if it serves to symbolise something distinctive about the region, and its people, and is a successful catalyst for the vitality of the local community.

Thank you.

*End of speech*





## **Commonwealth Press Union Conference in Cape Town, South Africa**

17 October 1996, Cape Town, South Africa

Mr Chairman,  
My Lords,  
Distinguished guests,  
Members of the Commonwealth Press Union,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an enormous pleasure for me to join you today. I only wish I could have attended all of your sessions, for your programme touches on many subjects which are of great interest to me, and your speakers have included an impressive array of distinguished personalities.

In fact, as I looked at the long list of those who have already come to this podium, I wondered whether you would have any capacity left to absorb whatever I might say!

It was a great comfort, therefore, to see that, as the first speaker on the morning after a day of R & R, I could attack you while you were still fresh!

As I prepared for this talk I also wondered whether you would have the foggiest notion of why I was invited to this conference.

Who is the Aga Khan after all — and what is he doing here?

Some of you may have known that my title — which I have held since 1957 — means that I am the Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. But I suspect that this phrase only makes my appearance here seem even more incongruous.

Others may have seen my name connected with the breeding and racing of thoroughbreds — but this connection will also seem incongruous for many of you and won't help much at all in explaining my place on this programme.

Still others of you may have heard me described as a “paper tiger”, in a recent book by that name which portrayed a long list of international publishing figures — thus the pun on the term “paper tiger”. We were all people whom the author took to be “media moguls”.

I am not sure whether it is better to be called a “media mogul” or a “paper tiger”. Personally, I would prefer to have been called a mogul tiger!

Perhaps all of these incongruities will seem less puzzling if I point out that, in the Islamic tradition, there is no sharp separation of the spiritual and material worlds — which is so pronounced in some faiths. For all Muslims, the concepts of *din* and *dunya* — faith and world — are inextricably linked. So it is not such a surprising or incongruous thing for a Muslim leader also to be involved in the world of business, the world of sport, the world of science — or the world of publishing.

Nor does it seem incongruous for me to be speaking to an audience which represents large populations in the developing world, where my family has worked for generations and I have concentrated so much of my work over the past four decades. My presence here today, in fact, grows directly out of my interest in the developing world and the forces that shape it, including the critical influence of the press.

The intertwining of these two interests — the developing world and the newspaper world — began for me in Kenya nearly forty years ago, when the British government was moving away from its colonial role. It became clear to me that this weaning process, in the political realm, could never wholly succeed unless it was matched by a similar process in the realm of public education and journalism.

At that time, East African journalism largely meant colonial journalism, and it was to help change that picture and with the encouragement of young African pre-independence politicians that I entered the newspaper field.

Our objective as we began our venture was to create a different sort of newspaper company, one that would truly speak for the new Kenyan nation. Our first step was to purchase a Swahili publication in Nairobi called Taifa, and we made it our base. A new English language paper, the Nation, came a bit later. And through both newspapers we have since pursued a single mission: to report and reflect on those matters which are of direct and proper concern to the indigenous majority of Kenyans.

I tell this story because so many of you share my interest in journalism as a force of development. And I suspect, as a result, that you have been asking many of the same questions I have been asking.

One of these questions looms particularly large as we approach a new century. It is a question which arises in every part of the world where people of diverse cultures are building new relationships. And the question is simply this: how can the rapid acceleration of contact among these cultures be turned into co-operation rather than conflict?

Or to put it another way: How can the growing demand for cultural integrity be reconciled with the dazzling rise of “the global village”?

The Commonwealth experience is itself a tremendous resource as we explore this question. And so is the profound experience of the country in which we are meeting this week. Indeed, the recent progress of South Africa in bridging historical gulfs while honouring historical identities is one of the most inspiring stories of the twentieth century.

Such inspiring stories will be increasingly important for us as time moves on. For the challenge I am describing will grow more difficult as contact among cultures escalates in intensity.

The notion that our planet is shrinking is a commonplace one, but it has recently taken a radical new turn. It is no longer a simple matter of geography, with cultures bumping up against one another and struggling over borders and territories. Thanks to new methods of communication, cultures now increasingly intermingle — mixing with growing familiarity.

Some say that the fall of communism has brought us to “the end of history”. But an even more profound development has been “the end of geography”. The connection between community and geography has been broken. A single community can thrive across immense distances, while a tiny dot of land can be home to many communities.

Not only can we transport ourselves in a few hours to any spot on the planet, we can also transport our words and our values, our songs and our dreams, our newspapers and our films, our money and our credit, our books and even our libraries to any part of the world — in a fraction of a second. And we can do so at a rapidly shrinking cost, and a rapidly accelerating pace.

Some suggest that the developing world, and Africa in particular may be left behind by this revolution in communications technology — or worse still, be drowned by a burgeoning flood of information and influence. But I would argue that societies which have invested less in old technologies have the potential to leapfrog more quickly into new technologies. The telecommunications revolution — including the Internet and World Wide Web — is providing us with ever greater power at ever lower prices. And this fact could help enormously in redressing earlier imbalances in information flows.

Already we see hints of what new developments in tele-medicine or in tele-education can mean to rural communities, as they suddenly participate in advances which once were distant dreams. The “end of geography” after all, can also mean the end of isolation. And the end of isolation can mean an end to ignorance and impoverishment.

But if new technology can break down walls which have isolated whole communities from progress and enlightenment, that same technology can also remove the barriers to less welcome change. The communications revolution is a two-edged sword, opening exciting doors to the future — yes — but also threatening venerable cultures and traditional values.

On every hand we can see the rise of the global economy, and with it the global career and multinational family life, international fads and intercontinental life styles. Some find this process exhilarating, but many other find it frightening. And some even fear that this new intermingling of cultures will someday lead to cultural homogenisation.

Yet even as the waves of globalisation unfurl so powerfully across our planet, so does a deep and vigorous countertide. In every corner of the world one can also sense these days a renewal of cultural particularism, a new emphasis on ethnic and religious and national identity. What some have called a “new tribalism” is shaping the world as profoundly on one level as the “new globalism” is shaping it on another.

Sometimes this new tribalism can be a liberating thrust, as was the case when national movements overthrew the communist empire. Sometimes it can express itself in terribly destructive ways, as in the former Yugoslavia, or in Rwanda or Burundi. Sometimes it means a radical casting-off of foreign influences, as happened in Iran. Or it can take on a separationist personality, as has been the case from Quebec to Kurdistan, from Scotland to Sri Lanka, from Northern Italy to East Timor. From the most developed to the least developed countries, we also see a resurgence of protectionism, a wariness about foreign immigration, a fascination with ancient languages, a rise in religious fundamentalism.

It is not surprising, of course, that the global and the tribal impulse should surge side by side. The desire to protect what is familiar intensifies in direct proportion to the challenge of what is different.

Wherever we look, we find people seeking refuge from the disorienting waves of change in the tranquil ponds of older and narrower loyalties, in the warmth of familiar memories, in the comfort of ancient rituals.

This recovery of cultural identity can be a nourishing and creative force, to be sure. But it can also mean a world where we define ourselves by what makes us different from others — and thus a world of chronic conflict.

Surely, one of the great questions of our time is whether we can learn to live creatively with both the global and the tribal impulse, embracing the adventure of a broader internationalism even as we drink more deeply from the wellsprings of a particular heritage.

The communications revolution means either a growing "homogenisation" that we know breeds its own hostile reactions, or we can search for a better course. We can hope that the spirit of the 21st century will be a spirit of creative encounter.

And this brings me back to the topic of publishing. For the spirit of creative encounter will never become a dominant force in our world without the strong and effective leadership of the information media.

How can the press best contribute to a spirit of creative encounter here in Africa and around the world? One simple requirement towers above all others: the ability to respect that which is truly different, to understand that which we do not embrace.

It is not as easy as it sounds. For it means much more than tolerance and forbearance. The word sensitivity is one of the most overused words of our time — and one of the least honoured. Why? Because sensitivity is too often seen as an emotion which can simply be willed into existence by a generous soul.

In truth, cultural sensitivity is something far more rigorous, something that requires a deep intellectual commitment. It requires a readiness to study and to learn across cultural barriers, an ability to see others as they see themselves.

Cultural sensitivity is hard work.

We live in a time when the quantity of information has exploded in incalculable ways. Data flows in greater volumes, at higher speeds, over greater distances to larger audiences than ever before. And yet the result has not been greater understanding or enlightenment. In fact, it has often been just the reverse.

One is reminded of T. S. Eliot's haunting question: "Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

Only as we reach beyond mere information and superficial knowledge can the spirit of creative encounter flourish.

Again, it is the press which should lead the way — not just newspapers and broadcasting outlets, but also the news services and press agencies which serve them and the organisations which support them. For centuries, the press has cast itself as the champion of understanding and enlightenment. And yet, even as the press has become more international, it has often left a trail of misunderstanding in its wake.

Confident that more information is a good thing in and of itself, the press has often focused too much on the quantity of what it can deliver, and too little on the quality of what it presents.

But if the media have sometimes been part of the problem — amplifying the threatening aspects of globalisation — then the media can also be part of the solution. If a careless or superficial press can exacerbate the clash of cultures, then a more sensitive and studious press can accomplish the opposite. The same media which serves to distort or discredit old cultures, can also be used to revalidate them, and to help explain them to others.

In some cases, this will mean a greater effort to adapt to the world's ways — to write or speak in the English language, for example — as we tell old stories to new audiences. If the mysteries of ancient Samarkand or Turfan or Kashgar are relayed predominantly in Uzbek or in Uygur, then the sharing will be incomplete and inconsequential. Global technologies imply the use of a global language — not to obliterate old traditions, but to rescue and revivify them.

There was a time when a variety of authentic cultures could thrive because of their separation from one another. But that day is past. The only answer now is that we come to understand and appreciate one another. And in that endeavour the media must play a central role.

I thought I would use the remainder of my time this morning to discuss three specific challenges which I believe the media must meet or obstacles it must overcome if it is to foster a spirit of creative encounter.

The first is the imperative need for expanded expertise, for a higher level of professional knowledge.

It is no longer enough that a journalist be a curious layman, who writes clearly and asks good questions. Good journalists in our time must be well- educated journalists. They must include in their number linguists able to understand the expressions of other cultures, anthropologists who can consider their deeper meanings, in addition to experts trained in their laws and histories, in their economics and sociology, and in a wide variety of other



disciplines. Our publications must have access to a wide array of professional insights — not only through their own journalists, but also through the better use of press agencies and news services and outside guest writers.

The Commonwealth Press Union has done a great deal over the years to improve the level of journalistic education in many parts of the world. In the years ahead, such work will be more important than ever.

As an example of the need for greater expertise, I hope you won't mind if I share an example which is particularly close to my heart. I refer to the superficial and misleading way in which much of the world's media treats the world of Islam. Muslims now constitute nearly a quarter of the world's people. They comprise a majority of the population in some 44 countries and no less than 435 million live in the Commonwealth. And yet, this vast and varied group is often viewed by the rest of the world as a standardised, homogenous mass.

If asked to characterise Islam, many non-Muslims would have little to say, except perhaps that the world of Islam seems to them a distant and different world, a strange and mysterious place, a world which makes them a bit uncomfortable, and perhaps even a bit afraid.

The cultural contexts in which over one billion Muslims have been reared and shaped are simply not understood in much of the world. Even the most basic elements of 1,400 years of Islamic civilisation are absent from the curricula in most of the world's schools. The subject is just not on the world's educational radar screen. And the result is an enormous vacuum. When developments in Islamic societies break into the headlines, few journalists, and even fewer of their readers can bring the slightest sense of context to such news.

These failures are compounded by our pernicious dependence on what I call crisis reporting — the inclination to define news primarily as that which is abnormal and disruptive. As one journalist puts it: "It is the exceptional cat, the one who climbs up in a tree and can't get down, that dominates our headlines, and not the millions of cats who are sleeping happily at home."

Most of the public, however, has no context in which to place the story of the exceptional cat that climbs a tree. And without that context, the casual reader or viewer, never hearing about the cats that stay home, comes to think of all cats as tree-climbing pests who are forever imposing on the fire departments of the world to bring out their ladders and haul them down to safety.

Unfortunately, much of what the world thinks about Islam nowadays has been the result of crisis reporting. When terms like shia and sunni first entered the world's vocabulary, for example, it was in the emotional context of revolutionary Iran. Similarly, recent press references to the shari'a, the traditional Islamic system of jurisprudence, are illustrated by its manifestations in Afghanistan.



Journalists learn to use these words — but how many of them know what they really mean? How many of them understand, for example, that the shari’a is seen by most Muslims as a changing body of law, subject to what we call the fiqh, the capacity for evolving interpretation. How many of them are aware of the selective and moderate application of the shari’a in the legal systems of those Islamic countries which do allow its application? How many of them know that Arabic translators of the Old Testament used the word shari’a to designate the Torah, underlining a shared perception of the Divine Law that governs the spiritual relationship between God and His believers? How many are knowledgeable enough to appreciate the shari’a’s illuminating qualities in civil law?

Without a proper sense of context, it is little wonder that those exceptional instances of Muslims theocratising Islamic politics are mistaken for the norm, and that the humanistic temper of Islamic ethics is overlooked. Among some observers, there is even a tendency to see political violence as a function of the faith itself — when in fact nothing could be further from the truth.

You may agree that all of this is regrettable. But I wonder how many of our news divisions, our reporting teams, our agency staffs, or even our journalism schools, include people who can recognise such distortions, much less set them right. When the educational background is so barren and when the rhythm of our learning — as reporters and as readers — is so often that of crisis, crisis, crisis, then deep misunderstanding will be the inevitable result.

I am not suggesting that every journalist must become an expert on Islam. But it would help greatly if more journalists at least were aware of when, and where they need to turn to find out more.

It should not be forgotten that journalists also have a broader educational role — a responsibility to provide readers and viewers with a context in which to understand individual events properly.

My concern about Islam is just one of countless examples which could be cited to make this point. I could also present a long list of examples growing out of my experience with media reporting on Africa.

The central point is simply this: no matter what group or what subculture we are covering, we must insist that our journalism is not only about what is perceived as unusual and bizarre.

If the spirit of the 21st century is to be a spirit of creative encounter among cultures, then journalists must relay to us the deeper truths about our neighbours, giving us a better sense of how they typically feel and think. They must dedicate themselves not merely to being “up-to-the-minute”, but also to seeing each passing minute within the larger sweep of history.

But there is no way this can happen — in an ever more complex world — without a substantially higher level of journalistic education and expertise. And that is the first of the three challenges I would present to you this morning.

The second challenge is equally demanding. It has to do with the goals we set for ourselves, and the need — as we set those goals — to rise above a domineering profit motive.

That sounds like a cliché. But clichés often identify important problems. And no media problem is more evident to me than the terrible distortions which occur when the highest priority, from influential world media groups to Third World pamphleteering, is merely to “maximise profitability”.

Invariably, what the pursuit of short term media profit means is the near term pursuit of the largest possible audience — the highest ratings, the best demographics, the most impressive circulation and advertising numbers. Inevitably, it seems designing products with instant mass or sectarian appeal — focusing on what is divisive or dramatic or diverting or sensational — at the expense of what is in the interests of society or truly significant.

Particularly deplorable is the growing journalistic tendency to exploit “quirks” in the human or social psyche. This is a major problem in the developing and the developed world alike. By “quirks” I mean curiosities, idiosyncrasies, anomalies, and dormant resentments or frustrations which can be developed among various segments of society. An irresponsible communicator can create an appetite for such materials by catering to one public’s voyeuristic curiosity, through the invasion of privacy for instance, or by pandering to the sectarian prejudice of one group about another. A market space for such offerings can be teased into existence and then prodded and nourished so that it becomes not only economically viable but commercially irresistible as well.

The public, at least in many Third World societies, is not as voyeuristic as some may assume. It is, however, immediately sensitive to sectarian views or news and the converse seems to hold true overall for Western societies.

The key is to sort out properly what belongs in the public sphere and what does not. And the complicating factor is that different cultures will draw that line in different ways. The same news story can thus have a different impact with different audiences.

It is not easy to be a sensitive journalist in a multi-cultural world. But the task will be far more difficult if our central concern is to attract the largest possible audience with the most easily digestible headlines.

The runaway profit motive is a culprit that must be curbed. But having said this, let me also argue that the best way to organise any publishing enterprise is as a private business

entity. Private capital is the backbone of an independent press, and private capital will flow only where it sees the prospect of reasonable long range earnings.

Only when newspapers are healthy in the financial sense can they be healthy in the journalistic sense — attracting and developing talent, investing in technology, pursuing difficult stories, eliminating dependencies on patronage resisting the pressures of aggressive advertisers on the one hand and the lure of passing tastes on the other.

Our experience with the Nation newspapers in Kenya has demonstrated that journalistic improvement goes hand in hand with financial health. Both the content of our publications and the methods for producing them have grown more complex in recent years, and the only way to keep pace was by making new investments out of increasing earnings.

The Nation was in the 1960s among the very first newspapers outside North America to embrace computerised typesetting. More recently, we have moved into the new multi-media technologies — our major publications are now globally available “on-line”. And before the end of this current year we will open, just outside Nairobi, one of the most advanced new printing plants anywhere in the developing world.

There has been much discussion of late about how to improve the quality of journalism in places where the traditions of good journalism are still thin. But this endeavour will not only depend on the quality of editors and reporters. It will also depend on the skills and energies of capable commercial managers. Fostering business skills among media executives is a critical ingredient in the development equation; it too is part of creating an enabling publishing environment.

In its proper context, the profit motive will contribute to the success of all our publications — but only if we can avoid too much focus on short-term financial gain. And that, in sum, is the second of the three challenges.

The third of the media challenges I would discuss today is the need to balance concerns about press freedom with a greater emphasis on press responsibility. In my view, we are sometimes too preoccupied with the rights of the press as an independent social critic, and we pay too little attention to the obligation of the press as an influential social leader.

Too often, the press seems to be caught up with that obsessive individualism which seems so rampant in our world, an expectation that we must make our way in life through a sort of meritocratic free-for-all, ignoring those who are hurt in the process and those who are left behind.

Too often, we join in the celebration of success for its own sake, regardless of the means by which it was achieved or its impact on society. Too often the media spotlight overlooks the corrupt or manipulative methodology and dramatises the triumphant result. Too often, the

right of an individual or the right of a publication to unfettered self-expression is enshrined as the most sacred of all values, independent of its impact on social or moral standards.

One of the most familiar of western political values is expressed in the phrase: "Freedom of the Press". I believe that press freedom, properly understood, is a universal human right. But we must be careful about how we define it and that it does not isolate the press from the rest of the social order. What is originally meant — and properly still means for me — is that the press should be free from the control or constraint of governments, and strong enough to resist all forms of intimidation.

Why is this precept so important? Because the health of any government should depend on public evaluation of its work. Not even the most enlightened government can do this for itself. And only if a pluralistic press is allowed to report freely about any government, will the public be able to hold their governments accountable.

The problem comes, of course, when freedom of the press is stretched beyond this meaning and used to shield the press — not just from government interference, but from any sense of social accountability. And that is when press liberty turns into press license.

Just as press freedom is a means for holding governments accountable, so must the press itself be held accountable for the way it does its work.

Accountable to whom?

To the political leaders of the moment? Never.

To the larger community and the cultures that comprise it? Always — provided we see the community not as a mere majority of the moment, but as an organic, pluralistic entity.

A most remarkable thing in our experience is that the larger community has invariably demanded better forms of journalism. Despite their relative lack of formal education, the first readers of the Nation sought something well beyond what the colonial press had given them.

Through the years, answering to the wider community has posed a changing array of challenges. When the demand for self-rule dominated everything, our tasks were fairly straightforward. The rise of tribal divisions — which were then reflected in political parties — complicated that picture, and so did the interplay of cold war rivalries. As the years passed, we also found that our work would sometimes be more in favour and sometimes less in favour with particular governments.

In recent years, the need for regional integration has become a central concern for the peoples of East Africa. Cross-border co-operation is essential if the patchwork quilt of small

African nations is to cope effectively in a globalised economy. The Nation Group's commitment to regionalism was reflected in the founding, two years ago, of a successful regional newspaper, the weekly East African.

But perhaps the most dramatic way in which the Nation Group has expressed its ties to the larger community was through the broadening of its public shareholdings. We are particularly proud that a majority of the Nation's shares are owned by more than 9,000 indigenous Kenyan shareholders. This policy has widened the Group's financial base - making it a more stable and resourceful business. This policy has also broadened our social and cultural base - making our publications more responsive and responsible.

Our journalistic code — a set of explicit written standards about editorial goals and practices — was submitted to our shareholders for their deliberation and approval because we want our shareholders to feel involved and responsible, not just for the Nation's financial success but also for its moral success. They are, after all, the ultimate stewards, not only of the Nation's corporate body, but also of its journalistic soul.

In short, we have pursued a concept of press freedom — which not only means freedom "from" but also freedom "to" — not just freedom from improper governmental constraints but also freedom to advance the common purposes which give meaning to our lives.

Such a sense of social accountability is not an easy thing to achieve. It must begin with those into whose care the institutions of the press have been entrusted, our editors and proprietors. Those who are in charge must really be in charge.

Freedom of the press does not mean the right of any journalist to write and to publish anything he or she wants to say. It is not acceptable for a reporter to cry "censorship" when an editor or a publisher questions his accuracy or his judgement. Nor is it acceptable for editors, managers and proprietors to slip their solemn responsibilities by invoking the same line of defence.

They may sometimes say they don't want to "meddle" with the contents of their publications. This is a weak and dangerous excuse. And too often that comment really disguises an abdication of moral responsibility.

This abdication is particularly troubling when it is used by proprietors or editors to mask their personal quest for financial gain or political influence, or to sustain divisive sectarian agendas. For in the final analysis, the press and those who manage it must also be held accountable to the collective judgements of the community.

Responsible journalists and managers will not want to shield themselves from such judgements. To the contrary, they will eagerly seek them out. They will want to know what thoughtful readers are saying and how responsible advertisers are thinking. They will talk

constantly with scholars and religious leaders, with artists and business leaders, with scientists and labour leaders, with educators and community leaders — and yes, with politicians and diplomats and governmental leaders as well. And through such continuing interaction they will develop and refine their sense of how the larger community can best be served.

Let me conclude by citing once again what I consider to be the enormous opportunity for the media to foster that new spirit of creative encounter which I described at the outset of this speech. And let me express my hope that as we in the press embrace that opportunity, we will respond creatively to the three challenges I have been discussing.

I hope, first, that we will contribute to a more expert and educated press whose achievements can be measured in the depth of its journalistic insights as well as the speed of its crisis reporting.

I hope, secondly, that while recognising the importance of the financial viability of the media, we press leaders will put the profit motive in proper context. This means resisting the temptation to define everything in terms of profit, and giving audiences due credit by producing socially responsible publications, rather than catering to quirks and sectarianism.

And, finally, I hope that we will recognise and foster press responsibility as vigorously as we defend press freedom.





## Aga Khan University convocation 1996 in Karachi

### LOCATION

Karachi, Pakistan (23 November 1996)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency the Governor of Sindh,  
Excellencies,  
President Kassim-Lakha,  
Rector Camer Vellani,  
Chairman & Members of the Board of Trustees,  
Faculty Members,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Proud Parents of the Class of 1996,  
Graduating Students of the Aga Khan University,

*As-salaam-o-alaikum*

This graduation ceremony, for the class of 1996 from the Faculty of Health Sciences, is a day of distinction which you and we will always remember.

You are to be commended, heartily, on your academic achievement. You have proven your excellence after being tested by a rigorous curriculum and exacting clinical standards. You are ready to take the next steps of working and learning, side by side, with your professional colleagues in bringing better clinical and preventive health care to urban and rural areas of our global community. We are all...parents, faculty, administration and supporters...proud of your accomplishments.



To your distinguished parents, I convey my personal congratulations for their untiring dedication to sustain your studies on an academic journey that began early in childhood. Your life long belief in the importance of education has made the work of AKU much more successful.

Since my visit in 1994, the city of Karachi has suffered from considerable social disruption and law and order problems. I want to take this occasion to express my deep admiration for everyone at AKU whose commitment to the University ensured that the quality of education it imparts did not suffer.

All of us, most closely associated with the Aga Khan University, may have concerns about the magnitude of development challenges which confront us, as our university moves towards the twenty first century. In responding to our Charter, the academic and social responsibilities that we enthusiastically undertake, appear to be significantly affected by the economic, demographic and political complexities of the developing, and the Islamic worlds. Our task is unusual and without precedent because the Muslim world as well as the other areas of Asia and Africa have been let loose from the iron grip of the Cold War. Experimentation in statehood and uncertainty in economic direction, including the reversal of long held dogmas, have confronted new efforts for major social progress. New initiatives are delayed, sometimes even frustrated by resistance to the pace of technical and policy change which is required to meet the increasing reality of competitive globalised economies and information availability.

Because of these complexities, it appears increasingly evident that for institutions such as AKU to succeed, the notion of volatility and change must no longer be viewed with surprise, but with the realism that it is going to be a characteristic of our future environments. In this context, we must develop a University for students and society that is clear and stable in its goals of imparting knowledge and practical skills to solve problems, and to improve the quality of life even if this must occur in a kaleidoscopically changing world. Our institutional purpose must be lucid, our work ordered and purposeful.

When AKU received its Charter in 1983 higher education in the Muslim world, indeed in most of Asia and Africa, was on an established path of decline. Most, if not all of the centres of higher learning, were in the public sector. Many were being driven by the dynamics of national or international politics, and were seriously under-funded. The quality of their education was at best mediocre. But there was more. The curricula they taught were often inherited from a colonial past and had little or no relationship with the cultures of the peoples they served. Many universities educated away from, rather than towards, the needs of our new pluralistic world, in which multi-party democracy in government, and the free market credo have become so powerful that they can even condition countries' access to international development resources.

This was a sad state of affairs. It was compounded by convictions, in the Third World and in major international development agencies, that universities were elitist and would consume inordinate resources that could more properly be devoted to universal primary education.

Set against this background, however, was, and still is, the reality of human history. Few, if any, of our world's great civilisations have developed without the benefit of outstanding intellects, concentrated in institutions which very early on were recognised as foci of knowledge, or universities.

There can be no doubt that the apogee of many great civilisations – Chinese, Christian, Muslim – was attained when their societies had given birth to, or were benefiting from, unique centres of learning. For more than 700 years, Muslim leaders ensured the development of world class universities that flourished on the cutting edge of research and vast libraries. The spread of knowledge was profound in scale and scope. It was a priority focus which energetically occupied the highest leadership elements of the Muslim Empires from the Omayyads, to the Abbasids, the Fatimids, but also the Nasrids in Spain, the Almoravids in Morocco, the Western African Kingdoms.... And the expansive territories of the Mughals, Safavids, Ottomans, the Khanates of Central Asia and the Sultanates of Malaysia and Indonesia. The Muslim world was richly rewarded by these centres of learning which cradled the flourishing of Islamic civilisations and formed the crucible for an explosion of creativity and scholarship in medicine, science, art, literature and philosophy and architecture.

It is against this background of historical greatness, recent academic decline and urgent social need that the Aga Khan University was conceived. We exist because there is a strong logic that we should. The political and economic environment in Pakistan and other Third World countries of Asia and Africa where AKU will be present may change, or generate other formidable challenges, but there must be no wavering in the University's firm dedication to the purposes for which it was created.

Our Charter commits our University, faculty and students to contribute to the resolution of the foreseeable needs of developing countries and the Muslim world through the promotion and dissemination of knowledge and technology by, and I quote "appropriate means, setting the highest standards possible whether in teaching, research or service."

After thoroughly examining a wide range of alternatives, the University focused on development concepts which emphasised offering educational programmes of excellence to students who are likely to make significant contributions to their societies. It stressed the need to develop more insightful research on critical issues, and to set examples of high quality education that could exert a constructive influence on other centres of learning within and beyond, the Muslim world.

In summary, if our University is to be useful to Pakistan and the developing world, we must not simply do things which are done well elsewhere. We must, rather, focus on what needs to be improved, and resolve to do it better than before, indeed, better if possible than in most other institutions.

To fulfil its role, and remain true to its Charter, the University must continue to grow. It must continue to improve its capabilities to impart knowledge and solve complex problems which increasingly have their roots in global issues. It must increase its capability to operate on a world scale in order to be effective at a community level. It must not be time bound if it is to stay ahead of the rapid pace of global technological change.

Today, we are entering a stimulating new phase of growth with expanded academic quality and more sophisticated service capability in our teaching hospital.

The Faculty of Health Sciences is the University's oldest and most advanced endeavour. It is appropriate, therefore, that many new accomplishments and initiatives are focused within that Faculty. The Rufayda School of Nursing building, and the Hadi Radiology building, have been successfully completed and inaugurated yesterday. Planning is at an advanced stage for new buildings to house the Community Health Sciences, and research programmes. Foundation stones as you know were laid yesterday for those buildings.

A Task Force has recently validated the operational soundness of the Institute of Educational Development's programmes and has identified steps for strengthening their programmes as well as their further development.

Significant geographic outreach is occurring with the training of students from Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Bangladesh, and with the planned establishment of a Professional Development Centre in the Northern Areas of Pakistan.

And the University continues to expand, effectively, in other areas as well:

The School of Nursing is involved in planning an Institute of Advanced Nursing Studies to be located in East Africa and to offer post-basic training degrees for nurses. Its degrees will be recognised in East Africa.

A second potential overseas programme now is in planning which is the Institute of Islamic Civilisations, under consideration for location in London. This programme, recommended by the Chancellor's Commission, will focus on the compelling relevance of Islam, as a world religion and a diversity of cultures, in efforts to address global development issues and promote international understanding. The experience of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, of establishing highly effective and influential Islamic centres of learning in architecture, in the West itself, at Harvard and MIT, has demonstrated that a powerful "multiplier effect" can be achieved by catalysing the skills of East and West and speaking together on issues of critical development importance to the Islamic world.

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a dynamic group of Muslim countries has emerged onto the world's centre stage. While they have enormous potential for the future, their economic transition has had a harsh impact on the quality of life of large segments of those populations. As part of an Agreement of Cooperation between the Aga Khan Development Network, and the Government of Tajikistan, AKU has formed a joint Commission to consider the establishment of a Central Asian regional university specialising in high mountain studies in Khorog.

Clearly, AKU is effectively seeking to meet its intended role to serve the developing and Muslim worlds. In so doing, it is establishing crucial bridges of trust and co-operation for future regional collaboration and peaceful development, in other areas of Asia, and in Africa.

Reviewing recent achievements of AKU provides a vivid reminder of how proud we are of the accomplishments realised through the continued generosity of our donors. You

have our most sincere gratitude. Your unwavering support repeated over the years, for scholarships, for capital investments and the care of indigent patients has ensured the sustainability and growth of AKU programmes.

Great peoples, nations and institutions live with what you in the medical sciences call bumps, bruises and major system failures, yet they continue to demonstrate resilience in meeting future challenges. Great peoples and nations and institutions continue towards greatness because they have determination, rationality of thought, resourcefulness and an inspiring vision of the future. With the devoted efforts of many generous and talented people, AKU has begun to create a meaningful community and global resource for the developing and Muslim worlds. It may be a new model of achievement and relevance. It must be our laser, instead of our candle, as we chart an optimal course into an uncertain future.

My good wishes and prayers are with you – the faculty, staff, graduates, students, and friends of AKU – as you go forward on your careers of service and education.

Thank You.



## Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Ismaili Centre,

### Lisbon

11 July 1998, Lisbon, Portugal

Your Excellency Mr President of the Republic,  
Your Excellency the President of the Parliament,  
Your Excellency the Representative of the Prime Minister,  
Your Worship the Mayor of the City of Lisbon,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,

Before addressing you about the Ismaili Centre, please let me express our sympathy and concern, on behalf of the Ismaili community of Portugal and myself, for the people of the Azores who suffered so terribly in Thursday's earthquake. Large segments of the world's Muslim population, including the Ismailis, reside in zones of the world which are subject to seismic disturbances, so we are very familiar with their destructive consequences, and the trauma that lingers in their aftermath. We therefore share, in a particularly personal manner, in this tragedy.

Despite these sad circumstances, it is a distinct honour and a very great pleasure for me to welcome you to this special place on this important day.

This is an occasion charged with symbolism. Each of its elements carries meaning that is rooted in rich history, while also reaching confidently and optimistically into the future. First there is this gathering of distinguished individuals and the many institutions and activities they represent. Next there are the exciting spaces and places of these new buildings, fine additions to the number of Ismaili Centres in major cities around the world, and to Lisbon's rich collection of distinctive structures, historic and contemporary. Finally, today is a very special day for the community I lead, and for me personally, the 41st anniversary of my accession as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims as designated by my grandfather and predecessor, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, Aga Khan.

May I begin by expressing my gratitude to all those individuals who have contributed to making possible this day, and what it commemorates. I would start by thanking the Government of Portugal for the supportive welcome it has extended to the Ismaili community over the years. This policy has enabled a community, many of whom arrived essentially as refugees from Mozambique and other parts of Portuguese-speaking Africa and Asia, to reconstitute itself and become productive and contributing members of Portuguese society within one generation.

The inauguration of the Centro Ismaili today symbolises both the welcome accorded by the Government of Portugal, the response of the Ismaili community to this land of harmony and opportunity, and its permanent commitment to Portugal. These new buildings and the spaces within and around them, are rich in symbolism; drawing on the plurality of cultures which characterise Ismailis here, and around the world. The array of facilities included is a reflection of the core values of the Ismaili community, its organisation, its discipline, its social conscience, the importance of its community organisations, and its attitude toward the society in which it exists. In addition to the prayer hall, there are classrooms, meeting rooms, offices for the Aga Khan Development Network, a lecture and social hall, and exhibition spaces. I thank the Government for its assistance in the development of this very special centre as the permanent focus of the community's spiritual and social activities, and a base for its continuing contribution to the life of the country.

I would also like to thank the City Council for assistance in obtaining the site for the Centre, and His Worship Mayor Joao Soares, and his team of city officials and staff for their understanding and support through all of the phases of what has been a very complex project. Among all his other duties and responsibilities, His Worship honoured us and this project by taking the time to approve the building permit personally. A great deal of construction has taken place in this wonderful city in the last few years. We have appreciated the helpful attention of the City's officials during a period of great activity and extreme pressure on all.

This is also an appropriate occasion to acknowledge and thank those who have made possible the actual construction of the Centre:

- Donors have been critical to the effort to give Lisbon Ismaili Centre the profile that is appropriate to its location and mission. You should know of my warm gratitude, and my admiration for your generosity, and that these thankful feelings are those of many around the world. This is an accomplishment for the entire community.
- To the architects, Mr Raj Rewal and Mr Frederico Valsassina, I extend my heartfelt compliments for the conception and execution of a truly remarkable complex of structures and spaces. As something of a student of Islamic architecture myself, I feel a certain familiarity as I move through the complex, whose evocative elements are drawn from the building traditions of various Muslim communities around the world. Yet the innovative use of local and contemporary materials, the integration of features and patterns inspired by traditional Portuguese architecture, and the technological solutions to some of the building's most demanding and innovative structural features, place the dominant characteristics of this inspiring complex in the fresh and thorough context of this dynamic capital city. A remarkable achievement!
- There are many others to recognise for their contributions. I thank the contractor M/S Soares da Costa, the project manager and the specialty sub-contractors who have worked so effectively to advance the construction process in a very tight time frame. The sub-contractors handling the stone work played a critical role in the realisation of the project, and deserve special mention. Congratulations to the structural engineer, consultant Julio Appleton, for his innovative use of pre-stressed cables in the cupola ceiling in the prayer hall, and of granite in the geometric trellises as structural members. My thanks as well to the consultants and artists including Manuel Caralerio, Karl Schlamming, and Raoul Rewal for their distinctive contributions.
- I would like to express my gratitude and admiration to members of our own organisation and community here in Portugal and my secretariat in France for the care and attention they have given to this project spread over many, long, working days. I want to acknowledge – and forgive me as it is a member of my own family – the contributions of my brother, Prince Ayn Khan, whose taste and talent I salute and rely upon, for his special attention to design issues, tiles, fountains, soft and hard landscape. Of the many others, all of whom I cannot name here, who kept this undertaking moving forward, Nizar Shariff deserves special mention. Finally, everyone who has visited the site over the past months has commented on the sense of engagement and enthusiasm of everyone working here, labourers and volunteers alike. To these people whom I cannot name individually, I would like to convey my deepest and most heartfelt thanks. I am most grateful for the creativity, energy, and attention to both the overall conception and the many details of the project, which render it distinctive, now, and, I hope, for the future.

It is to the future that I would now like to turn my attention. We live in a time of accelerating change, evidence of which surrounds us on a daily basis. Change can mean



stimulation, opportunity, and hope, but it can also mean disorientation, dislocation, and even conflict. Change can mean progress, but it can also mean that special efforts are required to improve access to the benefits of development for those less prepared to take advantage of them.

These countervailing forces of change are of great interest to me because Ismailis have felt their full brunt over the course of their long history. But even more importantly, they are a matter of religious concern. Islam teaches Muslims to strive to achieve equilibrium between human existence and the Absolute, and therefore to attend to both spiritual and physical needs. As Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, my responsibilities extend to both the spiritual and the material welfare of the Ismaili community.

Pursuant to supporting improvements in material well-being, I have created a number of development agencies, known collectively as the Aga Khan Development Network. The Network is a family of institutions sustained by the Imamate and the Ismaili community to realise the social conscience of Islam through institutional action. The agencies of the Network have distinct but complementary mandates with respect to economic development, social development, and the enhancement of culture. They work in countries where Ismailis reside, addressing problems experienced by citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity or religion.

Although my faith and office place upon me a distinctive perspective and role, I am most certainly not alone in my concern about the pace and direction of change at this moment in history. In recognition of the critical problems of human welfare confronting today's world, the role faiths can play in contributing to their resolution, Dr George Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Mr James D Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, convened a Dialogue on "World Faiths and Development" earlier this year. Leaders of nine world faiths participated: Baha'i, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jain, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, and Tao. Within each, the major traditions were represented, the Christians by both Catholic and Protestant leaders, the Muslims by leaders of Sunni and Shia communities.

The Dialogue took the form of an open and wide-ranging exchange of views among the participants. It concluded with a public commitment to continue the Dialogue and to the development of specific follow-on activities. Several points emerged which are important and encouraging. I was particularly struck by the degree of commonality in the ethical basis that motivated and guides the development work of the faiths. To find that similarity in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all of which share common Abrahamic roots, was anticipated and comforting. But to discover the extent and strength of comparable formulations among the religions that have their origins further East was exhilarating for our common goals.

The Dialogue has now moved to the creation of working groups with membership drawn from both The World Bank and the faiths. They are charged with drawing lessons from successful projects addressing some of the most pressing problems of our time: food

security, post-conflict reconstruction, delivery of social services, and the role of the culture and cultural institutions for healthy societies. This process will focus on the work of faith organisations in different geographical settings, and will seek to identify best practices. One goal is to lay the ground-work for co-operation between faith organisations and development organisations including The World Bank. Another, and it is one to which I attach particular importance, is to explore the potential for cooperation between faith organisations in settings where interests are shared and the environment enabling.

In this connection, I would like to compliment the Government of Portugal on the Law of Religious Freedom currently being discussed in the country. It is a pioneering and forward-looking undertaking that will encourage a new era of religious freedom, respect, and equality for over 60 different religious communities in the country, while maintaining the historic role of the Catholic Church. The draft Law on Religious Freedom can serve as a model for the rest of the European Community, where populations have grown more ethnically and religiously diverse in the past three to four decades.

In a more immediate sense, I believe that the proposed law will provide a basis for a greater cooperation between faith communities in Portugal along the lines envisaged in The World Bank's Interfaith Dialogue. If experience elsewhere is a guide, we can expect the release of much energy and creativity, and the Government and people of Portugal should be assured that the Ismaili Centre of Lisbon, and all those it represents – the Ismaili community world-wide, and the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network – will devote their energies to making Portugal's leadership in this creative and uniquely exciting initiative the success it must be. Social harmony coupled with the freedom and respect of religious expression is a prerequisite for all human progress.

Thank you.



## **Aga Khan Award for Architecture Ceremony, Granada**

09 October 1998, Granada, Spain

Your Majesties  
Mr. President  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

It is my distinct pleasure to open the 1998 Award Presentation Ceremony of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. It is an honour to do so in the presence of Their Majesties the King and Queen of Spain, and a privilege to welcome them, and all of you, here this evening. I would like to take special note of the largest contingent of ministers of governments from the Islamic world ever to attend this event. I interpret their presence as an expression of interest and commitment to the thoughtful process of physical change in their societies.

The triennial Presentation Ceremony of the Award for Architecture is the culmination of a careful, comprehensive, and intense effort to identify building projects worthy of world-wide attention in Islamic societies. Tonight we will celebrate the achievements represented by the seven projects selected this year. This evening's occasion has special significance in that it marks the completion of the Award's first twenty years. We are therefore especially grateful for Your Majesties' presence, and for your support, that of the Royal Household,

the Spanish Government, and the Government of Andalusia in making it possible to celebrate this occasion in this remarkable setting.

Each Award Presentation Ceremony has been held in a setting of special significance in the history of Islamic architecture. The Alhambra Palace is in the very best of this tradition, and I would like to thank its Administration and the Municipality of Granada for their assistance in the arrangements for all of the activities here today. This exceptional expression of the genius of Islamic buildings and gardens is beautifully presented and maintained, a credit to all those responsible for its management, and indicative of the respect for culture and architecture, in its richness and diversity, that is so enthusiastically embraced here in Spain.

For the first time the Award Presentation Ceremony is being held in Western Europe. Spain's example of successful cultural pluralism, reaching back into all chapters of its history, and out to the diverse array of countries in the region, including an important part of the Islamic world, makes this a particularly appropriate and inspiring setting.

Under His Majesty King Juan Carlos's wise and foresighted leadership, Spain's bridging role between Europe and the Ummah is being enhanced to the benefit of both.

Having completed twenty years – a generation in human terms- it is appropriate to offer some observations on the Award's record. The decision to create the Award stemmed from a sense that Islamic societies had lost some extraordinary inheritance in domain of human creativity in which they once set standards for the rest of the world. Skill, knowledge, and vision in the realm of architecture were once a hallmark of Islamic civilisations, and central to the identity of its peoples. The overarching goal of the Award is to stimulate the reawakening of that inheritance, and nurture its continuing evolution in contemporary terms, by seeking examples of creative solutions to the wide range of needs for buildings and public spaces.

The Master Juries – appointed anew for each cycle, and completely independent in their work – have brought many remarkable projects to the attention of the wider public, and have created what is now a continuing discourse about architecture appropriate for Muslim communities as they confront the modern world. This year's Jury, whom I would like to take this opportunity to commend and thank for their work, has made its own distinctive contribution to this process. The results of its decision to search for projects with a wide global context and meaning, as well as those with regional significance, has yielded a rich and interesting mixture of Award winning projects.

Collectively the seventy-six projects selected for premiation over the last twenty years share a celebration of the humanity of inspired architecture, and confirm the potential of its social purposes. They are also distinguished by the pluralism of the cultures of the Islamic world in which they are rooted, a pluralism that all Master Juries have both honoured and trusted. This richness of cultural expression is even more fully documented in the materials

collected on the hundreds of projects considered but not selected in each cycle of the Award.

But what are the prospects for the pluralism of cultures in the Islamic world, their richness of expression, and their contributions to world culture as one looks ahead over the next twenty to forty years? On the basis of my extensive travels as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims or in connection with the activities of the Aga Khan Development Network, I think there are grounds for serious concern.

Rapidly expanding populations, increasing environmental degradation, and the unevenness of development and resources, all contribute to the growth of an underclass that has never had sufficient opportunity or support for participation in cultural activities. More recently, the seemingly universal increase of migration to the cities, and the tragedy of dislocated populations seeking refuge from civil strife in many parts of the world have brought further pressure. Both of these processes remove people from familiar surroundings and thrust them into the unknown in terms of culture. Finally, there is the avalanche of new images, whether projected by the modern global electronic media, or by more traditional orthodoxies that make hegemonic claims with new vigour in response to it. Both are very powerful forces, both are monopolistic in intent, and neither nurtures or even respects pluralism.

In conclusion I would offer several propositions based on lessons drawn from the experience of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. They are relevant to its future work, and perhaps, more globally, to the process of cultural development and change.

- The loss of our inheritance of cultural pluralism – the identity it conveys to its members of diverse societies, and the originality it represents and stimulates in all of them – will impoverish our societies now and into the future.
- Sustaining this inheritance will require conscious and concerted effort involving the best minds and most creative institutions around the world.
- This effort must be grounded in an informed understanding of history and cultural context, and yet be forward looking and imaginative as it addresses the needs of contemporary societies.
- It will require an enabling environment, characterised by open and unfettered debate of ideas, a trust in cultural diversity, the celebration and reward of innovation, and a commitment to civil society and pluralistic government.
- It will also necessitate that the cultures of the developing world establish a presence on the rapidly growing information superhighway to balance those that currently dominate the new electronic media. This will require an investment of time and resources and a mastery of regional and international languages. Unless these cultures develop creditable and creative ways to present themselves effectively in this new and powerful medium of communication, cultural pluralism will suffer a massive setback.

Your Majesties, Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, the search started by the Aga Khan Award for Architecture twenty years ago will continue. It will remain committed to learning and sharing what is learned. Although its focus is Islamic societies, its quest is to develop knowledge and understanding that is outward looking and universal in nature. It is in that very spirit, that I am grateful for your presence here tonight.

Thank you.





## World Bank InfoDev Conference

10 November 1999, Washington D.C. (USA)

Thank you, Jim, for your kind words of introduction and for inviting me to address this gathering. It is an honour to have this opportunity to speak to an audience that is so distinguished and so accomplished.

The rapid developments in information and communication technology are of immense importance for those of us engaged in promoting positive economic, social, and cultural change. Like Jim Wolfensohn, I believe that they are also critical because development in all those dimensions is a prerequisite for world peace.

My remarks this afternoon are directed to the challenge of developing the human resources required for broad-based, sustainable development in some of the poorest parts of the world. It is my hope that these specific examples will provide a bridge between the complex and important issues involved in creating global information infrastructure and assuring broad access to it, and its application to specific, non-commercial development efforts, particularly those that are non-commercial in character. I will do this by reporting on three projects at various stages of development being undertaken by agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network. But first, I would offer two general observations:

Several sessions have considered the gaps within and between developed and developing countries, and how they may be exacerbated because not all countries and cultures are



presently positioned to reap the benefits of new technology. The importance of access was the subject of an entire session this morning. At this point access is the biggest constraint facing the networked economy. I would hope that those efforts will go beyond conventional programmes of development assistance, and will reflect at least a measure of the ingenuity that has driven the development and applications of this remarkable technology in the last few years.

But it is also important to ask if access is enough-- even the probably impossible dream of universal access. Will it not be equally important to develop capacity in the developing world to enable institutions and individuals to be more than users -- even interactive users -- of the new information technology? We all know that software and some hardware is already being produced in some of these countries. On the basis of my experience in culture and development over the last 30 years, I believe that it is critical to build capacity more generally to position users to be active participants in the advances in the shaping of content and applications. Only then will the full potential of the new information technology begin to be realised. And only then will the concern of some, that the Internet poses a threat to their cultures, be addressed.

My first case study involves culture and development, a field in which I have had an interest of long standing. I should take this opportunity to say publicly how important I think it is that the World Bank has embraced culture as an important dimension of development under Jim Wolfensohn's leadership. For too long, culture was dismissed as either irrelevant, or elitist, or was seen as an obstacle by development specialists.

Since 1957, when my Grandfather appointed me to succeed him as the Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network have been involved in building schools, hospitals, housing estates, and other constructions in the Islamic world. Early in that process, it became clear that while the use of the buildings was usually adequately defined, they had less and less to do with the architectural traditions of the societies that they were to serve. As we expanded our questioning, it became starkly apparent that across almost the entire Muslim world the traditions of architecture, one of its greatest and most distinctive forms of cultural expression, had become irrelevant or had disappeared.

Once the issue had been framed, some of the greatest architects in the world together with men and women from all disciplines and all religious backgrounds -- Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist -- joined me, to create programmes to help address the crisis in the built environment of the world's one billion Muslims and those among whom they live. The aim was to widen - for people of all backgrounds -- the sources of knowledge and inspiration for the design languages of Islamic cultures.

Now, two decades later, the best buildings and spaces of the Islamic world are exceptional once again. Designed and used by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, they address some of the most intractable problems of our age: rapid urbanisation, the "slumification" of the

rural built environment, management of historic structures and public spaces, and shelter for the very poor. For me, this is a powerful example of what can be achieved in as little as 20 years when talented and committed individuals can come together and focus their attention. In this instance, they did nothing less than begin the process of reversing the hundreds of years of decay that contributed to the erosion of the physical dimensions of cultural identity in Muslim societies.

Programmatically this has been accomplished through initiatives. The Aga Khan Award for Architecture, using an independent jury, selects innovative projects of all types - new constructions, restored buildings, and public spaces to share a \$500,000 prize every three years. The results are fully documented and vigorously publicised as examples to stimulate creative thinking about subsequent building projects around the world. The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology is dedicated to research and the training of scholars and practitioners to enrich building in the Islamic world by expanding the pool of knowledgeable professionals and the resources for their work.

Recent developments in information and communication technology, and the rich array of talent at MIT now make it possible to bring the resources developed through these initiatives to students, teachers, scholars, and practitioners throughout the Islamic world. A project team at MIT's School of Architecture and Planning is establishing an on-line community of professionals interested in Islamic architecture. It is being developed in close cooperation with the Graduate School of Design and the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at Harvard, and with the support of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Geneva. Called ArchNet, it is an ambitious Internet-based network that is intended to serve students, teachers, scholars, and design and planning professionals. Its goal is to provide an extensive, high-quality, globally accessible intellectual resource focused on topics of architecture, urban design, urban development, and related issues such as restoration, conservation, housing, landscape design, and construction in seismic sensitive zones with special reference to the Islamic world. It will be achieved by providing historical and contemporary images and drawings, an extensive bibliography on the art and architecture of the Islamic world, G.I.S. and CAD databases, and a searchable text library. MIT Press, a leader in electronic publishing, will maintain the Website on an accessible server.

ArchNet's structure is being designed to offer each user with a personal workspace tailored to his or her individual needs. From this space, the user will be able to contribute his or her own findings and research to the larger site. The Website will aim to foster close ties between institutions and between users. Through the use of on-line fora, chat rooms, and debates, it is hoped that the site can promote and enrich discussions among participants by providing effective support for research, teaching, and practice in architecture, and related fields for the benefit of all who live within the Islamic world, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It will be a bottom-up system, in which information will eventually flow directly from the user to a continually expanding resource base that can be shared by all. The lessons learned will be accessible globally, and of interest to those who are addressing similar problems of the built environment in other parts of the world.

Another feature of the project's design involves the selection of partner schools of architecture on a regional basis around the Muslim world, to participate directly and actively in shaping this initiative. Each partner institution will be provided, as needed, with the hardware, software, training, and infrastructure support necessary for active participation in ArchNet. The partner institutions will not only benefit by assured access to the contents of the Website, they will contribute to the expanding base of knowledge and information on it, and will also be invited to shape its scope and direction. Each school will coordinate with the other departments of architecture and planning in their respective regions to gather resources for which they have a particular expertise.

I believe that ArchNet will demonstrate the enormous potential of the global information system for supporting communication and collaboration among architectural and planning students, faculty, scholars, and practitioners throughout the world. It is particularly important that this can occur across countries in regions that share cultures, economic circumstances, and climatic and geographic characteristics. I anticipate that once ArchNet is up and running, it may prove to be an important model for other subjects and professional groups.

My second case is a new programme designed to develop human resources for the improvement of health services in East Africa. It is being undertaken by the School of Nursing of the Aga Khan University in Karachi. AKU is Pakistan's first, private, autonomous university and its charter, promulgated by the Government of Pakistan, allows it to operate academic programmes anywhere in the world.

The Trustees of the University decided that the provision of health care in Pakistan had been insufficient for so long, both in terms of quality and coverage, that one of the earliest contributions the University could make was to found a Faculty of Health Sciences. A Medical School and a teaching hospital were central to the programme. But because Pakistan has one of the lowest ratios in the world of nurses to doctors, AKU decided that the first component of its Faculty of Health Sciences had to be a School Nursing. This was created in 1980 with substantial support from McMaster University in Canada and the Canadian International Development Agency.

The programmes carried out by AKU's School of Nursing over the last two decades have clearly demonstrated that a focus on nursing advancement enhances the status of women by making them indispensable partners in societal advancement. Nursing, primarily a women's profession in Pakistan, empowers women and improves their status in their communities. It provides positive role models for other women, strengthens their decision-making and problem-solving capabilities in the eyes of others, and promotes their personal, professional, and financial autonomy. When AKU began operations in Pakistan, nursing was a very low status profession, and nursing studies were a neglected discipline in health education.

Since its founding, the School of Nursing has graduated almost 1100 diploma students and nearly 200 Baccalaureate graduates, and has launched a post-graduate Masters Degree programme. It has become a leading resource for nursing education, not only in Pakistan, but also for other developing countries. It is on this basis that the Ministries of Health in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have invited the School of Nursing to launch its regional programme for upgrading nursing education in Eastern Africa.

The health status of the populations of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, is among the poorest in the world. Twice as many women in Kenya and Tanzania die in childbirth as the average for low-income countries, and more than four times the average die in Uganda. In addition to facing the traditional causes of high rates of morbidity, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania bear the heavy and tragic burden of HIV and AIDS.

In the face of these challenges East African governments have adopted programmes to restructure the health sector to make services more effective, accessible, and affordable. The strategies call on governments to focus on financing and providing primary and essential health care packages at the community level, rehabilitating and better equipping provincial and district-level health facilities, and introducing cost-effective delivery of care at tertiary facilities.

Only recently has it become apparent that effective reform requires a significant investment in the personnel responsible for managing health services and providing care. While some programmes have been implemented to improve the capacities of those charged with managing the reformed health system, little systematic attention has been given to enhancing the clinical and managerial competence of nurses at all levels of the system. Nurses in service are a logical focus for a new programme because they are less expensive to train, are widely present in rural areas, and are usually the first point of contact for a patient seeking care. They are also essential to the competent provision of hospital based tertiary care.

At the outset, instructional programmes will employ conventional distance education technologies. Distance education is particularly suited to the initiative because it is cost efficient, allows participants to remain on the job while they improve their skills, and because it makes professional advancement available to women who generally cannot leave to pursue studies elsewhere. As the programme matures, and infrastructure develops, computer based information technologies will be employed to link the East African centres to resources at the School of Nursing in Karachi, and to provide enriched access for nursing professionals in more isolated parts of the region. If successful, the Advanced Nursing Studies programme should serve as a model of effective educational cooperation between two parts of the developing world.

My third and last case study is, in some senses, the most ambitious of all. It involves the creation of a new university, located in Central Asia in south-eastern Tajikistan, near the convergence of some of the highest mountain ranges in the world - the Pamirs, the Hindu

Kush and the Karakorum -- and the border with north-eastern Afghanistan. The mission of the university is to develop research and educational programmes focussed on the mountain regions and peoples of Central Asia, and mountain regions more generally. The Commission that was charged with analysing the need for such an institution and developing a conceptual plan has completed its work, and steps are underway to develop the agreements and understandings with the governments of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic to establish it as a truly international university.

The location and nature of the proposed university is such that it cannot succeed without an aggressive use of computer based information technologies. The university would have three units:

The first would be an undergraduate, residential, liberal arts programme with a special focus on the technical and managerial subjects required for development of mountain regions and peoples. These would include forestry, high mountain agriculture, engineering and natural resource management, and business, economics, and public administration. There would also be special attention given to the cultures of high mountain communities.

The second would be an interdisciplinary masters degree for development specialists in the government, non-government, and commercial sectors.

English, now recognised as an international language by the governments of the region, would be the medium of instruction for both degree programmes to ensure that graduates are able to participate in global systems of all sorts.

The third division will offer non-degree programmes for people in isolated settings, and for mid career professionals in Central Asia. It will be offered in Russian and regional languages.

To accomplish this ambitious set of goals, the university will require a sophisticated learning resources centre that will constitute the technological core of the institution, and which is critical to overcoming the physical isolation of its campus. Together with the use of English as a medium of instruction, it will constitute one of the university's most distinctive features and should play an important part in attracting prospective students, faculty, and donor support.

This is a very ambitious undertaking. It calls for a substantial initial investment in Internet access, a fibre optic-wired campus, and computing equipment, as well as regular investments thereafter to keep abreast of new developments. It calls for a faculty whose members are not only computer literate but, more importantly, prepared to change their methods of teaching and conducting research to take advantage of innovations in the rapidly changing field of communications. It calls for a rector and deans who arrive on the job with experience in and openness to, the new learning technologies. It calls for the

inclusion of technology training into the preparation (and eventually recruitment) of incoming students.

It will also require the establishment of satellite learning centres in mountain communities across the region and certainly in Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic and other countries from which the university will draw students. For the master's programme, it means opening distance learning links with leading institutions and scholars elsewhere who might develop special courseware for students on the home campus.

Why is a distance education initiative included in what otherwise is a residential research and teaching institution?

First, because there are thousands of persons who were trained to fill posts in the Soviet system whose skills must be updated if they are to survive professionally in the post-Soviet era. These include teachers, civil servants, and those responsible for nearly every sector of the economy. Graduates of the new university will themselves require in-service training and professional updating over the years. The kind of life-long learning this entails is rare or non-existent in Central Asia. The proposed division could provide it in such a way as to become a model for other institutions in the region.

Second, a market economy and civil society call for many new skills. Unless those beyond university age are simply to be abandoned, they too must have an opportunity to acquire such skills.

And third, millions of non-university graduates, formerly employed in Soviet enterprises, must now acquire trades or professions that will enable them to exist independently.

Outside the former Soviet territories, a different set of circumstances creates similar needs. In Xinjiang, Western China, many of these skills exist, but are concentrated in the large urban centres. Many traditional trades and crafts survive in Pakistan's Northern Areas but they need to be updated and supplemented with the skills which modern economies require. Afghanistan, by contrast, has seen the loss of most of its traditional capacities without the introduction of more modern skills. As a consequence, millions of people there have no means of sustaining themselves and the society as a whole lacks many of the trades that are essential for the merest survival. The scale of demand in Afghanistan is likely to be enormous and beyond the capacity of any one institution to meet. But, an effective Continuing Education programme operating at one or more satellite campuses there can serve as a model for others.

Here then are the three major projects that the Aga Khan Development Network is presently advancing that rely in different ways and to different degrees on information and communications technology.



The ArchNet Website will directly address the vitality and understanding of architecture in the Islamic world and its contribution to the quality of life, subjects that are central to the identity of a billion people and their cultures.

The Aga Khan University's School of Nursing's Advanced Nursing Programme in East Africa will build on twenty years experience to address the needs of a health system struggling to meet long existing challenges of health maintenance in a tropical region, and the more recent scourge of HIV and AIDS. By focussing on nurses, it will reach all the way from primary to tertiary health providers, and also contribute to the improved status of women in those societies just as it has in Pakistan.

The Central Asian University at Khorog, will be the first teaching and research institution exclusively focussed on the needs and potentials of the 20 million people living marginal existences in poor isolated mountain communities. The aggressive use of information and communication technology will allow undergraduate and graduate students from the countries of Central Asia to have access to a world of knowledge and information without leaving the settings that are familiar, and which they will study and apply the results of their education. The same technology will enable the University to provide training in subjects to participants spread across the region, with a specific emphasis on skills needed for meeting the challenges of functioning in post Soviet societies and economies.

Each of these ventures is experimental and challenging. Each addresses the critical problem of human capital, as well as a specific development objective. We have a clear vision of what we hope to achieve and why, but we realise we will need help to bring it to fruition.

Thank you.





## Conference of Indigenous Philanthropy

17 October 2000, Islamabad, Pakistan

Your Excellency General Pervez Musharraf,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
Chairman and Members of the Steering Committee,  
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalam-o-Alaikum

Let me begin by adding my welcome and congratulations to all the participants in this path-breaking meeting. His Excellency Rafiq Tarar, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, honoured this gathering with his presence and presentation yesterday. General Pervez Musharraf, Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, has honoured us by participating today and we look forward to his comments later in the programme. Their willingness to join these proceedings and thereby lend their support to its deliberations underscores, in the strongest of terms, the importance and potential of indigenous philanthropy in Pakistan at this moment in history. I thank them both for fitting the conference into their busy schedules, for their valuable suggestions, and for their vital encouragement.

I would also like to commend everyone who has worked to make this conference a success. The breadth of support it has enjoyed from government officials and institutions and from individuals and organisations representing all segments of society is, itself, a singular achievement. Indeed, I would venture to suggest that the organisation and conduct of the conference may be a model for new venues to grapple with many of the challenges confronting positive social and economic change in Pakistan today. Partnerships that bring together the government, the private sector and civil society institutions have great potential. I am impressed by how the Steering Committee, with its diverse composition in terms of backgrounds and perspectives, has been able to reach a clear consensus on such a complex set of issues, in such a short period of time.

I would also like to recognise the donors who have made this conference possible. The Canadian International Development Agency merits special mention in this regard for its long-standing support for the development of civil society institutions in Pakistan, and for the work of the Aga Khan Development Network more generally.

The creative leadership of the Steering Committee, the original and very interesting research papers, and other conference documents, the deliberations of the working groups, and the presentations at the plenary sessions have, in combination, laid a basis for formulating plans for the immediate future. I would add my endorsement to the recommendation to establish the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy as a means to institutionalise some of the processes that have been put in motion by this conference. I am sure that the work of the proposed Centre would move philanthropy in Pakistan to new levels of giving, new forms of activity, and new heights of accomplishment.

I am convinced that the potential for future development of this movement is enormous because it builds on the strongest of foundations. Philanthropy and charitable giving hold a very central place in the teachings of the Holy Quran, the writings of Islamic thinkers, and the history of Muslims in all parts and cultures of the Islamic World, including here on the sub-continent. Islam's clear and explicit injunction is to share resources beyond one's reasonable commitments, and to care for those in need. I will not speak further about them this morning as they received attention in yesterday's presentations. There are, however, some specific aspects of the teachings of our faith that are worthy of additional comment. They deal with the ethical basis for important policy decisions relevant for the future of philanthropy in Pakistan, and the duty to insure the integrity of philanthropic organisations.

Religion and generosity - the gifts of time, of funds, and of material - have been closely linked throughout human history. Religious institutions, buildings, and activities have been a major focus of giving in virtually all religious traditions and in countries at all stages of development. Charitable support for the poor and for the victims of disasters has an equally long and widespread history. In the Islamic World, from the earliest days, wealthy donors evolved a special form - endowments (Awqaf) - to address charitable needs on a sustainable basis. Philanthropic funding for social development (as distinguished from

charity) is a somewhat more recent phenomenon. Support for schools and hospitals, often through endowments, were its first forms. The funding of institutions engaged in human resource development came later but is beginning to grow rapidly.

The Quran, the Hadith, the sayings of Hazrat Ali, and many scholarly sources make numerous references to the forms and purposes of philanthropy. Human dignity - restoring it, and sustaining it - is a central theme. Enabling individuals to recover and maintain their dignity as befitting their status as Allah's greatest creation, is one of the main reasons for charitable action. There is dignity in the individual's ability to manage his or her destiny. That being the case, the best of charity, in Islamic terms, can go beyond material support alone. It can take the form of human or professional support such as the provision of education for those otherwise unable to obtain it, or of the sharing of knowledge to help marginalised individuals build different and better futures for themselves. Thus conceived, charity is not limited to a one-time material gift, but can be seen as a continuum of support in a time frame which can extend to years. This means that multi-year support for institutions that enable individuals to achieve dignity by becoming self-sustainable, holds a special place amongst the many forms of charity in the eyes of Islam.

There is another precept found in the Quran and Islamic philosophical texts of great significance that is particularly relevant in this context. It is the emphasis on the responsibilities placed upon those charged with the management of philanthropic gifts and the institutions supported by them. The duty of responsible stewardship is very clear, a concept that can be equated to the notions of trust and trusteeship in today's international legal terminology. The obligation to maintain the highest level of integrity in the management of donated resources, and of the institutions benefiting from them, is grounded in our faith. It is critical to the realisation of the purposes of all gifts, to the continuation and growth of philanthropic giving, and for credibility in the eyes of the public. Muslim societies have the moral right to expect and demand that philanthropic donations be managed according to the highest ethical standards.

The teachings of Islam and the history of Islamic civilisations give us direction and courage to take on the challenges and responsibilities of active engagement in philanthropic work. The world in which we live today provides additional stimulus to do so as well. Self-reliance at the national, and local, levels is a theme that is now receiving greater emphasis than at any time in the last fifty years. This is a significant departure from development thinking in the 20th century, with its emphasis on state and international organisations as "nannies" to which citizens could look for everything. It also represents a move away from "special" relations between individual countries in the developing and developed world, with their overtones of dependency and patron-client relationships. My sense is that in Pakistan today, the urgency of reducing dependency on external resources is widely appreciated. It will be equally important for the general public to understand and appreciate the requirements and consequences of the shift in responsibility for social services from the government to private and community organisations as well.

As governments pass more and more development responsibility to private and community level initiatives, countries must improve existing social service and development institutions, and create many new ones. Building and strengthening institutions and sustaining them on a continuing basis will depend primarily on the availability of philanthropic resources. The provision of such resources through multi-year grants is the optimum form of support. It enables institutions to plan and develop in an orderly fashion, rather than existing from year to year.

The question before this conference is how the movement toward self-reliance can be effectively supported and encouraged at the national, community and individual levels. The establishment of a Centre for Philanthropy, as recommended by the conference, would be a concrete step in that direction. Another would be to look for ways to strengthen an "enabling environment" of beneficial tax and regulatory conditions to stimulate philanthropic giving. Creating fuller public understanding of the role of philanthropy in the support and development of activities formerly offered exclusively through government funding are also very important.

My own engagement in international development work now extends over a period of more than forty years. This experience, which has included establishing the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network to mobilise domestic and international support for a wide range of projects and activities, has yielded some important lessons.

The first is that funding is generally forthcoming when the conditions are right: solid institutions with committed leadership that inspire trust and confidence, an enabling legal and regulatory environment that welcomes and encourages philanthropic action, and programmes and activities that are grounded in local needs and initiatives and are informed by the latest thinking and experience wherever it can be found.

The second lesson is that giving can take many forms - funds, time, ideas, and professional skills. Everyone can and should be a donor, not just the wealthy, and all forms of giving should be encouraged and recognised. Volunteerism is critical, and is obtaining greater and greater recognition and encouragement. One indication is that the United Nations has designated the year 2001 as the International Year of the Volunteer.

The third lesson is that new forms or objects of giving do not take place at the expense of more traditional forms, and should not be seen as competing with them. More funding for institutions engaged in social and human development does not, if experience elsewhere is a guide, mean less giving for traditional forms of charity or for religious institutions. An invigorated culture of giving, supported by appropriate institutions and an enabling environment, benefits all institutions supported by philanthropic giving.

Experience around the world, in developed and developing countries, suggests that partnerships involving the government, the business sector, and the wide variety of institutions of civil society, have enormous potential for finding innovative solutions to the

delivery of social services, and the development of a nation's human resources. New institutions will emerge, and existing institutions can be improved and in some instances take on new areas of activity. Opportunities will develop to create capacity to look beyond the pressing concerns of the day, and to address problems that are chronic or emergent.

Let us dream a little about some of the beneficiaries of a vigorous and maturing philanthropic movement ten or fifteen years from now. Endowed professorships, providing resources to attract and retain Pakistan's very best talent in critical fields of teaching and research, could be a feature of major government universities, not just a small number of private institutions. Funds for medical research on health problems and needs that are particular to Pakistan's different regions and that can never be fully resolved by depending on the international research system, could be made available on a competitive basis to researchers in public and private universities, and in the commercial sector. Sustaining cultural integrity is a major issue in many parts of the non-western world today. How can these cultures survive in the face of the globalisation of communications, and the huge resources of the western media giants? Cultural institutions could be funded to develop material on all facets of Pakistani culture designed for use in the new media and directed to both domestic and international audiences.

These are only a few examples of what might be considered in the future. I am sure that this audience could think of many more. I also suspect that all of you know at least one or two very good institutions in this country that do very important work, and yet are extremely fragile for want of better financial support. They too would be appropriate beneficiaries of a maturing philanthropic system.

It is also important to recognise that needs will change because conditions themselves will certainly change. The experience of the Aga Khan Development Network in the Northern Areas is that the social service and development needs today are very different than they were fifteen years ago. Philanthropic institutions have the opportunity, and I would say the responsibility, to be observers of trends and to anticipate emergent needs. They can support activities that focus on the kind of longer term requirements of the nation that are difficult for the government to consider, given the breadth and an depth of its role in dealing with the pressure of all its everyday responsibilities.

But now let us return to the present. Given what this conference has been able to accomplish, I am very encouraged about the future of indigenous philanthropy in Pakistan. The movement has a firm foundation on which to build. Giving in all forms is already much higher than many would have imagined. Fostering the expansion and development of philanthropic action will require continuous and vigorous attention. It is a source of confidence and inspiration that the ethical premises for philanthropy, from the time of the Revelation and throughout Islamic history, legitimise the application of charitable giving that has been the subject of this conference. I trust that some years ahead we will be able to look back at this gathering as something of great significance in the development of self-reliance and sustainability for this nation and all of its peoples.

You and I will recognise in General Musharraf's presence the importance he attaches to the subject of this conference, and his willingness to move its agenda forward. I thank him for sharing his time with us, and look forward to hearing his comments with great anticipation.

Thank you.





## Inauguration of the Professional Development Centre in Northern Areas

### LOCATION

Northern Areas, Pakistan (19 October 2000)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency Mr. Abbas Sarfaraz Khan, Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Northern Areas,

Your Excellency Mr. Kurt Juul, Administrator & Head of delegation of the European Union,

Your Excellency Mr. Yannick Gerard, Ambassador of France

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

*As-salaam-o-alaikum*

This is a special moment for the cause of education in the Northern Areas. I am aware that some of the programmes of the Professional Development Centre have been in operation for over a year. But the inauguration of this fine new facility is highly symbolic. It signifies the dawn, inshallah, of a new era in the quest to bring quality education to the children of this region.

Organisations such as the Aga Khan Education Services have been involved in this quest for many decades. But the opening of this Centre today represents a giant step forward. Its programmes will provide teachers with opportunities to enhance their



effectiveness and advance their careers. And it will enable communities to look to their schools to attain higher standards of student achievement, and better use of scarce resources. Trainees will receive certificates from the Aga Khan University's Institute of Educational Development on completion of their courses, which will be conducted by members of the Institute's faculty. I would like to congratulate everyone who has been involved in bringing this important endeavor to fruition. I would especially like to thank the European Commission for providing funding for the construction of the Center's facilities and its core programmes for the first ten years of existence. Thank you very very much indeed.

I would add an adlib comment here, which is to say that you can build new buildings but if you cannot find quality men and women to implement the programmes and to give them the confidence that their programmes will be able to continue and grow in the future you've achieved nothing. So the grant from the European Commission enables us to have that confidence for ten years into the future and that is enormously important. Thank you again.

I would like to go beyond thanking the European Commission for providing the funding that made the development of the Centre possible. I want to commend the Commission for its commitment to addressing development problems that remain crucial in much of the developing world, even though they have disappeared in most of Europe. I would take your time for a minute to explain the background to this PDC.

We have been working in Pakistan for many years and Pakistan fortunately like many other developing countries is moving to what we call a merit based educational system. This is good for the country. But we found that the children from the Northern Areas were being increasingly marginalised in a merit based educational system because the quality of teaching throughout the Northern Areas was insufficient to allow young boys and girls to compete in a National merit based educational system. This was a regional issue. It had nothing to do whether the schools were private schools or public schools, how long they had been in existence. It was a regional problem.

Secondly, it was not specific to Pakistan. There are a number of countries, such as the countries of eastern Africa, where for historic or other reasons communities, have failed to develop educational systems that allow them to maintain their position in a merit based educational system. So the problem that we were seeking to address is this. What could be done for education in the Northern Areas that would improve the quality of education right across the Northern Areas so that the young men and young women of this part of Pakistan would be able to develop their futures, sustain their opportunities in a merit based educational system? That was the problem. And the answer is behind me.

The problems facing isolated rural communities in countries like Pakistan are almost overwhelming. The logistical difficulties of providing social services in such settings are themselves staggering. Serving remote and dispersed populations poses challenges in recruiting and retaining qualified staff, maintaining morale, providing necessary material on a timely basis, and adjusting programmes to suit local conditions and requirements. If one then adds to address the issues of quality and continuous improvement, you add to that need, the necessity of quality, the degree of difficulty is multiplied several times

over, because the goal is not simply to provide education, its to provide quality education so that the young boys and girls can succeed in a merit based system.

The mission of the Professional Development Centre is to do precisely this for the primary and secondary schools in the Northern Areas. The Commission's willingness to make a major investment near a small town in the region to be served, rather than a major city somewhere else in the country, is both perceptive and farsighted. The existence of a well designed and well-equipped Centre will add to the status of teaching as an important and modern profession amongst the local population, thereby helping the recruitment from the region itself. The location will actually reduce the time and travel that trainees will have to undertake to participate in the Centre's programme. An example is that in the past quality teachers had to leave this area to improve their professional knowledge in order to serve better the populations of the Northern Areas. Equally important, it will eliminate the need for them to confront the social and cultural differences between rural people and city dwellers, between uplanders and lowlanders that are found everywhere in the world. The location will make it easier for women, particularly for those with family responsibilities, to make full use of the Centre's opportunities for training and professional advancement. It will also increase the potential return on research programmes because faculty and trainees live in or near their "laboratories", rather than having to make extensive field trips to visit them. And here again I would emphasise the notion of research. The peoples of Pakistan are very diversified. The areas in which they live are very different and unless research is carried out it will be impossible to focus education in curriculum training on the particularities and the idiosyncrasies of the needs of education in various parts of the country

Without the establishment of institutions like the Professional Development Centre, rural populations have no hope of succeeding in this world of increasingly rapid change. Many observers have expressed concern that the gap that has always existed between villagers and city dwellers, will actually be exacerbated in the new globalising economy. Without a solid education at the primary and secondary level, young people will be deprived of any hope of choosing new futures. Where there is no hope, disenchantment and alienation often follow. If the PDC is successful, it should help schools in the Northern Areas close the gap for at least some of the young people of the region.

It is a source of great satisfaction, even pride, that the Commission has chosen two Pakistani institutions, the Aga Khan Education Services (or AKES as we insiders call it) working in close association with the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development (or AKU-IED) to undertake this important mission. AKES has had decades of work, as you have heard, in the Northern Areas. AKU-IED, that's the Institute of Educational Development, has operated highly innovative and successful teacher training programmes since 1993. AKU-IED, that's the institute, is also the beneficiary of major grants from the European Commission, including a new grant covering the period 2001 to 2006 following a very positive evaluation. I would like again to repeat my gratitude to the European Commission, because in giving the university this grant they are sustaining the Resource Centre – The Professional Resource Centre – to which the PDC here and, inshallah, maybe other PDCs in Pakistan at some future time will relate for professional competence. The AKU and its Institute's involvement with the Professional Development Centre presents a wonderful opportunity for them to fulfill

their obligations of outreach and their mission to focus especially on the development of women professionals. But the Commission's choice of AKES and AKU-IED to launch the Professional Development Centre also places a heavy responsibility on them. I suggest that they should assume that many sympathetic but watchful eyes will be upon them.

I think that the Professional Development Centre has a genuine potential to make a significant and lasting impact. In terms of human resource development, investing in teacher training has the potential for greater returns than any other social sector initiative. The ripple effect that a teacher can have as he or she touches the lives of hundreds of students over the years provides a multiplier that even the sharpest businessman would envy. The structure and focus of the PDC's programme provides a further multiplier. The training of teacher educators will ensure that other teachers in their schools or nearby schools will benefit. The training of educational managers and instructional leaders will address the need to make the best use of available resources. In addition, a "Whole School Improvement Programme" has been especially developed for the Northern Areas, which will have teams moving from valley to valley to reach all schools, government and private, in a comprehensive manner.

Let me emphasise again, so that it is clearly and widely understood that the Centre will serve the needs of government schools as well as those operated by non-government organisations. This is a distinctive and positive feature. It breaks down the traditional divide between the public and private actors. This divide has existed for too long, and actually has been a burden on all round improvement of education in the country. The goal is to enable and reward teachers, to stimulate new thinking about what they are teaching and why, about teaching materials and the delivery of the contents of curricula, and to make the best use of personnel and facilities through improvement and management across all the schools in the region.

I need not remind this audience that Islam places special importance on the value of education. Learning is ennobling. Teaching is one of the most valued professions because it opens minds to greater self-awareness as well as to the knowledge that gives learners greater control over their destinies. In addition to what the Professional Development Centre should do for the quality of teaching in its catchment area, it introduces teachers, and by example others, to an experience with life-long education with all its potential for potential development and satisfaction.

I convey my best wishes for the success and further development of the Centre and its programmes to everyone involved in its oversight, management and programmes. You have been given the very best facilities and support with which to work. If you are successful, as inshallah you will be, your work will have a major impact on the quality of education and the status of the teaching profession in the Northern Areas.

Thank you.



## Aga Khan University convocation 2000 in Karachi

### LOCATION

Karachi, Pakistan (21 October 2000)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency General Pervez Musharraf  
Your Excellency the Governor of Sindh  
Excellencies  
Chairman and Members of the Board of Trustees  
President Kassim-Lakha  
Rector Vellani  
Faculty Members  
Distinguished Guests  
Proud Parents of the Class of the year 2000  
Graduating Students of the Aga Khan University  
Ladies and Gentlemen

*As-salaam-o-alaikum*

I would like to add my welcome to all of you, here to the family and friends of the Aga Khan University! It is an honour and a particular pleasure to have His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf here with us today.

Convocations are occasions for summing up, for stock taking, for congratulations, for celebration and for looking forward. They are a time for individuals, for families, for the components that make up a university and for the institution itself. As Chancellor I would like to speak to all of the audience, and to the future, as well as the present.

First I would like to speak to the students who are graduating today. I am sure that many of you feel that this is “your day”. This is understandable and justifiable – it is your day. Obtaining entrance to the Aga Khan University was a very significant measure of your merit and potential. The successful completion of your academic programmes is a second such measure, as represented by the degree or diploma that will be presented to you by the University. I offer congratulations to you personally and on behalf of the Board of Trustees.

In addition I would like to leave two thoughts with you. First, I anticipate that the professional qualification you receive today will not be the last one that a number of you, many I hope, will receive in the course of your careers. Education in this fast changing world has become a life-long affair. It is not too early to set new goals, to develop your vision. Second, this institution lives and grows on generosity. I urge you to be the very best ambassadors of that generosity towards society, throughout and in all the dimensions of your lives.

Let us turn now to another very important factor in the success of the young people we celebrate today – their families, their relatives and their friends. It takes a great deal for a student to succeed in a rigorous academic programme. Support from loved ones in many forms -- support to meet the costs and other material needs of an education, support in adjusting to new surroundings and new demands, support at times of stress, and sharing times of celebration, are all critically important. My congratulations and thank you.

I would like to take this occasion to speak about the many new developments in which AKU is engaged, in the city of Karachi, in Pakistan, and around the world as it moves to fulfil its mission as established in its Charter. Watching institutions evolve over time is very interesting. At first glance they seem to grow in fits and starts, with no major developments in some years, and then a rush of new activities, programmes, and accomplishments in a short space of time. This impression is valid in some measure. No institution has the time and resources to be in a constant mode of innovation and creation, even if the broader environment in which it operates is highly favorable. But in another sense it is misleading because major new developments take years for study and planning, for securing the required funding to ensure that no new undertaking draws resources away from the existing ones, and for the recruitment of new personnel and the construction of facilities. As the amount of time required for these essential steps varies, and some things move faster than others, it is often difficult to spread them out evenly over time. As I believe that you will soon appreciate, the last twelve to eighteen months have been one of those bursts of activity for the Aga Khan University.

My congratulations for an important job done, very well done.

Yesterday three new buildings were inaugurated that bring much needed facilities to the campus, the Juma Building which contains a Biological Safety Level Laboratory, the first of its kind in Pakistan, and the Ibn Ridwan Building. The new AKU Sports and Rehabilitation Centre contains facilities that will have an important impact on the quality of life of everyone in AKU and in the wider community. The Rehabilitation facilities are a very important addition to the Hospital’s other facilities for patient care. The foundation stone for the new Nazerali-Walji building was also laid yesterday. It is the first phase of

new ambulatory care services at AKU in response to the increasing number of outpatients and gives them greater access to various medical services. Those at AKU responsible for supervising their construction deserve our thanks.

Universities are by their very nature, loss making operations. This is particularly the case for institutions involved in research. This is therefore an appropriate moment to say something about the critical importance of donors to the development of this remarkable institution.

Earlier this week, in Islamabad, I participated in a conference on Indigenous Philanthropy in Pakistan, which was graced by their Excellencies President Rafiq Tarar, and General Pervez Musharraf, Chief Executive of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The meeting had several goals. One was to present findings of original research on current levels of giving and volunteering in this country, which showed much higher levels than many would have thought. Another was to recommend steps that could be taken to increase philanthropic activity and its application to institutions engaged in human resource and social development as well as to traditional charitable and religious activities.

AKU was cited as one of the models of effective development of philanthropic resources and of their use in Pakistan. Indeed as we gather here today, it is impossible not to be impressed with what the power of giving and volunteering can accomplish. I extend my sincere thanks to the donors who have made the new facilities possible. Looking more broadly at its fundraising, I would also observe that the University is now clearly a national institution whose spectrum of philanthropic support has steadily increased in breadth. We are grateful to all donors of funds, professional services and time who make this institution what it is today, and what it dreams to be tomorrow.

In addition to the development of these fine new facilities, steps are underway towards the establishment of a major new dimension of AKU that will extend its expression as a university. In keeping with the recommendations of the Chancellor's Commission, the University has launched a feasibility study for the establishment of a College of Arts and Sciences in Karachi. In its initial phase, the new College will start at the undergraduate level and then progress to postgraduate studies. The undergraduate programme will follow the "liberal arts" model, and aims to develop the skills of critical thinking and analysis, a high order of proficiency in verbal and written communication, and the mastery of a particular academic discipline. An emphasis on ethics, especially of Muslim societies, and on community service, will infuse all of its programmes. The latest information and communication technologies will support the education programme, and their mastery will be one of its required outcomes.

I am happy that a senior member of the Board of Trustees, has agreed to assume a leadership position, and will be joined by a group of national and international experts to do a careful study of existing institutions and needs in Pakistan, and in the developing world, with special reference to the Ummah. The survey will form the basis for development of a specific plan for a College of Arts and Sciences that meets those needs in the most imaginative and effective manner. This process will take time, since the study group's recommendations will lay the foundation which will need to be

pursued diligently and consistently, over an extended period, to ensure the long-term internal integrity of the institution and its external results.

I am pleased to announce that the Government of Sindh and the Aga Khan University have agreed on the purchase of an 400-acre site for the College of Arts and Sciences on concessional terms. The new campus will be located at Deh Chohar on the link road between the Super Highway opposite the Sindh Madrassa. I am grateful for this concrete sign of support from the Government. As a reflection of the importance I attach to the development of this new expression of the Aga Khan University, I would like to announce a donation of \$ 20 million to launch its funding.

Another recent development relates to AKU's mission to reach out from its base in Karachi and become directly engaged in addressing problems at the local and regional levels. When the Aga Khan University was first conceived the Harvard University-led feasibility study recommended that AKU should begin its service to its constituencies by being a problem-oriented university. It should focus on the critical national demands for the delivery of social services to the country's population, and especially to the most isolated and impoverished communities of Pakistan. Over the years, it has become evident that to impact health and education services in remote settings or in the katchi abadis in cities effectively, another type of institution is needed to form a bridge between them and the University.

Two days ago I had the pleasure of inaugurating a new Professional Development Centre in Gilgit designed to improve the quality of primary and secondary schools in the Northern Areas. The idea of establishing it originated in the realisation that students from schools there performed well below national averages year after year. This was true even for the better students from the better schools in the region, meaning that it was virtually impossible for students to secure places in the country's leading universities and professional schools on the basis of merit. To break this cycle, the only solution was to find a way to upgrade the quality of the schools across the region.

The Centre will bring the programmes and experience of AKU's Institute of Educational Development to the Northern Areas, to provide teachers with opportunities to enhance their effectiveness, and enable communities to look to their schools to attain higher standards of student achievement, and better use of scarce resources. The PDC will serve all schools in the catchment area; government schools as well as those operated by non-government organisations. Trainees at the Professional Development Centre will be taught by members of IED's faculty and will receive certificates from the AKU-IED. AKU- IED's involvement with the Centre is a critical form of outreach and also furthers its efforts to contribute to the development of women professionals. I have made a commitment to develop a hospital in Gilgit that will perform similar bridging functions between the Faculty of Health Sciences, the University Hospital and rural health centres with the assistance of the Aga Khan Health Services. I am convinced that this new pattern will magnify the impact of the resources of AKU throughout important regions of the country.

I would like to add a few additional comments about two new initiatives outside of Pakistan mentioned by Rector Vellani. The Advanced Nursing Programme, developed in response to the invitation of the three governments in East Africa – Kenya, Tanzania



and Uganda – is the University's first academic programme abroad. It is significant that it is an example of South-South, technical assistance, with a Pakistani institution providing assistance to other developing countries. I congratulate the School of Nursing for the progress that has been achieved on this new venture. I also salute the School for successfully completing twenty years of service to improving the delivery of health care and the development of women professionals in Pakistan.

The Institute of Islamic Civilisations in London will give expression to our University's Islamic character, in an international context. Its programmes are quite distinctive. IIC will create an index of published works on Islamic civilisations in various languages, write abstracts and translate them into the major scholarly languages, and distribute the abstracts globally on the World Wide Web. This unique facility, will enable many experts around the world to access each other's work for the first time.

The second activity involves the engagement of scholars and thinkers in thematic research on issues that affect contemporary societies that have escaped systematic attention in Muslim environments. Participants trained in both traditional and contemporary intellectual traditions, would take part in a given project through periods of residence at IIC and over the Internet, and results will be made available on the World Wide Web.

An education programme in Islamic civilisations would be the third area of activity. It would develop materials and curricula for the various units of AKU, other institutions in the Aga Khan Development Network, and a broad range of institutions from schools to higher education, in Muslim and other societies. IIC will also organise short courses and seminars around themes, or for specialised groups such as diplomats, journalists, and businessmen. A more formal post graduate programme designed to engender a critical humanistic approach to the study of Islamic civilisations will follow.

Reflecting on this long list of new and impending developments yields several conclusions. The first is that AKU has become a genuinely national institution. It is engaged in addressing national needs by developing high quality human resources in the fields of health and education, engaging in problem oriented research, working with government on policy issues, and reaching out to become directly involved in upgrading the delivery of critical social services at the local and regional levels. The second is that, with the decision to establish the College of Arts and Sciences, AKU will take the major step of moving beyond professional education toward becoming a comprehensive university in its classical form. The third is that the establishment of the Advanced Nursing Programme in Eastern Africa, and of the Institute of Islamic Civilisations in London, give life to the University as a Pakistani institution with an international mandate, reaching out as an expression of Pakistan into the international community.

The question before this institution at this moment in time is to ensure that it can maintain quality and integrity as it takes on many new activities. What are the specific parameters which should concern us? We cannot take the time this afternoon to formulate all of them, but I would suggest a few as a basis for further consideration:

The quality of the university's graduates and their contributions towards improving social services in Pakistan.

The institution's performance in reaching isolated and impoverished communities with quality professional services.

The fulfilment of the School of Nursing's special role to produce graduates who are sophisticated women professionals making a direct impact in their field, but also acting as role models for women in Pakistani society more generally.

A research programme that is beginning to push the boundaries of knowledge, particularly with respect to human development needs in Pakistan and the developing world.

The University ensures three important attributes, or goals, are in constant view as it reviews existing programmes and adds new ones: quality, relevance and impact.

I would like to take a few more minutes to inform the Aga Khan University community of one other new initiative of great significance to the work of the Aga Khan Development Network and to me. It is not another programme or division of AKU - let me be very clear about that. People have whispered in my ear: 'does this mean resources are going to go elsewhere?' It is the addition of a younger sibling of the Aga Khan institutions, and like any younger brother or sister, it will need the help of its elders.

In late August I travelled to Central Asia to sign an International Treaty between the Presidents of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan and the Ismaili Imam, to create a new institution of higher education. The University of Central Asia will be dedicated to developing teaching and research programmes focussed on the problems and potentials of the thirty million people, and the mountains in which they live at the convergence of the highest mountain ranges in the world.

The legal formulation of the University of Central Asia is unique. It is the first to be created as a single organisation under international law, signed at the highest level of government, and encompassing a number of states in a particular region. Its main campus will be located in Khorog on the Panj River, in Tajikistan, with programmes and facilities in the mountainous regions of Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.

The Undergraduate Division will offer courses of study in engineering sciences, the natural sciences, the social sciences, and cultural studies, but all students will be required to take courses across the curriculum, and courses in market economics, field research methods, and institutions of civil societies.

The Graduate Division will offer an interdisciplinary degree in mountain studies. Over time, concentrations in particular fields such as environmental management, cultural protection and enhancement, and tourism will be developed.

The Continuing Education Division will offer a variety of independent, non-degree courses in general education, skills, and retooling for mid-career professionals in government, non-government organisations, and the private sector, and special topics of particular interest making full use of the methods of distance education.

Faculty and staff and students will be openly recruited throughout the region, and selected on the basis of merit. Special programmes will be provided to enable faculty

and students to acquire expertise in English and the use of communication and information technologies.

This University will be a new, freestanding institution within the Aga Khan Development Network. While it will not be part of the Aga Khan University, it will certainly look to AKU for its experience and expertise on a wide range of policies and practical matters. Indeed many at AKU have been deeply involved in the study, planning and negotiating to bring the University of Central Asia to its current stage of development. President Kassim-Lakha served as the Co-Chair of the Organisation Commission that undertook the feasibility study, and many of his colleagues contributed to the work of its committees. Here is an example of Pakistan's first private university, playing a leadership role in creating a new university in a region of enduring interest to this country, and thereby, establishing a timeless opportunity for intellectual, academic and other interchanges between Pakistan and the countries of Central Asia.

I have taken a great deal of time to outline the many endeavours in which the Aga Khan University will be engaged in the coming years. Progress on them will be dependent on the context and conditions in Pakistan. It is a source of confidence and hope that His Excellency General Musharraf is here today, as the direction he will give to Pakistan's social and economic development and international relations will have a significant impact on all Pakistani institutions. This is particularly the case for universities given their responsibility to educate the nation's future intelligentsia and leadership and to project the country to the outside world through their work.

May Allah bless us all in this endeavour

Thank you.



## White House Conference on Culture and Diplomacy

28 November 2000, Washington DC, USA

Thank you Mr. President. It is an honour to be associated with this distinguished panel in a discussion of a topic which I have long felt has received too little attention, particularly at the policy level. Thank you for the invitation.

I offer my comments this morning from the perspective of someone who has been a long-standing observer of cultural evolution in the developing world of Africa and Asia, and from more than twenty-years of experience with activities such as the Aga Khan Award for Architecture that have attempted to make a positive contribution to that process.

At present there is a great deal of apprehension about the future of local and national cultures in most countries in the developing world. What can the cultural diplomacy of the United States do to address these anxieties and replace them with a sense of confidence through new and shared initiatives?

If the cultures and value systems of the developing world are being challenged -- or are believed to be under threat - I think it valuable to try to identify the nature of the

challenges. For the sake of discussion, I would put the major issues under the headings of language, institutions, people, communications, and funding.

First, there is the issue of language. During the process of de-colonisation in Asia and Africa, the driving objective of the governments of the newly independent countries was to create nation states. A national language was seen as an important part of this process. Forty years later, the world's dominant foreign language, English, is viewed as a necessity in most areas -- but not yet as an opportunity. For cultures in the developing world to be globally accessible, understood, respected and admired, and to be represented in electronic communications, they must ensure that their cultures find expression not only in the national language, but also in English.

The second issue is institutions. In most parts of the developing world institutions and places of particular importance to cultural inspiration and expression are all too often abandoned or neglected by both governments and civil society. Museums, conservatories, and buildings and public spaces in historic cities are generally in a precarious state. This is also true of higher education, particularly in the arts and the humanities. In their present state these institutions cannot contribute to the survival and reinvigoration of inherited value systems, and may actually contribute to their further degradation.

The third issue is people. Culture is by its nature rooted in people. Unfortunately, in the countries of Asia and Africa which I know, cultural expression as a life-long vocation nearly always leads to a dead-end. Artists in the industrialised world at least have the possibility of mobilising the resources necessary to live with dignity. The economic environment for cultural professionals in the industrialised world does not exist in the developing world. Indeed it is being weakened further by the collapse of traditional value systems and the cultural production they supported.

The fourth issue is communications. Cultures that do not or cannot communicate become increasingly isolated, inward-looking, and, in due course, marginalised. Some would argue the United States' dominance of global communications systems is, because of what has been called the digital divide, a contributor to this problem. I would offer a different perspective. It seems to me that by a purposeful effort, the United States could play a significant role not only in making the cultures of Asia and Africa available globally. Doing so would also make a massive contribution to the full acceptance to the legitimacy and value of social and cultural pluralism, something that is urgently needed in most parts of the developing world.

The last issue is funding. The reality in the countries of Asia and Africa is that the material resources required to sustain cultural activities are either not available because of higher priorities, or because there are no incentives to support culture. But with their economies becoming increasingly liberalised, an increasing percentage of national wealth being will be created by private initiative. It is my dream that private individuals and organisations will come to the support of culture, as has been the case for centuries in the industrialised

world. For this to happen, many new methods of giving will need to be stimulated and developed through appropriate public policies.

In response to the challenges facing countries in Africa and Asia that I have outlined, the United States, with a wealth of educational, private philanthropic institutions and global corporations that is unparalleled in human history, can play a leadership role. Specifics can be discussed later this morning or in this afternoon's sessions. Much very important work devoted to the issues of language, institutions, people, communications and funding is already underway, but there is scope, and I would say a need, for a massive expansion.

It is my hope that this meeting will lead to a re-conceptualisation of the role in culture in public life and international policy and move more public and private institutions to initiate or expand their activities devoted to the support of culture. I can assure you that you will find interested and reliable partners in the parts of the world with which I am familiar to join you in this process.



## Centenary Celebration Meeting, Association of American Universities

### LOCATION

Washington DC, USA (22 April 2001)

Thank you President Vest for your very generous words of introduction and thank you all for the very warm welcome. It is an honour to be invited to address such a distinguished assemblage of educators. If IQ could be converted into kilowatts, I have no doubt that the quantum massed here tonight would meet the world's energy requirements for at least a decade.

In 1954 I came to the United States for the first time in my life and entered Harvard College as a first year student. It was an experience that I will never forget. All of my formal education up to that point had been in French, and although I had studied English, my command of the language was not up to the demands of Harvard's curriculum. Fortunately there were several of us in the same position and we worked together to find French editions of as many of the assigned readings as possible. We wrote our papers in French, translated them into English, and waited in fear for our grades.

By a quirk of nature, although I was born right-handed, I had the good fortune to come into this world left-footed. Soccer players who could kick with their left foot were very rare in the United States in those days. This meant that I was able to make the Freshman Soccer Team as the left wing. We were a distinguished group; we turned in an undefeated season, and also had the distinction of all being on a list in the Dean's



office, not to be confused with the Dean's list, although we were never troubled to explain that fine distinction very fully to our parents. To this day I am convinced that I owe my Harvard degree to my left foot.

I can tell you that I had many a sleepless night during that first year at Harvard, and when sleep came, it was often accompanied by a dream (nightmare might be more accurate). In it I was hauled up in front of a senior authority figure, thoroughly scolded about my performance, told that I was unfit to be a member of the Harvard community of scholars, and then sent back to my room to pack my bag to return home. Not knowing anything about the structure of educational institutions other than my boarding school in Switzerland, I always imagined that authority figure to be the head of the institution, or in the case of Harvard, its President. Memories of the fear I felt at having to face only one university President, then, gave me little comfort as I prepared to face a room full of you here tonight.

As I turned my thoughts to what I might say on this occasion, that old fear took on a new form. How could I presume to have something to present on the subject of higher education, that was worthy of the scholarship, experience and responsibilities in higher education represented in this room? I am not trained as an academic, published as a scholar, or experienced as an educational administrator. While I am not sure that my comments will fulfil the programme committee's expectations, I have decided to draw on my experience working in social and economic development in parts of Asia and Africa over the last forty years.

A number of the issues about which I will speak are touched upon in the Task Force on Higher Education convened two years ago by The World Bank and UNESCO which was co-chaired by Professor Henry Rosovsky who spoke to us so effectively this afternoon. I will illustrate and expand on them by drawing on the experience of the agencies that comprise the Aga Khan Development Network as they have worked in areas with high concentrations of the world's poor; in Central and South Asia, and in sub-Saharan Africa. The purpose is not to "toot our own horn", but to focus on specific problems and opportunities and offer examples and lessons that can be drawn from our experience working in circumstances that are often very difficult due to the collapse of economies, political instability, and civil strife. I also hope to be able to convince institutions in both the developing and the industrialised world to come together to work on some areas of common problems, opportunities and responsibilities.

For those not familiar with our work, I would note that while the Aga Khan Development Network's activities are rooted in the worldwide Shia Ismaili Muslim Community, its programmes and activities in each setting are open to all without regard to ethnicity, race, gender or religion. As a matter of policy, none of the Network's educational institutions offer instruction in religion unless required by the national curriculum.

Quality education at all levels is, and has been, critically important for all societies at all times. In the developing world education offers the poor opportunities for new futures, women with higher status, and new roles in their families and communities, migrants with an asset that is portable, and refugees with one that is both portable and secure. For these reasons, the Aga Khan Education Service has for many years operated several hundred schools in Eastern Africa and Central and South Asia – many in

isolated settings, with a particular interest in the education of girls. I say this because the rest of my remarks this evening will focus on higher education, and I do not want to be understood, even by implication, as believing that primary and secondary school is of lesser significance. It is critical to the existence of an informed citizenry everywhere. Quality school level education is particularly important in the developing world, where only a small percentage of the population will ever be able to attend a university, and where population growth is massively more rapid than the expansion of capacity of its universities. Finally the school system has a vital role to play in preparing those who do go on for further studies to make full use of that opportunity. It is the supply system for higher education and therefore cannot be neglected.

But higher education has a special importance because of the difference it can make by developing new models and standards for other institutions in society, and by inculcating in its students the skills of critical thinking, analysis and problem solving, under-pinned by a strong grasp of moral reasoning, ethics and respect for others. While our world may be changing at a rate unprecedented in human history, it is not all positive. Negative changes are numerous; disrupting societies as evidenced by the violence that we see in so many parts of the world today. Positive change that is permanent requires strong institutions at all levels of society, and institutional development requires models, and capable and enlightened leadership. The report of the Task Force on Higher Education makes a number of important observations and recommendations in its review of higher education in the developing world. Among the most important from my perspective are those that relate to higher education as a public good, and the re-evaluation of the public returns on investment in higher education. These findings support the Task Force's recommendation for greater investment in higher education in the developing world by governments international development organisations and private initiatives.

The questions most commonly asked when people learn that I am founding a new university are: "How many students will it have" and "when will the construction of buildings begin"? From my perspective the questions should be:

- "Given all the current problems in that country, and all the existing universities, why start another university?"
- "What will it teach?"
- "What are your expectations for the impact that the institution and graduates will have?" and finally,
- "How secure is its funding over time?"

I believe that institutions of higher education have greater prospects for success for their students and for the societies they serve, when they focus on four factors: quality, relevance, impact and resources. The decision to create the Aga Khan University (or AKU as we refer to it) as the first private university in Pakistan, more than twenty years ago, was taken in the context of the deteriorating quality of higher education in the developing world. As a private university, AKU would have to remain small, but to justify the investment required it would have to become a role model for a country of more than 120 million people. To assume and retain this status AKU had to be a quality institution not only in terms of its academic offerings, but also in terms of admission and financial aid policies, governance, management and its financial health. The attraction

of Board members of international standing in fields of education and development played a critical role in this quest.

Academic excellence was achieved through careful selection of faculty and the nurturing of partnerships with important institutions in the West, many of which are represented in this room – Harvard, John Hopkins, McMaster, Toronto, Oxford, but also in Asia with the National University of Singapore.

But quality is not enough to justify the support of donors, society and the authorities in a developing country; a university's offerings must also be relevant. Following a study carried out with assistance of Harvard, AKU's Board decided to focus its initial efforts on addressing the very poor quality of social services in Pakistan and much of the developing world. Today, the Faculty of Health Sciences, including Nursing, and the Institute for Educational Development, are all having an impact beyond the training of students at high levels in their respective fields. They have given new status and recognition to women professionals who constitute an overwhelming majority of teachers and nurses in the region. The Medical Colleges Health Sciences Department has developed a pioneering model for treating the community as a patient, rather than only the individuals who present themselves for care. A fifth of medical students' curriculum time is spent in the Community Health Sciences. Nursing students also take part in this activity, and obtain their learning experiences in the rural areas of the country.

The quality and impact of the University can be further gauged from the fact that over the last fifteen years Pakistan's professional licensing body has recommended that all medical colleges in Pakistan adopt AKU's model of community based medical education. Similarly, the Pakistan Nursing Council has adopted AKU's nursing curriculum. Research has also concentrated on those themes that are relevant and have outcomes that impact society. With respect to the University's Institute for Educational Development, more than half of all course participants come from government institutions. Here the Institute's impact is not only visible in the improvements in classrooms and management of government schools, but also in government's major policy-making fora in which the Institute is invited to participate on a regular basis.

This is the kind of role that a small private university with strong international connections can play if it focuses on quality, relevance and impact and seeks opportunities to share its experience and human resources with other institutions and society as a whole. Examples, models and well-trained graduates can contribute to the improved performance of the vast number of schools, universities, health clinics and hospitals that exist in countries like Pakistan but often are functioning at levels far below their potential, and those necessary to meet the country's needs.

I would now like to shift to another area of great importance for higher education in the developing world. Here I refer to the rapid advances in communications and information technology of the last ten to fifteen years, that have opened up the prospect of dramatically expanding international linkages and the reach of educational programmes in both spatial and temporal terms. This topic is on the agenda for tomorrow, and most appropriately so, for an international gathering of educational leaders like this. It is true

that the implications of the impact of communications and information technologies on the role, structure and functioning of the university, as we have known it, are only beginning to emerge. But their development is important for universities everywhere in the world, even though applications may vary for some time to come.

The ability to project programmes and activities over great distances can bring educational opportunities and resources into settings where they are poorly developed at present, because of financial constraints, or sheer isolation. Where individuals have access to computers in their homes or, as will be the case in rural areas in developing countries for some time to come, in community centres, technology can provide the first real opportunity for lifelong education on a broad scale. One lesson is clear. The mastery of the use of the essential elements of communication and information technologies will have to be part of the experience of every university student sooner rather than later. The use of the technology should have a place in the educational process itself, and its mastery should be on the list of competencies that every graduate should possess.

But this is only the first step. Even in the United States, the founder and the leader in the development and application of information and communication technologies, the realisation of their potential for education is still at a very early stage. A few weeks ago Lawrence Grossman, former President of NBC News and the Public Broadcasting Service, and Newton Minow, former chairman of the Federal Communications Commission and PBS made this point in their op-ed piece entitled "The U.S. Should Invest in a Digital Library" that appeared in the International Herald Tribune. They introduce the recommendation in the article's title by observing that "... the Internet and digital communication are being largely wasted in America as a resource for the kind of broad education the future demands", that "... entertainment of marginal quality dominates commercial attempts on the Internet to reach a mass audience", while at the same time "the treasures in U.S. libraries, schools and museums are locked away for want of money to make them available to the full American audience".

I have quoted this article at some length not to advocate Grossman's and Minow's solution – although I think it makes great sense for the United States and would also be a priceless gift to the rest of the world, and the cause of world peace. I do so because it so clearly and authoritatively makes the case for concrete and imaginative steps that may lead to a fuller utilisation of the Internet for educational purposes. It is not a question of a single cosmic solution, but rather a wide range of initiatives. The Internet was created at an international research institute in Switzerland as a means to make data and findings readily available without cost to scientists around the world. Institutions of higher education have a responsibility to participate in the process of developing and shaping the use of the Internet for educational purposes in their societies and around the world.

At a seminar entitled "Architectural Education Today" held in Switzerland two weeks ago, William Mitchell, Dean of the School of Planning and Architecture at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and authority on the use of the Internet for a wide range of purposes, offered a succinct summary of some of the advantages and disadvantages of the use of the Internet for remote education. He stated that the debate

that focuses on conventional versus remote education is wrongly formulated. The issues are their relative advantages and disadvantages – including effectiveness and cost – and their complementary use.

Remote education is disadvantaged because it does not offer the value-added that comes with proximity to the instructor and the cross fertilisation with other students in the classroom or studio. Because users need facilities and training to draw on it and shape it to their needs, it carries high overheads, particularly at the outset. On the positive side, remote education has the advantages of scale. It dramatically increases the reach to scattered rural communities, which still represent the vast majority of the developing world's population, it adds the possibility of bringing imported expertise into remote and isolated contexts, it creates opportunities for cross-cultural experiences, and it makes possible the broad collaboration of specialists in scattered locations. Dean Mitchell contends that such efforts can reap the benefits of what he calls “educationally mediated globalisation”, which respects and incorporates intellectual diversity and cultural pluralism.

Examples are more meaningful than these generalisations. I will offer two rather different case studies of efforts by agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network to make more effective use of the Internet for educational purposes.

The first is a project to develop a World Wide Web based resource to enrich the information available for architectural students, teachers, scholars and professionals interested in architecture in the Islamic world. It builds on twenty-five years of cultural research, education and revitalisation by the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard and MIT, and the programmes of what is now the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Geneva.

These initiatives were launched following a series of consultations with architectural scholars and professionals of all faiths and from different parts of the world who were brought together to address a black hole in Islamic societies with respect to one of the most important dimensions of their identity and heritage – their built environment. At that time there was a real vacuum; there was little scholarship, no centres for study and professional training, and no collections of visual and textual resources on one of history's greatest traditions of architecture. The dominant perspective was that improvements in the quality of life demanded the adoption of the symbolism and style of countries and societies that were considered “advanced”. Twenty-five years later a complete turn-around has been achieved. Not only have patrons and professionals come to understand and embrace this important form of cultural expression, the inventories of buildings found in different countries have revealed and legitimated a diversity of expression of which even the Islamic world itself was unaware.

The emergence of the World Wide Web as a vehicle allows these efforts in public and professional education of the last twenty-five years to take on an entirely new scale. The project, called ArchNet, is being developed at MIT and is scheduled for launch in September. It will bring together and make available the visual and textual information amassed in collections in Cambridge and Geneva. Though microscopic in comparison,

it is an example of just the kind of digitalisation of inaccessible material for which Grossman and Minow are arguing.

But the example does not stop here. It is enough to simply “dump” information into communities around the world, even if, as in this case, they are communities of trained professionals. As an integral part of the ArchNet project, space on the Website has been provided for users to exhibit their own work, to communicate with other ArchNet members, and participate in informal discussions of topics of their choice, that are relevant to the overall purpose of the project, and to participate in organised discussions, including collaborative design studios. Equally important, schools and departments of architecture with interests in the Islamic world can establish sections on the Website to present their programmes, activities, and collections of visual and textual materials. In ArchNet’s development phase institutions from Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt and Jordan were invited to help establish this dimension of the Website. Once it is officially open, other institutions may join as well. A special effort will be made to bring in schools of architecture in Central Asia and Sub Saharan Africa.

My second example relates to the new University of Central Asia. Last summer I signed an international treaty for the foundation of the university on behalf of the Ismaili Imamat with the President of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. The University is dedicated to addressing the problems of poverty, underdevelopment and environmental degradation in the vast and largely forgotten mountain zone of Inner Asia. By doing so, I believe it will make a significant contribution to the establishment of peace and stability in the region by addressing some of the most important problems that currently plague it: poverty, isolation and a deep sense of hopelessness.

The University of Central Asia will provide training and research on the problems and prospects of the mountainous areas of Central Asia and the twenty to thirty million people who inhabit them. The new institution, which will begin by offering continuing education courses this year, will be private, secular, will recruit students and faculty on the basis of merit, and will be open equally to men and women. Its main campus will be based in South Eastern Tajikistan, in the town of Khorog on the Panj River, which serves as the international boundary between Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Satellite campuses will be opened in mountain settings in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, and in other countries in the region who decide to join the university in the years ahead.

Given the university’s location and mission, it has no option but to make an aggressive use of the latest developments in information and communication technologies. This is particularly true for its degree programmes, which will start with a Masters degree in integrated mountain studies in three years, and a Bachelors degree soon thereafter. These programmes will be taught in English, and will draw heavily on databases and human resources specialised in mountain studies to supplement the locally recruited and specially trained instructional staff. While most of you may not know it, there is a small, dedicated, but widely scattered group of specialists around the world committed to the study of mountains and mountain populations – self identified as the “mountain mafia”. Their experience and knowledge will provide the kind of remote resource that can be imported, and their interaction with students and faculty, during summer visits,

and throughout the year on a remote basis will lay the foundation for the kind of “mediated cross cultural dialogue” that Dean Mitchell envisions.

There is one last topic about which I would like to say a few words. Building capacity for moral reasoning and moral judgment is a goal that appears in the foundation documents of many of the world’s oldest and most prestigious universities. For a number of reasons, I worry that insufficient attention is being paid to the development of these important capabilities and that the situation may worsen in the years ahead.

The advances that have occurred in the sciences – most recently in the biological sciences, and the engineering that underlies computer and information technologies – are important for economic development and attractive to students and scholars. I applaud these developments, but worry that they will crowd out parts of the curriculum devoted to the study of the great humanistic traditions that have evolved in all civilisations throughout human history. Exposure to these traditions contributes to the formation of values as well as an understanding of the richness and diversity of human experience. The complexities of world problems and societies today require people educated in broad humanistic traditions in addition to the guidance and direction provided by the teaching of their religion. The history of the twentieth century is replete with examples of the danger of the systematic propagation and uncritical acceptance of dogmas, ideologies, and even theologies. More than ever, I believe that universities must shoulder the responsibility for contributing to the process of building the capacity for moral judgement in complex settings. This is another area where the leading universities of the world can individually and collectively respond to a shared opportunity and a shared responsibility.

I will close by returning briefly to some basic themes. Higher education in the developing world operates under enormous pressures for which there are no simple solutions. Private institutions can make a contribution through experimentation, and where successful, as models. Linkages between institutions are critical to this process, particularly international linkages.

The identification of new sources of finance for higher education has to be a high priority. National governments in the developing world are hard-pressed to meet existing education budgets, not to mention the additional funding required for expansion to accommodate growing populations, deal with a backlog of problems, and introduce new programmes. International agencies, public and private, will help, but only within limits. The identification of private sector funding is essential, as is the creation of an environment of regulations and benefits that encourages private companies to support institutions of higher education.

It has been said that the Internet is the most important development for education since the invention of the printing press. But for now it is grossly underused for educational purposes. Universities around the world should take on the task of developing educational materials, resources and programmes for the Internet. They should add their voices to critics of regulations and policies that impinge on the use of the World Wide Web for educational purposes in favour of commercial interests.



Let us remember the historic role of “The University” in the study, interpretation and transmission of the great humanistic traditions of the world. Our search for global peace in an inter-connected, and crowded world, with rising expectations, needs to understand and internalise their many lessons more than at any time in the past.

Thank you



## Archon Award ceremony of Sigma Theta Tau International

### LOCATION

Copenhagen, Denmark (7 June 2001)

Thank you very much, Dr. Thompson and Dr. Wyckle, for your warm and generous words of introduction. It is a deep honour to have been selected as a recipient of a leadership award by such a distinguished international professional organization working in the field of health. It is particularly meaningful to receive this recognition from Sigma Theta Tau with its record of focused dedication to the global advancement of nursing. I have long felt the enhancement of the nursing profession to be absolutely critical to the improvement of health care in the developing world, and the Islamic world. The way forward there was to professionalise, to institutionalize and to dignify this great profession.

More than twenty-five years ago, these were some of the central concerns that led to the establishment of the Aga Khan University in Karachi and its School of Nursing. Universities have the unique capacity for forming the human resources necessary for all fields of human development. Given the state of health services in Pakistan at that time, I felt it particularly important to create an institution in the country that could offer education in the health professions at international standards. This would ensure that the teaching and research programmes would be of the highest quality, but would also be grounded in local needs and realities, and that, if properly funded and led, could make a distinctive contribution on a permanent basis. In addition, a successful national institution would have the potential to provide leadership directly and through its graduates that would be felt in the professions and also in society more generally.

The School of Nursing was the first academic programme offered by the Aga Khan University for a combination of reasons, some universal in nature and others particular to countries like Pakistan. It is generally accepted that high quality health care, both in institutional as well as community settings, cannot be provided effectively without capable nurses to support physicians and other health professionals. But Pakistan suffers from an acute shortage of nurses. Even now, there are four physicians for every nurse, whereas the international norm is at least five nurses to every physician. In addition because women constitute an overwhelming number of nurses in the developing world, the Board of Trustees of the Aga Khan University felt that the School of Nursing could foster the enhancement of nurses, and women professionals more generally, empowering them, and increasing their standing and effectiveness in society.

Today, the AKU SCHOOL OF Nursing takes pride that:

More and more women are coming forward to join the profession. By adding programmes that lead to Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Nursing for the first time in Pakistan, the School is providing opportunities for career advancement that were out of reach for nearly everyone in the profession in the country.

The School of Nursing has become an important resource for policy dialogues with the government and the nation's Nursing Council. It has assisted in the review and reforming of nursing policies, and the curriculum for nursing education for the country as a whole.

The School of Nursing is also in the vanguard as the Aga Khan University launches its first programmes outside Pakistan, in fulfillment of the provisions of its charter as an international university. The School is developing an initiative in Advanced Nursing Studies regionally in Eastern Africa, responding to the needs for advanced training in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya.

I am particularly proud that the School of Nursing is in a position to reach out to assist professionals in other developing countries. International linkages have played a critical role in the development of many of the programmes at the Aga Khan University. In the case of the School of Nursing the most important relationship has been with McMaster University and the Canadian International Development Agency. I am certain that such linkages will continue to be important as the University matures and is in a position to increase its contributions to such relationships, in addition to being the beneficiary of them.

In this regard I believe that the establishment of the School of Nursing's Rho Delta Chapter of Sigma Theta Tau International will provide the significant and much needed impetus for strengthening the research capability and scholarly activities of the nurses at AKU and the countries it serves. The Board of Trustees, the leadership of the University and the School of Nursing and I, look forward to a very positive and productive association for all concerned. We thank you for helping us to professionalise, institutionalize and dignify nursing in Asia and Africa.

Thank you.

# Interview with His Highness the Aga Khan

31 August 2001, Gouvieux, France

**by Robert Ivy, FAIA Editor in Chief, Architectural Record  
(Aiglemont, August 31, 2001)**

*Robert Ivy: As Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, you lead a religious community that is an important branch of Islam and that resides on four continents. You have personally expressed an affinity for Islamic architecture. How have Muslim traditions and Islamic teaching affected your appreciation for architecture? Which great works of architecture have had special meaning for you?*

His Highness The Aga Khan: The faith of Islam has been central to my family for hundreds of years. And, as you probably know, I have a degree in Islamic history from Harvard University.

The value system of Islam, in terms of the interrelationship between what we call *din* and *dunia*, or 'faith' and 'world', is very particular in Islam. In a sense, they relate to each other in an ongoing way. This is how the value system of Islam carries into everyday life, into the way you exist in society, and clearly into the things that you do in society in a material way.

*Ivy: In what ways do these values permeate the larger world?*

His Highness: This affects not only your family life, it affects your role in society, it affects the way you run your economic affairs, it affects the way you develop your home, and what happens in and around your home. So, there is a continuation of the Islamic value system into the physical environment, which is interesting and special to Islam. I think that this is reflected in much of the greatest Islamic architecture.

Some years ago, a professor talked to me about a major doctoral thesis at Harvard, in which a student had demonstrated how the Taj Mahal was a reflection of the conceptualisation of heaven on earth - and the relationships between spiritual eternity and the foundational nature of life on this earth. In that sense, the Islamic context is very, very important. I think you can find the premise in many other situations - it is not specific to the Taj Mahal.

*Ivy: Architects and other planners are fascinated by the relationship of physical environments to well being, to health. How does this value system that you describe play out in the physical environment?*

His Highness: There are many, many interpretations of Islam within the wider Islamic community, but I think one on which there is greatest consensus, is the fact that we are trustees of God's creation, and we are instructed to seek to leave the world a better place than it was when we came into it. Therefore, the question is: What is a 'better place', in

physical terms? And that 'better place', in physical terms, clearly means trying to bring values into environments, buildings and contexts, which make the quality of life better for future generations than it is today.

I think that is the interrelationship that exists between a Muslim and the precepts on which he or she works, in terms of intervening in the physical environment.

*Ivy: Can't changes and interventions work in reverse? They obviously interrelate.*

His Highness: Yes, and I think that it is important in the way we look at the environments we are working in, to understand what changes would be damaging and what changes would be positive. That is where the role of society plays such an extraordinary role and is such a driving force, because the nature of society is to change. So what you are seeking to do, is to introduce a system of adjustment and improvement to a process. It never stops - it is not something that begins and ends.

Ivy: And to those purposes, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture comes into play. You've now been conducting the Award since 1977, through eight triennial cycles. In what ways do you think the programme has evolved over time? From your perspective as founder, has it affected the physical environment? Has it raised expectations? How have the issues addressed changed or remained constant? What have been its accomplishments?

His Highness: When the work programme started, everyone connected with it was very worried about, first of all, what I would call a sense of humility in the face of issues that were 'sensed', but that had never been intellectualised or rationalised. Therefore, we were right at the bottom of the learning curve. We started with an enormous process of inquiry. All of us, from whatever background we were coming from, faced these massive questions about the issues that we had to try to address.

The second one, was the fear of being seen as proposing a distinctive school of thought, because there was a very determined commitment not to be seen as an "architectural school". So these were two starting points.

Looking backwards: What has really happened? I think that the Award has become a sophisticated observer of physical change in civil society. You can deduct from that definition all the other things that stem from it.

*Ivy: That seems to be a succinct goal for a complex process. What decisions led to further development of the programme?*

His Highness: As the Award continued, we ended up by having to accept the fact that we needed to communicate; we needed to have an impact on values - ethical and aesthetic value judgments - and we needed to impact cultural value judgments; therefore, we had to impact opinion leaders.

The second thing we had to do was to accept reality. That reality was, that the industrialised world was dominating the processes of change in the Third World, in particular in the Islamic world. And, that domination resulted in an educational process, or educational processes, in the Islamic world, and in the Third World generally, which were First World driven. Therefore, we had to accept that an educational role was necessary. We committed that the primary educational role was not going to be that of the Award, because the Award did not want to become a school, but the need for education was real. That became the basis for the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture (AKPIA) at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

*Ivy: Yet you have described the Award's role as a catalyst. How did you elaborate that idea?*

His Highness: The third aspect was that, while the Steering Committees and the Master Juries never said it and never wrote it, they always were concerned to address the question of why we did not intervene directly in situations of change.

Anything connected with me is automatically disallowed in the Award process and disqualified. At the same time, the need for addressing issues such as historic cities in the Islamic world was constantly being put back on the table in one form or the other. I ended up by asking: Is there a bridge between what I was doing in development and the cultural context of, for example, the historic city? This is what caused the [The Aga Khan Trust for Culture](#) to create the Historic Cities Programme, because it is a remarkable bridge between cultural support and, at the same time, development support for communities that very often are marginalized and underprivileged.

That is why the Trust for Culture then went into active work; that was where it all came together with the other agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network.

*Ivy: So, your engagement evolved out of this process that really began as an observation, and then you actually began to take an active role. Are the issues fairly consistent that you described in the emerging world that you're engaged with through this period of time, or are they changing?*

His Highness: No, they are changing, because civil society is changing. If you go back to the 1950s onwards, what do you see in the Islamic world? You see colonialism; you see poverty; you see the Cold War; and you see, essentially, government-driven processes of change. You see centralised economic planning. You see the need to create a sense of nation in a number of countries that were not yet independent.

If you look at that picture today, you no longer have the issue of government-driven change. The processes of change, more and more, are part of the structure of civil society. You have independent decision-making by independent governments. The issue of nationhood has, in a sense, been driven backwards. Nationhood is no longer on the front burner of most of these countries - it is an accepted notion.

You have economic change, which is a process now led by market forces rather than dogmatic attitudes towards economic change. You have areas of extreme wealth in the Islamic world. You have countries that are coming out of a colonial or, let's say, dogmatic format. The Cold War is finished. The colonial countries have withdrawn.

And you have, perhaps to me one of the most important, an awareness that in most of our part of the world, it is the rural community that dominates. The notion of the numbers of people in rural communities in the Islamic world, and the difficulties of addressing the issues of development in rural communities, constitute a massive force.

*Ivy: Unlike other award programmes in which highly-touted architects dominate the short-lists, the Aga Khan Award programme regularly confers honour on lesser-known individuals and communities. What effects have these decisions produced?*

His Highness: That is one of the things which the Award has tried to respond to - it has looked at how society causes change, not how architects cause change, and it has tried to help societies to improve the processes of change.

In the Award, you'll see more and more small rural projects, which are considered highly important to be put together by village organisations or non-governmental organisations working in rural environments - because that is an important aspect. In the past, in the industrialised world, we have been driven by the notion of the urban environment, and the role of the architect functioning in the urban environment. I think, at least as far as the Islamic world is concerned, the Award has brought a massive change to that notion.

I think the second area that we have hopefully had an effect on, is the notion of pluralism. You cannot deal with a world like the Islamic world by rejecting the notion of pluralism. Historically, it is part of that world. The faith of Islam recognises and sustains the right of people to be their own masters of the judgments that they make. By premiating different types of projects, and different environments in different countries, with different architectural traditions and languages, the Award has enhanced the notion that pluralism is an asset.

I think the third area is perhaps one which is less easy to define, but nonetheless important - which I would call high-tech applications, high-tech projects. In the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, many high-tech projects were essentially extrapolations of high-tech buildings in the industrialised world. It has been important to encourage those buildings to become more appropriate to their own environments, to their own building industries, and to their own symbolic values.

I certainly would not want to say that the Award has covered all categories - it hasn't. And, there remain areas where the Award has not been able to premiate projects that it considers really important. I think that for categories that it felt were very important - buildings which are part of modern civil society - we have not yet succeeded in focusing them to look at the contextual. A typical case would be the industrial estate, for example,



which is a remarkable phenomenon of economic change. In the industrialised world, you have addressed it more and more successfully; but in the Islamic world, not all of it, but in much of it, the whole process of the liberalised economy is the one that is driving that notion of change, rather than the contextualisation of that change. I hope that will happen. We're beginning to see these questions being addressed, but we are not there yet.

*Ivy: How do you see the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the [Award for Architecture](#) interplaying with the need for rural populations to find work and the problems that they face when they get to the city? I'm sure that affects the communities that you deal with.*

His Highness: It is difficult to summarise such a complex question in a short answer, but one of the driving questions is how people perceive opportunity. They will perceive opportunity through the inherited perception of previous generations in the family, or they will perceive opportunity through communication, or they will perceive the downside, which is risk. If the notion of risk is very high in certain environments, people will try to remove themselves from those environments.

In looking at the rural issues, I think one needs to start with what the risks are. It is interesting to see how rural communities look at risk - in terms of health, in terms of physical security, in terms of corruption, in terms of conflict. They have a certain number of what I would call 'downside' risks that they are looking at, that affect their attitudes to the rural environment, because they assume that those risks don't exist in the urban environment. But, because they are not in the urban environment, they don't know what are the risks within the urban environment.

*Ivy: You are describing a kind of naïveté, but a kind that can be changed.*

His Highness: Then comes the issue of opportunity. I think the issue of opportunity is whether the rural environments of the developing world and the Islamic world can change sufficiently positively, so that the sense of opportunity will be stabilised and enhanced, and people will say, 'future generations of my family do have as good or even a better opportunity by staying in the rural environment than by moving to the urban environment.' That is a difficult equation, it really is. But, I think that where the Award can have an impact is in education, first of all to educate people about changes in the rural environment - which changes are positive, and which ones are damaging.

Secondly, it can help to cause the changes in rural and physical environments to be appropriate to those environments. As an example, a large part of the Islamic world is located in a seismic belt that goes through much of the Islamic world. You can look back in time and see that thousands of people have been killed by earthquakes at different times in our history. Yet, seismic construction in rural environments is unheard of. People who build for themselves do not know about seismically-sound construction. Most of the construction in rural environments is self-built, it is not architect-built. The question is,

how do you get that knowledge into the rural environment? How do you teach people how to build in a safe manner?

Clean water, sewer systems, open spaces, sports areas - these are all part of everyday life, but that need structure in the rural areas. By recognising small medical centres, handicraft centres, the Award is saying to the rural population of the Islamic world: 'You don't have to go through architects and big, mega-projects to improve the quality of the physical environment. You can do magnificent projects that will serve you well.'

*Ivy: How did your concern for architecture and planning develop? What previous experiences have prepared you to value the power of architecture and planning? How did you develop this concern for such issues?*

His Highness: As a student of history, you learn about the cultural processes of history. But after my grandfather died, I was looking at the physical environment in the developing world, and I had to ask myself what we were doing correctly, or incorrectly, in school construction, hospital construction, housing estates, industrial estates and commercial buildings. My sense was that while there was a fairly good understanding of programmatic requirements, the contextualisation of those programmatic requirements in our part of the world just didn't exist.

This had a cultural downside to it; it had a cost downside to it. And, particularly in the poorer countries, it tended to drive society towards things like a consumer environment, towards harnessing the top people in every profession because, obviously, the top hospital people wanted the top hospitals at the time. And, it introduced a value system that I felt had a number of risks to it.

But it also had another aspect, which was quite strange. In the industrialised world, the notion of physical change in urban environments is constant and a part of contextual thinking - buildings are torn down, they are rebuilt, sites get thrown together. In the developing world, land is much, much more constrained than you would expect, in terms of being able to change buildings with changing requirements. That caused me to ask, if I built something now, and the life of the building is going to be 25 years or more because we can't afford to change things every five years, what is the flexibility we need in land management, because programmes change. That flexibility was never designed into many of the projects in this part of the world - that notion that you have to be able to mould and remould and mould again, was simply not part of traditional thinking. Yet if you look at the way, for example, that health care delivery has changed in hospitals between the 1950s and today, fifty years later, there is no commonality.

The same thing has happened in education - the process of educating people has changed so radically. I think the need for a good physical environment for the young is something that has grown also. In fact, children have got to get exercise, and exercise is part of good health, and health is part of longevity.

These sorts of issues kept coming back. That is when I started asking myself, am I alone looking at these questions or are other people looking at them? That is where the Aga Khan Award for Architecture started.

*Ivy: As you describe the contextual question - you mentioned that often and I assume that you are referring to more than just a stylistic matter.*

His Highness: It is a value system.

*Ivy: So much of recent international design has embraced the 'universal' - even nostalgia for the International Style. Since the Aga Khan Awards are intended for Islamic societies, have they identified places and projects that are responsive to social, cultural, intellectual, spiritual, or geographic specifics? I'm trying to get at a definition of what authenticity is, or what real, appropriate building for a specific place should be.*

His Highness: I think that the best example of the problem we face is in the architectural schools of the Islamic world. Some years ago, we made a survey of the architectural schools, and we looked at the faculties: What was the education that the faculties had received? The answer was that the vast majority had been educated in the industrialised world. So, the process of educating had been acculturated. It was another culture, from another part of the world, that was being proposed as the correct illustration of the architectural profession.

*Ivy: Western, industrialised ideas were being imposed, in a way?*

His Highness: It was a fact, and it was related to a number of things. I don't think it was necessarily an intentional, 'colonial' process. If anything, it was more linked to the notion of quality of life - that this type of building was likely to be a higher quality building than a traditional building.

*Ivy: Whether it fit or not.*

His Highness: When we went through this process of beginning the Award, the group that worked with me came to the conclusion that we all had a whole series of questions. When this group had completed their work, we started questioning, we started discussing, or communicating, these concerns and questions to communities in the Islamic world. Not one of these communities asked 'why are you asking these questions?' All of them immediately responded by saying that these questions were the right questions to be asked. They didn't tell us what answers they wanted, but there was quasi-total identification between the communities and the questions that were being asked.

That meant, in effect, that the processes of change were no longer being driven by architectural schools, which were not asking the questions themselves. People started asking questions. 'Why do it this way instead of that way?'

*Ivy: If the right questions are raised, the right answers will emerge, you hope.*

His Highness: It was amazing because it went through the whole of the Islamic world. The questions could address themselves to Sub-Saharan Africa, to the Arab world, to Central Asia; they could address themselves to Western China. But there was a sense of, 'where is our culture?' Not culture in the sense of a capital "C" - it was a culture owned by the people. 'Where is our culture? What is its place?'

*Ivy: Is that where authentic architecture comes from? By asking a culture to define itself?*

His Highness: I think so. When you generate questions, one of the phenomena in doing so is that people come back to you and say, 'give us the answers!' That is where it became a great deal more difficult. I think one of the answers came from the Award, which was to give a new sense of value to traditional cultures, traditional forms of expression, to show that modern materials didn't have to be used to achieve the desired results. It was, in a sense, repositioning these cultures in a value system, or value systems. I think the Award did that.

And then you come back to how fine is the issue of the repositioning of cultures. It may be achieved, but then the question is, 'what are the sources of inspiration?' And the sources of inspiration, the sources of knowledge, come back to education. Education had to be part of our overall process, not part of the Award for Architecture, but part of the overall process.

*Ivy: And how has the education component played out at the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard and MIT?*

His Highness: The question was how to design an educational resource that would have the maximum possible impact and, at the same time, have a legitimacy which would make it acceptable to much of the Islamic world. I was a Harvard graduate, therefore I knew about Islamic studies at Harvard. In the arts and sciences, I had been involved with MIT, and I knew that their school of architecture was very strong. Ultimately, people who are trying to reposition what they are doing will be looking at the most credible, most competent resources. They are not going to address themselves to a third rate institution.

I asked MIT whether they would be willing to put the entire programme together - with Harvard addressing what I would call, in generic terms, a cultural component, and MIT addressing the professional component. They would be building a system whereby we would be able to educate people who are already practitioners, or people who wanted to become practitioners. The whole programme went into place and the two universities had

worked in a very solid way. I think that the graduates from these programmes are now having an impact, whether they are museum curators or conservationists or whether they are practising architects, or whether they are researchers. These individuals are having an impact wherever they are.

At the time, the Islamic world was not saying 'we only want Muslim students in this programme.' There was considerable support that the programme should be open to all people from all backgrounds that had a reason to want to work in Islamic societies, whether they were Muslim or not. I think the split at this time is at least 50-50 of people from the Islamic world and people from outside the Islamic world.

Right from the first days of the Award, it was exciting that there was intellectual acceptance by non-Muslims of the cultural questions that were being asked. And, I have to tell you, I am enormously grateful to the men and women who worked with me from outside the Islamic societies, who said 'we will bring our knowledge and our judgment and our competencies to sustain these, to develop answers to the questions you've been asking, because we consider that they're very important.' I remember the people from Harvard and MIT saying: 'This is a format that can be asked of other cultures of our world. You have started within the Islamic world, but it could very well apply to the Hispanic world, it could apply to other parts of the world.' There was no sense of 'normalising' the programme towards the Islamic world. The questions and the concepts were far outside the Islamic world.

*Ivy: In that regard, now you've established a new website - ArchNet.org - which makes the full range of information so much more accessible to a larger group of people. What is its purpose?*

His Highness: Because one of the questions that I asked Harvard and MIT when I founded the programme was that I didn't want it to be an ivory tower, located in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It had to articulate its worth towards the Islamic world. First, I had a publication called Mimar.

*Ivy: Which I knew well . . .*

His Highness: It was good, but the question was 'what is the best way to articulate this information, outside MIT, to the Islamic world?' And of course, the Internet just broke down those barriers; it became an extraordinary opportunity. Because it is so qualified in these areas of communication, MIT was the right resource to use for this activity. And MIT has gone out of its way to make it work. I'm hopeful that when ArchNet.org is officially launched, it will become a global resource to people working for change in the physical environment in Islamic societies. The fact that it is a global resource will mean that there is communication from these societies to one place, but also from this one place to these societies. It has a dual function.

*Ivy: The Islamic connection literally gives it a context. It grounds it in some real dialogue.*

His Highness: People from outside the Islamic world also said that they felt there was a lot to be learned from Islamic cultures - and I use the plural - in addressing problems of cultural continuity and also new problems. The fact is that rural environments can be Islamic or non-Islamic - they are still rural environments. There is also the problem of mega-cities, and so on. This was not something that was so specific that the lessons learnt couldn't be used in other environments.

*Ivy: You are presenting the Chairman's Award this year, which is not an annual event. In fact, you've given very few. What is the significance of the Award and this year's winner, Geoffrey Bawa?*

His Highness: It is an Award that, after this year, will only have been given three times. The premise is that the Chairman's Award stems from the consensus thinking of the Steering Committee. It does not have an independent jury. So, it's the people who run the Award, who watch the Award's work, and who may over one or several cycles say to themselves, 'this individual has had a massive, life-long impact on what's happening.' It is not related to one building - it is related to a life-long contribution. And it is given by people who are intrinsic to the Award process. Generally, it will bring forward names of individuals who have not often been identified in the industrialised world as dominant figures in the processes of change, dominant figures in the right way.

*Ivy: This raises a question. I personally discovered Geoffrey Bawa through Mimar. The earlier magazine put a name and a face to the Award programme. In terms of public recognition, winners in the rural cultures, however, are more difficult to identify with. Names and faces are part of contemporary media reality. Unknown projects present a dilemma, because in the present star-soaked environment, we tend to focus on people rather than on ideas. Can you comment on that?*

His Highness: You're correct, but constituencies react differently to the Award. Village constituencies tend to look at other village constituencies. Their horizon is that which is happening in other areas of the rural world, and the process of change is not through an architect, but through people, through NGOs, or through government programmes.

Creating 'thought leaders' in villages is very, very important. It indicates to village organisations, isolated peoples, that there are certain directions that they can follow in terms of enhancing their own local cultures, setting standards in terms of the basic quality that is required for the purpose of the project, whether it is a place for children, a school or a medical centre. So, we are not addressing ourselves to the 'high-profile' architectural profession - we are addressing the majority population of the Islamic world. That's the target. But please go back to the notion of civil society; after all, the Award has got to try to address as many aspects of civil society as possible. One of the things the Award has tried to do is to get away from the notion of architects as the only constituency that causes change.



*Ivy: The world is extremely dynamic and evolving at the moment, presenting numerous challenges. We talked about cities. What about some of the other challenges like environmental degradation or the converse, sustainability? How can the Award address questions of this type that are broad, societal questions?*

His Highness: I think there are two issues: one is the rural context and the other is the urban context. The environmental issues in the rural context are related to issues such as land ownership, live agricultural production, and rights of grazing, rights of water usage, etc. The challenge is assisting people to understand that the physical process of change can enhance or degrade the inherited issues that they have to deal with. Another question involves land planning in rural environments. I might overstate this, but I will say it the way I think it is - it is literally unheard of. Land planning in rural environments simply is not part of village thinking, nor is it generally part of education in architectural schools.

If we found, at some stage, a village which had a perimeter of control over land and that they had rehabilitated the whole process, and developed a high quality product, I would encourage it to be studied and rewarded, and used as a case study. We actually started doing that ourselves through some of our own programmes of instruction.

The urban environment is a very, very different one. The urban environment is one where more work is being done. There has been massive demographic pressure on urban space. This is a very difficult issue to deal with because it involves the livelihoods of people. So, protecting and improving open space is something of an issue. Oddly enough, it used to be one of the characteristics of Islamic architecture that the great buildings always had remarkably landscaped spaces within or around them. Often they were internalised spaces, sometimes they were peripheral. Either way, they were given the greatest design attention. That aspect of building has in many ways disappeared.

*Ivy: How are you addressing the urban question?*

His Highness: One of the things that the Aga Khan Trust for Culture is now working on in Cairo, in Zanzibar, and in the northern areas of Pakistan, is to try to encourage people to recognise the value of open space. And one of the past Awards was for a reforestation programme for a university in Turkey, an enormous undertaking. But, I think one has to be respectful of the fact that the demographic pressure is so great, that these open spaces are going to have to be protected tooth and nail. They'll go, otherwise.

I would say that we have lost some of the competencies in landscape architecture which were intrinsic to the Islamic world. Landscape architecture is not part of architectural education in a lot of the schools, and this brings me to the Aga Khan Program at Harvard and MIT. Now, Harvard's Graduate School of Design is part of the AKPIA programme; the Graduate School of Design was, from the beginning of the programme, a target school in my thinking.



*Ivy: Tourism can be both a boon and a problem, because it can introduce stress to culture or to infrastructure. Hasn't it been an important factor in your own planning for the Trust for Culture, for cities, and for the Award programme?*

His Highness: The Award has premiated a number of projects in tourism, and there is a downside and an upside. I think on the downside, in principle tourism can be 'managed' but only if the right questions are asked. There is probably a level of the number of tourists above which, in a given site or a given building, there will be a problem; a lot of ministers of tourism, a lot of people running hotels or historic areas do not look at that. And, since they don't look at it, they do not plan for it. My belief is that you can plan for it, but that you have to identify the problem first.

The other aspect to this question is defining what sort of tourism you want. We are particularly interested in cultural tourism, because we are interested in underwriting the value of pluralism, and therefore having people visit sites or complexes which they would not normally see, and which they can learn about. We think that cultural tourism is a very positive factor, particularly in societies that would tend to be rather rigid in their attitudes. The fact that they will meet with people from other cultures, who speak other languages, is very important. We have to recognise the need for tourism, but we have to recognise that it needs to be managed. Absolute freedom in the tourism field will end up with serious consequences.

The reverse question is, 'how do you address that?', and I do think it can be addressed. There are a number of different methods of doing so. It is also a way of repositioning people's attitude to their own culture, because very often people who live in a cultural environment are no longer aware of it. When you enhance that environment and you say to people, 'you actually have an extraordinary asset - protect it, make it work for you, invest in it' - that cultural asset, which in many generations has been thought of as an economic and social and physical liability, suddenly gets turned around and is actually seen as something of real value. Then people learn about it, they protect it, and they invest in it.

*Ivy: Can you describe your own experiences as a developer, working with architects and planners?*

His Highness: I learned very young that the resources that we have to cause change to take place are hardly ever going to be sufficient to meet all the demands. Now, that is not true of the entire Islamic world: there are some parts, which are very, very wealthy, and they don't need those resources. The parts of the world I am working in are generally resource poor. If you are resource poor, then you must look at making value from financial investments, you must look at making investments where you get a solid outcome, not something that you have to keep investing in year after year. You must look at projects that you hope will become self-sustaining, so that they don't become burdens on the society and the villages that they are working with. So, you start with a number of economic parameters.

A second notion is that of change. More and more, I have been looking at questions of flexibility of buildings and the way buildings have to adapt to changing society, particularly in the social field.

The third aspect that I have attached enormous importance to right from the beginning is the notion that people's attitudes towards their homes change if they have an acceptable physical environment. If they live in a slum, whenever they have a little excess money, what do they do with it? One of the first things is to change the physical environment they live in. They put a metal shade roof on a hut or they move to a place where fresh water is available. The physical environment is part of people's psyche and yet is very rarely articulated. It is a driving force in the way people look at their environment. So I think that in terms of encouraging development, one of the most important aspects is to help people live in better environments.

The cultural aspect is there all the time, whether you are talking about northern Pakistan or about the East African coast - the fact is that you are always dealing in a cultural context.

Of course, you look at questions of resource mobilisation. What is the nature of resource harnessing, which you can bring into play on the development process and which the development process can sustain? Development people, unfortunately, tend to look at the upside, because they are driven by hope. But when you get into the downside and things go wrong, and you have an avalanche of problems that come up, then the situation becomes very serious. So, what I would call the economic stability of the process is a critical factor.

*Ivy: You mentioned 'resource mobilisation.' How do you organise your efforts for long-term development? Do you seek other participants and partnerships to achieve your specific goals?*

His Highness: There are a number of processes that we look at and engage in. If it is the Trust for Culture, we would have a three-year or a five-year programme; for the Education Services, we have the same three-year or five-year planning. The agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network all have forward-planning, which is a rolling process. The people in our education programme would be able to tell you the number of schools we intend to build, in the exact number of countries, and the number of students intended to serve. From there you get down to the question, 'what resources do we have?' 'What is the availability or shortfall? A third question is, 'whom can we associate with to get things moving?' And, for example, in humanitarian aid, the spectrum of support entities is very large, but support for culture is very small.

*Ivy: After all, how many people or other philanthropic resources support artists?*

His Highness: People have for much too long, in my view, thought of cultural change as being philanthropic, with no quantifiable outcome. That is not true. You can cause historic cities to become economic dynamos. Now, there is a downside to that because, in the process, there is a risk of gentrification and of land speculation. The fact is that every single

one of the historic projects we are looking at has a social development process, which must be the outcome - otherwise we don't go with it. When you talk about historic cities, you are not talking about culture, but about culture and development. We are also, in many ways, talking about social stabilisation, because where there is cultural support, and particularly pluralistic cultural support, we are speaking about social stabilisation. We are speaking about communities with different backgrounds recognising the quality and the legitimacy of their own cultures, which is a very, very important thing in our world.

*Ivy: It sounds like a worthwhile but sophisticated notion to transmit.*

His Highness: It works. That's the bottom line.

*Ivy: What sort of partners do you find?*

His Highness: The World Bank has a cultural fund. It is very new and it is not yet clear who is going to be able to access it, and how quickly, and for what funds. We are also working with the Swiss now, and with the Swedes and the Norwegians. It is interesting that many of these countries that have rural and mountain traditions which have disappeared in some sense, are very forthcoming also in that regard. Some are the private foundations, such as the Ford Foundation and the Getty Foundation, or the World Monuments Fund. The World Monuments Fund is an important partner because they also articulate issues; they don't just fund projects - they actually are strong and competent communicators.

The other thing that we noticed is that in the historic cities, the multi-input process, rather than the singular input process, has an important impact. If you come into an historic city and you forget that the schools need upgrading, and you forget that the medical centres need improving, and you forget that people need credit to change their environment, then you have missed significant components of the whole process.

The Aga Khan Development Network, because of the way it is structured, can bring multi-input processes into these environments, because not all of our work is the Trust for Culture. The Development Network includes the Aga Khan Foundation; it includes the Health Services, and the Education Services, so that we can build what I would call a form of support net going into these environments. That is just about the only way you can really create a sustainable process of change. Just impacting in one aspect, whether it is agriculture, or whether it is commerce - the one-input process doesn't really work in development. Don't ask me why, because I don't know the answer.

*Ivy: Your Highness, how do you view your own opportunities for the Aga Khan Development Network?*

His Highness: We all sense immense opportunity. One of our difficulties is response, because no organisation or set of institutions can grow indefinitely. There is more and

more pressure on the Aga Khan Development Network to articulate and communicate, and I think that is very valuable, but it takes time. It takes top people. Now is a time of extraordinary opportunity, because, if you go back to the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, you could not talk in these terms.

*Ivy: The answers were more simplistic.*

His Highness: Simplistic, dogmatic, and very often not field driven, or not driven by reality and society. That's what is so wonderful today. I think that the nature of the Aga Khan Development Network is that we are field driven. Many development organisations don't have this intimate relationship with the field that we have. And I think it is that intimacy that has given us a little bit of a privilege in terms of understanding these areas.

*Ivy: Thank you for your attention and time.*



## 2001 Award presentation ceremony of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture

### LOCATION

Aleppo, Syria (6 November 2001)

Your Excellency Prime Minister Miro  
Honourable Ministers  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

It is with great joy that I open the 2001 Presentation Ceremony of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. To do so in Syria and in this great city of Aleppo is exhilarating. For me, it is moving in a very personal way, for it takes place in a land of shared history and common heritage.

I express my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Bashar Al-Assad, President of the Syrian Arab Republic, for making it possible for the ceremony to be held here, and for extending his patronage to it. I also thank His Excellency Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Mustafa Miro for his personal attention to the many arrangements that an occasion like this requires, and for his presence and presentation among us this evening.

I am sure you will all join me in thanking Yo-Yo Ma and the members of the Silk Road Ensemble for taking time out of their performance schedule to participate in the Award Ceremony today. Last year the Aga Khan Trust for Culture joined the Silk Road Project created by Yo-Yo Ma to support a variety of projects aimed at broadening the understanding and appreciation of the musical and artistic cultures of the Silk Road that linked the West with Asia and the Middle East -- including Syria-- for over a thousand

years. This collaboration is taking many forms, one of which we have been privileged to experience today. It also includes a series of activities led by the Trust for Culture designed to stimulate interest in traditional music within and between countries in Central Asia and the Middle East. This work owes a great deal to Yo-Yo Ma's vision, creativity, boundless energy and infectious enthusiasm, and most of all to his genuine interest and respect for the creative expression of peoples embodied in the rich diversity of their cultures.

Syria has been at the crossroads of civilisations for over 2500 years -- an ancient witness to the fruitful interaction of different peoples and cultures. Today that tradition remains a cornerstone in the national psyche; an objective for all future generations of Syrians. It is also an example of which many societies around the world should take note.

Damascus and Aleppo are among the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. They functioned as major seats of commerce and learning for over 1000 years and as a central stage in the critical first century of Islam. Since that time, Syria has demonstrated the power of Islam as a crucible for the spirit and the intellect, transcending boundaries of geography and culture. It has demonstrated the Muslim eagerness to learn and adapt, and to share and bequeath an enhanced understanding of man and the universe. It is also a testimony to the Quranic ideal of a vibrant humanity, rich in pluralism, and yet constituting a single human community. This heritage of respect for difference is admirably sustained in Syria today in the value it attaches to diversity, pluralism and positive and productive relationships between different segments of society.

Syria boasts numerous examples of individuals and rulers responding to another precept of the Quran: the injunction that mankind holds Allah's creation of the world in trust, with the duty to leave the physical environment better than they found it. The country is rich with illustrations of the special role that architecture plays in expressing the values and creativity of Islamic cultures. From the time of the first cycle of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture in the Shalimar Gardens in Lahore, Pakistan, in 1980, the Presentation Ceremony has always taken place in a setting of special architectural beauty and significance. I am sure that you will all agree that Aleppo continues that tradition with great distinction.

From our perspective it is also a most appropriate venue to take note of two important milestones for the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Next year, the Aga Khan Award for Architecture will complete a quarter of a century of activities dedicated to identifying and premiating works of architecture for Muslim communities that enrich the wide variety of social and cultural contexts in which they have been built. As of next year the Trust's Historic Cities Support Programme, a product of some of the earliest findings of the Award, will also celebrate an important anniversary. At that point it will have been working for a decade on self-initiated projects to demonstrate that historic buildings and complexes of buildings in the great cities and countrysides of the Islamic world can be restored for sustainable reuse. The most dramatic example so far is a complex of projects in Cairo, involving the construction of a 30 hectare park in the centre of the historic city, the excavation and restoration of the Ayyubid wall which defines one of its

boundaries and the physical and economic revitalisation of the adjoining neighbourhood which contains many important mosques and other historic buildings, but has deteriorated badly over the last century. Here in Syria, in collaboration with the Department of Antiquities and the Ministry of Culture, the Historic Cities Programme started work more than two years ago. While this beginning maybe modest, our plans are substantial and I am sure that they will grow over time. Syria has so much to offer to its own peoples and to the world.

An international seminar is being planned for early 2003 to critique in detail the work of the Award for Architecture over its first twenty-five years. But I would like to focus this evening on a few of the lessons derived from its experience over that period, because I think they are particularly relevant in the global context at this moment of history.

People interested in the Award for Architecture and why I established it in 1977, often ask me which of the buildings that have been premiated over the years are my favourites. That question, frankly speaking, misses the most important considerations that contributed to the founding of the Award. It also distracts from the understanding of its most important lessons. I say this not to take anything away from the wonderful assemblage of clients and professionals here on the stage who have been selected by the Master Jury to receive recognition for their work on winning projects this year. Each of their projects is very important, and each of them carries important messages and lessons as you will hear and see briefly this evening, and in greater detail in tomorrow's seminar. Individually and collectively, the projects that have been recognised over the years convey the meaning of the Award as interpreted by the succession of independent Master Juries.

Thirty years ago, as the eye ranged across most of the developing world, it was difficult to find new construction that reflected in its design a concern much less an understanding of the social, cultural, or in some cases, even the climatic context in which it was built. I was particularly disturbed to find this in the Islamic world, given its historical record of architectural achievement and the special place that architecture has played in the aesthetics and spiritual expression of its cultures. The gap between past accomplishment and current practice was massive. This recognition led to the establishment of the Award. And since the problems the Award addresses are global in nature and significance, it was also the basis for the practice of involving professionals from fields other than architecture and from all religious backgrounds.

The processes that define the work of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture reflect this early analysis. The Steering Committee would be composed of distinguished scholars and professionals in different fields and of diverse faiths and would deliberate afresh in each cycle of the Award to define a brief for the Master Jury and select its members. A similarly diverse Master Jury would be free to interpret the brief and refine its own definitions as it conducted its deliberations about the hundreds of projects that had been nominated anonymously by designated professionals throughout the Islamic world.

What was behind all this attention to structure and process? The goal was to create an intellectual space – something we might think of as a beautiful bustan



- in which there would be no possibility of suffocation from the dying weeds of dogma, whether professional or ideological;
- where the flowers of articulation and challenging ideas could grow without restraint;
- where the new plants of creativity and risk-taking could blossom in the full light of day;
- where beauty would be seen in the articulation of difference and for seeking diverse solutions in the form of plants of different sizes, shapes, textures and colours, presented in new configurations and arrangements;
- a bustan whose glory would stem from the value and legitimacy of the pluralism of the infinite manifestations of culture in the human community.

The immediate goal was to find the ways in which the profound humanistic tradition of Islam could inform the conception and construction of buildings and public spaces, and to do so in ways that were appropriate in scale yet inspiring in impact. At its core is a message of opportunity, of potential, of hope. The larger goal was to test a model that if successful, might be followed in some form or another to address the many issues and pressures facing Islamic countries and communities. The question today is whether individuals and groups of individuals can find the opportunity and the will to take such an approach to the problems of which we are all so acutely aware.

Culture is currently finding more space in the general media and the public consciousness than at any time in the past that I can recall. The debate is still in its infancy and has several dimensions. With respect to relations between the Western and Islamic worlds, are we not seeing a conflict of stereotypes and prejudices, exacerbated by a good measure of ignorance about Islam? There are, of course, some differences, but if superficiality and trivialisation can be set aside, and be replaced by the will to go deeper to seek a solid foundation for mutual understanding and respect, it can be found in the common heritage of the Abrahamic faiths and the ethical principles that they share.

Persistent confusion about the existence and legitimacy of different communities of interpretation within Islam is another source of misunderstanding. No one in the West sees Christianity as an undifferentiated monolith, and yet this is the commonly held perception of the peoples of Islam, while the reality is quite different. Pluralism in the practice of Islam and its expression in the cultures of Islamic civilisations have been validated by nearly 1400 years of history, including the history of its art and architecture. Indeed it is precisely this pluralism in architectural greatness that has led many authorities to consider the Islamic architectural heritage superior virtually to all others. It is essential that we respect and value that plurality; that we do all in our power to have it strengthen us in our determination, to build unity in diversity, rather than conflict within constraints.

There is a dimension of the “civilisation” debate that has not received as much attention to date, about which I would like to make a few remarks. It has less to do with interactions between world cultures; rather it requires careful thought and discussion within the Ummah, the community of Muslims around the world.

Many Muslims today, of which I am one, carry with them a memory of the historical achievements of Islamic civilisations. What is the significance of this historical memory for the Ummah in the contemporary world with its many and varied challenges? How can we look back and reinvigorate aspects of it, and what level of significance should be accorded to it? Since there is this general feeling that something has been lost, it is critical to look back in order to look forward. This is the debate that must occur, in which there must be broad participation on a basis that, like that used in the Award, provides freedom for full exchange. The goal should be to turn this great resource into an intellectual trampoline to generate ideas for building the future productively and constructively in terms that will be meaningful and beneficial for Muslims generally.

Some progress was made at an Award seminar on understanding the specifics of such a process with respect to expressions of Islam in contemporary architecture which I offer as an example, because it illustrates the level at which the process of questioning and deliberations must take place. Two lessons emerged from the discussion. One is that the technical issues of the built environment cannot be considered in isolation from the cultural and spiritual values of a society. The second is that these values have to be related at one and the same time to the historical traditions of Islam, in all their diversity, and to the fresh challenges posed by the opportunities and needs for living in the modern world.

Can these directions of search and enquiry be focussed on the critical the dimensions of Islamic societies today? If we find pride in our sense of the past, but are troubled by how it relates to the present and the future, what are our ways forward? We need to achieve a better understanding of how dynamic cultures have and do lose their vitality, and to identify the potential new linkages between technical issues in relation to cultural and spiritual values on the one hand, and the historical traditions of Islam and the fresh challenges of the world in which we now live. Such discussions will be complex and will be difficult. They will be most productive if they can take place in the environment of a bustan such as the one that has proved so valuable in the experience of the Award for Architecture.

In closing, I would like to shift the focus to the clients and professionals assembled on the stage. I congratulate you for the projects that are being recognised this evening. Each of them carries important messages and lessons, and collectively they document the continuing evolution of the Award in its search for architecture that has meaning in local contexts and as examples for consideration by those responsible for building more generally. I was particularly pleased to see this year a number of projects related to the needs and aspirations of rural communities because too frequently the fact that the majority of the population in many parts of the Islamic world lives in rural environments is overlooked. I was also delighted to see two projects involving the construction of public spaces, in one case in a building within an institutional complex and in the other in the form of a public park in a major city. I thank the members of the Master Jury and the Steering Committee for the many hours of deliberation that they contributed to bringing this work to public attention and advancing the Award's thinking on critical issues.

Summarising two and half decades of the Award's existence leads me to conclude that the Islamic world, by mobilizing the best of its talents in association with those from other religious backgrounds, has succeeded in reversing what thirty years ago was one of the greatest losses of Islam's cultures and civilisations, namely the quality of its physical expressions in buildings, public spaces, and gardens. Today that situation has been reversed and has been replaced with a sense of pride as the Islamic world builds for the future, knowing that its buildings and spaces are once again of world standing. Where there was once a lack of direction, there is now a clear sense of promise. The essence of this adventure may prove to be valuable as we address other issues of great importance in the Islamic world.

Thank you.



## Winners' seminar of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture

### LOCATION

Aleppo, Syria (7 November 2001)

I would wish to begin my closing remarks by first of all expressing my sincere thanks and deep feeling of gratitude on behalf of everyone connected to the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and from myself to the President of the Republic of Syria and to the Prime Minister and his Government for the most generous, thoughtful and constructive way in which they have enabled the Aga Khan Award for Architecture to hold its prize-giving ceremony and related events here in Aleppo.

I would also like to thank the Syrian Order of Architects and Urban Planners for their support. I am particularly touched by your references to my family's history in your comments.

Next in order is to express my very warm and sincere congratulations to the winners. I think that the projects we saw yesterday, and which you articulated today, all carry in their own way important messages -- and important answers to difficult questions that, with the best of competence, you have been able to construct into physical developments we can all admire. I would also like to thank the Steering Committee that stood by my side these last three years as the Award progressed from one triennium to the next and as we tried to find our way through the issues that face the physical environment of Muslim communities and countries.

I also want to thank the Technical Reviewers. I do not think it has been sufficiently stressed that the Aga Khan Award for Architecture is very fortunate to have a large

team of men and women who devote their time and their knowledge to going and examining the projects that are retained for deeper analysis by the Master Jury. It is a difficult assignment and the quality of the Jury's decision-making process is, to a certain extent -- I would say to a large extent -- dependent on the quality of the detailed analysis carried out by the Technical Reviewers.

The essence of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture is to examine, analyse, understand, and try to influence the dynamic of physical change in Islamic societies. The dynamic of physical change in Islamic societies is a very wide notion. It is not limited to cities, and it is not limited to professions. Its focus is the totality of civil society, as we know it.

It is society that is changing every day around the world. Our attempt, our aspiration, our prayer is to try to have the humility, but also the competence, to understand what is happening and to seek to influence it so that future generations can live in a better environment.

In defining the physical environment in these terms, we are including the ultra poor and the ultra-rich. We are covering the full spectrum of poverty and material wealth. In my view, it would be seriously wrong to ignore either end of that spectrum. That is why architecture for the poor, building for the poor, building by the poor, is an extremely important component of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

I have been particularly pleased during this triennium to see how many projects seek to address, competently and intelligently, the different circumstances in which poor people are living.

In looking at the Award, there are two issues that come on to the table: The first is the quality of the individual projects, a topic that was discussed extensively during this seminar today. The second, equally important, is the process. What was the dynamic behind the projects? Who contributed, and how did they contribute to creating the projects that were premiated at this triennium? It is fascinating when you look at the rural projects in terms of this dynamic. They ranged from village organisations that did not exist before to one person who was concerned about the unhealthy diet in an area of Africa.

These issues of the change in the rural environment are issues of deep concern to the Islamic world because, as I said yesterday, more than 50% of the Islamic world lives in a rural environment. We cannot, therefore, afford to ignore asking: What are the processes of change in the rural environment and how we can encourage them to progress? We cannot ignore modern life and the need for Islamic societies to improve their economies. Therefore, we cannot ignore industry, we cannot ignore tourism, and we cannot ignore high-tech infrastructure if we want to have the capacity to respond to those dimensions of physical change. Nor can we afford to ignore our history as expressed in extraordinary buildings. We have to learn and we are learning, but we cannot simply learn and not revitalise at the same time. And as we know, the process of revitalisation is very sensitive.

So I would say this evening that what we are seeking to do -- and I am referring particularly to the winners -- is to join with you as partners in making available your

knowledge, your talent, your creativity, to the widest spectrum of people we can reach. We believe that in the decades ahead the process of physical change in the Islamic world will benefit from not only looking at best practices, but also thinking of excellent practices. This emphasis on excellence means making people aware of the exceptionality of quality -- not just best practice -- through your work. If we were able to make it available to decision-makers, town halls, architects, clients, and the media, we would be making your work available to the spectrum of people who actually cause change to occur in the physical environment. We look to you as our partners in this exercise.

I wanted to say that to you this evening because it is going to be your generosity of thought and time that is going to help us take -- to rural communities around the world for example -- case studies of the best that is being done to facilitate the process of positive change in rural environments, the best of what is being done in adapting the leisure industry to our societies, and the best of what is being done adapting infrastructure to our needs.

Today, we have learned some specific lessons about a large number of areas. I will touch on them very briefly.

We have learned about new ways of helping rural societies to change, how to house important activities in small but elegant and cost-conscious quality buildings. We have learned about new approaches to institutionalising the human capacity to educate and to extend its knowledge. We have learned about high quality technology that is affordable for poor environments and communities. We have learned about new materials that are being developed and used, often along with locally available materials. We learned about conservation, restoration and re-use and some of the complexities of revitalisation. We have been told that the role of the architect is not necessarily easy to define because there is some difference of opinion as to whether architects have to come out of schools of architecture or whether they can be brought out from the community with the inherited knowledge of tradition. We have heard about sensitive development in fragile ecological settings. We have also heard about open spaces and recalled that, historically, open spaces were extraordinary places of gathering and spirituality in the Islamic world. Today, they are endangered by demographic pressures that are squeezing them practically out of existence. It has required a real search to find new initiatives in developing quality open spaces in the Islamic world of today.

All of these issues have come out of this cycle of our studies. We hope to make your work and your talent available to the largest number of people, as effectively as possible. I would like to close by assuring you that we will continue on this long search to build a system whereby processes enhance the quality of change in Islamic societies.

Thank you.



## Banquet hosted in honour of Governor Perry

### LOCATION

Houston, Texas, USA (23 June 2002)

Governor Perry

First Lady of Texas, Anita Perry

Mayor Wallace

Leaders and representatives of the Congress of the United States, the State of Texas and the City of Houston

Consuls General

Distinguished Guests.

I will begin with an apology. I request your indulgence because following a good deal of food for the stomach I am going to use this occasion to dish up a fairly heavy serving of food for thought. I do so because this is the first time I have had the opportunity to speak publicly in the United States about the events of September 11th of last year. Since then many perspectives have been articulated in many settings – diplomatic, academic, the media, and in public opinion as expressed in the streets and measured in opinion polls.

That the acts of September 11th and all that is behind them are repugnant to the very spirit of Islam and to the beliefs and yearnings of the vast majority of Muslims around the world is beyond question. In the words of the Quran it is as if the entirety of humankind had suffered a death with every life that was so brutally ended. The shared destiny of the ethos of the Abrahamic tradition that unites Christians, Jews and Muslims is governed by the duty of loving care to help nurture each life that is born to its God-given potential.



But the cacophony of voices, both in the West and the Islamic world, has generated a great deal of confusion about the broader meaning of the events of September 11th. This confusion has outcomes that are potentially dangerous for relations between countries as well as for the safety and security of individuals as they go peacefully about their daily lives.

Some years ago, Professor Samuel Huntington warned of an impending “clash of civilisations” between the West and the Islamic world as the next great confrontation following the end of the Cold War.

My position is somewhat different. It is based on my perspective as the leader of a Muslim community that now lives in the West as well as in the Islamic world, and from an engagement in international dialogue, development and cross-cultural education for more than forty years. What we are now witnessing is a clash of ignorance, an ignorance that is mutual, longstanding, and to which the West and the Islamic world have been blind for decades at their great peril.

For a number of years I have voiced my concern that the faith of a billion people is not part of the general education process in the West – ignored by school and college curricula in history, the sciences, philosophy and geography. An important goal of responsible education should be to ringfence the theologising of the image of the Muslim world by treating Muslims as it treats Christians and Jews, by going beyond a focus on theology to considering civil society, politics, and economics of particular countries and peoples at various points in their history. This will reveal the fundamental diversity and pluralism of Muslim peoples, cultures, histories, philosophies and legal systems. The

Aga Khan University’s newly established Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations in London will address these issues directly, as have the programmes of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture with respect to the field of architecture, and more recently music. Repositioning theology with respect to the normal forces of human society will help develop the understanding that Muslims too live in the real world and have to contend with the same issues of life – of poverty, hunger, tragedy and civil conflict as all others in the developing world.

Within the Islamic world there is work to do as well, starting with a better understanding and appreciation of the pluralism of cultures and interpretations among Muslims.

The legacy is rich, a source of strength, and needs to be encouraged and celebrated. It is also crucial that the Islamic world develops a creative and reasoned response to the impact of Western popular culture, which coupled with the dominance of modern electronic media by Western corporations, poses a serious threat to local and national identities and cultures, and their creative and sustainable evolution.

I will stop here, although there is much more to say. I warned you that my serving of food for thought would be heavy, and I hope that it has not caused indigestion. But I do feel that it is vital that we reduce the ignorance that contributes to misunderstanding and can feed conflict. The good news is that this is a process that each of us in this room can contribute to whatever our vocations or positions in life, whether through small individual initiatives or major projects. Please do join me in this important endeavour.



## **Inauguration of the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center, Houston**

23 June 2002, Houston, Texas (USA)

Governor Perry,  
First Lady of Texas, Anita Perry,  
Mayor Wallace,  
Leaders and representatives of the Congress of the United States, the State of Texas and the  
City of Houston, Consuls General,  
Distinguished Guests

It is a great pleasure to be here today to welcome one and all to the Inauguration of the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center at Houston. I am particularly thankful for your presence Governor Perry, and of the First Lady of Texas, and for that of many other elected officials on an occasion of great significance for the Ismaili Community of greater Houston.

Because this Center also incorporates the permanent home of the Ismaili Council of the United States and other Ismaili constitutional bodies responsible for the well being of the Community all over this country, the Center we inaugurate today is equally important for

every Ismaili in the United States. We are honoured that you have taken time on a day of rest amidst your heavy schedules to share this moment of celebration, gratitude and reflection with us.

The conception and completion of a project as complex as this requires dedicated and sustained contributions from many people -- too many to recognise individually. I congratulate the design architect, The ARCOP Group of Montreal, Canada, and the General Contractor for the project, Durotech of Houston. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the Aiglemont Construction Department and the Imara Volunteers.

The person who unquestionably deserves individual mention is the senior design architect, Mr. Romesh Khosla of New Delhi, India. Mr. Khosla's career has been marked by many accomplishments and awards. Among them is the design for the Mughal Sheraton Hotel in Agra, which faced the challenge of creating a contemporary structure with clear references and reflections of deep historical and cultural elements, and to do so within sight of the Taj Mahal! For his success with that assignment, Mr. Kholsa was selected by an independent jury of his peers to be among the winners of the triennial Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1980, the first year of the Award's existence.

In the Center we inaugurate today, the design brief charged Mr. Khosla and his colleagues to create a contemporary building that would similarly express Islamic values, ethics and attitudes but, in this instance, in the context of Southwestern and Texas architecture and materials, and in harmony with elements of the site's natural setting and surrounding buildings.

Many of you may be surprised by the amount of time I have devoted to talking about architecture on this occasion. Those familiar with my understanding of the importance of architecture in the teachings of Islam and Islamic history will not have the same reaction. Islam does not deal in dichotomies but in all encompassing unity. Spirit and body are one, man and nature are one. What is more, man is answerable to God for what man has created. Since all that we see and do resonates on the faith, the aesthetics of the environments we build and the quality of the interactions that take place within them reverberate on our spiritual lives. As the leader of a Muslim community, and particularly one that now resides in twenty-five countries on four continents, the physical representation of Islamic values is particularly important to me. It should reflect who we are in terms of our beliefs, our cultural heritage and our relation to the needs and contexts in which we live in today's world.

Some years ago we gathered a group of eminent scholars of Islamic culture and distinguished architects and designers representing all major faiths, in a series of seminars to wrestle with the challenge of coming up with a definition of Islamic architecture. One of the first outcomes of the effort was the conclusion that no single definition exists because over its long and distinguished history, Islamic architecture has reflected different climates, times, materials, building technologies and political philosophies.

But this is a very important finding in itself. It shows that trying to establish a norm would be counter productive, because it would stifle that strength which comes from the diversity and pluralism of Muslim societies, past and present, and the creativity of those who will build around us in the years ahead. Unfortunately there are forces at work in the Islamic world that seek to establish just such a norm. This makes it all the more important that we strive to counter such efforts by employing all the means of intellectual discourse -- research, discussion, celebration of innovative projects, and the commissioning of freshly conceived but well researched new buildings.

I think it would be appropriate for me to say something on this occasion about the Ismaili Community – in Houston, Texas, the United States and around the world. Today the Ismailis are a global community that comprises a multiplicity of peoples ranging in their origins from the north-west of the Arab world and the Middle East, through Iran and the Indian sub-continent to Afghanistan, Central Asia and Western China. Migrations in the late 19th and early in 20th centuries created a substantial presence in sub-Saharan Africa as well. As Shia Muslims, the Ismailis are united by their recognition of the Prophet Muhammad's appointment of his cousin and son-in-law Hazrat Ali as the first Imam and his declaration entrusting his Authority to his progeny through Hazrat Ali and his wife Fatima, the Prophet's daughter.

In 1957, I was still a student at Harvard when I inherited the responsibilities of the Ismaili Imamate from my Grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah. It seemed inconceivable then that there would ever be substantial communities in the West. The Ismailis were too deeply rooted in their ancestral homes, indeed frozen there by the Cold War in Asia, the Middle East and Africa. But dislocations in the wake of decolonialisation, and more recently the collapse of the Soviet Union and the prolonged difficulties in Afghanistan, have caused a number of Ismailis to seek new lands and homes. These migratory movements over the last half-century have resulted in a substantial Ismaili presence in Russia, in Western Europe, the United Kingdom and Portugal, and particularly in the United States and Canada.

In these settings Ismailis have found themselves rejoicing with new opportunities, but also confronted by new challenges. Bolstered by a long tradition of self-reliance, and a strong system of Community organisations, Ismailis have established themselves quickly as productive members of society in their new homelands. This has been particularly true in the United States with its long history of welcoming immigrants, its sense of opportunity and hope, and its recognition of accomplishment and merit. I express my gratitude to the people and leadership of the State of Texas for giving concrete expression to these important American values.

Nine eleven has scarred America, but not just America. It has scarred the Islamic world, and hundreds of millions of devout and practicing Muslims for whom the word of the Quran is the word of God. We have clarity and direction enough when the Quran affirms that to save a life is, as if, to save humankind altogether. It is in this context that I request that you view the Ismaili Jamatkhana and Center, Houston, as much, much more than a place of

congregation, and a home for administrative offices. The Center will be a place of peace, humility, reflection and prayer. It will be a place of search and enlightenment, not of anger and of obscurantism. It will be a center which will seek to bond men and women of this pluralist country to replace their fragility in their narrow spheres by the strength of civilised society bound together by a common destiny. It is already a symbol of the hopes of people who lived through change and turbulence, and have ultimately found security and opportunity here in the United States, the majority of whom have chosen the State of Texas.

Thank you for sharing this important occasion with us.



## Opening of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival

25 June 2002, Washington, USA

I am here to speak briefly about Central Asia. I wanted to share with you some of the reasons why the theme of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival this year is so important. As you know, Central Asia has been an area of considerable concern and instability for the world. Over the past decade, Central Asian countries have come into existence in difficult circumstances. Frontiers have been changed, ethnic groups have been divided, old traditions have been modified by the Soviet presence, and all this has caused considerable difficulty in looking ahead in that part of the world.

This period of deep change at the national and regional levels has prompted a search for new forces of stability. One that seems particularly important, I think, to the United States and to all of us, is the validation and vigorous promotion of human and cultural pluralism. Historically the Silk Route was a link that interconnected diverse aspects of human society and culture from the Far East to Europe, and did so on the basis of mutual interest. This suggests that for the new countries of Central Asia, the inherent pluralism of their societies can be regarded as an asset rather than a liability. In the wider sense, it can be a means of enlarging the frontiers of global pluralism. This is a goal with which we all can and should associate.

The remarkable work of Yo-Yo Ma has enthralled audiences, from all the countries of the Silk Route and beyond. By his leadership and imagination he has proved that the force of cultural pluralism to bind people is as necessary, powerful and achievable today as was the Silk Route in history.

It is my privilege and honour to be associated with the founder of the modern Silk Route, a cultural journey that inspires people to unity and joy through art.

Thank you.





## Prince Claus Fund's Conference on culture and development

### LOCATION

Amsterdam, Netherlands (7 September 2002)

Your Majesty  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Directors of the Prince Claus Fund  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with gratitude and admiration that I participate in this event today. It gives me the opportunity to express publicly the enormous respect in which I hold Prince Claus, and the very great importance I attach to the work of the Prince Claus Fund. I am saddened that Prince Claus cannot be with us tonight, and I am sure that all of you will join me in requesting Her Majesty The Queen to convey to His Royal Highness our warmest regards and best wishes.

The founding purpose of the Prince Claus Fund of "expanding insight into cultures and promoting interaction between culture and development" has been fulfilled by means of a vigorous programme of grants, awards and publications. These actions recognise, stimulate and support activities that share the principles of equality, respect and trust, and have the highest levels of quality and originality. Through them, the Fund is making a very significant contribution in an area which I believe will be critical to the development of humankind in the 21st century -- the strengthening and enhancement of pluralist civil society, in all corners of the globe. The work that the Fund has accomplished has given legitimacy and stimulus to the broadest range of intellectuals, artists, and committed groups and organisations, frequently in areas of the world where

the importance of such creativity is not recognised, and indeed, is often repressed. These initiatives constitute highly creative investments in the identification and premeation of forces working for the strengthening and enhancement of the pluralism of cultures that will provide strength into the future.

Within this same context the Aga Khan Trust for Culture has become a partner with Yo-Yo Ma in supporting his Silk Road Project and developing its own Central Asian Music Initiative, both of which involve some of the same performers who will delight us from this stage later this evening. This event therefore brings together three dynamic cultural institutions – the Prince Claus Fund, the Silk Road Project, and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture -- which singly, and together, are contributing to the global recognition of the importance of cultural pluralism. It also allows me to state my conviction that the strengthening of institutions supporting pluralism is as critical for the welfare and progress of human society as are poverty alleviation and conflict prevention. In fact all three are intimately related.

The field of development has yielded more than its share of buzzwords. Phrases like, "civil society", "poverty alleviation", and "sustainable development" are familiar to many of you, as is "enabling environment" for which I must carry responsibility, since it was the Enabling Environment Conference in Nairobi sponsored by the Aga Khan Development Network, the World Bank and others which brought that phrase into common use. I hope that my remarks might release some more buzzing, because the essence of what I will say this evening refers to "enhancing pluralism".

I do not think it is necessary to spend time outlining the challenge that the process of globalisation represents vis-à-vis the cultural fabric of our world. But it is not the content of the new media, or even its domination by media giants, that is the real threat. The problem is that large segments of all societies -- in the developing world and the developed world – are unaware of the wealth of global cultural resources, and therefore of the need to preserve the precious value of pluralism in their own and in other's societies. In this regard, there has unfortunately not been any development that parallels the recent acceptance by international public opinion of the imperative to preserve and enhance our natural environment and the world's cultural heritage as "public goods", worthy of general support.

I would go even further and say that the inability of human society to recognise pluralism as a fundamental value constitutes a real handicap for its development and a serious danger for our future. Since the end of the Cold War, a number of factors appear to have been common and significant ingredients, if not the primary cause, of many of the conflicts we have witnessed. Perhaps the most common of these ingredients has been the failure of those involved to recognise the fact that human society is essentially pluralist, and that peace and development require that we seek, by every means possible, to invest in and enhance, that pluralism. Those groups that seek to standardise, homogenise, or if you will allow me, to normalise all that and those around them must be actively resisted through countervailing activities.

Whether it be in Central Europe, the Great Lakes region in Africa, or in Afghanistan -- to cite just one example from three different continents -- one of the common denominators has been the attempt by communal groups, be they ethnic, religious, or

tribal groups, to impose themselves on others. All such attempts are based on the principle of eradicating the cultural basis that provides group identity. Without cultural identity, social cohesion gradually dissolves and human groups lose their necessary point of reference to relate with each other, and with other groups.

A necessary condition for pluralism to succeed is that the general education of the populations involved must be sufficiently complete so that individual groups, defined by ethnicity, religion, language and the like, understand the potential consequences of actions that might impinge on others. This is, for example, one of the principal reasons why today there is so much uninformed speculation about conflict between the Muslim world and others. For instance, the historic root causes of conflict in the Middle East or in Kashmir are not addressed at any level of general education in the most powerful western democracies that dominate world affairs.

I must say that, as a Muslim, I stand here in front of you in amazement that the Western world had to experience the revolution in Iran to learn about Shia Islam, or the civil war in Afghanistan to learn about Wahhabi Islam. Please remember that we are talking about a religion followed by one-fifth of the world's population! This is the equivalent of Muslims being unaware of the distinction between Catholics and Protestants within Christianity. The point I wish to make is that the governments, civil societies and the peoples of this world will be unable to build strong pluralist societies with the present level of global cultural ignorance, and particularly about its pluralism. Even the most developed countries will need a massive effort to educate the world's youth in a more thoughtful, competent and complete manner for the global responsibilities which they will be expected to fulfil, and particularly so in the increasing number of functioning democracies where an informed public plays such a central role.

The actions to enhance pluralism have to be matched in the developing world by programmes to alleviate poverty because, left alone, poverty will provide a context for special interests to pursue their goals in aggressive terms. Urgent humanitarian assistance is indispensable, but should be conceived as part of a long-term strategy of helping the recipient community develop its own resources that can support the improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the poorer segments of the population, and charitable support for those unable to work.

As you know, development is sustainable only if the beneficiaries become, in a gradual manner, the masters of the process. This means that initiatives cannot be contemplated exclusively in terms of economics, but rather as an integrated programme that encompasses social and cultural dimensions as well. Education and skills training, health and public services, conservation of cultural heritage, infrastructure development, urban planning and rehabilitation, rural development, water and energy management, environmental control, and even policy and legislative development are among the various aspects that must be taken into account.

To illustrate this approach, I would like to say something about the work that the Aga Khan Development Network has recently launched in Afghanistan. The scenario is dramatic: a country destroyed by decades of war, lacking basic infrastructure, economic resources, institutional fabric, and suffering from strong antagonistic social and religious forces. The government must also facilitate the return to the country of hundreds of

thousands of displaced families, feed the population, restore agricultural production, provide essential social services, eradicate drug-related crops and their ancillary industries, and last, but most essentially, consolidate a culture of tolerance, based on the mutual understanding between peoples of different origins and languages.

In this context the Aga Khan Development Network has started work in Afghanistan based on an accord signed with the Government. In the first phase, priority is being given to responding to the most pressing problems. Activities that are underway include the provision of humanitarian aid to address the food shortage. The food shortage is, of course, aggravated by the needs of hundreds of thousands of displaced people. We have to facilitate the resettlement of refugees, and undertake rehabilitation of buildings and public works required to provide basic social services.

Simultaneously, planning is underway to help address the country's needs in terms of building human and institutional capacity for social and economic development. Steps are being taken to revive and up date institutions for the training of teachers and nurses to meet the needs of urban and rural populations. Work is underway on the reform of school curriculum in accordance with the government's guidelines and current international experience, and making basic health services accessible to all. A microfinance facility is being established to provide financing for agriculture, micro-enterprise, small business including cultural enterprises, and the special needs of refugees returning to properties that have been destroyed.

In all of this work, the cultural dimension is pivotal because of the pluralistic nature of Afghan culture, and the severe stress it has endured in the recent past. As an initial undertaking the Aga Khan Trust for Culture is working in Kabul on the rehabilitation of the historic fabric of the ancient city, its monumental buildings, and traditional housing and decayed public spaces. These projects are centred around two significant historic sites: the Mausoleum of Timur Shah, considered by many to be the founder of modern Afghanistan, and the Paradise Garden of Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire in the Indian subcontinent. The goals range from the lofty -- the preservation and restoration of symbolic monuments of Afghan history and cultural identity, to the very practical -- immediate employment opportunities and the rebuilding of marketable skills. All of them are essential to enable the people of Afghanistan to rebuild their country in peace and dignity.

I would like to leave you with a final thought, and some questions and conclusions that flow from it. Developing support for pluralism does not occur naturally in human society. It is a concept which must be nurtured every day, in every forum -- in large and small government and private institutions; in civil society organisations working in the arts, culture, and public affairs, in the media; in the law, and in justice -- particularly in terms of social justice, such as health, social safety nets and education; and in economic justice, such as employment opportunities and access to financial services.

- Is it not high time - perhaps even past time, that a systematic effort be undertaken to document "best practices" by looking closely at the array of public policies and structures that support pluralism in particular national settings?

- As lessons are extracted and models identified, should not a process be put in place to share them widely for replication?
- Should not this effort reach out to as many countries as possible, and in as many organisational and institutional settings as can be mobilised?

In addition each of us can help enhance pluralism in our own personal, professional and institutional domains. We could play our role in favour of pluralism as public opinion makers. We could participate in and support the efforts of groups and NGOs that promote that cause. We could volunteer our professional competences in a variety of fields, such as academic, technical or managerial. We could, also, serve the cause of pluralism simply through the conduct of tolerance, openness and understanding towards other peoples' cultures, social structures, values and faiths, and thereby set an effective example in our own society.

My hope is that society as a whole will not only accept the fact of its plurality, but, as a consequence, will undertake, as a solemn responsibility, to preserve and enhance it as one of its fundamental values, and an inescapable condition for world peace and further human development.

Thank you.



## Opening ceremony of the Aga Khan School

30 October 2002, Osh, Kyrgyz Republic

Your Excellency Governor Kasiev  
Your Excellency Minister Aitmatov  
Honourable Mayor Satibaldive  
Your Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure to be here in Osh today and to participate in the opening ceremony of this new Aga Khan School. I thank you for being here to share this important moment with us. It is an occasion of great significance in many ways. It is significant because of the cooperation many organisations and individuals who have made the establishment of the school and construction of this complex of buildings possible.

- The government, at all levels -- national, provincial and local -- have made important contributions, both symbolic and very practical. Their Excellencies President Akayev and Governor Kasiev have provided encouragement throughout the process for which I am very grateful. The support provided to a private school is a visible demonstration of the government's commitment to private initiatives in the Kyrgyz Republic and a testament to its openness and flexibility.

- Special mention should be made of the role of the authorities in Osh in finding a way to make the land available for the school, and of the Ministry of Education for the expeditious issuing of the licenses for its construction and operation.
- The Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, Pakistan, deserves mention for its many contributions to the conception and implementation of the building project.
- I would also like to recognise the contributions of the architects and the general contractor for their ongoing efforts to complete a project that involves a number of firsts in terms of design and construction.

But the significance of this occasion extends beyond the establishment and opening of the school. The aspirations of the Aga Khan Education Services for what this school will achieve for its faculty and staff and above all for its students and their parents in the years ahead is perhaps the most important dimension.

I am sure that all of you here today will agree that we live in a time of rapid change -- change that is often not predictable, and not always positive. The best way to manage change, whether positive or negative, is to anticipate it and prepare for it. On the basis of my experience with development as an observer and a practitioner - that now spans more than forty years - I have come to the conclusion that there is no greater form of preparation for change than education. I also think that there is no better investment that the individual, parents, and the nation can make than an investment in education of the highest possible quality.

But education comes in many forms, and has been used for many purposes. An education for success in the modern world must be enabling and it must be outward looking. It must not only teach the time tested skills of reading, writing, and mathematics, which remain important, and must not only build on Central Asia's fine tradition of encouraging students to master more than one language. Today's students need to learn to use computers. The ability to use communication and information technology is now a critical part of the learning, as well as an essential qualification for eventual application in the workplace.

But even this is not enough. There are two more dimensions of education for the modern world about which I would like to make a few remarks. The first relates to inquisitiveness, critical thinking, and problem solving. What students know is no longer the most important measure of the quality of education. The true test is the ability to engage with what they do not know, and to work out a solution. The second dimension involves the ability to reach conclusions that constitutes the basis for informed judgements. The ability to make judgements that are grounded in solid information, and employ careful analysis should be one of the most important goals for any educational endeavour. As students develop this capacity, they can begin to grapple with the most important and difficult step: to learn to place such judgements in an ethical framework. Therein lies the formation of the kind of social consciousness that our world so desperately needs.



I hasten to add that these capacities cannot be developed quickly, nor can they be mastered at the high school level. But a beginning must be made, and starting this process should be part of the mission of this institution.

Yet another reason why the opening of the Aga Khan School in Osh today is so important. It is because of what it represents in terms of the Aga Khan Development Network, its work around the world, in Central Asia and in the Kyrgyz Republic.

- Being part of the Aga Khan Education Services' network means having access to a system of more than 300 high quality schools in various parts of the world, access to high quality training for teachers and school managers at the Institute of Educational Development at the Aga Khan University. It also means access to important international partners like Phillips Academy near Boston in the United States. These resources will enrich what this school can offer, and will help it achieve the very high aspirations we have for it and its graduates.
- Later this week I will visit Naryn where the first facilities of the University of Central Asia in the Kyrgyz Republic will be located. The University of Central Asia is the first university in the world dedicated exclusively to the study of the problems and potentials of mountains and mountain people. It is my hope that the school which we are inaugurating here today will, in a few year's time, be a significant contributor to the student body of the University.

In closing I extend my congratulations and best wishes to everyone associated with the school. When I arrived I was reminded that its cornerstone was laid in the year 2000 as part of celebration of the 3000th anniversary of the founding of the city. While the Aga Khan School was not part of that long and glorious history, it is my sincere hope that it will be an important part of this city and the Oblast for a long time into the future.

Thank you.



## Plenary Session of the Bishkek Global Mountain Summit

31 October 2002, Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic

Your Excellency, Prime Minister Tanaev  
Your Excellency, Ambassador Gautschi  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Participants  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honour to be one of the participants in this distinguished gathering. I am pleased to be part of a meeting dedicated to the search for new solutions to the problems and potentials of the mountains and mountain people. Looking back over the events of the last decade yields several lessons. One of the most important is that the global community cannot continue to ignore the problems that have been building in most mountain areas of the world.

It is most fitting that this Summit, the culminating event of the United Nations Year of the Mountains, should be held here in Bishkek.

- The Kyrgyz Republic is a mountainous country, located in a region dominated by some of the world's mightiest mountain ranges. For this reason President Akaev took the initiative, more than two years ago to move the General Assembly of the United Nations to dedicate the year 2002 as the Year of the Mountains.
- He saw it as a means to concentrate attention on the role that mountains and mountain communities play in local economies as well as their global consequences for climate, the supply of critical natural resources, and peace and security. The presence here of representatives from governments, private business, non-government organisations, universities, and international development agencies demonstrates that his objectives are being achieved.
- President Akaev, I would like to add my voice to those of the speakers at the opening plenary, in thanking you for the initiative you have taken to bring this meeting to Bishkek, for the warm welcome and the excellent arrangements.

Presentations and discussions over the past two days have detailed the complex problems confronting sustainable development in mountain areas. I will not take your time by repeating what has already been said. Dealing with the problems is particularly difficult for developing countries where resources for investment are always insufficient and subject to intense competition from many sides, often for other worthwhile and pressing needs.

These problems have been especially acute here in Central Asia over the last decade.

- Most of the countries that were formerly part of the Soviet Union have experienced rapid and severe stagnation as their economies were cut off from the highly centralised Soviet economic system.
- The effects of this change were magnified in mountain areas. Few were self sufficient in basic foodstuffs, and their industries and mines -- already inefficient -- were cut off from their markets. Even educational and health services, which had been accessible and good, collapsed because they had been dependent on high subsidies.
- The struggle to survive brought some immediate results – many with more than short-term consequences. I will give just two examples. The cut off of imported and subsidised fuel led to the massive cutting of trees and shrubs to provide heat during the bitterly cold winters. Herds of livestock, once a major export, were decimated for food in the absence of alternatives.
- The years of armed conflict have further exacerbated these conditions, in Tajikistan and even more notably in Afghanistan.

The Aga Khan Development Network (which I will refer to as the AKDN) has developed considerable experience working in mountain communities. It has been active in the Northern Areas of Pakistan for over twenty years, and in parts of Tajikistan for over a decade. This year the Network is bringing this experience to bear in northeastern Afghanistan, and next year plans to begin a programme in the mountainous districts of Osh Oblast here in the Kyrgyz Republic.

A fundamental premise of the AKDN is that development is a multifaceted process that must be approached from multiple perspectives and requires long-term engagement. The structure and approach of the Network is a response to this understanding of development. It is comprised of a number of agencies with specific mandates and expertise. The work of the non-profit entities ranges across the fields of health, education, economic development, rural development, and culture. Activities include the provision of social services, field based development activities and educational programmes and universities that train professionals at the highest level. Building institutions and human resources to operate on a sustained basis is one of AKDN's most important goals. The for-profit group takes equity positions and management responsibilities in companies that contribute to overall development.

AKDN's work in mountain communities has shown that attention to a combination of critical elements at the field level can make a powerful difference. These factors include:

- working with or creating community organisations that can progressively operate on their own,
- providing matching funds for community level infrastructure projects, selected and built in large measure by the community,
- supplying credit and improved inputs to agriculturalists, and
- providing technical assistance to support agriculture and construction projects.

In the case of Tajikistan, land reform that gave farmers secure access to their land was an additional, very important element.

These experiences have yielded many valuable lessons.

- To succeed, programmes have to be grounded in field experience, with trained personnel situated throughout the area.
- All factors require support over an extended period of time. Community organisations need to gain experience and develop strength.
- It is easier to improve agricultural production, and thereby income and nutritional levels, than it is to create agriculture-related and non-agricultural jobs in rural areas.
- Improving access to the quality of health and education services is essential. They support the diversification of the local economy, and equip those looking for work outside the mountains on a seasonal or long-term basis to be considered for new forms of employment.
- In many areas it is also possible to revitalise or strengthen cultural assets – be they buildings, musical forms, or crafts -- as potential attractions or products for those tourists interested in mountains and mountain cultures. The point was made in the opening plenary that mountain areas have the highest level of bio-diversity of any ecological zone. It is equally true that mountains have more cultural diversity than

any other physical setting. This is a great source of strength and an asset and should be supported as such.

- It is clear that improved livelihoods and functional communities are much more attractive to mountain people than armed conflict or criminal activities, including drugs.

But however well-designed community-based, integrated development programmes may be, they need support from strong institutions to evolve and good policies to move beyond what they can cumulatively achieve.

Institutional support is required to provide ongoing inputs explicitly focussed on the problems and potentials of mountains and mountain peoples. The challenge of improving agricultural production and productivity on a sustained basis illustrates this readily. While mountain regions share many problems, the solutions are often very specific to particular micro niches, even within one area. Grains, horticulture and the cultivation of specialised plants for medicinal and other specialised purposes require careful selection in order to succeed.

This requires field-based knowledge and capacity, as well as the means to mobilise the best science that is relevant, wherever it can be found. It will require the ability to undertake highly contextualised research, as well as the delivery capacity to bring that research to the field in a form that can be utilized in field conditions. Unfortunately, as the Director General of UNESCO stated in his plenary address, there are very few universities and research institutions located in mountain areas.

Research and training of this type – applied to the whole range of knowledge and human resources needed to support mountain development, is one of the premises for the creation of the University of Central Asia. The university came into being following the signing of a treaty between the Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and the Ismaili Imamat two years ago, and ratified by the parliaments of the three countries over the course of last year. From campuses located in mountain towns in the three countries, it will conduct a wide range of activities designed to serve the mountain peoples of the region.

I would like to move to a topic, which I do not think is receiving enough attention here at the Summit and in other Year of the Mountain fora. In Central Asia there are problems and unrealised potentials that can only be addressed by involving two or more countries, or working on a truly regional basis. This, as has already been pointed out, must be due at least in part, to the irrationality of national boundaries.

But tackling regional issues will require effort at political and diplomatic levels in each country involved, and they will in turn require facilitation and support from multilateral organisations to move negotiations forward. Truly regional projects will also require financial assistance that supports such efforts directly – not as an aggregation of

individually financed, single country activities. The need to build and improve roads and bridges in sensitive and neglected border areas are particularly critical.

I would be worried if the rational economic theories that support the benefits of regionalisation were only that: theoretical rationalisations. However, at least in the case of AKDN's high mountain activities I should share one last lesson with you that was recently highlighted in AKDN's most mature rural support programme.

At what stage does the compound impact of community based projects over a wide area and an extended period of time cumulate into the need for macro economic changes? In our high mountain situations, this equates with new regional dimensions. Even when demonstrably successful, community-based projects seem to reach a development stage at which they no longer produce continuing increments in returns.

It would appear that when that point is attained, much wider forces of change have to be brought into play, such as mobilizing new economic drivers and diversifying the economy at the macro level. New areas and scales of enterprise in fields such as commerce, agro-industry, the leisure industry and others must be developed. There are new needs for regional institutions such as universities, enterprise support agencies, micro-credit banks and the like. Improved communications, better roads and appropriate customs and border regimes take on a new urgency. They in turn must seek out new levels of funding and diplomatic support that only large international funding agencies can offer.

In AKDN's experience they unfortunately are generally unenthusiastic about funding regional initiatives. But in economic theory, and from the practical experience of AKDN's high mountain development programmes, the case for regional development initiatives and their institutionalisation is made.

There is of course, more that can be said about building institutions to respond to new needs and constraints but I will stop here. AKDN looks to partner with other institutions to move this process forward. Much remains to be done to stabilise mountain communities, and improve the options and therefore the future for mountain peoples. It will take the best efforts of all of us to make a difference for them

Thank you.





## **Ceremony to inaugurate the restored Humayun's Tomb gardens**

15 April 2003, New Delhi, India

Your Excellency, Shri Jagmohan, Minister for Tourism and Culture  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,

I would like to begin by expressing my warmest gratitude to the Government for inviting me to India, and to the Minister for Tourism and Culture, His Excellency Shri Jagmohan, for honouring this inaugural ceremony with his presence.

We are gathered today, near the twilight hour, surrounded by the signs of paradise, at what is clearly a defining moment in world history. The need for better understanding across cultures has never been greater - nor more pressing, the requirement to recognise, value, and protect what is greatest in our common heritage.

Breathing new life into the legacy of past civilisations calls for a creativity, imagination, tolerance, understanding, and wisdom well beyond the ordinary.



These are some of the qualities that we celebrate in the collaborative outcome represented by the project being inaugurated today.

Conceived in 1997 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of India's independence, the restoration of the gardens of Humayun's Tomb was formalised two years later. Implementation began in 2001 and was completed yesterday.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India recognised in this project a symbol of Indian history and of the world's cultural heritage. The role of the National Culture Fund also has to be acknowledged.

The task has been a vast one. Water channels were re-laid to such exacting standards that their beds rise only one centimetre every 40 metres. Over 2500 trees and plants were introduced in accordance with our knowledge of the original palette of landscaping. Wells were re-excavated and incorporated into a rainwater harvesting and irrigation system. Sixty stonecutters prepared 2,000 meters of hand-dressed red sandstone slabs.

These restored gardens are the first chahar-bagh, or four-part paradise garden to surround a Mughal tomb on the sub-continent. Built nearly a century before the Taj Mahal, the Tomb and its gardens were an expression of the love and respect borne towards the Emperor Humayun by his son, Akbar and widow, Haji Begum. The chahar-bagh was more than a pleasure garden. In the discipline and order of its landscaped geometry, its octagonal or rectangular pools, its selection of favourite plants and trees, it was an attempt to create transcendent perfection - a glimpse of paradise on earth.

The hues and scents of these gardens, the varied sources of the design elements and of the chosen construction materials, make this monument an important reminder of the power and elegance of diversity, while the sentiments that moved its patrons, united them in a shared virtue.

Revitalisation clearly is not just about replacing stones or replanting lawns. It is a process underpinned by careful research, in the present instance, drawing on archives in India as well as abroad. The project had to draw upon many disciplines - archaeological excavation, conservation science, soil analysis, stone carving, and civil and hydraulic engineering. It also benefited from, and contributed to, the skills of local artisans. Where encroachments had obscured and diminished the grandeur that was once enjoyed by all, we have, together, restored a glory that now becomes ours again.

Endeavours such as this are vital for countries like India, well-endowed with historical and cultural treasures, but also burdened by the responsibility of preserving them for future generations. It is my hope that this project will serve as a model for more collaborative ventures among the private and public sector, national and international entities and civil society.

Speaking of civil society, central to my broader concern is the fact that investing in such cultural initiatives represents an opportunity to improve the quality of life for the people who live around these remarkable inheritances of past great civilizations. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture insists that each of its conservation and restoration projects should be able to have an important positive impact on that quality of life. We are keen that our investments create a multiplier effect in the local economy. Accordingly, we monitor their impact on the physical environment as well as on disposable income and other indices of better living conditions. We also emphasise self-sustainability.

Here, as with the Trust's other urban projects such as in Cairo, Kabul and Zanzibar - a significant long term outcome will be the enhancing of the quality of leisure for residents and visitors alike.

A richer educational encounter at a sensitively restored monument will prompt more tourists to seek out other culturally significant sites in India.

These restored gardens can thus become the fulcrum and catalyst for socio-economic development as well as an irreplaceable resource for education.

I spoke a few minutes ago of this juncture in history, of reviving a legacy and of shared aspirations. Whether through neglect or willful destruction, the disappearance of physical traces of the past deprives us of more than memories. Spaces that embody historic realities remind us of the lessons of the past. They constitute valuable national assets but also represent the patrimony of mankind.

And, as we witnessed most poignantly across Afghanistan and now in Iraq, the very survival of so much of this heritage is today at risk.

What, then, of the deeper values that we risk abandoning under the dust of our own indifference, or that might be crushed to rubble by our own destructive human forces?

In the troubled times in which we live, it is important to remember, and honour, a vision of a pluralistic society. Tolerance, openness and understanding towards other peoples' cultures, social structures, values and faiths are now essential to the very survival of an interdependent world. Pluralism is no longer simply an asset or a prerequisite for progress and development, it is vital to our existence. Never perhaps more so than at the present time, must we renew with vigour our creative engagement in revitalising shared heritage through collaborative ventures such as the project we are inaugurating today.

Thank you.



## **Annual Meeting of The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (Tashkent, Uzbekistan)**

05 May 2003, Tashkent, Uzbekistan

President Lemierre  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to have the opportunity to join the participants in the Annual Meeting of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in Tashkent this year. I would like to thank President Karimov for his gracious welcome. It is with pleasure that I am visiting Uzbekistan again

It is a particular honour to have been invited to deliver the Jacques de Larosiere Lecture to such a distinguished gathering. It is, I must admit, an honour that I accepted with considerable trepidation. My first reaction was to question whether I would have anything

to say that would be of interest to this audience. Unlike those who have presented the Larosiere Lecture in previous years, I am neither an economist, a banker, nor a specialist in national or international finance.

But I have been involved in the field of development for nearly four decades. This engagement has been grounded in my responsibilities as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Community, and Islam's message of the fundamental unity of "din and dunia", of spirit and of life. Throughout its long history, the Ismaili Imamate has emphasised the importance of activities that reflect the social conscience of Islam, that contribute to the well being of Allah's greatest creation - mankind, and the responsibility which Islam places on the fortunate and the strong to assist those less fortunate.

When I became Imam in 1957, I was faced with developing a system to meet my responsibilities in an organised and sustainable manner that was suited to the circumstances, demands and opportunities of the second half of the twentieth century. In a period of decolonisation in Asia and Africa, the Cold War and its disastrous impact on developing countries, and the painful progress towards a global movement for international development, it became essential that the Imamate's economic and social development efforts be broadened beyond the Ismaili community, to the societies in which they lived. Presently, the Ismaili community of approximately 15 million resides in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe and North America.

This led me to establish what is now the Aga Khan Development Network (the AKDN), a group of eight agencies with individual mandates, to engage in critical dimensions of development from distinct yet complementary perspectives and the competencies they require. The Network is active in the fields of health, education, civil society enhancement, culture, and economic and rural development, and now has more than three decades of experience working in South Asia and Eastern and Western Africa, and since 1993, has been active in Central Asia. This work started in Tajikistan with humanitarian assistance and then post conflict reconstruction and redevelopment, and has expanded to other countries including Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan more recently. The Network's newest engagement is a major commitment to reconstruction and development in Afghanistan.

Time and experience have taught us a number of lessons, which you may already know, but which explain why our development agencies are structured in number and purpose as they are.

Development is a multifaceted process that:

- must be approached from multiple perspectives, and competencies;
- necessitates the mobilisation and development of the capacity of local communities or beneficiaries to take responsibility for activities designed to produce sustained results, and;

- requires long-term engagement with programmes developing into institutions to become permanent and localised.

The structure and operating principles of the Network are a response to this understanding of development. These agencies are all field-based, with a small headquarters staff and drawing on the energies of more than 20,000 employees and volunteers. The long-term perspective and the field driven experience of the AKDN will be the basis of my remarks this afternoon.

I am sure that we can agree that at the most general level, the goal of all development efforts -- be they promoted by governments, national organisations, or international development agencies and institutions -- is to stimulate and facilitate change that is positive in character, significant in impact, long-lasting in consequence, and sustainable into the future. The more complex and difficult question is what does it take to achieve development that meets this aspiration?

Economic development -- increasing the production and consumption of goods and services in the economy, and expanding and improving the quality of employment opportunities for a country's population and its disposable income is certainly critical. I take this as a given, and that is why the Aga Khan Development Network has several agencies whose objectives are the expansion of economic opportunity in selected sectors as a primary objective.

However, it is not at all clear that the quality of life has a direct, one-to-one relationship with the level of production or even the breadth of access to what an economy produces. Without doubt growth plays a central role in the increasing of human welfare and the dignity of life. But other dimensions and challenges to development play at least an equally important role. Unfortunately, many of them are not easily measured in conventional economic terms, nor addressed through usual economic programmes and policies. It is to these aspects of development that I would like to devote most of the rest of my remarks.

I do so for two reasons. The non-economic dimensions of development often escape the attention they deserve because the degree of risk of not doing something is often underestimated. Secondly, when dealt with competently and over time, they actually support and sustain the health of the economy as well as other aspects of society.

From the perspective of forty years of work, and the experience of the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network, institutional development stands out as critically important to broad-based sustainable change. By institutional development, I mean the strengthening and refocusing of existing institutions, as well as the creation of new institutions and policies to support them. Because this process takes time, it is also urgent. Institutional development is essential to respond to emergent needs, new opportunities, and persistent gaps if change is to measure up to the standards of being positive, significant, long lasting, sustainable and having a genuinely measurable impact. No country to my knowledge can

achieve stable continuous growth if its civil society is constrained by inherent institutional instability.

The need is universal. It exists in big countries and small countries, countries better endowed with natural resources, and those that have less, countries in the developing world, the developed world, and those in transition following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

The need for institutional development also applies to every sector of society: to government at all levels, to business large and small, and to that diverse array of informal and formal organisations that have come to be referred to collectively as civil society institutions. One clear lesson of the last half of the twentieth century is that governments cannot do everything. The role of the private business sector in national economies is now universally acknowledged as both critical and legitimate.

But the refocusing of existing institutions and the development of new ones to enter spheres of social activity previously undertaken solely by government is not yet as widely recognised. Nor is there as clear an understanding of what form new institutions might take, and how they should relate to government -- an issue that is at least being addressed with respect to government's relations with the private business sector, as opposed to the private social sector. There, lack of clarity, or even confusion, dominate the field. What do I mean when I speak of civil society institutions? Of the three sectors -- government, private business and civil society -- it is the most diverse and the least well understood. Moreover I am not sure that even those who work on the sector define it in the same way. My purpose is not to enter into an academic discussion but only to ensure that I am understood. I prefer to think of civil society in the widest sense, including all sorts of organisations and initiatives. It includes much more for example than is captured by the term NGO. I would for instance include professional organisations that aim to uphold best practices, or that serve and contribute to a vibrant and effective business sector, such as chambers of commerce, and associations of accountants, bankers, doctors, lawyers and the like.

Civil society organisations are generally non-profit or not-for-profit - at least implicitly. They may, however, generate money from fees or services that they provide. This is the source of a great deal of confusion in many parts of the world because non-profit is frequently confused with charity - giving services or sustenance to the needy. The confusion is understandable because charity has a long history in all religious traditions, and renders real assistance to those not able to help themselves. Some civil society institutions should and will always be involved in charity. But those of a new type exist to provide services in return for fees that will cover some or all of the costs of operations including salaries, but not produce a profit for owners or investors. Perhaps "non-commercial" conveys the purpose and operating principles of civil society institutions in many parts of the world, more clearly than the term "non-profit."



Because most civil society institutions are non-commercial, and whatever dividends they produce contribute directly to the improvement of the quality of life of their beneficiaries, these institutions are faced with the fundamental problem of identifying financial resources that will keep them alive and enable them to grow.

At the heart of the issue is the question : "Is civil society bankable?" If so, what criteria should apply? The long history of the AKDN agencies has shown that while there are numerous financial institutions and programmes that are available to support economic investment, non-commercial civil society institutions face the permanent threat of being systematically under-funded. One of the causes, at least from the experience of AKDN is that civil society institutions are rarely, if ever, part of a national planning process. Relations between public sector and private sector health delivery, or education delivery, are more often left to chance than a thought-through process driven by clear development goals. Within the civil society sector there is not even consultation between the providers working on the same problems from different perspectives as to how they might work together for better effectiveness.

In addition, financial institutions find it difficult to rationalise the role, needs and futures of civil society institutions within the national economy. At least in the banking sector, they cannot tailor their financial support systems when available, to the characteristics of non-commercial civil society institutions.

A number of these characteristics are common, such as the need and desire for longevity, incapability to plan growth on the basis of secure long term funding, the need to employ competent people at fair market rates, and in some cases the impossibility or unwillingness to become commercial ventures.

I would like therefore to share with you some specific examples from our own activities here in this region. How does a private sector hospital that has chosen not to offer its services for commercial gain, fund its expansion or the cost of increasingly expensive sophisticated technical equipment? How does a private university fund its expansion into new areas of higher education when student fees will never reasonably cover more than 25% of the cost of running the university? How do you address the now well-recognised problem of pockets of poverty in developing countries, when on the one hand it is clear that they present a real threat of destabilisation, but at the same time have no hope of improving their economic standards, unless a key piece of unbankable infrastructure is built. A good example is the recently constructed bridge, linking Tajik Badakhshan to Afghan Badakhshan, which could never be justified on the basis of normal banking criteria.

Within civil society in much of the developing world, there are professions which are critical to stable growth and to democracy, but which are systematically under resourced in terms of pay and opportunities for ongoing training. The three that I would cite today are: teachers, nurses and journalists. The economic status of these professions simply has to be corrected if the consequences are not going to be the progressive degradation of education,



the progressive degradation of health care, and national media, which will be incompetent or open to all sorts of undesirable pressures including corruption. And yet, the additional costs of better remuneration to such professions will simply add to the end cost of the product, making it even more inaccessible to those who need it most, the poor.

In the developing world the backlog of unmet existing needs combined with those of rapidly growing populations puts incredible pressure on even the most forward-looking, well-resourced and efficient governments. In the countries of the former Soviet Union, the previously high levels of achievement in health and all levels of education are no longer sustainable because governments cannot provide the same levels of subsidies. And in all parts of the world the growing differentiation and specialisation in the fields of health and higher education, demand institutions of a new type, mastery of new areas of knowledge and technology, the capacity to innovate, and the identification of new sources of funding. Not even the governments of the richest countries in the world can meet these challenges without contributions from the private business and the civil society sectors.

Civil society organisations need to reach for the highest level of competence to justify their support. The sector combines energy, creativity, with a social conscience. Together these constitute a powerful impulse and should be nurtured. At the same time capacities for management, programme design and implementation, fundraising, and self-study and evaluation need to be strengthened. The process of learning from the experiences of the sector is important for the organisations themselves, and for government, international development agencies, universities and even the private business sector. How can we improve the process of self-analysis, evaluation and the exchange of experiences without diminishing the autonomy and creative initiative of civil society institutions? How can they learn from their own experiences in order to improve the management of their programmes?

But the Network's experience also reveals that the civil society sector faces a number of challenges that must be addressed if it is going to make an effective and continuing contribution to national development in this region. Even when needs are readily evident, the sector's role and potential are not well understood. There are questions about its legitimacy, there is no framework, no predictable and reliable environment in which civil society organisations can function and prosper. There is often a lack of clarity about to whom, and for what, it is responsible and accountable, and there is little appreciation as to how it is and can be financed, and its sustainability. How should these civil society institutions be governed? What standards should be applied to define their success?

Governments, donor agencies and others need to do more to create an environment that enables civil society institutions to emerge and develop. The basic issue is how to improve mutual understanding and create the conditions of confidence, and mutual predictability that will enable people and institutions to realise their full potential.

There are some larger contextual issues that are critical as well.

The first is regional cooperation, a subject that has been mentioned at various points in the programme over the last two days, although primarily in terms of its economic consequences. The last few years have seen the emergence of groupings of neighbouring countries coming together to promote trade and broader economic relations. This is critically important for Central Asia as well, and can build on the demography of the region and elements of common culture that have developed over extended periods of time as symbolised by the Silk Road. Central Asia is still well situated to play an important role between Europe, China and the Indian sub continent. That role will be more important and have greater impact if the countries of the region can find ways to develop their economies and resources on a cooperative basis rather than as individual nations. But why restrict this cooperation to the commercial domain only? Many civil society needs are clearly regional, hence our creation of the University of Central Asia in partnership with the governments of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic to provide education specialised in high mountain studies on a regional basis.

Pluralism, the recognition of people of diverse backgrounds and interests, organisations of different types and projects, different kinds and forms of creative expression, are all valuable and therefore deserving of recognition and support by government and society as a whole. Without support for pluralism, civil society does not function. Pluralism is also essential for peace, a statement that is unfortunately documented by armed conflict in contexts of cultural, ethnic, or religious differences on almost every continent at this time. It is of particular importance here in Central Asia given the demography of most countries.

The purpose of my comments today is not to point an accusing finger at international or national banking systems. Nor do I want to appear ungrateful for the generous assistance we have received from our donor-partners over the last many years. I do want to share with you however, my deep conviction drawn from years of experience, that financial support systems for non-commercial civil society institutions, do not exist in certain countries, or are insufficient, or are ill-adapted to the needs of such institutions.

If the international financial community were willing to look in depth at the problems that should be addressed in supporting non-commercial civil society institutions, some strategic goals should be set. The first one that I would propose to you is to ensure that as civil society grows it does so in a manner that it enhances public appreciation of the diversity of most people within common frontiers as an asset and not a liability. Events in recent years have shown in Eastern Europe, in the great lakes area of Africa, in numerous countries in Asia, including Afghanistan and Tajikistan, that there is a central need for these societies to develop in a way that each group within them feels valued and respected, and is encouraged to contribute to the goal of national development.

I do not believe that most people are born into an understanding or an environment where pluralism is seen as an asset, but on the other hand I am convinced that civil society institutions have a central role to play in bringing value to pluralism and inclusiveness. But

again, who will fund the tools with which pluralism will find its way into civil society, as a central necessity for civilised life in the future?

Thank you for hearing me out. I was not invited here to speak to you about banking, though I clearly understand and admire the purpose of EBRD, which is development through economic stimulation. Creating a sound future for the peoples of Central Asia requires just as much in my view, a clear focus on building new concepts and new institutions for new civil societies.

# Dushanbe Fresh Water Forum

30 August 2003, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Your Excellency President Rakhmonov  
Your Excellency Prime Minister Akilov  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Participants  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak at the beginning of this important conference: the Dushanbe Fresh Water Forum.

To you President Rakhmanov I offer my congratulations and thanks for your initiative to move the United Nations to declare 2003 as the International Year of Fresh Water. Your efforts have already resulted in important meetings around the world, the outcomes of which will be presented this afternoon. The Dushanbe Fresh Water Forum brings together specialists in the management and development of water resources from an international and regional perspective, in the special context of Central Asia.

I also commend your government for structuring this meeting to enable a broader segment of the people of Tajikistan to be exposed to these proceedings. Broad awareness and appreciation of the importance of the intelligent use of a progressively scarce resource is certainly part of the solution to the problems that the Forum will be wrestling with over the next three days.

From a global perspective, it is here, in Central Asia, that one of the most unusual water situations exists. I am referring to Lake Sarez. It is some 60 kilometres in length, containing some 17 cubic kilometres of water, is at 3200 meters altitude and has a natural dam of 550 meters, the highest of any dam in the world. For years it has been seen as a major hazard to millions of lives in this country and in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan. It is clear that if the rock dam, caused by an enormous landslide following an earthquake in 1911, were to break as a result of another such event; or if another earthquake were to cause landslides to fall into the lake, raising the level of the water and causing a massive spill across the top of the dam, the consequence would be a major catastrophe. It is estimated that 5 million lives could be at risk.

Fear of this happening has dominated the thinking of government officials and the population living in the area around and below Lake Sarez for years. More recently the World Bank, the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), USAID and the Swiss Government have expended time, thought and resources to develop a credible protective response that can alert downstream populations as quickly as possible. In simple terms, this is risk management. The question I wish to raise today is whether we are not perhaps also facing a question of opportunity management. Thousands of cubic meters of

consumable water are trapped at high altitude. Is this not a situation which could be turned into a force for development, rather than a threat of tragedy? Studies are presently underway to test this idea, in particular in regard to the use of the Sarez Lake waters for hydro energy and irrigation for the area they now threaten, and probably much more. Any wisdom that this conference could bring to bear on these issues would be an extremely valuable outcome.

The other point I would like to stress is also about water management, but at more micro but still critically important human scale. I will do so because it is here, and in the nearby mountainous region of Northern Pakistan, that the AKDN has acquired much of its understanding of the importance of water management in physically difficult and fragile settings. This engagement now stretches over a period of more than twenty years in Pakistan, and ten years in Tajikistan. It has allowed the Network to develop its knowledge of the utilisation of this precious and scarce resource at the level of communities and watersheds.

This work has demonstrated that with support, mountain populations can enhance and maintain freshwater in a manner that contributes effectively to their increased well-being on an ongoing basis. At the same time, the use of water by these communities can be designed to be ecologically and socially responsible from the perspective of downstream communities, watersheds and even countries, that are equally dependent on adequate supplies of fresh water. I wish to make this point as I am struck how often, and in how many different discussions about water, people living in the communities scattered through the high mountains are seen as a problem.

I will not take your time to detail AKDN's experience with the development of irrigation, micro and mini hydroelectric plants, the planting of trees and hedgerows for fuel and land stabilisation and the like. Though essential, the technology is not the important message here. It is that with organisational support and technical inputs, mountain people can become part of the solution to effective watershed conservation and management, while also improving their own circumstances.

But, mountain communities need support from society and government at the national level. For much of Central Asia, but also in rural areas in Afghanistan and Northern Pakistan, civil society organisations based on principles of broad participation, equity and transparency are still uncommon. Their development needs support and requires legitimacy in the eyes of the government for they are the most capable micro managers of micro water resources. I know that in matters such as Lake Sarez, or the effective management by rural communities of their water resources, there are issues that require careful analysis. My purpose this morning has been to make two basic points. We must think creatively about the potential that Lake Sarez represents, while also attending to continuing issues of risk. It is equally essential to stress that the people living in mountain communities can be active participants in developments that will sustain and improve the supply of fresh water that is so vital to human life.

Thank you and best wishes for a productive set of deliberations over the next three days.

# 'Word of God, Art of Man: The Qur'an and its Creative Expressions' - An International Colloquium organised by The Institute of Ismaili Studies

19 October 2003, London UK

*Bismillah al-Rahman al-Rahim*

Your Excellencies, Your Worship, Distinguished Scholars and Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

An assembly of the wise and learned is a privileged occasion. I am, therefore, immensely happy to be with you this morning as you begin your deliberations on a theme which, though of perennial interest, holds a special significance at a time that calls for enlightened encounters among faiths and cultures. Whatever its vernacular forms, the language of art, more so when it is spiritually inspired, can be a positive barrier-transcending medium of discourse, manifesting the depths of the human spirit.

The venue for this international colloquium is particularly appropriate. In its architectural design and definition of broader functions, the Ismaili Centre in London, like its counterparts in other countries, has been conceived in a mood of dialogue, of humility, of friendship and of harmony. These Centres reflect a commitment to pre-empt excellence of endeavour in the realms of the intellect and the spirit.

I thank you most warmly for setting aside the time from your busy schedules to participate in this colloquium. I also congratulate the Institute of Ismaili Studies for marking the twenty-fifth year since its inauguration through this timely event. This is a part of its ongoing ambitious programme of Qur'anic studies in which scholars from around the world, both Muslim and of other persuasions, are participating. They bring to bear a variety of academic disciplines on a reflection of how Islam's revelation, with its challenge to man's innate gift of quest and reason, became a powerful impetus for a new flowering of human civilisation.

This programme is also an opportunity for achieving insights into how the discourse of the Qur'an-e-Sharif, rich in parable and allegory, metaphor and symbol, has been an inexhaustible well-spring of inspiration, lending itself to a wide spectrum of interpretations. This freedom of interpretation is a generosity which the Qur'an confers upon all believers, uniting them in the conviction that All-Merciful Allah will forgive them if they err in their sincere attempts to understand His word. Happily, as a result, the Holy Book continues to guide and illuminate the thought and conduct of Muslims belonging to different communities of interpretation and spiritual affiliation, from century to century, in diverse cultural environments. The Noble Qur'an extends its principle of pluralism also to adherents of other faiths. It affirms that each has a direction and path to which they turn so



that all should strive for good works, in the belief that, wheresoever they may be, Allah will bring them together.

Tradition honours the vocation of the learned scholars who are gathered here for this colloquium. The Qur'an itself acknowledges that people upon whom wisdom has been bestowed are the recipients of abundant good; they are the exalted ones. Hence Islam's consistent encouragement to Muslim men and women to seek knowledge wherever it is to be found. We are all familiar that al-Kindi, even in the 9th century, saw no shame in acknowledging and assimilating the truth, whatever its source. He argued that truth never abases, but only ennobles its seeker. Poetising the Prophet's teaching, Nasir Khusraw, the 11th century Iranian poet-philosopher, also extols the virtue of knowledge. For him, true jihad is the war that must be waged against the perpetrators of bigotry, through spreading knowledge that dispels the darkness of ignorance and nourishes the seed of peace that is innately embedded in the human soul.

This colloquium covers a range of Muslim expressions in the Arts, across time and space. Some among the eminent scholars present today have observed that, while the Qur'an may not propound a doctrine of Islamic art or material culture, it does offer imaginative scope in this direction. From early on, its passages have inspired works of art and architecture, and shaped attitudes and norms that have guided the development of Muslim artistic traditions.

In this context, would it not also be relevant to consider how, above all, it has been the Qur'anic notion of the universe as an expression of Allah's will and creation that has inspired, in diverse Muslim communities, generations of artists, scientists and philosophers? Scientific pursuits, philosophic inquiry and artistic endeavour are all seen as the response of the faithful to the recurring call of the Qur'an to ponder the creation as a way to understand Allah's benevolent majesty. As Sura al-Baqara proclaims: 'Wherever you turn, there is the face of Allah'.

Does not the Qur'an challenge the artist, as much as the mystic, to go beyond the physical - the outward - so as to seek to unveil that which lies at the centre but gives life to the periphery? Is not a great work of art, like the ecstasy of the mystic, a gesture of the spirit, a stirring of the soul that comes from the attempt to experience a glimpse of, and an intimacy with, that which is ineffable and beyond being?

The famous verse of 'light' in the Qur'an, the Ayat al-Nur, whose first line is rendered here in the mural behind me, inspires among Muslims a reflection on the sacred, the transcendent. It hints at a cosmos full of signs and symbols that evoke the perfection of Allah's creation and mercy. Many other verses of the Qur'an have similarly inspired calligraphy in all its forms, reminding us of the richness and vitality of Muslim traditions in the Arts.

It is my sincere hope that this colloquium will bring additional insights to an understanding of the Holy Qur'an as a message that encompasses the entirety of human existence and

effort. It is concerned with the salvation of the soul, but commensurately also with the ethical imperatives which sustain an equitable social order. The Qur'an's is an inclusive vision of society that gives primacy to nobility of conduct. It speaks of differences of language and colour as a divine sign of mercy and a portent for people of knowledge to reflect upon.

Ours is a time when knowledge and information are expanding at an accelerating and, perhaps, unsettling pace. There exists, therefore, an unprecedented capacity for improving the human condition. And yet, ills such as abject poverty and ignorance, and the conflicts these breed, continue to afflict the world. The Qur'an addresses this challenge eloquently. The power of its message is reflected in its gracious disposition to differences of interpretation; its respect for other faiths and societies; its affirmation of the primacy of the intellect; its insistence that knowledge is worthy when it is used to serve Allah's creation; and, above all, its emphasis on our common humanity.

As this colloquium embarks on its deliberations, I wish you well in all your proceedings.

Thank you.

# Aga Khan University Convocation

6 December 2003, Karachi Pakistan

*Bismillahi-r-Rahmani-r-Rahim*

Your Excellency, Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali,  
Your Excellency, Governor of Sindh, Dr. Ishrat-ul-Ebad,  
Honourable Chief Minister of Sindh, Sardar Ali Mohammad Khan Mahar,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Faculty, staff and students of the Aga Khan University,  
Parents and families of our students,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me very great pleasure to address this 16<sup>th</sup> Convocation of the Aga Khan University and to welcome the Prime Minister to this important occasion in the life of the Aga Khan University. He has a particularly demanding schedule at this time, including a long journey abroad within the next days and his presence amongst us today is testimony of his own and his government's commitment to education in Pakistan and their conviction in its essential role for the future destiny of this great country. I am also most happy to be able to greet so many of our friends and supporters from Asia, Africa and North America who are also our generous and committed partners in the life of this institution.

I share the joy and pride of everyone associated with the achievements of AKU's 241 new graduates. You enter the world as nurses and physicians, researchers and educators, with the University's and my highest expectations that you will contribute to your societies as professional givers of health care and solace, and of educational skills and aspirations, but also as intelligent and wise voices in the communities you serve. This is a time that will call for the very best of truly educated minds: your skills and specialised knowledge, but also your patience and tolerance. Above all, it will call for your understanding. May you bring reason, and hope to all whom you touch in your professional and personal lives, and may you find your work deeply rewarding.

The Aga Khan University is now 20 years old, but its aspirations were formed in the 1970s - nearly a generation ago. Some ten years ago, the Chancellor's Commission re-examined the University's goals and intentions that were set down in the Harvard Report of 1983 and found them to be no less salient. The Commission strongly reaffirmed AKU's commitment to be, in its words, an "open, Muslim university, devoted to free inquiry of distinction, quality and international character, preparing its students for constructive, worthwhile and responsible roles in society".

There were questions in AKU's early years about the timeliness and priority of a university, in an environment in which poverty and illiteracy – as we knew only too well – were dauntingly high. Would a new university and its university hospital merely benefit well-prepared students and well-off patients, replicating existing social divisions? It is only in the last few years that new voices, such as the World Bank's, have noted the world's "knowledge revolution" in which it is not so much factories, land and machinery that now drive the world economy but the knowledge, skills and resourcefulness of people. All societies, it has become clear, must invest in higher education for their talented men and women or risk being relegated to subordinate, vulnerable positions in the world.

The feelings of the subordination of people – that they are victims of an economic or cultural globalization in which they cannot be full partners but from which they cannot remain apart – these feelings fuel some of the most potent, destructive forces at play in our world today. The sense of vulnerability is especially powerful in parts of the Muslim world, which is itself heir to one of the greatest civilisations the world has known, but which also has inherited from history, not of its making, some of the worst and longest conflicts of the last 100 years, those of the Middle East and Kashmir. When people of a distinctive faith or culture feel economically powerless, or inherit clear injustice from which they cannot escape, or find their traditions and values engulfed culturally, and their societies maligned as bleak and unjust, some amongst them can too readily become vulnerable. They risk becoming the victims of those who would gain power by perverting an open, fluid, pluralistic tradition of thought, and belief, into something closed, and insular.

It would be wrong to see this as the future of the Ummah. There are many today across the Muslim world who know their history and deeply value their heritage, but who are also keenly sensitive to the radically altered conditions of the modern world. They realise, too, how erroneous and unreasonable it is to believe that there is an unbridgeable divide between their heritage and the modern world. There is clearly a need to mitigate not what is a "clash of civilisations" but a "clash of ignorance" where peoples of different faiths or cultural traditions, are so ignorant of each others that they are unable to find a common language with which to communicate. Those with an educated and enlightened approach – amongst whom I can count our graduates – are of the firm and sincere conviction that their societies can benefit from modernity while remaining true to tradition. But they will bring to our world more than that: they will be the bridge which can eliminate forever today's dangerous clash of ignorance.

It is especially at times when ignorance, conflict and apprehension, are so rife, that universities, in both the Muslim world and in the West, have a greater obligation to promote intellectual openness and tolerance, and to create increased cultural understanding. Muslim universities, however, have a unique responsibility: to engender in their societies a new confidence. It must be a confidence based on intellectual excellence, but also on a refreshed and enlightened appreciation of the scientific, linguistic, artistic and religious traditions that underpin and give such global value to our own Muslim civilisations – even though it may be ignored or not understood by parts of the Ummah itself.

In the 20 years since the granting of its charter, the AKU has made a good beginning.

The School of Nursing in Pakistan and Eastern Africa have become known internationally for the professional competence of their graduates and the value to Asia and Africa of their curricula and pedagogy. I am delighted that today we award the first postgraduate diplomas to two graduates of the Masters programme in Nursing. As the president has said this is the first time in Pakistan that postgraduate degrees in Nursing have been offered and I view it as a major achievement not only for the nursing profession but for higher education for women in Pakistan and the Muslim world.

Graduates of the Medical College have established the reputation of their scientific and clinical preparations in residencies in excellent teaching hospitals around the world.

Medical College faculty members have proven themselves to be talented instructors and clinicians of the highest standards in their respective specialisations at the University Hospital.

The Hospital itself is now certified to be meeting stringent international standards of care. It continues to respond swiftly to major emergencies in Karachi. And I am especially pleased that its outreach services in Pakistan, in such areas as family medicine, home physiotherapy and laboratory tests, will by the end of the year have treated some two million patients.

The Institute for Educational Development, helped greatly by grants from the international community, is revitalising teaching and curricular improvement in schools in Pakistan, in Central Asia, the Middle East and Eastern Africa. It is working hard to develop research based educational policymaking.

I do not minimise these achievements, nor do I ignore the importance of the University's continuing investment in its buildings, laboratories, instrumentation and precious faculty resources, when I say that AKU now has the strength and the duty to tackle an array of new challenges. Most were foreseen by AKU earliest planners, but the perils and voids of understanding I have suggested give them particular urgency now.

First the university must continue to expand its programmes of research. The true sign of maturity and excellence in a university is its ability to contribute to the knowledge of mankind, in its own society and beyond. It is equally essential that its faculty be challenged, as a matter of university policy, to expand the boundaries of human knowledge. Any vestige of dependence is cast off, any suspicion of a young scientist or scholar that he or she may sacrifice intellectual excitement by leaving the West is allayed, when a university becomes known for generating new ideas, making new discoveries and influencing events.

Some of this research will be in advanced realms of the medical sciences, for AKU, and Pakistan, must be part of the international edifice of inquiry in such fields as microbiology and biochemistry that will contribute much to the quality of human life in the coming century. But, because this is AKU, such work will usually be targeted, like the genetic research mentioned by the President, in an area, such as hypertension, of great concern to the people of Pakistan.

Much AKU research, however, will focus on pressing issues of public policy. This naturally follows the precepts of Islam, that the scientific application of reason, the building of society and the refining of human aspirations and ethics should always reinforce one another. The University – and notably the Department of Community Health Sciences – is already developing strength in applied research. This has enabled it to develop very productive relations between AKU scholars and scientists and provincial, federal and aid agency policy makers in such fields as nutrition, educational testing, maternal and child health, immunization strategies and vaccine development and epidemiology.

So important is this growing research capacity and informed discourse with policy makers, that the University must strengthen its public policy commitment. Large problem areas, for human development, and bio-ethics, to economic growth, and human settlements, desperately need systematic thought and information, and, whether through an Institute of Public Policy, or through policy units in existing departments, or even fully developed new faculties, AKU will pledge its energies and imagination to advancing effective public policy.

The second new emphasis of AKU that I would mention will gradually and beneficially change its nature: internationalisation. By the terms of its charter, AKU is to be an international university, with programs, projects and even institutes and campuses in other countries that have the desire, capacity and collegial spirit for partnership. The times I have described make these partnerships especially valuable today, and over time they will broaden and greatly strengthen the University.

AKU has made a good beginning in East Africa. In collaboration with Aga Khan Hospitals and Health Services, the School of Nursing has established Advanced Nursing Programs, as the President has indicated, in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania with the encouragement of their governments. I should emphasise to you that this is the first time in history of medical education in Eastern Africa that a private sector network of institutions is offering medical degrees to the peoples of Eastern Africa. Postgraduate medical education for physicians, assisted by our medical College, will soon follow in these countries. In the field of education, AKU will soon establish in East Africa a new Institute for Educational Development with its model, tested for a decade in Pakistan, of Professional Development Centres for teacher-improvement and curriculum-development. They will work both with national schools and with the first Aga Khan Schools of Excellence, private boarding schools of international quality that are now being established in East Africa. The objective of these schools is to enable means-blind, merit-based access to educational and extracurricular facilities of the highest international standards with multilingual curricula based on the



International Baccalaureate programme. There will inshallah eventually be up to 21 such Schools of Excellence in numerous countries in Africa, and Central Asia and South Asia. Students and faculty will be encouraged to live and learn from all that this multinational network of schools can offer, circulating extensively within it. New generations of teachers and graduates with multilingual competencies and a new understanding of human pluralism should emerge. Some of these men and women will return to educate at AKU's IED here in Pakistan, the future one to be created in East Africa and to teach at the Professional Development Centres. Hopefully this will result in a significant enhancement of the professional standing and strength of teachers in Asia and Africa. In due course, it is possible to imagine a full, comprehensive AKU campus in East Africa with strengths in educational development, health sciences education, and public policy.

The University is also now working in Afghanistan, where the School of Nursing is helping increase the capacities of the Intermediate Medical Education Institutes of which there are six; in Syria, where we see the beginnings of productive work with the Ministry of Education; and in Central Asia with the University of Central Asia recently established by an international treaty between the Ismaili Imamat and the governments of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan.

I strongly believe that, as these international associations increase, it will become clear that, although AKU's immediate goal is to provide assistance, its long-term goal is not mere extension of its existing skills, but the enhancement of its core purposes with partners of equal strength in different cultural settings. When this happens, AKU will be a most exciting innovation: a genuinely international, inter-cultural university, exchanging students and faculty among campuses that share a common goal of intellectual excellence.

My third aspiration is that AKU now fulfil its mission to become a comprehensive university and a centre of liberal study of Muslim civilizations. Muslim scholars in South and Central Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa are researching, publishing and discussing far too few books on Muslim history, architecture, city planning, art, philosophy, economics and languages and literatures. There is too little public sustenance for, and debate about, contemporary Muslim architecture and literature – and relatively little of the literary, cinematic and music talent from Turkey, Egypt and Iran that is now beginning to be recognized. The consequences are an intelligentsia – and a younger, successor generation – that is intellectually unchallenged and culturally undernourished, and a one-way flow of scholarship and popular culture from the West, which, in turn, receives all too little that is creative and interpretative, scholarly and artistic, from the Muslim world.

In the coming decade, I believe AKU can help, less to fill a void than to become a magnet and a concentration for Muslim scholars who are vividly engaged in a broad range of humanistic studies. AKU's Institute of the Study of Muslim Civilizations, in London, is making a beginning. It is assembling scholars from around the Arabic, Farsi and Urdu-speaking parts of the Muslim world in the fields of philosophy, history and other disciplines. Through public seminars and research monographs on a variety of topics –



ethics, ecology, historiography, scholarly traditions, and dimensions of Muslim identity – they will develop and test the curriculum of an MA in Muslim Civilizations that will be of value to the liberal professions including diplomats, teachers, business people, publishers and journalists, civil servants and NGO professionals.

The hub of this scholarly venture will be the AKU's new Faculty of Arts and Sciences, which will be well under way in the present decade. The Faculty will establish a residential campus on 600 acres of land that the University has purchased to the north east of Karachi. In its first phase it will have 1400-1500 undergraduates and some 100 post-graduate students. Undergraduates will experience rigorous (*aside to the faculty*) -- I hope you are listening – rigorous pedagogy, in English, and receive education in the sciences, economics and information technology. But they will also with equal rigor, be expected to master a broad core curriculum that engages them in world history, in the study of one or more Asian languages and in the strong foundation courses on the elements of Muslim civilizations, on South Asian history and culture, and on the history of the Persian speaking world. They will also (*aside to the faculty*) -- and I hope you are still listening—perform summer service and research projects in rural and urban areas of their own societies.

Such interdisciplinary programs as Human Development, Government, Law and Public Policy, Human Settlements and Architecture will function at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and will prefigure eventual professional schools. Graduates of these programs will be qualified for further study, or employment, anywhere in the world or in Pakistan. The objective of the new undergraduate Faculty, however, is to equip young men and women from within and outside the Ummah, with the skills, ethical commitment and leadership qualities for their future careers wherever they choose. My great hope and prayer is that, in time to come, the Aga Khan University will be only one of hundreds of universities in the Muslim world that are on the frontiers of scientific and humanistic knowledge, radiating intelligence and confidence, research and graduates, into flourishing economies and progressive legal and political systems.

These aspirations I hold for the Aga Khan University but I also hold them for our new graduates. As with AKU, I hope you, our 2003 graduates, continue to be restless researchers and learners. I hope that you, like AKU, will, with broadened international and cultural horizons, recall the heritage of Muslim civilizations past, and discover that change and progress take time, but that they also require impatience!

Thank you.



## **Speech of His Highness the Aga Khan at the opening of Alltex EPZ Ltd**

19 December 2003, Athi River, Kenya

**“Rehabilitating economies arising out of civil conflict or internal turmoil has been a challenge we have undertaken in environments as varied as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Tajikistan and Uganda... Each of these initiatives has entailed important manpower development components, investment in technical and management training as well as a significant multiplier effect.”**

Your Excellency, President Mwai Kibaki,  
Honourable Minister for Industry, Mukisa Kituyi  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to begin my remarks this morning by thanking His Excellency, President Mwai Kibaki for accepting formally to open this new enterprise, Alltex. I also extend my warmest congratulations to the government and people of Kenya on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of Kenya's independence, celebrated a week ago. I have a vivid personal memory of being in Nairobi on the 12th December 1963, to witness that historic event. It is an anniversary, Your Excellency, that is proudly shared by Industrial Promotion Services (Kenya) Limited, the sponsor of the enterprise to be inaugurated today. For IPS, too, was born here in 1963 and has grown and matured with the nation whose private sector it had been conceived to help build.

Four decades on, it might be appropriate to pause and reflect on the purpose for establishing IPS and the other institutions that today comprise the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development or AKFED. First, however permit me to share with you a few thoughts about the Ismaili Imamat, the institution that represents the hereditary office that I hold, and its relevance to the creation of development institutions.

The Imamat is a Muslim institution with a history going back over 1400 years. As Imam of the Ismaili Muslims, I am to be concerned with the quality of life of the Community and those amongst whom it lives. Over many centuries and decades, that responsibility of the Imamat has entailed the creation of institutions to address issues of the quality of life of the time, and it today includes a number of non-governmental organisations, foundations and economic development agencies. The vast majority of the community now lives in countries of the developing world and the newly emerging nations of Central Asia. In these countries, the quality of life is determined by a number of different factors that are, in my view, not limited to the World Bank indicators on longevity, or health, or the economic welfare of an individual, or a community. To the Imamat the meaning of "quality of life" extends to the entire ethical and social context in which people live, and not only to their material well-being measured over generation after generation. Consequently, the Imamat's is a holistic vision of development, as is prescribed by the faith of Islam. It is about investing in people, in their pluralism, in their intellectual pursuit, and search for new and useful knowledge, just as much as in material resources. But it is also about investing with a social conscience inspired by the ethics of Islam. It is work that benefits all, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality or background. Does the Holy Quran not say in one of the most inspiring references to mankind, that Allah has created all mankind from one soul?

Today, this vision is implemented by institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network. Our non-profit agencies include the Aga Khan Foundation, the Aga Khan Education Services, the Aga Khan Health Services and the Aga Khan Planning and Building Services. Their mandate is social development covering schools, health centres, rural support, water and sanitation programmes and the enhancement of civil society organisations. The initiatives of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, another non-profit agency, include promoting and teaching architecture, revitalising historic spaces, and even traditional music, and developing educational curricula. These non-profit agencies are all about investing in people. Our higher educational institutions, the Aga Khan University and the University of

Central Asia, which hope to help mould some of the most talented in future generations, will do so most competently by investing in research. Finally, it is the Network's for-profit agency, AKFED, that focuses on investing in material resources. The most important feature of these organisations, however, is that they share a vision, they work together, they create opportunity and they are inscribed in a single ethical framework.

AKFED, the entity that oversees and invests in projects such as Alltex, is therefore neither a charitable foundation, nor a vehicle for the personal wealth of the Ismaili Imam of the time. It is a for-profit, international development agency that, because of its institutional background and social conscience, invests in countries, sectors and projects, on criteria far different from those of a straightforward commercial investor. Investment decisions are based more on the prospects for better lives for the constituencies of people that will be impacted by the investments and their results rather than on bottom line profitability. AKFED does seek to generate profits, but they are entirely reinvested in future development initiatives.

AKFED's various entities, grouped broadly into industry, tourism, financial services, media services and aviation services, look to create economic capacity and opportunity in the developing world, particularly in those areas of the national or regional economies where they are lacking in scope, or scale, or both. This means creating new human and material resources for the future. It means adapting new technologies. It means developing new national and international markets. We have recognised these imperatives.

The approach of the Imamatus has always been to respond to the development challenges and priorities of the countries in which it is engaged. Naturally, these priorities differ significantly from one country to another, and from one region to another. It has often meant taking courageous but calculated steps to create opportunity in environments that are fragile and complex at the same time. For AKFED, this has frequently meant giving a lead where others might have feared to tread.

Rehabilitating economies arising out of civil conflict or internal turmoil has been a challenge we have undertaken in environments as varied as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Mozambique, Tajikistan and Uganda. Once again, however, it is not about short-term commercial gain, but long-term investment in areas of wide human and societal impact. In Afghanistan revitalising telecommunications through GSM telephony, and tourism through a landmark hotel is one example. Bringing light and power for education, industry and safety to Eastern Tajikistan through the Pamir 1 power station is another. Rural electrification in Western Uganda is yet another. Jump-starting local economies through innovative microfinance programmes and related institutions, as has been the case in Afghanistan, Mozambique and Tajikistan is yet a fourth. Each of these initiatives has entailed important manpower development components, investment in technical and management training as well as a significant multiplier effect.

Today's event evidences a consistent strategy by IPS to support national policies here in Kenya. Our earliest efforts involved creating industrial enterprises focused on import-substitution. Over the years, we have recognised the need to promote exports. Your Excellency spoke recently of the need for agricultural production to benefit from far greater local value-added input; this is precisely the approach taken by IPS in the processing of leather, horticultural produce, meat, and now textiles. And these purpose-built premises, house a factory designed to grow Kenya's capacity in the textile industry far into the future. We continue to support the government's privatisation policies in particular, their encouragement of private sector engagement in the provision of infrastructural services. The Tsavo Power Company, an IPS project, has set benchmarks in innovative financing and environmental compliance in the power sector. Here at the Alltex plant we are working with the Kenya Railway Authorities to facilitate the movement of goods in and out of the Athi River Export Processing Zone by adding a link/container terminal to the existing railway network.

For us, responding appropriately to economic opportunity means finding ways of positively impacting people's lives. Introducing valuable social services such as crèches of the kind we have here at Alltex, and programmes for HIV/AIDS sufferers, are amongst IPS's pioneering initiatives, here as elsewhere in Africa. Increasing employment opportunities for women who today account for over 40% of the employees of the IPS network has been another. Export-oriented industries in agro business, we have found, through our involvement over the past 15 years, can mean guaranteed, steady incomes and better prospects. AKFED is pleased to be able to contribute to improving the livelihoods of some 40,000 families in the agricultural sector here in Kenya.

Because of their limited resources countries of the developing world will need to be particularly effective in the way they use their resources, and one such direction now being taken by countries of both the industrialised world and the developing worlds is regionalisation.

The East African Community and the planned customs union to be agreed next month will certainly help widen markets and growth potential. The short-term support that the agreement envisages for industries in Uganda and Tanzania vis-à-vis Kenya can help refine and strengthen efficiencies in this country. We remain committed to the regional approach. AKFED sees valuable opportunities to continue to transfer knowledge between countries in the region and to take advantage of economies of scale as it expands its activities, particularly in the tourism sector.

I would urge however, that the East African countries widen the horizons of their regionalization endeavours to include all the key development institutions and resources of civil society. It is when that happens, and only when that happens, that the totality of the region's human resources will be fully and optimally mobilised, including the capacities of the NGOs, voluntary agencies and liberal professions.

From the point of view of the Aga Khan Development Network there is a lesson we have learnt, and a goal that we hold high. Training, researching, conceiving, planning, and advocating for development are all necessary, but demonstrating that successful and sustainable outcomes can actually be established is the real test. That is part of the rationale for the Aga Khan non-commercial delivery agencies, schools, hospitals and clinics, that is the rationale for our conservation, restoration and cultural initiatives, and that is certainly the rationale for the commercial companies established and operated by the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development.





## **Inauguration ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy Kilindini (Mombasa, Kenya)**

20 December 2003, Kilindini, Kenya

Your Excellency, President Mwai Kibaki,  
Honourable Minister for Education, Professor. George Saitoti,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

In the long history of the Ismaili Imamat's engagement with education, covering well over a 1000 years and numerous countries past and present, few days can have been as important as this one. It is therefore with the greatest happiness and gratitude that I thank His Excellency the President of Kenya, Mr. Mwai Kibaki for having accepted my invitation formally to open the Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa. Your Excellency, it is a source of very great joy to everyone associated with the Aga Khan Academies and their aspirations of becoming Centres of Educational Excellence to have you here.

I welcome the presence here today of the Ministers of Education from Kenya, the Hon. Professor George Saitoti;  
From the Democratic Republic of Congo, Minister of Higher Education Emile N'Goy



Kassongo and Educational Advisor to the President, Sangwa Ibiy;  
Minister Mer Ranjivason from Madagascar;  
Minister Mamadou Lamine Traore from Mali;  
Minister Alcido Nguenha from Mozambique;  
Minister Joseph Mungai from Tanzania;  
From Uganda, Minister Dr. Edward Khiddu Makubuya  
And from Zanzibar, Minister Suleiman Haroun Ali.

I would also like to note the presence of Prof. Mondo Kagonyera, Minister for General Duties, Uganda, and Mr. Kaidha Ordinaev the Deputy Minister of Education of Tajikistan, who have accepted my invitation to share this important day with us.

I also welcome key figures in education from other parts of the world who are present with us today, particularly Ms. Cathy Cox Secretary of State for the State of Georgia and her husband Mark Dehler, Ambassador Saidullah Khan Dehlavi, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Aga Khan University, Mrs. Barabara Chase the Principal of Phillips Academy Andover, Richard Larivière, Dean of the College of Liberal Studies University of Texas, and Mrs. Larivière, and Sam Cherribi Special Assistant to the Provost, Emory University, Atlanta Georgia.

The presence of all these honoured guests signifies an occasion of remarkable commitment to educating future generations in Africa, Central Asia and North America. I am honoured by your presence, and gratified by the commitment that you represent to improving the education that we all offer in our respective areas of the globe.

Everyone who joins in the establishment of a new school participates in an act of joyful hope and faith. A new school looks to a better world, for it exists to help students develop the character, intellect and mental resilience that will enable them to prosper in circumstances that we can only imagine. If it becomes a great school, it will educate its students not merely to be personally successful but also to use their gifts to build their communities and enhance the common good to levels beyond our dreams. In dedicating this school then, we dedicate the governing board, teaching and administrative staff and students to the most devoted and creative service to Kenya, to Africa, and to mankind.

In these few minutes I will underline what I believe to be the ideas and principles that will drive the Aga Khan Academy, Kilindini. I do so because I see it as the pioneer institution in what I hope will become in the next few years a network of schools of the highest international standards, from primary through higher secondary education, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia and South Asia. It is my hope that through joint ventures and curricular collaboration they will continually enhance the global content, so necessary today, in the standard education of schools in North America and Europe.

Before the AKDN and I could commit ourselves to such a high profile international academic endeavour, and one that will require significant human and material resources

over several decades, we needed to assure ourselves that the logic of the concept was solid. One of the factors which reinforced our decision was the deplorable state of much of higher education in the areas of the world where our network of new schools will be established. While the causes and consequences of this are well known, it is clear that the corrective processes which are now being put in place will take many years to bear fruit and that even as this occurs it is unlikely to expand the numbers of young men and women who will have access to higher quality education in the future.

Thus a very high percentage of secondary students will never have the possibility of proceeding to higher education in the years ahead. Probably not more than 15% of graduating students from the secondary schools of our areas will ever go to university. It is to the 85% of the students who currently end their education at secondary school, that the Aga Khan Academies aspire to offer new and significantly better opportunities.

Another consideration is the somber global circumstances in which we launch this new school.

In troubling ways we see a world more deeply divided, farther from the great ideals of tolerance and respect among nations, faiths and peoples that emerged from the devastation of World War II, than at any time since the end of the Colonial Era. We know too well the divisions on the continent of Africa, of rich from poor, of the gravely ill from the healthy and well fed, of ethnic and religious groups set against one another by fear and incomprehension, or greed and ambition, although they may for centuries have inhabited the same villages.

These conditions are dismaying, but I believe that this is also a time of great promise: that men and women of integrity, understanding and generosity of spirit can create the human institutions that will lay foundations of knowledge, trust and tolerance for bridging these terrible divides.

The effective world of the future is one of pluralism-that is to say, a world that comprehends and accepts differences. But such a world must be based on a new intellectual and spiritual equality and it must be educated to see in pluralism, opportunities for growth in all areas of human endeavour. History has shown in every part of the world and at every time, that the rejection of pluralism and the attempt to normalise the human race has always resulted in factionalism, oppressiveness and economic and social regression.

What is required to address this context?

First, and most obviously, the citizens of Africa and Asia must function intellectually at the highest international levels. Their writings and research must contribute to the global edifice of knowledge; their economists, lawyers, physicians and scientists must participate easily in professional and scientific societies around the world; and their publications,

inventions, and artistic and architectural creations must be of a quality to enrich the human experience. There are ample instances of this sort of performance to underline that human talent is not lacking - although too often the performer has emigrated from Africa or Asia.

Second, and perhaps less obviously, to participate confidently in a plural world, the citizens of Africa and Asia must have a deeper grasp of the cultures from which they spring. It is an enduring frustration for Asian students wishing to do advanced study, for example, in Urdu linguistics, or Ottoman bureaucracy, or Assyrian sculpture that they can only do this in Europe or North America. An African student wishing to study the history of the middle period of his continent will probably go to Paris or London.

This is not in itself wrong, but it is an anachronistic absurdity. Asian and African scholars and researchers-anthropologists, archeologists, art historians and musicologists-are gravely needed in enduring, productive concentrations to create the books and materials that will educate the children of Africa and Asia about their own cultural underpinnings.

The creation of broadly based scientific and intellectual communities, however, requires more than universities. Educators in the Aga Khan Development Network have worked in East Africa and South Asia for nearly a century, learning over the years in Aga Khan institutions from pre-school to university post-graduate levels, that education is a continuum. Confident attitudes to education, habits of learning, develop early in life. They are related to health and physical vitality, reinforced by steady, predictable environments of honesty, fairness and intellectual rigor.

It is on this base of experience that I took the decision to launch a new network of academic centers of excellence, with the aim of educating young men and women up to the highest international standards from primary through higher secondary education. It is my hope that, in due course, these schools will be located not only in Kenya, but in Tanzania, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mozambique, Madagascar, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, Syria and Mali.

These academic centers of excellence will over time become an alliance or system. Advanced students and teaching faculty will be able to move easily among the Schools, which will be residential, and which, while they meet national government requirements, will share their own high intellectual and pedagogical standards. Graduates, through their periods of study on other campuses, will have personally experienced different social, ethnic and religious environments. English will be their medium of instruction, but they will have become bilingual, and ideally trilingual, and, whether they attend the best universities in their own countries or those in the Western world, they will be equipped to lead in the professions in the societies in which they decide to establish themselves. Students in the Schools will gain basic education in the fields of study most needed for the development of their societies and home countries, but they will also have a strong grounding in the humanities. Most particularly, they will engage in study of the world's great civilizations, including those of the Muslim world.

I would underline three characteristics that will be indispensable to the Schools of Excellence.

The first is quality-of teachers, of students and of physical facilities. The Schools will adopt the International General Certificate of Secondary Education and the International Baccalaureate as their curriculum frameworks because this will align the Schools' academic programs with known, proven international standards and because these frameworks are sufficiently flexible to accommodate humanistic and social scientific materials developed in local environments. But the intellectual quality of a school depends not upon an abstract curricular design, but upon the quality of mind, classroom inventiveness and dedication of the teacher and upon the support given that teacher by parents and school leaders. A major goal of these academic centres of excellence therefore is to rejuvenate and restore the public standing of the profession of teaching. The minds of our children require teachers who are the intellectual equals to the best professionals in other fields such as law and medicine. We must not only compensate them appropriately and in accord with our expectations that they will grow professionally, but assure to them a quality of life which will both satisfy them, and encourage future generations of educated men and women to see in teaching a great and valid opportunity in life, and not a profession of last resort.

Students must be admitted because of their merit: their intellectual promise and evidence of their character and desire to learn. This means that the Schools must have the capacity to select them without regard to their families' ability to pay the school's fees. A talented, highly motivated student body is a joy to teachers, bringing out their best, and it will establish standards of performance and behavior for other students.

The buildings and spaces of a school, often the first exposure of young people to architecture and designed spaces, both educate the eye of students and reinforce the intellectual standards and cultural rootedness of the institution. The comments of parents about the architecture of the school at Kilindini illustrate gratifyingly their awareness of the connection between the intellectual and physical standards of a school.

The interplay among teachers, students and facilities of the first quality then are what create an excellent school, regardless of the vicissitudes of time and fashion.

Second, I would underline the importance to the academic centers of excellence of their connectedness to other intellectual resources. No school is an island. Over time, the Schools will become resources for one another, but today the Aga Khan Development Network makes it possible for this Aga Khan Academy to be a partner with three sources of ideas and program assistance.

For over a decade the Aga Khan University's Institute of Educational Development (IED), in association with the Universities of Oxford and Toronto, has been working with the schools of Pakistan, and more recently of East Africa, to foster great teaching. Through IED-related Professional Development Schools, teachers deepen their knowledge of their fields,

develop their teaching skills and learn the value of self-monitoring and self-criticism. This Aga Khan Academy, in association with the IED, will from its very inception, have at its core a unit to foster the development of teachers.

Recent history has highlighted the risk to the fields of general knowledge of the absence in education in the industrialized world of a knowledge of Islamic humanities. AKU recognized as early as the 1980's the consequences of this vacuum in general education and conceived an institute to address it. This led to the creation, in 2001, of the AKU Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations in London as a source of ideas, research and course materials. The Institute, in its short history, has begun to draw together scholars from around the Muslim world and beyond it to consider the great ethical, economic, artistic and social issues that Muslim societies have faced over the centuries.

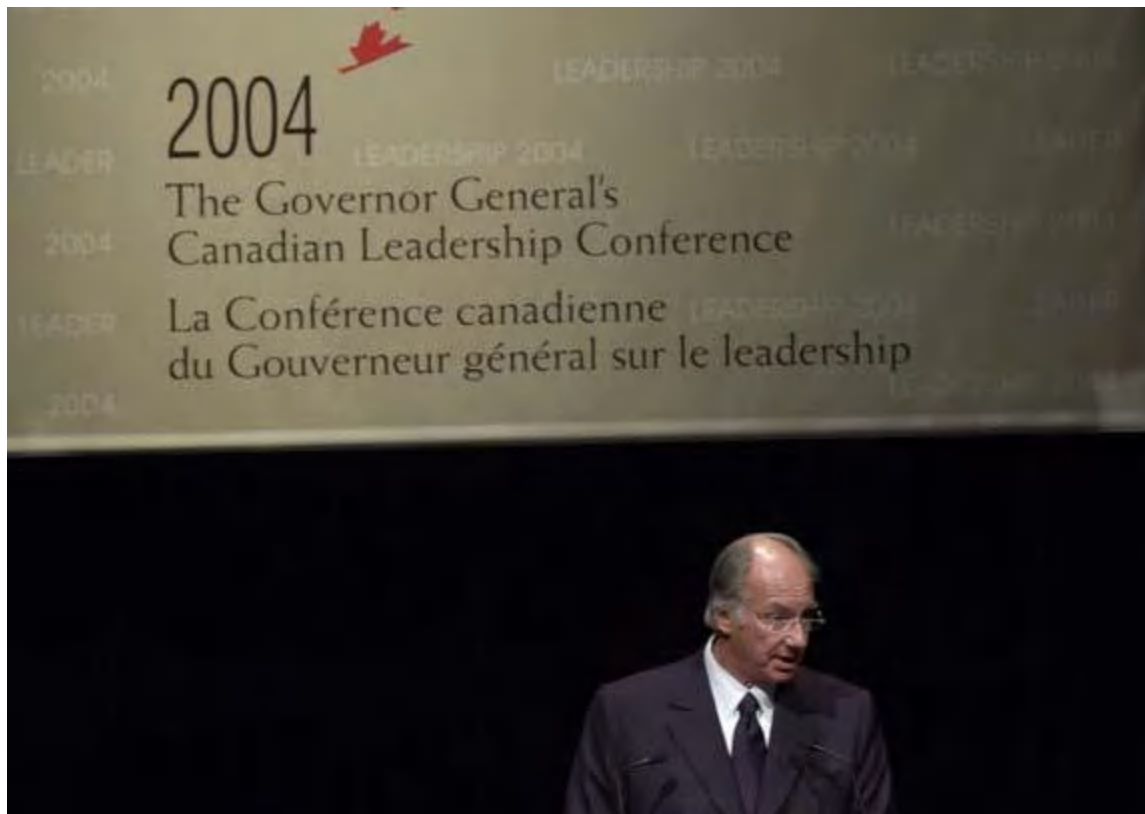
Finally, the Schools will be connected to other schools, with their own needs and aspirations. The AKDN's International Academic Partnership will provide the centres of academic excellence with access to the experience and curricular resources of such leading international schools as Philips Academy in the US represented here today by Mrs. Barabara Chase, and Salem in Germany. This in turn will enhance the ability of the Aga Khan Academies to make constructive connections with their neighboring government schools. As with all AKDN institutions, the academies must be vital players in national development efforts.

The third essential quality these academic centers of excellence need to guard and treasure is their integrity. Education is an intensely moral enterprise, which depends upon clear ethical rules. If children and their families can be confident that admission to the Academies is by open, understood criteria, that examinations are administered with integrity and that honors are awarded only for intellectual

merit, the Academies will attract the most able and honorable applicants. The environment of the school, if it deplores bullying, cheating and special treatment, will nurture growth, fearlessness and good character in its students. From such a school, graduates and faculty will be welcomed anywhere in the world, and the reputation of the school will be a light in its society.

As the young men and women from this Aga Khan Academy, and over time from its sister schools, grow and assume leadership in their societies, it is my hope that it will be members of this new generation who, driven by their own wide knowledge and inspiration, will change their societies; that they will gradually replace many of the external forces that appear, and sometimes seek, to control our destinies. These young men and women, I am sure, will become leaders in the governments and the institutions of civil society in their own countries, in international organizations and in all those institutions, academic, economic and artistic that create positive change in our world. It is my strongest hope that you who carry on the great mission of teaching them will take pride in the confident, resilient minds that you have nurtured.

Thank You.



## Leadership and Diversity Conference

19 May 2004, Gatineau, Canada

Your Excellency the Governor General,  
Excellencies,  
Conference Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank Your Excellency for inviting me to share some thoughts in this closing session of the Leadership and Diversity Conference. On this occasion, I would also like to thank Your Excellency and the Government of Canada for the warm welcome and the kindness and courtesies that have been extended to me.

In the course of the conference proceedings, you have had the good fortune of listening to people of high eminence and erudition, from Canada and abroad. I therefore seek your indulgence and generosity as I speak to you with much humility and no little apprehension!

I have not accepted to speak today about Canadians and Canada, because you have just completed a wide number of visits to different parts of your lovely country, and, as Canadians, you know a great deal more about her than I do. Where I feel I may have



something worthwhile to contribute to your discussions and reflections today deals with Canada and the developing world.

It is a joy and a privilege to address the young leaders of Canada who represent different walks of national life, as well as its social, cultural and regional diversity. I am particularly happy at this opportunity as you have been jointly exploring a critical aspect of the role of leadership: How the leadership—political and civil—can help sustain the moral and dynamic coherence in public life that Canada has so successfully constructed, predicated on the ethic of respect for human dignity. This coherence recognizes and builds on difference, enables a spirit of compromise and consensus in public and legislative policies, and marks out a healthy space for the role of civil society as a sound – indeed an essential - bulwark for democratic processes.

Canada has an experience of governance of which much of the world stands in dire need. It is a world of increasing dissension and conflict in which a significant contribution is the failure of different ethnic, tribal, religious, or social groups to search for, and agree upon, a common space for harmonious co-existence.

This situation of conflict and instability poses a grave risk for the future relationship between the industrialized world and the developing world. The polarizing and paralyzing Cold War, which impacted millions of people in the developing world, has gone. The new issue that demands the attention of the international community is the need to create stable states with self-sustainable economies and stable, inclusive forms of governance.

Much of the world's attention is periodically focused on the phenomenon of so-called failed states. But of the global threats that face us today, apart from nuclear war or HIV/AIDS, the most preoccupying is not failed states. It is the failure of democracy. The global picture at the beginning of the 21st century is a story of failed democracies in the Muslim world, in Latin America, in Eastern Europe and in sub-Saharan Africa.

A startling fact today is that nearly forty percent of UN member nations are failed democracies. The greatest risk to the West itself, and to its values, is therefore the accumulation of failed democracies. That in turn will cause deep under-currents of stress, if not conflict, among societies. It is essential, in the West's own interest, to admit to itself that democracy is as fragile as any other form of human governance.

It is essential that the question be asked, in every national situation and within each society, "if democracy is failing, why is this the case?" Every effort needs to be made to help correct the situation, rather than referring dismissively to failed states. To my knowledge, democracy can fail anywhere, at any time, in any society—as it has in several well-known and well-documented situations in Europe, as recently as the last 50 years. For it is self-evident, in Europe and across the globe, that the existence of political parties and elections do not alone produce stable governments or competent leadership.

Three concepts seem to me to be essential in creating, stabilizing and strengthening democracy around the world, including among the people of Africa and Asia with whom I have worked in the past. These concepts are meritocracy, pluralism and civil society. In particular, I will ask, what role can Canada play, drawing upon her national genius, in creating or enhancing these great underpinnings of democracy in the developing world?

A recent UN audit of democracy covering 18 Latin American countries reemphasizes the virtues of democracy in advancing human development; but it also warns that stagnant per capita incomes and growing inequality, in access to civil rights as well as income, are producing doubt, impatience and civil unrest. Thus, the report underlines a key concept that you will all know instinctively, and which my experience working in the developing world has illustrated, decade after decade: the primary, daily concern of peoples everywhere is their quality of life, which is intimately connected to their value systems. When it turns toward solutions, the report recognizes a crucial fact: “An important relationship exists between citizenship and organizations of civil society, which are major actors in the strengthening of democracy, in the oversight of government stewardship and in the development of pluralism.”

My interest in these themes of development and governance arises from my role as the hereditary spiritual leader—Imam—of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community. Culturally very diverse, the Ismailis are spread across the globe, mostly as a minority, in more than twenty-five countries, in South and Central Asia, the Middle East and Sub-Saharan Africa. In recent decades they have also established a substantial presence in Canada, the USA and Western Europe. Since succeeding to this office as the 49th Imam in 1957, I have been concerned with the development of the Ismailis and the broader societies in which they live. The engagement of the Imamate in development is guided by Islamic ethics, which bridge faith and society. It is on this premise that I established the Aga Khan Development Network. This network of agencies, known as the AKDN, has long been active in many areas of Asia and Africa to improve the quality of life of all who live there. These areas are home to some of the poorest and most diverse populations in the world.

Our long presence on the ground gives us an insight that confirms the UN’s detailed assessment in Latin America, which is that a democracy cannot function reasonably without two preconditions.

The first is a healthy, civil society. It is an essential bulwark that provides citizens with multiple channels through which to exercise effectively both their rights and duties of citizenship. Even at a very basic level, only a strong civil society can assure isolated rural populations, and the marginalized urban poor of a reasonable prospect of humane treatment, personal security, equity, the absence of discrimination, and access to opportunity.

The second precondition is pluralism. Pluralism means peoples of diverse backgrounds and interests, coming together in organizations of varying types and goals, for different kinds

and forms of creative expression, which are valuable and deserving of support by government and society as a whole.

The rejection of pluralism is pervasive across the globe and plays a significant role in breeding destructive conflicts. Examples are scattered across the world's map: in Asia, in the Middle East, in Africa, in Europe, in the Americas. No continent has been spared from the tragedies of death, of misery and of the persecution of minorities. Are such high-risk situations predictable? If the answer is, "Yes", then what can be done about them, to preempt the risk that the rejection of pluralism will become the spark that sets human conflict aflame? Is the onus not on leadership, in all parts of the world, to build a knowledge base about such situations and consider strategies for preventing them? For, I deeply believe that our collective conscience must accept that pluralism is no less important than human rights for ensuring peace, successful democracy and a better quality of life.

I am optimistic that much constructive work can be done, and I would cite one example—only one from the perspective of forty years of experience of agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network—in which the careful, patient development of institutions of civil society helped to create the capacity to manage and legitimize pluralism.

In Northern Pakistan, once one of the poorest areas on earth, our Network has been working for over twenty years, with CIDA as our lead partner. Isolated and bypassed rural communities of different ethnic and religious backgrounds—Shia, Sunni and non-Muslim—struggled to eke out a meager living, farming small holdings in the harsh environment of this mountain desert ecosystem. Relations among the communities were often hostile. The challenge for the Network was to create sustainable, inclusive processes of development in which diverse communities could participate together and seek joint solutions to common problems.

To summarize two decades of work in Northern Pakistan: over 3,900 village based organizations, comprising a mix of broad-based representations and interest-specific groups in such fields as women's initiatives, water usage, and savings and credit were established. The quality of life of 1.3 million people living in a rural environment, representative of the majority of the population of Asia and Africa, has been dramatically improved. Per capita income has increased by 300%, savings have soared, and there have been marked improvements in male and female education, primary health, housing, sanitation and cultural awareness. Former antagonists have debated and worked together to create new programs and social structures in Northern Pakistan, and more recently in Tajikistan. Consensus around hope in the future has replaced conflict born of despair and memories of the past.

This micro experiment with grass roots democracy, civil society and pluralism has also underlined for everyone involved the enormous importance of competence and advancement by merit. Inherent in the notion of merit is the idea of equality of access to opportunities. Citizens who possess potential, whatever the community to which they

belong, can only realize their potential if they have access to good education, good health and prospects to advance through enterprise. Without this equity, merit does not develop.

A secure pluralistic society requires communities that are educated and confident both in the identity and depth of their own traditions and in those of their neighbours.

Democracies must be educated if they are to express themselves competently, and their electorates are to reach informed opinions about the great issues at stake. Perhaps the greatest obstacle to pluralism and democracy, however, is the lacuna in the general education of the populations involved.

A dramatic illustration is the uninformed speculation about conflict between the Muslim world and others. The clash, if there is such a broad civilizational collision, is not of cultures but of ignorance. How many leaders even in the West, whether in politics, the media or other professions which in their own ways shape public opinion, grow up aware that the historic root cause of the conflict in the Middle East was an outcome of the First World War? Or that the tragedy that is Kashmir is an unresolved colonial legacy, and that neither had anything to do with the faith of Islam? To what extent is the public aware that the deployment of Afghanistan as a proxy by both sides in the Cold War, is a major factor in her recent history of tragic woes? These matters, which now touch the lives of all world citizens, are simply not addressed at any level of general education in most Western countries.

Humanities curricula in many educational institutions in the West, rarely feature great Muslim philosophers, scientists, astronomers and writers of the classical age of Islam, such as Avicenna, Farabi and al-Kindi, Nasir Khusraw and Tusi. This lack of knowledge and appreciation of the civilizations of the Muslim world is a major factor that colors media stereotypes, by concentrating on political hotspots in the Muslim world, and referring to organisations as terrorist and Islamic first, and only obliquely, if at all, to their national origins or political goals.

No wonder that the bogey of Islam as a monolith, irreconcilable to the values of the West or, worse, as a seedbed of violence, lurks behind its depiction as being both opposed to, and incapable of, pluralism. This image flies directly in the face of the respect that Islam's cherished scripture confers upon believers in monotheistic traditions, calling upon Muslims to engage with them in the finest manner, and with wisdom. History is replete with illustrations where Muslims have entrusted their most treasured possessions, even members of their families, to the care of Christians. Muslim willingness to learn from Jewish erudition in medicine, statecraft and other realms of knowledge, is well exemplified by the place of honour accorded Jewish scholars at the court of the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt.

Intellectual honesty and greater knowledge are essential if current explosive situations are to be understood as inherited conflicts and—rather than being specific to the Muslim world—driven by ethnic and demographic difference, economic inequity and unresolved

political situations. An excellent example of what is needed, to shape national sentiments as well as guide foreign policy in this perilous time, is the recent Parliamentary committee report entitled, "Exploring Canada's Relations with the Countries of the Muslim World". I wish there were time to comment on a number of the observations of the report, but in its very opening sentence, which begins, "The dynamic complexity and diversity of the Muslim world...." the report sets the tone of balance and wisdom that suffuse its recommendations. It emphasizes history, education, and the urgent need for communication and general knowledge in observing that, "Understanding Islamic influences on government and state policies, on social and economic relations, cultural norms, individual and group rights and the like, necessarily goes far beyond the question of the extreme, violent-minority edges of Islamist activity". I warmly hope that the resources can be found to bring to life the constructive recommendations of this fine report, as the need for such rational voices is great.

It is urgent that the West gain a better understanding of the Islamic world, which, as the Parliamentary report notes, is a hugely diverse collectivity of civilizations that has developed, and continues to evolve, in response to multiple societal influences—agricultural and rural, commercial and urban, scientific and philosophical, literary and political. Just like other great traditions, the Islamic world cannot be understood only by its faith, but as a total picture whose history is closely tied to that of the Judeo-Christian world.

In this situation of a conflict of ignorance between the Muslim world and the West, an example of Canada's bridging is the support given by CIDA and McMaster to the Aga Khan University School of Nursing. Not only did this partnership transform nursing education, and the nursing profession, in Pakistan, but is also now having a significant impact in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Afghanistan and Syria by offering women in these countries new and respected professional opportunities.

Canada is, in an almost unique position to broaden the scope of her engagement with the developing world by sharing very widely her experience in humane governance to support pluralism, the development of civil society, and meritocratic premises for action. For instance, incipient, home-grown civil society institutions in developing countries need expert assistance to strengthen their capacities for management, programme design and implementation, fund raising, self-study and evaluation. They require help in such other areas as defining answerability and the criteria that measure success, as well as in identifying how a sector can be financed and sustained. I am happy to note that this is the declared intention of your Government. In the words of Prime Minister Paul Martin speaking in the House of Commons: "One of the distinct ways in which Canada can help developing nations is to provide the expertise and experience of Canadians in justice, in federalism, in pluralist democracy".

In living through her history and confronting its challenges, Canada has established strong institutions to sustain her democracy, the cornerstone of which is your multi-faceted, robust civil society. Canada offers the world an example of meshing, and thereby fortifying,

civil society with merit from all segments of its population. You are, hence, able to harness the best from different groups because your civil society is not bound by a specific language or race or religion.

My intention is not to embarrass you with too rosy a picture of the Canadian mosaic as if it were free of all tension. But you have the experience, an infrastructure grounded in wisdom, and the moral wherewithal to be able to handle challenges to your social and political fabric.

The Ismaili Imamat strives to ensure that people live in countries where threat to democracy is minimal and seeks to draw on the experience of established democracies, which have a vibrant civil society, are sensitive to cultural difference and are effective in improving the quality of life of their citizenry. Canada is a prime example of such a country. It is for this reason that the Aga Khan Development Network is establishing, in Ottawa, what is to be known as The Global Centre for Pluralism.

This secular, non-denominational Centre will engage in education and research and will also examine the experience of pluralism in practice. Drawing on Canadian expertise, and working closely with governments, academia and civil society, the Centre will seek to foster enabling legislative and policy environments. Its particular emphasis will be on strengthening indigenous capacity for research and policy analysis on pluralism, while also offering educational, professional development and public awareness programmes.

Ladies and Gentlemen: There are compelling reasons, as I have tried to articulate, why Canada can and should take the lead in investing to safeguard and enhance pluralism. We inhabit an overcrowded planet with shrinking resources, yet we share a common destiny. A weakness or pain in one corner has the tendency, rather rapidly, to transmit itself across the globe. Instability is infectious! But so is hope! It is for you - the leaders of today and tomorrow - to carry the torch of that hope and help to share the gift of pluralism.

Thank you.





## Convocation of the University of Toronto's Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

18 June 2004, Toronto, Canada

Chancellor Poy,  
President Birgeneau,  
Dean Gaskell,  
Members of the Governing Council,  
Faculty,  
Students and Parents,  
Fellow Graduates,

I thank you for your warm welcome, and am deeply moved by the honour that this renowned institution of learning has done of conferring upon me the degree of Doctor of Laws, honoris causa. I accept this award with much happiness, but also a profound sense of humility, cognisant that many men and women, of higher distinction and more notable achievements, are also being recognised, joining an illustrious line of previous recipients.

But, above all, today's event belongs to you, the graduands of OISE, as you contemplate the nature of the world which awaits your engagement. From your choice of education as the area of knowledge of greatest interest to you, there are, at least, three questions which I



assume you will apply to most of your future endeavours. First, what will future generations of educated people in Canada and around the world need to know to earn for themselves, and their families, honourable livelihoods? Secondly, what will future generations need to know to make our world a better place? And third, what can you, as Canadians, do to play an optimised world role?

In 1957, the year I became Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, the Nobel Peace Prize winner was a 60 year-old statesman who, two years earlier, in a book entitled *Democracy in World Politics*, had written:

" We are now emerging into an age when different civilisations will have to learn to live side by side in peaceful interchange, learning from each other, studying each other's history and ideals, art and culture, mutually enriching each other's lives. The only alternative in this overcrowded little world, is misunderstanding, tension, clash, and catastrophe."

The prescient writer, whom some of you will recognise as a distinguished alumnus and former teacher at this great institution, went on to lead this country as its fourteenth Prime Minister: Lester B. Pearson.

Four weeks ago, speaking at the Leadership and Diversity Conference in Ottawa, I noted that some 40% of the countries in the United Nations are failed democracies, and the U.N.'s own experience pointing to the general weak state of civil society in these countries as one of the major causes for this widespread failure. What is civil society? Why is it so essential to the good health of any modern state? And what is the role of education in shaping and enriching civil society?

The World Bank uses the term to refer to a wide array of organisations that have a presence in public life but are not affiliated to the state. They function on a not-for-profit basis to express the interests and values of their members and others, based on ethical, cultural, political, scientific, religious or philanthropic considerations. In this sense, civil society organisations are multifarious: from community and indigenous groups through faith-based and charitable organisations, to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), labour unions, professional associations and foundations.

But there is a broader definition that holds that civil society embraces an even wider diversity of spaces, actors and institutional forms that vary in their degree of formality, autonomy and power. Besides the Bank's categories, these spaces are populated by such organisations as village and women's groups, neighbourhood self-help groups, social movements, business associations, microcredit organisations, coalitions and advocacy groups.

In an era of rising expectations and unmet needs, both in the developed, but much more in the developing world, civil society institutions play an essential role in the provision of social services, the protection of the marginalised and the delivery of development

programmes. The positive action of these civil society initiatives is especially critical where governments are weak or non-performing, as in situations of failed democracies or post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction.

Whatever definition is used, a quality civil society is independent of government, pluralist and led by merit-based educated leadership. Not only does Canadian civil society eminently meet these three criteria of being non-governmental pluralist and merit-led, I know of no country where civil society is more empathetic with the needs of civil society of the countries of Africa and Asia in which I have been working for some 45 years. I have, therefore, asked myself, not once, but hundreds of times, if and how Canadian civil society can mobilise its resources more vigorously to help improve the quality of life of the peoples of Africa and Asia.

Asked in these terms, the issue is that of sharing the many forms of human knowledge and experience that create and then sustain a civil society of quality, rather than the massive injection of monetary resources. There are, however, two obvious pre-conditions: First, that the governments and peoples of the developing world wish for, and welcome, the help being offered. This requires an enabling social, legal and fiscal environment. Secondly, that Canadian institutions and human resources must see in their willingness to help, real enrichment in life's purpose.

Assuming these preconditions are met, you may ask how this wide civil society partnership for development can occur in practice. There are innumerable forms which have achieved genuine successes in the past. These include: the sharing of best practices, the twinning of institutions, quality improvement in delivery of healthcare and education, secondment of leadership such as school head teachers or university professors in specialised fields, strengthening civil society institutions in forward programming and performance measurement, continuing education for the most marginalised professions such as nursing or journalism, teaching best practice in the not-for-profit and charity field. The opportunities for partnership are many. But they are not being realised, or if they are, it is at a level infinitely below the needs, and dramatically below the potential for change.

This is the nature of the true regime change we need, where the civil society of the industrialised world gives wide and encompassing support to that of the developing world.

True regime change occurs when liberty is guaranteed by a people free to create or support institutions of their own choosing. True regime change occurs when that strength and that freedom are defined by the depth, breadth and quality of education shared across the society in question.

Partnerships between the developed and developing worlds can and do work. Moreover, they demonstrate how essential universities and their lifeblood -- you their graduates -- are to civil society.

Today, in Pakistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tanzania, at the forefront of curricular change and new teaching technologies, are young men and women who, like yourselves, have studied at OISE. They are graduates of the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development, which was established with the help of the Universities of Toronto and Oxford. Today, also, the Aga Khan University is collaborating with international research institutions in the developed world in areas ranging from cancer and HIV/AIDS to cardiovascular disease, perinatal infection and hypertension. These collaborations, across national, cultural, linguistic, religious and ethnic boundaries are serving to find ways of preserving life.

At the nascent University of Central Asia, we are researching and addressing the challenges of mountain societies, drawing on a multiplicity of traditions to create stability and prosperity in remote yet geopolitically sensitive regions of the world -- preserving not just life, but societies, cultures and, perhaps, nations.

Today, you are graduating from one of Canada's greatest universities in a field of study that is of paramount importance. I am speaking to you as a person whose roots and institutional engagement are in the developing world; as a Muslim; as someone seeking to engage with, and improve, the lives of the millions of people who live in Asia and Africa.

It is against this background that I invite you -- indeed, I urge you -- to reflect deeply on the needs of our world today. I am sure you will wish to seize the opportunities for sharing your knowledge with future generations here in Canada, but should you wish it, the reach of your knowledge can go far beyond your shores, and will be deeply welcomed. Because civil society is so critical to the quality of life, and the pace of progress, and because it finds expression in so many pluralist forms and spaces, I am convinced that the future before you, in this global environment we share, offers you a remarkable spectrum of opportunities.



## Foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy

25 June 2004, Maputo, Mozambique

Your Excellency President Chissano  
Your Excellency the President of the Assembly  
Your Excellency the Prime Minister  
Honourable Ministers  
Honourable Mayor  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

What event could express a greater aspiration than laying the foundation of a school that hopes to inspire its students to explore horizons beyond their own, develop their mental resilience and discover the bonds of mutuality that cut across differences of culture, ethnicity, religion or background?

I am, therefore, most happy and grateful that His Excellency President Chissano has accepted our invitation to lay the foundation stone of the Aga Khan Academy, Maputo, here in the city of Matola.

Your Excellency, you have been a most staunch supporter of the Academy and of the spirit behind its concept. Your presence with us today is, therefore, a source of great happiness to everyone associated with the Aga Khan Academies and what they aspire to achieve in the service of society.

I also welcome the presence of the Hon. Mrs. Luisa Diogo, Prime Minister and Minister for Planning and Finance, and her cabinet colleagues, the Hon. Dr. Leonardo Simao, Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Hon. Mr. Alcidio Nguenha, Minister for Education. I am also grateful to the Hon. Carlos Tembe, Mayor of Matola, for his presence here today.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge your vital support and consistent encouragement. The Aga Khan Development Network and I are also most grateful to the Government of Mozambique for its continued collaboration in the planning and development of the Academy.

For me, it is a special honour and pleasure to be in Mozambique at the time of her Independence anniversary celebrations. On this occasion, I extend my good wishes and heartiest congratulations to the people of Mozambique with whom the Ismaili Imamat and Community enjoy a long history of warmth and friendship. Our shared history goes back many decades to the middle years of the 19th century when Ismaili Muslims first began to settle along the eastern coast of Africa.

This continent has experienced a painful history of crises and conflicts. Mozambique herself has had her own share of trauma from which the country emerged, twelve years ago, united in determination to apply her reserves of energy and creativity to the challenge of reconstruction. Indeed, under President Chissano's leadership, Mozambique is seen as one of the most open-minded, pragmatic and wisely-guided models of post-conflict reconstruction in the world.

This pragmatism and open-mindedness underlines the importance of specialist expertise in approaching the challenges of development. Post-colonial national economic and political philosophies, often linked to the Cold War, sought to indoctrinate, rather than educate, just as much in the former Soviet Union as in many developing countries of Africa and Asia.

The developing world now increasingly recognises that there are areas of national life, particularly economics and education, which require the dedicated leadership of professional specialists who are not burdened by the baggage of dogma. The economic challenges now faced by the former Soviet Union, and many developing countries, are a salutary warning against entrusting the direction of national economies to political ideologues rather than to professional economists.

After Independence, education in the developing world was often used to seek to foster a greater sense of national identity, with a particular tendency to focus on the promotion of

national languages. But when this turned exclusionary, the resulting insularity became a severe handicap. How can one educate students for a global environment in a language that has no international reach? Lessons have been learned. Today, whilst the use of national languages has, in many cases, been retained at the primary level, increasingly, educational systems in developing countries provide for the teaching and use of English at the secondary and higher levels, so that students are able to access the world and its opportunities.

The triumph of pragmatism and professional expertise over ideology is now an accepted wisdom in the realm of education. A lifelong and necessary experience, education is, by common consensus, a powerful driving force in any strategy for national development.

Yet, given insufficient national resources and the vagaries of aid-flows, quality education remains a daunting challenge for most developing countries. Large class sizes, and the poor quality of teaching in schools, all too frequently reflect the loss of standards throughout national education systems including, in particular, in universities.

Fortunately, governments everywhere are now beginning to appreciate the contribution of not-for-profit private providers of social services to address the challenges of rising expectations that compound historically unmet needs. In this context, international partnerships in education are increasingly seen as vehicles for introducing best practices, tried and tested. Such partnerships also expand the pool of much needed resources to invest in quality, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels, so that educational institutions are able to form the best minds in their own countries.

The conviction that home-grown intellectual leadership of exceptional calibre is the best driver of a society's destiny, underpins the Ismaili Imam's endeavour to create catalytic centres of educational excellence. The first of these opened last December in Mombasa, Kenya. The Aga Khan Academy in Maputo will be the second in a planned network of what I hope will be residential schools of the highest international standards, from primary through higher secondary education. In due course other academies will be located not only in Kenya and Mozambique but also in Tanzania, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Mali - and India, Pakistan, Bangladesh - and Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan - and Syria.

Adopting internationally proven but flexible curriculum frameworks, the residential schools will evolve over time into an integrated system through which advanced students and faculty will be required to study at other campuses, and to be exposed to different social, ethnic and cultural environments. Students will specialise in the fields of knowledge most required for the development of their own and their neighbouring societies, within the context of a broad and meaningful education. This will embrace the sciences and the humanities, including music and art, while the teaching of history and world civilisations will seek to portray, in a more balanced and comprehensive way, the world's heritage. For example, the humanities programme will include a study of Muslim civilisations, all too



often misrepresented or ignored, especially in the industrialised world. Corresponding to this global reach, the curriculum will include mastery of more than one language so that, while English will be the medium of instruction, the students will be encouraged to be bilingual, and perhaps trilingual. They will also excel in the use of modern information technologies to enable them to access the world's most sophisticated knowledge bases.

But above all, it is my hope that these schools will stimulate creativity, intellectual curiosity and honest inquiry so that their students can adapt and thrive in a world of rapid change; can make informed judgements on life's daily challenges, and place those judgements in an ethical framework.

The intellectual and moral quality of the Academies will therefore depend, not only on their curriculum design, but on the quality and dedication of their teachers. Teachers, in turn, must have the support of parents, school leaders and society itself. A major goal of the Academies is therefore to restore the public standing of the teaching profession so that future generations of educated men and women come to see in teaching a great, valid and rewarding opportunity in life. To sustain creative teachers in their desire for continuing self-improvement, the Academies will have in-built provisions to foster teacher development in association with the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development.

Committed to excellence, the Academies will only admit students on the basis of their merit, that is, their intellectual promise, evidence of character, and capability and desire to learn. The schools must – and will - therefore have the capacity to select students without regard to the ability of their families to pay the school fees.

The buildings and spaces of the Academies will seek to provide an aesthetically well conceived environment conducive to reflection, study and enjoyment within an appropriate cultural context.

No school can thrive in isolation. Over time, these Academies will become resources one for another, and, through the Aga Khan Development Network, benefit from the intellectual and programmatic resources of the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia. In addition, the Academies will have access to the experience and curricular resources of such leading international schools as Philips Academy in the United States and Salem in Germany which are associated with institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network in an International Academic Partnership.

Among history's great truths is that a society is only able to advance to newer horizons of greater promise when it overcomes insularity, and recognises strength in difference. Despite, therefore, the tensions and conflicts, which riddle our planet, the effective world of the future is one of pluralism, a world that comprehends, accepts and builds on diversity. The Academy in Maputo, like its counterparts elsewhere, will seek to demonstrate the instrumental role that education can and must play in building strong civil societies across



the developing world. It is institutions such as the one whose foundations we are laying today that will be a driving force for progress and betterment around the world.

The education that the Academies will offer will make the case for a pluralist worldview. It is one which values differences of outlook, ethnicity, and religion and culture, yes in the interest of justice and fairness, but also because a temperament receptive to pluralism helps creativity, curiosity and inquiry, to thrive in sharing the best of human knowledge and talent from whatever individual, or group, it originates.

A thousand years ago, my forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo. In the Islamic tradition, they viewed the discovery of knowledge as a way to understand, so as to serve better God's creation, to apply knowledge and reason to build society and shape human aspirations.

The Academies are, therefore, a continuing articulation of this vision, a statement of great hope in the power of good education, and an investment in the development of the best minds who will enable future generations to take charge of their own destinies.



## Annual Conference of German Ambassadors

06 September 2004, Berlin, Germany

Foreign Minister Fischer,  
Distinguished Ministers,  
Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Honourable Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is an honour to address men and women of eminence with great knowledge and insight about the state of the world. You can and do have the ability to shape its future direction for the better.

I will talk to you today about an issue that has been a critical focus for most of my working life: the process of social, cultural and economic development in many of the poorest regions of the world. In particular, I will attempt to go some way toward answering this fundamental question: what are the preconditions for developing countries to be transformed into peaceful and productive modern societies?

As I look at escalating tensions in the world, particularly the horrific events of recent days, I am convinced more than ever that neither “peaceful” nor “productive” modern societies will ever be achieved by short term responses composed in the midst of crisis. What I will propose to you today is that there are fundamental issues that must be addressed persistently, and over the long term, if we are to achieve the desired outcomes.

My views are presented from two perspectives. First, as the hereditary spiritual leader – Imam – of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community. Like the Muslim Ummah as a whole, the Ismailis are culturally diverse. They are settled across the globe as minorities in more than twenty-five countries. There are Ismaili communities in South and Central Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. In recent decades Ismailis have also established a substantial presence in Western Europe and North America through migration.

The second perspective is that of someone who has been engaged in human and economic development in many of the most fragile regions of the world for more than 45 years and whose roots and institutional commitments are there.

The engagement of the Imamate in development is guided by the ethics of Islam which bridge faith and society, a premise on which I established the Aga Khan Development Network, known as the AKDN. Its cultural social and economic development agencies seek to improve opportunities and living conditions of the weakest in society, without regard to their origin, gender or faith. We work with many partners, including scores of national and international agencies.

Several of my observations today apply to developing countries generally. But our greatest depth of experience is in countries with substantial or majority Muslim populations. Therefore my comments will make particular reference to matters as they affect the Muslim world, including Africa, Asia and the Near and Middle East.

I will begin by quoting from Minister Fischer’s remarks to the 40th Munich Conference on Security Policy this past February. He noted that efforts to foster peace and security must go far beyond security matters alone. He said, and I quote: “social and cultural modernisation issues, as well as democracy, the rule of law, women’s rights and good governance, are of almost even greater importance.”

Minister Fischer was referring specifically to dealing with the issue of terrorism. I certainly agree with his point about that. I also believe the issues he raises are of broad and permanent concern to the developing world. Even in parts of the developing world where terrorism is not an issue, improving the quality of life is critically dependent upon advances in the areas he identified.

I would like to focus today on what I believe are three essential pre-conditions for the successful transition of the poorest areas of the world into modern, peaceful societies. They are:

- First, stable and competent democratic governance;
- Second, an environment that respects and encourages pluralism;
- And third, a diverse and engaged civil society.

In my view, these must be critical components of any global development policy. Not only are they mutually reinforcing, they also permit developing societies to gradually become masters of the process and to make that process ultimately sustainable.

I believe we must work in each of these areas simultaneously. But we should not expect to make progress in each one at an equal pace. Nor should we plan for them to occur in sequence. We must also anticipate and plan for setbacks and failures. This requires a multilateral deployment of resources for capacity building. Otherwise, millions suffer while we await perfection.

Let us look first at democracy.

In the 1990s, the term “failed state” gained currency to describe the situation in places like Afghanistan and Bosnia or Liberia and Somalia. Today, such descriptions simply divert attention from the real issues. For, apart from Weapons of Mass Destruction, HIV/AIDS or climate change, the greatest global threat today is not failed states – states themselves do not fail – but the failure of democracy in nearly forty per cent of UN member-nations. These failures cross much of the Muslim world, Latin America, Eastern Europe and Africa.

In my visits to African countries such as Mali and Uganda, to Middle East countries such as Syria and to Asian countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan, leaders in all levels of society have expressed to me their deep concern and frustration about the failure of democracy and its consequent inability to put governments in authority that can meet the expectations of the people. They would welcome assistance supporting education about democracy.

Unfortunately today, in more and more developing countries where there is a tradition of legislative elections, we are witnessing a splintering of national political parties into factions, based around narrow interests. Coalition governments are being cobbled together by leaders with little experience in managing multiple factions.

We only need to look at the recent history of Western Europe to understand the difficulty such coalition governments may face in delivering effective, democratic governance. For many years, the lifespan of governments in some countries was measured in months. Building consensus for corrective constitutional changes, and implementing them, was equally challenging,

What logic is there to think, therefore, that an African government suddenly having to manage a fractious coalition after years of single-party majorities will be able to address

this issue maturely? If it cannot, how will it meet the expectations of its people for a better life?

The point is this: democracy is fragile. It is susceptible to failure at any time, in any society. The experience of Europe in the last fifty years should also be a sobering reminder of another unfortunate truism. Elections and the existence of political parties do not by themselves guarantee stable governments, competent political leadership and respect for the constitution. Nor do they guarantee good economic management and the absence of corruption.

If this has been the experience in the birthplace of modern democracy, I must urge you to be patiently supportive of democratic experiments in the Middle East and in the wider developing world.

Sometimes I read that Islam is in conflict with democracy. Yet I must tell you that as a Muslim, I am a democrat not because of Greek or French thought, but primarily because of principles that go back 1400 years, directly after the death of Prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him).

At that time, Muslims debated how best to implement the premises he had established for being qualified for leadership. The principle of wide public consultation for selecting leadership for matters relating to affairs of state and civil administration was adopted by groups that coalesced into the Sunni branch. The parallel principle of hereditary leadership was preserved among the Shia. Muslims of the time also established that leadership in social governance was to be selected on the basis of merit and competence. These principles, cemented 14 centuries ago, are consistent with democratic models that exist around the world today.

A quick analysis of the map of the Near and Middle East shows the strong probability that numerous forms of democratic government are likely to be tested in the coming decades. Some states will test republican democracy, others will test constitutional monarchy, and yet others will test various forms of theocratic government.

It is impossible to predict the outcomes or the pace of change. What we can predict with some certainty is that the kaleidoscope of changing patterns will be driven by internal forces, as has already been illustrated in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Personally, I do not see how it could be otherwise, given the multiplicity of stakeholders and the absolute necessity that all must be consulted if consensus is to be achieved and maintained.

Therefore, I strongly believe these indigenous elements must be nurtured and supported. We must ensure they have a solid grasp of the elements that sustain, or weaken democracy, and its institutions.

Any development strategy, therefore, must include education and support for developing a wider understanding of the institutions and processes of constitutional democracy.

Formal education, beginning at the secondary school level, can play a part. But so too can such programmes as exchanges of working groups of parliamentarians, legislative officers, senior government officials, and the panoply of civil society participants, including journalists, educators and lawyers. We must seek to build breadth and depth of understanding of the culture of democracy, both in theory and in application.

Let me turn now to the issue of pluralism.

We have all witnessed how inattention to, or worse, the rejection of pluralism, has bred destructive conflicts across the globe affecting a great many cultures, races, nationalities and religions. Sadly, these insights have been dramatically verified by events in such varied situations as Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. They underline how fundamental it is in the developing world for democracy to be built around an absolute priority to manage and legitimise pluralism.

Pluralist societies do not happen by themselves as accidents of history. They are a product of enlightened education and continuous investment by government and all forces of civil society in developing value and recognition for one of humanity's greatest assets: the diversity of its peoples.

Is it not, therefore, the responsibility of enlightened leadership everywhere to ensure that pluralism, and education about pluralism, occupy the centre stage in any agenda of global priorities?

And yet school curricula in Western and developing countries rarely give young people a sound understanding of their own cultures let alone the diverse religious, linguistic, social and artistic forces of communities around them. These perceptions have led the AKDN's primary and secondary schools, and particularly its new network of academic centres of excellence – the Aga Khan Academies – to experiment with education curricula that make the case for a pluralist worldview.

It is one that builds on differences of outlook, ethnicity, religion and culture. This initiative will benefit from collaboration with some of the leading international schools, including Salem in Germany, who are working with us in an International Academic Partnership.

It is my profound belief that the Judeo-Christian world will find it a hopeless endeavour to try to address the issues of democracy, civil society and pluralism in the Muslim world unless a major effort – and I mean an absolutely major effort – is made by the Judeo-Christian world to acquire deeper and wider knowledge about Muslim civilisations. This is a first step toward building dialogue and understanding.

The effort I am describing will have to be systematic and extended over many decades to be successful. It must reach a wide spectrum of students in secondary schools and not be restricted to the specialised knowledge of higher education as it is today.

In this regard, I applaud the initiative the German Government has made in introducing material about Islam into the public education curriculum.

As a Muslim, I accept that such a truly comprehensive effort is likely to cause unwelcoming reactions from a large number of forces in the Judeo-Christian world.

Relations between this world and the world of Islam historically have been conditioned by inter-faith attitudes. They were vividly and brutally illustrated at the time of the Crusades. Then, the issues were focused upon which faith was best placed to redeem the individual soul. Proselytisation was probably the single most powerful driving force.

In recent decades, inter-faith dialogue has been occurring in numerous countries. Unfortunately, every time the word “faith” is used in such a context, there is an inherent supposition that lurking at the side is the issue of proselytisation. But faith, after all, is only one aspect of human society.

Therefore, we must approach this issue today within the dimension of civilisations learning about each other, and speaking to each other, and not exclusively through the more narrow focus of inter-faith dialectic.

Such an approach would also be immensely beneficial to the Muslim world. It would result in its much greater emphasis on learning about the pluralism and richness of its own history, and about the diversity of the countries, cultures, religious institutions and interpretations of Islam. Learning must not be restricted, as it often is, to matters of theology.

Today, theological interpretation and proselytisation continue to divide among Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant interpretations in the Christian world as it does in the Islamic world between Sunni and Shia and their various sub-divisions.

I would hope to see the day when the definition of an educated person in Judeo-Christian culture would include an intelligent understanding of the Muslim world.



That person would appreciate the eminent position of Islamic civilisations in human thought and knowledge. That would include an understanding of their tradition of research and achievements, from philosophy and the arts, to the sciences, architecture and engineering.

The current void of knowledge makes it impossible to establish a dialogue because you cannot build a dialogue based upon ignorance. With whom do you have dialogue? Without meaningful dialogue, you cannot construct coherent and sustainable foreign policy because you will not have the ability to predict. You will not understand the forces at play.

How would the handling of the situations in Kashmir, Afghanistan, Iraq and the wider Middle East, or the Philippines, have been different if the main players had benefited from a thorough understanding of the history and culture of those regions?

Let me turn now to civil society. None of the initiatives I have discussed can be effective in the absence of a robust civil society which is critical to supporting pluralism and ultimately, effective democracies.

Civil society includes charitable organisations and NGOs. It also encompasses organisations charged with maintaining best practices such as legal societies and associations of accountants, doctors and engineers. It includes trade associations, unions and journalist groups. Village organisations, women's groups, micro-credit entities and agricultural co-operatives are important components as well. Some organisations are primarily urban, others primarily rural, while still others provide links and support to both urban and rural environments.

Civil society makes an enormous contribution to human development, filling the gaps between government, the business sector and the family. It does things the state cannot and thus supports citizens in nation building.

Most important, civil society underwrites human progress. It acts as a stabiliser or buttress in times of economic slowdown or social stress. When democracies are failing, or have failed, it is the institutions of civil society that can carry an added burden to help sustain improvements in quality of life.

In his Munich remarks, Minister Fischer recognised the importance of partnerships in building indigenous capacity of civil society in developing countries.

I wholeheartedly welcome the principle of partnerships. Civil society institutions in developing nations must have expert assistance if they are to be a bulwark for democratic processes and are to play a role in helping people improve their living conditions. Partnerships can take many forms. They include the twinning of institutions, the secondment of experts in education and healthcare, and the provision of continuing

education for practitioners in fields such as nursing, journalism and the charitable and not-for-profit sectors.

Germany and AKDN already collaborate on a wide and expanding scale in areas of risk and sensitivity such as Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia. Through a great variety of village and community organisations, we encourage people to overcome their antagonisms, and work together to find solutions to common problems in the search for a better life.

Northern Pakistan is an excellent example of how this support for civil society and pluralism can buttress democracy. We have been working in that isolated region for more than 20 years, and with German participation since 1992. Some 3,900 village-based organisations have been created, dealing with a range of issues from women's initiatives, to water usage, to savings and credit. Economic growth has been impressive and hostilities born out of despair have been replaced by co-operation and hope for the future. In recent local elections, many of the leaders of these village-based organisations sought and achieved elected positions.

The lesson here is that democracy can work even in the most remote rural areas, which is where much of our vital work is concentrated, if one is patient and works to build up indigenous capacity.

The AKDN has begun to formalise its support for democracy, pluralism and civil society through the establishment of a Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. This education and research centre will work closely with governments, academia and civil society to foster legislation and policy to strengthen local capacity for enhancing pluralism. We would welcome the participation of the German government in helping transport the fruits of this venture to the developing world.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am immensely grateful for the collaboration between the AKDN and the German development institutions. It illustrates the scope of partnership between the West and the developing world, especially the Muslim world.

I have the hope and the confidence that our partnerships will continue and be characterised by a willingness to innovate, to take risks for great reward, and to have the patience and determination for the long term commitment required.

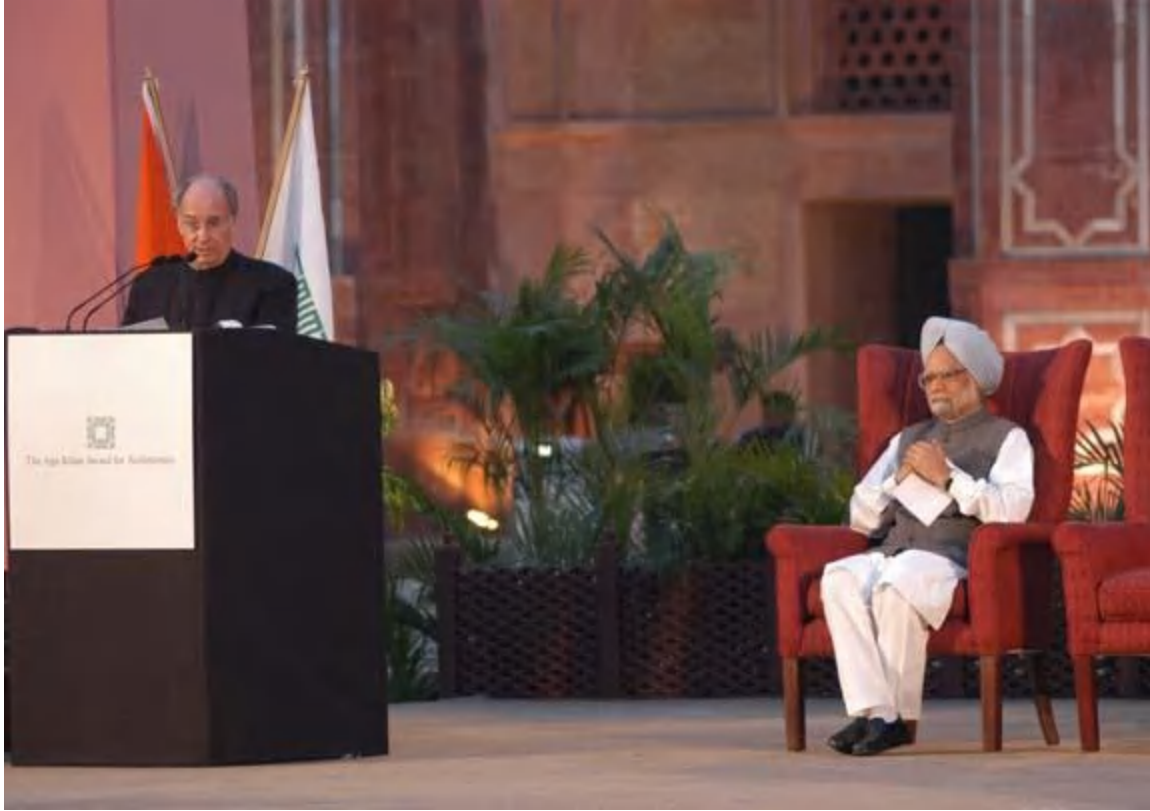
I have attempted to share with you the lessons of very specific development experiences of AKDN and our partners in Asia, Africa and the Near and Middle East.

All of you assembled here have the ability to shape the future direction of the world for the better. Each of you, in your role in diplomacy, may reflect upon how the issues I have identified might help in addressing, in a strategic way, the kaleidoscope of changing patterns in the regions and areas of responsibility in which you work.

Is sustaining democracy a serious issue in our quest to transform developing nations into peaceful and productive modern societies? How can we nurture and support the growth of civil society? What are the educational and cultural approaches that can support greater pluralism, understanding and dialogue?

And finally, by responding to these issues, can we reduce risk and increase the probability of success in helping the people of the developing world to attain a better life?

Thank you for your kind attention.



## **Address by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Ninth AKA Award Cycle, New Delhi**

27 November 2004, New Delhi, India

**“In Islam, the Holy Qur'an says that man is God's noblest creation to whom He has entrusted the stewardship of all that is on earth. Each generation must leave for its successors an enhanced and sustainable social and physical environment. I am sure every responsible citizen in every part of the world would share this aspiration.”**

Prime Minister,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here in Delhi this evening to recognise the winners of the ninth cycle of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. We are particularly honoured by the presence of the Prime Minister whose leadership and ideas have contributed so much to improving the quality of life and economic well-being of the citizens of India.

I would also like to thank the departments and agencies of the Indian government who have been so supportive in mounting the Award events in India, and in facilitating the presence of so many people from different parts of the world. Many of our international guests have prominent and responsible positions at home and their presence here honours us.

The recognition we are giving tonight carries the name Award for Architecture. But it represents much more. The Award recognises the efforts of architects and their clients, builders - large and small, governments, planners, international organisations, granting agencies, village organisations and individuals. All of them are collectively responsible for the creation of a humane and socially-supportive built environment that is so important to our quality of life.

It is therefore most appropriate that this event is taking place in India, a country rich in cultural heritage and pluralistic traditions. Here, many cultures have maintained their distinct identities while combining and co-operating to create something even greater, the dynamic and vibrant India of the modern world. This is also a country where the struggle for social justice and improved quality of life has made tremendous strides over many decades through the continuous efforts of governments and civil society.

This year's Award recognises projects that cover the entire spectrum of human capability and human need. The striking differences in these award winners reflect the enormous range of need for human habitat that must be met in the world today.

It is now 27 years since the Award was launched. At that time, I was becoming increasingly disturbed by the loss of cultural identity and appropriateness in the architecture and built environments of much of the Muslim world. A few centuries ago, architecture was one of the great forms of artistic expression in the many diverse Muslim societies.

It permeated all types of buildings and spaces, both secular and religious, rural and urban, in the multiple Islamic cultures spread across the world and in neighbouring non-Muslim societies as well.

This magnificent structure, built to honour the second Mughal Emperor, Humayun, is one of the early examples of the spectacular architectural legacy the Mughals left to the people of the subcontinent. The Taj Mahal, built almost a hundred years later, is one of the world's most admired buildings of all time. Before these, the early Muslims had already made their distinctive architectural mark in Syria, Iraq, Fatimid Egypt, Spain, Persia and Anatolia.

But in recent years, Islamic architecture seemed to have lost its identity -- I should perhaps say identities -- and its inspiration. Occasionally, construction tended to repeat previous Islamic styles, but much more often, it simply absorbed imported architectural forms, language and materials.

There were several reasons for this. In part, it was because “modernity,” equated with all that was Western, had come to be seen as representing improved quality. And most Muslim architects were trained in western schools and had little knowledge and understanding of the traditions of Islamic architecture.

The net result was that our cities, villages, and rural areas were being transformed by the insidious introduction and expansion of inappropriate and irrelevant architecture and planning.

In Islam, the Holy Qur'an says that man is God's noblest creation to whom He has entrusted the stewardship of all that is on earth. Each generation must leave for its successors an enhanced and sustainable social and physical environment. I am sure every responsible citizen in every part of the world would share this aspiration.

Therefore, we set out on a long journey to try to understand the causes of this sad situation which Muslim and non-Muslim architects alike recognised as unfortunate, but which none knew how to alter. They included some of the most eminent architects, and men and women of different disciplines and cultures who joined me in this endeavour to understand the causes of this decline in quality and design.

The enormity of the challenge caused many to doubt that a significant result could be achieved. It seemed certain that decades would pass before results, if any, would be seen.

The evolution of the Award has been first, engaging constituencies to develop consensus about the nature of the problem; second, developing the means to support change; and finally, exposing solutions to the many who are involved in the process of developing human habitat.

Now, as we enter our second quarter century of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, we might ask ourselves: Are the lessons we have learned in this particular cultural endeavour applicable to other environments and other cultural traditions that are stagnating or under threat?

I, of course, start with the basic assumption that the world is a much better place because it is pluralist and multi-cultural. Imagine what it would be like living in a world of no diversity, a world where we were all the same colour, shape and size, ate the same biryani, told the same jokes and combed our hair identically. Aside from the fact that my comb, sadly, serves less purpose these days, I would find a world like that quite boring!

I am therefore convinced that supporting diversity and cultures under threat is a worthwhile and fruitful venture.

This leads me to the fundamental question we sought to answer in establishing these awards. It is one which I think is applicable to any initiative which is aimed at nurturing and supporting cultures at risk: How do we protect the past and inspire the future?

Put another way, how do we reshape and reposition knowledge and taste and appreciation in the public psyche, and among those who play a role in developing human habitat?

From the beginning, we knew that to have a realistic chance of bringing about fundamental and lasting change, we had to reach out and raise awareness, not just among architects, but among clients, corporations, governments, planners, educators and financiers.

That meant we needed to build an all encompassing profile of people and habitat, not only in the Islamic world, but in countries where Muslims live and interact with other communities, both urban and rural.

We broadened the definition of architecture from one that tended to look only at individual structures, to one that encompassed entire neighbourhoods, including informal settlements, village communities and open public spaces. In the first nine cycles, some 2,661 projects have been assessed and documented in 88 countries, an unparalleled data resource base. The independent Master Juries have recognised 97 projects in 25 countries.

They demonstrate widely different aspects of architectural solutions that affect quality of life, ranging from the restoration of historic urban fabrics and monuments, to the reforestation of a university campus of over 300 hectares. They have included generic models of individual houses and modest individual efforts, large civic complexes and high-tech, ultra-modern buildings that set new trends for the future.

Another important step in the process was to promote awareness and understanding of appropriate technologies and solutions. The Muslim world is multi-cultural, diverse in geography, terrain and climate and it exhibits extremes of wealth and poverty. This diversity required us to be sensitive not only to local needs, but to local capacity and resources available to meet those needs.

And finally, new initiatives outside the Award itself became necessary. In education, our Trust for Culture supports the Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture at Harvard and M.I.T.

The Trust's Historic Cities Support Programme helps create new examples and models for reviving historic buildings and spaces.

Our efforts have been richly rewarded in the growth of knowledge and awareness of Islamic architecture and landscaping in educational bodies around the world. In the most



eminent Western schools there is a much greater academic offering and commitment to the field of Islamic architecture.

And in Muslim countries we have seen the birth of new schools and a new generation of architectural teachers and scholars in the field. Most important, as we have seen from the winners recognised this evening, we are getting better habitat. I think that the Award and the cluster of initiatives born from it are truly protecting the past and inspiring the future.

But while we can be pleased with this progress, there is much more to be done.

Quality housing remains the most essential need for societies everywhere, both in rural and urban environments. Industrial facilities and workplaces are not at a level of excellence that makes them exceptional.

Rapidly-expanding urban centres throughout the world lack public parks and open urban spaces. Problems of transport, congestion and pollution have too few solutions emerging. The growth of slums, the consequence of the relentless forces of urbanisation, has not been stopped or even slowed down.

And although many fine examples of rural projects have been represented in past Award cycles, still there are not enough. We have much yet to strive for. But I believe the process we have launched has become a self-sustaining and unstoppable force for change in human habitat not only in the Muslim world, but in much of the developing world as well.

The larger and perhaps more interesting question is whether this approach might be adopted to support other cultures that are at risk.

The issues we have been attempting to address through the process of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture are not exclusive to the Muslim world.

The non-Muslim world struggles equally with explosive population growth, poverty, environmental degradation, exodus from rural areas, globalisation and the impact on cultural identity of new forms of media.

I hope that the lessons learned in the process we have established would be applicable to the many others in similar circumstances.

Perhaps these lessons will one day be seen as an important contribution from the Muslim world: A contribution to the broader cause of maintaining and enhancing a multi-cultural, pluralist world and a responsive, appropriate human habitat.

Thank you.



## Scully Award Acceptance

25 January 2005, Washington D.C., USA

Honoured Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First I would like to thank Charles Correa and Jim Wolfensohn for their kind words.

Charles, through your work you have made an immense contribution to the built environment. Your buildings have brought timeless elegance to societies in the East and the West. Your inspirational use of their many languages of design will speak powerfully to many generations hence. I would also like to sincerely thank you for your contribution over many years to the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, as a member of five different Steering Committees, a Master Jury and as an Award winner yourself in 1998.

Jim Wolfensohn, you have changed the very nature of the World Bank, creating an ethic that recognizes that the development of individuals and communities are as important as return on equity.

Hundreds of millions of people around the world, faceless and desperate in their poverty, may not know, but should know, that you have seen their plight and have heard and understood their needs.

You have been successful in harmonising the activities of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund which has made both more effective in achieving their respective goals. And you have been an ecumenical leader in building bridges between and among faith-based organizations and recognising their importance in international development.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your presence here this evening.

And thank you to the National Building Museum for honouring me with this recognition. I am humbled to receive an award carrying the distinguished name of Vincent Scully. His work as a teacher and critic has reminded the world of the importance of a humane architecture that both respects the past and embraces the future.

I might add that my only regret, as a Harvard man, was that Mr. Scully chose to do so much of his work at Yale.

Ladies and gentlemen, some 30 years I began to question why architecture in the modern Islamic world seemed to have lost touch with the great achievements of its past.

I began working with leading architects, philosophers, artists, teachers, historians and thinkers -- from all religious faiths -- to establish an Award for Architecture. We sought to reshape and reposition knowledge and taste in the public psyche and to change the behaviour of the vast range of actors who shape the built environment.

Now some 28 years later, the extent to which we have been successful is due to a multitude of individuals and organisations from all regions, faiths and occupations. They have been cemented together by their mutual commitment of service to people through the contribution of time, talent and knowledge.

It is on behalf of this broad spectrum of qualified men and women that I accept the Vincent Scully Award this evening.

These include members of the nine Award Steering Committees and Master Juries. From the beginning, they pushed the notion of architecture far beyond the act of building and technical perfection. They were concerned with quality of life, social justice, pluralism, cross-cultural exchange, education, the proper use of resources and corporate responsibility.

Thank you to William Porter, former Dean of MIT's School of Architecture, for a persistent advocacy of community responsibility and to Ukrainian Oleg Grabar, from Harvard and Dogan Kuban, from Istanbul, who brought depth to the Award's understanding of the traditions of Islamic Architecture.

Thank you Nader Ardalan for pioneering climatically relevant and socially meaningful modern architecture. Hasan Uddin Khan helped us communicate with the architectural community by establishing the architectural magazine Mimar, a publication still much missed today.

Robert Venturi helped the Award address popular expressions in architecture. Frank Gehry has been an adamant supporter of social responsibility. Peter Eisenman and Charles Jencks helped us involve younger talent and fresh ideas as did Glenn Lowry from the Museum of Modern Art of New York. Renata Holod of the USA and Canada and of Ukrainian origin, helped us build the foundation of Award procedures, seminars and field visits. Saïd Zulficar, Secretary General of the Award from 1981 to 1990, helped to further refine our procedures, and to deepen the Award's interest and presence in contemporary societies where Islam had historically been at the forefront of architecture and learning. Suha Özkan now the longest serving Secretary General of the Award, has helped us gain momentum for the future.

Some who contributed are no longer with us. The late Professor Charles Moore, brought a real understanding of plurality in contemporary architecture and Hassan Fathy, made an enormous contribution with his advocacy of appropriate building traditions. The late Sir Hugh Casson moulded contemporary architectural expressions from Islamic heritage.

The many other architects, planners and thinkers who contributed are a pluralist microcosm of the world itself. And here is just a partial list: Kenzo Tange, Fumihiko Maki and Arata Isozaki of Japan, James Stirling of the United Kingdom and Zaha Hadid of the UK and Iraq, Kenneth Frampton of the UK and USA, Balkrishna Doshi of India, Moshen Mostafavi of Iran and the USA and Farshid Moussavi of Iran and the UK, Elias Torres Tur of Spain, Glenn Murcutt of Australia, Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh, Geoffrey Bawa of Sri Lanka, Alvaro Siza of Portugal, Jacques Herzog of Switzerland and Billie Tsien of the US. And there are many more.

I know of no process where so many people of such different backgrounds have come together to improve the living conditions of more than one billion people.

Thank you to the more than 1000 nominators worldwide who have brought such a diversity of projects to our attention. Thanks also to the dozens of highly-qualified reviewers who conducted the in-depth analysis of short-listed projects to enable the judges to assess them impartially.

Finally, my most heartfelt thanks go to the thousands of architects, builders, designers, financiers and planners who had the inspiration, creativity, and most of all, the patience and determination, to bring so many worthwhile projects to completion.

There were 2,261 such projects in 88 countries that made our short lists over the last 27 years.

They are the living proof that the built environment can truly be what we want it to be.

Thank you.



## Scully Seminar

26 January 2005, Washington D.C., USA

Honoured Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I believe profoundly that architecture is not just about building. It is a means of improving people's quality of life. At its best, it should mirror the plurality of cultural traditions and the diverse needs of communities, both urban and rural. At the same time it must employ modern technologies to help fulfill desirable aspirations for the future.

In Islam, the Holy Koran says that man is God's noblest creation to whom He has entrusted the stewardship of all that is on earth. Each generation must leave for its successors a wholesome and sustainable social and physical environment.

For these reasons, in 1977 I began working with leading architects, philosophers, artists, teachers, historians and thinkers -- from all religious faiths -- to examine issues in the built environment and to establish an Award for Architecture.

The task was extremely difficult and, some thought, impossible. We sought to reshape and reposition knowledge and taste and to change the behaviour of those who have an impact on the built environment. That meant not just architects and their clients, but governments, planners, granting organisations, village organisations, educational institutions and builders, large and small, in urban and rural areas.

If we could achieve this, there was a real chance we could launch a process that would become self sustaining, to help bring about the truly profound change we sought.

That led us on a long journey of inquiry and action based upon a premise which, strangely enough, was never put formally into writing.

We were interested in architectural achievement, not just in design, but with how good design could help improve the daily lives of the users and beneficiaries. It was from this service perspective that the Award parameters grew.

One example was the definition of architecture. The users were largely in developing countries. So we pushed our definition far beyond the so-called “architected” buildings and into self-built environments, many of them in rural areas, most of them poor.

It was from this notion of service to people that we were led to search for best practices. We sought examples of best practice for vastly different local situations – from the ultra-poor in rural environments to the ultra-rich cities and towns of oil producing states. The solutions we found ranged from restoration of historic buildings to the new high-tech buildings of modern societies.

The criteria for best practice varied to reflect conditions. Poor communities, for example, do not have the resources to replace buildings every few decades. So we looked to best practice that emphasised efficient and creative refurbishing or to new construction designed for a much longer economic service life than industrialized countries.

As the inquiry process became more widely known in the communities where we were focused, they responded to us with two basic requests: first, teach us how to do things differently and second, show us examples of best practices in real world situations.

In response, a number of parallel programmes were spawned to teach these best practices, such as the Programme for Islamic Architecture at Harvard and MIT and the online ArchNet resource which supports global dialogue and research.

We were challenged with finding ways of making these best practices available to broad segments of the population in order to have a continuous and positive effect. In the developed world, that would mean reaching the middle classes. In the developing world, it meant making these best practices accessible to the poor.



We have had some success in this regard through our Historic Cities Support Programme which we launched to develop best-practice models in the real world. That programme has been applied in some of the poorest settlements, many of them in rural areas. We have shown how human and material resources can be applied to deteriorated and under-used cultural assets. The result has been new economic activity and better quality of life.

So I am pleased that 28 years later, we have had some success in achieving our original goals. We are gratified that so many others now are engaged in the cause. We have created a momentum that has become a self-sustaining and unstoppable force for change in the human habitat of the Muslim world. And I am most pleased the principles we have established are having an impact in much of the developed world as well.

But there is still much to be done.

Quality housing remains the most essential need for societies everywhere, both in rural and urban environments. Industrial facilities and workplaces are not at a level of excellence that makes them exceptional.

Rapidly-expanding urban centres throughout the world lack public parks and open urban spaces. Problems of transport, congestion and pollution have too few solutions emerging. The growth of slums, the consequence of the relentless forces of urbanisation, has not been stopped or even slowed down.

And although many fine examples of rural projects have been represented in past Award cycles, still there are not enough.

I am also concerned there is still too little attention being paid to design for communities to protect residents from the effects of earthquakes, many of them in remote rural areas. Two million people died as a result of earthquakes in the last century and 100 million were severely affected. There are vast populations that live in seismic-sensitive high-mountain areas where we must focus attention.

And the massive devastation of the Indian Ocean tsunami has taught us a terrible lesson that the destructive power of earthquakes can reach far beyond the initial disturbance. It will no doubt lead to new thinking and new approaches toward seaside construction.

So we are by no means at the end of our task. To quote Churchill, we may be at the end of the beginning.

I hope the next quarter century of the Award will contain as much innovation and surprise as the first. To the extent that it does, it will be thanks to the many hundreds of capable individuals who have given so generously, and continue to give, of their time, their knowledge and their talent. To all of them, I am enormously grateful.



## Groundbreaking of the international Academic Centre of Excellence

17 March 2005, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

President Mkapa,  
Honoured Guests,  
and Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for being with us today. Your presence on this important occasion is very special to us.

Mr. President you have been a most staunch supporter of a new Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development here in Dar-es Salaam. And you have espoused vigourously the launching of a new Academy.

One hundred years ago my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, visited this region to celebrate the opening of the first Aga Khan School in Zanzibar. Two years later, a second school was opened here in Dar-es Salaam.

My grandfather was totally convinced of the importance of education for all young men and women.

He would have been, I believe, immensely pleased that those first two educational institutions were the beginnings of a network that would eventually grow to more than 300 schools in Africa and Asia, from pre-primary to higher secondary. He himself opened some 200 schools and was the founding figure of the first university for Muslims in India, Aligarh, before he passed away in 1957. Since then, our post-secondary system has expanded to include the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia.

For the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Aga Khan School system grew essentially to serve the needs of the Ismaili Community. In a world of colonial governments, each community in East Africa was required to educate in schools specific to their race.

As independence was achieved across Asia and Africa in the post-war period, new nationalist governments asked what was to be the role of their country's educational system in building a wider sense of nationhood. Many private and community schools were brought into the national system, voluntarily or through nationalisation. Teaching in national languages was emphasised.

But it became evident that governments of developing countries could not alone carry the mounting cost of providing education to their growing numbers of children. Private initiatives would have to play a part. It also became clear teaching in the English language was essential because it had become the global language of diplomacy, education, transport, science, commerce and medicine.

The Ismaili schools across Asia and Africa lived through this process. They were among the first to open their doors to other communities. They had retained English as an essential language and they sought continuously to improve by professionalising and upgrading teachers and administrators. They also built strong relationships with other schools in the Aga Khan network as well as with the national school systems.

Many who attended those schools were able not only to achieve their own potential, but to make an important contribution to the development of their communities and their countries.

I would include here His Worship Mayor Kleist Sykes who is an alumnus of the Aga Khan Boys Secondary. He has made a distinguished contribution to Tanzania in international organizations, as a businessman and as mayor of Dar-es Salaam. Your Worship, Mayor Sykes, we are honoured by your presence today and by your fine example.

Throughout this changing educational environment our schools sought to achieve regional excellence in Asia and Africa. One question was ever present, but never overtly articulated:

will Aga Khan Schools ever be able to offer educational standards that will compete with the best, and I mean the very best, in the industrialised world? Today the answer is a vibrant, confident, yes.

This will be achieved through a new kind of school, indeed a network of schools, known as the Aga Khan Academies. One Academy is already opened in Mombasa and the foundation stone has been laid for another in Maputo.

Our Academies represent a commitment to an international standard of excellence for facilities, for faculty and for curriculum. They offer student-centred interactive learning that stimulates inquiry and analysis, encourages critical thinking and builds the foundation for lifelong learning. They aim to produce students with strong value systems who have a broad understanding of the pluralist world.

The students at this institution will be distinguished not only for their academic capacity, but for their character and their commitment to citizenship. They will leave these institutions not only with a thorough grounding in the humanities, the arts and social sciences: They will have studied comparative religion, global free market economics, government and political science, including the various forms of functional and dysfunctional democracy.

They will have spent at least one year studying at an Academy in another country and they will also have mastered at least one foreign language. In short, they will grow up in an educational environment with new areas of knowledge which will be essential for the future.

Over the next 10 years, we plan to open over 19 Academies. They will form part of an international network linked not only with each other, but with some of the best educational institutions in the world. We have already developed academic partnerships with the Phillips Academy in Andover, USA, with the Schule Schloss in Salem Germany.

Some people have referred to the Academies as schools for the elite. I prefer to think of them as schools for the exceptional.

The students who come here will be exceptional because they will have capabilities and character that make them stand out from their peers. And we will ensure through scholarships that exceptional students will be admitted even if they do not have the financial means.

I believe deeply that if developing countries are to be successful in their aim of becoming modern economies with living standards comparable to the West, we must focus not only on universal access to education for the majority or even all of the population. We must

also make available educational opportunities at the top international standard for the exceptional students who stand out from the rest.

The reality is that not all students are created equal intellectually. And exceptional individuals are as abundant in the developing world as anywhere else, from the cities and from the countryside. The pity is that too many in the developing world are never given the opportunity to have their minds challenged and stretched and developed to their full potential. Therefore we must strive to create institutions of learning that can help them maximise the potential to study, to learn and to function at the highest international intellectual levels.

I believe this for three reasons.

The first has to do with students. If world class facilities are available here in Tanzania, we reduce the risk that students with the financial means will go abroad to study, many of them never to return and contribute here. And those who do not have the financial ability to study abroad will find the opportunity for an education on par with any institution in the world, right here in Tanzania. This also will help improve the quality of students seeking entrance to national universities.

The second reason has to do with teachers. The Academies will make a substantial contribution to helping uplift the overall quality of education in the communities and countries where they are located. We intend these Academies to be beacons of academic excellence which will attract the best teachers. Some will be recruited from other parts of the world, both for long-term appointments and short-term rotations, bringing with them fresh ideas and bountiful experience. Many more will be educated and trained here.

The faculty of the Academies will do more than teach our students. They will also reach out to schools and teachers in the surrounding community to share their knowledge through formal Professional Development Programmes and informal guidance and mentoring. In this way, the imprint of the Academies will reach far beyond their physical facilities.

This particular Academy will be co-located with a branch of the Institute of Educational Development of the Aga Khan University. This Institute is dedicated to research and teacher training at Baccalaureate level, at the leading edge of pedagogical practice and curriculum content.

The third reason for building exceptional schools in Africa and Asia has to do with building bridges to the industrial world. As residential schools teaching in English with international curricula, the Academies will be excellent venues for students from industrial countries to do studies as part of their “Year Abroad” programmes. This will enable students from developed countries to learn about the developing world by living within it and to carry that knowledge into their chosen careers. These exchanges may start with students from our partner schools at Salem and Andover.

The first Academy in Mombasa already has developed international linkages by incorporating the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, or IB, in the junior and senior schools. The IB is currently offered by nearly 1,500 schools in more than 100 countries, and it has become the only truly international secondary graduation diploma. Students with the IB are accepted by more than 1,700 universities worldwide without further testing.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my profound hope the Aga Khan Academy in Dar es Salaam will represent a wonderful opportunity for young Tanzanians of exceptional talent. They will be able to pursue an education in the best of facilities with outstanding faculty and peers.

But no truly worthwhile opportunity comes without some risk. The risk we confront here is willfully to build an educational institution that dares to compare its students, curriculum, faculty and premises with the best in the world. We are saying that success will be based solely upon merit, judged against an international standard.

Once we accept that challenge, there will be no turning back. For one thing certain today is that best practices continue to evolve at a rapid pace in every discipline, education being no exception. A world class standard is therefore, by definition, a constantly evolving standard.

I have every confidence we are up to the challenge at the Aga Khan Academies. And I am just as confident that the exceptional students who will attend this institution will be up to the challenge as well.

One hundred years from now, I believe that our successors will look back at the founding of the Aga Khan Academies as an important milestone in the development of Tanzania and East Africa.





## Launch of the expansion of the Aga Khan Hospital

18 March 2005, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

President Mkapa,  
Excellencies,  
Honoured Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for joining us today to celebrate the launch of the second phase of the expansion of the Aga Khan Hospital.

Yesterday, President Mkapa joined me for the groundbreaking of the new Aga Khan Academy School to be built here in Dar-es Salaam. The President spoke eloquently about the need to increase the capacity in Africa to educate and retain more indigenous professionals and to reduce the costly dependence upon expatriates.

Mr. President, you will be pleased to know that our vision for this hospital, and our wider health strategy for East Africa, are entirely consistent with those views.



This hospital already plays an important role in supporting medical education and health care delivery for the people of Dar es Salaam, and those referred to it from our up-country medical centers in Morogoro, Dodoma, Iringa, Mbeya, and Mwanza. The new facilities planned for this site will enhance that capacity further. It will also solidify the hospital's wider role in education and health delivery for East Africa.

The goal is to invest in medical education, and health care facilities, to enable the delivery of patient care to international standards in a wider spectrum of medical specialities.

And we will continue to reach far beyond this facility and this community to help others strive for that level as well.

This regional approach will allow us to offer the best in training for medical specialists, nurses and medical technicians in East Africa. We will also have the facilities and the equipment to enable them to practice in their chosen fields of expertise.

I have every confidence we will be able to train and retain more specialists here in East Africa. I also have reason to hope that some medical specialists who have left to practice abroad may be persuaded to return.

Our approach is being driven by powerful trends that are rapidly changing health care practice and patient care demands throughout the world. Increased medical specialisation and advances in pharmacology, diagnosis and surgical techniques are making possible dramatic improvements in patient care. They are also changing the way health care is delivered, altering the mix between treatments that require hospitalization and most effective out-patient and community-based care.

We are also seeing here in Tanzania and East Africa generally, rising demands for cardiac, orthopedic and oncology treatment very similar to those in the industrialised world. And there is of course the added challenge of malaria and HIV/AIDS.

We expect these trends to accelerate here as they have internationally. And unless we make significant investments in education as well as new equipment and facilities, East Africa will fall further behind in health care delivery.

Let me say a few words first about education.

Through linkages between the Schools of Medicine and Nursing of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Aga Khan University, and the Aga Khan teaching hospital in Nairobi, we are building here in Dar-es Salaam a regional hub of quality medical and nursing services. This hospital will be part of what amounts to a regional teaching hospital network.

Post Graduate Medical Education programmes are already in place between here and the Aga Khan teaching hospital in Nairobi. The family medicine post graduate programme has been placed at this hospital, in part because of the important links to our five up-country community health clinics. Other post-graduate medical programmes will be established here in future. These programmes will be opened to physicians from our own and other hospitals to gain greater regional synergies. The hospital already has a partnership with the Muhimbili College of Health Sciences at the University of Dar es Salaam. Rotations for specialising physicians help them gain valuable clinical experience.

The hospital has been able to bring experts from abroad to help train medical staff in new surgical techniques. In the last six months, for example, the volume of less-invasive procedures known as keyhole surgery has increased significantly.

This is thanks to the assistance of an international specialist who has overseen training on recently-acquired laparoscopic equipment. In Nairobi, currently there are post graduate programmes in surgery, internal medicine and radiology.

But it is also in nursing education that we have made important commitments:

Our regional nursing education programme trains nurses in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. However it is here in Tanzania that it is considered the most successful. The East African regional programme now has more than 400 graduates. From this hospital alone, 45 nurses are currently enrolled in diploma and degree programmes – half of all the hospital nursing staff.

In addition to enhancing the status of professional women, we believe that by creating better academic opportunity for nurses and a rewarding work environment, we help reduce the rapid and damaging outflow of these crucial resources to the developing world.

Of course, the best training can only be put into practice with the right facilities. The aim of the Aga Khan Hospital is to create a virtuous circle of excellent training combined with the best facilities to increase the range of medical specialties at the hospital. That in turn will increase the capacity to train others.

Phase One of the hospital expansion, which opened five years ago, included a new Emergency Room department, 18 out-patient consulting clinics, a laboratory and a pharmacy.

It also included 56 new pediatric and medical-surgical in-patient beds in an air conditioned environment.

Since then the hospital has built up a sophisticated radiology department. In addition to x-ray and ultrasound technology, the hospital has added mammography, specialist dental and

CAT scanners. Most recently the hospital acquired the county's first MRI scanner. The MRI means that more referrals, and patients, will be able to benefit from enhanced diagnostic accuracy, and patients will no longer need to travel abroad for these investigations.

The range of specialists available in the hospital supports the very busy out-patient clinics, which serve 100,000 patients a year. They also enable the hospital to provide specialist emergency treatment on a 24-hour basis, seven days a week.

Phase Two of the expansion, which we are launching today, will increase capacity further.

Five new operating theatres will be added. Maternity delivery rooms will increase to four from the current two. The intensive care unit will expand from four beds to 12.

There will also be further improvements in the radiology department to bring all these services together in one physical department and add new ultrasound capacity. There will be new physiotherapy facilities as well.

The new operating theatres will enable the hospital to do more advanced cardiac and orthopedic surgery. They will include modern air flow control technologies, to reduce significantly the risk of infection. This is particularly important for orthopedic surgery where the complications from infection can be extremely serious.

Tanzanians will thus no longer have to seek this kind of advanced treatment outside the country, at considerable cost and inconvenience.

Any hospital that expands its services, introduces new equipment, and harnesses new medical practitioners must pay special attention to quality care. To address this issue the hospital has also created 20 departmental quality teams to review working practices and ensure they progress to international standards. And it receives 200 questionnaires a month from patients to measure their perceptions of our services. The hospital was proud to receive ISO 9001 certification in October of 2003.



## Inauguration of Al-Azhar Park

25 March 2005, Cairo, Egypt

Bi-'smi Llahi 'r-Rahmani 'r-Rahim

Madame Mubarak, Excellencies, Honoured Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Twenty-one years ago we had a vision that launched us on a journey of inquiry, exploration and discovery that took us through some 1,000 years of history of this extraordinary city.

It was a journey in which we engaged with historians, archeologists, architects and horticulturalists. We worked with engineers, statisticians, sociologists and urban planners. We met with neighbourhood residents and businessmen, artisans and entrepreneurs, young people and old.

Like some of the great Muslim explorers such as Al-Idrisi, Al-Baruni or Ibn Batuta, our journey of discovery was an act of faith. We did not know what lay ahead, other than excitement and unpredictability. And we knew that it could be enthralling but would require patience, determination and tenacity.

The path we followed has led us finally to this evening, at the inauguration of this magnificent park with so many who have contributed to this historic achievement. Thank you all so much for being here. And thank you for your support.

There are too many people to thank individually. Let me start by expressing my warmest appreciation to President and Mrs. Mubarak. Without your support and commitment, our journey would not have gone beyond the first step.

Let me also thank the Minister of Culture, Farouk Hoshni, and his ministry; the Supreme Council of Antiquities, the present Secretary-General Dr. Zahi Hawass and his predecessor, Dr. Gaballah; the Governorate of Cairo, the current Governor Dr. Abdel Azim Wazier and his predecessors, Dr. Abdel Rahim Shehata and Omar Abdel Akher. I also want to acknowledge the Egyptian Ambassadors to France who were so helpful in the early stages of the project.

Her Excellency Madame Suzanne Mubarak understood from the very beginning we were creating not just a park - as great an achievement as that would be. The First Lady recognised we were giving birth to a catalyst for social, economic and cultural renewal and improvement that would grow for many years to come. She knew it would have far-reaching consequences for the urban fabric of one of the city's most historic, yet poorest neighbourhoods, touching some 200,000 individuals. The agencies of the Egyptian government were quick to see that as well, and they helped to create the enabling environment that made the project achievable.

Our experience in creating Al-Azhar Park has taught us important new lessons that will contribute to the international body of knowledge about preservation and development in world heritage cities, a substantial portion of them in the Muslim world.

We already have similar, if somewhat smaller-scale initiatives underway in the Stone Town in Zanzibar, at Bagh-e-Babur in Kabul, Afghanistan, and we will soon launch projects in Djenne and Mopti in Mali.

A fundamental lesson, which reinforced our experience in other countries, is that public-private partnerships can be effective mechanisms for enhancing the value of underused, unappreciated or even unknown social, cultural and economic assets.

The private, not-for-profit entities of The Aga Khan Development Network, led by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, have been able to forge effective partnerships with government agencies at all levels here in Egypt and with a range of international, national and local NGOs and institutions. Without them, this project would not have been successful.

I would include here, the Swiss Egyptian Development Fund, the Ford Foundation, the World Monuments Fund, the French Institute of Archaeology, the city of Stuttgart and the newest donor, the Social Fund for Development.

A second fundamental lesson is that when embarking on a project of this complexity we must be prepared for the unpredictability of discovery. There will be delays and added costs, but there will also be new and interesting opportunities. And each opportunity must be assessed to ensure it brings additional value at acceptable cost.

This, after all, is a project that cost several times the original budget and took more than 20 years from vision to realisation.

This is because what started as one project actually turned into three: the design and construction of a park, the restoration of the Ayyubid Wall, and the community redevelopment of the historically-important Darb al-Ahmar neighbourhood. All are tightly interconnected and have added to the body of knowledge we can share with others.

Here in the park for example, we faced major engineering challenges in adapting the site. Then we had to select plants that would thrive in arid local conditions. The American University of Cairo established an off-site nursery for propagation and testing and as a result, the number of species planted is a new benchmark for park spaces in the region.

The Ayyubid Wall presented another particular challenge because so much of it had been covered by centuries of debris. We did not know how long it was, or how deep. We did not understand the complexity of the structure, or what archeological treasures it contained.

Portions of the wall had been buried for 500 years or more since the time of the Mamluks. We also found sections where buildings had seriously encroached on the wall.

These discoveries required detailed pilot investigations, in partnership with the Supreme Council of Antiquities. The result was unique policies aimed at avoiding harm to archeological sites, respecting cultural heritage and safeguarding authenticity.

That in turn helped us develop appropriate training for local craftsmen and artisans to shape their skills and to apply them to this project.

The lessons from Darb al-Ahmar are a compelling case study of the complex interactions that result from restoration in a densely-populated and historically-sensitive urban area. It is a story that continues to unfold and will do so for many years to come.

We found Darb al-Ahmar to be a resilient community with a large pool of skilled workers and small entrepreneurs. We were able to engage them in the restoration of houses and schools and the rebuilding of minarets that had long ago disappeared from the Cairo skyline.

Another lesson here was the important role that microfinance could play in helping residents of this community lift themselves beyond subsistence, enabling them to grow businesses and upgrade the quality of their living conditions.

Ladies and gentlemen, it has indeed been a long and interesting journey of discovery that has brought us to this evening. Many projects continue and there are, no doubt, many surprises to come and many more lessons to be learned.

I look forward to that because this process has been particularly satisfying for me from a very personal perspective.

In our excavations and our historical investigations, I constantly have been reminded that we were touching the very foundations of my ancestors, the Fatimids, and the pluralistic history and intellectual profile of this city and this country to which they contributed so profoundly.

I am very humbled by the opportunity to return to Cairo, founded over a thousand years ago by the Fatimid Caliph Al-Muiz, to build on that history.

Thirty-five generations later, through the work done here by my institutions, it is my prayer that this park will be a continuing contribution to the people of this great city."

Thank you.





## The Nobel Institute in Oslo

07 April 2005, Oslo, Norway

Madame Minister, Ladies and Gentlemen

I thank the Government of Norway and Minister Johnson for the invitation to speak here this morning and for her generous words of introduction. Madame Minister, the exchanges we have enjoyed since we met yesterday has been highly constructive.

I am particularly honoured to be speaking at the Nobel Institute, respected worldwide for its promotion and recognition of exceptional endeavours to reduce human conflict.

It is also a rare privilege to address such a learned and experienced audience which includes not only officials in government charged with issues of human development, but also leaders of Norwegian civil society who are important partners in Norway's impressive international development efforts.

In my remarks today I will propose to you several questions which I will attempt to go some way toward answering:

- First, why are so many democracies failing in Asia and Africa?
- Second, is enough being done to help these young countries achieve successful forms of democratic governance?
- Third, are there common factors causing this failure of democracies?
- Fourth, why is the international community unable to get engaged at the early stages before crisis occurs?
- And finally, what can be done?

Before I begin, perhaps I can give you some background on my perspective.

My role in human development stems from my position as Imam or spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, as designated by my grandfather in 1957.

In all interpretations of Islam, Imams, whether they are Shia or Sunni, are required not only to lead in the interpretation of the faith, but equally to contribute to improving the quality of life of the people who refer to them. This dual obligation is often difficult to appreciate from the viewpoint of Christian interpretations of the role which Church leaders are expected to perform.

It is on this ethical premise, which bridges faith and society, that I established the Aga Khan Development Network. Its multiple agencies and programmes have long been active in many areas of Africa and Asia that are home to some of the poorest and most diverse populations in the world, serving people without regard to their ethnicity, gender or faith.

The community I lead of Shia Ismaili Muslims is culturally, ethnically and linguistically, very diverse. Their main concentration is in South and Central Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. In recent decades the community has also established a substantial presence in North America and Western Europe.

We have lived through colonialism and independence, two World Wars, the Cold War and many local and regional wars. We have seen the collapse of the Soviet Union and the birth of new states. The pendulum has swung from private ownership to nationalisation and back to privatisation. And we have lived in democracy and under dictatorship.

The community and its institutions are in many ways a microcosm of the last century in the developing world and we have learned many lessons.

Ladies and gentlemen, I put it to you that no human development initiative can be sustainable unless we are successful in achieving three essential conditions.

- First, we must operate in an environment that invests in, rather than seeks to stifle, pluralism and diversity.
- Second, we must have an extensive and engaged civil society.

- And third, we must have stable and competent democratic governance.

These three conditions are mutually reinforcing. Taken together, they allow developing societies gradually to become masters of the process and make that process self sustainable.

I will speak first about pluralism.

The effective world of the future will be one of pluralism, a world that understands, appreciates and builds on diversity. The rejection of pluralism plays a significant role in breeding destructive conflicts, from which no continent has been spared in recent decades.

But pluralist societies are not accidents of history. They are a product of enlightened education and continuous investment by governments and all of civil society in recognising and celebrating the diversity of the world's peoples.

What is being done to support this key value for society and for democracy in Asia and Africa, to pre-empt catastrophe, rather than simply respond to it?

The Aga Khan Development Network intends to help create some permanent institutional capacity to address this critical issue through a Global Centre for Pluralism. It will be based in Ottawa to draw from Canada's successful record in constructing and sustaining pluralist civil society. The centre will work closely with governments and with academia and civil society around the world.

The centre will seek to foster legislation and policy to strengthen developing countries' capacity for enhancing pluralism in all spheres of modern life: including law, justice, the arts, the media, financial services, health and education.

I believe leadership everywhere must continuously work to ensure that pluralism, and all its benefits, become top global priorities.

In this effort, civil society has a vital role. By its very nature, civil society is pluralist because it seeks to speak for the multiple interests not represented by the state. I refer, for example, to organisations which ensure best practices such as legal societies and associations of accountants, doctors and engineers. The meritocracy they represent is the very foundation of pluralism. And meritocracy is one of the principles of democracy itself.

Village organisations, women's and student groups, micro-credit entities and agricultural co-operatives help give access and voice to those who often are disenfranchised.

Journalist associations also play a key role, explaining the political process, guarding against corruption and keeping governments accountable. Responsible reporting and competent comment on critical issues, and the hard choices that society must address, are an essential element in the functioning of a democracy.

Civil society organisations make a major contribution to human development, particularly when democracies are failing, or have failed; for it is then that the institutions of civil society can, and often do, carry an added burden to help sustain improvements in quality of life.

I believe strongly that a critical part of any development strategy should include support for civil society. I know that Norway supports this approach and works actively with its own civil society organizations to build capacity in the developing world. Twinning civil society institutions is a promising approach, to which the Aga Khan Development Network institutions and programmes are very receptive.

Let me turn now to the question of democratic governance. If we were to look at a map of the world that charted armed conflicts in the last 15 years, it would show that nearly two thirds have occurred in the developing countries of Asia and Africa. More than 80 per cent were internal conflicts, either full-blown civil wars or state-sanctioned aggression against minorities in those countries.

In nearly every instance, these internal conflicts were predictable because they were the culmination of a gradual deterioration in pluralist, inclusive governance. In too many cases – and I can speak here of our experiences in Uganda, Bangladesh, Tajikistan and Afghanistan – this sad but foreseeable turn of events has had severely adverse effects lasting more than a generation.

The question I have is this: if these breakdowns in governance were predictable, why was the international community powerless to get engaged at the early stages to help arrest the deterioration and avoid the suffering that resulted? Secondly, are there common factors in the majority of these situations which are insufficiently recognized?

I suggest to you that a major problem is that the industrialised world too often is severely lacking in credible information about the forces at play in the developing world.

Take as an example the phrase “clash of civilisations” which has travelled far and wide. I have said many times previously, and I would like to reconfirm today my conviction that what we have been observing in recent decades is not a clash of civilisations but a clash of ignorance. This ignorance is both historic and of our time.

This is not the occasion to analyse the historic causes of the deep ignorance that exists between the Judeo-Christian and Muslim worlds. But I am convinced that many of today's

problems could have been avoided if there had been better understanding and more serious dialogue between the two.

The issue of ignorance, or lack of solid information, and its impact on our world today, is illustrated by events in Iraq. No less deplorable is that the 9/11 attack on the United States was a direct consequence of the international community ignoring the human tragedy that was Afghanistan at that time. Both the Afghan and Iraqi situations were driven by lack of precise information and understanding.

My fundamental point is this: Since the collapse of the Cold War, the need has grown exponentially for the world's leaders to be able to understand, and properly predict, what is likely to happen in parts of the world in which they previously had no reason to be involved.

The task of addressing this need cannot be met by the resources presently being engaged.

I note that Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Petersen, spoke of this very problem just last week in Beijing. He called for the international community to provide assistance in governance for fragile states that is, and I quote: "more systematic, more strategic, more persevering and more reliable."

My suggestion is to examine this question in depth.

Let me share with you some real world field examples. Just as we read about the supposed clash of civilisations, we read about so-called "failed states." In fact, at least in my definition of a state, it cannot fail. What we are observing in reality is the massive failure of democracy around the world.

I estimate that some 40% of the states of the United Nations are failed democracies. Depending upon the definitions applied, between 450 million and 900 million people currently live in countries under severe or moderate stress as a result of these failures.

To me, therefore, a central question is why these democracies are failing and what can the world's nations and international organisations do to sustain their competence and stability.

Let me now illustrate some specific issues which I believe are contributing to this fragility.

A number of countries in which we are active have opted to harness enormous resources to universal primary education, causing a significant under-expenditure on secondary and tertiary education. This educational policy originated from a number of ill-advised social economists in the early 60s.

This degradation of secondary and tertiary education is not a new phenomenon. It is being made significantly worse today due to the lack of educational resources available to secondary and tertiary students who, after all, will represent the leaders of tomorrow.

Secondly, if governance is a science, as I believe it is, developing countries must educate about governance at secondary and tertiary levels. Otherwise, they deprive their intelligentsia of academic grounding in the critical knowledge of how democratic states operate.

A survey today in secondary schools or universities in Africa or Asia would find that “government,” as a subject in its own right, is either non-existent or given low priority.

It is clear that over the next decades, a large number of countries will be designing new constitutions, or refining existing ones, and new regional groupings will come into place. Many young democracies will spawn new political structures. But where are the men and women who will lead?

Just as education in governance is weak, the developing world continues to suffer from insufficient support to certain liberal professions which are critical to democracy. In my experience, the teaching profession and journalism are failing to attract the level of men and women who are essential for these liberal professions to make their appropriate contribution to democracy.

The challenge is therefore, clear. We must create the human and institutional resources to build and sustain young democracies.

As long as the developed world hesitates to commit long term investment towards education for democracy, and instead laments the issue of so-called failed states, much of the developing world will continue to face bleak prospects for democracy.

And the West should not discount that an accumulation of failed democracies could be a serious threat to itself and its values, capable of causing – if not conflict – deep under currents of stress among societies.

Ladies and Gentlemen, what seems apparent today is that the developed world must find the resources to provide consistent and meaningful assistance to fragile states struggling with democratic governance.

The world cannot sit by while countries spiral into crisis.

Some of the things we can do, I suggest to you, are as follows:

- A greater commitment to build capacity in the developing world to teach the science of government
- An aggressive effort to support indigenous civil society, both to assist in the building of democracies and to provide a buttress in times of stress.
- Active encouragement and support for pluralism.
- And above all, we must set about to improve knowledge and understanding of the factors in the developing world that are encouraging or undermining democratic governance.

Thank you.





## Opening ceremony of the IPI World Congress and 54th general assembly

22 May 2005, Nairobi, Kenya

Your Excellency President Kibaki,  
Your Excellency President Kagame,  
Mr. Fritz,  
Mr. Kiboro,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

My thanks to you, Mr. Kiboro, for your kind words and to the International Press Institute for your warm welcome.

Twenty-four years ago I had the honour of addressing this organisation at its 30th annual conference, also held here in Nairobi. Twenty-one years before that, in 1960, I established the Nation newspapers here.

At that time, many African nations had freshly emerged from colonial rule, and I believed that good journalism could play a critical role in their development.

Some may ask why a Muslim spiritual leader would get involved in the media business. In all interpretations of Islam, Imams are required to lead not only in interpreting the faith but also in improving the quality of life for the people who refer to them.

This ethical premise is the foundation of the Aga Khan Development Network, which has long been serving the developing world without regard to ethnicity, gender or race. My commitment to African media has been within this framework.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the quarter century since I first addressed IPI, both the state of governance and the state of the media in Africa have shown encouraging progress.

Not only has Africa moved beyond the worst legacies of colonialism, but it has also moved beyond the rigid constraints of the Cold War. Old dogmatisms, both of East and West, have given way to a new pragmatism—a new freedom to innovate, to experiment and to find African answers to African challenges.

Africa has learned a lot about democracy in these years—its fragility and its potential. Increasingly governments are expected to change hands peacefully, to cooperate regionally, to attract the capable and to punish the corrupt. And the progress reaches beyond governments. As the Economic Commission for Africa concluded in its recent report: “Civil society and the media have increased their voice and power in the last decade of democratic reforms.”

But there is still a long way to go - in the media field among others.

Let me begin with a concern which IPI has raised in its annual report: the erosion of press freedom in some African countries.

Respect for press freedom, it seems to me, grows out of a respect for pluralism as a cornerstone of peace and progress. Pluralism implies a readiness to listen to many voices - whether we agree with them or not - and a readiness to embrace a rich diversity of cultures.

When our diversity divides us, the results can be tragic - as we have seen in Rwanda, the Ivory Coast, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Sudan. But when we welcome diversity - and the debate and dissent that goes with it - we sow the seeds of stability and progress.

My concern for diversity and open expression was reflected recently as The Aga Khan Development Network joined with the Government of Canada to establish a Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. Its mission is to promote pluralist values and practices in culturally diverse societies worldwide, including here in Africa.

The Centre will work with governments, academia and civil society, to enhance pluralism in every sphere - including the media.

But there is a second media-related question that I want to raise with you today, and that concerns the adequacy of journalistic knowledge in an increasingly complicated world.

What I often hear from Africa's leaders these days are serious misgivings about the depth of that knowledge, and genuine doubts about the breadth of understanding that many journalists bring to difficult issues. Clearly, a deeper and broader knowledge base will be a key to the future of African journalism.

This means that journalists must move beyond a primarily adversarial relationship with those they write about.

To be sure, the role of independent critic can be a vital role - but it is not the only role.

If the dominating assumption of media is that the rest of society is up to no good, that the best journalism is what many call "gotcha" journalism, then the media will forfeit a more constructive and nobler role.

I believe that the best journalists are NOT those who think they know everything, but those who are wise enough to know what they do not know. Excellence in journalism, it seems to me, stems not from arrogant judgmentalism but from intellectual humility. As a wise judge once put it: "The spirit of liberty is the spirit that is not too sure that it is right."

The major issues in Africa today are complex and elusive - and old approaches have often failed. But every day, leaders in Africa and elsewhere are thinking in new ways.

The revolution in bio-engineering, for example, promises to change rural societies as the old industrial engineering once reshaped urban landscapes. Genetic research - like the stem-cell breakthroughs which dominated front pages across the world just two days ago - will transform our approaches to personal and public health, including scourges like AIDS and malaria.

Meanwhile, the physical sciences offer new ways to think about the impact of climate change on Africa - and on its food and water supply. New information technologies will transform education throughout Africa - including the most remote rural areas, even as they re-energize non-industrial economies.

One of the most exciting aspects of scientific progress in the 21st century is that so much of it can be applied so directly in the rural environments of the developing world.

We no longer need to be urban in order to be modern.

My central question today, however, is whether we have enough good journalists who know enough about these subjects - and can help African audiences understand their African implications.

Good journalism is never easy - especially in an constantly-changing, impossibly fragmented and highly unpredictable world.

To monitor this world hour by hour, day after day, under deadlines pressures and often with inadequate resources - this is a daunting task.

But there are some ways to help.

For a start, we need to increase dialogue and communication among journalists and those they write about - politicians, civil servants, business and religious leaders, the voices of civil society.

There are models for such exchange elsewhere in the world, including programmes which permit journalists to spend time working within the institutions they report about.

I could be a bit mischievous here and suggest some possibilities that might result if all the media employees ran the government for a month or two - and all government employees ran the media! But I will resist the temptation.

My serious point is that the media and those it covers could do much more to build bridges of mutual understanding. On the media side, this ought to mean more rigorous research - what I call "anticipatory research" - at the start of the reporting and writing process. Cultivating knowledge is as important as cultivating sources.

But the sources can also do more to help. Off-the-record background briefings, for example, are regular and routine in the West, but they are relatively rare in Africa. Some journalists have difficulty getting responses even to their direct requests. The habit of sharing information is a habit which Africa needs to hone.

Another challenge for African journalism is that we cannot find enough competently educated people.

Good journalism requires the best we can muster in terms of disciplined learning, intelligent analysis, prudent judgment, and nuanced expression. Most particularly, it requires people who can write clear and compelling prose. These are not qualities easily found in any society.

But the problem is particularly severe in Africa. The continent is desperately short of the well educated people it needs, not just in the liberal arts, but in virtually every field.

In an ideal world, journalists would be educated in the nuances of the beats they cover - and new beats which are emerging. Scientific sophistication, economic acumen, political subtlety, legal and medical expertise - all these skills should be present in our newsrooms as matter of course.

There are understandable reasons why this ideal is still not realized. For one thing, journalism has not been seen as a desirable profession. Too many young Africans, for too long, saw the journalist as a mere propagandist. And for many years journalism was a highly dangerous profession. Between 1985 and 1995, 108 journalists were killed in Africa and that risk, while diminishing, is still a reality.

Low compensation levels are another problem. Most African journalists are paid substantially less than those who enter other liberal professions. In addition, the quality of journalism education in Africa has often been deteriorating.

But none of these problems is intractable. I believe that a concerted effort to invest in the quality of African journalism can launch an upward spiral of progress.

There is one other front on which the battle must be waged, however, and it has to do with media owners and managers. Too often, those who set the media agenda see it primarily as a business agenda. Too often the measure of media success is simply financial profit.

I think this attitude is wrong - it often makes for manipulative media, distorting and misleading in a narrow pursuit of readers and ratings.

It means that journalism is subordinated to entertainment, and that the need to inform must yield to the need to please.

Responsible and relevant reporting is NOT the priority in that business model. Instead, the power of the press is used to turn traditional value systems on their heads - to take what is really quite unimportant and to make it seem very important, to take what is trivial and to make it seem titillating. In that context, what is most truly significant must yield to what is most readily saleable.

The damage that can be done by such distorted journalism is especially heavy in Africa, offending African value systems, distracting African energies and mis-serving African development.

Manipulative journalism is not merely a nuisance here - it can have destructive power.

Yet journalism at its best can be a strong pillar in building Africa's future.

One disadvantage, of being both a media proprietor and a media critic is that one is eventually obliged to follow one's own advice!

I am pleased to tell you, therefore, that our own Nation Media Group has been taking on these challenges.

Our need for competent journalists has been expanding as we have grown in the last decade from a small newspaper company - publishing daily in one country, into a multi-national, multi-media company, with publications in three countries, along with a growing radio, television and internet presence.

To improve our human resource base, we have been organizing school outreach programs, designed to attract more of the best and brightest students to the profession. We have revamped our compensation systems - and put new emphasis on life-long education and training. And this work continues.

Ladies and gentlemen, one cannot work in international development for nearly fifty years without being optimistic about the potential for human progress.

That outlook, and my connections to this region going back to childhood, allow me to say with confidence that the Promise and Potential of Africa is great. Equally, forty-some years in the African media business have convinced me that the media can play a vital role in the African development story.

Working in partnership with governments, with the private sector and with the institutions of civil society, African media can - I am sure - be a burgeoning source of relevant and responsible information, a reliable locus of competent comment and insight, a constructive and cooperative partner even as it remains a free and independent player, commercially successful at the same time that it is socially responsible.

If that happens, then the African press will indeed be a leading force in fulfilling the Promise and Potential of Africa.





## Foundation ceremony of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat

### LOCATION

Ottawa, Canada (6 June 2005)

Your Excellency the Governor General  
Your Worship  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am deeply touched by Your Excellency's kind words and generous welcome. I also thank the Government of Canada for the kindness and courtesies that have been extended to me during this and many other visits, and Your Worship for the hospitality of this beautiful city. I am particularly happy to welcome, and thank our distinguished guests for being with us on an occasion that is of special significance to the Ismaili community and Imamat. For it marks a cherished moment, a milestone, in the forward flow of a valued relationship.

Nearly three and a half decades ago, Canada opened her shores to dispossessed thousands – Ismailis and others – who had been expelled from their homeland, Uganda, which was then in the grip of a brutal tyranny. Many, from such distressed lands as Afghanistan and Tajikistan, have also found, here, a welcome home.

With industry, intelligence, education and self-help, but above all, with all the reassurances that a just, pluralist society bestows, they were able rapidly to rebuild their lives and institutions, and are discharging their responsibilities as citizens of this great



land and to the less privileged elsewhere. Today's occasion is, therefore, an appropriate opportunity to renew, on behalf of the Ismaili community and myself as their Imam, our lasting gratitude to the Government and people of Canada. The event which brings us together – the initiation of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam – is a celebration of the Ismaili community's permanent presence in, and commitment to Canada. Reflecting the pluralism of the Muslim world generally, the Ismailis are a richly diverse community within the Shia branch of Islam, who belong to distinct ethno-geographic and linguistic traditions, namely, Arab, Iranian, Central Asian, Chinese and South Asian. They live across Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, while in recent decades they have also established a substantial presence in North America and Europe. The Ismailis are, thus, a transnational community who are, first and foremost, active and loyal citizens of the countries where they live, though in outlook they transcend the divisions of North and South, East and West. Whatever the context of their lives, they all share, like other Muslims, the commitment to an ethic whose values converge on the inherent dignity of the human person as the noblest of creation. Historically, Ismailis are united by a common allegiance to the living hereditary Imam of the time in the progeny of Islam's last and final Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him) through his daughter Fatima and her husband, Hazrat Ali, the Prophet's cousin and the first Shia Imam. In the Muslim ethical tradition, which links spirit and matter, the Imam not only leads in the interpretation of the faith, but also in the effort to improve the quality of life of his community, and of the wider societies within which it lives; for a guiding principle of the

Imamat's institutions is to replace walls which divide with bridges that unite.

It is an honour and privilege to have Your Excellency with us at this initiation of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam. I also thank the National Capital Commission under the leadership of Chairman Marcel Beaudry, His Worship Mayor Robert Chiarelli, and Councillor Georges Bedard of the City of Ottawa, in whose ward the Delegation is located, and the capital's civic leadership generally for their vital support and consistent encouragement in the search for this site and its development.

The Delegation will serve a representational role for the Imam and its non-denominational, philanthropic and development agencies which constitute the Aga Khan Development Network – the AKDN. An open, secular facility, the Delegation will be a sanctuary for peaceful, quiet diplomacy, informed by the Imam's outlook of global convergence and the development of civil society. It will be an enabling venue for fruitful public engagements, information services and educational programmes, all backed up by high quality research, to sustain a vibrant intellectual centre, and a key policy-informing institution.

The architectural planning has been entrusted to the capable hands of Fumihiko Maki, an architect of world standing. Maki and Associates have my enthusiastic admiration for addressing, with tact and empathy, challenges of design which are difficult and subtle. They call for translating concepts that have a context in our faith and our history, yet stride boldly and confidently ahead, into modernity; for expressing both the exoteric and the esoteric, and our awe and humility towards the mysteries of Nature, Time and beyond. The outcome is an inter-play of multiple facets, like rock crystal. In it are

platforms of pure but translucent horizontality. Light's full spectrum comes alive and disappears as the eye moves. In Islam the divine is reflected in Nature's creation.

The building will rest on a solid linear granite podium. Above it will be a glass dome through which light will illuminate, from multiple directions, two symbolic spaces: an interior atrium and an exterior courtyard landscaped in four quarters, recalling the traditional Persian – Islamic garden, the Chahr-bagh. Nature, through the greenery of trees and flowers, will be on the site, but also in the building, just as we are sometimes able to see leaves and petals captured in rock crystal, but still visible through its unique translucency. The building will be a metaphor for humanism and enlightenment and for the humility that comes from the constant search for answers that leads inevitably to more questions. The Delegation, with its openness and transparency, will be a symbolic seat for the Imam's permanent presence in Canada, and a platform for constructive exchanges that mutually broaden moral and intellectual horizons. It will be a window for the AKDN to reinforce existing, and cultivate new, partnerships with national and international agencies present in Ottawa, that share the ethic of contributing to an improved quality of life in the developing world. This concern to improve the human condition underlines the long standing relationship of the Ismaili Imam and the AKDN with Canada's Government and civil society institutions in many parts of Africa and Asia. Our presence in these areas, home to some of the most disadvantaged and diverse populations in the world, has exposed us jointly to a realistic appreciation of the problems of persistent under development, namely that human progress can only be sustained when people are able to participate in their own governance. Parliamentary elections are only one aspect of participation. Equally or perhaps more important is the access to a healthy, multi-faceted civil society pervading all areas of human interaction, rural and urban, able to seek out, and harness, the best from all segments of the population.

Successful experience with democracy, civil society and pluralism are the national genius of Canada of which much of the developing world is in dire need. As an example – and there are many – of how these Canadian assets can help transform living conditions, I often cite our experience in Northern Pakistan, a case study situation of poor development prospects in a harsh, sparsely endowed physical environment, further beset by ethnic and religious hostilities. The AKDN has been present there for over twenty years, with CIDA as a lead partner. Our joint micro experiment with grassroots democracy, civil society and pluralism has been the spring board for a dramatic trebling of per capita incomes, with corresponding improvements in social services and cultural awareness in what was once one of the poorest areas on earth. Tensions occasionally resurface, incited by mischief; but by and large, where once there was conflict born of despair and past memories, there is now a spirit of consensus built around hope in the future. This is, therefore, a good opportunity to acknowledge gratefully Canada's intellectual, institutional and financial contribution to a partnership with the AKDN in the creation of the new Global Centre for Pluralism here in Ottawa. A tribute to, and drawing on, Canada's experience of pluralist democracy, this research and education Centre will work closely with governments, academia and civil society in culturally diverse countries. The aim will be to foster policy and legislation, that enables

pluralism to take root in all spheres of modern life: law, justice, the arts, media, financial services, health and education.

It is heartening that, in a report of March this year, the Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs and International Trade recognized the critical importance of developing partnerships with the countries of the Muslim world. It stressed the need to work, not only with their governments, but also with civil society and minorities, in realizing Canada's key international policy objectives of sharing her experience of good governance and economic development. Acknowledging the contribution of Muslim civilisation to the West's own development, and Islam's affinity to the values of pluralism and liberal democratic principles, the Committee and the Government have signalled the intention to take steps to improve mutual understanding between Canada and the Muslim world.

The Delegation of the Ismaili Imam in the federal capital, the new Aga Khan Museum and the Ismaili Centre to be built in Toronto, are symbols of this seriousness and respect that Canada, leading the West generally, accords to the world of Islam, of which the Ismaili Community, though a diverse minority itself, is fully representative. May this mutual understanding, so important to the future stability and progress of our world, flourish many fold. It is my sincere hope that, by its presence and the functions it fulfils, the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam will be an illuminating landmark on "the Mile of History". An epitome of friendship to one and all, it will radiate Islam's precepts of one humanity, the dignity of man, and the nobility of joint striving in deeds of goodness.

Thank you.



## American University of Beirut

25 June 2005, Beirut, Lebanon

President Waterbury,  
Honoured Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am most grateful to the American University of Beirut for this award. I accept it with much happiness and humility, cognisant of the great distinction and achievements of fellow recipients whom the University is also honouring.

I have a personal reason for being particularly pleased and grateful for the honour which AUB is bestowing upon me today: as I was completing my undergraduate years in Islamic studies at Harvard, I had been looking forward to further these studies at the post-graduate level in the Islamic world, and my choice at that time was AUB.

These post-graduate studies never became part of my life, as I inherited my responsibilities as Imam of Shia Ismaili Muslims upon my grandfather's death in 1957 while I was still an undergraduate.

Although I have never therefore been an enrolled student here, this great university has always been part of my academic horizon, where some 40 years ago, I supported the introduction of studies in Muslim civilisations and cultures through an Aga Khan Chair in that discipline.

This long relationship has been further strengthened by the valued support which AUB's faculty of architecture has given the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. AUB is now a founding partner in the development of ArchNet, a pioneering joint effort by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that offers a global, online research tool in the built environments of Muslim societies.

It is my hope that AUB will also collaborate in the new Global Centre for Pluralism that we are establishing in Ottawa, in partnership with the Canadian Government. This research and education centre will work with governments, academia, and civil societies in culturally diverse countries worldwide to help develop the tools and policy frameworks for promoting pluralist values and practices in all spheres of modern life.

AUB is eminently placed to contribute to this endeavour given its steadfast commitment to the ethic of inclusiveness. Nobody will forget the immense price that this university paid in the Lebanese civil war, but even this failed to deter it from its mission of building tolerance and understanding – so critical in the culturally diverse Lebanese society.

The University's fidelity to its founding notion that disciplined, objective inquiry is the property of all humanity, attracts faculty and students of high calibre from dozens of countries and cultures, challenged not only to excel in their chosen fields, but to place their knowledge in the wider context of humanity's pluralist heritage.

This is a core principle of my own faith – Islam – that learning is ennobling, regardless of the geographic or cultural origin of the knowledge we acquire.

Such teachings spurred a spiritually liberated people to new waves of adventure in the realms of the spirit and the intellect, amongst whose visible symbols were the University of al-Azhar and Dar al-Ilm established by my Fatimid ancestors in Cairo, and the illustrious counterpart institutions in Baghdad, Cordova, Bukhara, Samarkand and other Muslim centres.

There is an intimate, centuries-old link between the most glorious periods in Muslim and Judeo-Christian civilisations and their institutions of higher learning. In those terms, AUB is relatively young with a history that goes back nearly a century and a half, but it is recognised worldwide that during those 139 years, it has had an influence over Lebanon, and the region more generally, infinitely greater than its age. Clearly, it has chosen with great wisdom those areas of knowledge which are particularly important for the future of the peoples in this part of the world, educating men and women to graduate with outstanding qualities of leadership.

The sentiments, which shaped this link, enlivening the great and civilising exchanges of knowledge and wisdom, are very much evident on this campus today. They are a legacy that is the strongest shield against clashes of ignorance.

Thank You.



## Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan upon receiving Die Quadriga 2005 Prize

03 October 2005, Berlin, Germany

**“I am fortunate to lead an international community with a strong social conscience. Bridging North and South, East and West, the Ismailis have a long tradition of philanthropy, self-reliance and voluntary service. Wherever they live, they faithfully abide by the Quranic ethic of a common humanity and the dignity of man. They willingly pool knowledge and resources with all those who share our social ethic to help improve the quality of life of less fortunate men, women and children.”**

I am deeply touched by the generosity of the remarks by President Karzai, an honoured Die Quadriga alumnus. His engagement and foresightedness are an inspiration to the Afghan people as they reclaim their proud nationhood and struggle to build a future of promise. We salute them and stand shoulder to shoulder with them.



Thank you also, President Mkapa, for honouring us with your presence. Yours has been an exemplary leadership for your people's fight against poverty, and their commitment to peace and harmony at home and within the region.

I am delighted to return once again to Germany on a day that marks the nation's reunification and its commitment to a strong democratic future.

It is a great honour to be among the distinguished recipients, past and present, of an award which celebrates the four virtues of harmony, friendship, valour and state wisdom. An enduring foundation of societal welfare, these values are at the heart of the ethics of Islam that guide the institutions of the Ismaili Imamate. The Die Quadriga organisers and sponsors are to be highly commended for seeking to uphold them for global peace and progress.

I accept the "United We Care" Award with much gratitude, and still greater humility. The credit for it belongs to many.

I am fortunate to lead an international community with a strong social conscience. Bridging North and South, East and West, the Ismailis have a long tradition of philanthropy, self-reliance and voluntary service.

Wherever they live, they faithfully abide by the Quranic ethic of a common humanity and the dignity of man. They willingly pool knowledge and resources with all those who share our social ethic to help improve the quality of life of less fortunate men, women and children.

This is the impulse that drives the Aga Khan Development Network, the AKDN. To understand this dimension of the religious office I hold, one must appreciate that Islam encompasses both the spiritual and the secular. This unity underpins an unrelenting effort towards an equitable order, where the vulnerable are helped to regain the dignity of self-fulfilment.

Long active in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, South and Central Asia, the AKDN agencies and programmes help advance human development – cultural, economic and social. Experience convinces us that human progress can only be achieved and sustained when it is anchored in grassroots institutions of civil society, able to harness merit and build on pluralism, as bedrocks of democracy. We assist in building these organisations as well as for-profit institutions.

Our horizons, therefore, are long-term, promoting local capacities for self-development. The emphasis on cultural values helps people manage forces of change.

Many national and international, public and private, development agencies support our activities, in partnership with thousands of dedicated volunteers and professionals from

different faiths and cultures. The German government works with us in strategically critical regions.

We are encouraged the World Bank has identified AKDN programmes, as far afield as Pakistan, Tajikistan and East Africa, as examples to scale up for global poverty reduction.

This Award is, therefore, a tribute to many: our institutional and individual collaborators, our volunteers, and, above all, to all those who struggle hard to take charge of their own development and destiny.



## Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan upon receiving the Carnegie Medal for Philanthropy

04 October 2005, Edinburgh, Scotland

**“The achievements of the AKDN would not be possible without the tireless contributions of the global community of Ismailis that I lead, residing in Central and Southern Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America. Our volunteers and contributors also include many thousands of others from multiple cultures and faiths around the world. They are united with us in our mission to help build capacity and dignity for individuals, to enable them to take control of their own development.”**

Presiding Officer,  
First Minister,  
My Lords and Ladies,  
Fellow Recipients,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

My sincere thanks to the Scottish Parliament for welcoming us here today in this magnificent building, in the homeland of Andrew Carnegie.

Dr. Robinson, thank you for your most generous remarks. It is especially humbling to hear these kind words from an individual of such great accomplishment, who has served not only her own country with distinction, but also the global cause of human rights.

My thanks also to the worldwide network of Carnegie foundations, both for your continuing commitment to international development, and for your efforts to encourage generosity that crosses borders. The vision and the legacy of Andrew Carnegie, who was a role model for progressive philanthropy, are being well served by his successors.

And thank you also for the very great honour of this award. It is extremely gratifying to be counted among the accomplished recipients here today, as well as those of previous years, whose commitment to improving the dignity of humanity is a profound force for good in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, individual philanthropy is an important duty in all the major religions of the world.

In Islam, the Holy Quran offers explicit direction to share resources beyond one's requirements, and to care for the poor and those in need. The injunction to service is the ethical underpinning of the work of the Aga Khan Development Network. It drives its efforts to build the intellectual capital and institutions needed to address the problems of our world today. An example is the Global Centre for Pluralism which we have recently founded in partnership with the Government of Canada.

The achievements of the AKDN would not be possible without the tireless contributions of the global community of Ismailis that I lead, residing in Central and Southern Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe and North America. Our volunteers and contributors also include many thousands of others from multiple cultures and faiths around the world. They are united with us in our mission to help build capacity and dignity for individuals, to enable them to take control of their own development.

These volunteers include those who contribute to the governance of the 200 entities of the AKDN in more than 30 countries, many others who support co-operatives, craft guilds, village organisations and women's groups, and still others who work closely with the vast array of grassroots civil society organisations that form the bedrock of our activities.

It is on behalf of these many thousands of selfless and dedicated men and women of multiple languages, cultures, faiths and nationalities, urban and rural, that I accept this award today.

Thank you.



## Opening of the Kabul Serena hotel

08 November 2005, Kabul, Afghanistan

President Karzai,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is my immense happiness and privilege to welcome you all as we celebrate the inauguration of one of Kabul's restored landmarks. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those professionals, architects, construction trades, staff and volunteers who have worked so hard, under so many constraints, to build this hotel and prepare it for today's opening.

The presence here of so many government leaders and so many other distinguished guests, marks this event as an important milestone in Afghanistan's reconstruction and its re-engagement with the world community.

Today's ceremony is also an occasion to pay tribute to President Karzai and his cabinet for their steadfast commitment to the task of rebuilding this country and helping its people regain their proud nationhood.

Ladies and gentlemen, there are some who will ask: why build an hotel in Afghanistan at this stage of its struggle for development? And why build one of a five star level?

In 2002, the Government of Afghanistan asked the Aga Khan Development Network – the AKDN - to help in restoring Kabul's hotel capacity, which had been almost totally destroyed by the civil war.

The government wanted to ensure that state visitors, diplomats, government officials, foreign and local investors, donor agency representatives and tourists travelling to Kabul would have acceptable accommodation. The Kabul Hotel had been a notable landmark and centre of activity in the city since it was built in 1945; hence it was an obvious candidate for restoration.

In post-conflict situations, countries must make choices in how to rebuild themselves. One way would be to accept the mediocre or run-of-the-mill and to be satisfied with what is second best. The other way is to see reconstruction as an opportunity to draw upon the world's state-of-the-art technologies and standards, using them to jump-start the economy and to help bring it to a new and higher plane. I cannot believe that replacing a collapsed society and environment with mediocrity is the right way for a destroyed country to rebuild for its future.

Certainly, Germany, Japan and South Korea, now among the leading economies of the world, have clearly demonstrated in the not-so-distant past that the second approach to post-conflict reconstruction is the one that has the most lasting impact. I believe that is the approach we, AKDN, must take in Afghanistan, just as we have done in other post-conflict situations where we have been engaged, such as Tajikistan, Uganda and Mozambique.

As a significant development asset, the Kabul Serena Hotel is a major commitment within the broader mission of the AKDN's nine development agencies which work in concert on the many facets of human development. Regardless of gender, origin or faith, the AKDN strives to help the weakest in society to achieve self reliance in improving their lives, guided by the Quranic ethic of a common humanity and the dignity of all mankind.

AKDN affiliate agencies began that mission in Afghanistan in 1995 with refugee resettlement and emergency humanitarian assistance. Since 2001, our agencies have been engaged in longer term development across the full spectrum of human need: economic, social and cultural.

AKDN takes an area-based approach. Drawing on its experience of many years in diverse environments, we have learned that development is an integrated process. This requires us to work simultaneously across multiple sectors, and in spheres both public and private.

Working in close partnership with the Government ensures that, together, we focus on national priorities and address critical issues. We believe that the principal issue is the need to build a vibrant civil society to help develop economic, social and cultural institutions to serve people in rural and urban settings. We have thus been cooperating with the Government in expanding a community development programme through the creation of village-based Community Development Councils, enabling us to direct attention to priorities that people themselves identify. A thousand of these institutions are expected to be functioning by next year.

It is heartening that a recent external evaluation, commissioned by the World Bank, found this AKDN approach innovative and effective in forming credible, legitimate and self-reliant institutions. The report commended the outcome as a significant contribution to democratic governance and civil society development in the country. This observation corresponds to our experience in many countries, similar to that of the United Nations, that a healthy civil society is indispensable to fostering and legitimizing pluralism which itself is the foundation of democratic government. This remains a paramount challenge.

In the health sector, we are training health and medical personnel, the priority being the training of midwives and nurses. The AKDN's nursing education programme has been endorsed by the Ministry as the national nursing education standard for Afghanistan. Besides many health clinics, the AKDN also manages the Bamiyan Hospital, the province's only referral centre, whose facilities have been considerably upgraded by us, and a new ward block opened earlier this year.

In education, the AKDN is engaged in the rehabilitation and construction of 132 schools, and is working on curriculum development, teacher education and training in the disciplines related to the management of schools and education programmes.

In the economic sphere, we are using microfinance to support rural development and small scale enterprises. The First Micro Finance Bank and the Rural Micro credit Programme set up by us have a combined loan portfolio of some US\$ 12 million, and operate in Kabul, Pul-e-Khumri, Mazar-e-Sharif and Herat. We expect their portfolio to triple by 2007 and their branch network is extending throughout the country. We are building productive infrastructure, including roads, bridges, mini-hydel and irrigation systems that are having a major impact on enhancing access and income opportunities in the areas where we operate.

We are also establishing enterprises, such as this hotel, that we believe are strategic to the national economy. These investments are managed by another AKDN development agency: The Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development, or AKFED. AKFED is dedicated to building



economically-sound enterprises in countries of Asia and Africa where foreign-direct investment and management know-how are in short supply, and where many private investors regard the risk as too great. The focus is not on profit, but on people. We seek ways to transfer knowledge and technical capacity to local citizens and to the national economy to generate an economic ripple effect.

This is the AKFED development agenda in the countries where we are active, from Afghanistan to Uganda, almost always at the invitation of the government concerned. All AKFED strategic investments are made in close consultation with the government, focusing on the key sectors of industry, infrastructure, media, financial services, air transport and the leisure industry.

Here in Afghanistan, AKFED has also helped build telecommunications infrastructure with the creation of Roshan, the brand name under which its Telephone Development Company operates. This too was a strategic investment in the light of the extensive damage that the sector had suffered during the hostilities. The Roshan network now serves 45 urban centres and about 100 small towns. Roshan has created more than 500 jobs, making it one of the largest employers in the country. Indirect employment has been much greater, estimated at about 7000. Roshan has contributed in fees, duties and taxes more than \$ 50 million to the Government coffers. I believe the contribution that Roshan has made to the country's unity and productivity has been immeasurable.

Ladies and gentlemen, before I conclude please allow me to explain briefly why we attach importance to our work in the field of culture.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture has taken on several important projects, beginning with the restoration of historic gardens, the Bagh-e-Babur, the burial site of the founder of the Mughal Empire. We have also restored the Mausoleum of Timur Shah, regarded by many historians as the founder of modern Afghanistan. And we are working in the historic neighbourhood of Asheqan wa Arefan in Kabul, as well as in the Bar Durrani quarter of Herat. Historic cities most often attract the poorest amongst the poor, and therefore rehabilitating these spaces creates new opportunity for the most tragically marginalized.

Our experience in situations as diverse as remote parts of Northern Pakistan, to Delhi, Zanzibar and Central Cairo, is that the restoration of historic communities and important cultural assets serves as a trampoline for economic development. The restoration activity is a source of direct employment for workers and skilled craftsmen, many of whom live in adjacent neighbourhoods. The refurbished facilities themselves become an attraction for tourists, generating more opportunity. And as the residents of surrounding areas find themselves with new sources of income, they spend some of it improving their own homes and neighbourhoods.

These are the pragmatic reasons for revitalizing a nation's cultural assets. But equally, and perhaps, more important, these activities are restoring and preserving for Afghanistan its

historic identity, whose rich pluralist heritage has suffered extraordinary stresses in recent decades. Afghanistan's historic geographic place at the cross-roads in the flow of goods, ideas, faiths and cultures between East and West, is the very essence of Afghanistan's international distinctiveness. It is also a heritage for the world to cherish.

Our consistent engagement on the entire development front, in many regions of Afghanistan, has meant, happily, that we have greatly surpassed our initial pledge of \$ 75 million, announced in 2002 at the Tokyo conference.

The Aga Khan Development Network and its partners have, together, expended \$380 million, of which \$150 million – twice our Tokyo pledge - has come from the Network's own resources. These funds have almost evenly been dedicated, on the one hand, to humanitarian assistance, rural development, health care, education and cultural revitalization; and, on the other hand, to productive economic investments. We are committed to these endeavours, and to scaling them up as circumstances permit.

This is, therefore, an appropriate occasion to acknowledge and thank our partners, who range from the World Bank, Asia Development Bank, the United Nations, and the European Community to the national development agencies of many countries. These last include agencies from Britain and Canada, France and Germany, India, the Netherlands and Norway, Switzerland, Japan and the U.S.A.

Together with the Government and people of Afghanistan, we all share a common goal: to enable the people of Afghanistan to determine their own future and to rebuild their nation.

The underpinning objective is to replace the risk of economic and social collapse with a new capacity, built on informed consent and knowledge capable of sustaining and guiding the transition from poverty to an improved quality of life based on choice and opportunity.

Thank you.



## Aga Khan University Convocation

03 December 2005, Karachi, Pakistan

Your Excellency

Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz

Your Excellency Governor Ishrat-ul-Ebad Honourable

Chief Minister Arbab Ghulam Rahim

Honourable Ministers

Excellencies

Chairman Dehlavi and the Members of the Board of Trustees

President Kassim-Lakha

Graduates and Parents

Generous donors and well wishers of the University, from Pakistan and around the world

Distinguished guests

The presence here this morning of Your Excellency the Prime Minister, for which I thank you most deeply, is a visible tribute to this nation's resilience and determination not to be overcome by a tragedy of vast proportions. Scarcely two months ago in Kashmir and the North West Frontier Province, tens of thousands of our brothers, sisters and their children lost their lives, communities were split apart and local economies were shattered by the forces of nature. The Ummah and the world at large grieve with Pakistan. We pray for the

eternal peace of those who died; for the relief and comfort of the grievously injured; and for the consolation and courage of their families. Ultimately, our refuge must be in the promise of the all-encompassing mercy of our Lord Allah, the most beneficent, the most merciful. Despondency, therefore, is a betrayal of our faith. The future must be faced and rebuilt on a sounder basis.

Despite these sad circumstances it is a great pleasure to be here to rejoice with parents and friends in the steadfastness and the achievements of our new graduates. We rejoice not only because you have become promising nurses, physicians, educators and researchers, but because at AKU you have also become educated men and women with expanded powers of reason and reflection. As you now prepare to leave your University years, I congratulate you and I wish for you the blessings and deep satisfactions that can come from using all your powers in service to the progress of mankind. Your gifts, your hard work and the devotion of your professors have prepared you well. You are eagerly awaited by us and by a world of grave and sudden needs.

The earthquake has brutally reminded this University of the reason for its existence. World communications beam instantly around the globe the image of death and misery - of earthquakes, tsunami, plague, and of man-made disasters of violence and hatred. For a time, they capture the world's attention and generosity. Governments, themselves overwhelmed, do their best and carry most of the burden of the basic recovery. But they and the world's donors must very often look to existing, specialized, non-governmental organizations that have the knowledge, professional manpower and experience to respond to the great array of ills that follow social trauma.

In what way has the Aga Khan University contributed to facing this national tragedy and how should its happening affect future education at AKU?

First, the most enduring work done by many of the AKU response teams, notably in the realm of public health, has been to create model health programs and health surveillance systems on the ground and train the people to run them. These systems had for years been studied and tested and training programs were developed by the Aga Khan Health Service and by AKU's Department of Community Health Science. Our hope is that the disaster will eventually leave, at least in some respects, stronger communities.

Second, the effectiveness of AKU's response to this highly complex human disaster was materially increased because the University is part of the Aga Khan Development Network. The Aga Khan Health Service had for several decades been studying and working with mountain people and villages; the Aga Khan Building and Planning Service was able to share its methodology for constructing temporary shelter and seismic-resistant construction; and the Aga Khan Foundation helicopters provided the transportation of materials and evacuation of serious casualties.

We may take pride in all of this, but the fact is that AKU does not teach about architecture and land planning, nor environmental studies such as climatology, nor engineering and seismology, nor habitat change, nor the means to convey such knowledge to civil societies, as is so evidently needed for the rebuilding of Kashmir.

The tragedy of the earthquake raises in quite clear terms a central question for AKU and other universities in Pakistan: What should be the next areas of education to which AKU should devote itself, and is higher education in this country preparing future generations for Pakistan's needs? Shamsh Kassim-Lakha has shared with you some of AKU's plans for the future. The Trustees and I are also considering areas such as architecture and the built environment, including land planning, as well as governance and civil society, and fortunately these would appear to be some of the areas of knowledge that would be required in order to face, better, a further major earthquake. Sadly, AKU does not yet offer education in these fields but it does seem that another tragedy of such a nature would require a response from men and women educated in such areas, which have been pre-selected in the University's forward academic planning.

Today's University is the work of many hands and generous spirits. But the substance and quality of today's AKU owes a very great deal to the determination, energies and loyalty of its first president. Shamsh Kassim-Lakha has led AKU - Pakistan's first, fully fledged private university - through its construction, the promulgation of its Charter, the establishment of its Medical Center and the outreach of its programs.

Universities have long periods of development and change, as the President has often noted, and I know that he has thought for some time that AKU was nearing the point at which the baton should be passed to a leader who would carry it to its next plateau. I have agreed, with the understanding that the change should occur only when a person of the highest personal, intellectual and professional qualities could be found.

I am happy to be able to say that I have recently proposed to the Board of Trustees the name of Mr Firoz Rasul. Mr Rasul has demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities for which he has received national recognition and respect within Canada. He has been one of Canada's most successful entrepreneurs and has served as a member of the Board of Governors of the University of British Columbia. His wife Saida was recently appointed Chairman of the Board of Governors of Simon Fraser University. He has also overseen major projects for me in Canada: the development of the Global Centre for Pluralism and the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat building in Ottawa; and the Aga Khan Museum and the Ismaili Centre in Toronto.

It gives me great pleasure to introduce you to Firoz Rasul, the next president of AKU; and to give my warmest and my deepest thanks to Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, who has brought the University to its present level of distinction.

The University now stands at a new threshold of needs, aspiration and potential, but I believe its course is clearer, and secure, as it approaches its leadership transition.

Much of my confidence rests with the support AKU has received, without fail, from the Government of Pakistan and of the Provincial Government of Sindh, and of the enormous generosity of thousands of donors here and abroad. To them, I express my deep, deep gratitude.

AKU's leadership is changing at a time when, beyond national boundaries, it is in the field of education that reflection is most desperately needed. Many countries, nations at widely diverse stages of economic and social development, are expressing grave doubts about the effectiveness of their systems of education to develop the intellectual and moral talent they need to function in the modern world - and to engage all levels of their societies.

This vital work in education must be highly sensitive to local conditions, gain the confidence of parents and children and communities and draw upon the best research into brain development, nutrition, and learning theory. But it must also grasp the role and the importance of local values, for educational change is also a deeply moral enterprise. It will only flourish as part of a revitalization of our societies.

A great risk to the modernization of the Islamic world is identity loss - the blind assumption that we should give up all our essential values and cultural expressions to those of other civilizations. In order to contain this risk, for it cannot be totally eliminated, we must re-invigorate our own value systems and cultural expressions. This includes the sciences and the ethical structures that go with them, but also architecture and the design of landscape and towns, literature, music, philosophical thought, and the free space they require, which are unfailing signs of a nation's vitality and confidence.

This is the frame within which AKU will function in the years ahead. It is also the world of yearning, hope and creative possibilities that our graduates will enter.

Thank You.





## **Protocol of Cooperation between the government of the Republic of Portugal and the Ismaili Imamat**

19 December 2005, Lisbon, Portugal

President Sampaio,  
Prime Minister Socrates,  
Minister of State and Foreign Affairs Freitas do Amaral,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am deeply touched by the generosity of remarks by Prime Minister Socrates. I also thank President Sampaio, the Prime Minister, and the Government of the Portuguese Republic, for their kindness and warm welcome.

In its contemporary history, when our world, at times, has seemed to descend into chaos, and moral leadership into oblivion, Portugal has been an outstanding example of integrity and compassion. When crises have erupted beyond her shores, she has welcomed displaced populations of different cultures and ethnicities. This is, therefore, an appropriate occasion to acknowledge the lasting gratitude and permanent commitment of



the Ismaili Imam and Community to Portugal, a land of harmony and opportunity, that rejoices in her diversity as a wellspring of national strength.

It is a great honour and an immense source of happiness for me to be at this historic Palace of Ajuda to mark a milestone, as our valued relationship moves confidently forward. The Protocol of Co-operation between the Government of the Portuguese Republic and the Ismaili Imam, which we signed this evening, is the first such Agreement that the Ismaili Imam has signed with a Western Government, and I am deeply convinced that it will bring clear benefits to our peoples and to many others.

For the Ismaili Imam, the Ismaili Community worldwide and me, this is a highly important day. I, therefore, wish this evening, to illustrate the full significance which it has in our eyes, and which is the context in which His Excellency Professor Freitas do Amaral, the Foreign Minister, and I spent some exceptional time together in putting our final touches to this Agreement.

Portugal is a small country, with a long history, and its role in the world has been illuminated by peaks of glory. The Ismaili Community is a small community with a long history also illuminated by peaks of glory. Our respective histories have also, at times, been marked by conflict and internal challenges. They have often strengthened us. Portugal's population is only slightly smaller than that of the Ismaili Community worldwide today. We have, therefore, very much in common, which underscores the logic of our new and formal relationship. But there are also differences.

Portugal is rooted in the centuries old Christian world, whereas the Ismaili Imam is rooted in the centuries old Muslim world. Portugal's influence has been essentially in Africa and South America, with an occasional presence in Asia. The Ismaili Community is significantly present in Central and South Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, but it is nearly totally absent from South America.

What brings us together is not only our historical similarities and our mutual respect for our past, but our wish to work together better to address the opportunities and the problems which will confront us in the decades ahead. Our respective histories have taught us to place our trust in human values and to root them in an ethical view of life.

Our histories have taught us the value of dialogue, and that rarely, indeed very rarely, does anything good come out of conflict. Our world view is to engage with the problem of social exclusion in our societies and to contribute to building bridges across faiths and across nations, by linking diverse parts of the world.

I have no doubt that for you, whose historical roots are in the Christian world, it is as painful as it is for us Muslims, with our roots in the East, to watch an increasingly deep gulf growing between significant parts of our respective worlds. We cannot stand by as passive observers letting this gulf grow wider and wider, at the cost of future generations. If we

have the will, which I am certain we share, we have the historical knowledge and the ethical foundations to move our world forward, to make it a better and more hopeful place, and to put an end to the storm of hatred which appears to be building up around us.

We are concerned, and most rightly so, that there is poverty among our respective peoples, and we cannot stand by watching this inhuman indignity become a permanent part of our societies, of our generations of today and tomorrow. We must work together to develop an arsenal of peaceful weapons to attack this plight which blights our times, and to try to make sure that those who are marginalised today can be certain that we are not blind to them, that we will not let their future generations live in the same hopeless world in which they themselves are seeking, often only in despair, to survive.

In confronting this situation we share the same need to build our civil societies for we both recognise that it is the civil society institutions of today, that, strengthened and expanded by tomorrow, have the highest probability of enabling people to help themselves out of the quagmire of poverty. Working together in the East and the West, we certainly have the greatest chance of being successful in multiple situations, such as responding to the needs of aging populations.

There are those who say that faiths divide. This may be true. But today we must explore every opportunity to have different faiths come together in addressing the problems of our respective societies. We come from the same common religious heritage, descendants of Abraham, and it is enjoined on us to address the problems of society on the same ethical premises.

You have created here in Portugal a moral and enabling environment for faiths to live in equity and mutual respect. I intend to do all in my power to work with other faiths here and elsewhere, to give practical meaning and quantifiable outcomes to our future partnerships.

The acute challenge for all faiths, both in terms of their principles and practice, is the scourge of poverty which, unfortunately, also afflicts sections of populations, especially minorities, even in the industrially advanced countries of the West. The tragedies they endure and the unknown dimensions of their plight have been highlighted by recent natural and other events. To their credit, their citizens and governments recognize it is intolerable that these pockets of misery should persist in self respecting societies.

It is in this light that, encouraged by the Government, and after careful assessments through years of independently commissioned studies and programmatic engagement, particularly in Early Childhood Education development, the Aga Khan Development Network has embarked on an Urban Community Support Programme in Portugal. This is designed to help marginalised groups, including cultural and ethnic minorities living in urban settings, develop their own capacity to move out of the poverty trap and achieve the benefits of social inclusion.

The Government and municipalities, the European Commission, leading civil society and business organisations are our partners in this moral enterprise known by its local name of Kapacidad, reflecting the conviction that people are inherently capable to look after themselves. I am most happy to acknowledge and welcome the presence here this evening of their representatives.

In global terms our numbers may be small, but our openness to addressing the issues of our time and of tomorrow, our willingness to bring mature judgment to our pluralist societies, are so strong, and so vigorously shared, that I believe the partnership we are founding today would enable us, with God's support, to have a positive influence in the future which could far surpass the sizes of our demographics.

These are the reasons that have given birth to my conviction that this is truly an historic day.

These are the principles that underpin our long standing and fruitful relationship, inspiring the joint work we already do in Portugal and abroad in Mozambique, Afghanistan and ... Pakistan. It is on these principles and experience that the Protocol of Co-operation builds. Both the Government and the Imamat are determined it does not remain just an expression of pious hope.

Thank you.



## Conference on Afghanistan (London, UK)

31 January 2006, London, UK

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In spite of remarkable progress in Afghanistan since the Bonn Agreement of 2001, daunting challenges remain and the new Compact sets ambitious goals for addressing them.

The Compact is a recognition by the international community that returning Afghanistan to its proud status as a happy and prosperous country, able to contribute to the progress of the region and to desirable global goals, requires the steadfast commitment of our collective will and resources for the long term.

The Compact acknowledges that this rebuilding must be on a solid foundation of fundamental respect for the rich pluralistic heritage, values and peoples of Afghanistan.

I am pleased that the Compact also stresses the valuable role of civil society institutions in the monumental task that lies before us. The Aga Khan Development Network remains dedicated to this mission, operating in an integrated fashion across the broad spectrum of

human development: economic, social and cultural. We are investing in sustainable enterprises, building capacity in social services, and restoring monuments and buildings such as Bagh-e-Babur that are part of Afghanistan's pluralist history and culture.

Our financial pledge of \$75 million in 2002 has been exceeded by 60 per cent and along with our donor, lender and investor partners, we have mobilised just under \$400 million for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

Our experience in Afghanistan, as well as in neighbouring Tajikistan and Pakistan, is that sustainable development is only possible when the community is engaged at the grassroots level and is given the ways and the means to take responsibility for its own future.

This means building the capacity of civil society institutions as well as tapping into the wellspring of individual initiative that has been part of the vigorous Afghan spirit for centuries.

It is therefore critical that the Government of Afghanistan creates the appropriate legal and fiscal framework, the regulatory conditions and the stable democratic institutions - in other words, the enabling environment - that encourages and supports the confidence and growth of private initiative, and also facilitates the development of public-private partnerships.

Because of the extensive presence of AKDN agencies in Afghanistan - engaged in humanitarian assistance, education, health, rural and urban development, microfinance, tourism, cultural revitalization, telecommunications and banking - we have a wide understanding of the redevelopment processes in Afghanistan.

We are thus proposing to work with the Government of Afghanistan, in concert with a wide variety of stakeholders, to support the development and maintenance of an enabling environment. I would like to take this opportunity today to invite our partners - including governments, international and non-governmental organisations, and investors - to work with us and to participate in a conference we are planning in Kabul within the next twelve months to address this critical issue.

The task that lies before us is enormous and governments cannot shoulder the burden alone.

It is my firm belief that if the enabling conditions are in place, private initiative and the organisations of civil society can work successfully, with governments, toward achievement of our common vision for Afghanistan.

Thank you.



## Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at 2006 Evora University Symposium

12 February 2006, Evora, Portugal

**“We must accompany our concern for quantity with a heightened concern for quality. Are the curricula we teach relevant to the knotty problems of the future? Or are we still providing a twentieth century education for twenty-first century leaders? Our system of Aga Khan Universities and Aga Khan Academies are addressing such questions as they work to advance the concept of meritocracy in the developing world and to maintain world class**



## **standards which will stretch our students rather than patronizing them.”**

President Sampaio,  
Rector Manuel Patricio,  
Professor Adriano Moreira,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great honour to be invited here today to address this esteemed audience on such a relevant topic. Our title speaks of societies which are at once plural and peaceful—a goal which is important but also elusive. For even our best efforts to combine stability with modernity seem to be constantly disrupted.

Some of these disruptions come from new technologies—from internet blogs to biogenetics. Others spring from nature—from changing weather patterns or mutating viruses. Still others arise from social transformations—new patterns of family life, --and enormous migrations of people.

Newspaper headlines remind us daily of growing strains and stresses: Civil disorder in places as affluent as France and Australia; the plight of hurricane victims in Louisiana and earthquake victims in Kashmir; the uses of nuclear energy; the sense of impotence amid suffering in places like Darfur.

The planet becomes more crowded and its resources less abundant. The gap widens between rich and poor. People everywhere cry out against these evils. But change, when it comes at all, is painfully slow, and we sometimes seem to be sliding backward.

I should also mention here the headlines of this past week—which chart the widening gulf between Islamic and Western societies. Here the culprit has not been military action or diplomatic failure but the power of media images----deeply offensive caricatures -- which have profoundly offended one billion four hundred million Muslims around the world—including myself.

The question I ask—as I read all these headlines—is this: Why are political and civil leaders, in rich and poor nations alike, unable to develop the vision and harness the will to confront such challenges more effectively?

What makes this sense of impasse especially disturbing is that it so often represents a failure of democracy. For many centuries, it was the conviction of enlightened people that societies would truly come to grips with their problems once they became democratic. The



great barrier to progress, they said, was that governments listened to the special few—rather than the voice of the many. If we could only advance the march of democracy, they argued, then a progressive agenda would inevitably fall into place.

But I am not sure that such an analysis holds up any longer. For the past half century, we have seen great waves of ostensibly democratic reform—from the fading of colonialism in mid-century to the fall of the Iron Curtain. But despite this apparent progress, the results have often been disappointing.

I can scarcely count, nor fully catalog, the variety of governments which I have visited over the past five decades—from the most autocratic to the most participatory. Often, the more democratic governments were the more effective and responsible. But this was not consistently true—and I have recently found it to be decreasingly true. In fact, nearly forty percent of UN member nations are now categorized as “failed democracies.”

Democracy and progress do not always go hand in hand—and the growing threat of “Failed States” can often be described as “the Failure of Democracy.”

Frequently, democratic failures grow out of sheer incompetence. Publics are asked to vote on issues that bewilder them. Candidates obscure their own views and distort their opponents’ positions. Journalists transmit superficial rhetoric and slight underlying realities. People are appointed to jobs they cannot do—but are rarely held accountable.

Corruption for some becomes a way of life. Meanwhile, the Media tell audiences what they want to know rather than what they ought to know. And what too many people want today is not to be informed-- but to be entertained.

The breakdowns are institutional as well as personal. Democratic systems veer between too many checks and balances-- and too few. Parliaments, in particular, often lack the expertise and structure to grapple with complex problems—and they are often too factionalized or too subservient to sustain a coherent view.

For all these reasons, democracies often make bad decisions. And when democracies are ineffective, disenchanting publics are tempted in other directions.

Latin America is one place where democracy was thought to be expanding in recent years. Yet the UN Development Program reports that 55 percent of those surveyed in 18 Latin American countries would support authoritarian rule if it brought economic progress.

The challenge of democratic competence, then, is a central problem of our time. Meeting that challenge must be one of our central callings.

The challenge of democratic renewal has been vastly compounded by another development which is also mentioned in the title of this symposium. I refer to the rapid proliferation of cosmopolitan populations. The world is becoming more pluralist in fact—but it is not keeping pace in spirit. “Cosmopolitan” social patterns have not yet been matched by what I would call “a cosmopolitan ethic.”

Peoples mix and mingle, side by side, to an extent that was once unimaginable. Waves of migration indelibly change the rhythms, colours and flavours of their host communities.

Some 150 million legal immigrants live outside their country of birth, joined by uncounted millions who have immigrated illegally.

These trends will continue. Globalization has dissolved the tight bond between community and geography. Economic opportunity—for rich and poor alike—can lie in distant lands. Some 45 million young people enter the job market in the developing world each year--but there are not enough jobs at home for all of them. Meanwhile war and civil conflict add their refugees to the mix.

Immigration brings both blessings and problems. Immigrants now account for two thirds of the population growth in the 30 member countries of the OECD, where an aging workforce requires new young workers. Meanwhile, remittances sent home by immigrants total some \$145 billion a year—and generate nearly \$300 billion in economic activity— more than is provided either by Foreign Development Aid or Foreign Direct Investment.

At the same time, immigrant communities can sharply strain public and private resources. The resulting competition with older residents can cause resentment and hostility. More than half of the respondents in various European opinion polls have a negative view of immigration. The so-called “Clash of Civilizations” is both a local and a global danger.

But it need not be this way. Nor has it always been this way down through the sweep of history. Yes-- cultural clash has been one major theme in the human story. But so has inter-cultural cooperation.

This country and this university know from your own history how Islamic and Christian cultures met in this part of the world many centuries ago—and how enriching their interactions were for both traditions. This is a good time and place to emphasize the manifold blessings that come when peoples decide to stop shouting at one another, and instead begin listening and learning.

Cross cultural interaction has been a central focus of my own activities in the nearly 50 years since I became Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. The ethics of Islam bridge faith and society, so my responsibilities as spiritual leader are accompanied by a strong engagement in issues of community well being.

The Ismailis are themselves a culturally-diverse community. They live -- as minorities -- in more than twenty-five countries, primarily in the developing world, but also in Europe -- including Portugal -- and North America. This Ismaili multi-cultural experience is reflected in the approach of the Aga Khan Development Network —working with a wide array of partners to help the disadvantaged, regardless of their origin. We are pleased, for example, that our work in Portugal has recently been formalized in cooperative agreements with both the Portuguese Government and the Patriarchate of Lisbon.

In discussing cultural diversity, let me also mention our recent partnership with the Government of Canada to create a new Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. This Centre will draw on both Ismaili experience and the experience of Canada itself, where a pluralist society thrives—and where—in contrast to much of world opinion, 80 per cent of the public welcomes immigration as a positive development

In honoring me today, you honor the tradition which I represent, and, in doing so, you are renewing an inspiring story of intercultural affection and intercultural respect, of mutual dependence and mutual reinforcement.

This brings me to my central question. What is it we can now do to nurture healthy and competent democracies, in old settings where democracy has grown weary and in new settings where it is freshly planted? I would make three suggestions—each of which is reflected in the experience of this university.

First, we must strengthen our civil institutions. This means realizing that a democratic society requires much more than democratic politics. Governments alone do not make democracy work. Private initiative is also essential, including a vital role for those institutions which are collectively described as “civil society.”

By civil society I mean an array of institutions which operate on a private, voluntary basis—but which are driven by public motivations. They include institutions dedicated to education, to culture, to science and research. They include commercial, labor, professional and ethnic associations, as well as entities devoted to maintaining health, protecting the environment, and curing disease. Religious institutions are central to civil society—and so are institutions of the media.

Sometimes, in our preoccupation with government and politics, we neglect the importance of civil institutions. I am not suggesting we ignore politics—but I am suggesting that we think beyond our political preoccupations. A thriving civil sector is essential in renewing the promise of democracy.

The second democratic pillar I would mention is education—rigorous, responsible and relevant education. We must do a better job of training leaders and shaping institutions to meet more demanding tests of competence and higher standards of excellence. This means moving beyond the notion that better education simply means broader schooling — wider

access to formal learning. We must accompany our concern for quantity with a heightened concern for quality. Are the curricula we teach relevant to the knotty problems of the future? Or are we still providing a twentieth century education for twenty-first century leaders?

Our system of Aga Khan Universities and Aga Khan Academies are addressing such questions as they work to advance the concept of meritocracy in the developing world and to maintain world class standards which will stretch our students rather than patronizing them.

For too long some of our schools have taught too many subjects as subsets of dogmatic commitments. Economic insights, for example, were treated as ideological choices—rather than as exercises in scientific problem solving. Too often, education made our students less flexible—confident to the point of arrogance that they now had all the answers—rather than more flexible—humble in their life-long openness to new questions and new responses.

An important goal of quality education is to equip each generation to participate effectively in what has been called “the great conversation” of our times. This means, on one hand, being unafraid of controversy. But it also means being sensitive to the values and outlooks of others.

This brings me back to the current headlines. For I must believe that it is ignorance which explains the publishing of those caricatures which have brought such pain to Islamic peoples. I note that the Danish journal where the controversy originated acknowledged, in a recent letter of apology, that it had never realized the sensitivities involved.

In this light, perhaps, the controversy can be described less as a clash of civilizations and more as a clash of ignorance. The alternative explanation would be that the offense was intended—in which case we would be confronted with evil of a different sort. But even to attribute the problem to ignorance is in no way to minimize its importance. In a pluralistic world, the consequences of ignorance can be profoundly damaging.

Perhaps, too, it is ignorance which has allowed so many participants in this discussion to confuse liberty with license—implying that the sheer absence of restraint on human impulse can constitute a sufficient moral framework. This is not to say that governments should censor offensive speech. Nor does the answer lie in violent words or violent actions. But I am suggesting that freedom of expression is an incomplete value unless it is used honorably, and that the obligations of citizenship in any society should include a commitment to informed and responsible expression.

If we can commit ourselves, on all sides, to that objective, then the current crisis could become an educational opportunity—an occasion for enhanced awareness and broadened perspectives.

Ignorance, arrogance, insensitivity—these attitudes rank high among the great public enemies of our time. And the educational enterprise, at its best, can be an effective antidote to all of them.

Let me move, then, to my third suggestion for strengthening democracy in a pluralistic world—the renewal of ethical commitment.

Democratic processes are presumably about the sharing of power, broadening the number who help shape social decisions. But that sharing--in and of itself-- means little apart from the purposes for which power is finally used.

To speak of end purposes, in turn, is to enter the realm of ethics. What are our ultimate goals? Whose interests do we seek to serve? How, in an increasingly cynical time, can we inspire people to a new set of aspirations—reaching beyond rampant materialism, the new relativism, self-serving individualism, and resurgent tribalism.

The search for justice and security, the struggle for equality of opportunity, the quest for tolerance and harmony, the pursuit of human dignity—these are moral imperatives which we must work and think about on a daily basis.

In the ethical realm—as in the educational realm—one of the great stumbling blocks is arrogance. Even the resurgence of religious feeling—which should be such a positive force--can become a negative influence when it turns into self-righteousness. All of the world's great religions warn against this excess—yet in the name of those same religions too many are tempted to play God themselves—rather than recognising their humility before the Divine.

A central element in a truly religious outlook, it seems to me, is the quality of personal humility—a recognition that strive as we might, we will still fall short of our ideals, that climb as we might, there will still be unexplored and mysterious peaks above us. It means recognizing our own creaturehood—and thus our human limitations. In that recognition, it seems to me, lies our best protection against false prophecies and divisive dogmatism.

A deepening sense of spiritual commitment—and the ethical framework that goes with it-- will be a central requirement if we are to find our way through the minefields and the quick sands of modern life. A strengthening of religious institutions should be a vital part of this process. To be sure, freedom of religion is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion—then societies will find themselves lost in a bleak and unpromising landscape—with no compass, no roadmap and no sense of ultimate direction.

What I am calling for, in sum, is an ethical sensibility which can be shared across denominational lines and which can foster a universal moral outlook.

In conclusion, then, I would ask you think with me about these three requirements: a new emphasis on civil institutions, a more rigorous concern for educational excellence, and a renewed commitment to ethical standards. For these are all ways in which we can encourage a climate of positive pluralism in our world—and thus help meet the current crisis of democracy.

For only in such a climate will we come to see our differences as sources of enrichment rather than sources of division. And only in such a climate can we come to see “the other” not as a curse or a threat, but as an opportunity and a blessing-- whether “the other” lives across the street-- or across the world.





## University of Evora Honorary Doctorate

12 February 2006, Evora, Portugal

President Sampaio,  
Minister of State & Foreign Affairs Freitas do Amaral,  
Rector Manuel Patricio,  
Professor Adriano Moreira,  
Members of the University Senate, Scientific Board and Faculty,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am deeply touched by your warm welcome and generous remarks. I accept this honour with the utmost gratitude and humility, conscious of the great distinction and achievements of past recipients.

Today's occasion is of special happiness since it continues the long-standing relationship that the Ismaili Imam and community enjoy with the Republic and people of Portugal. Our ties are the stronger for being rooted in a shared sense of responsibility to strive together for the greater good of all.



The University of Evora is an ancient bastion of this sense of equitable and moral order which supports its tradition of academic excellence, nurturing merit wherever it exists.

These are the values which the Iberian Peninsula radiated as an inspiring beacon of light, representing the truly glorious epochs in human history when the Muslim and Judeo-Christian worlds developed constructive linkages, enriching their civilisations and empowering their institutions of higher learning with new sources of knowledge.

It is a privilege to be associated with a University which has remained true for so many centuries to the principle that the fruits of learning are to be at the service of all humanity.

In Islam, this is a core principle of belief. In that tradition, my forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, who founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo a thousand years ago, viewed the acquisition of knowledge as a means to understanding, so as to serve better, God's creation.

For them the true purpose of scholarship, and the gift of reason was to help build society and guide human aspirations. Lest it be forgotten, the society of their times was richly pluralistic when the Quranic notion of the Ahl al-Kitab – the People of the Book – and of one humanity were the driving force for tolerance and respect for difference.

One of history's great lessons is that a society can underwrite human progress only when it overcomes its insularity and suspicion of "the other," and instead, looks upon difference as a source of strength. For, while our new century continues to be marred by conflict and tension, the effective world of tomorrow is a pluralist one which comprehends, welcomes and builds on diversity.

That is why I passionately view the struggle against poverty, and respect for the values of pluralism, as two of the most significant tests of whether the 21st Century is to be an era of global peace, stability and progress.

These two challenges engage the entire spectrum of the institutions and programmes of the Ismaili Imamate which constitute the Aga Khan Development Network, cornerstones of which are its educational endeavours from the pre-school to the tertiary level. The Network's agencies and programmes are non-denominational and open to all without discrimination, guided by the Imamate's policy of replacing walls that divide with bridges which unite.

Their ethic is that of global convergence and the development of civil society that manages, and harnesses the forces of pluralism so as to elicit the best in human endeavour.

I am profoundly honoured that this historic institution of higher learning, that has contributed so much to the human cause, has seen fit to consider me henceforth as one of its esteemed graduates.

Thank you.



## Royal Toledo foundation award ceremony

02 March 2006, Toledo, Spain

Bismillahi Rahmanir Rahim

Your Majesty,  
Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Foundation Board,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

On behalf of all the award recipients, including the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, it is my privilege to thank the Royal Toledo Foundation for its generosity in recognizing their efforts as contributing to the preservation of historic, cultural and artistic heritage.

We are particularly honoured by the presence of Your Majesty among us this evening.

Some may ask if preserving the material evidence of our past influences the future positively, helps us live together in peace, and improve the quality of life.

I believe the answer is a confident yes. But there is a paradox.

In the developing, including the Muslim, world, many historic cities are home to large populations who live in extreme poverty. They may contain some of the greatest treasures of Muslim architecture, yet many of their inhabitants lack even the most basic services. They live on the margins of society and feel trapped in a cycle of poverty.

The risk is that when hope fades, extremist ideologies feed on the despair that is born from limitless poverty. Thus, a recent UN Development Programme study in Latin America reports that a majority of people surveyed would support authoritarian rule if it delivered economic progress.

This confirms a universal tendency. Whatever their faiths or value systems, the primary, daily concern of peoples everywhere is their quality of life.

Indeed, the revelation of Islam - my faith - looks upon freedom from hunger, provision of appropriate shelter and clothing, security against fear for one's safety, good health, learning and wisdom, and generation of wealth as a blessing to strive for, and to share in the creation of an equitable order of peace and harmony.

This explains my own role, as the hereditary Imam - the spiritual leader - of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, in development activities through the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network, or the AKDN.

Like the Muslim Ummah as a whole, the worldwide Ismaili community that I lead is immensely pluralistic, culturally and linguistically. In our experience and conviction, the creation of a humane, socially supportive built environment is critical to people's quality of life.

For this reason, the Historic Cities Support Programme, a component of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, is not only concerned with saving buildings or historic districts for future generations. It seeks to go beyond restoration to creating mechanisms that contribute to real, measurable improvement in the quality of life in rural and urban areas, also enabling their inhabitants thereby to look after their cultural assets.

This is the goal of the multi-programme capacity-building strategies which the AKDN deploys to help the residents of historic cities or areas, whether this be the Silk Road, or Kabul and Herat in Afghanistan, Aleppo in Syria, Mopti in Mali, Zanzibar, or Cairo, the city that my forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, founded more than a thousand years ago. In all such places, rehabilitation of cultural heritage is supported by the work of AKDN agencies specialising in microfinance, health, education, water and sanitation and promotion of economic enterprise.

We have evidence to believe that the processes we have been developing and testing for the past 20 years have the potential to become self-sustainable. The expertise and

investment that they bring to historic cities, or indeed the Silk Road, are helping to create jobs and economic opportunities, for example, through tourism and by rendering ancient crafts and skills into marketable products and services.

At the same time, I believe conservation can play a central role in helping different civilizations understand each other, to appreciate how mutually enriching their historic interactions have been, and the contribution of each to the common heritage of humanity.

Undeniably, there have been periods in history when the genius of different civilisations was perceived as a threat. In recent times also, we have witnessed attempts by antagonistic social, cultural and religious forces to impose their own norms on vulnerable groups.

Be that as it may, the reality is that our world is pluralistic and multi-cultural, and destined to remain so.

Ought we not, then, to focus our attention on periods of history when pluralism was happily embraced? May we not learn thereby the need to nurture what I have recently called a cosmopolitan ethic? For this is the foundation of a merit-based civil society capable of harnessing the best in all walks of life from all groups of people. This is the only way to manage, and build on, pluralism, the critical test of democracy anywhere.

This brings me to Toledo which has so successfully preserved, over many centuries, the evidence of its three-fold culture: magnificent churches, synagogues and mosques.

This was an era when each of these cultures, Christian, Jewish and Muslim, retained its independent identity while all worked and came together in a glorious intellectual and spiritual adventure. The legacy was a truly enabling environment conducive to prosperity, harmony, scientific discovery, philosophical insights and artistic flowering - all the defining features of a thriving civilisation.

I believe, therefore, that the past has the potential to inspire the future positively, and in the wisdom of investing in its protection, particularly the protection of cultures under threat.

The Royal Toledo Foundation deserves admiration for its commitment to keeping alive this spirit of Toledo.

Thank you.



## Inauguration of the French Medical Institute for Children

08 April 2006, Kabul, Afghanistan

Mr. President,  
Madame Chirac,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am delighted and touched that Madame Chirac has joined us today for the inauguration of the French Medical Institute for Children in the presence of His Excellency President Hamid Karzai. Despite a very heavy schedule, President Karzai has chosen to be with us today, which underlines his personal unwavering commitment and that of his Government to the reconstruction of this proud land of the great Afghan people. The partnership of the Government of Afghanistan will remain essential for the future of this Institute.

The presence of the First Lady of France is far from being simply symbolic because Mme Chirac is actively involved in the medical and social field, in particular as President, since 1994, of the Foundation of Paris Hospitals and French Hospitals. All of us here appreciate her engagement and her strong support of this medical initiative in Kabul. Moreover, the



new Institute we are inaugurating today represents French medicine in Afghanistan, medicine which is of worldwide renown. In the future, this Institute will permanently represent the engagement of French medicine in the national medical services of Afghanistan.

We are here today thanks to the generosity of large French enterprises, and of French men and women who have understood the critical situation of medical care in Afghanistan after 25 years of war, and who wish to urgently try to re-establish medical institutions capable of serving the population who no longer have access to satisfactory medical treatment.

I also welcome the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Philippe Douste-Blazy who, while leading French international affairs, is himself a medical doctor, ex-Head of Department at the Regional Hospital of Toulouse, and therefore extremely well qualified in the medical field.

I acknowledge the presence of Dr. Abdullah, the Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs whose Ministry has been instrumental in negotiating the agreement for this partnership.

Indeed, I should especially emphasise the significance of this Institute in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. This Institute was created through a Public-Private Partnership to establish a new medical institute through a strategic collaboration: The support of the French Government, that of the Afghan Government, the participation of the French Non-Governmental Organisations La Chaine de l'Espoir, and Afghan Children, and the Aga Khan University. This collaboration is today unique in Afghanistan and will bring to the Afghan population a new high quality hospital that will be accessible to the underprivileged.

I particularly wish to congratulate also the two French philanthropic associations La Chaine de l'Espoir and Enfants Afghans whose President and Founder Prof. Alain Deloche, and President Dr. Eric Cheysson, of Enfants Afghans, are with us here today. I warmly congratulate them as well as the members of their team. Without them, this Institute would not exist.

The health condition of Afghan children is extremely poor. Neo-natal and infant mortality are among the highest in the world: one child in four does not reach the age of five years.

Out of one million children born each year in Afghanistan, 165,000 die within the first 30 days. Nineteen out of 20 births are outside a medical establishment. Out of one million future mothers, 17,000 will die of complications linked to their pregnancy. In Western countries this figure is 100, even less, for the same million births.

This infinitely serious situation justifies in itself the support of the Aga Khan University and the Aga Khan Health Services, but three additional reasons have prompted our engagement in the future management of this institution.



The first is that the Non-Governmental Organisations and the French and foreign enterprises who have contributed to the creation of this project have done so in a particularly sophisticated manner, bringing to Afghanistan, an institution and buildings comprising a very elaborate complex whose components were conceived with a vision of the future clearly in mind. Therefore, for example, the plans of the hospital have been established in a manner which allows for development and expansion, and of course the buildings are constructed according to anti-seismic norms.

The second reason is that France has engaged to continue its support by making available the necessary human resources to assure the provision of high quality medical treatment.

Finally, the third reason is that the Aga Khan Health Services have, at the regional level, a significant hospital network comprising the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi; a hospital in Bombay in India; our engagement in the hospital in Khorog in the East of Tajikistan; and the management of the hospital in Bamyan. In fact, it was logical that our desire to help in the reconstruction of Afghanistan qualifies us to manage the French Medical Institute for Children in Kabul, known earlier as the Mother and Child Hospital.

Allow me to close on a vision of the future for this Institute, a vision which I know is already shared by the Afghan Government and the French Government, the French philanthropic associations La Chaine de l'Espoir and Enfants Afghans, the Aga Khan University and the Aga Khan Health Services.

We are all convinced that Afghanistan today and for a number of years to come has a great need of men and women qualified in the medical and para-medical domain. The lack of human resources is in fact dramatic, because there is, according to the World Bank statistics of 2004, only one doctor for 5000 inhabitants. In comparison, France has 15.

As a result, it is clear that we must envisage training for nurses and doctors within this Institute. There too, we will engage in strategic reflection with the Afghan Government and the French medical institutions in order to conceive and put in place these training programmes, so critical for the future.

We therefore are highly desirous that this hospital develops into a high level university hospital tertiary care centre which will offer new specialisations – essential for Afghanistan – such as neuroscience, cardiology, oncology and many other fields of medicine, which best meet the needs of the country.

Thank you.



## Graduation ceremony at the School of International and Public Affairs, USA

15 May 2006, New York, USA

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Dean Anderson,  
Faculty Members,  
Graduating Students and Parents,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am deeply honoured to be here and deeply grateful for your invitation. This is a memorable day both in your personal lives and in the life of this School—and I am pleased to share in it.

They say that a good graduation speaker is someone who can talk in someone else's sleep. I hope we can break that pattern today.

An opinion poll reported recently that what American graduates want as their graduation speaker more than anyone is “someone they could relate to”. But that test, says the poll, showed the most popular university speaker in recent years was the Sesame street character, Kermit the Frog. I found it a bit intimidating to wonder just where the Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims would rank on the “relating” scale in comparison to Kermit the Frog.

Ceremonies of the sort we observe today are valuable because they help us to bridge the past and the future – to see ourselves as players in larger narratives. This School’s narrative is now sixty years old – embracing the whole of the postwar period. In that time you have dramatically broadened both the communities you serve and the programs through which you serve them.

Your history reflects a continuing conviction that the challenges of our times are fundamentally global ones – calling both for multi-disciplinary and multi-national responses.

Even as SIPA marks its 60th anniversary, I am approaching an anniversary of my own – the 50th anniversary next year of my role as Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims.

While I was educated in the West, my perspective over these fifty years has been profoundly shaped by the countries of South and Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa, where the Ismaili people live and where they are largely concentrated. For five decades, that has been my world – my virtually permanent preoccupation. And it is out of that experience that I speak today.

For the developing world, the past half-century has been a time of recurring hope and frequent disappointment. Great waves of change have washed over the landscape – from the crumbling of colonial hegemonies in mid century to the recent collapse of communist empires. But too often, what rushed in to replace the old order were empty hopes—not only the false allure of state socialism, non-alignment, and single-party rule, but also the false glories of romantic nationalism and narrow tribalism, and the false dawn of runaway individualism.

There have been welcome exceptions to this pattern, of course. But too often, one step forward has been accompanied by two steps back. Hope for the future has often meant hope for survival, not hope for progress. The old order yielded its place, but a new world was not ready to be born.

Today, this sense of frustration is compounded – both in rich and poor nations – by a host of new challenges. They range from changing weather patterns to mutating viruses, from new digital and bio-genetic technologies to new patterns of family life and a new intermingling of cultures.

As the world economy integrates, global migrations are reaching record levels. Immigrants now account for two thirds of the population growth in the 30 developed countries of the OECD. Once homogenous societies are becoming distinctly multi-cultural.

Meanwhile, the gap widens between rich countries and poor. Populations explode and the environment deteriorates. The nation-state itself is newly challenged by the influence of non-state forces—including global crime and terrorism.

Whenever I sit down with leading thinkers and policy makers – I come away with a haunting question. Why is it, given the scope of our collective learning – unprecedented in human history – that we have such difficulty in controlling these developments? Why is our growing intellectual mastery of the world so often accompanied in practice by a growing sense of drift?

My response to that question focuses increasingly on the fact that democratic institutions have not lived up to their potential. In both the developed and the developing world, the promise of democracy has too often been disappointed.

For many centuries, enlightened people have argued that democracy was the key to social progress. But today, that contention is in dispute.

In countries where I am directly involved, the 21st century has already experienced at least a half-dozen constitutional crises. The sad fact – hard to swallow and difficult to deny – is that nearly forty percent of UN member nations are now categorized not merely as failed states – but as “failed democracies.”

Our central challenge in this new century – as leaders and future leaders of our world – is to renew the democratic promise.

The saving grace which democratic systems are most likely to possess, after all, is that they are self-correcting. A system of public accountability still provides the best hope for change without violence. And that virtue alone redeems the entire concept. It explains Churchill’s famous view that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all others.

Our challenge is not to find alternatives to democracy, but to find more and better ways to make democracy work.

In responding to that challenge today, I would like to make four observations – four suggestions for addressing our democratic disappointments and advancing our democratic hopes.

My comments involve, first, the need for greater flexibility in defining the paths to democracy; secondly, the need for greater diversity in the institutions which participate in

democratic life; thirdly, the need to expand the public's capacity for democracy; and finally, the need to strengthen public integrity-- on which democracy rests. Let me say a few words about each.

My first concern is that we must define the paths to democracy more flexibly. We like to say that democracy involves a pluralistic approach to life – but too seldom do we take a pluralistic approach to democracy. Too often, we insist that democracies must all follow a similar script – evolving at a similar pace – without recognizing that different circumstances may call for different constructs.

The ultimate recourse in any democracy must be to the concept of popular sovereignty. But within that concept there is room for variation. One size need not fit all – and trying to make one size fit all can be a recipe for failure.

The world's most successful democracies have had widely differing histories – each taking its own shape according to its own timetable.

How is power best divided and balanced? How should secular and spiritual allegiances interact? How can traditional authority – even monarchical authority – relate to democratic frameworks? How is the integrity of minority cultures and faith systems best reconciled with majority rule?

It is simplistic to wish that our democratic destinations should be similar – that they cannot be reached by many paths. The democratic spirit of freedom and flexibility must begin with our definitions of democracy itself.

Even as we think more flexibly about democracy, we should also consider a second goal: diversifying the institutions of democratic life.

One of the reasons that governments often fail is that we depend too much on them. We invest too many hopes in political promises and we entrust too many tasks to political regimes.

Governments alone do not make democracy work. The most successful democracies are those in which the non-governmental institutions of “civil society” also play a vital role.

Civil society is powered by private voluntary energies, but it is committed to the public good. It includes institutions of education, health, science and research. It embraces professional, commercial, labour, ethnic and arts organizations, and others devoted to religion, communication, and the environment.

Sometimes, in our preoccupation with government, we discount the impact of civil society, including the potential of constructive NGO's. But we can no longer afford that outlook.

Meeting the realities of a complex world will require a strengthened array of civic institutions. They spur social progress – even when governments falter, and because they are so intimately connected to the public, they can predict new patterns and identify new problems with particular sensitivity.

But such developments cannot be coerced. They require an encouraging, enabling environment, supported by a broad public enthusiasm for social goals. And let me be clear: I am here because I believe SIPA, with its annual outpouring of able graduates, can make an enormous worldwide contribution to such a response.

The development of civil society can also help meet the rising challenge of cultural diversity. As communities become more pluralistic in fact, they must also become more pluralistic in spirit. A vibrant civil society can give diverse constituencies effective ways to express and preserve their distinct identities, even as they interact with new neighbours.

We are often told that increased contact among cultures will inevitably produce a “Clash of Civilizations,” particularly between Islam and the West. Such predictions could become self-fulfilling prophecies if enough people believe them. But that need not, and must not, be the case.

The true problem we face is what I would call a “Clash of Ignorance” – on both sides – one which neglects, for example, a long history of respect and cooperation between Islamic and Western peoples, and their respective civilisations.

This is an appropriate place to recall how North American history was shaped over the centuries by diverse cultural groups. In the future as in the past, such diversity can be an engine of enormous creativity – if it is sustained by what I would call “a new cosmopolitan ethic”. To encourage that process, the Aga Khan Development Network has recently formed a partnership with the Government of Canada to create a new Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. Drawing on both the Ismaili experience and the pluralistic model of Canada itself, the Centre recognizes that we cannot make the world safe for democracy unless we also make the world safe for diversity – and that strengthening can be achieved by the institutions of civil society. They can contribute significantly to that goal.

My third point involves the public capacity for democratic government. This is a problem we too often treat with too much sentimentality, reluctant to acknowledge that democratic publics are not always all-wise.

Inadequate public communication is part of the problem. Driven by short-term circulation and profit goals, media increasingly tell audiences what they want to hear rather than what they ought to hear. And what too many people want is not to be informed, but to be entertained.



One result is the inadequacy of international news. I am told that world news now represents a substantially lower percentage of mainstream American news than it did a generation ago. Thanks to the Internet, specialists can get more information from more places than ever before. But for the general public, in America and elsewhere, global information has declined, while global involvements have expanded.

If better communication is one part of the answer, better education is another. This means, above all, developing new curricula which will meet new demands – especially in developing countries. We must do more to prepare the leaders of the 21st century for economic life in a global marketplace, for cultural life in pluralistic societies, for political life in complex democracies. Our system of Aga Khan-sponsored universities and academies is working throughout the developing world to create new educational models. But the scale of our work only begins to address the enormity of the challenge.

Improved communication and education can be helpful, but we also must be realistic about public capabilities. I believe, for example, that publics are too often asked to vote on issues that bewilder them. In recent months, both in Africa and in Asia – new national constitutions have been left to the mercies of mass public referenda – posing complex, theoretical issues well beyond the ability of politicians to explain, and publics to master. Nor is this matter unique to the developing world. We saw a similar pattern last year when the French public rejected a new European constitutional treaty that was 474 pages long.

Democracies need to distinguish responsibly between the prerogatives of the people and the obligations of their leaders. And leaders must meet their obligations. When democracies fail, it is usually because publics have grown impatient with ineffectual leaders and governments.

When parliaments lack the structure or expertise to grapple with complex problems – or when a system of checks and balances stymies action rather than refining it – then disenchanted publics will often turn to autocrats. The UN Development Program recently reported, for example, that 55 percent of those surveyed in 18 Latin American countries would support authoritarian rule if it brought economic progress. There, in too many cases progress and democracy have not gone hand in hand.

The best way to redeem the concept of democracy around the world is to improve the results it delivers. Developed countries, rather than talking so much about democracy on the conceptual level, must do more – much more – to help democracy work on a practical level. Our goal must be “fully functioning democracies” – which bring genuine improvements in the quality of life for their peoples. We must not force publics to choose between democratic government and competent government.

This brings me to my final topic: the need for a sense of greater public integrity.



Expanding the number of people who share social power is only half the battle. The critical question is how such power is used. How can we inspire people to reach beyond rampant materialism, self-indulgent individualism, and unprincipled relativism.

One answer is to augment our focus on personal prerogatives and individual rights, with an expanded concern for personal responsibilities and communal goals. A passion for justice, the quest for equality, a respect for tolerance, a dedication to human dignity – these are universal human values which are broadly shared across divisions of class, race, language, faith and geography. They constitute what classical philosophers – in the East and West alike – have described as human “virtue” – not merely the absence of negative restraints on individual freedom, but also a set of positive responsibilities, moral disciplines which prevent liberty from turning into license.

Historically, one of the most powerful resources for any culture has been the sense that it is heading somewhere, that tomorrow will be better than today, that there is reason to embrace what I would call “a narrative of progress.”

The right of individuals to look for a better quality of life within their own life-spans – and to build toward a better life for their children – these are personal aspirations which must become public values.

But a healthy sense of public integrity, in my view, will be difficult to nurture over time without a strong religious underpinning. In the Islamic tradition, the conduct of one’s worldly life is inseparably intertwined with the concerns of one’s spiritual life – and one cannot talk about integrity without also talking about faith.

For Islam, the importance of this intersection is an item of faith, such a profound melding of worldly concerns and spiritual ideals that one cannot imagine one without the other. The two belong together. They constitute “a way of life.”

From that perspective, I would put high among our priorities, both within and outside the Islamic world, the need to renew our spiritual traditions. To be sure, religious freedom is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion – then I fear we will soon be lost on a bleak and barren landscape – with no compass or roadmap, no sense of ultimate direction.

I fully understand the West’s historic commitment to separating the secular from the religious. But for many non-Westerners, including most Muslims, the realms of faith and of worldly affairs cannot be antithetical. If “modernism” lacks a spiritual dimension, it will look like materialism. And if the modernizing influence of the West is insistently and exclusively a secularising influence, then much of the Islamic world will be somewhat distanced from it.

A deeply rooted sense of public integrity means more than integrity in government, important as that must be. Ethical lapses in medicine and education, malfeasance in business and banking, dishonesty among journalists, scientists, engineers, or scholars – all of these weaknesses can undermine the most promising democracies.

Let me finally emphasize my strong conviction that public integrity cannot grow out of authoritarian pronouncements. It must be rooted in the human heart and conscience. As the Holy Quran says: “There is no compulsion in religion”. The resurgence of spirituality – potentially such a positive force – can become a negative influence when it turns into self-righteousness and imposes itself on others. Like all of the world’s great religions, Islam warns against the danger of comparing oneself with God, and places primary emphasis on the qualities of generosity, mercy and humility.

A central element in any religious outlook, it seems to me, is a sense of human limitation, a recognition of our own creature-hood – a posture of profound humility before the Divine. In that sensibility lies our best protection against divisive dogmatism and our best hope for creative pluralism.

In conclusion, then, I would ask – as you move out from this University into a diverse and demanding world – that you think about four considerations for renewing the promise of democracy: defining democratic paths more flexibly; expanding the role of civil society; increasing public capacities for self-governance; and strengthening our commitment to public integrity.

In all these ways, I believe we can help restore confidence in the promise of democratic life, affirming with pride our distinct cultural identities, while embracing with enthusiasm our new global potentials.

To the graduants, my prayer is that God may guide you and accompany you as you fulfil your destinies.

Thank You.



## Upon receiving the "Tolerance" award at the Tutzing Evangelical Academy

### LOCATION

Tutzing, Germany (20 May 2006)

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Herr Minister  
Dr Greiner Herr Landesbischof  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Minister Steinmeier has been very generous in his remarks -- for which I thank him most sincerely. And I would like to take this occasion at the opening of these comments, to tell him how much all the people who work with me around the world appreciate the support and the partnership of the people and Government of Germany in the work that we are doing. You have brought imagination, you have brought sophistication, you have brought flexibility to areas of need, areas of intellectual activity, which we consider unique, and I thank you for that.

In these times of misunderstanding and mistrust, I applaud the realistic outlook on international affairs that His Excellency Minister of Foreign Affairs brings to his work. I know that he views a constructive relationship between the West and the Muslim world as critical to global peace and stability, and I am grateful for his contributions to that goal.

I am also deeply grateful for your kind invitation and your generous award. This honor takes on special distinction for me because of the very high value I attach to the award's purpose, that is to increase awareness and respect between peoples and cultures through a discussion of political, cultural and religious topics. It is to these subjects that I will address my comments today.

In doing so, I would like to draw on my personal experience, as one who was educated in the West, but who has spent nearly 50 years working largely in the developing world. My particular preoccupation during this time has been with the countries of South and Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East, where the Ismaili community is concentrated.

Since I became Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, I have watched my world -- or should I say the entire world? -- oscillate between promise and disappointment. In many cases, the disappointments can be attributed to the absence of a culture of tolerance.

Of course my experience includes the religious faith in which I have been nurtured. I was born into a Muslim family, educated as a Muslim and spent many years studying the history of the faith and its civilisations. My commitment to the principle of tolerance also grows out of that commitment.

One of the central elements of the Islamic faith is the inseparable nature of faith and world. The two are so deeply intertwined that one cannot imagine their separation. They constitute a "Way of Life." The role and responsibility of an Imam, therefore, is both to interpret the faith to the community, and also to do all within his means to improve the quality, and security, of their daily lives.

I am fascinated and somewhat frustrated when representatives of the western world -- especially the western media -- try to describe the work of our Aga Khan Development Network in fields like education, health, the economy, media, and the building of social infrastructure.

Reflecting a certain historical tendency of the West to separate the secular from the religious, they often describe it either as philanthropy or entrepreneurship. What is not understood is that this work is for us a part of our institutional responsibility -- it flows from the mandate of the office of Imam to improve the quality of worldly life for the concerned communities.

Our spiritual understandings, like those of your Academy, are rooted, of course, in ancient teachings. In the case of Islam, there are two touchstones which I have long treasured and sought to apply. The first affirms the unity of the human race, as expressed in the Holy Qu'ran where God, as revealed through the Holy Prophet Muhammad, may peace be upon him, says the following:

"O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord, Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from the twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women." (4:1)

This remarkable verse speaks both of the inherent diversity of mankind -- the "multitude" -- and of the unity of mankind -- the "single soul created by a single Creator" -- a spiritual legacy which distinguishes the human race from all other forms of life.

The second passage I would cite today is from the first hereditary Imam of the Shi'a community Hazrat Ali. As you know, the Shi'a divided from the Sunni after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Hazrat Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, was, in Shi'a belief, named by the Prophet to be the Legitimate Authority for the interpretation of the faith. For the Shi'a today, all over the world, he is regarded as the first Imam.

I cite Hazrat Ali's words so that you may understand the spirit in which I have attempted to fulfill the mandate left to me as the 49th hereditary [Ismaili] Imam after the death of my grandfather. I quote:

“No belief is like modesty and patience, no attainment is like humility, no honour is like knowledge, no power is like forbearance, and no support is more reliable than consultation.”

Hazrat Ali's regard for knowledge reinforces the compatibility of faith and the world. And his respect for consultation is, in my view, a commitment to tolerant and open-hearted democratic processes.

These Islamic ideals, of course, have also been emphasized by other great religions. Despite the long history of religious conflict, there is a long counter-history of religious focus on tolerance as a central virtue -- on welcoming the stranger and loving one's neighbour.

“Who is my Neighbor?” - one of the central Christian narratives asks. Jesus responds by telling the story of the Good Samaritan -- a foreigner, a representative of the Other, who reaches out sympathetically, across ethnic and cultural divides, to show mercy to the fallen stranger at the side of the road.

I know you will find nothing unusual in this discussion given your own spiritual foundations. But it is striking to me how many modern thinkers are still disposed to link tolerance with secularism -- and religion with intolerance. In their eyes -- and often in the public's eyes I fear -- religion is seen as part of the problem and not part of the solution.

To be sure, there are reasons why this impression exists. Throughout history we find terrible chapters in which religious conflict brought frightening results. Sometimes, a part of the problem grew; it came from proselytizing -- in which faith was not so much shared as imposed. Again in our day, many ostensibly religious voices aggressively affirm a single faith by denying or condemning others.

When people speak these days, about an inevitable “Clash of Civilizations” in our world, what they often mean, I fear, is an inevitable “Clash of Religions.” But I would use different terminology altogether. The essential problem, as I see it, in relations between the Muslim world and the West is “A Clash of Ignorance.” And what I would prescribe -- as an essential first step -- is a concentrated educational effort.

Instead of shouting at one another, we must listen to one another -- and learn from one another. As we do, one of our first lessons might well centre on those powerful but often neglected chapters in history when Islamic and European cultures interacted cooperatively -- constructively and creatively -- to help realize some of civilization's peak achievements.[I think] We must also understand the vast diversity that exists within individual faiths and cultures, including the diversity now at play within the Islamic world.

And we must acknowledge that while such pluralism can be healthy and enriching -- it can also become destructive and deadly as it did for the Christian community in Europe half a millennium ago and it does in some parts of the Islamic world at the start of this new millennium.

Intolerance can thus result from one sort of presumably religious attitude, but profound tolerance can also be a deeply religious commitment.

The spiritual roots of tolerance include, it seems to me, a respect for individual conscience -- seen as a Gift of God -- as well as a posture of religious humility before the Divine. It is by accepting our human limits that we can come to see The Other as a fellow seeker of truth -- and to find common ground in our common quest.

Let me emphasize again, however, that spirituality should not become a way of escaping from the world but rather a way of more actively engaging in it.

There are a variety of ways in which we can work to build a culture of tolerance in a turbulent time. Many of them are reflected in the work of our Aga Khan Development Network. One example is the new Global Centre for Pluralism which we recently established in Ottawa -- in partnership with the Canadian government. The Centre sees the minority experience of the Ismaili community as a helpful resource in the quest for a constructive pluralism -- along with the pluralistic model of Canada itself.

The challenges to tolerance are manifold -- in both the developed and the developing world. The revolutionary impact of globalization means that many who never met before now intermingle continually -- through modern communications media and through direct contact. The migration of populations around the world is at record levels; peoples who once lived across the world from one another, now live across the street.

But societies which have grown more pluralistic in makeup, are not always growing more pluralistic in spirit. What is needed -- all across the world -- is a new "cosmopolitan ethic"-- rooted in a strong culture of tolerance.

I recall a conversation I had some years ago with Jim Wolfensohn, then President of the World Bank, about perceptions of happiness in various societies -- and especially among the very poor. We decided that we should "listen to the voices of the poor"-- and the World Bank commissioned an important study on that topic. One of its conclusions was that the emotion of "fear" was a central factor holding these societies back. Such fear could have many forms: fear of tyrants, fear of nature, fear of ill health, fear of corruption, violence, scarcity and impoverishment. And such fears inevitably became a source of intolerance.

There is a human impulse it seems -- fed by fear -- to define "identity" in negative terms. We often determine "who we are"-- by determining who we are against. This fragmenting impulse not only separates peoples from one another, it also subdivides communities -- and then it subdivides the subdivisions. It leads to what some have called the "fraying" of society -- in which communities come to resemble a worn out cloth -- as its tight weave separates into individual strands.

But the human inclination to divisiveness is accompanied, I deeply believe, by a profound human impulse to bridge divisions. And often the more secure we are in our own identities, the more effective we can be in reaching out to others.

If our animosities are born out of fear, then confident generosity is born out of hope. One of the central lessons I have learned after a half century of working in the developing world is that the replacement of fear by hope is probably the single most powerful trampoline of progress.

Even in the poorest and most isolated communities, we have found that decades, if not centuries, of angry conflict can be turned around by giving people reasons to work together toward a better future -- in other words, by giving them reasons to hope. And when hope takes root, then a new level of tolerance is possible, though it may have been unknown for years, and years, and years.

Tolerance which grows out of hope is more than a negative virtue -- more than a convenient way to ease sectarian tensions or foster social stability -- more than a sense of forbearance when the views of others clash with our own. Instead, seen not as a pallid religious compromise but as a sacred religious imperative, tolerance can become a powerful, positive force, one which allows all of us to expand our horizons -- and enrich our lives.

Thank you for the honour of this Award.





## American University in Cairo

15 June 2006, Cairo, Egypt

President Arnold,  
Members of the Board of Trustees,  
Members of the Faculty and Administration,  
Parents and Families,  
Distinguished guests,  
And, most importantly, the Graduating Class  
Congratulations

I deeply appreciate your warm welcome and I am most grateful for the wonderful honor you are conferring upon me through this honorary degree. I have long been a great admirer of the American University in Cairo - and I am proud that I can now count myself among your alumni.

This is a very special University. For 87 years, it has been a place for creative and constructive interaction between East and West. Its success has inspired those who see the future as one of intercultural cooperation and collaboration, rather than intercultural clash.

The new campus you are building will be a splendid physical manifestation of that vision. But it is even more important that this vision be manifested in the years ahead in your own, individual lives.

Most of you share with me a common cultural background. I was born into a Muslim family, educated as a Muslim and spent many years studying Muslim history. Then, almost fifty years ago, I became Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, responsible both for interpreting the faith to the community, and for helping improve the quality and security of the community's daily life. From that day to this, my dominant preoccupation has been with the developing world, and particularly the countries of South and Central Asia, Africa and the Middle East, where Ismailis are concentrated among other Muslim populations.

Over these five decades, I have watched that world oscillate constantly, between hope and disappointment.

Too often, disappointment has been the dominant story. And too often the dominant response to disappointment has been to embrace false hopes - from dogmatic socialism to romantic nationalism, from irrational tribalism to runaway individualism.

Another response has been to revisit past glories - contrasting them with contemporary setbacks. Many Muslims in particular, recall a time when Islamic civilizations were on the cutting edge of world progress. They dream of renewing that heritage. But they are not sure how to do so.

For some, renewal means recovering old forms of the faith - while for others it means rejecting faith itself. For some, recovering glory means opposition to the West, its cultures and its economic systems - while for others it means partnering with non-Islamic societies.

As university graduates, you will be fashioning your own visions for the future and your own ways of fulfilling them. But as you do, I hope you will honor the values of this University. For the one ingredient which holds particular promise in the search for fulfillment, is the search for knowledge.

From the very beginnings of Islam, the search for knowledge has been central to our cultures. I think of the words of Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib, the first hereditary Imam of the Shia Muslims, and the last of the four rightly-guided Caliphs after the passing away of the Prophet (may peace be upon Him). In his teachings, Hazrat Ali emphasized that "No honour is like knowledge." And then he added that "No belief is like modesty and patience, no attainment is like humility, no power is like forbearance, and no support is more reliable than consultation."

Notice that the virtues endorsed by Hazrat Ali are qualities which subordinate the self and emphasize others - modesty, patience, humility, forbearance and consultation. What he

thus is telling us, is that we find knowledge best by admitting first what it is we do not know, and by opening our minds to what others can teach us.

At various times in world history, the locus of knowledge has moved from one centre of learning to another. Europe once came to the Islamic world for intellectual enrichment - and even rediscovered its own classical roots by searching in Arabic texts.

Astronomy, the so-called "Science of the Universe" was a field of particular distinction in Islamic civilization - in sharp contrast to the weakness of Islamic countries in the field of Space research today. In this field, as in others, intellectual leadership is never a static condition, but something which is always shifting and always dynamic.

Indeed, Islamic culture in past centuries was distinctly dynamic - constantly reaching out - both to India and the East and to Europe and the West - for enrichment. Throughout history, confident cultures from every part of the world have been eager to seek new learning, not to dilute inherited traditions but to amplify and extend them. The great civilizations of Islam were prime examples.

More than a millennium ago, as early as the 8th century, the original Abbasids, ruling as Caliphs in Baghdad, set up academies and libraries where new knowledge was honored - independent of its source. The Fatimids continued this tradition - reaching out from their base in Cairo - established in the 10th century - to welcome learned figures from distant lands. A bit later, Ghazni, in Afghanistan, became another center of learning - again by reaching out.

By the time of the Safavid era - halfway through the second millennium - cultural leaders of all types - mathematicians, scientists, painters, musicians, and writers - were moving constantly from country to country and court to court - from the Safavid centers in Iran to the Mughal courts of India, and the Uzbek court at Bukhara in what is now Uzbekistan.

The Ottoman Caliphs in Turkey continued in this proactive tradition in the 19th century, borrowing now from primarily western models. The Ottomans paved the way for the immense modernizations associated with Mustafa Kemal Ataturk in the twentieth century. Ataturk's reforms brought opposition from ulama and others. Nonetheless, scholars have concluded that "a great part of the population did not see Ataturk and his reforms as hostile to Islam." Many saw them as extending a well-established pattern.

I believe that same pattern must be our model today. In keeping with our past traditions, and in response to our present needs, we must to go out and find the best of the world's knowledge - wherever it exists.

But accessing knowledge, is only the first step. The second step - the application of knowledge, is also demanding. Knowledge, after all, can be used well or poorly - for good or evil purposes.

Once we have acquired knowledge, it is important that the ethical guidelines of faith be invoked, helping us apply what we have learned to the highest possible ends. And it is also important that those ends be related to the practical needs of our peoples.

Throughout history, the application of knowledge has often been determined by a few powerful rulers—or by highly dominant governments. But I believe the hour is passing for these outmoded, top-heavy ways of deciding how knowledge should be utilized.

Government's role will not disappear, of course. But a variety of new factors are at play-- the vast complexity of economic life, the growing pluralism of society, the splintering and decentralization of information media, and the fragmentation of cultural identity. And all of these factors argue for a more diverse approach.

The great effort of humankind to organize itself for the common good must change with changing environments. For thousands of years our environment was largely agricultural, where value attached primarily to land. Three centuries ago, agriculture began to yield to industry, as machines took center stage, along with standardized processes and the efficiencies of scale.

But in the last few decades, Agricultural Society and Industrial Society have gradually been displaced by what has been called the Knowledge Society, propelled by new digital technology and the expansion of cyberspace.

As a result, enormous social influence has been transferred from the owners and workers of farms and factories, to those whom we now call "Knowledge Workers," people who create and exchange information. For them, power attaches more to ideas and values than to money or physical force. Among them, power itself is widely dispersed.

In such a time, we need to depend less on government and more on what I call the institutions of civil society. These civil institutions are normally private and voluntary - but they are committed to the public good. They include entities dedicated to education and research, labour and commerce, health and the environment, culture and religion.

Civil institutions can thrive even when governments falter. But they cannot thrive unless governments and citizens also place a high value on diversity, and create a supportive environment for non-governmental initiatives. The graduates of the American University in Cairo can play a critical role in that process.

To do this however, will mean confronting the “knowledge deficit” which now plagues too many Islamic societies. Happily, technology has given us wonderful new ways of sharing knowledge. Rather than sending scholars over thousands of miles and scores of years, from library to library and academy to academy, today we can simply click in a matter of seconds onto a wide variety of appropriate websites. But, first, we must acknowledge what it is that we do not yet know - committing ourselves to continued learning and accepting the fact that useful knowledge will often be found by reaching beyond the traditional barriers of both geography and culture.

The most valuable part of your University education may not lie merely in the content of what you have learned here, but in your improved ability to go on learning for the rest of your lives.

One certain contributor to the knowledge deficit in large parts of the Islamic world has been the disconnect between weak universities, and the requirements of modern economies. We must understand the intimate connection between the economy of any country and the research agenda of its universities - the fact that research requires the intimate involvement of economic institutions, and that economic development requires the support and the stimulus of cutting edge research.

All of this will help explain why our Aga Khan Development Network has placed such a high priority on the development of Aga Khan supported Universities and Academies in parts of the developing world. And it will also explain my admiration for the work of this University. Along with similar, sister institutions, AUC has effectively combined values and requirements of the Islamic world with educational resources from the Western world. In doing so, it marks a promising pathway to the future.

As graduates of this university, you have already begun your journey down that path - and you are ideally placed to lead others along it. This calling is your special responsibility. But you can take up this obligation knowing that you are well equipped for the road ahead.

In the long sweep of human history, Egypt has been among the first and most distinguished centers of world learning. Building on those traditions, this country and this region can again play a central role in the Knowledge Society of the future - and each of you can be a vital part of that exciting process.

May Allah accompany you.

Thank You.



## Foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy

22 September 2006, Hyderabad, India

Your Excellency the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies And Gentlemen:

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Let me begin by thanking all of you for honoring us by joining in this celebration – at this truly magnificent site. We are most deeply grateful to all who helped to make this site available to our Academy program. Your generosity will be a continuing inspiration to us all.

Our celebration today is part of a long, unfolding story. It is, for me, a highly personal story – growing out of my family’s active involvement through the years in the field of education – especially in the developing world.



It was just about a century ago that my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah, began to build a network of educational institutions in places where the Ismaili community had settled. This network would eventually include some 300 schools – 200 of which my grandfather opened personally.

In addition, he was the founding figure of Aligarh University, and I have continued that tradition through the establishment of the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia.

The tradition I am describing, however, goes back much further than one hundred years. For it was some one thousand years ago that my forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo. For well over a millennium, the pursuit of knowledge has been a central element in our tradition.

Against this background, you can understand why this new educational beginning means so much to us.

But even while we renew a rich tradition inherited from the past, we are also looking deeply into the future. What we begin here may not have its full impact in any of our lifetimes. But the beginnings we undertake today may well be among the most important things we will ever do.

I would like to speak initially about the logic behind the Aga Khan Academies program – to look at its philosophical underpinnings. For unless those foundations are sound, whatever we build will be inherently vulnerable.

We are taking our time in laying those foundations. We are designing for the long-range future and we have thought long and hard about our goals and how to achieve them. We have launched research projects and surveys. We have done our homework.

At the very heart of our conclusions – is one, central conviction: the key to future progress in the developing world will be its ability to identify, to develop, and to retain expert and effective home-grown leadership.

In our lifetimes, the developing world has looked in various directions for the key to progress. For a while, it was thought to be enough that indigenous peoples simply throw off the yoke of colonialism – which for some was the most important barrier to fulfillment and progress. This viewpoint often evolved into a hope that reasserting cultural identity would unlock the future – and education sometimes became mainly a matter of tapping into ancient wisdom, expressed in distinctive languages. In many places, the promises of a charismatic ruler also captured the public imagination – the mystique of the romantic hero – and public education sometimes slipped into relative insignificance.



Over time, as frustration mounted, other cures were entertained in parts of the developing world. Ideologies of the left and the right came into vogue – ranging from the siren songs of state socialism on one side to the allure of unrestrained capitalism on the other. The demands of dogma came to replace the disciplines of reason – and education too often turned into indoctrination.

But none of these approaches proved adequate to the demands of their times – and all of them seem increasingly inadequate to the demands of the present. A different approach has been needed. I would note that the people of this city and this region were among those who first came to realize this fact – and to respond impressively to the challenge.

That response – here and elsewhere – has had, as its centerpiece, a distinctive intellectual style and a creative approach to leadership. As the pace of history has accelerated, agility and adaptability have become more important qualities than mere size or strength, and the race of life has gone increasingly to the nimble and the knowledgeable.

As the economic arena has been globalizing, openness and flexibility have become prerequisites for progress, and success has gone more and more to those who can connect and respond.

Specialized expertise, pragmatic temperament, mental resourcefulness – these are increasingly the keys to effective leadership – along with a capacity for intellectual humility which keeps one’s mind constantly open to a variety of viewpoints and welcomes pluralistic exchange.

In such a world, the most important thing a student can learn is the ability to keep on learning.

What these developments mean is human resources have become more important than natural resources in determining the wealth of a society. And yet, there are still too many communities in which the true potential of the human resource base is sadly underdeveloped.

Too many of those who ought to be leading their communities in the hopeful world of tomorrow, are being left behind in the real world of today. Because good schools are not available to them early in life, they are often blocked from such opportunities as they grow older. And even those who do break through, into a world of wider educational opportunity, too often also break out – and leave their home regions. The result is a widening gap between the expert and effective leadership these communities need – and the leadership their educational systems are likely to deliver.

Am I saying that we should focus only on educating a leadership elite? Not by any means. Broad public education is still an essential obligation of a just society. But I also believe that

the best interests of every society will be best served if its future leaders can be adequately prepared for an unusually demanding future – if its outstanding students, in short, can be given an outstanding education.

Every society develops and depends on some set of leaders – but the great question is how those leaders are developed and chosen. For much of human history, leaders were born into their roles, or they fought their way in – or they bought their way in. Elites were normally based on physical power, or accumulated wealth, or inherited claims to authority.

But social progress can be greatest when aristocracies of class give way to aristocracies of talent – or to use an even better term – to meritocracies.

The well-led society of the future, in my view, will be a meritocracy – where leadership roles are based on personal and intellectual excellence.

Our goal, then, is not to provide special education for a privileged elite – but to provide an exceptional education for the truly exceptional.

This is the fundamental philosophy undergirding our Academies program.

How, then, will these goals be realized in practice? In all candor, some of our plans may have few precedents in this country and may strike some observers here as new and distinctive. But we have seen them tested in other contexts and believe they represent worthwhile challenges.

Our plans begin with the realization that governments alone cannot meet the educational challenges of the 21st century. Nor can private institutions which are constrained by the necessity to earn a profit. The answer lies in the expanding role of civil society – in voluntary institutions which are not governmental but which are nonetheless dedicated to community values and the public good. We hope that the Aga Khan Academies will become leading exemplars of civil society's potential role.

Access to these schools (each of which will enroll 700 to 1200 young men and women) will thus be based solely on merit – not on financial resources. Intellectual capacity and intrinsic character will determine not only who is admitted, but who is actively recruited – for matriculation at these schools must go beyond passive selection and include an active outreach effort.

Once admitted, students will pursue a diverse and balanced curriculum, one which will evolve constantly as learning expands at an unprecedented pace. The best schools of the future will be those which select wisely just what learning will best help prepare students for an unpredictable future.

Our curriculum will be designed to qualify students for the widely-respected International Baccalaureate degree – and beyond that, for admission to the very best university programs that may interest them – in India and in every part of the world.

The International Baccalaureate program will help us prepare students to meet world-class standards – joining a community of some 1800 other schools who use the IB framework, including highly respected institutions here in India. Using that framework, we can ensure that the education we provide will be tied to global concerns and keep pace with global developments.

But the Aga Khan Academies will also have their own areas of special emphasis, including: an explicit concern for the value of pluralism, a strong emphasis on the ethical dimensions of life, a more specialized knowledge of how global economics work, and a focus on comparative political systems.

We are often told these days that tension and violence in much of the world grows out of some fundamental clash of civilizations – especially a clash between the Islamic world and the West. I disagree with that assessment. In my view, it is a clash of ignorances which is to blame. The Academies will seek to remedy such ignorances through the broad study of a variety of world cultures, including the Study of Muslim Civilizations, a subject which is often overlooked in some parts of the world today.

The principal language of instruction will be English – today’s primary language of global connection. But connectedness will also be enhanced in other ways. Every graduate will at least be bilingual, for example, and many will be trilingual. In his or her home Academy, a student will not only meet other students from a variety of cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds – but they will get to know one another as friends and neighbors – something that residential schools are well-equipped to foster. And many will study for at least a year outside their home cultures, as well.

Each of our Academies can be thought of, in sum, as a center for cross-cultural education. And the City of Hyderabad, with its rich history as a meeting point for different cultures, including the Christian, Hindu and Muslim traditions, will provide a particularly appropriate setting.

The spirit of pluralism will be further enhanced by the fact that each Academy will be part of a larger network. All of them will be linked electronically and will serve students and faculty throughout the system through video-conferencing and other distance learning technology--as well as through programs whereby teachers and students will work for a time in a distant setting.

Building a global network of Academies will enable us to pursue simultaneously two sometimes divergent goals. On the one hand we want our students to understand and appreciate the variety of the world and the diversity of its peoples. On the other hand, we

want to ensure a certain consistency in the quality of instruction and in the pursuit of core values. Building a wide network of schools around the same fundamental principles will allow us to pursue both of these objectives.

There will be one teacher for about every seven students at our Academies, and the teachers will not only be actively recruited, carefully selected and equitably compensated, but they will also be expertly trained and continually retrained. World class standards are ever-evolving standards—staying on the cutting edge is a not a static process. Not only will we need highly professional instructors, but we must also be sure that our instructors are well-instructed. State-of-the art teaching technologies will help our faculties as they reach for this goal.

In short, we seek not only to train the next generation of expert leaders, but also to develop a professional corps of world-class teachers. Emblematic of this commitment is the fact that a Professional Development Center, focused on the improvement of teaching, will be part of the central Academic Building on each of our campuses. If all goes well, teachers at the Aga Khan Academies will become role models not only for their students, but for other teachers in their communities.

We also realize, as I have already suggested, that much of what our students will learn over time they will learn from one another – not only in formal classroom settings but in residential and social contexts, in a wide range of extracurricular activities and in community service projects, as well. The Academies will be concerned with the whole of the human being – mind, body and spirit – and with the broad range of human aspiration – intellectual, moral, artistic, physical and spiritual. The fact that these are residential academies will contribute enormously to these broad objectives, encouraging students to identify more completely with the school, to help lead it and shape its environment.

We envision that our graduates will emerge as well rounded men and women, enriched by their participation not only in rich learning communities but in rich living communities as well.

All of these commitments imply a special emphasis on the quality of our physical resources – on the built environment, as it is often called – including the quality of architectural design. As it has so often been said, we first shape our buildings, and then they shape us.

In sum, the Academies will be serious, focused, rigorous environments – but at the same time they will be spacious and joyous places. They will operate on the cutting edge of knowledge and pedagogy, but they will be rooted in history and steeped in tradition.

It is such an institution that I hope to bring to the city of Hyderabad.

Thank you.



## Laudatory address for Viktor Yushchenko, President of The Ukraine at Die Quadriga Award ceremony

03 October 2006, Berlin, Germany

Distinguished Recipients and Laudators  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me mention at the outset why the Die Quadriga has such a special significance for me.

There is in today's ceremony a magnificent dimension which is the fact that the Quadriga Prize continually honours new stories --- and thus links a rich heritage to an ever-evolving future. The honour one feels in receiving the Award one year is profoundly reinforced the next year, as one presents the Award anew. Certainly that is my feeling today as we honour President Viktor Yuschenko of the Ukraine. Today his story now also becomes part of the Die Quadriga legacy.

The President's story is both personal and political --- built around enduring values as well as persistent challenges. It is the story of a leader who chose to serve others when service was inseparable from danger --- and who came to symbolize the hopes of millions.

President Yuschenko comes from a family of educators --- and he himself won academic distinction in the field of economics and finance. He developed the vital gift of a specialized expertise --- and he then devoted that expertise to the service of his country, helping to create its independent economy, its financial institutions, its new national currency, and its Central Bank. As the young leader of that Bank, he won the Global Finance award in 1995 as one of the world's top five Central Bankers. He went on to serve as Prime Minister --- as his country continued its economic progress.

Viktor Yuschenko became an expert in the ways that complex institutions work --- reconciling a pluralism of perspectives with a unity of purpose. It has been suggested that his personal passion for bee-keeping --- a family tradition for generations --- has been a continuing reminder from nature of how the harmony of a community can flourish when strong institutional habits respect a variety of social contributions.

Our honouree has also developed a close personal association with culture and the arts --- as a painter, sculptor, woodworker and collector in his personal life, and as a public defender and promoter of Ukraine's cultural heritage --- especially those art forms which are rooted in the history of the Ukrainian countryside and the hearts of the Ukrainian people. His public service has been an expression of his patriotism --- his love for his country's past, his dreams for its future.

Yet another aspect of our honouree's personal and professional story is his conviction that the future lies with the forces of popular sovereignty --- with the progress of freedom and democracy. And these are not abstract values for him --- they include a working commitment to the institutions that make democracy possible --- a credible election process, for example, reliable judicial systems, and a strong commitment to Freedom of Expression --- including the vital role of an independent press.

Just as the long drama of German reconciliation reached its climax on this day in 1989, so the recent story of Ukrainian freedom centres on two landmark events. The first came on July 16, 1990 --- with Parliament's declaration of Ukrainian independence and sovereignty. The meaning of that event for President Yuschenko is reflected in his decision to celebrate that day each year by climbing the highest mountain peak in his country --- Mount Hervola --- symbolizing the ever-ascending aspirations of an independent Ukrainian nation.

A second set of events in the story of Ukrainian democracy days which will always be linked with the President's name, came less than two years ago. We all remember how the integrity of democratic processes were threatened, defended and finally vindicated with Mr. Yuschenko's election to the presidency. The world was watching those events ---and drawing inspiration from them, as the words "Orange Revolution" were entered forever into the global vocabulary of freedom.

In all of these ways then --- as a perceptive student of human institutions, --- as an ardent advocate of cultural traditions, --- and as a courageous voice of democratic aspirations, President Yuschenko adds today his own powerful chapter to the Die Quadriga story.

It is indeed a great honour for me to present him to you.





## Signing of the funding agreement for the Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa

### LOCATION

Ottawa, Canada (25 October 2006)

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Prime Minister Harper  
Honorable Ministers  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It was just eighteen months ago that the Government of Canada announced its decision to partner with the Ismaili Imamat and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) in our Global Centre for Pluralism. What we welcomed at that time was a multi-faceted partnership—financial, yes, but also institutional and intellectual.

But our sense of partnership was not a new development. In fact, the AKDN and Canada have built a unique collaboration over nearly a quarter century, next year it will be 25 years of this partnership -- on a wide variety of projects in a wide variety of places—especially in South and Central Asia, East and West Africa, and the Middle East. We have a long history of path-breaking cooperation.

This successful collaboration, moreover, is deeply rooted in a remarkable convergence of values—our strong mutual dedication to the concept and practice of pluralism.

In my own role as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims over the past half century, I have come to appreciate the importance of pluralism in ever-expanding ways. The Ismaili community, after all, is itself a global family, spanning many geographies, cultures, languages and ethnicities—and sharing its life with people of many faiths. In addition, much of my work over this time has dealt with highly diverse societies in the developing world, often suffering from poverty, violence and despair. In such circumstances, a commitment to pluralism comes as no accident. For pluralism, in essence, is a deliberate set of choices that a society must make if it is to avoid costly conflict and harness the power of its diversity in solving human problems.

It will not surprise you that I am fascinated by Canada's experience as a successful pluralistic society. My active engagement with Canada began in the 1970's when many Ismailis found a welcoming refuge here in Canada from East African ethnic strife. Since that time, the Ismaili community has planted deep roots here, become self-sufficient, and can now make its own contributions to Canada's pluralistic model. That model, in turn, is one which can help to teach, and inspire the entire world.

Comme les Canadiens le savent si bien, l'idéal du pluralisme n'est pas nouveau en ce monde. Il a des fondations honorables et anciennes, y compris des racines profondes dans la tradition islamique. Ce qui est sans précédent aujourd'hui, c'est une société mondialisée, intimement interconnectée et extraordinairement interdépendante.

De nombreux facteurs ont contribué à ce nouvel ordre: la fin de la Guerre froide, les avancées techniques des transports et des communications, les migrations accélérées des peuples. Or l'impact de ces forces va probablement s'intensifier à l'avenir. A mon avis, ce à quoi nous faisons face actuellement, c'est à une nouvelle et éprouvante période de l'histoire humaine, où les valeurs et les pratiques pluralistes séculaires ne sont plus tout simplement désirables – elles sont devenues absolument essentielles – et pas seulement pour l'évolution future du monde mais également pour notre survie même.

The Ismaili Imam and the Aga Khan Development Network are deeply grateful to the Government and the people of Canada for the continuing spirit of vision, generosity and mutual respect which has brought us to this landmark moment.

Indeed, our agreement itself exemplifies pluralism at work. It brings together people, ideas and resources from different continents and cultures, from religious and secular traditions, and from the public and the private sectors. And it continues in that spirit today.

The sense of momentum we feel at this hour will surely give us renewed confidence as we seek to connect our diversified pasts with our common future.

Our hope and expectation is that the Global Centre for Pluralism will become a vital force in our world for research, learning and dialogue, engaging Canadians from all walks of life, and joining hands with a widening array of partners.

I am grateful that the Government of Canada has contributed so generously to its material and intellectual resources. Making available the Old War Museum is a particularly generous and symbolic gesture. Let us replace war with peace. Our own

commitment is to invest in this building so that it becomes a worthy testament to Canada's global leadership in the cause of pluralism.

Those who talk about an inevitable "clash of civilizations" can point today to an accumulating array of symptoms which sometimes seems to reflect their diagnosis.

I believe, however, that this diagnosis is wrong—that its symptoms are more dramatic than they are representative—and that these symptoms are rooted in human ignorance rather than human character.

The problem of ignorance is a problem that can be addressed. Perhaps it can even be ameliorated—but only if we go to work on our educational tasks with sustained energy, creativity and intelligence.

That is why we felt the Global Centre for Pluralism was needed. That is why the Global Centre for Pluralism exists today. And that is why the Global Centre for Pluralism holds such enormous promise for all of our tomorrows.

Thank You.



## Inauguration of the Ishkashim bridge

31 October 2006, Ishkashim, Tajikistan

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

President Rahmonov

Vice President Khalili

Governor Niazmamadov

Governor Munshi

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am delighted to be present with you today as we inaugurate the Ishkashim Bridge.

It has always seemed to me that bridges are among the most powerful and important symbols in human society - symbols of connection, of cooperation and of harmony. When harmony breaks down and conflicts ensue, the destroying of bridges is usually among the most urgent targets. But when peace and healing come, then it is the construction and rehabilitation of bridges that marks our progress.

In the recent past, in this region, bridges have opened at Tem, Darwaz and Langar. Like them, the Ishkashim Bridge is a concrete expression of cooperation amongst the Governments of Tajikistan and Afghanistan and the Aga Khan Development Network. It symbolizes our common determination to help open up the region to new development and improved prosperity.

I would like, first of all, therefore, to express sincere gratitude, to the two national governments and to the local governments in both countries, for making a strong commitment to rehabilitate this Bridge, and for remaining steadfast in delivering on that commitment. Allow me also to express my deep appreciation to all the volunteers from the local communities who prepared these sites for today's ceremony.

Each of the bridges I have mentioned has had a considerable moral and symbolic value, inspiring a spirit of confidence, progress and hope. But these projects also have a very concrete economic value, allowing for a substantial expansion of productive exchange. People in both countries are granted unprecedented access to markets beyond their immediate frontiers. Goods originating in Pakistan can now make their way to Tajikistan. Products from China now have a fast road transit to Afghanistan.

The Iskhashim Bridge is not only a transit point, however. It is also a meeting place. Like the other bridges, it is a place where people from more remote settlements can gather to trade in goods and services. A widening variety of peoples can have access here to a widening variety of products. The market site at Ishkashim will surely have a salutary impact on the surrounding populations, and we are deeply grateful to UNDP's Border Management Program for Central Asia (the BOMCA) for building the market here as well as for their support to the border management posts at Tem and Darwaz.

The Aga Khan Development Network has contributed \$ 1,700,000 to the four bridges at Tem, Darwaz, Langar and Ishkashim, but we would like to go further than this, as next year we hope to build new bridges at Vanj and Shurobad. Since the beginning of this exciting programme, over 2000 tons of wheat, 500 tons of milk and 160 tons of beans have crossed from one country to the other, significantly increasing food security. The local cost of tea has dropped by a third, and salt is now available in the remotest areas of Afghan Darwaz. Jeeps and hundreds of tons of cement, household goods and fabrics are significantly more available to the peoples either side of the Pyanj than ever before. Hundreds of sick people have crossed the river to seek medical support from the hospitals here at Ishkashim, and at Darwaz and Khorog, and for the first time vehicles of up to 30 tons will be able to cross from one country to the other.

Links and meeting places created by the bridges do more than simply facilitate commerce. We exchange questions and answers. We trade in products, but we can also trade in ideas. Communities on each side of the border will know one another better and be better able to help one another grow, prosper and share the lessons of life.

But let us not forget, as we celebrate this achievement, that these bridges bring with them a great responsibility. It is my hope and desire that what is carried across them – in whichever direction – is done for the purpose of creating happiness and health, wisdom and prosperity - in both the economic and the moral realms. Peoples who live on either side, and the authorities who govern them, together must assure security and regulatory enforcement, even as they work to facilitate safe passage – through an easier visa process.

It is my prayer today that the Ishkashim bridge will further join the peoples of this region and their neighbours, multiply the fruits of their labour, and bring harmony, stability and prosperity to all.

Thank You.





## Official opening of the Kampala Serena hotel

### LOCATION

Kampala, Uganda (10 November 2006)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency President Museveni of the Republic of Uganda  
The Right Honourable Prime Minister  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
Distinguished Guests

What an immense privilege it is to be present at this great beginning - the inauguration of what has instantly become one of Africa's finest hotels, the Kampala Serena. And what a joy it is to share in this moment with all of you - the people who made it possible.

Among us today are those who dreamed the dream of developing Ugandan tourism many years ago. Here also are those from the halls of government, from private business and from the institutions of civil society who developed the financial and legal arrangements which under-gird this project. Also present are many of the architects and artists, designers and engineers, construction workers and managers, hotel staff, volunteers, and so many others whose work has turned our hopes into tangible reality.

We are deeply indebted to you all.

Today's ceremony marks the culmination of a long process. My own interest in Ugandan tourism goes back at least to 1968, when we first acquired development sites



on what was called the old safari circuit. It was thirteen years ago that we identified the Nile Hotel as a potential development site. And it was three years ago that our tender offer for the Nile Hotel was accepted.

I remember how pleased we were at that time with the powerful example set by the Ugandan Government's Privatization Unit when it insisted on a transparent and professional tender process. Today, we again express our appreciation to the President and the Government of Uganda for providing the enabling environment which has allowed this project to flourish.

Once our agreement was reached, the next step was to achieve what our bid document promised. Under the direction of our Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development, and its Tourism Promotion Services group, that work was accomplished in record time - in 17 whirlwind months. During this period, we spent approximately one and a half million US dollars per month - rehabilitating, extending and transforming the old Nile Hotel. Another three months has now been spent in streamlining its operations. The result is a hotel complex which is, both in form and function, one of the outstanding tourism facilities in all of Africa - indeed, in all of the developing world.

So that is something of the historical context of the Kampala Serena project. But let me also say a word about its organizational context. For this new hotel is only one of 17 Serena properties which now brighten the African landscape - in Kenya, Tanzania, Zanzibar, Mozambique, and now Uganda.

This hospitality group began in the early 1970's with just four units. We hope and plan that its growth will continue, in Uganda and in other places, including Rwanda. Our intention is that the model we have adopted elsewhere in the region will also be applied here in this country - so that this major new hotel in the capital city can be followed, as soon as the necessary allocations are granted, by a quality circuit of new resorts and safari lodges in the Ugandan countryside. When that happens, a new East African travel circuit will be completed - featuring world class, state-of-the-art facilities, comprising a unique array of inspiring attractions, and offering a holiday experience "second-to-none".

This growing African enterprise, in turn, is part of a larger Serena presence, comprising 25 facilities in eight countries in the developing world. The newest of these opened in Kabul, Afghanistan, exactly one year ago this week. And just two weeks ago, we dedicated the foundation for a new Serena Hotel in Dushanbe, in Tajikistan.

Let me continue, then, with a word about Serena's strategic and philosophical background.

In all of these places, the Serena projects exemplify a larger strategy. In all of these places, our goal is not merely to build an attractive building or to fill its rooms with visitors, but also to make a strategic investment which many private investors might be reluctant to make, but which promises to produce a magnificent multiplier effect as its impact ripples through the local communities.

The multiplier effect is in part an economic one. It is measured in jobs - created in building, maintaining and operating the new facility. The impact is measured by the flow

of visitors and their resources - and by the investments they are encouraged to make. It is measured by the returns it generates for local investors, as our projects achieve stability and their shares are placed on local stock exchanges. It is also measured in the motivating effect a successful new enterprise almost inevitably has on other local enterprises.

But these ripple effects need not be limited to the economic sector. Their impact can also be a social and a cultural one, as this project works to re-enforce the values of hospitality and courtesy, of excellence and efficiency, of community and confidence, of self reliance and self improvement. We are proud that our projects exemplify the highest standards of corporate governance and human resource development. We also believe that, through the creative design of the hotel and through the activities it supports, this effort will help to nourish cultural pride, strengthen artistic expression, and renew traditional values.

But even as it embraces rich traditions of the past, this project also looks to an exciting future. For the hospitality industry, one of the oldest in the world, is the symbol of a bold new world, in which global connection, global travel, and global coordination will be a way of life in virtually every community. The Kampala Serena Hotel, like many of its sister projects, will be a place where the local and the global regularly intersect - enriching the lives of all who participate in this process.

Let me conclude with a word about the development process in Africa - as I have seen it emerge now over nearly fifty years as Imam of the Ismaili Muslim community. I came to this position in 1957, a moment when the colonial era was about to end in Africa, and I have been a close observer and an active participant in the region ever since.

For two generations now, those who care about African development have been seeking an important key, searching for the best way to improve the quality of human life by advancing the pace of economic development. One of the most promising outcomes of that search was the creation of a new set of venture capital institutions - ready to invest in projects which traditional private investors were less likely to support.

It is worth recalling, candidly, the several good reasons why private investors were often reluctant supporters of African initiatives: political instability, currency fluctuations, a lack of qualified manpower, low rates of return - all of these factors contributed to the problem. But the biggest risk was often the fear that the projects would be too closely controlled by inexperienced governments - and perhaps even nationalized at some point along the way. Given all of these uncertainties, much of the investment which did occur came from sources which put more emphasis on human development goals - and less emphasis on economic profit. Among them, for many years now, has been the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development - or AKFED as it has come to be known.

These uncertainties have eased to some extent in more recent times, and in some cases the investment climate has improved. But at the same time, the requirements of the international investment community have also become more rigorous. Some of these agencies have given up their development agenda and act as fully commercial financial institutions - others are now increasingly concerned with new development

conditionalities - including human rights, environmental protection, and the practices of good governance, as well as rates of financial return.

Countries like Uganda will have to take all these trends into account as they plan their economic futures. And so will institutions such as AKFED. We must be certain, for example, that our growing range of co-investors can meet their financial goals. But at the same time, we are determined to keep clearly in view our traditional commitment to developmental rather than purely financial goals. We believe this makes AKFED a particularly attractive and effective partner in projects which will work to improve the quality of life for the peoples of the developing world.

This is true because AKFED is ready to take justified investment risks - to a greater extent than many other investors. We are ready to be patient investors, with a far-ranging vision. We are long-term players, maintaining our presence even during periods of economic or political turbulence.

But even as we continue this approach, we must give increasingly rigorous thought to how each local project will affect national development. We must look, in short, for places where our leverage can be greatest. This is why the Kampala Serena Hotel project is so important to us. For - as we look at the countries of East Africa - and at Uganda, in particular - we believe that the travel and leisure sector stands out as one that offers enormous unrealized potential.

AKFED has identified other priorities as well, of course. Basic infrastructure needs are high on our list - as is evidenced in Uganda by both the large Bujagali power development project and the innovative Rural Electrification project in the West Nile region. Another priority is to foster indigenous financial institutions - not only in commercial banking, but also in fields such as micro credit, lease finance, micro insurance and other financial products. Flexibility must be a constant watchword in a world which is changing at an ever-accelerating pace.

Let me conclude by underscoring, once again, a central point - which I hope will be remembered as decision makers in developing countries plan for the future. AKFED will continue to be as supportive and creative as possible in responding to the evolving demands of developing economies. Yes, we must look with care at the dividends we can produce for the co-investors in our projects. But in the end, what will count most for AKFED is what it can contribute to the quality of human life in the cities, provinces, countries and regions in which we function. That will be our most important dividend.

Thank you.



## **Aga Khan University Convocation in Karachi, 2006**

06 December 2006, Karachi, Pakistan

**“Many observers describe this new world as the “Knowledge Society” - contrasting it with the Industrial Societies or the Agricultural Societies of the past. In this new era, the predominant source of influence will stem from information, intelligence and insight rather than physical power or natural resources.”**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Your Excellency Mohammedmian Soomro, Chairman of the Senate

Honourable Chief Minister Arbab Ghulam Rahim

Honourable Ministers

Excellencies

Chairman Dehlavi and the Members of the Board of Trustees

President Firoz Rasul

Graduates and Parents

Generous donors and well wishers of the University, from Pakistan and around the world

Distinguished guests

As-salamu'alaykum

It is a privilege and a pleasure to be with you—on what is truly “Your Day.” Those of you receiving degrees and certificates at this ceremony are the genuine guests of honour—and it is a joy to congratulate you. I include in this salute, as well, all who have helped you to attain the achievements we celebrate today—families, friends and faculties who have supported you all the way. And I also would like to thank all of those who have supported this University along its way—through their generous gifts of time, energy and financial resources. I know you will agree with me when I say that education is truly a team effort.

This is a time of transition for you—and thus a good moment for personal reflection. But it also comes at a time of transition for the Aga Khan University—and is thus a good moment for institutional reflection as well.

When we talk about transition today, we immediately think, of course, of the recent transition of our University’s presidency. I was able, at these ceremonies one year ago, to reflect on the remarkable contribution of our founding president, Shamsh Kassim-Lakha. And I am pleased today to be able to offer an official welcome to our new president, Firoz Rasul, as he is formally invested with presidential authority. Firoz, and his wife Saida, bring with them years of experience at the highest level in academia and in entrepreneurship, and it is precisely in these two areas that AKU requires continuing world-class leadership.

But our transition today is more than a handing over from our first President to our second. AKU’s original blueprint, written more than 25 years ago-- and implemented competently and rigorously by its Trustees since that time--- focussed AKU’s efforts primarily here in Pakistan. It was to be a time of concentrated innovation---and it was. We see the physical symbols of success as we walk this campus – nearly every year a new building has been added. More than that, all over the world, we can trace the impact of AKU through the accomplishments of its graduates.

But as I have watched our recent progress, it is clear that we are now moving at an accelerating pace into a new phase of our history—a period in which our energies will be focused more than ever on reaching out to new locations, new disciplines and new partners.

It is a time when we will become more inter-dependent, more inter-disciplinary and more international— just as our world itself is becoming more inter-related.

The Aga Khan University has been described as a “problem-oriented university”— a description of which we should all be proud. It explains why we focused so sharply on the fields of health and education in our early days—these were the sectors where our planners identified as the most urgent problems. And they are still areas of central concern.

But with the passage of time, we have come to see that meeting the problems of any one sector increasingly requires an understanding of other sectors—and that the best way to broaden our impact is to broaden our reach.

There has always been a human tendency to seek a simple, all-powerful answer to the world's problems. Those who have lived or worked in the developing world know this pattern particularly well. When progress seems to be moving at a snail's pace, we are easily persuaded that there must be some "quick fix".

And thus we have lurched from one panacea to another, from dogmatic socialism to romantic nationalism, from embattled tribalism to rampant individualism. For a period of time we behaved as though our political systems or economic institutions or cultural traditions could save us—or perhaps that some heroic leader was the answer. I suspect that many of us have hoped, from time to time, that education would be the solution—and that if we could create the right learning institutions, then everything else would fall into place.

But the plain truth of the matter is that everything else does not just fall into place. The hard reality of life is that there is no single button we can push that will set off an unstoppable wave of progress.

Social progress, in the long run, will not be found by delegating an all-dominant role to any one player—but rather through multi-sector partnerships. And within each sector of society, diversity should be a watchword. Healthy communities must respect a range of educational choices, a diversity of economic decision-makers, multiple levels of political activity, and a variety of religious and cultural expressions.

There was a time when many felt that modern technology would work against such diversity—blending and homogenizing the world. Technology was dehumanizing, they said. Digital communications would destroy individual expression. Globalization would mean standardization everywhere. This is not what has happened.

Instead, what the advancing years have produced, on balance, is an ever more complicated world, with a higher level of diversity-- as power is dispersed to the periphery rather than collecting at the hub.

The world into which you are graduating increasingly resembles a vast web in which everything connects to everything else—where even the smallest groups and loneliest voices can exercise new influence, and where no single source of power can claim substantial control. Indeed, the argument is often made that our long run enemy in such a world is NOT likely to be the tyranny of the few, but rather a new, global disorder—in which the centre fails to hold and a new anarchy takes over.

A vast decentralization of decision-making is already occurring in many countries; it has the advantage of placing new responsibilities in the hands of local communities. But to function successfully, these communities will need stronger civil society institutions, and broader and more expert leadership.

For the key to future progress will lie less in traditional top-down systems of command and control—and more in a broad, bottom-up spirit of coordination and cooperation. Similarly, the key to intellectual progress will not lie in any single body of instruction, but in a spirit of openness to new expression and fresh insights.

All of these changes suggest that we are moving into a new epoch of history, a new condition of human life. Many observers describe this new world as the “Knowledge Society” - contrasting it with the Industrial Societies or the Agricultural Societies of the past. In this new era, the predominant source of influence will stem from information, intelligence and insight rather than physical power or natural resources.

This Knowledge Society will confront people everywhere with new challenges—and new opportunities. Clearly this will be true of the Ummah, so let us look, dispassionately, at its present and future.

What would an independent, non-Muslim observer have to say about the Ummah in these first years of the 21st century? He might begin by noting its wide dispersion -- stretching across many countries and climates, from the very hot to the very cold, yet concentrated in a band of land that separates the far north from the far south. He might also observe its broad diversity—embracing many histories and ethnic backgrounds, speaking a multitude of languages, and experiencing a wide array of economic conditions—from extreme poverty to extreme wealth. He might continue by pointing out that Muslim peoples live under virtually every form of government—from republics to monarchies, and including more and less functional democracies. An accurate picture of the Ummah today must be truly kaleidoscopic.

But amid this variety, Muslims also share a common, continuing aspiration for security—the hope of being free from fear. Their common enemy is a sense of vulnerability in the face of volatility—whether it stems from natural causes or human failure. And they dream of a better life.

That quest for a better life, among Muslims and non-Muslims alike, must lead inevitably to the Knowledge Society which is developing in our time. The great and central question facing the Ummah of today is how it will relate to the Knowledge Society of tomorrow.

If we judge from Islamic history, there is much to encourage us. For century after century, the Arabs, the Persians, the Turks and many other Islamic societies achieved powerful leadership roles in the world—not only politically and economically but also intellectually. Some ill-informed historians and biased commentators have tried to argue that these



successes were essentially produced by military power, but this view is profoundly incorrect. The fundamental reason for the pre-eminence of Islamic civilizations lay neither in accidents of history nor in acts of war, but rather in their ability to discover new knowledge, to make it their own, and to build constructively upon it. They became the Knowledge Societies of their time.

Those times are over now. They are long gone. But if some people have forgotten or ignored this history, much of the Ummah remembers it—and, in remembering, asks how those times might be recaptured. There may be as many answers to that question as there are Muslims—but one answer which can be shared across the whole of the Ummah is that we must become full and even leading participants in the Knowledge Society of the 21st Century.

That will mean embracing the values of collaboration and coordination, openness and partnership, choice and diversity—which will under-gird the Knowledge Society, learning constantly to review and revise and renew what we think we know - learning how to go on learning.

The spirit of the Knowledge Society is the spirit of Pluralism—a readiness to accept the other, indeed to learn from him, to see difference as an opportunity rather than a threat.

Such a spirit must be rooted, I believe, in a sense of humility before the Divine, realizing that none of us have all the answers, and respecting the broad variety of God's creation and the diversity of the Human Family.

As the Ummah moves into the Knowledge Society, a variety of questions and choices will arise. And this brings us back to where we started. For my singular goal for the Aga Khan University, the University of Central Asia, and related institutions is that they should play a central role in addressing those questions and in guiding those choices.

Priority setting will be a particularly important challenge. One of the problems of the Knowledge Society is that it produces too much information. I recall President Nixon acknowledging publicly more than 30 years ago his dismay at the sheer volume of information that the President was expected to absorb daily. In such a world we can easily lose track of the forest by seeing only the trees. As a poet lamented: "Where is the Wisdom we have lost in Knowledge. Where is the Knowledge we have lost in Information?" As we work our way back again from Information to Knowledge and from Knowledge to Wisdom, a rigorous sense of priorities will be a central requirement.

But just how should the Ummah set its priorities as it embraces the Knowledge Society? Can we determine, for example, what areas of knowledge are needed in the greatest urgency, or those that will be needed for as long as we can predict? Are there specificities to the needs of the Ummah which it should seek to draw from, or instill, into the global knowledge society of tomorrow? In ethics? In the balance of world and spirit? Or in more

worldly issues such as stem cell research or nuclear non-proliferation versus global access to nuclear energy. I am not arguing that the Ummah as a whole will share similar priorities on every subject. But there may be subjects where the specific needs of the Ummah should shape our research agenda. Universities are the correct fora, but no doubt not the only ones, in which such questions should be raised, and intelligent answers developed from the best of minds.

In addressing such questions, including those with special relevance to the Ummah, we must also recognize that learning has become a global enterprise. There was a time when a single society or empire could live unto itself, culturally and intellectually—claiming dominance over other places. But that was when knowledge travelled slowly—and could be seen as a local resource. That day too has passed. In the age of the internet, knowledge is universally shaped, universally accessible, and universally applied. And successful institutions of learning must be global institutions.

That is why the Aga Khan University must make the years ahead a time to broaden our networks, broaden our teaching and broaden our geographic reach.

This can happen in a variety of ways. We are already, for example, planning a new curriculum in the liberal arts—expanding our role as a comprehensive learning institution. We are also developing new programs in fields such as architecture and human settlement; law; management of for-profit and not-for-profit institutions; government, civil society and public policy; leisure and tourism; media and communications; science and technology; and human development.

We are strengthening our research activities. Universities have a special obligation to produce new knowledge—though always within ethical bounds. But in the Knowledge Society, productive research is most often partnership research—as Universities work closely with businesses, industrial associations, engineering centres and scientific laboratories—sharing agendas and exchanging insights. New knowledge is a constantly unfolding gift of God—but it is rarely something that is achieved in isolation.

We will be building alliances with other Universities around the world—opening study and research opportunities for students and faculties alike. The result will be the development of truly global citizens, graduates who have studied in a variety of places—among people from a variety of backgrounds, fostering a better understanding of a diverse and complex world. In an era of breath-taking change and bewildering complexity, we choose not to pull back or to settle down, but instead to reach out and push forward.

The path we have chosen is not easy to chart—and it is certainly not risk free. But it is both a necessary and an exciting road—filled with the promise of high adventure.

Even as our University moves on down such a path, so I hope will each of you—in your own personal lives. For wherever you go, this University also goes—we are inevitably a part of one another's future.

It is both a perplexing and an exciting new world that we enter today—and it should be supremely reassuring and inspiring to all of us that we can enter it together.

Thank you.



## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at Splendori a Corte exhibition**

30 March 2007, Parma, Italy

**“I warmly thank the Fondazione Parma Capitale della Musica for giving the Aga Khan Trust for Culture the opportunity to share with you, in this great city and this great country of unique cultural wealth, a small sample of the cultural assets of the Islamic world, and to try to build new forces of pride and respect for the cultural manifestations of the Islamic world at a global level.”**

Let me begin by thanking Mrs. Fornari, Mayor Ubaldi and Senator Lunardi for their kind words of welcome to representatives of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, our guests and me here at Parma.

As Presidente Onorario Fondazione Parma Capitale della Musica, and Chairman of the Board of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture it is an honour for me to be here tonight at this, the first preview of masterpieces of Islamic Art in the Collections of the Aga Khan Museum

entitled Splendori a Corte and the performance of Sacred and Festive Music Traditions from Central Asia.

The past has privileged me with the friendship of Senator Lunardi and Ing. Baiocchi, as well as the happy occasion to have visited Parma in a private capacity and to have been welcomed by Mayor Ubaldi. During these happy times, we shared many thoughts on how our areas of mutual interest could build into joint initiatives from which, amongst other goals, the city of Parma could benefit. History and Culture were common areas of engagement, and it was a particularly exciting moment for me, when I realised we could bring them together in a shared platform of activities. That would, of course, not have been possible, unless those responsible for sustaining and enhancing the cultural life of this city had been willing to look outside the limits of the city, outside the frontiers of Italy and Europe, and espouse the concept that culture from whatever part of the world and from whatever background, should be part of the new region of Parma as the Capitale della Musica. In our world, where major cultures and faiths are ignorant of each other, new dialogues are critical. And Parma has opened the door to this important and challenging prospect. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture and I are honoured that the first initiative of the young Foundation Parma Capitale della Musica to embrace the global world around us, has been to welcome the cultural representations of various parts of the Muslim world.

The developing political crises of the last few years, and the large numbers of Muslims emigrating to the West, have revealed - often dramatically - the considerable lack of knowledge of the Muslim world in many Western societies. This ignorance spans all aspects of the peoples of Islam: their pluralism, the diversity of their interpretations of the Qur'anic faith, the chronological and geographical extent of their history and culture, as well as their ethnic, linguistic and social diversity.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture, the cultural agency of the Aga Khan Development Network, works to expand this knowledge. It promotes debate about the built environment; proposes exemplars and solutions for contemporary design problems; engages in the physical and social revitalisation of communities, thus impacting their quality of life; and, through education and cultural initiatives in the realm of music and the arts, aims to position properly the greatness of the cultures of the Muslim world in our global cultural heritage.

These societies are experiencing dramatic periods of transition, processes of change, and homogenising forces of popular culture, often from far away lands which they view as threatening the significant contributions Muslim civilisations have made to the common heritage of humanity and radically altering the value systems of their future generations. In Muslim societies culture matters a great deal, for it is intimately intertwined with matters of faith. Authentic symbols of pride and identity seem to be disappearing leading to a sense of exclusion, alienation or even challenge to inherited identity.

The need for better understanding across cultures has never been greater - nor more pressing. We must do our utmost to value and protect what is greatest in our common heritage. It is important that the diversity of cultures, the pluralism that characterises many societies today, is recognised as a vital asset and prerequisite for progress and development.

I warmly thank the Foundation Parma Capitale della Musica for giving the Aga Khan Trust for Culture the opportunity to share with you, in this great city and this great country of unique cultural wealth, a small sample of the cultural assets of the Islamic world, and to try to build new forces of pride and respect for the cultural manifestations of the Islamic world at a global level, and thereby contributing to the reduction of the damage that has been made in recent times by questionable decisions in the field of international politics.

## Message to The International Islamic Conference

7th May 2007



**Amman, Jordan – 4th – 6th July, 2005**

*Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim*

I am happy that we have been invited to participate in the International Islamic Conference being held in Amman, from the 4th to the 6th of July, 2005, under the auspices of the Hashemite Kingdom. In light of the purpose of the Conference, I find it appropriate to reiterate, in my message of greetings, the statement that I made in a keynote address at a gathering of eminent Muslim scholars from 48 countries who attended the Seerat Conference in Karachi on Friday, 12th March, 1976, nearly 30 years ago, which I had the honour to preside at the invitation of the then Minister for Religious Affairs, Government of Pakistan.

In my presidential address, I appealed to our ulama not to delay the search for the answers to the issues of a rapidly evolving modernity which Muslims of the world face because we have the knowledge that Islam is Allah's final message to mankind, the Holy Quran His final Book, and Muhammad, may peace be upon him, His last and final Prophet.

These are the fundamental principles of faith enshrined in the Shahada and the Tawhid therein, which bind the Ummah in an eternal bond of unity. With other Muslims, they are continuously reaffirmed by the Shia Ismaili Muslims of whom I am the 49th hereditary Imam in direct lineal descent from the first Shia Imam, Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib through his marriage to Bibi Fatimat-az-Zahra, our beloved Prophet's daughter.

I applaud Jordan, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah, for the foresight in hosting and organising this International Islamic Conference for the purpose of fostering unity in the Ummah and promoting the good reputation of our faith of Islam. Let this Conference be part of a continuous process of dialogue in the true spirit of Muslim brotherhood so that the entire wealth of our pluralist heritage bears fruit for the Muslim



world, and indeed the whole of humanity; for ours is the heritage which premitates human dignity, transcending bounds of creed, ethnicity, language, gender or nationality.

Our historic adherence is to the Jafari Madhhab and other Madhahib of close affinity, and it continues, under the leadership of the hereditary Ismaili Imam of the time. This adherence is in harmony also with our acceptance of Sufi principles of personal search and balance between the zahir and the spirit or the intellect which the zahir signifies.

I agree with our distinguished hosts and conference participants that there is a need today to define which Madhahib will apply to the Ummah. This clarity is critical for modern life in Islam as is evident in areas such as law, access to Islamic banking, or in dealing with the challenges of the rapid generation of new knowledge such as in bio-medical and other scientific fields.

In keeping with our historic tradition of ever abiding commitment to Muslim unity, we reaffirm our respect for the historical interpretation of Islam by our brother Muslims as an equally earnest endeavour to practise the faith in Allah and emulate the example of our Holy Prophet, may peace be upon him, which illuminates Muslim lives and which, Inshallah, will elevate all Muslim souls.

Once again, I congratulate His Majesty and the Hashemite Kingdom for this timely initiative, and I pray for the successful deliberations of the Conference in the spirit of Islamic brotherhood.

With fraternal greetings,

His Highness the Aga Khan  
49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims



## Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Enabling Environment Conference, Kabul

04 June 2007, Kabul, Afghanistan

**"By civil society, I mean a realm of activity which is neither governmental nor commercial, institutions designed to advance the public good, but powered by private energies. They include non-commercial, non-governmental entities in fields such as education, health, science and research. They embrace professional, commercial, labour, ethnic and arts associations, and others devoted to religion, communication, and the environment."**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Your Excellency President Hamid Karzai  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure and honour to be with you all today. We extend our warmest thanks to all those whose dedication has made this conference possible, most especially to President Karzai and the Government of Afghanistan for their central role - as well as to Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, who will attend tomorrow's closing session.

Let me also express our deepest gratitude to Prime Minister Badawi for his deep engagement with the subject of this conference - and for the example Malaysia has provided of a successful, pluralistic, Muslim country, guided by the ethics of Islam. This achievement is something of which the whole Muslim world can be particularly proud.

We are approaching the 50th anniversary of Malaysian independence in September - so it is a particularly appropriate moment to salute Malaysia's record as a role model for the Ummah and for the entire developing world.

I am particularly aware these days of the significance of 50th anniversaries, as I will complete, in July, my 50th year as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims.

It is appropriate to both of these anniversaries that we should be talking today about an Enabling Environment for Development - for this has been a central theme in the story of Malaysia since its independence - and it has also been a central theme of my Imamate. In fact, it was on another personal Jubilee occasion - just 25 years ago - that I addressed this topic at the first Enabling Environment Conference in Nairobi.

Over the ensuing quarter century, we have learned a great deal about the nature of Enabling Environments. Among other things, we have been learning to free ourselves from overly simple myths about how development works.

The term "Enabling Environment" has two implications which I would underscore today. First, it reminds us that the conditions which enable progress can be extremely complex, that an entire "environment" of interacting forces must come together if development is truly to take root - and to take off.

Second - the term recognizes that even the right environment is still only an enabling condition - not a sufficient one. Our conference title does not talk about an environment which "solves" or "cures" or "progresses" or "prevails" - but rather about an environment which "enables". In the end, human progress must grow out of the human heart and soul. The environment enables - but it is the human spirit, guided and supported by the Divine Will, which eventually triumphs.

What a sound enabling environment must do is to create a favourable framework in which human creativity can flourish.

When I have spoken about this topic in the past, I have emphasized such conditions as political stability, safety and security, citizen rights, predictable democratic practices, and a legal and administrative framework which is streamlined and efficient, impartial and effective. While these concerns are largely the responsibilities of government I believe that the ethics of Islam can contribute significantly to their achievement, especially the importance Islam places on mediation and conciliation.

Laying the State's political foundation is a necessary first step for an enabling environment, but even effective government can take us only so far. And that is why we have been talking more in recent years about two other sectors: first, what I often call the role of "civil society"; and, secondly, the capacities of the private sector.

By civil society, I mean a realm of activity which is neither governmental nor commercial, institutions designed to advance the public good, but powered by private energies. They include non-commercial, non-governmental entities in fields such as education, health, science and research. They embrace professional, commercial, labour, ethnic and arts associations, and others devoted to religion, communication, and the environment.

Of course, the civil sector includes international non-governmental organizations - which are so well represented at this gathering. But they also grow, increasingly, out of local communities and indigenous populations. This is particularly true for Afghanistan, where a broad sense of local commitment, tied to rural villages and urban neighbourhoods, will be an indispensable development force.

Throughout the developing world, we see a new emphasis on the capacities of indigenous organizations to meet development challenges - on a bottom up rather than a top down approach. Voluntary village associations, for example, are undertaking projects which once lay in the political domain - ranging from the installation of water and sanitation systems and the building of irrigation canals, to the provision of educational services and the support of health and safety standards.

In saying all of this, I do not mean to ignore the importance of government. The role of civil society is to complement government efforts, not compete with them. And the same thing is true of a third important partner in a great alliance for development - the private, business sector.

All around the world, private companies of all sizes are a rapidly growing source of progressive energy. Increasingly, they see corporate social responsibility not as something extra - a symbolic after-thought tacked on to the corporate agenda at the end of the day - but rather as part and parcel of their basic commercial strategies. Many companies have set up dedicated departments or corporate foundations to lead such efforts - budgeting a portion of their proceeds to finance them. Other companies encourage and even match the contributions of time and treasure made by individual employees.

We can see a notable example of this potential here in Kabul. Roshan is a mobile phone company, only four years old, but already the largest company in Afghanistan - with over one million customers and nearly a thousand employees. For almost two years now, it has sponsored a department of Corporate Social Responsibility - the first of its kind in Afghanistan.

Roshan sponsors micro-finance projects which enable women to become independent entrepreneurs - selling phone services, or repairing mobile phones. It provides playgrounds, meals, cultural and school projects for street children. It has pioneered in the field of Telemedicine - using fibre optic and microwave links to connect local patients to sophisticated doctors and equipment in Karachi.

Roshan has recently been honoured, for these and other efforts, by the prestigious Committee to Encourage Corporate Philanthropy - an association of over 160 major corporations - as an inspirational business model. .

The Roshan story is one I know well - since the company's largest shareholder is the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development. But it is only one of countless examples of imaginative business initiatives.

Let me add one further thought - perhaps the most important. To be sure, each of these three sectors - government, civil society, and the business sector - can accomplish important things on its own. But it is my conviction - that one of the chief obstacles to development in our time is that the energies of all three sectors are too often scattered and fragmented. Too often, the various actors go about their business without enough reference to one another. The result often reminds me of an orchestra made up of talented and dedicated artists - but playing from different scores. The result is not harmony but cacophony - and an unevenness of public impact which is inherently unfair.

Let me be clear: I am not denying the importance of decentralized, pluralistic approaches to development. . But I also believe that the positive impact of all the participants could be compounded if they understood one another even better, talked to one another even more often, and partnered together even more effectively.

Some of you may recall how the World Bank has tried to foster a series of stakeholder fora to encourage better coordination of developmental efforts. I believe that such an effort could have particular value for Afghanistan - where fragmentation and decentralization has been so deeply embedded in the physical geography of the country -and thus in its culture, as well.

Extreme forms of fragmentation have been a barrier to progress in Afghanistan. The most profound example is the fact that much of this country's economic life - activities related to illicit drug production - falls outside the reach of any legitimate regime. In many developing countries, illicit activities have shrunk as legal authority extends its influence and as

alternative licit activities - in the realm of agriculture for example - take on added value. But these processes are still at an early stage in Afghanistan.

Yet even within the sphere of legality and legitimacy, the problem of fragmentation and disconnection is an important challenge. Too often the good things that happen here occur in relative isolation from one another – too often the good people who contribute here lack the sense of mutual support and shared insight which could magnify their impact. The spirit of vigorous individual initiative is deeply-rooted in the Afghan spirit - but it could be tapped more effectively within a stronger framework of cooperation and consultation.

We should not forget, however, that the political history of Afghanistan is also one in which the traditional consultative assembly – the Loya Jirga - has played an important role. Its objectives have been those of engagement, accommodation and cooperation - and it is in that same spirit that a regular stakeholder development forum in Afghanistan might usefully be convened.

Perhaps our meeting today can add useful momentum to such a process, not only by creating a roadmap for future progress but also by ensuring that this roadmap will be seriously consulted and appropriately adjusted as time goes on.

Many good things might grow out of such enhanced communication. Among them, I would hope, would be an unfolding array of public-private partnerships. The range of such partnerships has been expanding of late - but there is still enormous unrealized potential.

Such partnerships will require a profound spirit of reciprocal obligation and mutual accountability - a readiness to share the work, share the costs, share the risks, and share the credit.

A good example of a successful three way partnership is a recent project to build health-care centres in Afghanistan. Local communities donated the land, the government financed the construction, and the Aga Khan Development Network trained the staff.

Another quite different example in which I have been involved was the creation of Al-Azhar Park and revitalising the Darb al-Ahmar neighbourhood in Cairo. At least ten different civil, governmental and private groups came together in that effort from at least five different countries.

Such partnerships can have another benefit as well - the partners can learn a lot from one another. A village association, for example, may need help with basic accounting practices. Another group might be creative with local projects, but inexperienced in extending their scale. Various other organizations may be good at long-range planning, or public communication, or legal strategies. Alliances of such entities should continually be comparing notes and sharing best practices.



Nor should such alliances be limited by outmoded geographic constraints. Here, as elsewhere, the future will depend on our ability to rise above the accident of common geography and to rally around common interests - whether our skills lie in apricot processing or tourism, transport or literature or law.

Each step we take to expand our horizons will make the next step easier. In Northern Afghanistan, for example, our network has built several bridges across the Pyanj River to Tajikistan, and it has been gratifying to see how markets have grown up around each of them. And once such interaction is launched, the integration process can accelerate. The regionalization impulse can be a critical part of an effective enabling environment.

Let me close these remarks by asking what may seem to be an impertinent question. How do we know whether these programs are actually working or not? How do we know whether they are improving? It would be very easy to mislead ourselves on this score -and to assume that because we are trying hard, or spending significant sums of money, or are inspired by noble intentions, or are holding a lot of meetings - we must therefore be making an effective impact.

But this is not always the case. And that is why it is so important that all of us should be held accountable for the results we produce - that our work should be measured by its observable, positive impact on the quality of people's lives.

But how should this measurement be done?

Let me mention in this regard a successful programme we have started in a neighbouring country: the Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP).

One of PCP's roles is to function as a standard-setting body - a group that certifies the effectiveness of organizations in contributing to the public good. This certification becomes a "seal of good housekeeping" for such institutions. The score-keeping is done by independent judges in the areas of internal governance, financial management and programme delivery. The goal is to set sector-wide standards and to encourage the widespread adoption of 'best practices'.

The PCP uses its website and databases to tell these success stories in ways which will inspire further successes. You can imagine how such an important effort can help potential allies in their search for credible partners. Even those organisations that fail to meet the standards can benefit, as PCP steps in to link them with specialised capacity-building groups.

The story of the PCP is another sign of a recent maturing process in the development arena. It represents another component of a strong enabling environment.



In sum, meeting the development challenge will continue to be a complex matter - one which will not only demand the very best of government, civil society and private enterprise, but will also require new efforts to coordinate and harmonize their various energies. And it will require discipline in the way we measure and evaluate the outcomes. .

But I would end, as I began, by suggesting that an enabling environment can only do so much. In the final analysis, it can create a framework in which individuals can make the best possible use of their own personal gifts.

An Ayat in the Holy Quran says: "Verily, God does not change a people's condition unless they change that which is in themselves." In the end, it is the will and the resourcefulness of the individual human being that, with Allah's blessings and guidance, will determine our future.

It is to that end that this conference has been organized - and it is to that end that each of us must continually be rededicated.

Thank you



## Graduation ceremony at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po)

15 June 2007, Paris, France

Mr. Richard Descoings, Director of Sciences Po,  
Directors and Faculty of the MPA Programme,  
Graduating Students and their Families,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to be with you today.

This is a memorable time for all of you who are graduating today - and for your friends and families. And it is also a special moment in the life of this School - the graduation of the first class to earn the new Master of Public Affairs degree.

The values which Sciences Po honors today are deeply rooted in its history - stretching back now over a century and a third a lot of people have been ahead of you. But the School's hallmark is that it has always honored the past by embracing the future. The

Master of Public Affairs programme -especially its emphasis on international partnerships - is an ideal example of new innovation in the service of old ideals.

Among those ideals has been the principle of educating for leadership, but leadership based not on social standing or material resources but on intellectual merit.

The founders of Sciences Po realized in their time that aristocracies of class must give way to aristocracies of talent – that is, to meritocracies. And the path to meritocracy in leadership is meritocracy in education.

Another value which Sciences Po has emphasized from the start is that of pluralism - an outlook which rises above parochial preoccupations. That outlook is reflected today in your strong international commitments, including your new Master of Public Affairs degree.

I was impressed with this programme from the day I first learned that Sciences Po would join with Columbia University and the London School of Economics in its sponsorship. And my enthusiasm is reinforced as I look out at the global mix of your first graduating class. I wish I had the time to meet and talk to every one of you.

I had the opportunity to speak just a year and a month ago at the School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University. I shared with that audience a definition I once heard of a good graduation speaker - they say it is someone who can talk in someone else's sleep.

I hope that we can break that pattern today.

Toward that end, I thought it might be helpful if I took up a question which may well be on many of your minds: Just who is the Aga Khan, anyway? And why is he here?

In response, let me say first that I was born into a Muslim family, linked by heredity to Prophet Muhammad (May peace be upon him and his family). It was exactly fifty years ago that I became the 49th Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims.

The ethics of Islam bridge the realms of faith on the one hand and practical life on the other – what we call Din and Dunya. Accordingly, my spiritual responsibilities for interpreting the faith are accompanied by a strong engagement in issues relating to the quality of life and well being. This latter commitment extends not only to the Ismaili community but also to those with whom they share their lives - locally, nationally and internationally.

One of the issues which has concerned me the most over these years has been the topic of education.

My forefathers, as far back as a thousand years ago and as recently as a century ago, founded some of the great universities of the Muslim world, and I have continued in that tradition through a program of Aga Khan Academies, a school system, and by establishing the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia.

Against this background, you can understand why the success of your new program is of such a great interest for me.

We hear a great deal these days about a clash of civilizations between the Islamic world and the West. I disagree profoundly. In my view, it is a clash of ignorance which we are facing. And the answer to ignorance is education.

I should note that my own education has blended Islamic and western traditions. My secondary and university schooling, in fact, was in Europe and in America. But my perspective over these last fifty years has also been profoundly shaped by the developing world.

The Ismailis currently reside – as minorities - in more than 25 countries, mostly in the developing world. For five decades, that has been my world – my virtually permanent preoccupation. During that time we have built a wide-ranging series of programmes involving these societies - in fields such as health care, education and culture, economic infrastructure and social development, the environment, the arts, and the media – coordinated through the Aga Khan Development Network.

Over this past half century, the pace of change on our planet has been bewildering. And that pace is accelerating. I was struck last month by the fact that the leadership of France, the U.K. and Germany had changed significantly in just a few months and similar changes are coming in the United States.

As the pace of history accelerates, developments that occurred over fifty years in my lifetime will happen in fifteen or even five years for your generation. This is why I believe that the most important thing you could have mastered in the course of your studies - as you were becoming “Masters” of Public Affairs - was not any specific body of knowledge, but rather the ability to go on learning.

There is nothing we can do to slow the pace of change, but we can hope to help steer its direction.

As we do so, there are three challenges in particular that I would like to highlight to you today. They are: first, the future of democracy, especially in the developing world; secondly, the central role which civil society can play in that development; and thirdly, the crisis in relations between the West and the Islamic world. These are all areas which are going to affect the world in which you live in the decades ahead.

The history of democracy, especially in areas of Asia and Africa which I know well, has been a long series of jolts and jars. Today, any thoughtful observer of those regions would have

to conclude that democracy has been losing popular confidence as an effective form of government.

In many of these countries, governments, constitutions, parliaments, and political parties are little more than a dysfunctional assemblage of notional democratic vehicles. Elections are held, constitutions are validated, and international monitors issue their reports, but observing these forms of government is not the same thing as governing effectively.

A recent survey by UNDP of 18 South American countries confirmed that the majority of people were less interested in their forms of government than in their quality of life. In simple terms, most people would rather have a beneficent paternalistic dictator, provided he improved the quality of life, than a less effective, though duly elected, democratic leadership.

The question that must be asked, I believe, is not whether democracy is a good thing in the abstract, but rather how to help democracy perform better in practice. Do we really know what is going wrong? And why? Do we know what corrective steps should be taken? And by whom?

These are massive questions, and I do not claim to know the answers. But I do believe that significantly more thought must be given to these issues, by the intelligentsia of our world, yourselves included.

As we think about these questions, there are some hopeful signs. Generally speaking, the most successful developing countries are those which have engaged actively with the global knowledge society, those which have accepted and defended the value of pluralism, and those which have created an enabling environment for human enterprise, rather than indulging in asphyxiating policies which discourage human endeavour.

But in too many places, democratic practice is deeply flawed. One problem is simple ignorance of the various forms of democracy. I attribute this in part to the absence of good education in comparative government. Holding a national referendum on a new constitution, is no guarantee that the provisions of the constitution have been understood, let alone validated, by popular consent.

In addition, the machinery of government - including the creation and funding of political parties, is often unguided and undisciplined, and widely open to manipulation and fraud. Nor is government performance monitored effectively - by internal processes or by the media.

Finally, the very concept of democracy must be adapted to a variety of national and cultural contexts. Effective democracy can not be imposed from the top or from the outside.

Democracy's value must be deeply felt in the daily lives of a country's population, including the rural majority, if it is to be upheld and promoted.

Against this background, it would be wise, in my view, to prepare ourselves for a time of testing as far as democracy is concerned. We can expect a mix of successes, failures and disappointments, as well as a continuing array of governing arrangements: absolute monarchies, constitutional monarchies, single house or dual house parliaments, presidential and other systems, including numerous forms of federalism. In addition, regional groupings will increasingly play important roles. Does this picture mean continuing instability in parts of the developing world? May be.

But I have confidence that if we can ask the right questions about democracy, we will increasingly find the right answers.

In this regard, the fact that history moves at an accelerating pace is both a challenge and an opportunity. I remember how people 50 years ago carelessly referred to many of the developing economies as hopeless "basket cases", including places that have taken off since - like India and China.

As history demonstrates, so-called backward places can move forward over time. It is not unrealistic to plan for progress.

This brings me to my second major point. One of the reasons that I am more optimistic than some about the future of the developing world is my faith that a host of new institutions can play a larger role in that future. I am especially enthusiastic about the potential of what I call "civil society".

By civil society, I mean a set of institutions which are neither governmental nor commercial, organizations which are powered by private energies but designed to advance the public good. They work in fields such as education, health, science and research. They embrace professional, commercial, labour, ethnic and arts associations, and others devoted to religion, communication, and the environment. Many are targeted to fight poverty and social inequity.

Too often we have assumed that voluntary organizations are too limited to serve great public purposes. For some, the very notion of private organizations devoted to public goals seems to be an oxymoron.

But this skeptical attitude is changing. The power of civil society is becoming more apparent - in your coursework here at Sciences Po among other places. This is all to the good - civil society should have a prominent place in the new equation for social progress, complementing rather than competing with government. And the same thing is true of the private business sector - and the potential for public-private partnerships.

Civil and private institutions have unique capacities for spurring social progress - even when governments falter. For one thing, because they are intimately connected to the warp and woof of daily life, they can predict new patterns with particular sensitivity.

The development of civil society can also help meet the challenge of cultural diversity, giving diverse constituencies effective ways to express and preserve their distinct identities.

Private institutions also provide good laboratories for experimentation. Because they are multiple in nature, they can try a variety of approaches, sometimes failing and sometimes succeeding, but always learning from their experiences. And because these institutions need NOT make short term accommodations to conventional wisdom or current fashions, they have greater freedom to be controversial - and creative.

Let me move then to my third topic, the crisis in relations between the West and the Islamic world. I cannot remember a time when these relations have been so strained, or so wide-sweeping in their impact - both across generations and across the world.

I am deeply convinced that the fundamental roots of this crisis are infinitely more political than they are theological. And we can deal effectively with this crisis, I believe, only if we begin by addressing a complex set of political issues, rather than worrying so much about a conflict of religions.

If you reflect back to the origins of the present flash points, the historical legacy has been consistently political - and frequently explosive. The present Middle East situation was born at the end of World War I, growing out of the search for a homeland for the Jewish peoples of our world. The Kashmir conflict was born out of the decolonisation process when Britain withdrew from the then-united India. More recently, the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and the British and American invasion of Iraq have further contributed to the turmoil.

But disputes among the three Abrahamic faiths themselves have not been responsible for these conflicts. Yes, many of the problems have since taken on the colouring of interfaith conflict, but that development is the consequence, much more than the cause, of these tragedies.

Political conflict, of course, has sometimes intensified theological forces which were once less conflictual, particularly in the Islamic world. Separations within Islam have become more visible, more irascible, and more difficult to address. Some such divisions, such as relations between Arab Muslims and non-Arab Muslims, or between various interpretations of Islam, have historical roots which are centuries old, and have been revived and fanned by political developments. But other cleavages, between the secular states and the theocracies of the Muslim world, for example, or between the ultra rich and



the ultra poor, are essentially the products of modern times - at least in their scope and scale.

Three observations are critical here. First, there really is no one single Islamic world, but a variety of individual situations which need individual analysis. Second, the faith of Islam, in the vast majority of its interpretations, is not in conflict with the other great Abrahamic traditions. Third, each crisis we encounter stems from its own specific political context.

Bringing a new sense of peace and order to this complex situation will require great subtlety, patience, understanding and knowledge. Sadly, none, I repeat none, of these requirements are sufficiently available amongst the main players today. There is clumsiness, not subtlety, there is impatience, not patience, there is a massive deficit in understanding and an enormous knowledge vacuum.

Too often, there is also a tendency to run away from unpleasant truths. But we will not ameliorate these conflicts unless we address the underlying conditions - especially when economic despair leads to radicalization. It has taken 50 years, and the publication of the Sachar Committee Report, to acknowledge that the Muslims of India are second class citizens. But is the same thing not also true of the Muslims of Mindanao? It is perhaps understandable that any religious grouping which has been marginalized economically will see itself as being victimised. But our priority should not be to sharpen religious distinctions but to address human suffering.

Let me also comment on the sharpening of cultural conflict within western societies.

The past few years have been a dispiriting time in Europe - in part because of what many describe as a clash of civilizations in Europe's midst, triggered by the rapid growth of minority populations. Perhaps, under a revitalized leadership, Europe can lead the world in meeting that challenge. But it will not be easy.

Cultural conflict in the past was often mitigated by the fact that sharp cultural distinctions were muffled by geographic distance.

But geography as a cushion between cultures has been diminishing in recent years. The communications revolution has meant "the death of distance". More than that, cultures are now mixing physically to an extent that would once have seemed impossible.

Economic globalization contributes to the trend. Some 45 million young people enter the job market in the developing world each year - but there are not enough jobs at home for many of them. Immigrants now account for two thirds of the population growth in the 30 member countries of the OECD. Some 150 million legal immigrants now live outside their native countries, joined by uncounted millions of illegal immigrants. Remittances sent

home by immigrants total some \$145 billion a year - and generate twice that amount in economic activity.

The economic forces that propel immigration are far more powerful and relentless, I believe, than most people understand. They will not readily or easily be reversed or impeded.

As once homogenous societies become distinctly multi-cultural, the rhythms, colours and flavours of host communities change, inspiring some, but frightening others. More than half of the respondents in recent European opinion polls have expressed a negative view of immigration.

The frequent result of all these factors has been marginalization - socially and economically - for many minorities. And we need not look very far to see the evidence. To be sure, the victims of marginalization in our world can be found on the floodplains of Bangladesh, the village streets of Uganda, and the teeming neighbourhoods of Cairo. But they can also be found in the banlieu of Paris.

The “Clash of Civilizations” is both a local and a global problem.

The world is becoming more pluralist in fact - but not in spirit. “Cosmopolitan” social patterns have not yet been matched by what I would call “a cosmopolitan ethic”.

One of the great stumbling blocks to the advance of pluralism, in my view, is simple human arrogance. All of the world’s great religions warn against self righteousness - yet too many are still tempted to play God themselves - rather than recognising their humility before the Divine.

A central element in a truly religious outlook, it seems to me, is a recognition that we all have a great deal to learn from one another.

The Holy Quran speaks of how mankind has been created by a single Creator “from a single soul...” - a profound affirmation of the unity of humanity.

This Islamic ideal, of course, is shared by other great religions. Despite the long history of religious conflict, there is also a long counter-history of religious tolerance.

Instead of shouting at one another, our faiths ask us to listen - and learn from one another. As we do, one of our first lessons might well center on those powerful but often neglected chapters in history when Islamic and European cultures interacted cooperatively and creatively to realize some of civilization's peak achievements.

The spirit of pluralism is not a pallid religious compromise. It is a sacred religious imperative. In this light, our differences can become sources of enrichment, so that we see “the other” as an opportunity and a blessing - whether “the other” lives across the street - or across the world.

Having looked then at the challenges of democracy, the opportunities for civil society, and the nature of our cultural divides, let me return to a point I made earlier - the acceleration of history, the danger of further drift, and the need to master change.

Who is it, I would ask in closing, who is best positioned to pursue such mastery? Among those who inherit this obligation and this opportunity, I would suggest, are you who are graduating this week from one of the world’s most advanced university programmes, with a title which tells us that you are, each one of you, a “Master of Public Affairs”.

As you graduate, you have my warmest congratulations on all you have accomplished so far, and my prayer that God may be with you, inspiring you and empowering you, in all the good things you will be doing in the days ahead.

Thank you.



## "Spirit and Life" exhibition (London, UK)

12 July 2007, London, UK

Your Royal Highnesses,  
Your Excellencies,  
Mr. Mayor,  
My Lord,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am deeply pleased all of you are here today, for the opening of our 'Spirit and Life' exhibition. And I know you share the special sense of honour I feel in welcoming the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall, and so many other distinguished guests. Their Royal Highnesses have, in the past, visited the Azhar Park in Cairo and the restoration of the Baltit Fort on the Silk Route in Northern Pakistan, both projects sponsored by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. I am delighted by Their Royal Highnesses' support for the work being done by the Trust.

This exhibition is designed to give us a glimpse into the future. What we see here today is the nucleus of the Islamic art collections of the future Aga Khan Museum in Toronto. This museum, which is being designed by the renowned Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki, is conceived as a primarily educational institution in the field of Islamic art and culture, a

specific mandate that is not fulfilled so far by other North American museums. We hope and trust it will contribute to a deeper understanding among cultures - to the strengthening of true cultural pluralism - which is increasingly essential to peace, and to progress, in our world.

This is an appropriate place for us to share in this vision - and to talk about that objective. Britain, through its centuries of history, has been one of the world's countries that has been most exposed to the cultures of other societies. London, in particular, is a crossroads for widely diverse peoples - from every corner of the planet.

We can see the evidence of that in the impressive range of artworks found in places such as the British Museum or the Victoria and Albert Museum just across the road - where Your Royal Highness recently inaugurated the impressive new Islamic Art Gallery. We see our comparatively modest exhibition here at the Ismaili Centre as a complement to that and other venues in this country which house Islamic Art, and which spotlight both its richness and its diversity.

I am also very pleased that you are today in a building of which we are very proud, our Ismaili Centre. We hope that this exhibition will help bring many more Londoners into this place, the centre of spiritual life for our community in Britain.

Certainly one of the lessons we have learned in recent years is that the world of Islam and the Western world need to work together much more effectively at building mutual understanding - especially as these cultures interact and intermingle more actively. We hope that this exhibition - and the museum which it anticipates - will contribute to a better Western understanding of the peoples of Islam: in all of their religious, ethnic, linguistic and social diversity.

As you know, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, in particular, and the Aga Khan Development Network, in general, are working toward this goal in a wide variety of ways. I am especially pleased to take this occasion to thank an important partner in our efforts, the Prince of Wales - along with 18 organisations which make up the Prince's Charities, for their special cooperation and support. Our collaboration ranges from the world of corporate social responsibility to the challenges of economic development, from public health projects to creative educational initiatives, from environmental and architectural concerns to artistic and cultural workshops. We hope and we trust that the beginnings we have realized in our work together, can continue to flourish - and to multiply.

If I could express one hope for all of you, as you leave this place today, it is that you will appreciate even more deeply how much culture matters in Muslim societies, and how deeply culture is entwined for Muslims with matters of faith. This is why we call this exhibition: 'Spirit and Life'. At a time when the forces of exclusion, alienation, and separation can often seem so threatening in our world, I am convinced that our ability to honor authentic symbols of pride and identity - and to share their beauty and their power

with one another - can be a tremendous force for good. I hope you will feel the same way - let me thank you, most sincerely, once again, for sharing with us in this important moment.

Thank you.



## **Inauguration of the Faculty of Health Sciences of the Aga Khan University, Nairobi**

13 August 2007, Nairobi, Kenya

Honourable Minister for Education Professor George Saitoti

Honourable Ministers Excellencies Chairman Dehlavi and the Members of the Aga Khan University Board of Trustees

President Firoz Rasul Generous donors and well wishers of the University Distinguished guests

My thanks go out to all of you for sharing in this occasion with me. It is a special one for many reasons - including my close ties over so many years to this country, and to so many here whose friendship has enriched my life. It was just one month ago that I celebrated my 50th year as Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims. We are marking that occasion with a series of visits to places where our community has been most deeply rooted. This visit to East Africa is the first of those tours - and that is most appropriate, given Nairobi's central role both in our community life and in so many activities of the Aga Khan Development Network - including, of course, the educational work of the Aga Khan University.



A golden jubilee is a valuable opportunity for putting the present into historical perspective. In that spirit, I would begin today by emphasizing how my concern for education grows intimately out of my family history. It was just a century ago that my late Grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, began to build a network of educational institutions which would eventually include some 300 schools, many of them in East Africa. My late Grandfather, who was also the founding figure of Aligarh University in India, was renewing a tradition which stretches back over 1000 years, to our forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, who founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo. And going back even further, I would cite the words of the first hereditary Imam of the Shia Muslims, Hazrat Ali Ibn Abi Talib, who emphasized in his teachings that “No honour is like knowledge.” Those words have inspired an emphasis on education within our tradition ever since that time. That tradition has been expressed in recent decades in many ways, ranging from the sponsorship of Madrasa early childhood projects to the founding of the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia. We are also establishing a new network of Aga Khan Academies - outstanding residential primary and secondary schools - teaching the International Baccalaureate and covering no less than 14 countries in Africa and Asia. The first of these is already functioning in Mombasa - I will visit there tomorrow to launch the building of its new residential campus. The Aga Khan University (AKU) itself opened officially in 1983 in Pakistan where, I am happy to note, it has been voted as the country’s leading university, and where it is now establishing a new under-graduate Faculty of Arts and Sciences. AKU is also planning a number of new post-graduate schools in Pakistan and Eastern Africa, to meet important needs in both areas. Amongst these Graduate Schools will most probably be “Architecture and Human Settlement”, “Media and Communications”, “Tourism and Leisure”, “Management” and “Government, Public Policy and Civil Society”. AKU’s expanding presence now includes teaching sites in eight countries, three of them in East Africa, working primarily in the fields of medicine, nursing and education - the East African sites now enroll fully one-third of all AKU students.

This brings me to a central point of these remarks, which is to announce another major step forward for the University. Building on the success of its existing programmes – the Aga Khan University is planning to establish a new Faculty of Health Sciences here in Nairobi. To my knowledge, this will be the first private sector university in Eastern Africa to create a full-fledged Faculty of Health Sciences offering under-graduate and post-graduate degrees in Medicine, Nursing and the allied health sciences. The central challenge of this new faculty will be to address the crucial health care priorities of the East African population - and indeed all of sub-Saharan Africa - from Sudan to Mozambique, from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic. The new Faculty of Health Sciences will educate future generations of professional leaders in the evidence-based practice of medicine. Emphasizing both teaching and research, it will be accompanied by a major expansion of the Aga Khan University Hospital here, including a new Heart and Cancer Centre, which is scheduled to begin construction this year. What we envision here in the coming years is an institution of some 1000 students and 175 faculty members, admitting students on a merit basis. Our new facilities, including a teaching hospital of 500 beds, will eventually occupy some 80,000 square meters. The total investment over the next fifteen years will be about

250 million dollars. When the project is complete, the Aga Khan University in Kenya alone will employ over 4000 people.

Let me add some further comments about the background to this massive engagement: To begin with, it should be said in all candor that the recent history of higher education in numerous less developed countries has been discouraging. Many development policy makers in the 1960's and 1970's simply did not see higher education as a priority concern - instead they incorrectly calculated that they could not justify the cost of higher education from the foreseeable productivity of university graduates. As a result, some African countries which had strong institutions of higher education at the time of their independence, now find themselves unable to achieve even minimum global standards. This sad situation demands urgent attention. In responding, we can try to learn from the successful examples of others. One reason for the success of American higher education, for example, is its highly diversified base - it looks to a mix of national, state, and local governments for support - as well as to the private sector. It thus serves a host of different constituencies, and provides a variety of essential specialities. I believe that the developing countries of Asia and Africa will likewise be well-served by encouraging private, self-governing institutions to develop side by side with those which are supported by the public sector. The challenges of developing any new university are immense. They are massive consumers of human and material resources - even when they fall short of world-class standards. This means that the sponsors of new universities in the developing world will need to make significant long term commitments - and be capable of keeping them. They will also need access to the right human resources, as well as global perspectives on higher education, and a sense of complete dedication to the highest educational standards. AKU is developing close partnerships with universities and centres of excellence around the world. It is also expanding geographically - throughout the East African region, for example. But for its work to be optimized here in Kenya - especially in the field of health sciences - processes such as accreditation and the recognition of medical credentials may need reviewing. While Eastern Africa presently lacks a strong private university sector, this trend is changing. My hope is that the commitment we are announcing today will encourage other private initiatives, while also encouraging educators from the public sector to welcome private institutions as complementary players rather than as competitive ones. The initiative we are describing today blends the realm of education with the realm of health care - so let me take a moment to say that our concern for health care also has deep and well-developed roots. The Ismaili Community in Kenya has been closely involved in health care in this country for many years, and numerous members of the community have become doctors, dentists, pharmacologists and nurses. Meanwhile, the community and the Ismaili Imamat have fostered the development over fifty years of the Aga Khan Hospitals in Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. These institutions, staffed by some of the most talented professionals from within the Ismaili community and from outside, have, I believe, served the surrounding populations with integrity and commitment. The Aga Khan Hospital here in Nairobi was the first multi-racial hospital in colonial Kenya, and it has recently set another new precedent by becoming the first private sector hospital in Kenya to educate in medicine and nursing, through its new affiliation with the Faculty of Health Sciences of AKU in Pakistan.

Earlier, I discussed the need for private and public cooperation in the field of education. The same approach is also needed in the field of medicine. I am aware of perceptions that private health care in Kenya is expensive - health care worldwide, in fact, is becoming more expensive every year. Sophisticated equipment is increasingly costly, and new technologies are replacing old ones at shorter and shorter intervals. More and more, the treatment of complex cases is calling for teams of specialized professionals rather than single generalists. The Aga Khan Hospitals in Kenya, and everywhere else they exist - in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Tanzania - operate on a non-profit basis - no dividends are ever distributed, but they also aim to operate on a break even, self-sustaining basis. In this way, if new external funding is available, it can provide for expanded facilities, new buildings and expensive new equipment, rather than compensating for operating losses. This is the only way that private institutions can provide ever-improving services, which will, in turn, have a beneficial impact on the quality of medical practice for the whole of society. Even as we recognize the realities of private medical care, so we must recognize the importance of the public health care sector. In discussing this topic, I want to acknowledge the importance of the Kenyan Ministry of Health's assertive push towards a national health sector strategic plan. Such plans are essential not only for Kenya, but also for other developing countries. They should, no doubt, be drawn in wide consultation with all the stakeholders, including those from the private sector, who are the majority providers in Kenya. In such plans, the question of human resources will be central. How will Kenya retain as many of its qualified practitioners as possible, reversing the trend toward a greater foreign migration of medical and nursing personnel? How can we attract back the Kenyan professionals who have left to practice elsewhere? The answers will be complex. But the creation of a world class health care faculty for the Aga Khan University, and the expansion of its teaching hospital, should make an important contribution to that goal, and thus to the achievement of global best practice standards throughout the region. Thank You.



## State banquet commencing the Golden Jubilee visit in Kenya

13 August 2007, Nairobi, Kenya

Your Excellency President Kibaki,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests:

Let me say first what a wonderful honour it is - to become a Chief of the Order of the Golden Heart of Kenya, and to do so on one's Golden Jubilee!

I am most deeply grateful to President Kibaki for this award - and for his very warm and generous words.

It is a pleasure for me to be here tonight, among so many old and new friends.

As I observe this Jubilee year, I plan to use this occasion to do two things: first, to visit places and people that have been particularly important to the Ismaili community and to me throughout this last half century, and, secondly, to discuss issues which have been

particularly important to us, with a special effort to put them into historical perspective, and to build for the future.

When I speak of places that have played a major role in my life, no place comes to mind more quickly than Kenya. My ties here go back to my “toto” days - how can I ever forget our childhood house on Caledonian Road, now named the Denis Pritt road and the mega rhubarb I grew up the rain-water drain, or driving down the garden steps in the late Sir Eboo’s car? And how could I forget my brother’s despair when his pet bantam chickens were eaten one night by a visiting leopard? Little did I suspect that the next night my rabbits would suffer the same fate.

But going beyond childhood memories, let me say that the work which has involved me here in more recent years includes many of the most far-reaching and satisfying endeavours of my lifetime.

It is good to be in Kenya for another reason - and that is the great spirit of this country. That spirit was evidenced again just three weeks ago, when a new global opinion survey was published by the Pew Institute and the New York Times. The results came as a surprise to many - particularly when they reported that the peoples of Africa - despite the severe problems, were quite optimistic about the future. Kenyans, in particular, felt not only that their own lives were improving, but that their children’s lives would be better than their own.

The scholars who conducted the survey also described a sense of realism among Africans - an understanding that progress does not come as a steady wave, but rather as a series of surges and setbacks. Out of that realistic spirit has come a strong sense that the African story will have a happy ending.

Those who know Kenya know that there are good reasons for this hopeful spirit. Kenya has achieved impressive economic growth for the last three years, with the GDP expected to end at 6.9 % this year. During this same time, there has been a significant inflow of foreign investment, and a massive investment in education, health care and infrastructure. Kenya has one of the highest per capita literacy rates in Africa and is determined to make democracy work. It has created an enabling environment for vibrant enterprise in fields such as agriculture and horticulture, tourism and finance. In fact, at a recent World Economic Forum, Kenya was ranked among the top three countries in Africa in welcoming investment and innovation.

Kenya has played a role in past Jubilee celebrations of the Ismaili Imamat - during my late Grandfather’s time and my own. Some of our projects here bear names which came from those celebrations - like Diamond Trust and Jubilee Insurance. Some of our proudest accomplishments were launched as Jubilee initiatives. In that same spirit, we are announcing this week a number of new Golden Jubilee projects in Kenya and other parts of East Africa - including new ventures for the Aga Khan University Hospital and the Aga Khan

University. The Aga Khan Academies programme will also expand into a new network of world class primary and secondary residential schools teaching the International Baccalaureate curriculum and covering no less than 14 countries in Africa and Asia. Its first school is already functioning in Mombasa, and is about to add new residence buildings for faculty and students.

These investments will build on past AKDN activities here - in the fields of business and finance, the media, health care, education, transport, infrastructure investment - and others. They reflect our respect and affection for the Kenyan people - and for the sense of promise which I recall from my childhood in Kenya, and which I continue to feel on every return visit.

I said a moment ago that I had two objectives as I mark this Jubilee year - the second one was to put into historical perspective some of my experiences over this half century.

As you know, my principal preoccupation has been with the developing world, watching as it has oscillated between hope and disappointment. The disappointments often resulted from the false hope that one theory or one dogma, one person or one party had all the answers to the riddles of development.

Genuine hope, on the other hand, has usually been rooted in a tough sense of realism - a recognition that no one has all the answers, that today's answers may not work forever, that good people do not all think alike, and that we must constantly learn from one another for an uncharted future.

When this realistic spirit prevails, then the search for economic and social progress can become a shared experience, based on what I would call a "cosmopolitan ethic" and fostering a spirit of partnership and collegiality.

These comments explain why I value so highly what people call "public/private" partnerships. There is much to be gained when governments cooperate with private institutions. Governments can help provide a strong enabling environment for both private enterprise and for civil society. For example, they could create common standards for civil society organizations whose work extends across national frontiers. The Aga Khan University, for instance, is planning extensive new investments in the region and common registration and accreditation policies would help facilitate this effort.

Inter-governmental cooperation in many areas can be a key which unlocks the future in East Africa. This is why both the Imamat and the AKDN support the creation of new federal constructs in the region - including the concept of an East African Community.

A federal concept simply means that governments will forge a united approach on matters which call for unity - and will operate in disparate ways when diverse approaches are



better. To work of course, there must be a feeling of predictability as to who does what. And there must be a sense of equitable opportunity for all partners.

Federalism at its best need not be limited to governmental arrangements. Even as I commend the concept of a new East African Community on the political front, I would also encourage new region-wide approaches on the economic front, as well as in the civil society arena. Again, the dominant themes should be diversity, variety and experimentation - and an appropriate sharing of responsibilities.

History endorses the value of what I have called federal approaches - including the history of Islam - where some of the greatest chapters demonstrate how people who share a common faith can also embrace a broad diversity of local cultures.

The desire for unity and the urge to diversify may seem like contradictory forces - but the beauty and power of a partnership approach is that it respects the proper role of each impulse - and works out ways in which both can be respected.

If one of the themes of a Jubilee celebration is the search for historical perspective, then perhaps it will be appropriate for me to stretch that search back to the roots of the Islamic and Ismaili traditions, as I cite the words of the first hereditary Imam of the Shia Muslims, Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Hazrat Ali said: "No honour is like knowledge. No belief is like modesty and patience. No attainment is like humility. No power is like forbearance. And no support is more reliable than consultation."

Those words seem particularly relevant today. The spirit that Hazrat Ali evokes - the spirit of modesty, humility, forbearance, and consultation - is an approach we might also call the spirit of partnership. It is this spirit which I hope will characterize these Jubilee celebrations - even as it guides leaders in the public, private and civil sectors as they confront the great challenges of our time.





## **Foundation stone-laying ceremony of the residential campus, Aga Khan Academy, Mombasa**

14 August 2007, Mombasa, Kenya

The Honourable Professor George Saitoti,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Honourable Member of Parliament,  
The Provincial Commissioner,  
Your Worship the Mayor,  
Distinguished Guests:

I am most grateful to all of you for joining in this celebration. It was just one month ago that my Golden Jubilee observances began. It seemed appropriate to mark this Jubilee year by visiting some of the places which have been most important to the story of the past half century.

Our meeting today is among the first of those visits - and that is as it should be. For one thing, Kenya is the country where I spent a good part of my youngest years. It is also a place which has played a central role in the life of the Ismaili community - and in so many

activities of the Aga Khan Development Network. When I come to Kenya, I always feel especially at home.

The project which brings us here is one in which I have taken a special interest, and for which I have especially strong hopes. I refer of course to the Aga Khan Academies programme, which was launched here in Mombasa some four years ago.

What was described as a dream when we gathered to open the first Academy is now much better described as a concrete plan—one which extends out in time and space—to a day some ten years from now when the Academy network will embrace some 18 campuses across 14 countries in the developing world. But when that day comes, Mombasa will be remembered as the place where it all began.

But even as the Academies program moves on to new beginnings in new locations -scouting out sites, purchasing land, creating partnerships, planning campuses, and laying cornerstones—we continue to expand its work in Mombasa. Here too we are laying a new cornerstone—the first step in the building of a residential campus which will take this school into a new era—as it broadens its own geographic reach. We do this now with special confidence—based on what this school has already achieved.

The latest evidence is just a month or two old—the results of the recent International Baccalaureate exams -- which are used to measure academic accomplishment at some 1800 schools around the world. To have our very first class of students perform so well—as you have heard—is a great tribute to the students—and to their teachers. And it is also good to know that their academic prowess is matched by their accomplishments in athletics and other co-curricular activities—as well as the qualities of personal character which they exemplify.

A central premise of the Academies program is that students will enter based solely on merit-- not because of financial resources or family background. Our central hope for the program is that when students leave the Academies, they will move on to high quality universities—and then to positions of social leadership. As they go through life, we expect them to reflect the central values of the programme--a strong ethical orientation, a sense of personal discipline and civic obligation, and an appreciation for diversity and pluralism.

You may have heard about a recent survey of public attitudes throughout the world conducted by the Pew Foundation and the New York Times—and released just three weeks ago. The results for Africa, in particular, came as a surprise to many, because they showed an unexpected degree of hope for the future—despite a realistic awareness of present problems. The people of Kenya, in particular, ranked among the more hopeful of African citizens in feeling that their children would someday be better off than people are now. What is it that explains this optimism? Among other things, it reflects a faith in the inherent capacities of the younger generation—a sense of what their natural talents can accomplish if they are given the right opportunities.

And that of course is what the Academies program is all about. That is why we want to do everything we can to extend this programme to include more students – and an even broader range of experiences. In this ambition, we are heartened by an important new World Bank study which indicates that it is not the quantity of time or money that leads to educational success, but rather the quality of specific educational experiences. The stimulus provided by extraordinary teachers and exceptional companions is most important.

The World Bank study confirms a central tenet of our Academies planning, our confidence in the value of a residential campus. We believe that students draw valuable life lessons not only from learning together but also from living together—especially if the mix of students is broadly diversified. The laying of this cornerstone symbolizes this commitment to a residential experience. In addition, we are also committed to building an international network of similar schools—so that those who are enrolled on any one campus will also be able to be study at other Academy sites.

These plans constitute a bold step into the future. But they also reflect a deep respect for the past. The commitments we are discussing today grow out of values which have been central to the history of the Ismaili community in particular and of Islamic cultures in general. My personal interest in education as a key to future grows out of my family history—including the precedent set by my late grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, who began just a century ago to build a network of some 300 schools in South Asia, the Middle East and East Africa.

These efforts, in turn, extended a tradition which stretches back over a millennium and third-- to the very first hereditary Imam of the Shia Muslims, Hazrat Ali Ibn Abi Talib, and his elevation of Knowledge as a central quality in the life of faithful Muslims. As early as the 8 th century, the original Abbasids honored that prescription by creating a series of academies and libraries where new knowledge was honoured. The Fatimids continued this work from Cairo in the 10 th century. Later Ghazni, in Afghanistan became an important learning center. By the middle of the next millennium, an international culture of Knowledge and Learning was thriving under Islamic influence—ranging from the Safavid centers in Iran to the Mughal courts of India and the Uzbek court in Bukhara. In the 19 th century, the Ottoman caliphs added another chapter to this story. And so did my grandfather in his role as the Ismaili Imam.

Against this background, you can understand why the promising start of our Academies programme here in Mombasa means so much to me—and why this ceremony is such an appropriate part of our Jubilee celebrations.

A Golden Jubilee naturally calls on us to rise above the concerns of the immediate present—and to extend our historical vision. As we do so, we recognize that even the small beginnings we undertake today may make a profound impact in decades to come.

One of my institutional commitments has been to help the developing world explore the keys to social and economic progress. But sadly, over these fifty years, I have seen too many developing countries search for those keys in disappointing directions. For a while, it was thought to be enough to simply throw off the yoke of colonialism and to reassert an indigenous cultural identity. Education, from that point of view, became largely a matter of tapping into ancient wisdom. In other cases, the promises of a charismatic ruler would capture the public imagination, reducing the role of education to relative insignificance.

Over time, other potential cures would have their moments in the sun, ranging from the siren songs of state socialism on one side to the allure of unrestrained capitalism on the other. The demands of dogma came to replace the disciplines of reason – and education too often turned into indoctrination.

But as a wise observer once said, it's not so much what we don't know that hurts us, but also all those things that we are sure we know—but which are just not so. And so it was with many of the so-called certainties of the past.

What the modern world requires, however, is an approach which is the polar opposite of indoctrination. As world affairs have been steadily transformed by the process of globalization, the ability to command and control has become less important than the ability to anticipate, connect and respond. And educational institutions which can instill and enhance those capacities have become essential to effective development.

If the Aga Khan Academies are to fulfill their mission, they must work in these pragmatic directions. To this end, the Academies curriculum seeks to instill a habit of intellectual humility which constantly opens young minds to what it is that they do not know, and which sends them on a wide and rigorous search for new knowledge. In my view, the most important thing a student can learn in any educational institution is the ability to keep on learning.

At the same time, our curriculum also places a strong emphasis on the ethical and spiritual dimensions of life, as well as a more complex understanding of how global economics work, a focus on comparative political systems, and a broad exposure to a variety of world cultures, including the Study of Muslim Civilizations.

Let me address at this point one of the questions which is most often asked about the Academies programme, and that is whether its emphasis on educating future leaders in some way ignores or misses the interests of a broader public

My response rests on the conviction that the key to the success of democratic societies in the years ahead will be the effectiveness of democratic leadership—not only in government, but also in the private sector in civil society. In a world of bewildering complexity and a mind-bending pace of change, no institution can succeed without wise leadership—and specialized expertise. Yet, too many of those who ought to be effective

leaders in years to come are being left behind in the here and now. Because good schools are not available to them early in life, they are often excluded from such opportunities as they grow older.

Does this mean that we should focus only on educating a leadership elite? Not by any means. Broad public education is still a basic obligation of a just society—and I commend all those who are engaged in that noble enterprise. Public education and private education should not be seen as rivals in building a better society—but rather as important collaborators.

But I also believe that the interests of society will be best served if its outstanding future leaders can be given a truly outstanding education—and often it is a specialized private school which is best positioned to fulfill that goal.

How should a healthy society determine who will lead it? For much of human history, leaders were born into their roles, or fought their way in – or bought their way in. Leadership traditionally has depended on physical power, or accumulated wealth, or inherited claims to authority.

But I strongly believe that social progress can be greatest when aristocracies of class give way to aristocracies of talent – or to use an even better term – to meritocracies. The well-led society of the future, in my view, will be a meritocracy – where leadership roles are based on personal and intellectual excellence.

Our goal, then, is not to provide special education for a privileged elite – but rather to open the doors of opportunity to students from a broader array of backgrounds. Our goal is to provide a truly exceptional education for truly exceptional students. And we hope that the Academies, by embracing this principle, can also become role models for many other schools.

Educating effective future leaders is a high responsibility. To do it well, we must look beyond the world which is passing from sight and turn our eyes to the uncharted world of the future. We must rise above the antiquated approaches of earlier days and instead infuse our students with what I would call three “A’s” of modern learning - the spirit of anticipation, the spirit of adaptation and the spirit of adventure. This will happen best in learning environments which are both serious and focused on the one hand, but which are also joyous and inspiring places, operating on the cutting edge of pedagogy and knowledge.

To create such environments will be the central mission of the Aga Khan Academies in the years ahead. We are proud of the beginnings which have been made here in Mombasa in pursuing this vision, even as we are thankful to all of those who have contributed to this progress. And we look forward to continuing to work with you in pursuing the great educational adventures of the future.





## **Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Madrasa programme**

14 August 2007, Mombasa, Kenya

**“It is striking that modern neuro-sciences have demonstrated that long before the age of 6, children are aware of the different cultural backgrounds amongst each other in their classes. It is thus before that age that pluralism can be instilled as a life value.”**

The Honorable Noah Wakesa, Minister for Science and Technology,  
Honourable Minister Haroun Suleiman,  
Leaders of the Ummah,  
Distinguished Guests,

My thanks go out to all of you - not only for joining us here today, but for making this day possible. For some of you, this event marks the culmination of a 25 year story - a story that began with the sowing of some very small but well selected seeds a quarter of a century

ago - seeds which took root and now have blossomed into an educational success story which can serve as an inspiring example to educators everywhere.

As you know, I have completed 50 years as Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims. Sometimes it's not so easy these days to remember all the way back to 1957. But I have no problem at all remembering my initial meetings 25 years ago here in Mombassa with the Ummah leadership - with leaders of the Aga Khan Foundation, and with others of you who shared what was then an innovative insight. You shared a conviction that the way in which children are educated in their earliest years is a key which can unlock the doors of opportunity for the rest of their lives.

A deep concern for Knowledge - and the best ways of sharing Knowledge - goes back to the very roots of the Islamic tradition. When we think of our proud educational traditions, however, we often think first about the great Universities and Libraries which became centers of Islamic culture down through the centuries - including in our time the Aga Khan University which now has teaching centres in eight different countries. Or we think of schools which prepare students for university life - as our Aga Khan Academy programme is designed to do.

But we sometimes give too little attention to the schools which prepare young children for life itself - in all of its holistic dimensions. And yet the evidence accumulates steadily showing that an investment made in the earliest, pre-school years can bring enormous dividends as a child proceeds from one level of education to another.

We have particularly strong evidence that this has been the case for the Madrasa programme in this community - and in the other communities and the other countries to which these concepts now have spread. From the seed that was planted here in the Coastal Region some 25 years ago - when Bi-Swafiya Said received her grant from the Aga Khan Foundation - the East African Madrasa Programme has grown to include 203 pre-schools, with nearly 800 teachers, reaching some 30,000 households and serving more than 54,000 children. This is truly an inspiring story.

It is also important to note some additional distinctions concerning this program. One is the Programme's pluralistic, inclusive approach - embracing Muslim and non-Muslim children alike - and helping all of them to learn important lessons about diversity. Indeed, it is good to see that parents of different faiths are represented on the School Management Committees.

It is striking that modern neuro-sciences have demonstrated that long before the age of 6, children are aware of the different cultural backgrounds amongst each other in their classes. It is thus before that age that pluralism can be instilled as a life value.

Another point worth noting is the rigour with which quality has been assured - with strong Madrasa Resource Centres helping to set goals and standards, and rewarding their



achievement through a school graduation program. The progressive nature of this programme is also evident in the fact that women have played such a large part in its success - and that young girls make up such a significant part of the pre-school population. And I would point out as well that the programme's success has occurred largely among poor, rural populations - where both the needs and the obstacles are often greatest. Our challenge now will be to ensure the programme's sustainability - and its replicability.

We gather today, then, in a spirit of enormous gratitude - to the Pioneers who led this effort, the Ummah and Jamat leadership, the donor community, the government leaders who have been involved, and so many dedicated volunteers - from the very beginnings of the programme right down to the present day. In the end, the story of the Madrasa Programme has been a story of personal commitment.

And we know that the story must go on. The dream will continue to unfold. And the work which all of you have been doing will continue to resonate in the thousands of lives you have touched and shaped - and in the lives of their children and grandchildren.

Thank you.



## Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the State banquet in Tanzania

18 August 2007, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Your Excellency President Kikwete,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished Guests:

Let me begin my comments this evening by thanking His Excellency the President for his exceptionally warm and generous speech and comments about me – I am deeply touched President. I would also like to say how much I have enjoyed these last few days in Tanzania. It is always a great personal pleasure for me to be here - and I am most deeply grateful for your wonderful welcome and your gracious hospitality.

The enormous honour you have shown me, through the creation of a special stamp to mark this Jubilee, is something I profoundly appreciate and will always remember.

This Jubilee year provides such an ideal opportunity for me to visit places which have been particularly important to me - and to the Ismaili community - throughout my Imamatus. I am

taking these opportunities to revisit some of the important themes of these fifty years, and to announce a number of new initiatives.

The story of the Ismaili community in East Africa goes back well before the start of my Imamate, at least as far back as the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Various Aga Khan institutions have been active here for more than 100 years - ever since my late Grandfather founded the first Aga Khan Girls School in Zanzibar in 1905.

Today, our work here takes many forms: We work in the medical field through the Aga Khan Hospital and an array of clinics and dispensaries. Our educational institutions serve students and teachers of all ages. We are active in banking and microfinance, insurance, tourism, leisure and cultural preservation. We have been deeply involved in Tanzania.

I am always heartened, as I return to a place I have known so well, to hear from local friends about the progress which has been made since my last visit. I suppose there are times when enthusiastic friends might even exaggerate their stories - but usually, by the time I leave, I have a pretty clear fix on how things are going!

I must tell you that my conclusion tonight, is that the people and leaders of Tanzania deserve great credit. You have been able, under difficult conditions, to maintain national stability, to consolidate many recent reforms, and to build a sense of hopeful continuity. Surely one of Tanzania's great gifts to the world has been its example in building a strong spirit of pluralism among a population balanced almost equally between Christian and Muslim peoples. It is not surprising that a major new survey of world opinion ranks Tanzania among the highest countries in Africa in expressing faith in its democratic future.

I have also been impressed by the formulation of your Millennium Development Goals - and your success in meeting some of them - whether it is the increase of more than 6% in the GDP this year, or the fact that immunization rates have climbed past 80%, or that primary school enrolment rates now exceed 90%.

But each forward step must lead on to new steps. Increasing primary school enrolments, for example, leads inevitably to the need for more secondary schooling. As young people enter the work force here - two thirds of a million each year - the fact that only 6 percent of them enter the wage and employment sector remains an immense challenge. With effective new education and training programs, however, this enormous source of national strength could be unlocked.

As you know, the field of education has been a central concern of my Tradition - going back to the great institutions of learning which were such a distinguished part of Islamic history for so many centuries.

Our current efforts in education have centred on developing an integrated international system of schools, ranging from the pre-school efforts of our Madrasa program, to primary and secondary schooling through our expanding Academies programme, including some 18 schools in 14 countries of Africa and Asia. These efforts culminate in the tertiary programs of the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia.

One cannot hope to build quality schools, of course, without quality instructors. That is why our Academies program includes a Professional Development Centre (PDC) on each of its campuses, with a focus on educating the educators. In many cases, the PDC will be opened and training teachers well before the Academy students are enrolled. Similarly, the Aga Khan University has already opened the Institute for Educational Development here in Dar es Salaam for the purpose of teacher training and pedagogical research.

We realize that these efforts in themselves will not remedy the human resource challenges in Tanzania. But we do believe they can have a great “multiplier effect”, serving as laboratories, models, and motivators.

The challenge of development - in education as in other fields - is highly complex -and it calls for complex responses. We must replace old, dogmatic prescriptions with new pragmatic approaches.

This is why I say so often that the challenge of development must be a shared experience, one that rests on a “cosmopolitan ethic”, and proceeds in a spirit of partnership. In this light, Tanzania’s progress in building a pluralistic society is an important foundation stone for the future.

The commitment to cooperate is not only essential among peoples of different ethnic or religious backgrounds, or different classes, or philosophies. We must also build stronger bridges of cooperation between different sectors of social and economic leadership. I am pleased, for example, to be hearing more and more these days about “public/private partnerships. As we learn to work across the public/private dividing line, we can do things together we could never do separately.

One effective way in which governments can contribute to this goal is by providing a strong enabling environment for private initiatives - at the local, national and regional levels.

It has been a hallmark of Ismaili thinking that the peoples of East Africa can often be most effective when they work and think on a region-wide basis. Many of our AKDN initiatives, in fact, have been organized, for some years now, on a region-wide basis - and with great success.

Stronger regional institutions in East Africa can do a great deal to facilitate development, but for this to happen, and for the East African Community to thrive, the spirit of partnership must also be present when governments deal with one another.

We hear constantly these days about the process of “globalization” in our world. But we should note that this is also an age of enormous “regionalization”. It is happening in Europe. It is happening in Southeast Asia. It is happening in North America – and in many other places. And, of course, it is also happening in Africa.

East Africa is a place where regionalization can have a particularly beneficial impact. It is good to know that the leaders of the five major countries of East Africa have all indicated their strong support for regionalization. The moment is a promising one.

I mentioned earlier that my Jubilee visits would be opportunities to talk about future plans - and I have done so tonight by emphasizing the importance of a pragmatic approach to development, the value of public/private partnerships, and the importance of building a stronger East African Community.

Let me conclude by describing something more concrete - one of the most far-reaching of our new initiatives. I do this out of my conviction that the best way to celebrate the past is to grasp the future - and that it is good to make new plans with an eye on their historical context.

It is in that spirit that I am pleased to announce the Aga Khan University’s decision to build a major new campus in East Africa--and to locate that campus in Arusha.

Tis project is, I believe, the first major private sector investment in the East African Community since the formal joining of Rwanda and Burundi. It is the biggest expansion step for the Aga Khan University since it opened in Pakistan almost 25 years ago.

This new campus will be built over a period of fifteen years with a total investment of some 450 million dollars. It will include a new Faculty of Arts and Sciences and several graduate professional schools. It will be committed to teaching and research of world-class standards.

Building a university is a very exciting process. But it is no small undertaking!! It requires enormous resources of time, talent and treasure. Above all, it requires a sustained long-term commitment. It is not a sprint—it is a marathon.

But we undertake this effort with some confidence, bolstered by evidence of past success. We are pleased, for example, that the Aga Khan University has been ranked as the best university in Pakistan - and that its medical graduates score in the top 10% on licensing

exams in the United States. We are also pleased that the first class of Aga Khan Academy graduates in Mombasa has scored impressively in the International Baccalaureate exams.

Even in the planning stages, building a new University campus is an exercise in complexity. As we undertake this unprecedented task, we will need to work closely with the Tanzanian government on several fronts. One key challenge will be in the area of land use planning, zoning, and infrastructure—providing all the facilities a thriving new community will need. Introducing a new university in Arusha will actually change the way a city grows and the way people live in that environment. A second area is the preparation of students who can compete effectively for admission –and who can rely on loan and scholarship programs to help support their schooling. We are looking at a means blind admissions process. Any young child male or female who has the intellectual potential to enter that university must be able to have access that that university. Thirdly, but just as importantly, region-wide accreditation will be critical —so that the University’s degrees are recognized and respected across all of East Africa and of course as of the first of July that includes Rwanda and Burundi.

We hope that the University will be a source of effective leadership for the East Africa of tomorrow. We envision students coming from many directions and many backgrounds—living and studying together in a special regional environment, and then going out again with a strengthened sense of personal empowerment and social responsibility.

The plans I have been discussing reflect our faith in the future of this region and this continent. In a very specific way, they also reflect our faith in the future of Tanzania and of Arusha - not only as an organizing point for regional affairs, but also as an international focal point of Ideas and Innovation.

Our dream is that the Aga Khan University - as it expands in East Africa and elsewhere - will play a central role in the great Knowledge Society of tomorrow.

This vision for the future is important to me personally because it so fittingly honors the past. The great chapters of Islamic history, after all, demonstrate how peoples of a common faith, spread widely throughout the world, have flourished when they embraced and advanced a cosmopolitan Society of Knowledge.

As the 49 th Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, I often look back to the words of the Fourth Caliph, who was also the first Imam of the Shia Muslims, Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Listen to Hazrat Ali’s words: “No honour is like knowledge. No belief is like modesty and patience. No attainment is like humility. No power is like forbearance. And no support is more reliable than consultation”.

The passage - beginning with the word "knowledge" and ending with the word "consultation" - sums up my message to you tonight. It is my prayer that all of us - with a common commitment to knowledge - and in a continuing spirit of consultation - can go forward together to meet our great challenges.

Thank you.





## **Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Bujagali hydropower project**

21 August 2007, Jinja, Uganda

**"Everywhere in the world today, people are searching for ways to reduce the threat of global warming both by limiting greenhouse gas emissions and by fighting the blight of deforestation. The key to both efforts is to move away from plant and fossil fuels, and to depend instead on renewable energy sources. Hydro electric power fulfills that goal. It is "clean" energy - advancing sustainable development while minimizing its environmental impact."**

Your Excellency President Museveni  
Honourable David Migreko, Minister for Energy  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

Let me begin by expressing my warmest thanks for your kind introduction and for this wonderful welcome.

What a great pleasure it is to be a part of this historic occasion. I am particularly pleased that it comes during my Golden Jubilee year - and indeed at the outset of my Jubilee visits to places in the world which have had special meaning to me - and to the Ismaili community - over the past fifty years. I know I will always remember this day - and this place - as a special highlight of these celebrations.

The laying of this foundation stone is indeed an historic moment. The project we celebrate today is an unprecedented endeavour.

As Nizar Juma has pointed out, it represents the largest single private sector investment of any sort in East Africa and the largest independent power project in sub-Saharan Africa. I understand it is the largest single power investment ever made by the International Finance Corporation - anywhere in the world.

I must tell you that the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development is very proud to have been the catalyst in advancing this project - and very happy to be a continuing part of it.

Our ceremony today is both an ending and a beginning.

It marks the end of a long road of dreams and plans, discussions and debates, negotiations and bids, adjustments and agreements - with a wide array of partners. It is thus a moment for extending warmest thanks and congratulations to everyone who has participated in this process - some of you for some time now - from both the public sector and the private sector - from Uganda, and from so many other countries.

We are deeply indebted to you all - for your patience and your stamina, for your imagination and your vision, and for your commitment to Uganda and East Africa.

You have already heard about President Museveni's suggestion that a statue at State House might have been a good incentive for pushing this project along. I might observe, however, that if every person who played a key role in the project's success were to be awarded a statue, the State House in Kampala would have to add a whole additional wing.

What has emerged from this intense, yet tireless, effort, in a relatively short period of time, was not a statue or a building - but something which can still be described as a truly splendid structure.

This will soon be true in a physical sense here at Bujagali. But it is also true in an organizational and a financial sense, as support for this project has been assembled from so many institutions and so many places.

It has not been easy through the years to attract traditional, private investment capital into ambitious infrastructure projects in the developing world. And yet, with the strong commitment of the Government of Uganda, the critical backing of the Global Power and other private investors, and with the key support of the World Bank Group and other highly-respected multi-national lenders, the debt and equity financing for this project was actually over-subscribed!

What a wonderful breakthrough this has been - and what a powerful model it can be for the future!!

But if today marks the culmination of an intricate process of planning and organization, it also marks the beginning of another demanding journey - the process of executing and instituting our plans. At the end of this road, however, lies an exciting new world of opportunity - for the people of this region, for the people of this country, and indeed for the whole of East Africa.

As you know, the government and the people of Uganda have made substantial economic strides in recent years - and they are to be congratulated for these achievements. But in Uganda - as in many other countries - the greater those strides may be, the more they bump up against a formidable barrier - a shortage of dependable power. The greater the progress in other fields, the more severe this problem can become - as the inevitable load-shedding and loss of power too frequently reminds us.

This problem, of course, extends well beyond Uganda. It is striking to me that the continent of Africa, with fully one-sixth of the world's population, produces only four percent of the world's electricity - and most of that is in its northernmost and southernmost countries. The great issue of development, everywhere in the world, is whether the power supply will grow more quickly than the economy, or whether economic growth will outstrip the power supply. Uganda has been suffering from the latter condition - and the consequences have been grave.

Today, only five percent of the total population of Uganda - and only one percent of the rural population - have access to the grid supply of electric power. Even for those who do have access, electricity tariffs have more than doubled in the last four years. These skyrocketing costs work to reinforce the cycle of poverty for millions, and they badly impair the ability of Ugandan companies to compete in international markets - and thus to expand employment. The result of continuing power shortfalls can be a downward spiral of disappointment and discouragement.

The Bujugali project was not merely a desirable option as we began to examine it a few years ago. It was a fundamental necessity.

But just imagine for a moment the transformation that can take place when the cost of power is cut by more than half, as it will be in the early stages of this project, and then is

later cut in half again. Think of the difference it will make when the supply of power is adequate to the needs, and massive load-shedding becomes a distant memory.

Bujagali alone will not accomplish our goals, of course. The energy challenge - here and elsewhere - will require a multi-faceted response, including bold innovations in the way we both produce and consume energy.

I believe that the Bujagali project will propel a great chain of positive developments - an exciting upward spiral.

Let me mention one other positive aspect of the Bujagali project.

Everywhere in the world today, people are searching for ways to reduce the threat of global warming both by limiting greenhouse gas emissions and by fighting the blight of deforestation. The key to both efforts is to move away from plant and fossil fuels, and to depend instead on renewable energy sources. Hydro electric power fulfills that goal. It is "clean" energy - advancing sustainable development while minimizing its environmental impact.

If this were not the case, we would not have taken up this project, and we could not have attracted such a wide range of public-minded supporters to join in this endeavour. We feel deeply that environmental goals and development goals must be part of a Complementary Agenda - we can serve one set of goals only if we also serve the other. We are proud that the Bujagali project advances that Complimentary Agenda.

The project we launch today is just one example of how the Aga Khan fund for Economic Development is responding to its mandate as an agent of change and growth - from Afghanistan to Tajikistan, from Mozambique to Mali. Another example in the energy field is the West Nile Rural Electrification Company, as has already been mentioned.

From the other side of the Continent, we have just recently learnt that the Ivory Coast Government has approved a major expansion of our Azito power project - one that will enable Azito to help meet the growing needs of the Ivory Coast and respond to the critical energy shortfalls in the neighboring country of Mali.

AKFED's constant goal is to build institutions of enduring excellence, embracing state-of-the-art technologies and world-class standards. In many cases, AKFED's initial investments have come in situations which were too uncertain for traditional private investors. Often, these projects were so effectively transformed that they could later be floated publicly on national stock exchanges in Asia and Africa.

AKFED works in many fields - from insurance, banking, micro-finance, and media, to a variety of manufacturing enterprises, to the tourism and leisure sector. It is presently

creating four new national air transport companies, linking various countries throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. Step by step, each of AKFED's projects will make a special contribution, we trust, to an upward spiral of progress. And the project we will develop here - at Bujagali, will be a particularly proud example.

From the very beginnings of civilization, the use of water - intelligently, respectfully, and creatively - has been at the very center of human concerns. The Nile River itself has been a great source and sustainer of life for thousands of years. Today, we repeat and renew that ancient story once again as we lay this Foundation Stone - and thus signal the opening of a new era in African history.

I salute all of you, respectfully and gratefully, for sharing with us in this great endeavour.

Thank you.



## **Banquet hosted in honour of President Museveni**

22 August 2007, Kampala, Uganda

Your Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda and the First Lady  
Your Excellency the President of the Central African Republic and the First Lady  
Your Excellency President Chissano, former President of Mozambique and UN Secretary-  
General's Special Envoy  
Your Excellency the Vice President  
Right Honourable Speaker  
Her Lordship the Deputy Chief Justice  
Right Honourable Prime Minister  
Your Worship the Mayor of Kampala  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

My heartfelt thanks go out to all of you tonight - for being a part of this gathering - for your generous welcome and warm hospitality here in Uganda, and for all that you do -each in your own circle of influence, for the betterment of your communities and the progress of society.



This is a special evening for me - the closing moments of the first of my Golden Jubilee visits to places which have had particular meaning for the Ismaili Community, for the institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network, and for me, personally, over the past half century.

A Jubilee celebration is a time for reflection. And it is also a time to look ahead.

As I look back to my early years of my Imamate, I would note that I came to this position at the very moment when the developing world was first emerging as an important, independent voice in world affairs. The late 1950's and the early 1960's marked the end of the colonial era in most of the developing world. It was a time of enormous hope - but also of fearful challenge. I remember thinking to myself that, at no time in human history had so many nations achieved independence - and introduced new systems of government - in such a short period of time. I remember the sense of awe I felt - indeed of diffidence - close to a sense of vertigo - when I asked myself how so many poor states would create the political structures - or find the human and material resources, which would give real meaning to their independence.

In Uganda, it was also a time of special hope - but also one of special challenge.

I describe those memories tonight not out of any sentimental nostalgia for the past - for a time when both my Imamate and the era of African independence both seemed so very young. No - I mention these memories because I continue to feel so deeply about Africa's enormous potential. These feelings, in fact, have come to form what I would describe as a core conviction.

My optimism grows out of several observations: beginning with the continuing rich potential of Africa's natural resources - including the remarkable talents and the resilient spirit of its peoples. I would also note the progress which has been made in the economic field, as exemplified by the recent growth rates in Uganda. I am encouraged by the welcoming attitude which has developed in Uganda, and elsewhere across the Continent, for private investment and for public/private partnerships. I would mention also, especially in the Ugandan context, the growing potential for cross-border cooperation, including Uganda's role in international institutions - from the East African Community to the British Commonwealth.

In discussing economic progress, I especially want to note the strong commitment which has been made to improving the quality of life in the great rural areas of this country, places where both the opportunities and the difficulties, the hopes and the hurdles, are particularly high. Yet - here in Uganda, as in the other countries I have recently visited, I see an intensified determination to overcome those obstacles - and to deliver practical results.

I had the honour yesterday of joining President Museveni in laying the foundation stone for one of the largest power projects in African history, a great hydroelectric facility at



Bujagali. That project has been a dream in Uganda for many years. When that dream was renewed more recently, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development took on the leading role - acting as a catalyst for a wide array of public and private partners. It was an impressive experience - not only because it showed the depth and breadth of support for Africa's future, but also because of the Uganda government's determination to clear the path for this project, in innovative and effective ways. The result was that our ceremony yesterday came less than two years after we became officially involved - a remarkably short time as these things go - reflecting a healthy sense of urgency.

There are other reasons, too, for my positive outlook. One of the most important is a growing spirit of pluralism - which is especially vibrant here in Uganda, growing out of this country's rich diversity - of language, of ethnicity, of faith, and even of social philosophy. It is a diversity which is mirrored in the diversity of the Ismaili Jamat and the whole of the Islamic Ummah in Uganda. This rich diversity is also reflected, I am pleased to note, in the makeup of our gathering this evening.

My hope for Uganda is that it can continue to build a culture which sees diversity and difference, peacefully expressed, as a source of potential strength rather than a cause of harmful division. Even as we take deep pride in our own personal traditions - we also know that we can learn a great deal from those who have come from different backgrounds and who hold different perspectives.

As this resurgent cosmopolitan spirit continues to develop in Uganda, it can be a profound source of strength for this country - and indeed for the entire world.

All across our planet in these early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, people are learning to live with other people who are different from them - but who are suddenly and closely connected. This is happening because of the radical technological revolution in the way the world communicates - and also because of the unprecedented movement of populations from region to region. In such a world, our new neighbours are those who may live across the world as well as those who may live across the street.

I believe the people of Uganda can give to the world, in the years ahead, the gift of a vibrant example - as a society which has overcome the worst experiences of past intolerance and embraced the abundant promise of a pluralistic but united future.

If one key to unlocking the potential of Uganda, and of all of Africa, is a spirit of pluralism, then another key should be a commitment to excellence. There was a time, earlier in my Imamat, when mediocrity was considered tolerable here because it was "good enough for Africa". I remember my apprehension at the time, my concern that among all the goals that were set for Africa in those days, the achievement of normal world-class standards was not seen as realistic. But in the rapidly globalizing world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the progress of every country and continent will depend on its ability to meet universal standards. To settle for less is an increasingly dangerous decision.

This commitment to achieve global norms, and even to excel, can wisely begin with a nation's educational institutions - and the preparation of our future leaders. Here Uganda's proud traditions - at Makerere University - and other great institutions - should be of special motivation and strength.

As you know, a number of the new initiatives which I have announced on behalf of the Aga Khan Development Network this past week have been in the educational area.

When we invest in education we are investing in people - and no investment can pay greater dividends. This is why the Aga Khan University - building on its successes in Pakistan - and in eight other countries where it now has teaching sites - is determined to establish a major new presence in East Africa. We announced just the other evening a plan for creating this campus in Arusha - a central point from which it will be able to serve the entire region - as a true center of international excellence.

A few days earlier, we announced the creation of a new Faculty of Health Sciences, based at the Aga Khan University in Nairobi. And earlier today we announced plans for an Aga Khan Academy campus here in Kampala - to train teachers and developing students for leadership positions. In all of these efforts, we see ourselves as partners with the people of East Africa.

It is in that spirit of partnership, then, that I conclude this journey, grateful for what we have been able to do together in the past, excited by the things we will be attempting to do together in the future, and looking forward to many return visits to this very special place.

Thank you.



## **Foundation stone-laying ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy, Kampala**

22 August 2007, Kampala, Uganda

Your Excellency Vice President Professor Gilbert Bukenya,  
The Right Honourable Speaker,  
The Right Honourable Prime Minister,  
Your Worship the Mayor,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,

It is a very great joy for me to be here today, and I am most grateful to the Vice President - and all of you - for joining us. This is indeed a special celebration - in a truly magnificent setting.

Let me extend, at the very start, my heartfelt thanks to the person who made this beautiful site available for the building of a new Aga Khan Academy. He is Amirali Karmali, known affectionately throughout Uganda as Mzee Mukwano. We are most deeply grateful to Amirali and his family for their extraordinary generosity.

I know I speak for everyone here in describing this gift as a truly inspiring one.

The Quran tells us that signs of Allah's Sovereignty are found in the contemplation of His Creation - in the heavens and the earth, the night and the day, the clouds and the seas, the winds and the waters. I am confident that future generations of students and teachers - who will come to this Academy from around the region and around the world - will feel a profound sense of inspiration as they look out on this superb landscape.

As you have heard, the new Academy in Kampala will be one of 18 Academies in 14 countries which will be developed over the next 15 years. Together, they will constitute an inter-related community of learning - exchanging students and teachers, sharing ideas and insights. And they will also share a variety of environmental experiences. Some, like the first Academy at Mombasa, will be in ocean-side settings, other will be placed in high mountain environments, still others will be built in desert terrains or forested areas - or, as in Kampala, at the side of a beautiful lake. As our students and teachers experience these remarkable surroundings, I hope they will develop what I would call a sense of "environmental pluralism" - to accompany the appreciation for cultural pluralism which we will also hope will be one of the programme's hallmarks.

As you know, these ceremonies are part of my Golden Jubilee observances. I have welcomed this anniversary year as an opportunity to think back over the past half century - to reflect on the challenges we have faced, the goals we have met, and the lessons we have been learning. In this process, I will be traveling to places which have been of particular importance for me, and for the Ismaili community, and it is most appropriate that Uganda is among the first of these visits.

As I make these journeys, I am also announcing a number of new projects - including this Academy in Kampala. This is in keeping with our tradition on Jubilee occasions of honoring the past by seizing the future - and at the same time, making new plans in an historical context.

A strong commitment to learning has been at the very root of Ismaili and Islamic culture, going back to the first Imam of the Shia Muslims, the fourth Caliph, Hazrat Ali ibn Abi Talib, and his emphasis on knowledge. The tradition was renewed over many centuries in many places by the Abbasids, the Fatimids, the Safavids - the Mughals, the Uzbeks and the Ottomans. During his Imamate, my late Grandfather started some 300 schools in this region. The Academies Programme is thus planted in rich historic soil.

This is a time of exciting dreams and for our Academies programme - as we begin the long process of identifying sites, developing partnerships, and designing campuses. This will be an intricate and demanding process, but we undertake it with a certain confidence. That confidence was re-inforced, I might note, by the excellent scores which our first class of Academy graduates, in Mombasa, have just achieved on their International Baccalaureate exams.

One of the central precepts of the International Baccalaureate Programme is to honour world-class standards, while also respecting cultural diversity. In this respect, its approach mirrors that of the Aga Khan Academies - to help students combine a cosmopolitan spirit on the one hand, with a strong sense of cultural identity on the other.

And is that not one of the secrets to success and fulfillment in our rapidly globalising world? Everyone, everywhere, faces the challenge of engaging - productively and creatively - in the global arena of action and ideas, while also respecting the unique character of family roots and cultural traditions.

As students seek to enter the Academies programme, they will be judged on merit, not by their financial resources. As students leave this programme, they will move on to quality universities - and then to positions of social leadership. We expect many of our Kampala graduates to become pillars of Ugandan public and private institutions, a homegrown cadre of leadership.

Let me also underscore at this point Uganda's own history as a centre of learning - the home of great international institutions like Makerere University, a traditional source of indigenous African leadership. Today, the Government of Uganda is making a commendable commitment to universal public education. It is a time of renewal in Ugandan education, and we hope the Aga Khan Academy in Kampala will contribute to that process.

Just yesterday, we marked another key step in building Uganda's future as we laid the foundation stone for a new hydroelectric energy project in Bujagali. I noted there that lasting economic growth will be self-destructive if it is not matched by the growth of the power supply.

The same thing is true in the world of human resources, where people supply the power. If economic growth propels us down a road for which our future leaders are not prepared, then we will never sustain our advances.

This is why so many of the long-term investments we have been making, throughout the developing world, are investments in education. They have ranged from Madrasa programmes for early childhood development, to primary schools in disadvantaged communities, to leadership training programmes and scholarships for promising young professionals. At the tertiary level, we have recently launched the University of Central Asia. This is an international agreement between Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan and the Ismaili Imamat to create a new institution of higher learning specialised in mountain societies. And, as you may know, we are also planning to expand the Aga Khan University - founded almost 25 years ago in Pakistan - and now an active presence in nine different countries. Just this week, the Aga Khan University announced its plans for a new Faculty of Health Sciences in Nairobi, as well as a major new East African campus in Arusha.

All of our initiatives are built around a pragmatic, experience-based, and innovative approach to education - an effort to refresh and replace narrower approaches which have sometimes mis-served the developing world. Education, in the past, has too often been a matter of indoctrination - advancing the demands of dogma instead of the disciplines of reason.

What is required today, in my view, is an educational approach which is the polar opposite of indoctrination - one that nurtures the spirit of anticipation and agility, adaptability and adventure.

To this end, the Academies curriculum will encourage its students in the practice of what I would call “Intellectual Humility, “ recognizing that what they do not know will always be greater than what they know - and launching an ardent, lifelong search for the knowledge they will need. In an age of accelerating change, the most important thing any student can learn is how to go on learning.

Let me touch briefly, on two particular features of the Academy vision. The first is its emphasis on the training of teachers. We plan to create on our campuses a series of Professional Development Centres, devoted to “educating the educators,” and to pedagogical research. On the Kampala campus, in fact, we will begin with teacher education - establishing the Professional Development Centre, even before we enroll the students. We will put the horse before the cart, where it should be. We are confident that good teachers and best practices will radiate out from this Centre into the wider world of education.

A second feature is our emphasis on the value of a residential campus, where students not only learn together but also live together. I have noted a recent study by The World Bank which found that the quantity of time or money spent on education was less important than the quality of specific educational experiences. Extraordinary teachers and exceptional companions are the key to such experiences.

The final point I would emphasize today, above all else, is our uncompromising commitment to Quality-- in every aspect of the Academy experience. Our hallmark will be quality students, quality instructors, quality facilities - an unwavering devotion to world-class standards. Let the day be long past when some could excuse mediocrity by saying that it was “good enough for Africa”.

The particular challenge of the Aga Khan Academies will be to provide an exceptional education for exceptional students. We cannot claim that they will directly provide a major proportion of tomorrow’s leaders - or tomorrow’s teachers. But we believe they can help - as centres of energy and influence for the entire educational enterprise.

We look forward to working with the government and the people of Uganda as we pursue these great objectives. I know we will all remember this important ceremony at this

beautiful place as a special moment in this process. Again, we are most grateful to all of you for sharing it with us.

Thank you.





## Presentation ceremony of the 2007 Aga Khan Award for Architecture

04 September 2007, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Assalamu-Alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi  
and Datin Seri Jeanne Abdullah  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

What a great pleasure it is for me to greet you today, as we present the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. This is an event we await with great anticipation as it comes around on the calendar every three years. It is the culmination of a wonderful process of discussion, research, exploration, and deliberation - one that has involved, through the years, nearly 8000 nominated projects and tens of thousands of participants, in some 88 countries. I

think of the Award not as an event but as a process - and my thanks go out to all of you who have been a part of it.

This is a very good time and a very good place to hold this culminating ceremony.

To begin with, we join our Malaysian friends in celebrating the 50 th anniversary just a few days ago of the Malaysian Merdeka. Anniversary occasions are valuable opportunities to reflect on the past and to plan for the future. The Malaysian people have had good reason this past week to look back with pride, and forward with hope. I am particularly pleased that we can welcome and congratulate the Prime Minister and his wife at this special moment in their nation's history.

I often reflect back on that period in the late 1950's, when so many developing countries were suddenly gaining their independence. Those were the very first years of my Imamat - which, as you may know, has also marked its 50 th anniversary this summer. I recall both how excited and how sobered we were as we thought about the enormous challenges which then faced these newly independent nations - including Malaysia - as they worked to develop effective new institutions which would give meaning to their freedom.

I also recall how our emotions since that time have oscillated between hope and frustration as the story of development has unfolded. But more and more, in many places, the story has become one of promise and progress. This is particularly true, of course, here in Malaysia. And it is most especially evident as we look out on the face of this city.

I doubt that even the most imaginative among us could have envisioned fifty years ago what Kuala Lumpur would look like today. Surely the transformation of the built environment in this city is among the distinctive and exciting urban transformations in our lifetimes. More than that, the dramatic remaking of this city, so powerfully evidenced in the architectural realm, is all the more compelling because it expresses a profound transformation in the social and economic realms as well.

So again I would say that this is a good and appropriate place to gather this week - and a very appropriate time to be meeting.

Our common purpose today is to honour excellence in the field of architecture, as we have defined it for the purpose of the Award - represented by the nine projects which the Master Jury has selected as the 2007 awardees. It is with deep sincerity and appreciation that I extend my warmest congratulations to all of you.

The imperative that we "honour excellence" could be misleading, however, if we define the architectural enterprise too narrowly. What we spotlight through this award is an all-encompassing sweep of human endeavour, shaping an infinite variety of human spaces

The spaces we had in mind in establishing this Award were broadly defined, encompassing places both public and private, enclosed and open, urban and rural, residential and commercial, cultural and industrial, intimate and grand, religious and secular.

And the categories of people we had in mind also were broadly inclusive. We recognize with enormous respect those who initially dream about inspiring combinations of shape and scale, pattern and colour, texture and volume, line and light. But we also honour those who express those dreams in tangible designs, or through inspired on-site articulations, as well as those who finance these projects, and those whose skills as managers and builders convert abstract ideas into physical realities.

In short, our definition of the words “Architects” and “Architecture” is very comprehensive.

As has been mentioned, this Award itself is marking one of those round-numbered anniversaries tonight - the 30 th year since it was created, the tenth completion of its triennial cycle.

A central concept when this all began 30 years ago was the power of Architecture to connect the past with the present and the future. It was my strong impression then that Architecture had largely abandoned the indigenous past - especially in Muslim societies and in the developing world.

Perhaps it was a natural tendency - the thought that if we wanted to speed up the modernization process, we should clear our minds, and even our landscapes, of what some saw as the dead hand of the past. But, in doing so, we often cut ourselves off from great well-springs of inspiration, power and moral authority.

This is one of the reasons our Award Ceremonies have normally been held in historically significant settings - reminders of just how rich our Islamic heritage has been.

Our venues were NOT meant to imply however that our goal was simply to reproduce the past. In fact, the projects we have honoured through the years - over one hundred of them - have invariably rejected simplistic, copy-machine approaches. The fact that we hold these current ceremonies in a contemporary setting - one which has itself been a recipient of our Award, symbolizes our faith that Architecture can not only link us to the past, but also propel us, creatively, into the future.

The past is not something to stand on, but rather to build on. If ignoring the past was a problem on one side, then the opposite danger was an exaggerated submission to the past, so that some creations and creators became prisoners of dogma or nostalgia.

There is a danger, in every area of life, everywhere in the world, that people will respond to the hastening pace of change with an irrational fear of modernism, and will want to

embrace uncritically that which has gone before. The Islamic world has sometimes been vulnerable to this temptation - and the rich potential for a new “Islamic modernism” has sometimes been under-estimated.

The Aga Khan Award was designed, in part, to address this situation, encouraging those who saw the past as a necessary prelude to the future - and who saw the future as a fulfilling extension of the past. And, by and large through the years, this objective has been accomplished.

In my view, a healthy life, for an individual or a community, means finding a way to relate the values of the past, the realities of the present, and the opportunities of the future. The built environment can play a central role in helping us to achieve that balance.

One other area in which Architecture can play a connecting role is through the bridging of man and nature, between the natural and the built environments. For Islam particularly, this bridging objective is a religious imperative. The Quran commands us to be good stewards of Allah’s natural creation - even as we employ His gifts of time and talent to shape our surroundings. Neither environmental protection nor economic development can be long sustained unless both objectives are prioritized. They are part of a Common Agenda.

Finally, I might observe what you also know very well: the fact that architecture also connects people. I think of people of different ethnic, religious and political backgrounds, with different skills and temperaments, from different classes and social sectors - all of whom can come to understand one another better by experiencing one another’s architecture.

At its best, architecture is an inherently pluralistic enterprise - one that honours diversity - including diversity within and among Islamic communities. At its best, architecture will help people to come together across old divides rather than re-enforcing those divides and isolating one group from another.

Finally, as we present this Award for the tenth time, we must ask ourselves what we have learnt from the past three decades, and what should be our sights for the future.

While we cannot present an in-depth analysis right now, I think we can begin by acknowledging that, more or less everywhere in the Ummah, Muslims and others are asking themselves the right questions and are developing positive answers about their built environment: Are we building for the future in a culturally empathetic way? Do we now own and are we marshalling the necessary creative resources - ranging from new schools of architecture to new data bases, through which the architectural community can share its questions and answers, its problems and its successes? This in itself is a magnificent change from 1977, when such simple but essential questions were generally not being asked, or had only negative answers.

Looking to the future, we are faced with the challenge of change on a more massive scale than ever before in the history of Islam. As we look ahead, we can predict a continuing, relentless urbanisation in countries which are now largely rural. In some areas of the Ummah physical development is occurring at a near industrial scale. We can also see new international partnerships linking development institutions from the industrialised world with those of the Ummah. And, happily, we can now welcome the steady emergence of new, highly talented generations of Muslims and non-Muslims who appreciate the heritage of world-class buildings and spaces which characterized the Ummah for so many centuries - and who understand the power of Islamic cultural well-springs to inspire continuing accomplishment.

The talents and insights of these new generations of young creative people will be an enormously valuable resource in the years ahead. It is essential that the decision makers of the Ummah and of their development partners should trust and embrace these new generations of architectural professionals. It is my deep conviction that if this is done, while errors may be made, the outcomes will surely include a sense of authenticity, inspiration, heritage and creativity which will restore to many areas of the Ummah a sense of the architectural greatness of its past. If that happens, then the impact on the physical environment of world civilizations, well beyond the frontiers of the Ummah, will also be profound.

I believe that the awards we present today will facilitate that process - and amplify its impact.

We are proud that you who gather here are among the strong supporters of this award. We salute you for that support, even as we thank you for your participation in this great anniversary event - in this distinctive and forward-looking city.

Thank You.



## The 'Musée-Musées' round table Louvre Museum

### LOCATION

Paris, France (17 October 2007)

Mr President

Ladies and Gentlemen

Shortly after the announcement of our museum in Toronto, the aim of which is to present Islamic art in all its beauty and diversity, I had the immense pleasure of receiving Henri Loyrette's invitation to stage an exhibition here at the Louvre.

I thank Mr Loyrette and the management of the Louvre most warmly for organising this round table and inviting me to speak this evening. This is a completely new situation for me, since I have never previously taken part in this kind of initiative in France, much less at the Louvre. You will not be surprised if I confess that I feel as though I am sitting an extremely important school examination for which I have done no preparation at all! So I approach the task with deep trepidation!

When I was invited to talk to you about the future of the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto and the objects that will be on show there, I was asked to explain the significance of our exhibition and the role museums might play in improving understanding between East and West.

The meaning of our exhibition was certainly better illustrated by my brother Prince Ameen, and the director of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Luis Monreal. I myself could not have explained the technicalities, but I think it is interesting to know about the framework within which our initiative is taking place, and it is to this issue that I shall turn now. It is, of course, risky to generalise about a world as diversified, complex and

pluralistic as the Islamic world in this day and age. I shall allow myself to take that risk and attempt to explain to you some of the strategic aims we considered in relation to putting our collection on exhibition.

I believe that today the Islamic world's view of its own future is seriously affected by a divergent squint. It is a world split into two tendencies: on the one hand, modernisers and believers in progressive change, on the other, traditionalists who might even be described as hidebound. Both seek to determine future directions to be taken by the Ummah which will reinforce its identity, or rather its identities, while remaining rooted in a truth which is firmly Muslim. In practice, these two tendencies can be seen in the political domain in the differences between theocratic governance and the secular state; between the application of Sharia in all legal fields and the complete absence of Sharia or its application only in the domain of civil law; between economic and financial systems based on Sharia and systems that are essentially liberal and westernised; between religious education at every level and a national system with no reference at all to religion throughout the whole educational process, apart from the madrasa option for very young children.

In this context, we thought it essential, whichever choice Muslim populations may indicate to their governments, to clarify certain aspects of the history of Muslim civilisations in order that today's two main tendencies, modern and traditional, can base their ideas on historical realities and not on history that has been misunderstood or even manipulated.

Firstly, the 1,428 years of the Ummah embrace many civilisations and are therefore characterised by an astonishing pluralism. In particular, this geographic, ethnic, linguistic and religious pluralism has manifested itself at the most defining moments in the history of the Ummah, hence the objective of the Aga Khan collection, which is to highlight objects drawn from every region and every period, and created from every kind of material in the Muslim world.

The second great historical lesson to be learnt is that the Muslim world has always been wide open to every aspect of human existence. The sciences, society, art, the oceans, the environment and the cosmos have all contributed to the great moments in the history of Muslim civilisations. The Qur'an itself repeatedly recommends Muslims to become better educated in order better to understand God's creation. Our collection seeks to demonstrate the openness of Muslim civilisations to every aspect of human life, even going so far as to work in partnership with intellectual and artistic sources originating in other regions.

The third important observation we can make about the Ummah today is that the two main tendencies, traditional and modern, are trying to maintain, indeed to develop, their Islamic legitimacy. Loss of identity, anxiety about the risk of being caught up in a process of westernisation that is essentially Christian and is perceived as becoming less and less religious, are deep and very real concerns. Where the two tendencies diverge is on the question of how to maintain and strengthen this identity in the future.

Here, I would like to digress in order to illustrate how deep this loss of identity can be, even though it passes unrecognised until it is too late. Thirty years ago, I and a number



of Muslim intellectuals met to ask ourselves an apparently simple but in reality extremely complex question: "Has the Muslim world lost the ability to express itself in the field of architecture, a field admired and acknowledged as one of the most powerful manifestations of every great Muslim civilisation?" The response was a unanimous 'Yes'. Since then, many efforts have been made to reverse the situation, including the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, but one of the causes was that, throughout the Ummah, none of the teachers in any of the schools of architecture had studied in their home countries. Without exception, every teacher of architecture in every school and university in the Muslim world had been trained abroad, without any reference whatsoever to the Muslim world. This is, by the way, one of the reasons we are pleased to have been able to include in our collection some documents of unique architectural interest.

For the populations of the Ummah, loss of identity is an unquestionable reality, as it is for all societies. Perhaps one of the keys for the Muslim world will be to perpetuate their cultures in the modern world by means of rediscovered ancient and newly inspired sources. The Muslim world's two main tendencies, traditional and modern, will both have a role to play but if one attempts to achieve exclusivity at the expense of the other, the consequences will be predictable and highly damaging.

The second issue about which I have been asked to talk to you is what the role of museums might be in promoting understanding between East and West. It is a huge question to which I shall not try to give a comprehensive response but I should nevertheless point out that the Muslim world, with its history and cultures, and indeed its different interpretations of Islam, is still little known in the West. Even today in secondary and even university education in the West, the study of the Muslim world is still a specialist subject. One example is how little the Muslim world features in the study of humanities in the West, where courses are essentially centred around Judeo-Christian civilisations.

This lack of knowledge is a dramatic reality which manifests itself in a particularly serious way in western democracies, since public opinion has difficulties judging national and international policy vis-à-vis the Muslim world. There are an infinite number of historical reasons for this, but perhaps there is also a fear of proselytisation. Be that as it may, the two worlds, Muslim and non-Muslim, Eastern and Western, must, as a matter of urgency, make a real effort to get to know one another, for I fear that what we have is not a clash of civilisations, but a clash of ignorance on both sides. Insofar as civilisations manifest and express themselves through their art, museums have an essential role to play in teaching the two worlds to understand, respect and appreciate each other and ensuring that whole populations are given fresh opportunities to make contact with each other, using new, modern methods imaginatively and intelligently to bring about truly global communication.

Western museums, particularly those in Europe, have some extraordinary collections of Muslim art. Obviously, the Louvre and the Museum of Decorative Arts are the richest and I congratulate and thank them for the efforts they are making, with government backing, to fill the enormous void, a veritable black hole, which threatens us in this

conflict of ignorance. Rest assured that you can fully count on us to play our part, however modest.

I shall finish by saying a few words specifically about our museum in Toronto. As you will have gathered, I am firmly convinced that better knowledge of the Muslim world can overcome distrust and therefore that city has been a strategic choice. While some North American museums have significant collections of Muslim art, there is no institution devoted to Islamic art. In building the museum in Toronto, we intend to introduce a new actor to the North American art scene. Its fundamental aim will be an educational one, to actively promote knowledge of Islamic arts and culture. What happens on that continent, culturally, economically and politically, cannot fail to have worldwide repercussions – which is why we thought it important that an institution capable of promoting understanding and tolerance should exist there.

The museum will also belong to the large Muslim population living in Canada and the USA. It will be a source of pride and identity for all these people, showing the inherent pluralism of Islam, not only in terms of religious interpretations but also of cultural and ethnic variety. Furthermore, the museum will show, beyond the notoriously politicised form of Islam which now tends to make headlines, Islam is in reality an open-minded, tolerant faith capable of adopting other people's cultures and languages and making them its own. There is no doubt whatsoever that the Muslims of North America will play an important role in the development of states and populations within the Ummah.



## Inauguration of the restored monuments in Darb al-Ahmar

26 October 2007, Cairo, Egypt

Bismillahir-Rahamir-Rahim

Your Excellencies  
The Minister of Culture  
The Governor of Cairo  
Ambassadors  
Distinguished Guests

It is a very particular pleasure for me to welcome you tonight, as we share in a special moment - and the first and most important thing that I want to do is to thank you for what you have done to make this moment possible.

The buildings we inaugurate are central elements in an effort which has given me profound personal satisfaction for nearly a quarter of a century - the revitalisation of Islamic Cairo.

The joy I received from this project stems from at least three of its extraordinary dimensions.

First, I have found that this endeavour has provided for me, personally, a profound sense of connection with my own ancestors, the Fatimid Caliphs, who founded Cairo and who laid its physical and cultural foundations 1000 years ago. To reach back across 35 generations and to be able to engage in the restoration and renewal of their legacy is a rare and stirring privilege. How could I not be affected seeing the remains of the original Fatimid walls and towers that protected this city when they founded it? And this experience has special meaning for me as I mark my own 50th year as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims.

Secondly, this entire project, from the time we began, with so many of you, to dream about it, 23 years ago, has provided an inspiring example of broadly based cooperation – among diverse people and institutions, working across cultural, religious and national lines, including participants from government, the private sector, and the non-profit institutions of civil society. It has involved people whose homes are thousands of miles away from Cairo – and it has also involved, most profoundly, the people of this neighbourhood, those who live and work only minutes away, in the very shadows of these buildings.

Among the partnerships I would note today are the ones we have enjoyed with the Egyptian Government, the Ministry of Culture, the Governorate of Cairo, the Supreme Council of Antiquities, the Social Fund for Development, the World Monuments Fund, the Swiss Egyptian Development Fund, the Ford Foundation, the French Institute of Archaeology, the American Research Centre and the United States Embassy in Cairo, as well as the city of Stuttgart. And I would also note with gratitude the signing, this past July, by the Governorate and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, of a formal Public-Private Partnership (PPP) linking Al-Azhar Park with the ongoing projects in Darb al-Ahmar and adjacent areas. Whatever barriers history might possibly have put in our way have been removed by our common will to achieve a remarkable goal.

These diverse interactions are particularly fitting, of course, as we remember the origins of this city. The Fatimids, after all, prided themselves on a broadly inclusive approach to knowledge. What they founded here would become a truly global city – to use contemporary parlance. Pluralism was indeed the hallmark of a Golden Age of the City Victorious 1000 years ago. I am happy that I can feel in this time also, like during the time of my predecessors, that there is true pluralist consensus surrounding our endeavours – all of us working together - to revive the Islamic city.

The first two reasons, then, for my special identification with this undertaking are its historical connections to the past, and the diverse and plural dimensions of its present. The third element, however, has to do with its sustainability in the future - and in discussing that future, two important questions come to mind.

They are: first, at what point of physical improvement can we consider that the areas of the Islamic city most at risk have been restored, rehabilitated and returned to their residents in a secured manner? And secondly, what can and should we do to ensure that the more than one million visitors per year who are likely to visit the Azhar Park in the future become an economic benefit rather than a potential economic burden for the residents of Darb al-Ahmar?

If we are able to develop and implement strong and fulfilling answers to these questions, then my third reason to view this as a thrilling project will be fulfilled: It will constitute an extraordinary gift to the future. Even as we look back over many centuries today – even as we have reopened and literally “uncovered” gifts from the past as this project has developed – so we can also look far ahead in time. We are aware today of the connections we are establishing to generations yet unborn, those who will live here and those who visit from afar, and who will treasure these sites as precious gateways to their history.

Let me attempt briefly to suggest some responses to the two questions I have asked earlier, the first being to define when sufficient physical work will have been completed for us to consider the core of the Islamic city restored. Logically, we must complete the work which is already underway, and which has produced such magnificent achievements as the restoration of the Kheyrebek Complex, where we are gathered today, and the Umm al Sultan Shabaan Mosque through the close collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and its Supreme Council of Antiquities. The ambitious conservation programme that lies ahead contemplates interventions in the Alin Aq Palace, the Tarabay Mausoleum, the Aslam Mosque, and in due course in the Blue Mosque. We must finish the restoration of the Ayyubid wall, and the most important open spaces along it. And we must complete the archaeological site at the North-west edge of the Park with its Fatimid and Mamluk excavations. This site, in turn, will be tied into the new museum of historic Cairo being created in collaboration with the Supreme Council of Antiquities, as well as the new Urban Plaza and the significant underground parking which are both part of the programme agreed by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture with the Governorate of Cairo.

To complete this list of future tasks, I should add that along the historic wall there are several hundred houses that remain to be restored, just as the Early Childhood Centre and the Vocational Training Centre remain to be completed. Finally, I cannot see how this enormous endeavour, which still lies ahead, could be considered complete without serious attention being given to the area’s ongoing infrastructure, such as the road surfaces, the sewage disposal system, the distribution of water and electricity, and signage and public lighting.

The second question I have raised was how we increase the impact of the new economic life generated by the Azhar Park to the benefit of the people of Darb al-Ahmar.

In responding to this question, I would note that special emphasis has been placed by our planners on sustainability. It has always been clear that a strong financial base must be

created just for maintaining the accomplishments we note today. The project must be compatible with the long term health of this neighbourhood and its community. For any important work of restoration to survive and to thrive into the longer-range future, it must contribute to the well-being of those who live in its presence – so that they in turn will have reason to safeguard its enduring viability.

We have two opportunities to strengthen the economic life of this part of Islamic Cairo which I want to highlight today: The first is to encourage a higher number of the visitors to the Park to come to Darb al-Ahmar to see its historic buildings and to acquire goods and services. It is therefore essential that the North-west and South gates of the Park should be completed and opened as soon as possible, and that the visitors should be encouraged to walk to the restored wall, and then through it, into this unique historic area of Cairo, Darb al-Ahmar with its remarkable concentration of monuments and open spaces.

There is another way, a second way, to support the economic enhancement of the population of Darb al-Ahmar. I believe much more can and should be done with our micro-credit programme, by developing new products, better adapted to local needs, and making them more easily accessible. This work is ongoing, but it must be completed and put in place early enough so that the service providers and traders of Darb al-Ahmar can prepare themselves in good time for the increased number of visitors that will come from the Park.

A long and strenuous journey began when we gathered here back in 1984 to hold a seminar on the growth of Cairo. What we mark today is another milestone along that path – not the first nor the last, but an important reminder of how far we have come – and an added moment of encouragement – as we continue the demanding journey which lies ahead of us.

I know you join me in feeling that we have been extraordinarily blessed in the heritage that has been given to us – as well as in the friends and collaborators who now share our life and work – all of us striving together to be good stewards of our inheritance as we pass it on to the future.

Thank You.



## The Conference on Central Asia and Europe, Berlin

13 November 2007, Berlin, Germany

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellencies Foreign Minister Steinmeier, Dr. Belka  
and Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner,  
State Secretary Erler,  
Your Excellencies Ministers from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan,  
Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and  
Uzbekistan,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me, first, acknowledge and thank for their kind words those who have spoken before me this morning -- the Foreign Minister, Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe, Dr. Marek Belka -- as well as Benita Ferrero Waldner, the EC Commissioner for External Relations.

It has always been special pleasure to return to Berlin -- a city that continues to be synonymous with the word "cosmopolitan". Berlin is truly a global connecting point -- a



fact which has been instrumental in our decision to open an office of the Aga Khan Development Network here.

How appropriate that we should be discussing, in this historic crossroads city, one of the great, inter-cultural projects of our time -- the effort to build a partnership between Central Asia and Europe. I commend the German Government for its leading role in this effort, and the European Union for carrying it forward -- with its endorsement of a "Regional Strategy" for Central Asia a few months ago. Others have also played welcome contributing roles, including The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

As I offer my own comments today, I will draw on the experience of our Aga Khan Development Network in Central Asia. We have come to know much of this region well, particularly Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan; not only has it long been home to significant numbers of Ismaili Muslims, but we have also developed a widening range of programs across the region over the past fifteen years.

It is appropriate that the word "Regional" is at the center of our deliberations on Central Asia. The countries are diverse in many ways -- and the development approaches there must be sensitive to divergent requirements. But these countries also have a common historical experience, including several centuries of shared Islamic heritage. Each of them has faced the need to build new political and economic institutions following the breakup of the Soviet Union. And, as the EU Strategy document emphasizes, each of them can only optimise their development through a regional approach.

In this respect, the Central Asian experience parallels the European experience. In Europe, too, the end of the Cold War demanded new political and economic structures and it is striking how quickly Europe is now reaching out to Central Asia -- offering, among other things, the great gift of a powerful regional example.

Among other things, the European example demonstrates that a healthy sense of national identity need not be a barrier to constructive regional engagement. So my first objective today is to tell you how warmly I endorse regional diagnosis for Central Asia. And because that diagnosis begins in the right place, it also extends into a series of wise prescriptions for the future. These prescriptions are validated in large measure by the experiences of the Aga Khan Development Network institutions in Central Asia. We have learned a great deal from those experiences -- both successes and setbacks, but we can learn a great deal more by sharing our lessons.

The problems of Central Asia are remarkably complex -- their causes are multiple and defiantly inter-tangled. Progress requires a multi-faceted and multi-input approach -- a proper "policy mix" -- to cite the language of the EU Report. The learning curve is steep and there should be a sense of urgency -- for all of us -- and all the more so, because solutions can be elusive.

In many ways, the greatest obstacle in the struggle for progress in Central Asia is simple human frustration. In this region the sense is that its development partners talk about progress, and then act, and then talk some more -- but too often, for the people of the region, progress is just “not happening”. When it does happen, it too often is incomplete, or exceptional, or fleeting. This situation is of course by far the most acute in Afghanistan.

What we face in Central Asia is a race against frustration -- which means a race against time and mediocrity. Alternative scenarios, often utopian and extremist, beckon on every hand -- and people will not be patient with pragmatic scenarios unless the work in practice is effective. The EU rightly emphasizes the need for greater “continuity” in these efforts -- so that each experience, successful or unsuccessful, becomes a building block for the future.

It is a daunting challenge indeed to move in a coordinated way on multiple fronts. But as we do, success can become self-generating. Progress on one, or two, or three fronts can often make progress easier on other fronts -- a sense of possibility can also be contagious. I acknowledge the considerable advances that each of the Central Asian countries is making, including recognising the needs of their rural populations.

In a spirit of shared learning and with diffidence -- let me highlight a few of our own experiences.

I would begin with the University of Central Asia, founded in the year 2000 by the Ismaili Imamat -- and the governments of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan.

I remember the signing ceremonies well. They were the culmination of six years of planning -- an experience which itself illustrated the importance not only of regional cooperation, but also of cooperation among disciplines and among social sectors. Our goal was to address a massive regional problem: how to improve the quality of life of nearly 25 million people who live in the high mountain areas of the region and beyond?

We often talk about Public Private Partnerships -- as the EU Strategy does. But such relationships need not be limited to cooperation between governments and the private business sector. There is also enormous potential for active partnering between governments and the not-for-profit institutions of Civil Society. The University of Central Asia is an example of that potential -- and one worth usefully being replicated. The University has recently graduated its first students from the School of Professional and Continuing Education in three mountain communities: Khorog, Tajikistan ; Naryn, Kyrgyzstan ; and Tekeli, Kazakhstan. We have prepared our graduates for active roles in the world of modern business and finance through programmes benchmarked against international standards. The story of these students illustrates another central precept -- the importance of educating people to meet carefully prioritised needs and specific employment opportunities. In the same way, plans for our forthcoming undergraduate and post-graduate programs will emphasize governance skills -- appropriate for future leaders

in the public sector, as well as for Civil Society. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the government of Germany and a number of German institutions for their support.

Closely paralleling these efforts is our engagement with systems of schools for pre-university education in cities ranging from Bishkek and Dushanbe, to Osh and Khorog -- again reflecting our shared confidence that the development of human capital is the foundation stone for effective development. It is also almost impossible to develop quality tertiary university education if its supply system, secondary education, is sub-standard.

Another set of our experiences which illustrate the potential for partnerships between the public sector and Civil Society involve our health institutions' alliances with local hospitals, including nursing training in Khorog, and other regional referral hospitals in Tajikistan, and the six Institutes of Nursing in Afghanistan, and even a new venture in the use of telecommunications advances to link hospitals in distant cities: Today the Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi is connected to the French Medical Institute for Children in Kabul.

Among the most difficult of challenges, of course, is connecting any progress we may achieve at a national level with more remote, rural areas -- where poverty often seems most intractable. Mountain peoples, in particular, have endured economic hardship, civil strife, arms and narcotics trafficking, an insecure food supply, earthquakes, water shortages -- the list could go on. But overcoming these problems will require a searching re-examination of what poverty really means. I am increasingly inclined to define poverty not only as a matter of income, but rather as a state of marginalisation in all of those conditions which contribute to the quality of human life. A state of poverty is a state of deprivation with respect to health and nutrition, education and security, housing and credit, and all the other conditions which are essential to human well-being.

Here too we are learning as we go. In this spirit, and with the active support of KfW, we are experimenting with innovative microcredit programs -- especially for the rural poor -- as well as with local efforts to increase agricultural output. Only as legitimate economic activity becomes a viable source of sustenance, and all the manifestations of poverty recede for the peoples of these regions, will the blight of crime, and drugs, and terrorism, be diminished.

The EU report also emphasized the need to expand energy production and to distribute energy more equitably. We are responding to these needs through projects in eastern Tajikistan, to cite one example, where restored Soviet era power plants will provide near 24-hour coverage for Eastern Tajikistan, as well as to people on the other side of the Pyanj River -- in Afghanistan.

Expanding trade and international investment, creating new sources of economic growth, -- and doing so on an urgent basis, and with a long-term perspective, -- are essential priorities for Central Asia. To this end, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development is increasingly

investing in the leisure sector in the region -- building new hotels in Dushanbe, Khorog, and in Kabul -- and working on a major tourism planning project for the Issyk-kul area in Kyrgyzstan.

The recent opening of a new hotel in Kabul has been a particularly visible example of our Central Asian investments. Our hope, of course, is that a tangible example of confidence in the future can help trigger an upward spiral of hope and renewal. In this regard, the challenges of Afghanistan become particularly important. For without a viable and progressive Afghanistan, any progress which might be made elsewhere in the region will at best be very fragile.

One of the approaches I have used in thinking about development is the concept of "The Enabling Environment". It has grown out of my impatience with overly simple myths about how development really works.

The term "Enabling Environment" reminds us that the full context of interacting forces must be brought together if sustainable development is to be achieved. The term also recognizes that even the right environment is still only an enabling condition -- not a sufficient one. In the end, human progress must grow out of human inspiration and endeavour. I have come to know the Central Asian peoples and their dreams and aspirations. I know of their proud entrepreneurial spirit -- often manifested at the village and household level. It is critical -- even as we plan for development at the "macro" level -- that we also build at the "micro" level. Too often, we forget that a large number of people in Central Asia live in the countryside.

A sound enabling environment must create a favourable framework in which people's energy and creativity can be motivated, mobilized and rewarded.

This framework should embrace such conditions as political stability, safety and security, citizen rights and predictable democratic practices. A supportive environment should include transport systems which make cooperation possible, incentives which encourage broader trade, and a legal and administrative framework which is impartial, predictable, and efficient. These concerns are largely the responsibilities of government, but effective governmental efforts can take us only so far. And that is why I so often talk about the role of "Civil Society"; the capacities of the private sector, and the value of partnerships among these various institutions.

The key to building partnerships -- whether they are among social sectors, or among countries -- is a profound spirit of reciprocal obligation -- a readiness to share the work, to share the costs, to share the risks, and to share the credit. In the end, what it will require most -- in Central Asia -- as it has in Europe -- is a spirit of mutual trust.

Let me mention in conclusion, one other set of relationships which will be central to the concerns we have been discussing. I refer to the relationship of both Europe and Central Asia to the world of Islam.

During the Soviet period, the populations of Central Asia were dissuaded from learning or practising the Islamic faith of their ancestors. The result, over time, has been a theological vacuum.

Now the five newly independent countries of Central Asia are re-establishing their relations with the Ummah, that is, with Muslim peoples all around the world. They are doing so quickly, and at a time when relations between the Ummah and the West are particularly strained -- more so than at any other time I can remember.

Some may suggest that these matters of faith should not be a part of the development dialogue between Europe and Central Asia. But allow me to ask the reverse question. Can we really ignore this matter without consequence? I think not.

Two aspects of this question deserve our attention:

The first concerns the relationship between the countries of Europe and their growing Muslim minorities. As is the case all around the world, the effort to accommodate a variety of faiths within any population is often problematic. But a successful effort to establish respectful, pluralistic attitudes and behaviour, based on a deep respect for religious and cultural diversity, will surely help to shape emerging inter-regional relationships. Is it too much to hope that one day, young Muslims, from all backgrounds, all educated in Europe will serve wisely and competently in their countries of origin?

Noticeably today, the peoples of Central Asia are developing religious and civic practices, reflecting the views of their own diverse peoples, but also with Muslim views from outside the region. There is no doubt questions will arise, such as how matters of faith should affect political governance or civil jurisprudence. Responding to such issues could be divisive, and will need to be approached with sensitivity, patience and humility.

My second question concerns the role that Islamic countries could play in partnership with Europe in Central Asian development. I believe that Europe's commendable efforts to address the challenges of Central Asia can be even more effective if they see the Muslim world as a relevant resource.

Fortunately there are today a number of Muslim countries which can serve as helpful models and available partners for a progressive and welcoming Central Asia. These are Islamic countries which have kept their own peace, and have progressed thanks to the application of best practice to their development. Many are Islamic countries with strongly

pluralist societies -- and whose learning curves for development to levels of global performance are relevant to Central Asia

Much more needs to be done in Central Asia, for many more institutions, and many more people, in many more places, covering many more types of support, within frontiers and across frontiers, if there can be any hope that the pace of progress will become a self-sustaining momentum. The central issue is not, understanding what needs to be done -- for all of us share the same analysis and common goals. The issue is essentially one of scale.

Throughout Central Asia, with each passing day, we see new examples of what can be achieved when we learn to transcend old boundaries -- to replace the icy past of the Cold War by the warmth of new partnerships.

It is that spirit of partnership which brings us here today -- manifested within Europe and within Central Asia -- and now with growing success between Europe and Central Asia.

In that spirit of partnership, then, let us continue, wherever we encounter the boundaries of the past -- to build bridges to the future. I am proud and grateful for the opportunity to join you in that endeavour.

Thank you.

## State banquet during the Golden Jubilee visit in Mozambique

20 November 2007, Maputo, Mozambique

Your Excellency President Guebuza  
Your Excellency Madam First Lady  
Your Excellency the Prime Minister  
Honourable Mayor of Maputo  
Honourable Governor of Maputo  
Honourable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to express, Mr. President, to you and your guests, and to the people of this country, my profound gratitude for the extraordinary warmth of your welcome.

The Mozambican people have a great gift for making visitors feel at home. As a previous visitor, I know well the special quality of a Mozambican welcome - and I deeply appreciate the kindnesses you have shared with me.

An anniversary is always an occasion for reflection - for looking back and for looking ahead. As we reflect tonight, we can do so with a special sense of hope and promise- in the future of Mozambique and in the future of Africa.

As you know, the future of Africa has been one of my central preoccupations over the past five decades. My interest grew partly out of the history of the Ismaili people in Africa - stretching back over a century and a half. And I was also fascinated by the great drama of national independence in those early years of my Imamatus, as proud, ancient cultures - after so many years of colonial rule - began the journey toward stability and progress as self-governing countries.

That journey has often been a difficult one, especially in Mozambique. But that past, sometimes deeply painful, is gone - and Mozambicans now look to a new era of progress and of promise. Over the past fourteen years of post-conflict history - you have gone from negative growth rates in the range of eight percent a year, to positive growth rates in the same range! That is a remarkable accomplishment.

Great challenges remain, of course. The problems of poverty, disease, and illiteracy here are still enormous. But your recent progress has been built on sound principles - and, for that reason, Mozambique has become a valuable model for the whole of the developing world.



Your growth record is one of the best in Africa - built neither on diamonds nor on oil, as Prime Minister Diogo has put it - but on the development of human potential and the consolidation of the democratic processes.

Mozambique has learned to set careful priorities - to establish clear markers for progress, and then, carefully, to measure its progress against those indicators.

One of the prime qualities which recommends Mozambique as a model is your reliance on professional expertise rather than ideological caveats. In that spirit, you have built a broad consensus among many stakeholders - public and private, from civil society, and from the international community. In pursuing your great goals, you have been inclusive, rather than exclusive. In an era when frustration often breeds cynicism concerning the possibility of progress, Mozambique can provide inspiration and encouragement to other post conflict societies.

And there is more. Even as Mozambique points a path to progress in the economic and social realm, it also plays a leadership role in regional diplomacy. The contributions of former President Chissano in sensitive regions have been particularly appreciated, of course. Mozambique's standing as a highly regarded member of the community of nations will enable it to play an increasingly important, strategic role in relations between its neighbors to the south and its neighbors to the north - between the Southern African Development Community and the East African Community.

The key ingredient in all of these efforts - within Mozambique and in its regional neighborhood, is a spirit of genuine partnership - an understanding that we can do things together that we can never do separately. The institutions of our Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) have experienced that spirit of partnership here in many ways, over many years - including our Agreement of Cooperation, signed nearly ten years ago.

Much of our work, as you know, has involved the northern areas, and especially the Mtwara Development Corridor. One project I would highlight is the Unity Bridge, linking northern Mozambique with southern Tanzania. Here we literally reach across national frontiers in a way that will stimulate progress on both sides of the border. Because of the Unity Bridge - and related projects - our investments in the leisure and tourism sector in southern Tanzania can have a multiplier effect within Mozambique. In a similar way, here and elsewhere, progress will accelerate and dreams will come true, whenever we are able to span borders with bridges.

We must also help young people build "Bridges to the Future" - that is the name, in fact, of one of our new scholarship programs. Our philosophy is to build leadership for tomorrow by educating the young on the basis of academic potential - not on social status or family income. That philosophy is at the core of our Aga Khan Academies program.

Many of you were present three years ago when we laid the foundation stone for a new Aga Khan Academy at Maputo. It will be part of an 18 school network - in 14 different countries - all teaching the international baccalaureate curriculum. This system of schools will have significant commonalities. Each one, for example, will be supported by a Professional Development Center - a place for teaching the teachers - using best practice techniques from around the world. These teachers will serve both the Academy and other schools in Mozambique.

In all of these Schools, moreover, our watchword will be “Pluralism” as we develop leaders who can deal effectively with diverse peoples in a globalizing world.

Some commonalities will be easier to develop than others. Here in Mozambique, for example, there is no tradition of residential primary and secondary schools, and there is not a great deal of experience in educating in English. Yet both concepts - residential education and educating in both the national language and English - are two common goals for our wider network of academies. These are questions which we must resolve with prudence - pursuing sound long-term goals, but understanding short-term realities.

On the economic development front, we are planning a new garment factory for export, employing some 700 women in the first phase. We expect the project to begin next June - but its success will depend again on partnership - through an enabling labour environment.

Power generation and rural electrification is another critical area. The Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development recently played a central financing role for one the largest hydroelectric projects in African history, in Uganda - at Bujagali on the Upper Nile. We hope now to apply that experience to projects in Mozambique. Meanwhile, we have also invested in a new fibre optic cable linking Southern and Eastern Africa (including Mozambique ) with Mumbai in India and Marseille in France. This link will enable low cost broadband access to rural communities within Mozambique, and will require additional investment in the existing backbone structure.

While these major infra-structure projects move ahead on one hand, we also work at the micro level - in some 146 villages, including 21,000 households, in Cabo Delgado, for example. There the selling of cash crops, the storage of food, the development of diverse income sources and the creation of Village Development Organizations, have all become commonplace in a very short time. New rural development programs are helping to increase crop yields, to circulate health and nutrition information, and to expand inoculations and sanitation programs.

A recent World Bank report strongly recommends that the countries of Africa should improve agricultural productivity - as the government of Mozambique is working to do. Yet - our experience, particularly in Asia, teaches us that a time will surely come when agricultural productivity can simply go no further - the growth potential will simply run

out. And, when that occurs, agricultural economies must seek new activities to sustain their populations.

This scenario may be many years ahead in the case of Mozambique, but diversifying the economy deserves immediate thought. One area where that can start happening now, in my belief, is the leisure and travel sector. AKDN has devoted considerable resources to expanding this sector. We are about to launch, for example, a major renovation project at the Polana Serena Hotel in Maputo, and we see enormous potential for extending into Mozambique our East African safari circuit of travel facilities.

At the same time, in and around Pemba, micro credit projects are creating new economic opportunities - we anticipate a tripling of these programs to the 3 million dollar level over three years. We have also noted the President's concern about the lack of financial services in rural areas and are ready to address this concern by establishing a rural micro finance bank in northern Mozambique.

In all of these ways, then, our commitment is to add to the foundations you have already laid for future progress. As we do, we realize more and more, with each passing day, the importance of effective partnerships.

It is in that spirit of partnership, then, that I come to Mozambique, grateful for what we have done together in the past, and inspired by the things we will be attempting together in the future. We are proud that we can join you in the great, continuing story of Mozambican progress.

Thank you.



## State banquet during the Golden Jubilee Visit in Madagascar

27 November 2007, Antananarivo, Madagascar

Prime Minister,  
Mr President of the National Assembly,  
Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I must thank you for the invitation you have extended to me in the name of the President of the Republic and the Government of Madagascar, and for your warm welcome and hospitality that is so typical of the Madagascan people. I am touched to the heart. I should also like to say how flattered and honoured I am by your words, which are at the same time a tribute to my community.

It was in 1956, fifty years ago, that I first set foot on Madagascan soil. Of all my subsequent visits, this one is especially symbolic for me and my community. I am celebrating my Golden Jubilee and I thank you for your good wishes on this occasion as I visit all the

countries which are close to my heart and which have a special significance for me and for the Ismailis.

The Ismaili community settled in Madagascar around one hundred years ago and is deeply involved in the country's economic and social life. It has become interwoven in the national fabric and has come to be one of the many cultures and traditions that enrich the nation. The Ismailis are present in nearly thirty-five countries across the world and represent a significant pluralism, both cultural and linguistic.

Islam's ethics establish an inextricable link between spiritual and material life, Din and Dunya. Consequently, my responsibilities as spiritual leader and interpreter of the faith are coupled with a deep commitment to improving the quality of life. These activities are not limited to the Ismaili community but extend to those who share their lives, whether on a local, national or international scale.

Our duty is to try to free people from poverty. And to me, poverty means being without shelter, without protection, without access to healthcare, education, or credit, and without hope of ever controlling one's own destiny. This means condemning one's children and grandchildren to unacceptable living conditions.

A voluntarist and innovative strategy is needed in order to break this chain of despair and total imprisonment.

That is why I, as Imam of the Ismailis, considered it my duty to meet the challenges now facing these communities. I chose to involve myself in development projects in every field by means of a group of private agencies known as the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a multi-sector network whose purpose is to fight poverty and work for the benefit of all, irrespective of faith or origin.

In May 2005, with the support of the government of Madagascar and the ministers present here today, we identified the Sofia region and set up a rural development programme which you, Prime Minister, were kind enough to mention. As a result of this programme and its innovative methods, in particular the training provided for farmers, the production of rice per hectare has doubled and has already benefited the 10,000 growers taking part.

Building on expertise acquired in more than twelve countries in Africa and Asia, in 2006 we also established the microfinance agency, the P.A.M.F., which so far, has seven branches in rural and urban areas and nearly 3,000 customers.

Among other initiatives, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) encourages economic progress in developing countries and those undergoing post-conflict reconstruction. AKFED intervenes in areas where returns on investment are drawn-out and uncertain and which many private investors consider too risky. Profits generated by

AKFED are reinvested in countries where there is insufficient foreign investment, in order to shore up their national economies. For example, we have recently launched the various energy projects to which you have referred, with the inauguration a few months ago of a new hydroelectric scheme (at Bujagali in Uganda), and also in telecommunications (in Afghanistan) and tourism (particularly in East Africa), where private initiative is ready to act in accordance with the domestic priorities of the countries concerned.

We were particularly impressed by the supreme importance that the “Madagascar Action Plan” (MAP) attaches to education, since it coincides with the Network’s own ethos.

The objective is to halt the brain drain, a veritable scourge in developing countries, by providing universities which maintain international standards with regional campuses, such as the one I have just announced in Arusha, which could eventually serve all the nations of East Africa and the Indian Ocean. Institutions such as this will, I hope, break the dependency of the South on the North and mould the leaders of the future. The improvement of centres of excellence in primary and secondary education with an international, multilingual curriculum, will enable pupils to enter these universities as well as the finest institutions worldwide. Furthermore, a Professional Development Centre will help improve teacher competence and introduce innovative teaching methods.

Madagascar has identified the challenges facing its people and drawn up a clear road map. And as the country appropriately shares this vision of the future with the Aga Khan Development Network, we can now move forward hand-in-hand for the good of generations to come.

Thank you.





## **Dinner hosted by the Governor and First Lady of Texas**

12 April 2008, Austin, Texas, USA

Governor Perry and First Lady Anita Perry  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Governor Perry, you have been very generous in your remarks - even as you have been most gracious in your hospitality. We are deeply grateful for the warmth of the Texas welcome which you have extended to us. Of course we have known from previous experience about the wonders of Texas hospitality. As I am told one might say in Texas, "this is not our first rodeo". But I must also say that you have outdone yourselves today - and you have our deepest appreciation.

Of course, I know that Governor Perry is highly experienced as an official host - I understand you are about to become the longest serving governor in Texas history. And this accomplishment has only been the recent culmination of your long career in public service.



I am also looking back at a long career this year, as I mark my fiftieth anniversary as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. I have been celebrating this Golden Jubilee by visiting places which have been of particular importance to the Ismaili Community over the last half century.

As many of you know, I was studying in the United States when I succeeded my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, as Imam in 1957. My ties here thus go back to the very beginning of my Imamate.

It is fitting that the first stop on this current visit is in Texas. Of course, Texas is known around the world as a place which likes to be first and foremost in just about every area of accomplishment! So it should come as no surprise that for the Ismaili community - as for so many others - Texas is a place where superlatives apply.

Our community's life in the United States began only a few decades ago - as our people, like so many others, found here a welcoming land of opportunity. So many of them settled in Texas, in fact, that the Ismaili community here has recently been the fastest growing anywhere on earth.

At the heart of that growth of course, is the fact that Ismailis have felt so welcome here. And the critical reason for that compatibility, I believe, is captured in the word "opportunity". The American ethic and ideal - the Texan ethic and ideal - has always been one of openness to others and openness to the future. It is an ethic of opportunity, which the Ismaili Community deeply shares.

This commitment to opportunity is exemplified in the vitality of your diverse multi-ethnic society. It is rooted in a deep respect for the individual human being - independent of one's background or origins.

The Governor has cited words from the Quran about the affinity of our religious commitments. The teachings of the Quran, like those of the Bible, also resonate with the words that rang out from Philadelphia in 1776: affirming that "all men are created equal, and are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights." Those words express our common ideal.

One of the purposes of my trip this week is to meet with the Ismaili community - all across this country. But another purpose is to meet with civic and government leaders, and to discuss ways in which the Ismaili Imamate, the institutions of our Community and the Aga Khan Development Network can partner with them even more effectively. We would like to build, for example, on the encouraging start we have made, working with educational institutions here in Texas and elsewhere, to span the cultural gap which too often has separated the Islamic World from the West. As you may know, I see this problem not as a clash of civilizations but rather a clash of ignorances - on all sides - and ignorance is a condition that we can do much to remedy.

Similarly, I believe that we can work together to encourage the development of sustainable democracies in parts of the world where democracy has not flourished - reflecting even more rigorously on the conditions which make democracy possible, and helping democratic institutions adapt more effectively to local conditions.

Thirdly, I believe we can partner effectively in applying the world's most advanced expertise to the challenges of development in parts of the world which are less advanced.

The United States' position as a world leader, in my view grows directly out of its accomplishments as a Knowledge Society - and this Knowledge - rightly applied - can continue to be a resource of enormous global value.

I thought it might be appropriate for me to say a few words at this point about the Ismaili community and my role as Imam. The Ismailis are a diverse community within the Shia branch of Islam, living in many parts of the world, and encompassing numerous ethnic and linguistic traditions. Their diversity reflects the profound pluralism of the Muslim world. The diverse Ismaili community has been united over many centuries by an allegiance to the living hereditary Imam of the time.

Let me also emphasize the inseparable nature, within Islam, of faith and world: the intertwining of spiritual responsibility with the conduct of daily life. My responsibilities as Imam for interpreting the faith are thus accompanied by a strong engagement with issues relating to the quality of life, affirming the dignity of all peoples.

As many of you know, Ismaili institutions everywhere are anchored in the community's Jamatkhana, our places of congregation. Governor Perry has honored us by being present at the ceremonies in years past when we have laid the foundations and opened our Jamatkhana in Texas, both in Sugarland and Plano. Most recently, the Governor's encouragement has been instrumental in our decision to build the Community's first high-profile Ismaili Center in the United States - and to situate it in Houston. For this support, Governor, we are profoundly grateful.

This new edifice will take its place along with six other Ismaili Centers - now located or soon to be located - in London, Vancouver, Lisbon, Dubai, Dushanbe and Toronto. You have mentioned, Governor, your own visit to the Dubai Center, which I had the honor of opening officially last month. We are confident that the new Ismaili Center in Houston, like the Center in Dubai, will not only enhance the physical fabric of the city, but will also serve as a tangible symbol of the values we share with our good neighbors here in Texas.

Shared values are what underly successful partnerships. We look forward to continuing and expanding our partnerships with the people of Texas as we work to extend the blessings of opportunity throughout our communities - and throughout the world.

My thanks to all of you for sharing in this memorable evening.



## Annual meeting of the International Baccalaureate

18 April 2008, Atlanta, Georgia USA

Dr. Monique Seefried, Chairman of the IB Board of Governors  
Members of the Board of Governors  
Mr. Jeffrey Beard, Director General of the IB  
Educators and Students from the IB Community  
Distinguished Guests

What a great privilege it is for me to be with you today - I have looked forward to this gathering for a long time. And I am particularly grateful to Monique Seefried for her generous introduction, and for so beautifully describing both the local and the global context in which we meet.

This is a particularly significant occasion for me, for several reasons.

It is significant of course because it marks the 40th anniversary of what I regard as one of the great seminal institutions of our era - the International Baccalaureate program. I say that because the IB program incarnates a powerful idea, the confidence that education can reshape the way in which the world thinks about itself.

I am deeply honored to be giving this particular Lecture - the Peterson Lecture, as it, too, has a great legacy. It fittingly celebrates the life and work of Alec Peterson, whose intellectual and moral leadership have been central to this organization and to all whom it has influenced.

I was humbled when I was first invited to be the Peterson Lecturer. That sense of deference grew, I must confess, as I began to look at the distinguished list of former Lecturers. And then I took one more step, and looked at what these people have said through the years - and I was even more deeply impressed by the responsibility of this assignment.

The Peterson Lectures - collected together - would make a wonderful reading list, for an excellent University course, on the topic of international education. After looking through them, I wondered if there was anything left to say on the subject! But if anyone should ever incorporate these lectures into a university syllabus, then perhaps my remarks today could appropriately be placed under the heading of "optional additional reading!"

Finally, this occasion has special meaning for me because it comes, as you may know, on my 50th anniversary as spiritual leader, or Imam, of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. We are thus celebrating both a fortieth and a fiftieth anniversary today - and both provide important opportunities to connect our past with our future, our roots with our dreams.

I came upon a rather striking surprise in looking through the texts of earlier Peterson Lectures. Not just one - but two of those addresses in recent years have quoted my grandfather! It was from him, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, that I inherited my present role in 1957. I also inherited from him a deep concern for the advancement of education - especially in the developing world. These two topics - education and development - have been at the heart of my own work over the past fifty years, and they will form the central theme of my comments today.

Very early after the end of the second world war, my brother and I were sent to school in Switzerland, Le Rosey, and after a few years at that school, a new coach for rowing became part of the school and we were told that he would also coach the ice hockey team during the winter term. His name was Vaclav Rubik, not the one of Rubik's cube fame but rather, like the famous cube itself, a challenging influence. He was also one of the most talented and intelligent sportsmen that I have ever met. He was in the Czech national ice hockey team which has been one of the best in the world, and he was also in the national Eights and Fours without Coxswain. His wife was in the Czech national field hockey team. So Le Rosey was extremely fortunate to have two exceptional athletes available for coaching. But there was another dimension to Vaclav Rubik. He had a doctorate in Law, and he and his wife were political refugees who had fled on foot all the way from Czechoslovakia to Switzerland. He was a charismatic individual, and after only a couple of years of training he succeeded in putting together an under-18 crew of Fours, which won just about every race it competed in, including the Swiss National Championship for all ages.

We used to spend long hours in buses driving from one rowing competition to another, and from one ice hockey match to another. I remember asking him what he intended to do, as I could not see a man of such quality remaining indefinitely as a sports coach in a small Swiss school. His answer was that he had applied for acceptance as a political refugee to the United States, and that as soon as he would be allowed to come here he would do so. I asked him how he would earn his living once he came to the United States, as I was certain that he would not want to continue his career as a sports coach, and his answer has remained in my mind ever since. He said, my wife and I fled from Czechoslovakia with nothing, other than the clothes on our back and the shoes on our feet, but I have had a good education and when I arrive in the United States, that is what will enable me to obtain the type of employment I would wish. Once he left Le Rosey, I somewhat lost touch with him, and the last thing I heard was that he had become a very senior executive in the Singer Sewing Machine Company.

The moral of the story is clear – you can have nothing in your pocket, and only the clothes and the shoes you wear, but if you have a well educated mind, you will be able to seize the opportunities life offers you, and start all over again.

I suspect that many members of the Ismaili Community, like other Asians who were expelled by Idi Amin from Uganda, and who made successful new lives in other parts of the world, would tell you the same story.

From its very beginnings, the International Baccalaureate Organization has understood this central truth. But as we move into a new century, I would like to combine my words of congratulation and commendation, with some words of inquiry and challenge.

What is the eventual place and purpose of the IB in developing societies - and in a Muslim context? What can those worlds contribute to the IB community? And how can institutions which are rooted in different cultural traditions best work together to bridge worlds that have too often been widely separated?

As a point of departure in addressing these questions, I would turn to those words from my Grandfather which were quoted in two earlier Peterson Lectures. He included them in a speech he gave as President of the League of Nations in Geneva some 70 years ago. They come originally from the Persian poet, Sadi, who wrote:

“The children of Adam, created of the self-same clay, are members of one body. When one member suffers, all members suffer, likewise. O Thou, who art indifferent to the suffering of the fellow, thou art unworthy to be called a man.”

You will readily understand why such words seem appropriate for a Peterson Lecture. They speak to the fundamental value of a universal human bond- a gift of the Creator - which both requires and validates our efforts to educate for global citizenship.

I would also like to quote an infinitely more powerful statement about the unity of mankind, because it comes directly from the Holy Quran, and which I would ask you to think about. The Holy Quran addresses itself not only to Muslims, but to the entirety of the human race, when it says:

“O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from one single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women.”

These words reflect a deeply spiritual insight - A Divine imperative if you will - which, in my view, should under gird our educational commitments. It is because we see humankind, despite our differences, as children of God and born from one soul, that we insist on reaching beyond traditional boundaries as we deliberate, communicate, and educate internationally. The IB mission statement puts it extremely well: “to encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.”

The IB community has thought long and hard about what it means for students to become powerfully aware of a wider world - and to deal effectively with both its bewildering diversity and its increasing interdependence. The IB program has wrestled vigorously with one of the basic conundrums of the age - how to take account of two quite different challenges.

The first challenge is the fact that the world is increasingly a “single” place - a wondrous web of global interaction cutting across the lines of division and separation which have characterized most of its history. This accelerating wave of interdependence is something we first defined as “internationalization” when the IB program was launched 40 years ago. We refer to it now as “globalization.” It brings with it both myriad blessings and serious risks - not the least of which is the danger that globalization will become synonymous with homogenization.

Why would homogenization be such a danger? Because diversity and variety constitute one of the most beautiful gifts of the Creator, and because a deep commitment to our own particularity is part of what it means to be human. Yes, we need to establish connecting bonds across cultures, but each culture must also honour a special sense of self.

The downside of globalization is the threat it can present to cultural identities.

But there is also a second great challenge which is intensifying in our world. In some ways it is the exact opposite of the globalizing impulse. I refer to a growing tendency toward fragmentation and confrontation among peoples. In a time of mounting insecurity, cultural pride can turn, too often, into an endeavour to normalise one's culture. The quest for identity can then become an exclusionary process - so that we define ourselves less by what we are FOR and more by whom we are AGAINST. When this happens, diversity turns quickly from a source of beauty to a cause of discord.



I believe that the coexistence of these two surging impulses - what one might call a new globalism on one hand and a new tribalism on the other - will be a central challenge for educational leaders in the years ahead. And this will be particularly true in the developing world with its kaleidoscope of different identities.

As you may know, the developing world has been at the centre of my thinking and my work throughout my lifetime. And I inherited a tradition of educational commitment from my grandfather. It was a century ago that he began to build a network of some 300 schools in the developing world the Aga Khan Education Services - in addition to founding Aligarh University in India.

The legacy which I am describing actually goes back more than a thousand years, to the time when our forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt, founded Al-Azhar University and the Academy of Knowledge in Cairo. For many centuries, a commitment to learning was a central element in far-flung Islamic cultures. That commitment has continued in my own Imamatus through the founding of the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia and through the recent establishment of a new Aga Khan Academies Program.

And this is where your and our paths meet.

As you have heard, the curriculum of our Academies is centered on the IB program. We hope that the network of Aga Khan Academies will become an effective bridge for extending the IB Program more widely into the developing world.

Each of you knows well the IB side of this bridge. I thought I might add just a few words about the Academies side of the bridge, and about my purpose in initiating this international network of high quality schools.

Our Academies Program is rooted in the conviction that effective indigenous leadership will be the key to progress in the developing world, and as the pace of change accelerates, it is clear that the human mind and heart will be the central factors in determining social wealth.

Yet in too much of the developing world, the capacity to realise the potential of the human resource base is still sadly limited. Too many of those who should be the leaders of tomorrow are being left behind today. And even those students who do manage to get a good education often pursue their dreams in far off places - and never go home again. The result is a widening gap between the leadership these communities need - and the leadership their educational systems deliver.

For much of human history, leaders have been born into their roles, or have fought their way in - or have bought their way in. But in this new century - a time of unusual danger and stirring promise, it is imperative that aristocracies of class give way to aristocracies of

talent – or to use an even better term – to meritocracies. Is it not a fundamental concept of democracy itself, that leadership should be chosen on the basis of merit?

Educating for leadership must imply something more than the mere development of rote skills. Being proficient at rote skills is not the same thing as being educated. And training that develops skills, important as they may be, is a different thing from schooling in the art and the science of thinking.

The temptation to inculcate rather than to educate is understandably strong among long frustrated populations. In many such places, public emotions fluctuate between bitter impatience and indifferent skepticism - and neither impatience nor indifference are favorable atmospheres for encouraging reasoned thought.

But in an age of accelerating change, when even the most sophisticated skills are quickly outdated, we will find many allies in the developing world who are coming to understand that the most important skill anyone can learn is the ability to go on learning.

In a world of rapid change, an agile and adaptable mind, a pragmatic and cooperative temperament, a strong ethical orientation - these are increasingly the keys to effective leadership. And I would add to this list a capacity for intellectual humility which keeps one's mind constantly open to a variety of viewpoints and which welcomes pluralistic exchange.

These capacities, over the longer term, will be critically important to the developing world. They happen to be the same capacities which programs like the IB - and the Aga Khan Academies - are designed to elicit and inspire.

The Academies have a dual mission: to provide an outstanding education to exceptional students from diverse backgrounds, and to provide world-class training for a growing corps of inspiring teachers.

At these 18 Academies, each educating between 750 to 1200 primary and secondary students, we anticipate having one teacher for every seven students, and we will place enormous emphasis on recruiting, training, and compensating them well. We hope they will become effective role models for other teachers in their regions.

To this end, we expect within the next year or so to open new Professional Development Centres for teacher education in India, Bangladesh, Mozambique, and Madagascar. Similar planning is underway in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, Tanzania and Uganda. These Professional Development Centres will operate before we open the doors to students.

In sum, our strategy begins with good teaching. We must first teach the teachers.

As the Academies open, one-by-one, they will feature merit-based entry, residential campuses, and dual-language instruction. This language policy exemplifies our desire to square the particular with the global. English will enable graduates to participate fully on an international stage, while mother-tongue instruction will allow students to access the wisdom of their own cultures.

Squaring the particular with the global will require great care, wisdom, and even some practical field testing, to ensure that it really is possible to develop a curriculum that responds effectively to both the global and the tribal impulses. While this will be a feat in itself, it will also be important to relate well to highly practical concerns such as the nature of each country's national university entrance exams, and the the human resources required by each country's multi-year development plans.

The Academies have given much thought to the components that we would describe as global in our curriculum. We intend to place special emphasis on the value of pluralism, the ethical dimensions of life, global economics, a broad study of world cultures (including Muslim Civilizations) and comparative political systems. Experienced IB teachers have already been helping us to integrate these important areas of focus into the Academies curriculum.

Many students will also study for at least a year in other parts of the Academy network, outside their home countries. And of course we have stipulated that our program should qualify our students for the International Baccalaureate diploma. Faculty too will have the opportunity to live in new countries, learn new languages and engage in new cultures.

You may be asking yourselves on what bases the Aga Khan Education Services and the Academies Program have selected new subjects to be added to the Academies curriculum, and I thought it might be useful to illustrate that to you.

With regard to pluralism, it has been our experience that in a very large number of countries in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, in the Middle East, and elsewhere, the failure of different peoples to be able to live in peace amongst each other has been a major source of conflict. Experience tells us that people are not born with the innate ability nor the wish to see the Other as an equal individual in society. Pride in one's separate identity can be so strong that it obscures the intrinsic value of other identities. Pluralism is a value that must be taught.

With regard to the issue of ethics, we see competent civil society as a major contributor to development, particularly where democracies are weak, or where governments have become dysfunctional. We are therefore concerned with the quality of ethics in all components of civil society, and reject the notion that the absence of corruption or fraud in government is anywhere near sufficient, to ensure to every individual a rigorous and clean enabling environment. Fraud in medicine, fraud in education, fraud in financial services, fraud in property rights, fraud in the exercise of law enforcement or in the courts, are risks

which have a dramatic effect on peoples' development. This is especially true in rural environments where the majority of the peoples of the developing world live, but where fraud is often neither reported nor corrected, but simply accepted as an inevitable condition of life.

Educating for global economics will also be essential to ensure that the failed economic systems of the past are replaced. But this must not mean a simplistic acceptance of the imbalances and inequities associated with today's new global economy. We need to develop a broad consensus which focuses on creating a global economic environment which is universally fair.

Our program will also teach about world cultures. Inter-cultural conflicts inevitably grow out of intercultural ignorance - and in combating ignorance we also reduce the risk of conflict.

Finally, we want to educate about comparative political systems, so that more and more people in the developing world will be able to make competent value judgements about their Constitutions, their political systems, and how they can best develop democratic approaches which are well tailored to their needs. Public referenda, to sanction new Constitutions, for example, make little sense when they call for judgments from people who do not understand the questions they are being asked, nor the alternatives they should be considering.

These planned subject areas share two characteristics: They all impact a large number of countries across the continents of our world, and they address problems that will take many decades to resolve. And, while the Academies have made reasonable progress in defining the broad areas of the curriculum, I must be frank in saying that the more tribal subjects, specific to individual countries, or perhaps regions, are areas where a great deal of work remains to be done, and where in fact we should expect to go through a prudent step-by-step process - cutting the cloth as each individual situation requires.

What we hope to create, in sum, is a network of 18 educational laboratories, all of them sharing a common overriding purpose, but each one learning from the others particular experiences.

The first Aga Khan Academy opened in Kenya four years ago, and the first cohort of IB Diploma graduates completed their studies last June. The quality of their academic work, including their success on the IB examinations, along with their records of community service, make us optimistic about the future.

As we move into that future, we would like to collaborate with the International Baccalaureate movement in a challenging, but inspiring new educational adventure. Together, we can help reshape the very definition of a well educated global citizen. And we can begin that process by bridging the learning gap which lies at the heart of what some

have called a Clash of Civilizations, but which I have always felt was rather a Clash of Ignorances.

In the years ahead, should we not expect a student at an IB school in Atlanta to know as much about Jomo Kenyatta or Muhammad Ali Jinnah as a student in Mombasa or Lahore knows about Atlanta's great son, the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr.? Should a Bangladeshi IB student reading the poems of Tagore at the Aga Khan Academy in Dhaka not also encounter the works of other Nobel Laureates in Literature such as the Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk or America's William Faulkner or Toni Morrison?

Should the study of medieval architecture not include both the Chartres Cathedral in France and the Mosque of Djenne in Mali? And shouldn't IB science students not learn about Ibn al-Haytham, the Muslim scholar who developed modern optics, as well as his predecessors Euclid and Ptolemy, whose ideas he challenged.

As we work together to bridge the gulf between East and West, between North and South, between developing and developed economies, between urban and rural settings, we will be redefining what it means to be well educated.

Balancing the universal and the particular is an age old challenge - intellectually and practically. But it may well become an even more difficult challenge as time moves on and the planet continues to shrink. It is one thing, after all, to talk about cultural understanding when "the Other" is living across the world. It is often a different matter when the "Other" is living across the street.

I admire the IB organization's desire to take on the cultural challenges of our time, to move into parts of the world and areas of society where it has been less active in the past. But we all should be clear, as we embark on such projects, that the people with whom we will be dealing will present different challenges than before. As we choose our targets of opportunity, we should examine the environments and consider carefully the changes which can make these programs most relevant to the future.

Some people tell us that globalization is an inevitable process. That may be true in certain areas of activity - but there is nothing inevitable about globalizing educational approaches and standards. Conceptualising a global examination system is one of the most difficult intellectual endeavours I can imagine - though it should also be one of the most exciting. The intellectual stimulation of working on such a project could keep the world's best educators engaged for decades. That task may be more feasible, however, because of the head start which the IB organization has already made in thinking about a global curriculum. Your IB experience, independent of the Aga Khan Academies, as well as your Peterson lectures through the years offer an excellent foundation for that process.

As the IB moves beyond the Judeo-Christian cultures where it is most experienced, it will have to make educators in other areas of the world into its newest stakeholders. This will

probably mean developing more explicit expressions of a cosmopolitan ethic, founded if possible in universal human values. That may well be a progressive, ever evolving process - one that will be increasingly inclusive but may never be complete.

What would it mean for example for the IB program to work in largely rural societies - where there have never been the resources or incentives to support serious and sustained education? What would it mean to apply the concepts of critical thinking and individual judgment in societies which are steeped in habitual deference to age and authority, to rules and to rituals.

What would it require for an organization which is deeply rooted in the Western humanist tradition to speak with relevance in profoundly non-Western cultural settings? And how should we go about the challenges of moral education - growing out of universal values - in settings where religious and ideological loyalties are particularly intense.

I ask these questions not because I have ready answers to them - but because I think the posing of such questions will be essential to our progress. I ask them not to discourage you from reaching out - but rather to encourage you - as you do reach out - to do so with a full understanding of the risks and the strains that you will inevitably encounter.

I believe we can find answers to these questions. They may not be full and complete and perfect answers, but there at least will be initial answers, tentative answers, working answers. And each step along the way will teach us more.

What is essential is that we search.

In the final analysis, the great problem of humankind in a global age will be to balance and reconcile the two impulses of which I have spoken: the quest for distinctive identity and the search for global coherence. What this challenge will ultimately require of us, is a deep sense of personal and intellectual humility, an understanding that diversity itself is a gift of the Divine, and that embracing diversity is a way to learn and to grow - not to dilute our identities but to enrich our self-knowledge.

What is required goes beyond mere tolerance or sympathy or sensitivity - emotions which can often be willed into existence by a generous soul. True cultural sensitivity is something far more rigorous, and even more intellectual than that. It implies a readiness to study and to learn across cultural barriers, an ability to see others as they see themselves. This is a challenging task, but if we do that, then we will discover that the universal and the particular can indeed be reconciled. As the Quran states: "God created male and female and made you into communities and tribes, so that you may know one another." (49.13) It is our differences that both define us and connect us.

I am confident that the IB program will continue to succeed as it extends its leadership into new arenas in the decades ahead. But as that happens, one key variable will be the spirit in which we approach these new engagements.

There will be a strong temptation for us to regard these new frontiers as places to which we can bring some special gift of accumulated knowledge and well seasoned wisdom. But I would caution against such an emphasis. The most important reason for us to embrace these new opportunities lies not so much in what we can bring to them as in what we can learn from them.

Thank you very much.





## **Dîner Officiel lors de la Visite du Jubilé d'Or au Mali**

23 April 2008, Bamako, Mali

Excellence Monsieur le Président de la République,  
Excellence Monsieur le Président de l'Assemblée Nationale,  
Monsieur le Premier Ministre,  
Messieurs les Ministres,  
Excellences Messieurs les Ambassadeurs,  
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Permettez-moi tout d'abord de remercier le Président, le gouvernement et la population du Mali pour l'accueil chaleureux que vous m'avez réservé et pour la généreuse hospitalité que vous me témoignez.

Permettez-moi aussi, Monsieur le Président, de vous dire à quel point je suis touché et honoré d'être élevé à la dignité de Grand Croix de l'Ordre National du Mali. Le fait de recevoir la plus haute distinction de la République du Mali et d'entendre vos mots si aimables et si élogieux, est pour moi le témoignage de l'estime et de la considération du

peuple du Mali et de vous-même. Sachez, Monsieur le Président, que cette estime et cette considération sont partagés et reflètent les liens qui nous unissent depuis bien longtemps.

Les liens formels de l'imamat avec l'Afrique de l'Ouest remontent ainsi aux années 1960 lorsque, tout jeune imam, j'ai eu l'occasion de visiter plusieurs pays de la région. Mais nos liens informels remontent à bien plus longtemps. Les historiens parlent en effet d'échanges au 12ème siècle entre les érudits de l'Université de Sankoré à Tombouctou et ceux d'al-Azhar, l'institut universitaire fondé au Caire au début du 10ème siècle par mon ancêtre, l'imam-calife fatimide al-Muizz.

Au cours de mes nombreux voyages dans la région durant les quarante dernières années, j'ai pu mesurer l'importance des projets qui contribuent de façon constructive au développement et ceci a conforté certaines de mes convictions.

Tout d'abord, les défis du développement offrent également la possibilité de créer des opportunités dans une partie du monde qui possède un riche patrimoine culturel.

Ensuite, que des partenariats avantageux entre le secteur public et le secteur privé peuvent renforcer la capacité de chacun à contribuer à l'amélioration de la qualité de vie et à redonner de l'espoir dans des environnements pauvres en ressources.

Enfin, qu'en renforçant les infrastructures, en introduisant des innovations et en facilitant les synergies entre les pays de la région, les fruits du développement peuvent avoir un impact plus large et plus profond sur les populations.

Je voudrais donc saisir cette opportunité pour féliciter le gouvernement du Mali pour l'engagement et la diligence avec lesquels, sous la direction clairvoyante de Votre Excellence, il encourage les partenariats et le recours à des approches innovatrices afin de répondre aux défis clés du développement.

Nous espérons, de répondre à la vision que nous avons partagée avec Votre Excellence, Monsieur le Président, lors de mon séjour au Mali en octobre 2003. A cet égard, permettez-moi, Votre Excellence, de vous exprimer mon admiration pour l'ambition que votre gouvernement et vous-même affichez pour le pays à travers la mise en œuvre du Programme de développement économique et social (PDES). Cet engagement courageux et déterminé, qui accompagne les efforts de la société civile, contribuera, j'en suis sûr, à permettre à la population du Mali de progresser et d'atteindre une meilleure qualité de vie.

Pour ce qui est de l'avenir, j'entrevois des possibilités accrues de moderniser les infrastructures d'éducation et d'améliorer la qualité de l'environnement rural pour lutter contre les problèmes préoccupants de l'urbanisation qui surgissent sous la pression démographique à travers toute l'Afrique et particulièrement dans la sous région.

Je voudrais vous assurer ce soir que mon objectif est de pouvoir continuer à travailler avec le gouvernement et le peuple du Mali pour qu'ensemble, nous puissions relever les défis du futur.

Merci.



## **Ceremony of inauguration of the Great Mosque of Mopti**

24 April 2008, Mopti, Mali

*Bismillah-hir-Rahmanir-Rahim*

Mr President,  
Ministers,  
Regional Governor,  
Mr Mayor,  
Village chiefs and dignitaries of Komoguel, Imam of the Mosque  
Honoured guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Asalaam-o-aleikum

Today I am pleased to be able to inaugurate the newly-restored Great Mosque of Mopti, also known as Komoguel Mosque, and to later visit the various projects currently underway to improve the environment in the historic district of Komoguel.

I should like to extend special thanks to the President of the Republic and the Minister for Territorial Administration and Local Community Affairs for their presence here today and for the support given by the government, regional authorities, the Mayor, Mr Oumar Bathily, the town council, and the Komoguel Local Development Committee to this project.

The significance of this project extends far beyond the physical restoration of the architectural structure of the mosque.

The history of the Ummah has reason to remember the prestige and influence of Mali 's great mosques. At the height of the empire, in the eighth century, it was from these great seats of learning, these veritable centres of intellectual and spiritual activity, that Islam spread across Africa . It is therefore an immense privilege for me to be able to restore these magnificent mosques. Here in Mopti, and in Djenne or Timbuktu, the great tradition of mud brick building has been revived and the skills acquired can henceforth be put into practice in the construction of all mud brick buildings, whether intended for religious or secular purposes.

The work of revitalising the mosques is gradually being extended to their surrounding neighbourhoods to include all residential accommodation situated in the shadow of the minarets. How wonderfully symbolic it is that the outcome of efforts to restore the mosques should be to improve the quality of life of the people whose lives follow the same rhythm as theirs!

The restoration of the Great Mosque of Mopti is the result of close collaboration between the Ministry of Culture and the National Cultural Heritage Department (DNPC), the regional and local authorities, the Mosque Committee and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and of the dedication of numerous professionals and craftspeople from architects and conservation experts to stone masons, bricklayers, plasterers, metal workers, potters and electricians.

This project has made it possible to combine modern heritage conservation techniques with the processes and materials traditionally employed in the construction of mud brick buildings. The participation in the project of the few stone masons who still practice banco pourri has meant that more than 30 young people have been trained in this traditional technique, thus ensuring that is handed down to the next generation.

This is especially relevant in Mali where there is a danger that traditional artisans will gradually disappear, taking with them the skills and knowledge accumulated by previous generations of builders. Hence, restoring this important monument has provided the opportunity to perpetuate a tradition and also to ensure the future conservation of built heritage with appropriate techniques, competently applied.

Many other buildings and villages constructed out of mud which may be less visible but are nonetheless significant in the context of the region are awaiting inspection and urgent protection and will require considerable cooperation on the part of national institutions

and international organisations. It is encouraging to know that Mali has been selected to host this year's international Terra conference on mud brick architecture. In the next few years, the AKTC plans to contribute to this international effort, not only by restoring important buildings but also, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, by setting up a national list of mud brick structures, a move that is becoming increasingly urgent in view of the increasing deterioration of the country's mud brick architectural heritage and the dangers it faces.

In parallel to the restoration of the Great Mosque, the Trust has, in collaboration with Mopti's local community and other AKDN agencies, launched a pilot project to improve the quality of life of people living in the immediate neighbourhoods, by responding to some of their most pressing needs. The AKTC's initial commitment is to improve access to water and to an upgraded sewage network and to put in place social development, vocational training and micro-finance projects.

While these environmental management programmes centering on the mosques are designed to ensure that the whole population will benefit from an improved quality of life, the work nevertheless forms part of a more global vision of urban development.

Indeed, my fear is that urban modernisation will lead to an increase in property speculation and the uncontrolled development of tourist infrastructures which will eventually swallow up the mosques within the urban fabric. Sadly, we see that in many large Muslim cities, the minarets of our mosques, those towering symbols of our faith from the top of which the call to prayer rings out, are lost amid blocks of local authority housing, drowned out by the hubbub of the city.

My hope is that the regeneration of the areas around the mosques will mean the preservation and protection of the heritage of our glorious past which deserves our respect and admiration.

And it is our duty as Muslims to contribute to and to encourage this effort, as the Holy Qu'ran reminds us by commanding us to leave the world in a better condition than that in which we received it, and instructing us to help one another in the performance of good works.

Thank you.





## **Presentation of the title of Honorary Citizen of the Islamic Community of Timbuktu and an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Sankoré**

### **LOCATION**

Mopti, Mali (24 April 2008)

Bismillah-ir-Rahmanir-Rahim  
Minister, General Kafougouna Koné,  
Regional Governor, Colonel Mamadou Togola,  
Mayor Ould Mahmoud,  
Imam ben Essayouti of the Djingareyber Mosque,  
Imams of the Sankoré and Sidi Yahya Mosques,  
Grand Qadi of Timbuktu,  
Honoured guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Asalaam-o-aleikum

Allow me first of all to thank Minister Koné, Mayor Said Ould Mahmoud, and Imam ben Essayouti for their very kind words.

I should also like to express my thanks to the alumni, students and scholars of Timbuktu for presenting me with these honours. I am also grateful to the Governor and citizens of the city for the warm welcome extended to me and my family.

I have precious memories of my last visit to Timbuktu during which you presented me with the title of “Honorary Citizen” which I bear with very great pride. At the same time, I



feel extremely humble, since there can be no greater honour than to be accorded citizenship of a city that has always been renowned for its dedication to the quest for knowledge.

Amid such a worthy and learned gathering I am reminded of the verses of the Holy Qur'an in which Allah reminds us that He gives the blessing of wisdom to whoever He wills, but only those with intelligence remember that He has done so.

My most sincere prayer is that I, my fellow citizens of Timbuktu and my brothers and sisters in Islam can continue our journey to bring greater wisdom and understanding to all.

For a thousand years, Timbuktu has been a town noted for its hospitality. Here, the desert and the River Niger converge and travellers arriving from across the Sahara have found a friendly welcome and an environment of knowledge and profound faith, as well as a cosmopolitan culture.

Today, I feel honoured and proud to belong to this town which has made a lasting contribution to the enrichment of Islam and world civilisation, not only through its scholarship but also in its role as a crossroads where rich cultural and commercial exchanges between Africa, Europe and Asia which have taken place.

I am also very happy to accept the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa from the prestigious University of Sankoré, the African continent's most ancient higher education institution. Like Djingareyber and Sidi Yahya, this university has been the alma mater of the town's 180 Qu'ranic schools and the birthplace of the many scholarly works which became uniquely influential in Africa during the Middle Ages. The sum of all that knowledge has been preserved in the richly-stocked libraries of Timbuktu which house thousands of manuscripts, most of them written by scholars born in the town. This tradition of learning and the transmission of knowledge is at the heart of Islam and the practice of the faith.

I am delighted to receive this degree in such a prestigious centre of Islamic erudition, facing the historic Djingareyber Mosque built in the 14th century in the reign of Emperor Mansa Kankou Moussa by the architect Abu Ishaq as-Saheli.

This mosque is the oldest and most typical example of a unique style of earth architecture developed in the very earliest years of Islam in West Africa and which survives to this day. Today, however, the process of rapid change means that the region is threatened with the loss of technical expertise and the disappearance of the traditional banco technique. That is why the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and Mali's Ministry of Culture, in cooperation with the mosque's governing body, have launched this heritage conservation programme with the aim of reviving traditional construction techniques, improving the state of preservation of the buildings, and ensuring their long-term maintenance so that they can be passed on to future generations.

I shall always remember this honorary doctorate as proof of the harmony between intellect and faith which is Islam's blessing to Muslims.

Thank you.



## Cérémonie annonçant la création d'un Parc Urbain à Bamako

25 April 2008, Bamako, Mali

*Bismillah-hir-Rahmanir-Rahim,*

Son Excellence Monsieur le Président de la République,  
Monsieur le Premier Ministre,  
Messieurs les Ministres,  
Excellences, Messieurs les Représentants du corps diplomatique et des organisations internationales accréditées au Mali,  
Monsieur le Maire de Bamako,  
Mesdames et Messieurs,

Asalaam-o-aleikum,

Je voudrais tout d'abord remercier Son Excellence le Président de la République du Mali de l'accueil si chaleureux que le gouvernement et lui-même, personnellement, ont réservé à ma famille et à moi-même tout au long de cette visite particulièrement chaleureuse dans tous les sens du terme.

Je voudrais également remercier le Président d'avoir bien voulu sélectionner le Trust Aga Khan pour la Culture pour un partenariat avec l'Etat afin de créer un projet tout à fait exceptionnel et de très grande envergure. Je voudrais dire combien nous sommes heureux et admirons le Président et le gouvernement d'avoir reconnu l'absence d'un poumon vert pour la population de Bamako. C'est une raison supplémentaire pour nous de vouloir participer à cette initiative totalement unique et essentielle.

Nous recherchons l'amélioration de l'environnement, nous recherchons la planification urbaine, le développement culturel et touristique et la revitalisation économique et sociale. Ce partenariat réunit le Ministère de la Culture, le Ministère de l'Environnement et de l'Assainissement et le Trust Aga Khan pour la Culture, qui est l'agence culturelle du Réseau Aga Khan de développement.

Je pense qu'il est utile de vous dire ici ce qu'est le Trust Aga Khan pour la Culture, parce que la question est souvent posée, et il est important de se souvenir d'abord que, sur le plan juridique, c'est une fondation. C'est à dire une entité à but non lucratif. Mais pourquoi l'appelons-nous « Trust » plutôt que fondation?

En Islam, il est dit qu'Allah nous rend responsables, durant notre vie, de la bonne gestion de Sa création : nous sommes effectivement les trustees et non pas les propriétaires de Sa création. C'est la raison pour laquelle j'ai voulu choisir le mot « Trust », parce que ce mot correspond le mieux à l'éthique de l'Islam et de l'individu face à la création d'Allah. Voilà donc la raison pour laquelle le Trust, tout en étant une fondation, s'appelle « Trust ».

Le deuxième commentaire que je voudrais faire est que, quand on a un projet unique comme celui-ci, on n'a pas le droit de se tromper. S'il est unique, il faut qu'il réponde aux besoins de tous les segments de la population et on ne peut pas se permettre une espèce de vanité intellectuelle en présumant que nous pouvons savoir quels sont tous les besoins des différents utilisateurs qui fréquenteront ce parc à l'avenir. Et je voudrais donc qu'il y ait, avant tout, une concertation extrêmement large de toute la population de Bamako, des clubs sportifs, des ONG, du corps diplomatique, des enseignants, des banquiers, de tous ceux qui peuvent avoir intérêt à venir, un jour, dans le parc. Nous souhaitons connaître d'avance ce qu'ils souhaitent qu'on leur offre, pour que nous puissions construire le programme du parc à partir d'une connaissance réellement profonde et avec un consensus le plus large possible de la population de Bamako sur ce que nous devons faire.

Il existe au Mali un dicton qui met en garde ceux qui pourraient être trop présomptueux dans leurs ambitions. Et ce dicton dit ceci : « Celui qui veut enfileur un pantalon à un éléphant est très courageux, mais s'il n'y parvient pas, il lui reste un énorme problème ». Je m'engage à ne pas essayer d'enfiler de pantalons aux éléphants du zoo.

Le Trust Aga Khan pour la Culture reste humble devant un projet d'une telle envergure. Mais nous avons quand même déjà réalisé un certain nombre de programmes significatifs comme le parc Al-Azhar au Caire, la restauration de Bagh-e Babur à Kabul, les jardins du

mausolée de Humayun à Delhi ; nous participons actuellement à la construction de deux parcs, l'un à Khorog au Tajikistan et l'autre à Zanzibar. Deux nouveaux parcs sont également à l'étude à Alep en Syrie et à Nairobi au Kenya. Et pour éviter de devenir tailleurs pour éléphants, je voudrais vous dire que tous ces parcs sont différents les uns des autres, et nous ne sommes donc pas du tout présomptueux devant ce projet unique à Bamako.

Pour ce qui est de ce parc de Bamako, je souhaiterais que l'on puisse développer le plus large éventail possible d'activités et accueillir toutes les composantes du public, et notamment les jeunes. Mais pas seulement les jeunes qui viendraient une fois : pour nous, le succès ce serait que les utilisateurs du parc reviennent et reviennent encore et que ce parc fasse partie de leur vie quotidienne à Bamako. Je dirais aussi que ce genre d'initiative doit être développée avec prudence, non seulement en écoutant tout le public mais en sachant également que le public change d'avis d'une décennie à l'autre. Et il faut donc que nous gardions un espace de flexibilité dans ce parc pour pouvoir ajouter des composantes nouvelles au fur et à mesure que les choses évoluent dans le temps.

Et pour finir, je voudrais dire que ni l'Etat, ni le Trust Aga Khan pour la Culture ne souhaitent s'engager dans une initiative extrêmement importante et pluridimensionnelle qui risque de devenir un consommateur sans fin de ressources financières. Le programme sur le site cherchera donc à se développer de manière à atteindre l'équilibre financier dans un laps de temps raisonnable. Et le jour où cette initiative créera des ressources supplémentaires, ces surplus seront réinvestis dans le parc pour qu'il puisse s'améliorer avec les années.

Je termine ce bref commentaire en remerciant le Président, la ville, le gouvernement et le Ministre de la Culture, de nous avoir invités à participer à cette initiative merveilleuse. Et j'espère que nous pourrons mettre en place cette nouvelle institution avec succès, et donner à tous ceux qui vivent à Bamako, une nouvelle raison d'apprécier la qualité de vie dans leur ville.

Merci.



## State banquet during the Golden Jubilee visit in Bangladesh

### LOCATION

Dhaka, Bangladesh (19 May 2008)

The Honourable Chief Adviser  
Honourable Advisers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

I am most grateful to the Chief Adviser for his very kind words, and for the extraordinary warmth of this welcome.

As you know, I am marking this year a half century as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. To celebrate this Golden Jubilee, I am visiting places which have had particular meaning for the Ismaili Community, for the Aga Khan Development Network, and for me personally, over the last 50 years. My visit to Bangladesh is an important part of that celebration.

When I inherited my office five decades ago from my Grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, I also inherited the special feeling he had for this part of the world. I remember in particular, his response to the partition of India, when he actively encouraged a large number of members of the Ismaili Community to settle in what was then East Pakistan. They found a warm welcome here, and were pleased to integrate fully into Bengali life.

It was on the occasion of my Grandfather's Platinum Jubilee - marking seventy years of his Imamatus - that he first invested in what became a thriving jute mill industry here. The

first of those companies continues to exist and is still called the “Platinum Jubilee Jute Mills.”

The success of those early investments encouraged us to make Dhaka our headquarter city when we established the first venture capital and development corporation anywhere in Pakistan in 1966. It later became one of the largest employers and biggest exporters in the country.

Through all of these years, our investments were designed to foster strong, cooperative partnerships with local institutions - not only with governmental bodies but also with private industry, and with the organizations of civil society, a sector which Bangladesh has so constructively encouraged.

This spirit of partnership, in turn, has reflected the spirit of pluralism which also characterizes this society - the readiness of people to work creatively, side by side, with those who are different from them. This quality will also become increasingly important as technology advances in the years ahead, enabling people to travel and trade and talk more often with one another, across cultural and geographic borders.

Technology is also transforming our economic lives. Economic value is no longer tied to how much land one controls - or how many machines or factories one owns. Within our lifetimes, predominantly “Agricultural Societies” and “Industrial Societies” of the past have been joined - and sometimes supplanted - by what many call the “Knowledge Society,” propelled by the digital revolution, and focusing on the creation and management of information.

In a Knowledge Society, the most productive investments we can make are investments in education. And education is another priority we share with the Bangladeshi people.

Education has always been a central theme in Islamic life- and in the life of my family, going back a thousand years, to my forefathers, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt. My Grandfather built on this tradition by founding a network of some 300 educational institutions, including Aligarh University in India. And we renewed this commitment more recently through the founding of The Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia.

It seems appropriate therefore that one of my central purposes on this visit will be to lay the foundation stone for a new Aga Khan Academy here in Dhaka. This school will be one node in a network of eighteen high-quality schools located throughout the developing world, global in outlook, but deeply rooted in the local culture, providing a world-class education for boys and girls of all backgrounds, independent of ability to pay. It will educate promising students and develop inspiring teachers. It will be a strong educational resource for the entire country.

As we look to the future of development in Bangladesh, it is important to be realistic about the challenges. But it also is important to remember the distance which has been traveled - and the building blocks which are already in place.

I think, for example, of the strides which have been made here in controlling population growth, developing export trade, establishing micro-credit programmes, improving early childhood care, extending education, especially for women, and fighting corruption - in

addition to doubling per capita GDP over the past two decades. The challenge now is to make development both sustainable and equitable, so that it fairly benefits people of all classes, cultures and regions.

The Aga Khan Development Network's agenda for Bangladesh reflects your agenda. To achieve that agenda will require a continuing spirit of close partnership.

It is in the spirit of partnership, then, that I thank you again for what we have been able to do together in the past, while looking forward to the things we will be attempting together in the future.

I would like you to join me in a pray in wishing peace, success, happiness and unity for all the people of Bangladesh.

My warmest thanks again to all of you.





## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the foundation stone-laying ceremony of AKA, Dhaka**

20 May 2008, Dhaka, Bangladesh

**“World and faith are inseparable in Islam. Faith and learning are also profoundly interconnected. The Holy Qur’an sees the discovery of knowledge as a spiritual responsibility, enabling us to better understand and more ably serve God’s creation. Our traditional teachings remind us of our individual obligation to seek knowledge unto the ends of the earth - and of our social obligation to honor and nurture the full potential of every human life.”**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Honourable Adviser for Education  
Honourable Advisers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

As-Salam-olai-kum

My warmest thanks to all of you who have joined in this celebration - representing so well the diverse and impressive accomplishments of this country. You honour us by being here.

Our immediate purpose today is to lay the Foundation Stone of the Aga Khan Academy in Dhaka. It is a day we hope to look back upon with joy and satisfaction for many years to come. And, if our work is done well, it is a day that future generations will also look back upon as a great beginning.

As you have heard, this new Academy will be an important node in a network of 18 schools throughout the developing world, providing world class education for young men and women from all backgrounds, irrespective of ability to pay. It will be a remarkable place to go to school.

But our commitment to this institution is not simply a matter of creating beautiful, modern facilities for some 700 to 1200 deserving students or developing a corps of several dozen gifted teachers. It is also about creating a new national asset for the whole of this country - and for its broad educational community. This work will be done through an ambitious programme of professional teacher development, attracting talented candidates, sharing best practices, developing curricular innovations, and engaging in the most current training at the Academy's Professional Development Centre.

We could say a lot more about this new Academy. But I thought I might, instead, take a few minutes to describe what I see as the larger significance of our Academies' initiatives. For underlying our dreams for this School is our commitment to principles which have even broader implications.

There are three such principles that I would like to mention.

The first is the centrality of quality education as an element in the Islamic tradition. It is appropriate that I highlight this matter today, for Bangladesh is the first Muslim country in which we have laid a new Academy foundation stone. It also seems appropriate to underscore the spiritual foundations of this work since this event is helping to mark my 50th anniversary as the spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslims.

World and faith are inseparable in Islam. Faith and learning are also profoundly interconnected. The Holy Qur'an sees the discovery of knowledge as a spiritual responsibility, enabling us to better understand and more ably serve God's creation.

Our traditional teachings remind us of our individual obligation to seek knowledge unto the ends of the earth - and of our social obligation to honor and nurture the full potential of every human life.

The creation of a new Aga Khan Academy in Dhaka thus grows out of rich Islamic precedents.

The second point I would emphasize today is that our Academy initiative - in Dhaka and elsewhere - is one that strongly affirms the integrity of local and national cultures.

To be sure, this new Academy will connect its students to global perspectives. But it will also respect the central role of each person's particular heritage as a cornerstone of his or her identity and an enriching gift of the Creator.

The beauty of Creation is a function of its variety. A fully homogenized world would be far less attractive and interesting. The roots we inherit from our history – linking us to a particular past – are a great source of strength and joy and inspiration. And a sound educational system should help nourish those roots.

That is why the Aga Khan Academies, wherever they exist, will follow a dual-language curriculum. They will teach in English in order to connect to global society. And they will also teach in the appropriate local language. Here in Dhaka that means teaching in both English and Bangla. Because they will be fluently bilingual, our students will be prepared to unlock the rich treasure chests of history and culture, art and music, religious and philosophical thought, which are integral to one's identity and one's values and which are such powerful elements here in Bangladesh.

My first two points of emphasis, then, concern the emergence of our Academies program from Islamic traditions, and its commitment to local and national values. My third point is somewhat different, but entirely consistent - the strong link which our Academies will provide to an increasingly globalized world.

I mentioned earlier the importance of affirming the local and the particular in the face of forces which would dilute our identity and homogenize our cultures. But I would also note the equally compelling importance of global partnership and universal understanding - in the face of forces that would dangerously fragment our world. In the process of nurturing a healthy sense of identity, we must resist the temptation to normatize any particular culture, to demonize "the other", and to turn healthy diversity into dangerous discord.

This is why the Academies' curricula, in addition to using English as a connecting language, will emphasize areas of focus such as comparative political systems, global economics, and global cultures, along with the importance of pluralism and a sound ethical foundation.

At the same time, we will provide thorough preparation in subjects such as science and mathematics, developing the habits of rigorous reasoning and searching inquiry. In addition, the Academies experience will be a holistic one, with a healthy program of extracurricular and athletic activities.

Let me reflect for a moment on the matter of ethics - and the importance of ethical commitments not only in government but throughout society. Competent civil society is a major contributor to development particularly where democracies are less well established, or where governmental efforts are inadequate. The absence of corruption or fraud in government is not enough. Fraud in medicine, fraud in education, fraud in financial services, fraud in property rights, fraud in the exercise of law enforcement or in the courts, are all risks which can have a dramatic impact on social progress. This is especially true in rural environments, where fraud is often neither reported nor corrected, but simply accepted as an inevitable condition of life.

This is why the serious and sustained ethical formation of students and teachers is an essential dimension of the Academies program.]

In addition, as we educate for global citizenship, we will also integrate each local school with others in the network, sharing ideas and experiences, exchanging students and teachers, and affirming in the end that all graduates have achieved a globally relevant credential in the form of the International Baccalaureate diploma.

Those, then, are the basic concepts of our program. We believe that this undertaking can flourish particularly well in Bangladesh - where a proud sense of independent national destiny is so often combined with a generous spirit of international partnership. The appreciation here for the institutions of civil society is another favorable factor - and so, may I add, is the impressive progress you have made in achieving gender parity in education.

In the final analysis, the Academies project will face an age-old challenge as it moves ahead - the challenge of balancing the universal and the particular - the global and the local - as influences in human life. It is a challenge which becomes more important with every passing year. It has been said that the most important fact about modern communication technology is that it "universalizes the particular and particularizes the universal" - which simply suggests that local and global experiences are increasingly intermixed.

Such an intermixture can give us the worst of both worlds - hostile, defensive localism on one side and a superficial homogenized mega-culture on the other. Or it can give us the best of both worlds - proud local identities living side by side with creative international cooperation. How this issue will be resolved will depend on whether we can educate future leaders, in Bangladesh and elsewhere, to live creatively in such a setting. Our new program of Aga Khan Academies is one response to that challenge.

We are very proud today formally to expand the Academies network to the country of Bangladesh. And we are very pleased and honoured that you have been able to join us in this moment of celebration and dedication.

Thank you.



## **The Afghanistan Conference in Paris**

12 June 2008, Paris, France

Chairman  
President  
Secretary General  
Ministers for Foreign Affairs  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to begin by thanking President Sarkozy and his government for having hosted this conference at such a crucial moment. Much has already been done in Afghanistan over the last six years, but there are major challenges nonetheless to be picked up.

I would also like to commend President Karzai and his government for the implementation of the National Development Strategy, the ANDS. It is a major step forward towards a real change for the Afghan population. We now have the foundations for the reconstruction and we must build on these foundations and accelerate change.



There are tremendous hopes in terms of economic development, access to education, health, justice and rule of law. Afghans expect concrete results, tangible actions so that they can really believe there is a major credible change coming about in their quality of life.

By implementing the ANDS, development has to be seen as being fair and inclusive, reaching men and women even in the most isolated rural communities. And all of the ethnic groups have to be concerned. There is a veritable constitutional commitment.

The creation of a diverse, vibrant and sustainable civil society is critical in ensuring the success of democratic processes in Afghanistan. I call on everyone interested in strengthening the capacity and performance of civil society organisations and communities both rural and urban in Afghanistan.

Last year, together with the Government of Afghanistan, the World Bank, UNDP and ADB, we organised the Enabling Environment Conference in Kabul. The Conference defined a Road Map to create the conditions necessary to unleash the full potential of private initiative – business and civil society – in Afghanistan’s development. All of us – government, the international community, civil society and the private sector – must redouble our efforts to build this enabling environment in Afghanistan.

In Afghanistan, we have brought together the multiple capacities of the AKDN, through which we combine activities in microfinance, health, education, culture and rural development. Our multi-faceted approach has contributed to a 74% decline in poppy cultivation in the north-east of the country, improving the quality of life of over one million people. I quote this figure not to be self-congratulatory but to substantiate that significant processes of change are feasible.

Since 2001 the Aga Khan Development Network (the AKDN) has been an active and committed partner in the development process. Our financial pledge of \$75 million in 2002 has been nearly doubled. In our roles as investor, financial backer and implementer, we have mobilised nearly 750 million dollars for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. We take this opportunity to express our deep gratitude to our national and international partners, who have enabled us to achieve these results.

We are convinced for many years now that Afghanistan must be viewed in its regional context. We have systematically invested in the strengthening of regionalisation: four new bridges over the Pyanj linking from now on Tajik Badakhshan to Afghan Badakhshan. National programmes between Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, in the sectors of telecommunications, microcredit, health and education including the new regional university, “the University of Central Asia” bring together Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan and neighbouring countries who wish to unite around the development of high mountain societies; all are or could be regionalised.

The AKDN's commitment to Afghanistan is for the long-term. Today, we pledge \$100 million over the next five years, made available through AKDN's agencies for activities in alignment with the objectives of the ANDS and is inclusive of a contribution towards the elections in 2009 and 2010.

The effectiveness of Parliament is critical for a functioning democracy. To this end, we will set aside several million dollars for building the capacity and competence of Parliament in technical areas of governance and the legislative process.

I am pleased to announce that in conjunction with the Afghan and French authorities, particularly the French Agency for Development, the AKDN will invest 9 million euros towards the expansion of the French Medical Institute for Children in Kabul. Under the auspices of the Aga Khan University this expansion will make it possible for the existing hospital facilities to become a major regional player in the field of tertiary level healthcare and in the training of nurses and doctors.





## Installation en tant que membre associé étranger de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts

18 June 2008, France

Madame le Représentant du Président de la République,  
Mesdames et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs,  
M. le Président,  
M. le Premier Ministre,  
Messieurs les Maires,  
Mesdames et Messieurs les Présidents et Directeurs,  
Mesdames et Messieurs les Conseillers,  
Monsieur le Chancelier, Madame et Messieurs les Secrétaires Perpétuels,  
Messieurs les Présidents,  
Mes chers Confrères,  
Mesdames, Messieurs,

Alfred de Vigny écrivait dans son Journal d'un poète, que l'honneur c'est la poésie du devoir.

L'honneur, mes chers Confrères, puisque j'ai la joie de pouvoir vous appeler ainsi, cet honneur que vous me faites de rejoindre votre compagnie dans cette auguste maison, je le ressens comme un immense bonheur et, effectivement, comme un grand devoir :

un devoir envers vous-même ;

un devoir vis-à-vis de Kenzō TANGE ;

un devoir enfin envers ceux qui nous suivront.

L'histoire de ma famille est celle d'une transmission ininterrompue à travers le temps de valeurs non seulement religieuses mais également culturelles, depuis un événement fondateur qui remonte à presque quatorze siècles. Vous comprendrez dès lors que je me sente intellectuellement et affectivement proche de cette admirable tradition de l'Académie des Beaux-Arts : par l'éloge de celui qui est parti, celui qui est admis contribue à transmettre aux générations futures un peu de celui qui n'est plus.

C'est donc avec le plus grand respect que je vais m'incliner devant Kenzō TANGE que vous avez admis en votre sein il y a quelques années.

J'ai cherché à comprendre ce qui conduisit Kenzō TANGE sous cette coupole. Le jury du Prix Prizker d'architecture, lors de son attribution à Kenzō TANGE en 1987, alors qu'il avait 74 ans, avait dit de lui :

Kenzō TANGE "parvient à des formes qui élèvent nos cœurs parce qu'elles émergent d'un passé ancien dont nous avons à peine la réminiscence, et pourtant, elles nous coupent le souffle par leur contemporanéité".

Cette émergence du passé, Kenzō TANGE voulait la maîtriser afin qu'elle facilite l'épanouissement des formes nouvelles, mais sans la laisser disparaître.

Il avait résumé ainsi sa pensée sur ce point :

"Le rôle de la tradition est celui d'un catalyseur, qui permet la réaction chimique, mais qui n'est plus détectable dans le résultat final. La tradition peut bien sûr être en œuvre dans une création, mais elle ne peut plus être création elle-même."

Ce que le présent doit prendre au passé dans l'élaboration de l'avenir est objet de réflexion pour tout architecte. Plus généralement, ce doit être une interrogation permanente pour toute personne qui porte une responsabilité dans le domaine de l'habitat, dans toutes les civilisations et sous tous les cieux.

Pour tenter de comprendre les conditions dans lesquelles Kenzō TANGE a apporté sa contribution à cette réflexion, il est nécessaire de se reporter au début du XX<sup>ème</sup> siècle.

Nous sommes en 1913, l'année qui suit l'avènement de l'Empereur Yoshihito et le début de l'ère Taishō, sur l'île de Shikoku au Sud du Japon. Kenzō TANGE est en effet né là, à Imabari, petit village côtier qui s'ouvre sur des bras de mer reliant la mer intérieure et le large. Hiroshima se trouve à 60 kilomètres d'Imabari au nord-ouest, sur l'autre rive de cette voie marine.

L'ère Taishō est une ère d'ouverture, souhaitée et voulue, vers l'Occident. Elle s'opposera à la période de l'immédiat après guerre, où la réception des valeurs américaines fut pour une bonne part contrainte.

Kenzō TANGE naît donc dans un pays en mutation. Cela explique peut-être pourquoi un autre architecte japonais, un peu plus âgé que le jeune Kenzō, Kunio Maekawa, part à Paris en 1928 pour faire ses armes avec Le Corbusier.

C'est là que beaucoup de choses se nouent. En effet, Kenzō TANGE, après avoir obtenu son diplôme d'architecture de l'université de Tokyo en 1938, travaillera jusqu'en 1941 pour Kunio Maekawa.

Pendant qu'il se forme auprès de lui, Kenzō TANGE revient à l'université de Tokyo pour étudier l'urbanisme. C'est là qu'il fondera le 'Laboratoire Tange' dans le cadre duquel il conseillera de jeunes architectes dont Sachio Otani, Takashi Asada, Taneo Oki, Kisho Kurokawa, Arata Isozaki et Fumihiko Maki. Les deux derniers me sont bien connus. Arata Isozaki est l'architecte choisi par l'Université d'Asie Centrale, dont je suis le chancelier, pour construire les trois campus du Tadjikistan, du Kirghizstan et du Kazakhstan. Quant à Fumihiko Maki, il est le concepteur du Musée Aga Khan de Toronto et de la Délégation de l'Imamat ismaïli à Ottawa.

Au-delà de la formation universitaire et de ses premières expériences auprès de ses maîtres, on ne peut passer sous silence l'influence sur Kenzō TANGE du débat sur la "japonitude", néologisme dont on a désigné la querelle qui parcourut le Japon de 1920 à 1960. Il s'agissait non seulement de l'influence du passé sur le présent et l'avenir, mais, plus généralement, de la question de savoir si le Japon devait développer sa propre culture de la modernité, ou adopter le 'Style International' qui diffusait alors dans le monde, essentiellement à partir des Etats-Unis.

Mais revenons à Kenzō TANGE, qui est sur le point d'entrer dans la vie active.

Il est diplômé.

Il a été formé par des maîtres prestigieux.

Il est pénétré de l'immense tradition japonaise et de modernisme occidental.

Tout se présente sous les meilleurs auspices : le jeune homme est prêt à voler de ses propres ailes.

Sa vie est cependant bouleversée par la guerre.

Kenzō TANGE tient cependant sa vie fermement en main et ses qualités vont, de fait, se déployer dans l'adversité. Il s'installe à son compte, est nommé en 1946 professeur assistant à l'université de Tokyo et, en 1947, membre de l'Agence pour la reconstruction du Japon.

C'est en ces qualités qu'il participe à très haut niveau à la renaissance de la ville d'Hiroshima, selon un concept moderne et aéré. Il signera à cette occasion de nombreux monuments qui entourent le Mémorial de la Paix, cette ruine d'un immeuble d'Hiroshima resté debout, célèbre dans le monde entier, et inscrit au Patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO en 1996.

C'est ainsi que Kenzō TANGE concevra et réalisera le Cénotaphe, le Musée mémorial de la Paix, la Flamme de la Paix et, plus récemment, le Mémorial national de la Paix pour les victimes de la bombe atomique.

Kenzō TANGE devient alors un architecte dont on célèbre les qualités.

1960 et 1970 sont des années qui marquent respectivement la World Design Conference de Tokyo et l'Exposition universelle d'Osaka. A cette époque, Kenzō TANGE est proche du mouvement dit 'métaboliste' animé par Kurokawa et Maki, ses élèves d'antan. Cette école s'est rendue célèbre par l'idée qu'il fallait privilégier les lois de l'espace pour réinventer celles qui, traditionnellement, s'appuyaient sur la forme et la fonction.

Kenzō TANGE fut considéré dans cet intervalle de temps, presque comme l'architecte en chef de cet Etat-maître-d'ouvrage, qui marquait alors fortement le Japon de son empreinte. Cette reconnaissance de fait lui permettra de concevoir des oeuvres considérables, en particulier son projet urbain pour Tokyo.

Cette dimension de Kenzō TANGE ne l'empêcha pas cependant de forger sa propre doctrine. Il déclara, ici même, avoir acquis assez tôt une certitude qui avait déterminé sa manière de penser l'architecture et l'urbanisme : il s'agissait du rapport entre espace et objets physiques, qu'il analysait ainsi :

"... l'espace urbain et architectural, auparavant ouvert, aéré, exerçait en fait une force d'attraction. J'avais de plus en plus le sentiment que les espaces que j'avais interprétés précédemment comme étant créés par l'écartement des objets physiques, exerçaient au contraire une force qui faisait adhérer ces objets. J'arrivais, peu à peu, à considérer l'espace comme une énergie d'adhérence réellement active."

La pureté et la profondeur de ce propos font mieux comprendre le sens de l'œuvre de Kenzō TANGE.

Il est difficile ici d'analyser individuellement ses œuvres. Je voudrais cependant distinguer le merveilleux Musée des arts asiatiques de Nice, quatre cubes dévolus aux civilisations chinoise, japonaise, cambodgienne et indienne, musée dont on peut dire pour reprendre une autre expression du grand architecte que c'est une "beauté qui convient", par opposition à la recherche de la nouveauté pour la nouveauté.

Au-delà du grand penseur des formes, Kenzo TANGE était un homme d'affaires parfaitement à son aise dans la vie du monde. Il ne redoutait pas la concurrence et adorait emporter des marchés devant ses confrères. Sa lutte confraternelle avec I. M. Pei sur plus de vingt ans était bien connue et la rumeur veut qu'il ait eu un immense fou rire quand il apprit que son immeuble de Singapour dépasserait en hauteur celui qu'avait conçu I. M. Pei dans cette même ville.

Kenzō TANGE fut aussi un enseignant admiré et recherché dans de nombreux grands pays, même si, vers la fin de sa carrière, il critiqua les tâches administratives qui lui incombaient et qui l'empêchaient de consacrer à ses étudiants tout le temps qu'il souhaitait.

Kenzō TANGE est ainsi l'homme accompli par excellence, un maître en sa profession et en son art.

Il laisse une œuvre immense, que l'on peut admirer dans le monde entier.

Il laisse des esprits bien formés.

Il laisse une conception du rapport entre la structure et l'espace.

Il a surtout identifié pour nous la nécessité de traiter ensemble, sans jamais les séparer, cinq thèmes centraux : l'architecture, l'urbanisme, l'éducation, la continuité culturelle et la technologie, courte liste dont la simplicité des termes dissimule l'importance fondamentale.

Nous nous souviendrons de lui.

Mon cheminement a été très différent en ce sens qu'il s'agissait d'autres cultures et d'autres régions du monde. Il fut cependant parallèle à bien des égards.

Lorsque j'ai succédé à mon grand-père, j'ai très vite réalisé l'immensité de ma responsabilité à l'égard des millions de membres de ma communauté, répartis en Asie, en Afrique et au Moyen Orient. J'ai constaté en particulier que l'amélioration de leur qualité de vie passait nécessairement par des progrès décisifs de l'habitat.

Après avoir observé le développement fulgurant, dans le monde entier, du Style International, question que j'évoquais tout à l'heure à propos du Japon, je me suis demandé s'il était souhaitable que le monde musulman suive cette voie.

La seule chose évidente était que la réponse ne l'était pas. A ma connaissance, personne ne s'était posé cette question et il était clair que je ne pouvais seul trouver la solution, même si je ressentais parfaitement que les identités culturelles musulmanes étaient fondamentalement en cause.

J'ai alors réuni des penseurs musulmans de toutes origines pour vérifier si mon interrogation était partagée et, dans l'affirmative, pour examiner l'opportunité d'agir ou, au contraire, de laisser faire.

Des idées divergentes s'exprimèrent, certains estimant que la symbolique religieuse devait avoir la primauté dans l'expression architecturale, d'autres que l'architecte devait pouvoir s'exprimer sans être tenu à des références spirituelles, d'autres exprimant un arc-en-ciel de points de vues intermédiaires. Cependant, tous avaient conscience de l'existence d'une question sans réponse

Une parfaite unanimité s'exprima en revanche sur la nécessité d'agir par un vaste programme d'étude et d'analyse. Pour cette seconde étape, j'ai élargi le groupe d'origine à des personnalités venues de tous horizons : architectes, historiens d'art, sociologues, économistes, philosophes de toutes les écoles de pensée – croyants, athées ou agnostiques- et théologiens de toutes confessions.

Nous avons regardé.

Il faut imaginer un monde d'un milliard quatre cent millions de personnes ayant en commun une religion dont vous savez la complexité des courants qui la traversent.

Ces peuples sont distincts par l'histoire et les cultures ; par ordre alphabétique notamment : africaine, arabe, asiatique, perse et turque ; ils sont marqués en outre par ce que Montesquieu appelait la théorie des climats, les uns habitant les déserts les plus torrides, les autres les montagnes les plus hautes, les uns souffrant des inondations et les autres devant conserver précieusement chaque goutte d'eau, les uns riches et les autres affligés de la plus redoutable pauvreté.

Ces différences expliquent la diversité remarquable de l'habitat en pays musulman.

Elles n'expliquent pas cependant, dans des époques récentes, le désamour, voire le rejet, parfois la destruction inconsidérée de ce que fut ce passé, en grande partie aujourd'hui disparu.



Elles n'expliquent pas non plus pourquoi les architectes d'une culture musulmane donnée ignoraient les traditions d'architecture d'autres pays d'Islam.

Elles n'expliquent pas enfin pourquoi, jusqu'à la fin des années 1970, aucun architecte important d'un pays musulman n'avait été formé à nos traditions architecturales. Bien au contraire, les élèves architectes musulmans leur tournaient le dos et se formaient exclusivement en occident ; et puisque les écoles d'architecture de l'occident n'offraient aucune formation sur l'architecture d'inspiration musulmane, les jeunes diplômés ne pouvaient que reprendre, avec enthousiasme d'ailleurs, la culture de l'Ouest, ses goûts, ses matériaux et les formes adaptées aux climats des pays tempérés.

Au delà de la question de la formation des architectes, les maîtres d'ouvrages eux-mêmes étaient presque toujours inconscients des traditions architecturales de leurs pays, qu'il s'agisse de maîtres d'ouvrages publics ou privés. Il ne s'agissait en rien d'un réflexe de défiance vis-à-vis de ces traditions culturelles. Ce qui était recherché était sans le moindre doute une amélioration de la qualité de vie. Mais, à l'époque, personne n'avait conscience que ce progrès pouvait être obtenu par un ressourcement des traditions.

L'architecture n'était pas le seul Art touché par ce phénomène.

Un gouffre, le mot n'est pas trop fort, apparaissait entre les tenants du monde du passé, et ceux qui se tournaient vers l'avenir en se désintéressant du passé, cette tension exerçant une influence négative profonde sur les relations entre personnes, entre courants religieux et entre Etats. En quelque sorte, une version nouvelle de la querelle des anciens et des modernes qui fut débattue et qui s'apaisa dans l'enceinte de l'Académie française à la fin du XVIIème siècle.

Pour s'écarter de cette pente dangereuse, il nous a semblé qu'une re-connaissance du passé, dans tous les domaines de l'Art, devait permettre aux sociétés musulmanes de considérer leur pluralisme sous un nouveau jour : un pluralisme légitimé par l'histoire et la culture.

J'ai la conviction que cette acceptation revendiquée et fière de notre pluralisme, par effet d'entraînement, devrait contribuer à atténuer les tensions entre communautés musulmanes, mais aussi entre musulmans et non musulmans.

Les responsables politiques auxquels nous avons confié nos convictions, furent pour la plupart intéressés par le constat de rupture entre la tradition et l'avenir. Beaucoup exprimèrent cependant une certaine frustration. En effet, ils pouvaient légitimement nous dire : "Vous avez su faire l'état des lieux, mais que proposez vous pour sortir de l'impasse ?"

Nous nous sommes alors remis au travail. Pendant des années nous avons cherché, nous avons enquêté, nous avons réfléchi. Des intellectuels d'une vingtaine de pays d'Asie, des



Amériques, d'Europe et du Moyen Orient nous ont apporté leurs contributions au cours de certaines de réunions, séminaires ou congrès, qui se sont tenus tout autour de la planète. Ces travaux ont fait l'objet de comptes-rendus, de publications, de thèses de doctorat et de cours universitaires. Ils ont été également à l'origine de notre implication directe dans la lutte contre la pauvreté dans les villes anciennes, au travers du Programme Aga Khan pour le soutien des Cités historiques.

Nous avons examiné des dizaines de sujets fondamentaux.

Quelques exemples : l'éducation architecturale dans le monde musulman, l'extension des métropoles, la métamorphose de l'urbanisme sous l'effet du développement, l'évolution de l'habitat rural, les agoras dans le monde musulman, la critique en architecture, la symbolique architecturale face à l'identité de l'individu, le régionalisme en architecture, ou encore l'acte de conservation du patrimoine comme clé de la survie culturelle.

Ce fut un processus ininterrompu sur plus de trente années. Un processus que nous voulons pérenne, afin de ne pas passer à côté de ce qui fut ignoré dans le passé : des choses toutes simples comme le fait que l'histoire avance, que les matériaux et les goûts évoluent et que les équations économiques et sociologiques se modifient constamment.

Cette démarche analytique a été suivie de synthèses.

Tout d'abord nous avons posé que la connaissance du passé était indispensable, quelle que puisse être son influence sur l'avenir. Nous avons en conséquence rassemblé une base de données très complète sur l'histoire de l'architecture dans les sociétés musulmanes, sans distinction de courants historiques ou religieux. Cette base est accessible sur le site ArchNet au Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Nous avons aussi considéré qu'il fallait mettre en place des outils éducatifs ouvrant sur l'histoire de ces architectures. Il s'agissait en particulier de donner un accès à la symbolique traditionnelle, par exemple la symbolique de l'eau ou celle du jardin mystique. Je citerai ici le 'Programme Aga Khan d'architecture islamique, enseigné à Harvard et au Massachusetts Institute of Technology, ces universités où Kenzō TANGE enseigna. Des centaines d'étudiants sont titulaires de diplômes délivrés dans le cadre de ce programme.

Nos travaux m'ont également persuadé qu'au-delà de la connaissance du passé architectural, il était impératif de faire connaître les œuvres des architectes de notre temps et du futur, afin qu'elles puissent à leur tour être objet de fierté. De façon peut-être plus essentielle, je voulais que ces œuvres nouvelles prennent leur place dans la chaîne ressoudée qui relie le passé et l'avenir.

La gamme de ces œuvres nouvelles est vaste : restauration d'habitats anciens, extensions d'agglomérations, amélioration de la qualité de la vie dans les environnements ruraux. Mais

aussi conception d'ensembles dont la notion même n'existait pas dans notre passé, par exemple les aéroports, les ensembles de bureaux, les centres commerciaux ou les hôpitaux multidisciplinaires. Tout ceci dans un monde marqué en profondeur par la révolution de l'informatique.

C'est ainsi qu'est né le Prix Aga Khan d'architecture. Je m'honore à cet égard d'avoir pu compter Kenzō TANGE parmi les membres du premier jury. J'ai été particulièrement heureux qu'il ait applaudi au fait que ce prix récompense non seulement les valeurs esthétiques mais aussi les valeurs sociales.

Les architectes français ont été à l'honneur. En effet, huit d'entre eux ont été distingués par les jurys du Prix. Dans l'ordre chronologique : André Ravereau, Serge Santelli, Michel Eccocharde, Paul Andreu, Jean Nouvel, Pierre Soria, Gilbert Lézénès et Marylaine Barret.

Les architectes qui ont puisé aux nouvelles sources de connaissances sur les cultures islamiques ont été à l'origine d'un cercle vertueux, les leçons tirées de leurs réalisations dans le monde rural et urbanisé enrichissant nos bases de connaissances.

Nous avons tiré des leçons importantes de ces réalisations :

Tout d'abord, nous avons constaté que pour avoir un effet sur une population importante, un projet de réhabilitation ou de reconstruction doit prendre en compte tout un quartier et non tel ou tel immeuble isolé, aussi important soit-il culturellement.

Nous avons été par ailleurs convaincus que le renouveau de l'habitat est en soi insuffisant, et qu'il doit se combiner avec une réhabilitation des espaces publics, des services médicaux et des écoles, et ce, en utilisant tous les outils modernes de financement, sans oublier le micro crédit et la micro assurance.

Ces réalisations nous ont enseigné également que l'action de réhabilitation ou de reconstruction d'un quartier constitue en soi une source de renouveau économique. Autrement dit, une population dont l'habitat a été amélioré régénère d'elle-même son environnement économique.

Enfin, nous avons fait le constat essentiel que le renouveau de l'habitat dans le cadre d'une approche culturelle ressourcée a des conséquences pérennes, au bénéfice en particulier des plus pauvres.

Vous aurez observé que les thèmes fondamentaux sur lesquels nous nous sommes interrogés, avons agi, et sur lesquels nous nous déterminons pour l'avenir, sont l'architecture, l'urbanisme, l'éducation, la continuité culturelle et la technologie, c'est-à-dire précisément les mêmes thèmes que ceux que Kenzō TANGE avait identifiés.

Ainsi, avec une chronologie décalée, avec des histoires et des géographies différentes, nous avons identifié séparément les mêmes axes fondamentaux, comme s'ils existaient de tout temps, en dehors de nous. C'est le mérite de Kenzō TANGE d'avoir discerné en premier l'importance de ne jamais les séparer.

Après vous avoir invité à me suivre loin de France, je voudrais y revenir pour vous dire que c'est avec cette expérience à l'esprit que j'ai évoqué la question si importante du devenir du Domaine de Chantilly avec le Gouvernement français, Monsieur Pierre Messmer, alors Chancelier de l'Institut de France, son successeur le Prince Gabriel de Broglie, Monsieur Eric Woerth, Ministre de la République et Maire de Chantilly et Jean-Luc Lagardère, président à l'époque de France Galop.

Le projet était très différent de ceux que j'ai connus précédemment puisqu'il est situé dans ce pays de France, l'un des plus développés au monde, cette France qui a réfléchi depuis des siècles aux rapports du passé avec le présent, notamment dans le domaine de l'architecture et de l'urbanisme.

Le respect de cet environnement français s'imposait donc à l'évidence, mais il devait à mon sens intégrer deux dimensions dont j'avais observé l'importance sous d'autres cieux :

Il fallait considérer le Domaine comme un ensemble. Ainsi, sauver le champs de courses seul n'aurait jamais pu, à mon avis, apporter la dimension nécessaire pour offrir une destinée renouvelée au Musée Condé, au Parc Le Nôtre et aux Grandes Ecuries.

Il fallait également, en donnant le temps au temps, créer les conditions pour que chaque partie prenante identifie les solutions économiques qui éviteront à l'avenir la remise en cause des efforts entrepris.

Mon vœu très cher est que l'on puisse dire dans quelques années que l'apport de cette expérience aura été utile.

Les initiatives que nous avons prises pour la réhabilitation de sites historiques dans le monde en développement nous ont démontré qu'un élément clé du succès est l'engagement, ensemble, de tous les partenaires, publics, privés, sociaux et culturels autour d'un projet commun. Le site de Chantilly est unique, mais sans le soutien de tous, rien n'aurait pu être entrepris. La France a fait encore une fois la démonstration qu'impossible n'est pas français.

Mes chers Confrères, voilà ce que je voulais vous dire de l'œuvre de Kenzō TANGE et de ma propre expérience.

Je souhaite que nos réflexions sur le passé, le présent et l'avenir, chacun avec ses responsabilités, chacun avec sa sensibilité, chacun avec son histoire, auront été utiles à ceux que nous avons voulu servir.

Je vous remercie.



## Dinner hosted by His Highness the Aga Khan

03 July 2008, London, UK

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Baroness Thatcher  
Secretary of State John Denham  
High Representative Solana  
Your Excellencies  
My Lords  
Ladies and Gentlemen

What a great pleasure it is for me to welcome you tonight - to greet so many friends, old and new - and to acknowledge how much your friendship - and that of this country - has meant to me.

I am deeply grateful for your warm welcome. I am no stranger to London, but this is a very special visit, as it is part of a year-long celebration - the Golden Jubilee anniversary of my Imamatus.

I came to this office in 1957 upon the passing away of my grandfather. I was an undergraduate university student at that time - and perhaps I seemed a rather unusual student, when I showed up for the next school term with two secretaries and a personal assistant!

In Islamic thought and practice, the world of the spirit and the world of daily life are inseparably intertwined. This is why, over a half century, my role as a spiritual leader has also required me to act in a host of social, economic and cultural endeavours, in order to secure and enhance the well being of the Ismailis and the communities amongst which they live. The Aga Khan Development Network has grown out of those efforts, and I am happy to say, the size of its staff has also grown just a bit since my undergraduate days!

In all of these endeavours, we have developed wonderful partnerships with many institutions around the world. And many of our most effective partners have come from this country.

These partnerships have involved many collaborators - governmental and private, academic and charitable, non-profit and commercial, religious and secular, national and international - providing not only financial resources but also human resources and intellectual capital. London has also been an important base for our work with Governments around Europe, and with the European Union itself.

Many of our partners - from the UK and other parts of Europe - are represented here tonight. We have been fortunate in these relationships, and I would like to express my deep gratitude to all those who have made them possible.

Our spirit of partnership here has deep roots. Over a century ago, my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, worked closely with Her Majesty Queen Victoria and her governments in the pursuit of common ideals. These ties were further strengthened by the strong presence of the Ismaili community - initially in places which later became Commonwealth countries, and later, here in the United Kingdom.

Many of the developing countries in which Ismailis lived were just coming into independent nationhood when I took office fifty years ago. Since that time, my attention has been focused on their challenges. My goal has been to improve the quality of life and to build new opportunity for Ismailis and the peoples amongst whom they live, while strongly supporting their pluralism and diversity.

The approach we take in the Aga Khan Development Network is non-denominational and holistic. It encompasses both the for-profit and not-for-profit sectors. We seek to catalyze the creation of necessary basic infrastructure, together with the provision of good quality education and healthcare. We are concerned with ensuring access to appropriate credit for the poor at the same time as we are working to sustain the arts and culture.

It is particularly in the field of rural development in East Africa, South East Asia and Central Asia that we have established long standing and successful programmes with the Department for International Development. This has been born of a common philosophy and approach, and has resulted in an improvement in the quality of life for tens of millions of people in some of the poorest regions in the world.

It is striking to me that in 1957, there were only about 100 Ismaili residents in this country, and most of them were students. Today, there are fourteen thousand Ismailis permanently living here and of all ages and walks of life.

Our story in this country is a case study in the settlement of an immigrant community - one which originated from East Africa, the Indian subcontinent and now Central Asia. Upheavals in their native lands - wars of independence, civil wars, collapsed economies and other dislocations affected the Ismailis and millions of others around them. Today almost one third of my community in this country have been born in the United Kingdom. They have maintained their religious and cultural identity and they are well integrated into their local environment. It is a community in which over 90 per cent of the university age population participate in tertiary education. The average household income is a third higher than the national average - although I say this with some trepidation as I hope we are not being overheard by Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs!

Britain has been an enabling environment. As a result, the community is now making a meaningful contribution to the economy and civic society, whilst also providing a resource to support initiatives in other parts of the world.

In 1957, there was only one Ismaili space here for congregational prayer - and that was on leased premises! Creating places of prayer as centres for community life was fundamental to ensuring the cohesion of the community, and there are now over 40 such places. Among them, of course, a central focal point is The Ismaili Centre, located in South Kensington. Having Baroness Thatcher with us tonight is particularly significant because The Ismaili Centre was opened by her in 1985.

Like other Ismaili Centres around the world, the London Centre serves not only as a gathering place for Ismailis, but as an active participant in local society, sponsoring a variety of cultural initiatives - exhibitions, lectures and other public events. These efforts reflect our pride in our heritage and our eagerness to share it with others.

We have also, in these recent decades, established two new institutions of higher learning here, The Institute of Ismaili Studies, and The Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations, which is part of the Aga Khan University. They both offer Masters level teaching programmes, they engage in research and publication, and they also develop curriculum materials for children in primary and secondary schools. In all these efforts, they take a holistic, civilizational approach to Islamic studies, rather than emphasizing the more narrow domain of theological dialectic.



What some describe as a clash of civilizations in our modern world is, in my view, a clash of ignorances. This is why education about religious and cultural heritage is so critically important—and why we will continue to invest in these institutions. We deeply believe that scholarship, publication and instruction—of high quality and generous breadth-- can provide important pathways toward a more pluralistic and peaceful world.

All of these comments, then, speak to the context in which we gather tonight-- a rich history of partnership reaching deeply into the past - and extending, we hope and trust, into an even more productive future.

Thank you very much.



## **Speech at the Foundation Ceremony of The Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centre, Khorog**

3 November 2008, Khorog, Tajikistan

*Bismillahir Rahamanir Rahim*

Your Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Asadullo Ghulomov,  
Your Excellency Governor Qodiri Qosim,  
Your Excellency Governor Munshi Abdul Majeed,  
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentleman

I would like to begin these comments this morning by welcoming you to this most happy occasion, this historic event, to celebrate the laying of the Foundation Stone of this first Ismaili Jamatkhana and Centre in Tajik-Badakhshan.

I would like to say how deeply happy I am, that this Foundation Stone ceremony will occur during the 50th year of my Imamah. I can think of few events in this year which will have given me the happiness which this one today will bring me and inshallah all the people who will participate in this event.

At the beginning of these comments, it is appropriate to situate here, one of the functions of the Ismaili Centre in the tradition of Muslim piety. For many centuries, a prominent feature of the Muslim religious landscape has been the variety of spaces of gathering co-existing harmoniously with the masjid, which in itself has accommodated a range of diverse institutional spaces for educational, social and reflective purposes.

Historically serving communities of different interpretations and spiritual affiliations, these spaces have retained their cultural nomenclatures and characteristics, from ribat and zawiyya to khanaqa and jamatkhana.

The congregational space incorporated within the Ismaili Centre belongs to the historic category of jamatkhana, an institutional category that also serves a number of sister Sunni and Shia communities, in their respective contexts, in many parts of the world. Here, the Jamatkhana will be reserved for traditions and practices specific to the Shia Ismaili tariqah of Islam. The Centre on the other hand, will be a symbol of confluence between the spiritual and the secular in Islam.

I would like today to situate what the Centre and the Jamatkhana aspires to be in the town of Khorog. It is my hope that the town of Khorog will become the Jewel of the Pamir. The gem cutter, the person who prepares the jewel, cuts it and cuts it and polishes it and cuts it and polishes it until he has fashioned the gem stone in to a stone of absolute purity with no clouding, absolute purity. And the gem cutter has to do his work very carefully with a lot of time, because if he makes a mistake, he can not bring back the part of the stone that he cut away by mistake. And this is what I hope, with the President of the Republic, His Excellency the Governor, we will be able to do over the years ahead, to improve the town of Khorog, to make it the Jewel of the Pamir.

And we will seek to improve, all of us together, the quality of the environment in which we live, bringing clean water to everywhere where the people live, bringing energy to all the places where people live, improving the schools and health facilities, improving and restoring our historic buildings which are representations today of our cultural history, and thanks to the Governor Niyozmamadov and his gift of land, we today have a new park in Khorog, inshallah we will build the University of Central Asia, we will build this Centre, and while working together, step by step, we will make Khorog the Jewel of the Pamir.

And I want to thank again His Excellency the President, the Deputy Prime Minister, His Excellency the Governor, the Governor of Afghan-Badakshan who has done us the honour of being here today, I want to thank everyone who has made this event possible today. But more than that, who is making new things happen in partnership and in friendship. Like the University of Central Asia, which is a very complex exercise, but inshallah, we will do it properly.

And every time I come back to Khorog, I will ask myself: Are we moving towards making Khorog the Jewel of the Pamir? Thank you.



## The Avignon Forum

17 November 2008, Avignon, France

Minister of Culture and Communication,  
European Commissioner for the Information Society and the Media,  
Ministers,  
Representatives of the European Union,  
Representatives of international organisations and institutions,  
Representatives of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Region and the Département of  
Vaucluse,  
Your worship, the Deputy Mayoress of Avignon,  
Representatives from the world of culture and economy,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr President of the Republic and you, Madam Minister, I'm honoured and delighted to have been invited to say a few words at this Avignon Forum.

You have asked me to talk a little about my experience of a subject that you know is very dear to my heart:

"The value and importance of cultural diversity and its role in promoting peace and development"

In fact, exactly fifty years ago, when I inherited the Imamate from grandfather, I discovered that wars, indifference, negligence and the drive to standardise cultures through colonisation, or the desire to modernise the built environment, had resulted in the irreparable loss of important cultural characteristics in developing countries, particularly those in Muslim countries.

In other words, the distinctive cultural features of those countries, whose key importance is stressed by UNESCO's definition, were being eroded.

Something had to be done.

I want to talk to you today about my efforts to defend these cultures, through the Aga Khan Development Network, and specifically through its dedicated agency, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

This Trust for Culture focuses its activities in three main areas:

- the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme,
- the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, and
- an Education and Culture Programme.

These activities, which are themselves subdivided into a variety of subsidiary programmes in many countries, obey three key principles:

- to increase the beneficiaries' independence,
- to involve local communities, and
- to secure the support of public and private partners.

I thought it would be best, in the allotted time, to give you three examples of projects carried out within the framework of this institution, so they might serve as a useful point of reference for the discussions that will take place in this Forum over the next few days.

All our programmes have three aspects in common:

- they are carried out in a poor environment where there are considerable centrifugal, sometimes even conflicting, forces at play;
- they are designed to have maximum beneficial impact on the economies of the populations involved and their quality of life in the broadest sense of the term;

- they are planned in the long term, over a period of up to twenty-five years, enabling them to become self-sufficient both financially as well as in terms of human resources.

That said, the first example I shall talk about is a programme being run in the field of intellectual works, namely music.

I should like you to consider the complex history, diversity and inventiveness of the music of countries like Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan or Afghanistan.

Sadly I discovered that the musical cultures of Central Asia were struggling for the reasons I gave a moment ago. Not only were they being consigned to oblivion, but the musical models imposed on them from outside, often with ulterior political motives, were creating a colourless cultural uniformity.

These processes have resulted in a loss of identity, not only in the field of music discussed here, but also in many others.

In a world that claims to be globalised, there are some who might regard cultural standardisation as natural, even desirable.

For my part, I believe that marks of individual and group cultural identity generate an inner strength which is conducive to peaceful relations. I also believe in the power of plurality, without which there is no possibility of exchange. In my view, this idea is integral to the very definition of genuine quality of life.

With regard to the example of music used here, through the Trust we met the challenge by creating the Aga Khan Music Initiative. We called this project the “Silk Road”, since all the countries concerned were situated along that unique route linking China and Europe.

The long-term objective is:

- to boost education and research;
- to train new generations of young artists;
- to contribute to the revival of festivals, concerts and performances in the countries from which the music originated;
- to bring the music to audiences not only in neighbouring countries, but also in other Muslim countries and the West.

We are now witnessing a true musical revival in these faraway countries. Furthermore, the great advantage of this type of programme is that it not only promotes cultural pluralism, but also underscores the legitimate function of pluralism as a principle of social organisation, which may be harder to comprehend.



Although this result cannot be measured with the tools of an economist, it unfailingly contributes every time to a renewed awareness of specific cultural characteristics and a considerable improvement in the quality of life. This is no doubt the reason why, when a community has witnessed and participated in an experiment to promote pluralism, it is eager to see it applied in other areas.

Equally important as the rediscovery and worldwide circulation of traditional music, is that young architects should be able to draw inspiration freely from all traditions, starting with their own, and this is my second example. Architects in the East should have access to the best sources in the West and vice versa.

It was with this aim in view that the Aga Khan Trust for Culture created ARCHNET, basing it at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to ensure its future growth as technology progresses.

Once again, this is an intellectual work, an online forum, and an electronic encyclopaedia of the built environment.

This tool allows architects from developing countries in particular to gain access to knowledge and techniques so that they can construct buildings for which there is no precedent in their history, such as airports, hospitals or modern office blocks, without precluding the integration of elements from their own culture. In other words, although there is no question of dismissing the technical contributions of modernity, they must be assimilated into their intended socio-cultural context.

Our objective, when we created ARCHNET, which has now been achieved, was to create a global community of architects, town planners, teachers and students sharing their knowledge online, in the field of the built environment. According to the most recent figures, this community now has over 60,000 members. By October, the number of “hits” on the website and web pages visited was 30% up on last year.

My third example is the restoration by the Aga Khan Trust of historic cities and their parks. We have done work in this field in Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Bosnia Herzegovina, Egypt, Syria, India, Pakistan, Kenya, Zanzibar and Mali. We have therefore helped breathe new life into rural and urban economies by revitalising the historic sites and buildings that form the living environment for people who are among the poorest inhabitants of the countries concerned.

In this context, it is only right to mention the incredible impetus provided by public-private partnerships. I'll quote here Dr Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India in 2004, who said: “I hope that more public-private partnerships can be evolved to maintain and restore the monuments of our ancestors, which often lie in a neglected condition in our cities and towns.” I must say that I was particularly delighted to hear him make this statement at



Emperor Humayun's Mausoleum, near Delhi, which was restored as the result of an effective partnership between the Indian state and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

We have learned how effective and valuable public-private partnerships can be. This is exactly the lesson I have put into practice for the restoration of the Chantilly estate, a programme that I am personally running in conjunction with the Institut de France, the town of Chantilly, the Département de l'Oise, the Picardy Region and France-Galop.

The impact of these particular examples can be measured with traditional economic tools, such as the effect on a given demography and the quantifiable improvement in quality of life parameters. This leads me to hope, for the first time, that this type of activity can be financed by the large international financial agencies, without our running the risk of being called financial carnivores.

So my experience concurs with what the Minister was saying earlier: "Culture isn't a world apart, it lies within an all too real economic context."

Finally, I should like to put into different words something I have already said indirectly: I am very concerned about the gulf between cultures.

However, this gulf is not what has mistakenly been called the clash of civilisations.

This gulf is potentially just as dangerous as a clash, because ignorance about other people and a lack of understanding of the valuable benefits of plurality can lead to contempt, hatred and war.

A gulf however can be filled in, whereas a clash is irreparable.

We are all profoundly aware of this gulf and this is fundamentally why we take action. I have given you several examples, but there are many others, like the Aga Khan Museum which is to be built in Toronto to become the specialist centre for Islamic art in North America and initiate exchanges with all the leading museums in the West.

I sincerely hope that these partnerships will be able to develop with governments, international organisations and their development agencies. They have supported and helped us greatly in the past and I'm sure that this tool will provide new ways for them to continue their activities.

As this Avignon Forum is being held under the aegis of the French Presidency of the European Union, I should like to end by paying tribute to the effective cooperation that exists between the European Union and the development agencies of many Member States on the one hand, and the Aga Khan Development Network on the other. And since we are in

France, I should particularly like to express my pleasure at the cooperation that exists with the French Development Agency and its network.

I hope I have demonstrated the hugely beneficial effects of serious initiatives in the field of culture, whether they can be measured in economic terms or can be perceived in terms of the progress made by pluralism and, as a result, the improvement in quality of life. Culture is not just an added extra or a luxury. QED.

Thank you.



## Inaugural ceremony of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat, Ottawa

06 December 2008 | , Ottawa, Canada

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Mrs. Harper  
Chief Justice Beverly McLaughlin and Mr. McCardle  
Madame Adrienne Clarkson and Mr. John Ralston Saul  
Your Excellencies  
Honourable Ministers  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Je voudrais commencer mes commentaires aujourd'hui en vous souhaitant la bienvenue dans le nouveau bâtiment de la Délégation de l'imamat ismaili à Ottawa. Nous sommes ravis que vous participiez à cette journée importante pour nous.

My warmest thanks go out to all of you for being part of this wonderful occasion. I particularly want to thank the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Stephen Harper, for the

honour of his presence, at a time of immense global challenges for those who bear the responsibilities of national leadership.

Let me also express my gratitude to the former Governor General of Canada, Madame Adrienne Clarkson. She was present at the Foundation Stone Ceremony for this building – and she thoughtfully predicted then, that this edifice would not be just another monumental structure, but would, both in its unity and its transparency, represent, as she put it, “the way in which the world can work when we are all at our best.”

I am also deeply grateful to the National Capital Commission and to all those who helped to design, construct and decorate this Delegation building, including all those who so generously volunteered their energies. This is the third important new Canadian building with which I will have been associated over the last five years. It affirms our intent to share, within a western setting, the best of Islamic life and heritage. This new Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat, like the Ismaili Centre and the Aga Khan Museum to be built in Toronto, reflects our conviction that buildings can do more than simply house people and programmes. They can also reflect our deepest values, as great architecture captures esoteric thought in physical form.

When I invited Professor Maki, a master of form and light, to design this building, I made a suggestion to him – one that I hoped would help connect this place symbolically to the Faith of Islam. The suggestion I made focused on creating a certain mystique, centred around the beautiful mysteries of rock crystal.

Why rock crystal? Because of its translucency, its multiple planes, and the fascination of its colours – all of which present themselves differently as light moves around them. The hues of rock crystal are subtle, striking and widely varied – for they can be clear or milky, white, or rose coloured, or smoky, or golden, or black.

It is because of these qualities that rock crystal seems to be such an appropriate symbol of the profound beauty and the ever-unfolding mystery of Creation itself – and the Creator. As the Holy Quran so powerfully affirms, “Allah is the Creator and the Master of the heavens and the earth.” And then it continues: “Everything in the heavens and on earth, and everything between them, and everything beneath the soil, belongs to Him.”

But in Islamic thought, as in this building, beauty and mystery are not separated from intellect – in fact, the reverse is true. As we use our intellect to gain new knowledge about Creation, we come to see even more profoundly the depth and breadth of its mysteries. We explore unknown regions beneath the seas - and in outer space. We reach back over hundreds of millions of years in time. Extra-ordinary fossilised geological specimens seize our imagination - palm leaves, amethyst flowers, hedgehog quartz, sea lilies, chrysanthemum and a rich panoply of shells. Indeed, these wonders are found beneath the very soil on which we tread – in every corner of the world - and they connect us with far distant epochs and environments.

And the more we discover, the more we know, the more we penetrate just below the surface of our normal lives – the more our imagination staggers. Just think for example what might lie below the surfaces of celestial bodies all across the far flung reaches of our universe. What we feel, even as we learn, is an ever-renewed sense of wonder, indeed, a powerful sense of awe – and of Divine inspiration.

Using rock crystal's iridescent mystery as an inspiration for this building, does indeed provide an appropriate symbol of the Timelessness, the Power and the Mystery of Allah as the Lord of Creation.

What we celebrate today can thus be seen as a new creative link between the spiritual dimensions of Islam and the cultures of the West. Even more particularly, it represents another new bridge between the peoples of Islam and the peoples of Canada.

Many of you may remember that my personal involvement with Canada dates back more than three decades when, at a time of great upheaval in Uganda, many members of the Ismaili community and others found here a new home in which they could quickly re-build their lives. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, and expressing habits of mind and spirit which have long been central to the Canadian character, this country provided a welcoming haven to those who had been victimised by history.

Since that time, Ismailis from other parts of the world have also come to Canada, contributing not only to Canadian society, but also to the diverse mosaic of the global Ismaili community.

One of the principal reasons, I believe, for the great rapport between the Ismaili and Canadian communities through the years is our shared commitment to a common ethical framework - and especially to the ideals of pluralism. By this I mean not only social pluralism, which embraces a diversity of ethnic and religious groups, but also pluralism in our thinking about government, and pluralism in our approach to other institutions. One of the reasons governments have failed in highly diverse settings around the world is that dogma has too often been enshrined at the price of more flexible, pluralistic approaches to political and economic challenges.

Within Islam itself, we can see a broad sense of pluralism, including a variety of spiritual interpretations, and a diversity of governments and social institutions.

The spirit of pluralism, at its base, is a response to the realities of diversity – a way of reconciling difference on the one hand with cooperation and common purpose on the other. It is an attitude, a way of thinking, which regards our differences not as threats but as gifts - as occasions for learning, stretching, growing - and at the same time, as occasions for appreciating anew the beauties of one's own identity.

The challenge of pluralism is particularly important for those who are called upon to lead diversified communities and to act in diversified environments. It is a challenge to which Canadians have responded nobly through the years - and it is also a challenge which has been central to our work through the Aga Khan Development Network, what we call AKDN.

The AKDN's principal focus, as you know, has been the under-served populations of Central and South Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Our approach has observed the principles of neutrality and pragmatism, but this has not always been an easy matter. Turbulence and discontinuity have characterised these regions, including the transition from colonial rule, the struggles of the Cold War, the tensions of the nuclear age, the rise of new nationalisms - of both the right and the left, as well as revolutions in communications and transportation which have so dramatically increased encounters among different peoples. Our Network has inevitably been drawn into a tangled variety of social and cultural contexts - including highly fragile, conflictual and post-conflictual situations. Our response has always been to focus on the pursuit of pluralistic progress.

Even against the most daunting challenges, social and economic progress can and must be a shared experience, based on a cosmopolitan ethic and nurtured by a spirit of genuine partnership.

When we have talked of development in this context over the years, we have always found responsive interlocutors in Canada. We recognise together the interdependence of economic progress on one hand and inclusive governmental structures on the other. We affirm together the centrality of communication and education in any progressive formula. We both embrace the interdependent role of various social sectors - private and governmental and voluntary - including the institutions of pluralistic civil society.

For the last quarter century, Canada, especially through CIDA, has been actively collaborating with the Aga Khan Development Network to support sustainable development in marginalised communities in Africa and in Asia. In the course of this work we have seen at first hand Canadian global leadership at its best - thoughtful, empathetic and avoiding both intellectual pretensions and dogmatic simplifications.

Our work together in northern Pakistan is one rich chapter in this story. Our newer efforts in places like Tajikistan and Afghanistan have opened further horizons. We could also point directly to early childhood programmes in Africa. Or we could speak of our projects in higher education, working with Canadian universities such as McMaster, McGill, University of Toronto, University of Alberta, and University of Calgary. The establishment of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam represents yet another step on a long path. It will give us another platform for strengthening and extending our relationship. It will be a site for robust dialogue, intellectual exchange, and the forging of new partnerships - with government, and with the institutions of civil society and the private sector of Canada and so many other countries. To be able to site this building on Confederation Boulevard, in close proximity to your major national institutions as well as representations from abroad,

is itself a symbol of the outgoing, interactive spirit which must guide our response to global challenges.

It is our prayer that the establishment of the Delegation will provide a strongly anchored, ever-expanding opportunity for rich collaboration - in the devoted service of ancient values, in the intelligent recognition of new realities, and in a common commitment to our shared dreams of a better world.

Thank you.





## The Global Philanthropy Forum

23 April 2009, Washington DC, USA

President Jane Wales, thank you for those very generous comments.

I'd like to say how happy I am to share in this year's Global Philanthropy Forum.

Participants,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a special pleasure for me to be with you tonight, for I look upon you as particularly serious and informed partners in the work of global understanding and international development.

As you may know, I recently marked my 50th anniversary in my role as Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims. This responsibility connects me intimately with the traditions of the Islamic faith and cultures, even while my education and a host of personal and professional associations have acquainted me with the non-Islamic West. The relationship of these two worlds is a subject of considerable importance for me – a relationship which

some define, regrettably, as an inevitable *Clash of Civilizations*. My own observation, however – and my deep conviction – is that we can more accurately describe it as a *Clash of Ignorances*.

It is not my purpose tonight to detail the misunderstandings which have plagued this relationship. Let me only submit that educational systems on both sides have failed mightily in this regard – and so have some religious institutions. That – at this time in human history – the Judeo Christian and Muslim societies should know so little about one another never ceases to astonish – to stun – and to pain me.

As a Muslim leader speaking in Washington this evening, it seems appropriate that I cite the words of President Obama, in his recent speech in Ankara. As he put it, pledging a “broader engagement with the Muslim world, we will listen carefully, we will bridge misunderstandings, and we will seek common ground.” I know that the vast majority of the Islamic world shares these objectives.

Among the areas where we *can* find common ground is our mutual effort to address the problem of persistent global poverty, especially the endemic poverty of the developing world. Surely this is an area where we can listen and learn and grow together – establishing ever-stronger bonds of understanding. One of the great principles of Islam, in all its interpretations, is the elimination of poverty in society, and philanthropy's centrality in this duty.

When I succeeded my grandfather as Aga Khan in 1957, I was a student at Harvard – but speaking mostly French. I got extra English practice, however, from my new official routine of regular communication with Africa and Asia – and, in the bargain, was kept in great good humour by the amazing typographic errors which inevitably arose. But then computerized spell check programs came along - and all those charming idiosyncrasies disappeared!

I recently noticed, to my joy, however, that this new invention is not a fail safe protection. Consider this recent item in the publication “The Week: “Bad week for spell-check: Several Pennsylvania high school students had their last names changed in their yearbook by an automatic computer program, Alessandra Ippolito was listed as Alexandria Impolite, while Max Zupanovic was rechristened Max Supernova. And Kathy Carbaugh's photo appeared next to the name Kathy Airbag.”

After reading this, I decided that maybe I should act prudently and spell check my own name. And I found that, while there was no “Aga Khan”, there was an “Aga” Cooker. It was defined as one of England's oldest stoves and ovens – now somewhat outdated – but with a distinctive whistle every time it frizzled the food within!

But returning to a more serious topic let me submit this evening a few of my own reflections on the developing world that I know a central focus of my interests over fifty

years. For, in coming to understand the life of widely dispersed Ismaili communities across the globe, I have also become immersed in their host societies.

The essential goal of global development has been to create and sustain effective nation states – coherent societies that are well governed, economically self-sustaining, equitable in treating their peoples, peaceful amongst themselves, and sensitive to their impact on planetary sustainability.

This is a complex objective, a moving target, and a humbling challenge. Sadly, the response in the places I know best has often been “one step forward and two steps back.” Today, some forty percent of UN member nations are categorized as “failed democracies” – unable to meet popular aspirations for a better quality of life. The recent global economic crisis – along with the world food crisis – has sharply accentuated these problems.

But why have our efforts to change that picture over five decades not borne greater fruit? Measured against history, where have things gone wrong? Given the progress we have made in so many fields, why have we been so relatively ineffective in sharing that progress more equitably, and in making it more permanent?

My response centers on one principal observation: I believe the industrialized world has often expected developing societies to behave as if they were similar to the established nation states of the West, forgetting the centuries, and the processes which moulded the Western democracies. Forgotten, for one thing, is the fact that economic development in Western nations was accompanied by massive urbanization. Yet today, in the countries of Asia and Africa where we work, over 70 percent of the population is rural. If you compare the two situations, they are one and a half to two and half centuries apart. Similarly, the profound diversity of these impoverished societies, infinitely greater than that among nascent European nation states, is too often unrecognized, or under-estimated, or misunderstood. Ethnic, religious, social, regional, economic, linguistic and political diversities are like a kaleidoscope that history shakes every day.

One symptom of this problem has been the high failure rate of constitutional structures in many developing countries, often because minority groups – who often make up the bulk of the population – fear they will be marginalized by any centralized authority. But did today’s developed countries not face similar challenges as they progressed toward nationhood?

If there is an historic misperception here, it has had several consequences for development activities.

The first concerns what I would call the dominant player fallacy – a tendency to place too much reliance in national governments and other institutions which may have relatively superficial connections to life at the grass-roots level.

Urban-based outsiders often look at these situations from the perspective of the city center looking out to a distant countryside, searching for quick and convenient levers of influence. Those who look from the bottom-up, however, see a much much more complex picture. The lines of force in these rural societies are often profoundly centrifugal, reflecting a highly fragmented array of influences. But was this not also true during the building of Western nation states?

Age old systems of religious, tribal or inherited family authority still have enormous influence in these societies. Local identities which often cross the artificial frontiers of the colonial past are more powerful than outsiders may assume. These values and traditions must be understood, embraced, and related to modern life, so that development can build on them. We have found that these age-old forces are among the best levers we have for improving the quality of life of rural peoples, even in cross frontier situations.

Nation building may require centralized authority, but if that authority is not trusted by rural communities, then instability is inevitable. The building of successful nation states in many of the countries in which I work will depend – as it did in the West – on providing significantly greater access for rural populations, who are generally in the majority.

If these reflections are well founded, then what is urgently needed is a massive, creative new development effort towards rural populations. Informed strategic thinking at the national level must be matched by a profound, engagement at the local level. Global philanthropy, public private partnerships and the best of human knowledge must be harnessed. As the World Bank recognized in its recent Poverty Study, local concerns must be targeted, providing roads and markets, sharpening the capacities of village governments, working to smooth social inequalities, and improving access to health and education services. The very definition of poverty is the absence of such quality of life indicators in civil society among rural populations.

It is in this context that I must share with you tonight my concern that too much of the developmental effort – especially in the fields of health and education - have been focused on urban environments.

I whole-heartedly support, for example, the goal of free and universal access to primary education. But I would just as whole-heartedly challenge this objective if it comes at the expense of secondary and higher education. How can credible leadership be nurtured in rural environments when rural children have nowhere to go after primary school? The experience of the Aga Khan Development Network is that secondary education for rural youth is a condition sine qua non for sustainable progress.

Similarly despite various advances in preventive medicine, rural peoples – often 70% of the population – are badly served in the area of curative care. Comparisons show sharp rural disadvantages in fields such as trauma care and emergency medicine, curbing infant mortality, or diagnosing correctly the need for tertiary care. Building an effective nation

state, today as in earlier centuries, requires that the quality of rural life must be a daily concern of government. Ideally, national progress should be as effective, as equitable, and as visible, over similar time-frames, in rural areas as in urban ones. Amongst other considerations, how else will we be able to slow, if not stop, the increasing trend of major cities of Asia and Africa to become ungovernable human slums?

From this general analysis, let me turn to our own experience. The Aga Khan Development Network, if only as a matter of scale, is incapable of massively redressing the rural-urban imbalances where we work. It is possible, however, to focus on areas of extreme isolation, extreme poverty and extreme potential risk - where human despair feeds the temptation to join criminal gangs or local militia or the drug economy. The World Bank refers to these areas as “lagging regions”. We have focused recently on three prototypical situations.

Badakhshan is a sensitive region of eastern Tajikistan and eastern Afghanistan where the same ethnic community is divided by a river which has now become a national border, and where both communities live in extreme poverty and are highly isolated from their respective capitals of Dushanbe and Kabul. There is a significant Shia Ismaili Muslim presence in both areas.

Southern Tanzania and Northern Mozambique is a region of eastern Africa where large numbers of rural Sunni Muslims live in extreme poverty. A third case, Rural Bihar, in India, involves six states where the Sachar Committee Report, commissioned by the Indian government, has courageously described how Muslim peoples have been distanced from the development story since 1947.

All three of these regions are works in progress. The first two are post conflict situations, relatively homogeneous, and sparsely populated, while the third is densely populated, and culturally diverse. All three have acute potential to become explosive, and our AKDN goal is to identify such areas as primary targets for philanthropy.

We have also developed a guiding concept in approaching these situations. We call it Multi-Input Area Development – or MIAD. An emphasis on multiple inputs is a crucial consequence of looking at the development arena from the bottom up. Singular inputs alone cannot generate, in the time available, and across the spectrum of needs, sufficient effective change to reverse trends towards famine or towards conflict.

Similarly, we want to measure outcomes in such cases by a more complex array of criteria. What we call our Quality of Life Assessments go beyond simple economic measurements – considering the broad array of conditions – quantitative and qualitative – which the poor themselves take into account when they assess their own well-being.

Secretary Clinton echoed the concern for multiple inputs and multiple assessments when she mentioned to you yesterday the need for diversified partnerships among governments, philanthropies, businesses, NGO’s, universities, unions, faith communities and

individuals. The Aga Khan network includes partners from most of these categories – sustaining our Multi-Input strategy. I applaud her concern – and yours – for the importance of such alliances.

Northern Pakistan provides another example, in a challenging high mountain environment, of a complex approach to rural stabilization. Innovations in water and land management have been accompanied by a new focus on local choice through village organizations. A "productive public infrastructure" has emerged, including roads, irrigation channels, and small bridges, as well as improved health and education services. Historic palaces and forts along the old Silk Route have been restored and reused as tourism sites, reviving cultural pluralism and pride, diversifying the economy and enlarging the labor market. The provision of micro credit and the development of village savings funds have also played a key role.

For nearly 25 years, we have also worked in a large, once-degraded neighborhood, sprawling among and atop the ruins of old Islamic Cairo – built 1000 years ago by my ancestors, the Fatimid Caliphs. This is an urban location – but occupied by an essentially rural population, striving to become urbanized. The project was environmental and archaeological at the start – but it grew into a residential, recreational and cultural citiscape – which last year attracted 1.8 million visitors. The local population has new access to microcredit and has been trained and employed not only for restoring the complex, but also for maintaining it – as a new expression of civil society.

Because historic sites are often located among concentrations of destitute peoples, they can become a linchpin for development. We work now with such sites as Bagh-e-Babur in Kabul, the old Stone Town in Zanzibar, the Aleppo Citadel in Syria, the historic Moghal sites at New Delhi and Lahore, and the old mud mosques of Mopti and Djenne and Timbuktu, in northern Mali. Altogether, more than one million impoverished people will be touched by these projects. Such investments in restoring the world's cultural patrimony do not compete with investing in its social and economic development. Indeed, they go hand in hand.

In all these cases, it is the interaction of many elements that creates a dynamic momentum, bringing together people from different classes, cultures, and disciplines, and welcoming partners who live across the street – and partners who live across the planet. Each case is singular, and each requires multiple inputs. And it is here that those present tonight can have such an important impact. Working together on programme development, on sharing specialized knowledge, and on competent implementation, we can all contribute more effectively to the reduction of global poverty.

Let me say in closing, how much I admire the work you are doing, the commitment you feel, and the dreams you have embraced. I hope and trust that we will have many opportunities to renew and extend our sense of partnership as we work toward building strong and healthy nation states around our globe.

If we are to succeed we will need, first, to readjust our orientation by focusing on the immense size and diversity of rural populations whether they are in peri-urban or rural environments. For no-one can dispute, I think, that a large number of the world's recent problems have been born in the countrysides of the poorest continents.

Finally, we will need to address these problems with a much stronger sense of urgency. What we may have been content to achieve in 25 years, we must now aim to do in 10 years.

A mighty challenge, no doubt.

Thank you.





## **Investiture Ceremony of His Highness the Aga Khan as a Member of the Lisbon Academy of Sciences**

08 May 2009, Lisbon, Portugal

Professor Oliveira,  
Minister of National Defence, Mr Nuno Severiano Teixeira,  
Minister of Culture, Mr Pinto Ribeiro,  
Apostolic Nuncio, Rino Passagata,  
Excellencies,  
Members of the Academy,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an immense honour for me to be here today and to have been admitted to the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon. It reminds me of the day on which I was given an honorary doctorate from the University of Evora. And I do not want to let this occasion pass, without recollecting that very, very special day.

You here in the Academy are guardians of old knowledge and developers of new knowledge. And I thought I would share with you today, very briefly, some of the

reflections that have occurred to me since I have completed my journeys in the developing world during my Golden Jubilee.

I visited numerous countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and I came into contact with men and women who were intelligent, mature, responsible and who were seeking to build nation states – nation states which would be autonomous, which would be well governed, whose economies would be competent, but these builders were seeking to build on the basis of an enormous knowledge deficit. These men and women in public office simply did not have access to the demography of men and women who are sufficiently educated to be able to man the institutions of state.

And I have come away with another question stemming from my point that there is a deficit of knowledge? The key question is a deficit of what knowledge? What knowledge is necessary in these environments, so that in the decades ahead we can look towards stable nation states around the world?

My conclusion was that the deficit of knowledge is in many areas which are not being offered in education, which are not being taught. Because what have been inherited are curricula of the past, reflections of the past, attitudes of the past, rather than looking forwards, asking what do future generations need to know. And that is the central question which needs to be asked, and on which an academy such as this can have such a massive impact.

Let me mention three areas. First of all, there is the nature of society in these countries. One of the characteristics of all these countries is that they have pluralist societies. And if pluralism is not part of the educational curriculum, the leaders and the peoples of these societies will always be at risk of conflict, because they are not accustomed to pluralism and they do not value it. People are not born valuing pluralism. Therefore pluralism is the sort of subject which needs to be part of education, from the youngest age onwards.

Another aspect is ethics. But not ethics born of dogma, but ethics in civil society. Because when governments fail in these parts of the world, it is civil society which steps in to sustain development. And when ethics are not part of education, teaching, examinations; when they are not part of medicine, the quality of care; when they are not part of financial services, then civil society is undermined. Ethics in civil society is another aspect which is absolutely critical.

The third example is constitutionality. So many countries which I have visited have stumbled into, run into difficulties in governance, because the national constitutions were not designed and conceived to serve the profiles of those countries. And therefore, teaching in areas such as comparative government is another area which is absolutely critical.

If these are the subjects which are necessary today, what are the subjects which will be necessary tomorrow? Is the developing world going to continue in this deficit of

knowledge? Or are we going to enable it to move forwards in to new areas of knowledge? My conviction is that we have to help these countries move into new areas of knowledge. And therefore, I think of areas such as the space sciences, such as the neurosciences. There are so many new areas of inquiry which, unless we make an effort to share globally, we will continue to have vast populations around the world who will continue in this knowledge deficit.

Portugal has an extraordinary history. It has been influencing the world for centuries. Your influence today is not limited to Europe. Your influence is massive through your presence in South America. A country like Brazil is a case study for many countries around the world. Brazil is dealing with new areas of knowledge in air transport – that is a new area of knowledge – competing with the best in the world in areas such as agriculture, the development of cash crops, and sugar at new levels of technology.

So the influence of Portugal and the capacity of Portugal to influence what is happening around the world is immense. And it is in this context that I want to thank you for electing me a member of the Academy and for the opportunity you have given me to encourage you to use your global influence, through your history, through your knowledge, through your contacts with the developing world, to bring to the rest of the world what is best in your knowledge.

Thank you.



## Remise de la distinction de Grand Mécène et de Grand Donateur

28 May 2009, Paris, France

Majesté, Madame la Ministre de la Culture, Monsieur le Président du Sénat, Monsieur le Chancelier de l'Institut de France, Mesdames et Messieurs les Ambassadeurs, Mesdames et Messieurs les Hautes personnalités, Mesdames, Messieurs, Madame la Ministre, je vous ai dit, tout à l'heure en arrivant, mon très grand plaisir de me trouver aujourd'hui à vos côtés, dans ce quadrilatère historique du Palais Royal, qui abrite tant de grandes institutions politiques et culturelles de la République française :

- le Conseil constitutionnel,
- le Conseil d'Etat,
- le Ministère de la culture,
- la Comédie française,

le tout à proximité immédiate du Musée du Louvre. C'est dans ce cadre merveilleux que vous m'avez fait le grand honneur de me remettre, au nom de la République, la médaille de grand donateur et de grand mécène du ministère de la Culture. Vous avez par là, bien voulu distinguer ce que j'ai souhaité faire pour la France à Chantilly et pour la culture dans notre

monde. Sachez que ce geste me va droit au cœur, notamment pour la raison qu'il est très rare dans le monde qu'un Etat, par ses représentants les plus éminents, soit attentif à faire un signe d'amitié comme celui que vous me faites aujourd'hui. J'ajouterai que je suis très sensible à la dimension symbolique que la France a donnée officiellement à cette médaille en y gravant le sceau de la première République française et, selon votre belle tradition, une femme représentant la Liberté. On ne dira en effet jamais assez combien la Culture est facteur de Liberté, ni combien la Liberté est ferment de Culture. Vous avez bien voulu rappeler les impulsions que j'ai données au fil des décennies à de nombreux projets culturels dans le monde. Pour les raisons que j'ai exposées sous la Coupole il n'y a guère, les projets culturels sont en effet devenus pour moi une priorité très rapidement, après avoir pris la succession de mon grand père, il y a plus de 50 ans. C'est en effet à cette époque que je suis devenu le 49ème Imam des quelque vingt millions de musulmans shiites imamis ismailis, populations majoritairement rurales et pauvres, disséminées dans 35 pays, principalement en Asie Centrale et du Sud-ouest, en Afrique, et au Moyen-Orient. Je suis ainsi l'héritier d'une culture, je devrais dire 'de cultures' au pluriel, plus que millénaire. Je n'oublie cependant pas que grâce à mon père, dès ma tendre enfance, j'ai été sensibilisé très tôt à la peinture française, notamment aux œuvres de grands maîtres comme Corot, Utrillo, Vlaminck, Boudin ou Raoul Dufy. Cet éveil, mêlé à mes lectures de Maurois, Mauriac, Gide et bien d'autres grands auteurs, m'a fait découvrir les français, la France et le regard que les français portent sur le monde. J'ai aimé ce que j'ai vu, comme ce que j'ai lu, et voici pourquoi, entre autres, j'habite la France depuis maintenant presque quarante ans. J'ai tenté de mettre ce foisonnement d'expériences à profit, au bénéfice de Chantilly. Dans ce bref moment qui nous réunit, je voudrais vous dire quelques mots sur ce que j'ai entrepris dans cette belle ville, œuvre humaine et monumentale, riche et complexe, que l'histoire de France a léguée à l'humanité. Beaucoup ici savent que je conduis ce projet avec l'Etat, la région de Picardie, le département de l'Oise, la ville de Chantilly, l'Institut de France et France Galop. Je n'oublie pas évidemment les collaborations fructueuses avec le monde académique et le secteur privé. Je salue d'ailleurs ici, outre vous-même Madame la Ministre, Monsieur le Chancelier de l'Institut et Monsieur le Préfet de l'Oise. Je voudrais vous dire principalement que j'ai mis en œuvre, au bénéfice de Chantilly, certains enseignements importants acquis dans les pays lointains que je mentionnais tout à l'heure, ce qui peut étonner quand on sait combien sont différentes ces cultures et la culture française. En fait, j'ai acquis la conviction, à l'occasion de ce que j'ai vu sous d'autres cieux, que les ressorts humains et économiques en action dans les projets de rénovation ou de réhabilitation sont très proches, quel que soit le lieu. Puisque je dois être bref, je dirai qu'au milieu d'innombrables considérations, le point essentiel pour moi est qu'un projet culturel centré sur un lieu d'histoire ou de tradition doit prendre en compte l'environnement immédiat dans lequel il s'inscrit. Autrement dit, au-delà du soin apporté à la renaissance de tel ou tel monument ou lieu historique, il convient d'intégrer dans le programme de redéveloppement l'ensemble des espaces publics et privés proches. Pourquoi ceci me paraît-il si essentiel que je n'entreprends jamais un projet culturel sans avoir cette idée à l'esprit ? Simplement parce que, lorsque l'on renouvelle ou que l'on restaure à la fois le lieu de culture, au sens traditionnel du terme, et sa périphérie, on observe toujours deux conséquences :



- un renouveau économique au service des populations alentours, en particulier des plus modestes ;
- une pérennisation de l'effort de rénovation ou de restauration sur la très longue durée.

Ce concept est tout simple. L'élément de complexité réside, vous le savez, dans la nécessité de gérer sur le long terme ce qui doit devenir ou redevenir un centre de développement économique pérenne et à dimension humaine. Il est alors absolument nécessaire de travailler en collaboration avec toutes les parties prenantes. J'ai eu la grande joie de constater, au-delà d'un enthousiasme de tous pour le projet de Chantilly, que chacun a eu à cœur de partager avec moi son expérience, et d'accueillir la mienne. Ceci fait qu'aujourd'hui le projet avance à grands pas. C'est ainsi qu'après la création de la Fondation pour la sauvegarde et le développement du Domaine de Chantilly :

- le champ de courses, ses bâtiments et ses accès ont été remis en état ou réaménagés, ce qui a fait repartir une activité qui s'essouffait ;
- le parc de Le Nôtre a fait l'objet d'une rénovation en profondeur ; c'est ainsi que tout récemment, après d'importants travaux hydrauliques, les fontaines du parc commencent à revivre. Nous avons eu un long débat sur la hauteur qu'il fallait donner à cette fontaine. On a éliminé la concurrence avec le lac Léman ... Et puis on a cherché à comprendre ce que Le Nôtre voulait et ça, ça a été beaucoup plus difficile et je me suis fié aux spécialistes. Si vous allez visiter Chantilly, sachez que la hauteur des fontaines a été un sujet de très, très grands et profonds débats !
- quant aux Grandes Ecuries du septième Prince de Condé, elles font l'objet de travaux considérables qui vont être amplifiés dans le temps ;
- à cet égard, je voudrais souligner que le Musée vivant du cheval, qui y trouve naturellement sa place, sera le seul au monde consacré exclusivement à l'histoire du cheval sous toutes les latitudes ;
- également, le Musée Condé fait l'objet de toutes nos attentions et l'on peut ici évoquer la restauration, comme vous l'avez dit Madame la Ministre, de la merveilleuse Grande Singerie créée en 1737 ...
- sans oublier les travaux préparatoires sur le château lui-même.

Au-delà, dans l'esprit de ce que je vous disais il y a un instant, de nombreux projets économiques sont en discussion, dont le plus avancé est celui de la construction de l'hôtel du Jeu de Paume à l'entrée de Chantilly, ensemble qui reviendra à terme à l'Institut de France. J'espère profondément que ces efforts sur la longue durée, permettront aux habitants de Chantilly et de sa région de vivre mieux dans ce cadre séculaire qui leur est si familier. Pour ma part, au-delà de l'affection pour la France que ma famille a exprimée depuis des générations, j'ai voulu, en m'impliquant personnellement dans ce projet,

remercier votre beau pays de m'avoir accueilli avec tant de chaleur. De fait, mes liens personnels et institutionnels avec la France sont d'une telle qualité qu'au fil des années la France devient progressivement le centre de mes activités, notamment en matière de politique de développement au bénéfice des populations les plus pauvres de la planète. Madame la Ministre, vous avez voulu me remercier et m'honorer et j'en ressens une grande fierté. Cependant, compte tenu de ce que je viens de dire, veuillez accepter que ce soit moi qui remercie la France à travers vous.





## Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Graduation ceremony of the University of Alberta

09 June 2009, Alberta, Canada

**“Even when governments are fragile, or even nearly paralyzed in their functioning, strong civil society organizations can advance the social and economic order as they have done in Kenya and Bangladesh. Civil society is a complex matrix of influences, but its impact can be enormous, especially in rural environments, where, for example, the need for stronger secondary as well as primary schools is dramatically evident. We have also learned that effective civil progress involves a multiplicity of inputs and a variety of partners - including universities.”**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Eminent Chancellor  
Madame President  
Mr. Chairman of the Board

Your Worship the Mayor  
Faculty, Graduates, Friends and Family

What a pleasure and privilege it is to be here today, as this great university moves into its second century. I am deeply grateful for your kind invitation, for the wonderful honour you have given me, and for the rich partnership which the Aga Khan University has enjoyed with the University of Alberta. I am pleased, too, that this partnership will be extended under the new Agreement we have just signed between our two universities, along with the institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network.

My warmest congratulations go to all who graduate today and to the families, friends and faculty members who share in your proud achievements.

I read recently about a graduation ceremony like this one which was marred, perhaps, by an excess of confidence. The editors of the class yearbook were great believers in technology and entrusted the final proofreading to the computer program called spell-check, something which you undoubtedly know a thing or two about!

Unfortunately, as *The Week* magazine reported, it was “a bad week for spell check,” as the automatic program changed the names of several students. For example, Alessandra Ippolito was listed as Alexandria Impolite, while Max Zupanovic was rechristened Max Supernova. And Kathy Carbaugh’s photo appeared next to the name Kathy Airbag.

After hearing this, you may want to check on how your own names are spelled on your programmes and diplomas and what mischief spell-check might do to your name if it had the chance. I for one decided that I should spell check my own name. I found that, while there was no “Aga Khan”, there was something called an “Aga” Cooker. It was defined as one of England’s oldest stoves and ovens ...now somewhat outdated ... but with a distinctive whistle every time it frizzled the food within!

As you may know, the Aga Khan is, in fact, the Imam, or spiritual leader, of the Ismaili Muslim community, a role I inherited from my grandfather over fifty years ago. Even as the University of Alberta was celebrating its 100th anniversary last year, I was marking my own golden jubilee. To mark both anniversaries, to express my profound thanks, and to celebrate our growing partnership, I am presenting a gift today which reflects both my Islamic heritage and your University traditions. I have just visited a parcel of land within the Devonian Gardens of the University, where we plan to create a traditional Islamic Garden. We hope this space will be of educational and aesthetic value, a setting for learning more about Muslim culture and design, as well as a place for public reflection.

Over these past five decades, much of my attention has been focused on the challenges of the developing world, and it is in this arena that our partnership with the University of Alberta has been most active. The University’s commitment to the global context and the developing world has been inspiring, and the match between your areas of expertise and

developing world requirements, as I understand them, has been nothing short of extraordinary.

For many years, your leaders have set priorities which intersect with vital development needs, including such areas as agricultural sciences and nutrition, public health and telemedicine, natural resource management, information technology, environmental and energy sciences, and so many others, including your respect for diversity, and for the rights and the roles of traditional societies. Roderick Fraser, your President Emeritus and a Trustee of the Aga Khan University, is one of the many Canadian visionaries who have helped forge this remarkable record.

I was pleased to read recently the University's own description of its continuing international goals: increasing joint programmes, encouraging semesters abroad and broadening exchange programmes, building international community service and internship opportunities, and creating new academic programmes with a global perspective.

What an impressive agenda! It represents precisely the sort of outreach from Western intellectual centres which I believe is essential for global progress. And it coincides with a period in which the developing world itself is recognizing, as never before, the centrality of education to its future - and the leading role of North American universities in that process.

Let me mention one more critical element in this picture. The international impact of this University's work is reinforced by the high regard in which Canada itself is held as a valued development partner. Canada comes to that challenge with impressive credentials; no history as a colonial power, a successful pluralist society, high standards of living, and a readiness to welcome a global leadership role.

In today's community of nations, a country's standing is no longer recognized simply by what it can achieve for itself, but just as much by what it can do for others. In this context, Canada has become a world "power" in the best sense of that word.

As young people with a Canadian education, you will be warmly welcomed by the global community if you should choose to spend some time in international activity, making the world your workplace. The path has been well prepared by eminent Canadians who have gone before you.

As I have thought about the challenge of international development and its relationship to education, I have come to identify four key areas of concern. These are issues which have engaged the Aga Khan Development Network for over two decades, including the innovative curricular planning of our schools and universities. I thought I might discuss them briefly with you today.

The first of these themes concerns the faltering instruments of government in many countries of Asia and Africa: Afghanistan and Pakistan, Kenya and Uganda, for example, are plagued by dysfunctional constitutional frameworks which ignore inherited traditions, poorly apportion responsibilities among central versus provincial authorities, fail to ensure equity and liberty for minority and tribal communities, and are unresponsive to their vast rural populations.

We are facing, I believe, years and even decades of continued testing among various forms of democratic governance. At the present moment, we may well be seeing more failures than successes.

I feel strongly that students of government from across the world can help address this situation, suggesting a creative range of constitutional options and best practices in places where governmental systems have not yet had time to mature. And educational institutions at all levels should give more attention to the disciplines of comparative government.

This does not mean the imposition of political systems from outside. But it is not enough to replace coercion from beyond one's borders with coercions from one's own capital city. Governments everywhere should reflect the will and the aspirations of all their peoples.

One central challenge here is that age-old traditions of the countryside often seem unrelated to the challenges of running a modern nation-state - and plugging it into a changing global economy. Reconciling the global and the local, the urban and the rural, the regional and the national, is one of the great political challenges of our time - and it is a challenge to which Canadians can speak with special insight.

We have also learned that simplistic systems don't work; whether built around the arrogance of colonialism, the rigidities of communism, the romantic dreams of nationalism, or the naive promises of untrammelled capitalism. But I do believe old governing methods can be improved, and that appropriate, effective new models can be created. And I know that great universities like this one can play an important role in that process.

The second topic I would raise today is the role of civil society in the development process. By civil society I mean an array of institutions which operate on a private, voluntary basis, but are driven by public motivations. They include institutions dedicated to education, to culture, to health, and to environmental improvement; they embrace commercial, labour, professional and ethnic associations, as well as institutions of religion and the media.

Even when governments are fragile, or even nearly paralyzed in their functioning, strong civil society organizations can advance the social and economic order as they have done in Kenya and Bangladesh. Civil society is a complex matrix of influences, but its impact can be enormous, especially in rural environments, where, for example, the need for stronger secondary as well as primary schools is dramatically evident. We have also learned that effective civil progress involves a multiplicity of inputs and a variety of partners - including

universities. The broad scope of programmes here at the University of Alberta is a tremendous resource, actual and potential, for the development of civil society throughout the world.

My third theme today is ethics. Neither the political nor the civil sector can accomplish anything of value unless those who steer those institutions are motivated and directed by demanding moral standards.

When we talk about the ethical realm, when we attack corruption, we are inclined to think primarily about government and politics. I am one, however, who believes that corruption is just as acute, and perhaps even more damaging, when the ethics of the civil and private sectors deteriorate. We know from recent headlines about scoundrels from the American financial scene to the halls of European parliaments - and we can certainly do without either. But the problem extends into every area of human enterprise. When a construction company cheats on the quality of materials for a school or a bridge, when a teacher skimps on class work in order to sell his time privately, when a doctor recommends a drug because of incentives from a pharmaceutical company, when a bank loan is skewed by kickbacks, or a student paper is plagiarized from the internet - when the norms of fairness and decency are violated in any way, then the foundations of society are undermined. And the damage is felt most immediately in the most vulnerable societies, where fraud is often neither reported nor corrected, but simply accepted as an inevitable condition of life.

Again, universities are among the institutions which can respond most effectively to such threats. It seems to me to be the responsibility of educators everywhere to help develop 'ethically literate' people who can reason morally whenever they analyse and resolve problems, who see the world through the lens of ethics, who can articulate their moral reasoning clearly - even in a world of cultural and religious diversity - and have the courage to make tough choices. And it is clear that the quality of ethical leadership throughout society can in great measure be shaped by our educational institutions.

This analysis brings me to my fourth theme: the centrality of pluralism as a way of thinking in a world which is simultaneously becoming more diversified and more interactive. Pluralism means not only accepting, but embracing human difference. It sees the world's variety as a blessing rather than a burden, regarding encounters with the "Other" as opportunities rather than as threats. Pluralism does not mean homogenization - denying what is different to seek superficial accommodation. To the contrary, pluralism respects the role of individual identity in building a richer world.

Pluralism means reconciling what is unique in our individual traditions with a profound sense of what connects us to all of humankind.

The Holy Quran says: "O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a

multitude of men and women.” What a unique and profound statement about the Oneness of humanity!

And yet, just recollect the number of situations where pluralism has failed, dramatically and detestably, in just the last ten years: in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Sri Lanka, in Kenya, Rwanda, Darfur and the Congo, in Iraq and in the Balkans and in Northern Ireland – and the list could go on. No continent has been spared.

A pluralistic attitude is not something with which people are born. An instinctive fear of what is different is perhaps a more common human trait. But such fear is a condition which can be transcended - and that is why teaching about pluralism is such an important objective - at every educational level.

In the final analysis, no nation, no race, no individual has a monopoly of intelligence or virtue. If we are to pursue the ideal of meritocracy in human endeavour, then its most perfect form will grow out of a respect for human pluralism, so that we can harness the very best contributions from whomever and wherever they may come.

President Obama cited his own country as a relevant example when he said last week in Cairo, and I quote: “the United States has been one of the greatest sources of progress that the world has ever known ... we are shaped by every culture, drawn from every end of the earth...”

All of these considerations have led me to create a new institution that you may have heard about - it is called the Global Centre for Pluralism - a joint project which we have established in Ottawa, in partnership with the Government of Canada. We hope that it will help us all to better understand and implement the pluralistic approaches on which our future now depends.

When peoples think pluralistically, there is no limit to what they can do together, joining forces across a wide variety of divides - and even across long distances - so that a University based in the far western reaches of North America can join hands and hearts with institutions which are, quite precisely, on the opposite side of the planet. As the world shrinks, and as contact among diverse peoples increases, some would argue that we face an inevitable “clash of civilizations.” My own conviction, however, is that we face today “a clash of ignorances.” It continually amazes me, for example, how little is understood about the Muslim civilizations and cultures in the non-Islamic world and how little is taught. When President Obama described the richness of that history in his Cairo speech, he was telling a story which is unfamiliar to many in the West. A pluralistic commitment will call upon educators, everywhere, to address such dangerous ignorances, in this and in other fields.

We live today in what has been called the Knowledge Society. But even as our knowledge advances at lightning speed, we also become more vulnerable to gaps in that knowledge, to

what we might describe as Knowledge deficits. Each of the four themes I have outlined today points to a specific knowledge deficit, and each deficit constitutes a challenging obstacle to progress, justice and stability in many countries and for many decades.

The great universities of the world have a special mission - a high calling I believe - to take a leading role in the struggle to narrow and even to eliminate the knowledge deficits which challenge our world - a role which your University has been playing so well.

My congratulations once again. My prayer is that God will be with you, inspiring you and empowering you, in all the good things you will be doing in the days and years ahead.

Thank you.





## Inauguration of the revitalised Forodhani Park

30 July 2009, Zanzibar

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

His Excellency President Karume and Mrs. Karume  
Honourable Deputy Chief Minister of Zanzibar  
Honourable Chief Justice  
Honourable Minister Mansour Himid, and I thank you for your very kind words  
Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a distinct pleasure for me to be part of this great occasion - in this very special setting.

As we look to the extraordinary landmark buildings on one side of this historic site - and to the splendid seascape on the other side - and as we also look back upon the rich history of the ground on which we stand - we realize how privileged we are to be part of this place - and part of its revitalization.

Let me begin by thanking all of you who have contributed so much to the success of the Forodhani Park restoration - and the Seafont Rehabilitation Project of which it is a part.

This work has been a great partnership - an example of what can be done when people come together, with a common purpose, and share their knowledge - from the public and the private sector, from the local, national and international level, from civil society and many many different professions.

This coming together of people from many backgrounds has been a central theme in the history of Zanzibar for over a thousand years - since the first Arab traders were blown this way by the monsoon winds in the 8th Century. Through the centuries, Zanzibar became one of the central crossroads of commerce and culture. Here people from all sides of the Indian Ocean came to encounter one another - in ways which were ordinary and extraordinary, tragic and invigorating.

It is worth noting that the peoples who were drawn here were themselves men and women with pluralistic outlooks, energized by new horizons, skilled in the sciences of exploration, and engaged by cultural diversity. The culture which emerged here was thus a distinctly pluralist culture, resonating with African, Arab, Indian and European influences. It is that rich legacy which we celebrate today.

And just as Zanzibar was a significant focal point for this region of the world, so too the Seafront where we are gathered - and the place we now call Forodhani Park - has long been a focal point for Zanzibar.

In recent years, however, the intensity of the demands on this site have outgrown its capacity to meet them. What had been a place of lively interchange became a place of crippling congestion. As my brother, Prince Ayn Aga Khan said at the groundbreaking ceremony here just 18 months ago, "the balance between commercial activity and leisure had been lost." - and finding a healthy new balance became the key to making the Park, once again, the "hub and the heart" of Stone Town.

This project has given me great personal satisfaction over many years. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture began its work in Zanzibar some twenty years ago, in 1989. Working with the government, we published a Master Plan for Stone Town in 1996, and then, step by step, with the help of many partners, a major part of that plan was implemented. Local citizens were trained in traditional building techniques - and some eleven buildings were restored. The historic Grade One building known as the Old Dispensary was restored to Grade One standards, and given a new purpose as today's Stone Town Cultural Center. The Customs House and Kelele Square were also rehabilitated, and the Serena Inn has been operating successfully on the site of the old telecom building.

I should add, however, that my interest in Zanzibar has even earlier precedents. My grandfather helped to build schools here a century ago. Our Aga Khan Development Network and its predecessor institutions have been operating hospitals and clinics here for over fifty years. Community health programmes, early childhood education, and programmes to strengthen civil society continue to be important areas of emphasis.

The accomplishments we celebrate today, then, are a part of an ongoing story - and it is a story which has counterparts in many places around the world.

In Cairo, in Damascus and Aleppo, in Delhi and Lahore, in Kabul and Bamako, in Mopti, Djenne and Timbuktu, and along the ancient Silk Route, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, through its Historic Cities Programme, has worked to restore a series of major cultural landmarks.

We undertake these projects, in part, because they can reinforce a sense of identity within proud communities, providing gateways to cultural understanding for local citizens and for visitors alike. But there is more to the matter than that. These cultural initiatives, in each case, have also been accompanied by a social and economic rationale, so that the entire project works to improve the well being of the people who live in these areas.

How does this happen? It happens when many components come together - like pieces of a complex puzzle.

To begin with, of course, it happens by attracting outside investment. But more than that, it happens when the indigenous population can be intimately involved in the work of restoration itself, and when training in restoration and conservation is provided as an integral part of the project. It happens when the restored site can become the home for a range of newly active civic and commercial institutions, and when the completed project is so attractive to visitors that it produces a flow of new income that not only sustains the site, but also improves the life of the surrounding neighbourhood.

All of this happens most successfully when people from the community are employed directly at the site - and at supporting facilities, such as the Serena Inn just down the road from here, which not only pays local taxes but also provides employment for some 120 people.

Finally, the economic and social impact of these restoration projects can be multiplied even more powerfully through the use of micro-credit. Given even a small but a sustainable source of income, local residents can leverage these new resources by borrowing through well-focused micro-credit programmes, enabling them to make further, even more ambitious plans, and to turn those plans into realities.

I am pleased to report that our own Microcredit Finance institution has just launched a new program here in Zanzibar - and is planning to extend some 1000 loans within the coming year, totaling almost one half million US Dollars.

For Forodhani Park, as for all of our Historic City efforts, the watchword is sustainability. Each project must generate enough income not only to balance the books each year but also to reinvest in maintenance and further development. Our mandate is that no such

project should require future support from government or any other institution, but should stand on its own, as an entirely independent engine of community progress.

In summing up, we might well describe each of these initiatives, including Forodhani Park as gifts to the future.

For, even as we look back in time at a moment like this – so we should also look thoughtfully ahead.

Even as we sense today the influence of the distant past, so we should also think of generations yet unborn - people who will live here and people who will visit, and who will see these sites as gateways to their own history.

And of course we must also look to the more immediate future. We are ready now for Phase Two of the Seafront Rehabilitation Project, working with the World Bank and the Government of Zanzibar to rehabilitate an additional 315 metres of the seafront wall, while widening the area to facilitate pedestrian communication and traffic flow along Mizangani Road. Infrastructure improvements will also be critical, including items such as road surfaces, waste disposal, water and power supplies, signage and public lighting.

Finally, if our goal is to see all of the historic buildings along this seafront truly restored, with new purpose, and contributing anew to the quality of life for those who live and visit here, then I would include in that dream a new Indian Ocean Maritime Museum. Such a museum would celebrate appropriately a centuries-long story of international and intercultural accomplishment, with Zanzibar at its very heart. An Indian Ocean Maritime Museum would join the existing House of Wonders and the Palace Museum as part of Stone Town's great cultural hub. And should the Orphanage Building next to this Park ever have a different destiny, could it not be an ideal home for Zanzibar's newest museum? The Aga Khan Trust for Culture would most certainly support such a unique and exciting initiative.

Part of what makes this site so captivating, is that it links the natural environment with the built environment, the Divine Creation, on the one hand with human creativity on the other. Here endless seascapes humble us in the face of the eternal and unknowable - while a splendid cityscape expresses the confident accomplishments of particular historic moments.

It is not surprising that the waterfront area of Stone Town has been designated as a World Heritage Site. And it is heartening to know that so many of you share a deep appreciation and affection for this site - for what it has meant in the past - and for what it can now mean, for the community, and for those who will share in its beauty for many years to come.

Thank you for being part of this memorable occasion.



## Speech at the Opening Ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, Dubai

06 October 2009, The Ismaili Centre Dubai

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum  
Your Highness Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan  
Honourable Ministers  
Your Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

*As-Salaam-o-Alaikum*

I am deeply pleased that all of you have been able to join us for the inauguration of this elegant new Ismaili Centre. Your presence is itself a symbol of the wonderful diversity that characterizes Dubai. Your interest and support gives added meaning to our celebration – as we honour today a great architectural accomplishment, the exciting institutional activities



for which it will provide a home, and the remarkable people who have made all of this possible.

Those extraordinary people include, of course, His Highness Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, who has so generously given the land for this Centre. Let me express once again, on behalf of the Ismaili community, our profound appreciation to His Highness and his family.

I am particularly pleased that you, Your Highness Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum have again honoured us with your presence today. You were so gracious as to witness the ceremony at which the foundation stone of this Centre was laid a little over four years ago.

And let me also acknowledge, with deepest gratitude, the many other donors to this project, in Dubai and in so many other places, as well as those who designed and constructed and decorated this building and its adjacent park. Your dedication and generosity have been at the very heart of the long planning and building process which culminates so happily at this moment.

We gather today at a special place – and at a special time.

We welcome our new Ismaili Centre in a setting which has itself become a great centre – a hub of cosmopolitan activity, a truly global crossroads. We hear a great deal these days about the words “convergence” and “connectivity.” In my judgment, Dubai is a place where those words truly come to life. Dubai has become the very embodiment of the global village, placing itself at the forefront of an enormous surge toward global convergence.

The Dubai ethic is one that honours a generous exchange of knowledge and ideas, that welcomes the opportunity to learn from others, that celebrates not only our historic identities but also our open horizons.

This ethic of exploration and interconnectedness is one that is deeply shared by the Ismaili community. It is an ethic, in fact, that is firmly rooted in our faith – a value system which grows from deeply spiritual roots.

It understands that human diversity is itself a gift of Allah – that pluralism is not a threat but a blessing. It sees the desire to explore and connect as a way to learn and grow – not to dilute our identities but to enrich our self-knowledge. This ethic emanates ultimately from a relationship to the Divine which inspires a deep sense of personal humility – and a relationship to humankind which is infused with a spirit of generous service and mutual respect.

This new Centre is itself a profoundly spiritual place. Its defining symbolism is inspired by the Fatimid tradition – stretching back over 1000 years and widely shared with sister

traditions throughout the Islamic world – from Baghdad to Bokhara. As its architects have so effectively realized, this building exists fundamentally as a place for peaceful contemplation, but one that is set in a social context. It is not a place to hide from the world, but rather a place which inspires us to engage our worldly work as a direct extension of our faith.

Sheikh Mohammad has provided a powerful example of how the ethics of our Islamic faith can be taken into the world, through his affirmation of a pillar of Islamic values, the spirit of generosity toward others. As he wrote recently, and I quote him, “I always ask: How can I help? What can I do for people? How can I improve people's lives? That's part of my value system. The Dubai narrative is all about changing people's lives for the better...”

In that spirit, His Highness, in describing Dubai has replaced the word “Capitalist” with the word “Catalyst” – in that it inspires those who live and work here to greater levels of personal accomplishment. His philosophy, to paraphrase John Kennedy, calls us to ask “not what one can achieve for oneself, but what one can help others achieve.” And this, too, is an expression which grows out of deeply rooted Islamic principles.

In our Development Network we have used a slightly different vocabulary to describe a very similar commitment. We like to talk about building what we call an “enabling environment,” one that can provide what we have called “the spark” which can “ignite” a spirit of individual determination.

Our Development Network pursues that objective in many places in many ways – one apt example is the early childhood education programme here at the Ismaili Centre – a long-term investment in moulding human character at the most formative time of its life.

Of course, we must be realistic about the challenges we face. This is a region, after all, which Sheikh Mohammad has described as a “tough neighbourhood” – the locus in recent years of tragic clashes and cleavages, including many divisions within Islam itself. And yet at the same time, this is a region of powerful potential and promise. That promise will be increasingly fulfilled as the Islamic world learns to embrace ever more effectively the spirit of fundamental cohesion expressed so well in the Amman Declaration of 2005, along with its affirmation that the variety of expressions within Islam is not a curse but “a mercy.” That spirit of comity, in turn, can become a great Islamic contribution to the future of this region – and to the future of our world.

Just as Dubai is indeed a very special place, this is also a very special time. For me this is particularly true because this new beginning coincides with my 50th year as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims – a Golden Jubilee moment which connects the past to the future for me and in a special way.

And that is what this celebration today is all about – at a time of demanding challenge, we look for strength and inspiration from our spiritual and cultural roots.



My thanks again to all of you for sharing in this special moment.

Thank You.



## Inauguration of Khorog City Park

10 October 2009, Khorog, Tajikistan

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency, First Deputy Prime Minister, Asadullo Gulomov  
Your Excellency, Chairman of Gorno Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast, Qodiri Qosim  
Your Excellency, Governor of Afghan Badakhshan, Alhaj Bazmuhammad Ahmadi  
Distinguished Guests

Today's inaugural ceremony marks the culmination of a wonderful process - stretching back over more than a decade.

I am honored and humbled to remember that the site where we meet today was graciously presented to me by the then Chairman on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of my Imamate. Then, some five years ago, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture began a rich and productive conversation about this site with the people of Khorog. We talked about how we might create a new and upgraded park in this place - what it would try to do - how it might be used - and what it should ideally look like.

Those conversations quickly fixed on one central goal: to offer all those who would enter here a place for personal reflection, for genuine relaxation, and for deep renewal. Our objective from the start was to ensure that this would always be a tranquil green space - serving all of the people who live in Khorog - and all of those who visit this city.

The development of Khorog City Park has been a cooperative response in many respects. Access to green spaces is clearly an important value for the residents of Khorog. Our vision for the Park is that visitors will truly think of the time they spend here as “quality time” - in the fullest sense of that word - moments in their lives during which their spirits will be deeply enriched, hours filled with experiences that they will both enjoy and remember as times of blessing.

That will happen in part because of the music and dance and other cultural events that will be presented here - especially in the new open-air theatre. It will happen in part because of the group discussions and lively conversations that will take place here - and the children who will play here - swimming in the summer, for example, and skating in the winter. It will happen in part because of the great celebrations that will take place here - including holiday ceremonies and festivals. And it will also happen because this will be a wonderful setting for individual reflection and contemplation - inspired by the beauty of this place - including the sounds and the sight of running water - in itself a mysterious, ever-changing and always-inspiring natural force. We see Khorog Park as a place of continuity - playing an intimate role from the earliest weeks of a child's life until that child grows to become a grown-up with his or her own family. And we also see it as a place of change - a park for all seasons of the annual calendar - transforming itself to capture the particular beauty of each particular time of the year.

The Park is not only a place of beauty to be enjoyed by many generations of future citizens and visitors to Khorog, it is also one of the earliest symbols of the processes of change for which I hope and pray in this region. As one example of this process, and in close collaboration with the Governments of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, we took the decision to build a new university to serve the high mountain peoples of these three countries and the region more generally. Toward that end, we are pleased that work is progressing on creating the Tajik campus of this university here in Khorog.

In addition, the amazing beauty of this area of the Pamirs, along with the presence of the university, will surely attract more and more visitors to come to this city in the future. In order to address this new development, we are planning, in collaboration with the central Government and the Government of the Oblast, significantly to enhance the capabilities of Khorog airport, so that regular air transport can become a normal feature for those who wish to visit.

The new patterns of visitation will also require new residential capacities, and it is our intention to build a new quality hotel in Khorog while also encouraging the construction of other hotels and leisure facilities, such as restaurants.

You may also know that the Aga Khan Trust for Culture has recently completed a comprehensive town planning report to present to your government - and is preparing now for the second stage of that planning exercise.

I mention all of these initiatives to give the peoples of Badakhshan, both from here and from across the river, a sense of confidence that there will be new opportunities in the years ahead to benefit from an improved quality of life, to find stable and remunerative employment, to have access to quality education and health care.

Throughout this part of the world, one reflection of how the natural environment is revered and hallowed has been the importance accorded to Green Spaces, like the one we celebrate today. This quality has been a central part of Tajik and Central Asian culture - down through the centuries. I recall, for example, how the poet Saeb Tabrizi, wrote about beautiful gardens, in any season - and in every season - saying that they are places where even "the morning dew awaits with expectant eyes and heart."

It is indeed with "expectant eyes and heart" that all of us gather here today to inaugurate on an official basis, the Khorog City Park. It is in that spirit that I join with you in celebrating the contribution which the Park will make to the quality of life in this community - for many years and many decades to come.

Thank You.



## **Nouvel Economiste Philanthropic Entrepreneur of the Year 2009 Award**

17 December 2009, Paris, France

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

The First President,  
Minister,  
Your Excellencies,  
Your Excellency, the Rector,  
Commissioner for diversity and equal opportunities,  
Distinguished representatives of the President's office, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior and Paris Town Hall,  
Distinguished guests,  
Chairman of the Board of M6,  
Editor in Chief and Associate Director of the Nouvel Economiste,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
I shall begin by saying how honoured I am to be given the Nouvel Economiste Philanthropic Entrepreneur of the Year 2009 Award in this splendid setting, the Palais Cambon.

I particularly wish to thank Madame Tchakaloff, for her very kind words, as well as the entire editorial team under the leadership of Monsieur Nijdam, for having singled me out. I would also like to thank the sponsor of this ceremony, and here, I turn to you, Mr First President, our gracious host. And of course I also wish to greet the Finance Minister, who is on a trip to Lebanon and Syria and sends us warm greetings through Madame Cotta. Thank you.

I also turn to His Excellency Rector Dali Boubakeur, whom I am delighted to see here, and who, at particular moments of my life in France, has honoured me with his friendship and advice. I also pay tribute through him to the Great Mosque of Paris, which my family and I look upon with great friendship and respect, and express my gratitude for everything he has done for Muslims in France.

Allow me to move straight on to the subject of this speech, which is to share with you the experience gained over the past five decades during which the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) has been built up.

I shall focus my talk on the strategy we implement, which will enable me to outline the notion of philanthropic enterprise.

First, a few figures:

The AKDN Foundation is an umbrella organization which coordinates the activities of over 200 agencies and institutions that make up the network, employing a total of 70,000 paid staff and 100,000 volunteers;

The network operates in 35 of the poorest countries in the world and is statutorily secular.

This tableau is of course merely a momentary snapshot of a constantly evolving process, but its contours are clearly defined enough today for us to speak about goals, strategy and method.

The goal is clear: the aim is to create or strengthen civil society in developing countries. This single goal, when it is achieved, is in fact necessary and sufficient to ensure peaceful and stable development over the long term, even when governance is problematic.

As regards the strategy, civil society obviously cannot exist without apolitical and secular civil institutions, in particular social, cultural and economic ones. The essence of our development strategy is thus to create these where they are lacking or need to be reinforced.

Lastly, the method. It first involves answering the question as to whether it is the right moment to create the institution and, in the affirmative, to bring together the human and financial resources to get it off the ground.

The various organizations within the AKDN fall into two categories which both share the same goal of supporting development: commercial companies (grouped together into the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development, known as AKFED) and those non-profit enterprises which I call “para-companies,” that work toward social or cultural goals.

The reason for this dual structure is that civil society cannot emerge solely by starting businesses or solely by building hospitals, schools and universities or cultural facilities.

It is the architecture of this dual company/para-company structure that I would now like to present.

I will start by saying that the two abide by a set of common rules.

First of all, they must implement current best management practices in their respective areas of competence and keep up-to-date in this regard. Among these practices I might point out one that is particularly difficult to achieve, and that is: the ability to withstand a crisis.

Another common rule is, they must be designed in such a way as to have measurable benefits for the local population, the general target being the very poor, and among them, rural communities.

I should also like to point out this rule: projects located in countries emerging from domestic or international conflict, or undergoing a change in their economic fundamentals, should not be dismissed, but should on the contrary often even be sought out. It is indeed in such circumstances that the poorest populations need the most attention.

All this requires very special skills and long-term AKDN involvement, if only to ensure that the managerial culture becomes strong enough for “best practice” reflexes to truly take hold.

And now, turning to AKFED commercial enterprises, we’re talking about approximately 150 companies in some 15 countries. They employ over 30,000 people and generate a turnover of two billion dollars.

They indirectly provide a living for millions of people, in particular in the agribusiness sector. To give you an example, AKFED developed green bean farming in Kenya by providing 50,000 farmers with technical assistance and buying their produce for export to



Europe. The company has 2,000 employees, turns a profit and indirectly provides a living for 500,000 people.

Specific rules govern AKFED companies. I will discuss two of the essential ones.

The first is that AKDN investments earmarked for AKFED projects should in most cases be made in the form of long-term equity participation. This is to avoid the risk of excessive debt.

The second is that AKFED's share of profits must be entirely reinvested in the group's projects. This is a fundamental feature of AKFED projects, the rule being that any return on investment should solely benefit the population of the country where it has been made.

Commercial activity alone is not enough to create or strengthen civil society. It also takes para-companies. These are in fact so essential that AKDN commits four times more resources to them as to the profit-making sector.

Para-companies are designed to be economically independent. An urban and rural network of schools such as the one we manage in Pakistan, a university hospital such as the Aga Khan hospital in Nairobi and a park such as Al-Azhar in Cairo, thus can be perfectly well conceived to produce a surplus to ensure their survival and development as long as an entrepreneurial philosophy underpins the creation process and later the day-to-day management. This notion of surplus, it should be pointed out, in no way conflicts with the non-profit status of para-companies.

In any event, one condition in order for a para-company to attain financial independence is that its start-up cost must be covered by an outright gift from the AKDN, supplemented in some cases from partner donations, usually from national or international financial development institutions.

I do not wish to go over the allotted time, but I would like to conclude by emphasizing that an important function of the network's umbrella organization, the AKDN Foundation, is to work closely with the governments of the countries with which we cooperate.

With France, this work is particularly intense, and I'm happy to report that in 2008, the French Delegation of the AKDN Foundation, the largest of all, signed a cooperation agreement with the French state and the French Development Agency to assist 23 developing countries, involving all the AKDN's areas of activity.

This brief presentation of AKDN companies and para-companies should not give the impression that the work of each is entirely separate from the other. On the contrary, both being part of the AKDN, the two types of organizations are able to offer each other mutual support.

For instance, a commercial or industrial AKFED company can set up endowment funds to subsidize access for the poor to top-quality medical services or to help one of the network's microfinance banks.

In return, through their enormous contribution to building civil society, para-companies create a space conducive to the development of AKFED companies.

Of course, the major principles guiding the AKDN are difficult to implement, and we have met with occasional disappointment. We have had enough successful achievements, however, to convince us to stay the course.

In other words, development works!

I am pleased to have had this opportunity to explain to you how, on the basis of a few fairly simple but fairly uncommon principles, we have tried to relieve hardship in the world and to help create peaceful, enlightened civil societies that are proud of their culture.

Lastly, and I say this tongue in cheek, I hope I have convinced you that I am neither a typical entrepreneur nor an ordinary philanthropist, and therefore may not deserve this award.

Thank you.



## London Conference on Afghanistan

28 January 2010, London, UK

Mr. Chairman,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

We express our sincere gratitude to the UK Government for organising the London Conference which has called upon the Afghan Government and the International Community at this critical time to review and prioritise policy directions for Afghanistan.

The Aga Khan Development Network joins in the wider sentiments expressed today for strong continued support for the development of a stable, progressive and plural Afghanistan. The challenges that face us in the fields of security, development and governance are all too clear and call for our collective wisdom and experience as we look ahead. We commend the strategy outlined by General McChrystal and underscore that stability and security can only be brought about through parallel and interrelated interventions in security, socio-economic development and governance.

In reflecting on the lessons learnt by the Aga Khan Development Network over the past seven years in Afghanistan, we would like to focus on a few key points drawing from our experience in the wider region, gained from extensive investments in development activities at the community, provincial and national levels:

1. Much focus over the years has centred heavily on the capital, Kabul, and the central government. Insufficient attention has been paid to the real impact of the generous investments made by donor countries. Do enough Afghans perceive these investments as improving their quality of their life? It is vitally important to demonstrate that local governments and local actors working together with local communities can meet pressing needs. We know too well from experience in Afghanistan and elsewhere that nefarious elements gain the upper hand when there is a gap between the promise of state-supported services and their tangible delivery on the ground. Results change minds, not rhetoric. AKDN's involvement in national programmes, such as the National Solidarity Programme, which place directly the onus of meeting development needs and setting priorities on communities, is showing remarkable progress, speaking to the entrepreneurial vigour of Afghans. Community elected councils are not only driving processes that improve the quality of life but are playing an integral role in the birth and evolution of grass-roots civil society institutions that are able to govern themselves. Investing in the creation of such civil society institutions, and in their capacity to deliver services, deserves much greater attention, support and resources than has hitherto been the case, even as investments in rebuilding the state institutions continue.
2. We note the tremendous vitality and resilience of Afghan entrepreneurship, which has enabled Afghans to endure and survive 23 years of war. Today, microfinance borrowers are still unable to access credit which would enable them to transit into small and medium enterprises. This is due to a variety of reasons, such as the fact that land cannot be used as capital due to the lack of an effective land ownership and registration framework. We encourage the Afghan Government to focus, as a priority, on creating the enabling conditions for private sector development and economic growth. The Enabling Environment Conference in 2007, hosted by AKDN and the Government of Afghanistan, defined a road map for private sector and social development. Resolving the issues identified and implementing the road map will undoubtedly accelerate socio-economic growth and development.
3. Development planning needs to be tailored to the socio-economic and political needs and realities of each province. Afghanistan is diverse: culturally, ethnically and geographically. The equation for development that addresses challenges in Helmand, for example, will be very different from that for Badakhshan. Provincial level planning that examines economic potential and opportunities, social needs and access, as well as investments in provincial and district capacity building should not only begin to address more effectively the challenges at hand but also delineate roles and responsibilities among the key actors: PRTs, NGOs, Government etc. Security issues prevent access to many communities in the South and the South East

but creating successful case studies in provinces where enabling conditions exist will provide a significant signal to other communities that change and development are possible, if there is willingness to cooperate.

4. Although Afghanistan is recognised as a regional land bridge, east and west, north and south, there are still few tangible projects that speak to the realisation of this regional potential, as acknowledged at the meeting of the region's Foreign Ministers in France in December 2008. AKDN is applying a regional approach to health, education, energy and infrastructure between the Badakhshans of Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Indeed such an investment would connect China to Kabul through Tajikistan, opening new trade corridors. That will inevitably have social and economic fall-out benefits for the communities and the country as a whole. Of our programmes and investments, we ask, how can we link the poor to growth and growth to the poor through subregional and regional investments? We submit that this requires willingness to support small-scale and middle-level investments in the short term that may not immediately be considered financially sustainable, but which our experience has shown would have the necessary medium to long term returns and economic benefits.

Overall we would emphasise four fundamental building blocks necessary to achieve a minimum critical mass of interventions that would improve Afghans' quality of life and opportunities: security; participation; ownership (both of assets and the development process); and institution building of the state and civil society. If resources allocated to each of these elements were better balanced, much more would be achieved by development efforts across the country.

With over US\$ 150 million spent in Afghanistan from a total AKDN pledge of US\$ 200 million by His Highness the Aga Khan, the Aga Khan Development Network remains committed to the stability and growth of this important country and its people.



## "Marketplace on Innovative Financial Solutions for Development"

04 March 2010, Paris, France

Honourable Minister,  
Deputy Director-General,  
Distinguished invitees,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here with you today and a great pleasure to greet the other patrons: the Agence Française de Développement, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the World Bank. Each has proved to be a highly valued partner of the Aga Khan Development Network. We are very grateful to them, and I express my heartfelt thanks for their invitation.

When preparing this speech, I thought I would tell you about generic difficult problems we encounter, such as the adequacy of financial development instruments to the needs of development projects.



I am thinking for example of projects which cannot receive financing from the Bretton Woods institutions or other regional inter-governmental financing agencies, and cannot meet traditional commercial financing criteria nor bear their cost either.

Other subjects are the lack of planning and coordination in many countries of Asia and Africa, where we are very active, and public-private sector consultation in the provision of education and health services.

As far as those who finance development are concerned, it is a strategic issue which must be resolved. There are numerous issues of this kind, and they will certainly feature in your discussions.

I thought that it would be helpful to give specific examples of situations the Aga Khan Development Network has encountered in the field, and then to ask you to consider the issues I am going to raise and to suggest solutions useful to us all.

I would like to mention major international financing principles here. For us, in the Aga Khan Development Network, the fundamental problem lies in translating funds into effective programmes, institutions and activities in the poorest countries in the world. We have to convert the principles followed by financiers in international financial organisations into action in the field.

I realise that these issues may not fit easily into how your organisations categorise things, but please bear in mind that our approach reflects our experience in the field.

As you may know, the challenge of global development has been one of my central preoccupations over the last fifty years. In striving to understand the lives of widely dispersed Ismaili communities, I have also become immersed in the lives of their host societies. And I have been joined in that immersion by the institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network and our 60,000 employees, in more than 30 countries. Our experience, like yours, has been filled with both satisfactions and frustrations.

Over these fifty years, the world has made enormous, indeed breathtaking progress in many areas, but often where the needs are most urgent, our progress has been too slow. We have learned how to address particular symptoms of poverty, but unforeseen variables have diluted our impact. Perhaps most importantly, we have often failed to predict and to pre-empt tragic developments, such as famines and civil conflicts, even when they have been brewing over decades of despair.

The recent economic crisis has deepened such problems, adding to the urgency of our mission. Time is therefore more of the essence than ever before, and unless we can markedly accelerate our performance, our tasks will be further multiplied. Confronting these challenges, creatively and urgently, is nothing short of a moral imperative.



So the issue comes back to how do you translate international public will to support, into effective action in countries; the poorest countries of our world. That is the problem we deal with every day in the Aga Khan Development Network.

In fashioning our response, a heightened capacity for predicting risk and developing anticipatory responses will be critical. Predictability must become a key objective of our work; it is a science, which deserves far more attention from the development community.

I have no magical answers to offer. But I come to you this morning as one who has been watching and listening carefully in the developing world for a long time, and who has shared with my Network colleagues a point of view which we describe as looking “from the bottom up.” Our experience in the field has encouraged us to focus on the complexities and subtleties of development, to think as pragmatically and holistically as possible, and to develop responses which are punctual, targeted, and replicable.

I don't mean to short-change the need for expanding financial resources and development. But a realistic assessment tells us that resource growth will be difficult, indeed we have learned recently, and regrettably, that government contributions have fallen short of the numbers that were pledged just five years ago.

But even as we work to change that picture, we also have a special obligation to maximise the impact of whatever resources are at hand. And again, the question is: how do you do that in the field? In order to do that, the first question I have asked is whether the nature of the development process itself has changed over time. I believe that it has. Let me explain this view by citing five principles which have grown out of our development experience.

First, I would cite the rising importance of civil society; by which I mean those not-for-profit organizations which are driven by a public service agenda. Increasingly, I believe, a cross section of civil society players can be major engines for progress in developing societies, particularly when governments are underperforming.

Secondly, I would underscore the growing potential of what some call PPP's - public-private partnerships. Such collaborations can tap the unique strengths of both sectors, overcoming outmoded dogmas which depreciate the role of the market-driven enterprises on the one hand, or which denigrate the capacities of publicly supported agencies on the other. Effective public-private partnerships must be genuinely participative, as committed leaders coordinate their thinking, sharing objectives, sharing strategies, sharing resources, sharing predictions. And this approach can be powerful, indeed very powerful, in the social and cultural development fields, not only in the more established economic one.

A third guiding concept for our Network, as for others, is what we call Multi-Input Area Development. The acronym is horrible, it's MIAD - but we use it a lot. Singular inputs alone will not do the job - not in the time available, not across the wide spectrum of needs. But if

we can work simultaneously and synergistically on several fronts, then progress in one area will spur progress in other areas. The whole can be greater than the sum of its parts.

The fourth touchstone is the recognition that social diversity, the pluralism of peoples, is an asset, not a liability for the development process. Even as we address the complexities of development in one context, we must also differentiate more clearly among contexts. Impoverished peoples are more diversified than is sometimes appreciated. Some 70 percent of the world's poor live in rural environments, where diversity - ethnic, religious, social, economic, linguistic, political - is like a kaleidoscope that history shakes every day. Often these local distinctions can provide valuable levers for long-term progress.

Fifth and finally, I would mention what many call "Quality of Life Assessments", a more adequate way to measure the results of our work. Quite simply, we need to embrace a wider array of evaluative criteria, both quantitative and qualitative, elements which the poor themselves take into account when assessing their own well-being.

As we measure outcomes with greater breadth, we will move beyond an excessive reliance on traditional categories, such as average productivity levels, or per acre yields, or per capita national product, or rates of population growth. Yes, these are all significant variables, but they come alive only as they transform the quality of daily living for the populations involved in ways in which they, and their children, can see and value.

This concern with quality assessments, of course, is not limited to the developing world. You may recall how President Sarkozy, speaking at the Sorbonne last September, described the inadequacies of traditional economic measurements. This view was echoed by the OECD - representing its 30 member countries - in calling for a new basket of quantitative and qualitative standards which reflect local conditions and local values.

And so the question I would pose is this: can we find new ways to fund the strengthening of civil society, to support broader public private partnerships, to encourage multi-input area development, to adapt to pluralistic human contexts, and to embrace a wider array of qualitative and quantitative measurements?

Let me turn from the general to the specific. And here I will share with you examples of important initiatives being taken in various parts of the world which fall outside this traditional context of international funding and it is therefore a set of examples which I think will be useful for you as you discuss new methods of funding development.

One area of the world in which our work has been focused is in the high mountain regions of Central Asia. Badakhshan, for example, is a sensitive region in eastern Tajikistan and Afghanistan, where the same ethnic community is divided by a river which is also a national border, and where both groups live in extreme poverty. Here we are pursuing a coordinated programme involving water and land management, health and education, energy and transportation, microfinance and telecommunications, culture and tourism.

With inputs from many partners, and an emphasis on local choice, this effort touches the lives of a million people.

But having described this promising example let me ask how such initiatives might best be financed. If this programme works, could it be applied to the similarly divided Pashtun peoples, who live at the other end of Afghanistan and in neighbouring Pakistan? And is it not predictable that once the military have left that area, a new birth of civil society institutions will be required?

A second illustrative AKDN project in the same region is the new University of Central Asia. There are 25 million people who live in this high mountain environment, but there has been no specialised tertiary institution to educate them. And so a new independent, self-governing University of Central Asia was founded under an international agreement between the governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and myself. It will have campuses in all three countries. It will specialise in educating people for high mountain environments. But I ask again: how do we best mobilise resources for ventures like this, which span the public private divide, cross national frontiers, and address a fundamental educational vacuum?

In another part of the world, we have been involved for 25 years in a once-degraded neighbourhood amid the ruins of old Islamic Cairo. The creation there of the Al-Azhar Park has been a powerful catalyst for urban renewal in the impoverished district of Darb al-Ahmar. This environmental and archaeological project has grown into a residential, recreational and cultural cityscape, attracting two million visitors a year and producing impressive, sustainable, and measurable economic growth.

Tens of thousands of the ultra-poor who live in this area live now with new hope for a better life. Using historic preservation as a linchpin for development is an eminently replicable approach. But here again, what are the funding instruments for development where culture is the driving force for change?

A fourth example comes from East Africa, where the Aga Khan University leads in establishing an East African Health System, a regional, not-for-profit, private sector initiative. Its focus is also multi-faceted: including community health services, secondary and tertiary referral hospitals, medical and nursing education, and state-of-the-art technologies. It will serve the populations of Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. But again, how does an effort which is essentially non-governmental, but which interfaces with five different governments, best find the funding it requires? Happily, I can begin to answer that question by citing the creative response which has been given to this initiative by the Agence Française de Développement.

Each of the cases I have cited today is singular. Each requires tailored financial instruments to succeed. They seem quasi-impossible to find. But it is here, in addressing new development challenges, that you and your colleagues can have a truly significant impact.

I wish you well. Thank you.



## Conference marking the 50th Anniversary of the Nation Media Group: "Media and the African Promise"

18 March 2010, Nairobi, Kenya

His Excellency Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya  
His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda  
His Excellency Kalonzo Musyoka, Vice President of Kenya  
Rt. Hon. Raila Amolo Odinga, Prime Minister of Kenya  
His Excellency Joaquim Chissano, former President of Mozambique  
His Excellency Benjamin Mkapa, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania  
Hon. Samuel Poghiso, Minister for Information and Communication, Republic of Kenya  
Honourable Ministers  
Your Excellencies  
Ladies and gentlemen

I am genuinely pleased to join you at this conference - an event which looks back at a distinguished past, and ahead to a daunting future.  
The presence at this conference of President Kibaki and many other government leaders, past and present, has immense importance for me personally and for the Nation Media Group. For there is no doubt that relations between governments and the media are central

to the future of Africa, challenging and even exasperating as that experience at times may be.

In many respects, this has been a new challenge for Africa. Prior to independence there were no national media owners, no national newspapers, television or radio stations, no indigenous corps of trained journalists. Newly independent governments had to work with media which had no African antecedents, even as both political leaders and journalists wrestled with massive debates about capitalism, communism and non-alignment.

It was against this backdrop that I decided to create the first East African media group. I was 24, and had no background – whatsoever – in the media field. In Swahili, I was Kutia Mkono Gizani. Or as we say in English, “the blind leading the blind.”

I am tempted to reminisce at some length about those early days - our big dreams and the steps we took to achieve them. And I would be remiss if I did not take this moment to salute those who have devoted so much time and talent to the progress of the Nation Media Group - in those opening days and ever since.

What did we hope and predict for the Group 50 years ago? We certainly aspired for its transformation from a loss making infant enterprise to a profitable blue chip corporation, and then its transformation from a private venture into a public company - owned principally today by many thousands of local shareholders. We also worked to stay ahead on the technology front, determined not to burden Africa with outmoded production techniques.

What we may not have foreseen, is how the company would diversify and expand - into the whole of East Africa - into television and radio, and now onto the Internet - enabling us to connect our work intimately with the wider world.

But even as we look back with pride, we must also take this occasion to look forward.

As we do, our goal, I submit, should be a future in which Africa will be served by some of the greatest, most respected, media enterprises of the world - an Africa in which both Governments and the media respect and abide by their appropriate roles in your still young democracies.

What should those roles be? This question, too, has been with us from the very start. For we were also aware back then of a critical historical pattern: the fact that, in many places, much of the time, the transmission of news had been the work of advocates - organizations with agendas - political parties, special interest groups and governments.

News media that sought independence, generally speaking, had a difficult life. One of them was the now defunct British newspaper, the News Chronicle, edited by the late Michael Curtis, who later played such a central role in the Nation story. With him, we believed that

the tradition of non-aligned newspapers was the most appropriate for Africa. We still believe that today.

It has not always been easy to explain this role - to share our understanding that independence from parties, or interest groups or governments should not and does not mean some sort of reflexive opposition to them. Not having a special agenda does not imply some counter-agenda. Being independent is not the same thing as being oppositional.

Truly independent media cannot be predictably partisan, narrowly politicized, nor superficially personalized. Journalistic shortcomings cannot be disguised behind political or partisan agendas. So the idea of “best practice” became a second NMG goal: to try to identify, educate, and harness the best media talent we could find.

Recent studies from the Freedom House organization report that media freedom is increasingly threatened globally. For every nation that moves forward in terms of press freedom, two nations are said to be slipping backward. Media freedom requires continuing vigilance.

But here let me sound a word of caution. Freedom, in any area of human activity, does not mean the moral license to abuse that freedom. It would be a sad thing if the people of Africa in the name of freedom, were expected to welcome the worst of media practices, whether they are home-grown or imported.

I am convinced that the best way for media, in Africa and elsewhere, to maintain their independence is to prove their indispensability.

This is not an easy task. Information flows more quickly, over longer distances at lower cost than ever before. But sometimes more information – in and of itself - can also mean more misinformation, more confusion, more manipulation, more superficial snapshots of events, lacking nuance, lacking context, or hiding agendas.

We talk a great deal - in Africa in particular - about protecting and improving our natural environment. Similarly, we should be increasingly vigilant about protecting and improving our media environment.

So let us take a closer look at what this could mean in practice for African media.

First, it should be, in my view, more African, taking the lead in addressing Africa - specific concerns intelligently and wisely.

As African media work to sustain African identity and culture, one of the issues we face is language. In Kenya, for example, Swahili readership has been shrinking compared to



English readership, while in Tanzania, the opposite is true. How should public policy makers and the communication industry support traditional languages?

On another front, I think we must focus more on questions of media ownership. For as long as I can remember, the quality of African journalists has been topic number one. But I wonder if the principal issue is not rather about the aims and intentions of the owners of communications enterprises. What are their agendas - personal, religious, political, economic?

Crisis management is another issue where the industry must be better prepared. During times of crisis, how do African media leaders respond? We know the challenges - NMG experienced them during the Kenyan crisis two years ago - as did so many others - tribalism, gangsterism, disinformation, corruption and religious intolerance are horrible forces which the media in Africa must sometimes face.

Of course we also have seen - here and elsewhere - courageous, and even heroic, media efforts to respond to these crises and to point the way out. But can African media do more?

When there are strong and legitimate opportunities to give credit for positive African initiatives, is African media paying attention? So many countries where I work, for example, have dysfunctional constitutions - but in many African countries this problem is being wisely addressed. Do we recognize such efforts? In many African places, as well, intelligent regionalism is replacing narrow-minded nationalism, but I wonder if the media gives sufficient credit.

When independence came to most sub-Saharan African countries, nearly all professions were under-developed: law, medicine, education, nursing, public administration .... and journalism. In some professions remuneration was inadequate to attract the most talented. Today that is improving. In my view the time has come when a sometimes dysfunctional relationship born out of government inexperience or media shallowness can be replaced by a new level of constructive intellectual empathy. I am convinced that an improved relationship is now possible. No! It is essential - if African development is to progress at the pace African peoples need and want.

Spirited debate, intelligent inquiry, informed criticism, principled disagreement - these qualities must continue to characterize a healthy media sector. At the same time, advancing the cause of media responsibility, grounded in professional competence, is nothing less than a moral imperative.

But all of these aspirations must be rooted in better education.

I take up this topic today in my role as Chancellor of the Aga Khan University - an institution which is now 25 years old and based in eight countries, including Kenya,

Uganda, Tanzania, Pakistan, Afghanistan, the United Kingdom, Syria and Egypt. This University, which originally focused on health sciences and education, is now pursuing a widening array of subjects.

I am pleased to tell you that The Aga Khan University is planning to establish a new Graduate School of Media and Communications, based in East Africa and dedicated to advancing the excellence of media performance and the strengthening of ethical media practices throughout the developing world.

The School will be driven, above all, by an absolute commitment to quality.

It will have several components. It will offer a Masters Degree program, serving recent university graduates as well as media owners, managers, and mid-career journalists. It will also offer continuing education classes - short courses designed to enhance media skills and to nurture media values. It will establish a special program in media management - one of the first in the developing world - devoted to enhancing more robust media institutions. Journalistic independence, after all, depends on financial independence.

In addition, the new School will create a Forum on the Media Future, a place for conducting and disseminating cutting edge research that will help shape public communication in the decades ahead.

In all of these efforts, the School will be driven by an active public service agenda providing a resource for the media community throughout Africa - and in places beyond.

The School's emphasis on the developing world will be reflected in its faculty and student body, as well its curriculum and research pursuits. We foresee, for example, a strong emphasis on using the case study method in our courses, as many law and business schools now do, drawing lessons from concrete historical examples. We intend to develop case studies which grow out of African media experiences, while also reflecting global best practices. These case studies will address recurrent media issues I have mentioned -such as crisis management, trivialization, incompetent analysis, and corruption.

This new School will also work on the cutting edge of media technology, embracing especially the new on-line world - its complications and its potentials. Here, as in other areas, Africa has the capacity to leap-frog into an advanced position in applying these new technologies. The rapid spread here of mobile phone technology supports this view - as do recent advances in broadband availability - including the new SEACOM undersea cable development.

A new campus hosting this program will be developed in Nairobi over the coming year. It will work closely, of course, not only with the Nation Media Group - but also with other local, continental and international media organizations.

Over the longer term, the Graduate School of Media and Communication will ally itself with another new project of the Aga Khan University - a Faculty of Arts and Sciences, to be created over the coming years in Arusha. In a world of growing complexity, journalists must increasingly understand the substantive, sophisticated dimensions of the fields on which they report - from medical and environmental sciences, to economic and financial disciplines, to legal and constitutional matters. And a new generation of African media entrepreneurs could well be born from programs which blend economic and media disciplines.

We hope and trust the new School will contribute to achieving the objectives I have discussed with you today, and I hope these reflections and opportunities of the African media future will be taken into account. May it be a future in which Africa will be served by some of the greatest most respected, media enterprises of the world.

Thank you.



## **Foreword by His Highness the Aga Khan for the Daily Nation 50th Anniversary special supplement**

18 March 2010, Nairobi, Kenya

*After 5 decades, the future depends on ability to adapt*

*By His Highness the Aga Khan*

*(Reprinted from a foreword to the Daily Nation 50th Anniversary special supplement)*

As the Nation Media Group (NMG) marks its 50th anniversary, it would be too limiting to perceive this occasion as a mere milestone in a history of a media organization, no matter how successful. The Nation's path has been closely entwined with the history of Kenya, East Africa, and the entire continent during a period filled with momentous developments.

NMG itself has undergone a remarkable transformation. From two struggling Kenyan newspapers, one Kiswahili and one English, half a century ago, the group has grown into the largest multi-media enterprise in East and Central Africa. At the same time, the organization has evolved from a small private company into a publicly-traded corporation, one of the largest on the Kenya stock exchange, with a majority of its shares owned by individual East African shareholders.

My own role in the Nation Media Group has also evolved considerably. Seven years ago I gave my personal shares in NMG to the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) – the economic development arm of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). The move not only gave NMG a new source of corporate strength but it also anchored the company in a broader development philosophy designed to bring excellence and best practices to societies in the developing world. It also allowed NMG to benefit from the Network’s significant experience in East Africa.

The Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development is neither a charitable foundation nor a vehicle for wealth generation. It is a for-profit, international development agency that, because of its institutional background and social conscience, invests in projects, which will make a positive contribution to the quality of life for those who are impacted by their activities.

The broader philosophy of the Aga Khan Development Network is founded on the premise that developing societies deserve the best and that settling for less, though often tempting, is an increasingly dangerous option. Our world is competitive: like other AKFED companies, the Nation Media Group must strive to meet world-class standards if it is to thrive and grow in the globalized world of the 21st century.

Our Network, I should also emphasize, is active in a broad range of development fields, from environmental, humanitarian and civil society projects to microfinance and infrastructure investments, to cultural, health-related and educational support. East Africa has been an important setting for our work in all of these arenas, including, most recently, major new initiatives in education.

For example, Kenya is the home of the first functioning Aga Khan Academy, located in Mombasa, and one of a network of 18 schools that will eventually provide world class primary and secondary education to talented students in 14 countries across three continents. I am pleased that East Africa will also host the continent’s first faculty of Arts and Sciences of the Aga Khan University (AKU) as well as the university’s new Graduate School of Media and Communication. It is my sincere hope that the school, which will be initially located in Nairobi and later extended to the new Arusha campus, will help Africa in particular and the developing world in general to develop an ever-stronger corps of owners, media managers, public-spirited professional journalists who will be able to adapt and excel in a rapidly changing media environment.

I believe that the media in general and the Nation Group in particular can play a central role in the shaping of the region and the continent in the years ahead, as part of the growing influence of civil society institutions in an increasingly pluralistic environment. Indeed Kofi Annan, arbitrator of the post-election reconciliation agreement in Kenya, acknowledged the Nation’s work in mobilising the forces of civil society in the cause of stability.

Anniversaries tend to lend themselves to reminiscing about the past— and, most appropriately, to saluting those who have been a part of that past, as I am pleased to join in doing. But commemorative occasions also present an excellent opportunity to look toward the future. NMG has had an impressive record of past achievement , dealing successfully over five decades with a wide variety of challenges and opportunities, and emerging as what some have called a journalistic “Mzee” of East Africa. But now, NMG’s future will depend on its continued ability to learn and to adapt, to attract leaders and employees of the highest quality, and, driven by an ethic of responsible service, maintain the confidence of its reading, viewing, advertising and shareholding constituents.



## Foundation ceremony of the Ismaili Centre, the Aga Khan Museum and their park

28 May 2010, Toronto, Canada

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Prime Minister Harper,  
Madame Clarkson,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by expressing my profound appreciation for the great honour which this country has paid to me today by extending this generous gift of Honorary Canadian Citizenship.

I have been deeply moved by your gracious gesture — which I also regard as a tribute to the institution of the Ismaili Imamat, which I represent. It is a significant recognition of the values which our community of faith shares with the people of Canada.



*Je suis très profondément touché par l'immense honneur que vous m'avez si généreusement accordé, à moi personnellement et à l'Imamat Ismaili.*

Mr Prime Minister, I have always felt very much at home in Canada, but never more so than at this moment.

It also means a great deal to me that all of you can be here today. This Foundation Ceremony marks a particularly important moment for my family and me — and such moments take on added meaning when they can be shared with colleagues and friends, and with so many men and women whom I deeply admire.

The projects we celebrate have been in the development process, as you may know, for some time — and perhaps, if I may say so, for a somewhat longer time than some of us may have expected! But I have learned that sometimes a bit of extra patience in the planning process can lead to even wider opportunities — and that is precisely what happened in this case.

Our original plans were to build here a new Ismaili Jamatkhana, a space of prayer, contemplation and community interaction. But as time went along and added space became available, the concept grew. It now includes three elements: a new Ismaili Centre — the sixth such representational building in the world; a new Aga Khan Museum; and a beautiful, welcoming Park, which will link these two new buildings.

Together, these three projects will symbolise the harmonious integration of the spiritual, the artistic and the natural worlds — in keeping with the holistic ideal which is an intimate part of Islamic tradition. At the same time they will also express a profound commitment to inter-cultural engagement, and international cooperation.

Our gathering this afternoon signifies the emergence of these projects from the planning stage into the building stage — from the realm of creative imagination into the realm of tangible construction.

This creative process has itself been a remarkable international story — bringing together the designs of architects from Japan, India and Lebanon, working with the Toronto firm of Moriyama and Teshima, and adapting age-old architectural traditions in a contemporary Canadian idiom. We look forward to the full realisation of their aspirations.

But even as we look ahead, it is only right that we look also to the past, including of course, the story of Canada's historic welcome to displaced Ismailis in the 1970s and later, and to their successful integration. Certainly this process, and the contributions Ismailis have made in so many walks of life, have also reflected the encouragement they received to rebuild here, their traditional institutions and social structures.

In looking back over these recent decades, I also think of the close cooperation which the Aga Khan Development Network has enjoyed with Canadian institutions such as CIDA — the Canadian International Development Agency — which continues to be a key partner in addressing needs in the developing world.

We appreciate, too, the strong relationships our educational institutions enjoy with great Canadian centres of learning — including McMaster and McGill Universities, the University of Toronto and the University of Alberta.

We are also proud of the partnering with the Canadian Government in the development of the Global Centre for Pluralism, based in Ottawa, which will express our shared conviction that the progress of civilisation depends on our ability to understand, embrace and energise the power of human diversity.

You can see the strong base of cooperative endeavour from which this Wynford Drive project has emerged, inspired as well by Toronto's own success as a vibrant cultural centre.

Let me discuss briefly each of the three project elements, beginning with the Aga Khan Museum.

As our plans began to take shape, we came to realise that the Museum's focus on the arts of Islam will make it a unique institution in North America, contributing to a better understanding of Islamic civilisations — and especially of the plurality within Islam and of Islam's relationship to other traditions. It will be a place for sharing a story, through art and artefacts, of highly diverse achievements — going back over 1 400 years. It will honour the central place within Islam of the search for knowledge and beauty. And it will illuminate the inspiration which Muslim artists have drawn from faith, and from a diverse array of epics, from human stories of separation and loss, of love and joy — themes which we know reverberate eloquently across the diverse cultures of humanity.

In a world in which some speak of a growing clash of civilisations, we believe the Museum will help address what is not so much a clash of civilisations, as it is a clash of ignorances. The new Museum will have a strong educational vocation: it will be a place for active inquiry, for discussion and research, for lectures and seminars, and for an array of collaborative programs with educational institutions and with other museums.

A major part of the gallery space will be dedicated to visiting and temporary exhibitions — building on exhibitions of our collection that have taken place in London, Paris, Lisbon and Berlin — and are now planned for St Petersburg, Doha, Istanbul and Los Angeles. A state-of-the-art auditorium will also host programs featuring the performing arts and cinema.

My own family has been intimately involved in Islamic cultural history, notably during the Fatimid Caliphate which, a thousand years ago, founded one of the world's first, great

universities in Cairo. The core collection of the new Museum in Toronto includes elements that have been gathered by my family through many generations, including the miniatures collected by my uncle, the late Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, which will be displayed in a replica of the Bellerive room from my late uncle's home in Geneva. We are deeply grateful to Princess Catherine for this generous gift.

I should emphasise, as well, that the Museum building itself will be an important work of art — designed by the great Japanese architect Fumihiko Maki. Many of you know his superb building in Ottawa that has been the home for the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam since 2008.

That Delegation building was inspired by the evanescent mysteries of rock crystal. The new Toronto Museum will take as its theme the concept of light — suffusing the building from a central courtyard, through patterned glass screens. From the outside, it will glow by day and by night, lit by the sun and the moon. This use of light speaks to us of the Divine Light of the Creator, reflected in the glow of individual human inspiration and vibrant, transparent community.

As the poet Rumi has written: “The light that lights the eye is also the light of the heart... but the light that lights the heart is the Light of God.”

The Museum in Toronto will belong to the institutional framework of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, already the sponsor of projects for restoring and preserving cultural heritage in places such as Syria, India, Pakistan, and parts of Central Asia, as well as museums in Egypt, Zanzibar and Chantilly in France.

Like the Museum, the Ismaili Centre will also be part of a supportive global network — a group of Centres that now includes Vancouver, London, Lisbon, Dubai and Dushanbe — and with new Centres planned in Houston, Los Angeles and Paris. The focal point of the Toronto Centre will be a circular prayer hall, dedicated to spiritual reflection, while other spaces will provide for deeper engagement with the broader community among whom Ismailis live.

The Centre has been designed by Charles Correa, the award-winning architect based in Mumbai. The building will feature a crystalline frosted glass dome — standing like a great beacon on top of a building that is itself at the highest point of the site — and illuminating the Prayer Hall and its Qibla wall.

What about the Park?

The Park will comprise some 75 000 square metres — and what an impressive site it will be! It was designed by Vladimir Djurovic, a Lebanon-based artist, who was selected for this role following an international competition.

His design draws upon the concept of the traditional Islamic garden, and especially the gardens of the Alhambra, which flourished during the great era of Spanish history when Muslims, Jews and Christians lived together in creative harmony.

The Park will combine quiet spaces with lively ones, open areas with more defined shapes, formality with informality, the traditional with the contemporary. It will be part of a series of parks developed through the Aga Khan Trust for Culture — ranging from Al-Azhar Park in Cairo, to the Khorog Park in Tajikistan, from the restoration of Babur’s Gardens in Kabul and the gardens of Humayan’s Tomb in Delhi, to the Forodhani Park in Zanzibar and new parks now under development in Bamako, Nairobi, Vancouver and Edmonton.

All in all, the Wynford Drive complex will represent a rich tapestry woven from widely varied strands. And the fact that we have come so far in pursuit of this dream owes everything to those who have believed in it so deeply.

We are grateful for the support of so many public officials, successive Canadian Prime Ministers, regional and city leaders, and local ward councillors like John Parker and his predecessor, Jane Pitfield. We also salute the contractors from Carillion who are working to implement the project, as well as our museum partners from around the world, the members of the Bata family whose support has been so helpful, and the staff and volunteers who have given so much of themselves to this effort.

We owe a great deal to all who have made gifts of time and treasure and endeavour to this project, including, most especially, the Ismaili community in Canada and around the world who have contributed to the development of Ismaili Centres and Jamatkhana, and to the fund which was set up to commemorate my Golden Jubilee. This project has been designated as a Golden Jubilee project, and is a beneficiary of those generous gifts.

Finally, my thanks, again, go to all of you for joining in this event. I hope you will feel, as I do, that you have been part of a distinctive observance — celebrating efforts which is impressive in scale, in aesthetic ambition, and in its cultural inspiration — contributing in the best way possible to Canada’s pluralism.

As we look ahead, we can anticipate with some confidence that the Wynford Drive project will be a beautiful part of the future — a proud gift from our generation to future generations — even as it celebrates so fittingly what past generations have given to us.

Thank you.



## Inauguration ceremony of the National Park of Mali

22 September 2010, Bamako, Mali

Bismillah-hir-Rahmanir-Rahim,

Your Excellency, President of the Republic,  
Prime Minister,  
Presidents of the Institutions of the Republic,  
Minister of the Environment and Sanitation,  
Minister of Culture,  
Ministers,  
Your Excellencies, ambassadors, representatives of the diplomatic corps and of accredited international organisations in Mali,  
Governor of the District of Bamako,  
Mayor of the District of Bamako,  
Mayor of Commune III,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

As we say,  
Asalaam-o-aleikum,  
First of all I would like to thank His Excellency the President of the Republic of Mali for the

very warm welcome extended to me by the government and by himself personally during this visit – a visit which has particular significance on this anniversary of the independence of your magnificent country.

I would also like to thank the Government of the Republic of Mali and in particular the Minister of the Environment and Sanitation and the Minister of Culture for their exemplary partnership with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and for the trust they have placed in us.

I would like to say how happy and proud we are to be involved in the creation of the National Park of Mali, the inauguration of which takes place as part of the festivities celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the country's independence. This gives me a welcome opportunity to convey my warmest congratulations to the government and people of Mali for these fifty years dedicated to the construction of a democratic nation, which you have rightly observed, Mr President, should be "inspired by its history and confident of its future in Africa and on the world stage".

Bamako currently has the fastest-growing population of any African city: it has nearly 2 million inhabitants today and at this rate its population is set to double in 15 years. Growth on this scale requires a considerable effort on the Government's part to create the infrastructure and public facilities commensurate with this expansion. The National Park of Mali, which we are inaugurating today, comes therefore at a highly opportune moment because, in parallel to the Government's efforts, the project makes a substantial contribution to improving the urban environment of Bamako.

Indeed the importance of green spaces in fast-growing mega-cities cannot be underestimated, and here I would like to pay homage to the vision of President Amadou Toumani Touré and to the remarkable initiative taken by the Government of Mali.

Like Mali itself, this Park has the mission of upholding the country's tradition of encounters and dialogue, while preserving the natural heritage and ecosystems of which man has stewardship, as the Holy Qur'an instructs us.

Inspired by this vision, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture's Historic Cities Programme has created and manages urban park projects in locations as diverse as Cairo, Kabul, Delhi, Khorog, Zanzibar – and, today, Bamako.

Creating green spaces in urban areas constitutes a significant improvement in the quality of the environment and people's living conditions. They are leisure spaces and meeting places for all ages and all social categories, encouraging different sectors of the population to mix and integrate. And they have proved to be catalysts for economic activity and a source of employment, both directly and indirectly, particularly through the services provided for visitors.



The National Park of Mali is an exceptional project and once again, Mr President, I express my thanks to you. The AKTC's approach to the development and realisation of the Park follows two principles which previous projects have shown to be effective:

- on the one hand, ensuring the maintenance and development of this public facility, whilst anticipating its users' future needs;
- on the other hand, ensuring that the operation is financially viable by re-investing the revenues generated by the Park itself. Thanks to the creation of an independent management organisation which will work in partnership with the local administration, the revenues generated by entrance fees and services offered to visitors will cover the costs of operating, maintaining and developing the site.

The National Park of Mali is also one of the largest urban parks on the African continent, and a remarkable achievement in several respects:

- it preserves an ecosystem of priceless value with the arboretum dating from the 1930s, which includes the most beautiful species of trees and is today shown in its full glory once again;
- it expresses a new landscape architecture, harmoniously combining the characteristics of a botanical garden that had fallen into disuse with a contemporary planning concept for public parks in major cities;
- it includes a garden of medicinal plants, reflecting Mali's ancestral knowledge in this field;
- the architecture of the buildings and entrance gateways, of the restaurant and the sports centre, is distinctively contemporary, while displaying its African roots in the use of traditional materials combined with advanced technologies, especially in the roofs and the technical services. This is the work of Diébédo Francis Kéré, an Aga Khan Award for Architecture recipient in 2004;
- thanks to the renovation of the colonial-era pavilions, the Park also has a crèche, a tea room, a restaurant and shops.

Beyond this, the National Park of Mali is also an institution with an educational mission, aiming to raise awareness among the public as a whole, and among children above all, on the judicious use of environmental resources. With this aim, the Park's Maison de l'Environnement (environment centre) will be launching a pioneering programme, following on from the programme established several years ago by "Agir", an NGO devoted to the environment and quality of life in Mali.

Finally, sport has always been popular with the people of Mali and remains one of the Park's strong points with the building of a huge sports centre, along with fitness trails featuring specialist equipment for gymnastics, running, cycling and climbing.

Today, parks meet the needs of many city-dwellers wanting to relax in a natural environment. This explains the success among local communities of parks already created



by AKTC. Experience shows that these urban parks are a vital public facility, frequented by city-dwellers in their hundreds of thousands. The Cairo park, for example, now receives more than 2 million visitors a year.

Our goal was not just to build a major environmental infrastructure and a central attraction for Bamako's inhabitants and visitors, but also to create a cultural space contributing to the city's economic and social development.

Creating the park was in itself a means of injecting resources into the local economy. It generated thousands of days of work and 130 permanent professional posts. Moreover, most of the construction materials were of local origin, as were the skilled workers. A stone-carving workshop and a nursery have been set up to train specialists in these fields. The Park therefore represents not just an economic and technical investment, but also a commitment to training and employment.

For all these reasons I hope that the Park will one day be regarded as a model for the rest of Africa.

Today, thanks to the combined efforts of the Government of Mali and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture I believe that we are offering Malians a new quality of life and I hope that over time the National Park of Mali will become an integral part of their daily life. Along with a high-quality natural space and outstanding cultural facilities – the former Botanical Garden and the National Museum – the project may in a later phase extend to include the Zoological Gardens and the protected Koulouba forest.

As the Malian saying goes:

“Even if a tree stays a long time in the water it doesn't become a crocodile.” So it is important that the trees remain in the park and the crocodiles stay in the zoo – and that both, nonetheless, can be admired!

Thank you.



## 10th Annual LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture

15 October 2010, Toronto, Canada

Bismillah-hir-Rahmanir-Rahim,

The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson  
Mr. John Ralston Saul  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen  
Mesdames et Messieurs

Lorsque j'ai été invité à donner la conférence de ce symposium LaFontaine-Baldwin, ce fut pour moi un grand honneur et j'ai éprouvé beaucoup d'émotion. Je dois dire, chère Madame Clarkson que j'ai encore plus d'émotion depuis que vous avez fait tous ces commentaires si flatteurs pour moi. C'est également un grand plaisir de se retrouver parmi de si nombreux amis tant anciens que nouveaux, ici à Toronto et je suis particulièrement heureux d'avoir été présenté, comme je viens de le dire, si chaleureusement ce soir par mes bons amis John Ralston Saul et Adrienne Clarkson. Je me sens profondément reconnaissant de cette très aimable invitation et de votre généreux accueil.

When I first received this invitation, I was deeply honoured. But I was also, perhaps, a little intimidated.

I was impressed by the lecture's prestigious history, the contributions of nine former lecturers, and the lecture's focus on Canada's civic culture.

As you may know, my close ties with Canada go back almost four decades, to the time when many thousands of Asian refugees from Uganda, including many Ismailis, were welcomed so generously in this society. These ties have continued through the cooperation of our Aga Khan Development Network with several Canadian institutions, including the establishment, four years ago, of the Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. I had the opportunity last week to chair a highly productive meeting there of the Centre's Board of Directors.

Earlier this year, we also celebrated here in Toronto the Foundation Ceremony for the Aga Khan Museum and a new Ismaili Centre. So there are powerful chords of memory – from four decades ago, four years ago, and even four months ago, that tie me closely to Canada.

I was also deeply moved by Canada's extraordinary gift to me of honorary citizenship.

I always have felt at home when I come to Canada – but never more so than in the wake of this honour. And if I ever felt any trepidation about accepting this evening's invitation, it has been significantly reduced by the fact that I can now claim – however modestly – to be a Canadian!

Many thanks go to all of you who are attending this lecture – or are watching and listening from elsewhere. It is a busy autumn night, I know.

For one thing, I believe the undefeated Maple Leafs are playing on television at this very hour!

My Canadian friends like to tell me about a time when the Stanley Cup playoffs were in full swing, and a gentleman took his seat in the front row of the stadium – leaving a seat open next to him. His neighbour asked why such an excellent seat for such an important event was unclaimed, and the man explained that his wife normally sat there but that she had passed away. The neighbour expressed his sympathies, but asked whether a member of the family, or another relative or friend might have been able to use the ticket. "No", the man replied, "they're all at the funeral."

The subject of tonight's Lecture, Pluralism, may not have quite the emotional hold of the Stanley Cup, but, for me, it has been a matter of immense importance.

One reason, no doubt, is that the Ismaili people have long shared in the experience of smaller groups everywhere – living in larger societies. In addition, my lifelong interest in development has focused my attention on the challenge of social diversity. My interest in launching the Global Centre for Pluralism reflected my sense that there was yet no institution dedicated to the question of diversity in our world, and that Canada’s national experience made it a natural home for this venture.

The Centre plans, of course, to engage expert researchers to help in its work. Those plans remind me of a “think-tank” executive who found himself floating aimlessly across the sky one day in a hot air balloon. (I suspect he was the chairman!). As he hovered above he called down to a man below, “Can you tell me where I am?” The man shouted back, giving him his longitude, latitude and altitude. “Thanks,” said the chairman, “that’s interesting, but you must be a professor!”

“Why do you say that?” asked the man below.

“Well,” the chairman responded, “you have given me a lot of precise information, which I’m sure is technically correct, but which is not of the faintest use to me.”

The man below replied, “And you must be an executive.”

“How did you know?” asked the balloonist.

“Well,” said the man, “you don’t know where you are – or where you’re going. You have risen to where you are on a lot of hot air. And you expect people beneath you to solve your problems!”

I trust that this story will not characterize the work of the Centre.

I would like to talk with you this evening about three things – first, the long history of pluralism in our world, secondly, the acute intensification of that challenge in our time, and third, the path ahead, how we can best respond to that challenge.

## **I. THE PAST: PLURALISM IN HISTORY**

### **A. Early History**

Let us look for a moment at pluralism in history. I would like to begin by observing that the challenge of pluralism is as old as human civilization. History is filled with instructive models of success and failure in coping with human diversity.

In looking at this history, I am going to do an unexpected thing for a graduate of Harvard University – and that is to quote from a professor at that “other” New England school, a place called Yale.

You may remember how President Kennedy, when he received an honorary degree from Yale, observed that he now had the best of both worlds – a Yale degree – and a Harvard education!

Perhaps I am trying to reap something of the same advantage tonight – mentioning my Harvard education, but quoting a Yale Professor. Amy Chua, of the Yale Law School, recently published a persuasive warning about the decline and fall of history's dominant empires. Their downward spiral, she says, stemmed from their embrace of intolerant and exclusionist attitudes.

The earlier success of these so-called “hyper powers” reflected their pragmatic, inclusive policies, drawing on the talents of a wide array of peoples. She cites seven examples – from ancient Persia to the modern United States, from ancient Rome and the Tang Empire in China, to the Spanish, Dutch and British Empires. In each case, pluralism was a critical variable.

You may know how, in ancient times, the common view was that nature had separated humankind into distinctive peoples. Aristotle was among the first to reject such arbitrary distinctions, and to conceptualize the human race as a single whole. It is interesting to note that his young pupil, on whom he impressed this notion, turned out to be Alexander the Great – whose international empire was animated by this new intellectual outlook. And, similarly, the Roman Empire thrived initially by extending the concept of Roman citizenship to distant, highly disparate peoples.

But even as Europe fragmented after the fall of Rome, another success story emerged in Egypt. I have a special interest in this story; it concerns my ancestors, the Fatimid Caliphs, who founded the city of Cairo 1000 years ago. They were themselves Shia in an overwhelmingly dominant Sunni culture, and for nearly two centuries they led a strong pluralistic society, welcoming a variety of Islamic interpretations as well as people of Christian, Jewish and other backgrounds.

Similarly, on the Iberian Peninsula between the 8th and 16th centuries, Muslim, Christian and Jewish cultures interacted creatively in what was known as al-Andalus. Remarkably, it lasted for most of seven centuries – a longer period than the time that has since passed.

The fading of al-Andalus came as a new spirit of nationalism rose in Europe – propelled by what scholars have called a sense of “imagined community.” Where local and tribal loyalties once dominated, national identifications came to flourish.

As we know, these nationalist rivalries eventually exploded into world war. The post-war emergence of the European Union has been a response to that history, much as regional groupings from South East Asia, to Central Asia, from Latin America to Eastern Africa, have been testing the potential for pan-national cooperation.

## **B. Canada and Pluralism**

This brings me to the story of Canada – shaped so fundamentally by two European cultures. This dual inheritance was an apparent weakness at one point, but it was transformed into an enormous strength, thanks to leaders like LaFontaine and Baldwin, as well as those who shaped the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, and so many others who contributed to a long, incremental process.

That process has been extended over time to include a broader array of peoples, the First Peoples, and the Inuit, and a host of new immigrant groups. I am impressed by the fact that some 44 percent of Canadians today are of neither French nor British descent. I am told, in fact, that a typical Canadian citizenship ceremony might now include people from two dozen different countries.

To be sure, the vision I am describing is sometimes questioned and still incomplete, as I know Canadians insist on acknowledging. But it is nonetheless an asset of enormous global value.

**C. The Developing World** Let me turn to the less developed world, where the challenge of diversity is often the most difficult problem our Development Network faces.

This legacy was partly shaped by European influences. In the 19th century, for example, European economic competition was sometimes projected onto Middle Eastern divisions, including the Maronite alliance with France and the Druze alliance with Britain. Meanwhile, in Africa and elsewhere, Europe's colonial policies often worked to accentuate division – both through the use of divide-and-rule-strategies, and through the imposition of arbitrary national boundaries, often ignoring tribal realities.

In my view, the West continues at times to mis-read such complexities – including the immense diversity within the Muslim world. Often, too, the West's development assistance programs assume that diversity is primarily an urban phenomenon discounting the vast size and complexity of rural areas. Yet, it is in the countryside that ethnic divides can be most conflictual – as Rwanda and Afghanistan have demonstrated – and where effective development could help pre-empt explosion.

I remember a visit I made almost half a century ago – in 1973 – to Mindanao, the one part of the Philippine Islands that was never ruled by Spain. It is home to a significant Islamic minority, and I was struck even then by how religious distinctions were mirrored in economic disparities.

Since that time, in predictable ways, economic injustice and cultural suspicion have fuelled one another in Mindanao. The quandary is how to break the cycle, although the Philippine government is now addressing the situation. But when history allows such situations to fester, they become increasingly difficult to cure.

The co-dependent nature of economic deprivation and ethnic diversity is evident throughout most of Asia and Africa. And most of these countries are ill-prepared for such challenges. The legitimacy of pluralist values, which is part of the social psyche in countries like Canada or Portugal, where so many Ismailis now live, is often absent in the developing world.

I think particularly, now, of Africa. The largest country there, Nigeria, comprises some 250 ethnic groups, often in conflict. In this case, vast oil reserves – once a reason for hope – have become a source of division. One wonders what might happen in other such places, for example in Afghanistan, if its immense subsoil wealth should become an economic driver.

The lesson: economic advantage can sometimes ease social tensions, but social and cultural cleavage can undermine economic promise.

#### **D. Central Asia**

Let's for a moment, look at the situation in Central Asia. Our Network's activity there includes the University of Central Asia, founded ten years ago, with campuses now in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

You will recall the outbreak of inter-ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan last June – thousands died, hundreds of thousands were made homeless. And yet, this high mountain region had traditionally been a place of lively cultural interchange – going back to the time of the Silk Route, one of history's first global connecting links.

The violence that raged between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities had tangled roots. The Kyrgyz, traditionally nomads, were forced in the last century to settle on Soviet collective farms – joined by new Russian settlers. Tensions mounted, especially with the more settled Uzbeks, and a harsh economy compounded the distress.

Kyrgyzstan – along with Tajikistan – is one of the two poorest countries to emerge from the Soviet Union. But economics alone do not account for its tragedies. Observers had long noted the absence of cross-cultural contact in Kyrgyzstan, the weakness of institutional life – both at the government level and at the level of civil society – and a failing educational system.

Another element in the equation was international indifference – indeed, almost total international ignorance about Central Asia.

The result was a society ready to explode at the touch of a tiny spark. How that spark was first struck has been much debated. But the fundamental questions concern the perilous preconditions for violence, and whether they might better have been identified – and addressed.



Meanwhile, a spirit of hope persists, even in this troubled setting. Shortly after the violence, a public referendum approved constitutional reforms which could open a new era of progress.

### **E. Other Developing World Examples**

Let us look for a moment at other developing world examples. The referendum in Kyrgyzstan this summer was followed one month later by a similar referendum in Kenya. I spent a part of my childhood in Kenya and our Network is very active there. So we watched with great sadness as Kenya descended into tribal warfare following the disputed election of 2007. In Kenya's case, the institutions of civil society took a lead role in addressing the crisis. One result was the public endorsement this past August of a new constitution – by a two to one ratio. Like the reforms in Kyrgyzstan, it includes a dramatic dispersion of national and presidential power.

We are reminded in such moments that hope can sometimes grow out of desolation. I think of other places in Africa, like Mozambique, which also found a path to greater stability after a long period of warfare.

I think, too, of Indonesia, which emerged from its colonial experience as a radically fragmented state – both ethnically and geographically. Its response included a nationally oriented educational system – teaching a shared national language. But we must be careful in drawing conclusions. Other attempts to foster a single language as a unifying resource – Urdu, for example, or Swahili, or Bangla, have sometimes worked to separate peoples from the main currents of global progress.

The question of language is very sensitive, as Canadians well know. And one of the central truths about pluralism is that what works in one setting may work differently in others.

Afghanistan is another case in point. In contrast with places where inflexible nationalism can be a problem, Afghanistan suffers from the opposite condition – an inability to imagine, let alone create, a broad sense of nationhood.

One of the prime lessons of history, ancient and recent, is that one size does not fit all.

## **II. THE PRESENT: INTENSIFICATION AND URGENCY**

Let's for the moment look at the present situation. Let me move to a second major topic, which is the present intensification of the pluralism challenge – and the sense of urgency that comes with it.

Clearly, the challenges posed by diversity are mounting. New technologies mean that people mix and mingle more than ever before. Massive human migrations are part of the story – two-thirds of recent population growth in the 30 largest OECD countries has resulted from highly diverse migrations. Meanwhile, communications technology means that even those who live on the other side of the world are as near to us as those who live on the other side of the street.

The variety of the world is not only more available, it is nearly inescapable. Human difference is more proximate – and more intense. What was once beyond our view is now at our side – and, indeed, to use the popular expression, it is “in our face.”

Almost everything now seems to “flow” globally – people and images, money and credit, goods and services, microbes and viruses, pollution and armaments, crime and terror. But let us remember, too, that constructive impulses can also flow more readily, as they do when international organizations join hands across dividing lines.

The challenge of diversity is now a global challenge – and how we address it will have global consequences.

Economic stress and new environmental fragilities have further intensified the difficulties, and so has the fading of the bi-polar political order. It was once said that the end of the Cold War meant “the end of history.” In fact, just the reverse was true. History resumed in earnest in the 1990’s – as old tribal passions resurfaced.

Meanwhile, the way we communicate with one another has been revolutionized. But more communication has not meant more cooperation. More information has also meant more mis-information – more superficial snapshots, more shards of stray information taken out of context. And it has also meant more willful dis-information – not only differences of opinion, but distortions of fact. A wide-open internet allows divisive information to travel as far and as fast as reliable information. There are virtually no barriers to entry – and anyone, responsible or irresponsible – can play the game.

New digital technologies mean more access, but they also mean less accountability.

The advent of the internet and the omnipresence of mobile telephony seem to promise so much! But so, once, did television and radio – and the telegraph before that – and, even earlier, the invention of the printing press. Yet each of these breakthroughs, while connecting so many, was also used to widen cultural gulfs.

Technologies, after all, are merely instruments – they can be used for good or ill. How we use them will depend – in every age and in every culture – not on what sits on our desktops, but on what is in our heads – and in our hearts.

It has never been easy for people to live together. I am not one who believes in some natural, human disposition to welcome the stranger. Wiping away superficial misunderstandings will not by itself allow a spontaneous spirit of accommodation to blossom.

As Adrienne Clarkson said at this lecture in 2007, we cannot count on the power of “love” to solve our problems – as important as that quality is. A part of our challenge, as she said, is learning to live and work with people we may not particularly like!

To do so will require concerted, deliberate efforts to build social institutions and cultural habits which take account of difference, which see diversity as an opportunity rather than a burden.

I have mentioned both social institutions and cultural habits – each dimension is critical. In a sense, one concerns the hardware and one concerns the software of the pluralism experience.

### **III. THE FUTURE; THE PATH AHEAD**

This brings me to my third and final topic this evening, the path ahead – how we might better predict and prevent breakdowns, and encourage progress.

#### **A. Institutional Concerns**

On the institutional level, we can begin by looking at the structures of public governance.

Let me warn, first, against a naïve hope that simply advancing the concept of democracy will achieve our goals. Not so. The high count of failed democracies – including some 40 percent of the member states of the United Nations – should disabuse us of this notion.

Too often, democracy is understood to be only about elections – momentary majorities. But effective governance is much more than that. What happens before and after elections? How are choices framed and explained? How is decision-making shared so that leaders of different backgrounds can interactively govern, rather than small cliques who rule autocratically?

We must go beyond the simple word “democracy” if we are to build a framework for effective pluralism.

This will mean writing more effective constitutions – informed by more sophisticated understandings of comparative political systems. It will mean explaining those arrangements more adequately – and adjusting and amending them. It will mean separating and balancing powers, structuring multi-tiered – and often asymmetrical – systems of federalism, and defining rights and freedoms – as Canada has learned to do. I would also point here to the experience of the largest democracy, India, which defines specific constitutional rights for eight distinctive cultural groups, an approach which has been echoed in Malaysia. And we have seen how Kenya and Kyrgyzstan are moving now to decentralize power.

All of these institutional arrangements can help resolve political deadlock, build social coherence and avoid the dangers of “winner take all.” They can provide multiple levers of social influence, allowing individuals of every background to feel that they have a stake in society – that they can influence the forces that shape their lives.

How we define citizenship is a central factor in this story – but one that is newly in dispute. Even the well-established concept that citizenship belongs to everyone who is born on national soil has been questioned recently in parts of Europe and the United States – as attitudes to immigration intensify.

Independent judicial and educational systems are also essential to effective pluralism, and so are non-governmental agents of influence – the institutions of civil society. As we have seen, Kenya presents a positive case study in this regard, while civil society in Kyrgyzstan was largely marginalized during its crisis.

Independent news media are another key element. This is why our Network has been involved for fifty years in the media of East Africa, and why the Aga Khan University is planning to create there a new Graduate School of Media and Communications.

The value of independent media was summarized recently by a veteran Ghanaian journalist, Kwame Karikari, who wrote of the media’s “... remarkable contributions to peaceful and transparent elections in Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia; to post-conflict conditions ... in Liberia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone; and to sustaining constitutional rule ... in Guinea, Kenya and Nigeria.”

Finally, let me emphasize that healthy institutions will tap the widest possible range of energies and insights. They will optimize each society’s meritocratic potential, so that opportunity will reward competence, from whomever and wherever it may come independent of birth or wealth or theology or physical power.

## **B. THE PUBLIC MINDSET**

But institutional reforms will have lasting meaning only when there is a social mindset to sustain them.

There is a profound reciprocal relationship between institutional and cultural variables. How we think shapes our institutions. And then our institutions shape us. How we see the past is an important part of this mindset.

A sense of historic identity can immensely enrich our lives. But we also know how myopic commitments to “identity” can turn poisonous when they are dominated by bad memories, steeped in grievance and resentment.

The marginalization of peoples can then become a malignant process, as people define themselves by what they are against. The question of “who am I?” is quickly transformed into “who is my enemy?”

Some would address this problem through a willful act of historical amnesia – but suppressing animosity can often produce future explosions.

In Kenya, national history is largely missing from the public schools. And, in the absence of shared history, divided communities feed on their own fragmented memories of inter-tribal wrongs.

On the other hand, the value of confronting memory lies in catharsis, an emotional healing process. As we know, the Truth and Reconciliation Process has helped South Africans address deep social divisions, as has Chile’s Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago.

As societies come to think in pluralistic ways, I believe they can learn another lesson from the Canadian experience, the importance of resisting both assimilation and homogenization – the subordination and dilution of minority cultures on the one hand, or an attempt to create some new, transcendent blend of identities, on the other.

What the Canadian experience suggests to me is that identity itself can be pluralistic. Honouring one’s own identity need not mean rejecting others. One can embrace an ethnic or religious heritage, while also sharing a sense of national or regional pride. To cite a timely example, I believe one can live creatively and purposefully as both a devoted Muslim and a committed European.

To affirm a particular identity is a fundamental human right, what some have called “the right to be heard.” But the right to be heard implies an obligation to listen – and, beyond that, a proactive obligation to observe and to learn.

Surely, one of the most important tests of moral leadership is whether our leaders are working to widen divisions – or to bridge them.

When we talk about diversity, we often use the metaphor of achieving social “harmony.” But perhaps we might also employ an additional musical comparison – a fitting image as we meet tonight in this distinguished musical setting. We might talk not just about the ideal of “harmony” – the sounding of a single chord – but also about “counterpoint.” In counterpoint, each voice follows a separate musical line, but always as part of a single work of art, with a sense both of independence and belonging.

Let me add one further thought. I believe that the challenge of pluralism is never completely met. Pluralism is a process and not a product. It is a mentality, a way of looking

at a diverse and changing world. A pluralistic environment is a kaleidoscope that history shakes every day.

Responding to pluralism is an exercise in constant re-adaptation. Identities are not fixed in stone. What we imagine our communities to be must also evolve with the tides of history.

As we think about pluralism, we should be open to the fact that there may be a variety of “best practices,” a “diversity of diversities,” and a “pluralism of pluralisms.”

In sum, what we must seek and share is what I have called “a cosmopolitan ethic,” a readiness to accept the complexity of human society. It is an ethic which balances rights and duties. It is an ethic for all peoples.

It will not surprise you to have me say that such an ethic can grow with enormous power out of the spiritual dimensions of our lives. In acknowledging the immensity of The Divine, we will also come to acknowledge our human limitations, the incomplete nature of human understanding.

In that light, the amazing diversity of Creation itself can be seen as a great gift to us – not a cause for anxiety but a source of delight. Even the diversity of our religious interpretations can be greeted as something to share with one another – rather than something to fear.

In this spirit of humility and hospitality – the stranger will be welcomed and respected, rather than subdued – or ignored.

In the Holy Quran we read these words: “O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord who created you from a single soul ...[and] joined your hearts in love, so that by His grace ye became brethren.”

As we strive for this ideal, we will recognize that “the other” is both “present” and “different.” And we will be able to appreciate this presence – and this difference – as gifts that can enrich our lives.

Let me conclude by emphasizing once again the urgency of this challenge. We are at a particularly complex moment in human history. The challenges of diversity are frightening for many people, in societies all around the world. But diversity also has the capacity to inspire.

The mission of the Global Centre for Pluralism is to look closely at all these challenges – and to think hard about them. This will be demanding work. But as we go forward, we hope we can discern more predictably and pre-empt more effectively those conditions which lead to conflict among peoples. And we also hope that we can advance those institutions and those mindsets which foster constructive engagement.

The world we seek is not a world where difference is erased, but where difference can be a powerful force for good, helping us to fashion a new sense of cooperation and coherence in our world, and to build together a better life for all.

Thank you very much.





## Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the 2010 Aga Khan Award for Architecture Ceremony

24 November 2010, Doha, Qatar

**“Diversity, in fact, is part of the essence of Islam. The unity of the Ummah does not imply sameness. Working in an Islamic context need not confine us to constraining models. Nor does respecting the past mean copying the past. Indeed, if we hold too fast to what is past, we run the risk of crushing that inheritance. The best way to honour the past is to seize the future.”**

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Highness the Emir  
Your Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

*As-salaam-o-aleikum*

What a pleasure it is to greet this wonderful audience, including so many friends, old and new, who have helped shape this programme, and who are so essential to its future.

I am especially pleased to salute their Highnesses, the Emir of Qatar and Sheikha Moza. We are honoured by your presence - and grateful for your inspiring example, as you embrace this country's proud heritage, while also pointing it boldly to the future.

It is hard for me to believe that this Awards process is now a third of a century old! - and that it has involved some 3500 candidate projects and over 100 prize recipients. As we complete the 11th cycle, I am delighted to extend to all of our recipients my warmest congratulations!

The awarding of prizes is in the spotlight tonight - and deservedly so. But the prizes themselves are only the tip of a larger iceberg. The Awards programme also includes a wide array of seminars, exhibitions, lectures, publications and a highly decentralized selection process. This ceremony, in short, marks the culmination of a long and lively conversation.

Many of you will remember my personal concern, back in the mid-1970's, that this conversation was scarcely even taking place.

Discussion and debate about the built environment in the Islamic world was then a very thin proposition. The continuity of Islamic architecture had sadly lapsed - weakened by the heavy hand of colonialization, by modernization and globalization, by the lack of architectural training in Islamic contexts, and even by the development of new construction materials in the industrialized world. The result was a paucity both of indigenous architects and of foreign architects working with distinction in Islamic settings and idioms.

This situation was particularly troubling given the powerful history of Islamic architecture - and given, too, the struggle many Muslims faced in expressing proud cultural identities in contexts where they very often had little influence. Historically, the arts, including architecture, have taken their principal inspiration from religious faith. But when art is separated from faith-based roots, other influences can dominate - including soulless technology and empty secularization.

At that time I used the term "vacuum" to describe the Islamic architectural scene. The initial goal of our Awards programme was to replace that vacuum with an energized debate. Was there a problem, how could it be addressed, by whom, and in what settings?

Notice that we did not seek then - nor do we now - the advancement of some definitive aesthetic style, or the promulgation, as one colleague put it, of some "manifesto of

architectural intent.” What we cared most about was that relevant questions be raised, and that a broad range of constituents be engaged in discussing them.

Three decades later, we can claim considerable progress, stimulated by this Award and other endeavours with similar goals.

We have come a long way from a careless confidence that the built environment would somehow take care of itself. We are increasingly aware that the quality of our buildings can transform the quality of our lives, both spiritual and material.

We have only to look around us tonight to see how things have changed. This Museum of Islamic Art itself represents one of the high profile accomplishments in global architecture in recent years. It symbolizes how contemporary international talent, at the highest level, can join creatively with ancient cultural inheritance - and visionary national leadership.

This Museum represents a commitment we have seen elsewhere in Doha - from the development of the Qatar National Museum - one of our first prize recipients in 1980, to the reconstruction of Souq Waqif - one of 19 prize finalists this year - to the striking new structures of Education City. And the progress we see in Qatar now is echoed through much of the Islamic world. How much the Aga Khan Awards have contributed to this story is for others to judge - but I do believe that our recipients, through the years, have provided inspiring examples of architectural excellence.

But what comes next? As we look to the future, let me mention four principle areas of concern: the Islamic environment of our work, its relevant constituencies, the shifting social and economic scene, and the impact of new technologies.

My first concern is with the cultural context of our work. Why should we emphasize an Islamic approach to architecture? Our Master Jury, in responding to this question, has described how global forces now threaten the values of “memory, heritage and belonging,” and how the built environment can help meet that challenge. This is why these triennial celebrations take place in settings that evoke Islamic tradition, and why most of our Award juries have thereby emphasized, among other criteria, the restoration and reutilization of historic buildings. Great icons of the past must not be allowed to disappear, without an opportunity to come back to life and serve the future.

At the same time, in looking at the places we have met and the projects we have honoured, we also see enormous diversity. Diversity, in fact, is part of the essence of Islam. The unity of the Ummah does not imply sameness. Working in an Islamic context need not confine us to constraining models.

Nor does respecting the past mean copying the past. Indeed, if we hold too fast to what is past, we run the risk of crushing that inheritance.

The best way to honour the past is to seize the future.

In sum, an Islamic architectural agenda involves a dual obligation - a heightened respect for both the traditions of the past and the conditions of the future.

A second area of concern involves the definition of our relevant constituencies. With whom should we be communicating?

The answer is increasingly complex. The architectural community has been expanding - beyond the creative core of professional architects.

The list of players is long: planners and managers, engineers and financiers, researchers and educators, computer scientists and social scientists, designers and craftsmen, political and civic leaders, clients and consultants.

More players mean more variables to consider - not only creative designs, but also client directives, the adaptability of building types and materials, allowed expenditures, the indigenous climate, rural versus urban settings - and, of course, the immediate cultural context. We must be aware, for example, that Islamic populations are intermingled, more and more, among peoples of other backgrounds.

When I think of the diversified players in the architectural community, I am reminded of the impatient client who wrote to his architect: "Awaiting plans. If good - cheque will follow." To which the wise architect, of course, replied: "Awaiting cheque! If good - plans will follow!"

Indeed it takes a wonderful mix of patience and impatience to achieve architectural success.

In the end, significant progress will require the effective interplay of all constituent groups. The success of each is diminished when any of them lags - in concern or in competence.

As we define our constituencies more inclusively, we can help raise architectural awareness across a wider spectrum of stakeholders.

A third area of growing concern is the shifting social and economic scene. People are living longer, rural populations are urbanizing, and economies are diversifying, making complex demands on the built environment. This is why societal evolution has become a stronger preoccupation for our nominating juries. The fact that an industrial complex, for the first time, is one of our Award winners tonight is welcome evidence of this growing recognition.

The nature of the Award is to help shape best practices for the built environments of Muslims and their neighbors. Our mandate must therefore include a wide range of architectural settings - not only mosques, museums and monuments - but also schools and hospitals, industrial spaces and public markets, parks and thoroughfares, and, of course, a variety of residential habitats.

Similarly, our geographical focus must be more inclusive. For centuries, most of our important buildings have been located in capital cities. But recent population growth has concentrated in what I would call secondary cities, often neglected by the global spotlight, but in need of intelligent planning.

The same thing is true in rural settings, which have often been left to a self-build process, receiving little best-practice attention. This, too, is a situation which the Award process can help redress, as we adapt to social realities.

Fourth, and finally, let me point to the revolutionary impact of new technologies. Clearly, a relevant architectural conversation these days requires a considerable degree of technological sophistication, as we encounter a constant flow of new materials, new techniques, and new requirements.

Among other things, new technologies can help us address growing environmental urgencies. I think, for example, of the pressing need for energy and water conservation, and of the risks associated with climate change, weather extremes and geological instability. Used alertly and intelligently, new technologies can help us cope with bewildering environmental challenges.

These, then, are four of the major concerns that I would submit for further discussion. What does architectural excellence mean in the context of Islamic traditions and aspirations? How do we reach a wider array of constituents? Can we expand our social and economic relevance? And how do we best employ innovative technologies?

These concerns, of course, will lead us to further questions. How and where do we teach about architecture? How can we anticipate and occasionally help steer the processes of change? How do we best reward and learn from those who are most successful? How can we share our lessons with others outside the Ummah?

In addressing all these issues, I believe we can, indeed, make our continuing conversation more relevant and more productive - remembering always the Quranic commandment that humankind must take responsibility for shaping and reshaping our earthly environment, employing Allah's gifts of time and talent as good stewards of His Creation.

Thank you.



## **Inauguration of the restoration of the Polana Serena hotel in Maputo, Mozambique**

16 December 2010, Maputo, Mozambique

Your Excellency the President  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by saying what an honour and joy it is to receive His Excellency the President of the Republic of Mozambique on this occasion.

What a great day this is as we mark the opening of a new landmark for the African hospitality industry - a new flagship for the Serena Hotel Group - and a new benchmark in the economic progress of Mozambique.

We have been looking forward to this celebration for some time - it marks the culmination of a complex process. And it is good to celebrate this moment with those who have devoted so much talent and energy to this process - and have made the moment possible.



It is a pleasure to welcome all of you.

That special word, “welcome”, is at the center of my thoughts today. After all, the purpose of this rebuilt Polana Serena hotel is to receive people from across the country, the continent and the planet and to help them to feel “welcome” in Mozambique.

I remember well the day- a little over twelve years ago - when President Chissano welcomed me to Maputo, for the purpose of signing a Development Co-operation Agreement between the Mozambique government and the Aga Khan Development Network. Our celebration today grows out of that initiative - and I thought I might say a word about how our cooperation has unfolded since that time. It is the longer story of which the Polana story is the latest part.

That story begins with my own enormous respect for this country, its leaders and its peoples, and the progress you made in recovering from an extremely difficult period of post-colonial turmoil. One reason for this progress, in my view, was Mozambique’s growing respect for practical, professional expertise in making development choices, rather than getting carried away by theoretical dogmas or arbitrary formulas. Another factor, I felt, was the value this society places on inclusiveness - welcoming the cooperative inputs of many stakeholders - from public institutions and private companies, from civil society, and from the international community.

As you may know, the developing world in general - and Africa in particular - has been a central focus of my work for over half a century. The colonial period was just ending when I became the Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslim Community, and a host of newly independent countries were suddenly facing opportunities and challenges of unprecedented complexity.

One lesson we quickly learned about the development process, was that familiar investment assumptions - that had worked in earlier periods and in western economies - were not going to work in the same way in the post-colonial world. Private capital that looked for rapid returns - at minimum risk - would not flow readily - and other sources of seed finance would have to be found or generated. That is why we created AKFED - the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development - which has been the principal investor in this Polana project.

The purpose of the Agreement President Chissano and I signed twelve years ago was to lay a framework for the fullest presence of all our Network’s capacities, economic but also social and cultural in Mozambique - and we have been building on that framework ever since.

Much of our work, as you may know, has involved the northern areas, principally in Cabo Delgado. It includes the Coastal Rural Support Programme that integrates health, education and rural development in almost 200 villages, reaching over 160,000 inhabitants. A parallel effort is our Bridges to the Future programme which helps provide scholarships,



internships, English courses and management training. And a third major element is the Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance, which lends money to generate income for small-scale activities – some 7500 micro loans have already been made in this country.

At the same time, we have also tried to help with some larger projects such as Moztex, a new factory aimed at producing garments for export, a project which currently employs some 600 workers, a figure which is expected to double in the near future, with a focus on employment for women.

And, of course, I should also mention the new fiber optic cable company, SEACOM, which now links Southern and Eastern Africa with Europe and India.

Let me also mention a current project in Mozambique which is close to my heart - the Aga Khan Academy. The designs for that school have made excellent progress - and we expect construction to begin early next year. This means that the building of the Academy will mesh well with the early graduates of our new teaching facility at the Professional Development Centre at Matola. The School and the teaching facility are strategically partner projects – one supporting the other, and it is good that this academic construct will be operational by 2013.

Our efforts over the past decade have been quite diverse, and diversity must continue to be a watchword. It seems clear, for example, that improving agricultural productivity can only be one part of the long-range strategy - the growth potential in agriculture at some point will diminish - and we must encourage other activities that will propel continued growth.

One economic category that can have that sort of propelling impact, especially in Africa, is the travel and leisure sector. This is why our AKFED organization has made such significant investments in this field. And this is why the opening today of the Polana Serena Hotel is so important.

There is one other larger context I would like to mention today - the story of the Serena Hotel Group as a whole. Stretching back now over nearly four decades the Serena Group has contributed significantly to the economic progress of the places where it operates. And we intend that this same thing will happen in this country.

To begin with, attracting visitors to this country - business leaders and leisure travelers alike - one-time visitors and repeat customers - will itself produce foreign exchange at the time of such visits - as well as later foreign investment, often as a result of those stays. And in both cases, there will be important multiplier effects for other enterprises, as well as for government revenues.

As the Serena Group has learned in so many other places, world-class travel facilities can be crucial components of what we call “an enabling environment” - a setting in which additional development initiatives can take root and thrive.

Thus all of those who have contributed to the rebirth of the Polana deserve our heartfelt thanks, as do all of our valued partners in this work – the Government of Mozambique, our investment partners from Germany and France, the architects and designers, builders and decorators, and all those who are part of the Serena team. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my brother.

In conclusion, I would like to return to the word I used at the outset of these remarks, the word “welcome.” It is a word that most certainly sums up the spirit of today’s event, even as it expresses the essential mission of the entire Polana project. It is a word that signals the contribution this country and this facility will make to a widening world of exploration, engagement and cooperation.

It is with that same spirit that I greet you today, grateful for your participation in this project and your presence at this ceremony. I hope that wherever you live, in this city, or elsewhere in Mozambique, in Africa or elsewhere in the world, your path will bring you back often to the beauties of the Polana Serena.

Thank you.



## Inauguration of the Heart and Cancer Centre at AKUH, Nairobi

25 July 2011, Nairobi, Kenya

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency President Mwai Kibaki, President and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Honorable Uhuru Kenyatta  
Minister for Medical Services, Honorable Professor Peter Anyang' Nyong'o  
Chief Executive Officer of Agence Francaise de Developpement, Mr. Zerah  
Honorable Ministers, Your Excellencies  
Members of the Corps Diplomatic  
Chairman and Members of the Board of Trustees of the Aga Khan University  
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am enormously pleased to celebrate with all of you this benchmark moment in the evolution of the Aga Khan Development Network and the Aga Khan University.

I think of this as a “benchmark” because it signifies another step on a long pathway of medical advancement.

We can trace that pathway back a thousand years - to the great hospitals that were founded in Cairo by my ancestors, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs of Egypt. More recently, we remember the founding - some 53 years ago - of the Aga Khan Hospital here in Nairobi. That event was part of the Platinum Jubilee of my late grandfather, Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah.

From its very first day of operations in 1958, this has been a distinctive hospital. From the start, we were determined to go beyond the traditional concept that such a hospital should serve a separate, individual community - and instead to build an institution for the whole of the Kenyan nation.

In that same spirit, at the time of my own Golden Jubilee four years ago, we extended, within this hospital, the role of the Aga Khan University's Faculty of Health Sciences.

Today's inauguration of the Heart and Cancer Centre follows in this long tradition - and points the way to broader, future horizons. We are planning for the day when this Faculty will include undergraduate education in medicine, nursing and allied health professions, as well as post-graduate nursing and medical studies - and a 600-bed hospital. We plan to award bachelors and masters degrees in medicine, surgery and nursing, and, in due course, to offer Ph. D. degrees as well.

Meanwhile, beyond the medical field, the Aga Khan University is planning bold steps in other directions, including a new campus in Arusha to house a Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and the expansion of our Institute for Educational Development in Dar-es Salaam. Later this week, we will hold the Foundation Ceremony here in Nairobi for a new Graduate School of Media and Communications. And we envision other new Graduate Schools as well - in fields such as Management, Leisure and Tourism, Law, Government and Public Policy, and Economic Growth.

It is a substantial, demanding agenda.

And the agenda for our health-related programmes is equally ambitious.

We see our medical programmes here in Nairobi as nodes in a broad, regional health care network, reaching from Arusha to Kampala, from Nyeri to Mtwara and from Kigali to Malindi. Our goal is an integrated, best practice regional health system - providing a continuum of services from preventive and primary care to tertiary hospital-based care.

This will be a bracing challenge - involving not only the University and the Hospital - but also a wide array of cooperating partners, governments, schools and medical institutions. We have already established active partnerships, for example, with the University of Alberta and the University of California at San Francisco. And let me emphasize our deep gratitude to the Government of France, through the Agence Francaise de Developpement. Indeed, let me be frank in saying that without this international support, from France and

others, including many individual donors, our solidly founded initiatives for the future would be but slender dreams.

In describing our hopes for this regional system, let me emphasize the challenge of creative joint planning - in which both the public and private sectors work together in preparing long-term strategies. The initiatives I share with you today are integral to Kenya's Vision for 2030.

Such long term planning is not an easy thing. Overburdened national health care institutions, understandably, are often hypnotized by immediate crisis situations. But we cannot allow the system as a whole to be obsessed only with the short-term. Yes, we need to meet immediate costs, but we also need to generate surplus resources - in order to keep pace both with growing demand and new technologies. We need joint public/private planning for the medical needs of tomorrow - for expanded facilities and improved equipment - for quality education and innovative research.

We are finally arriving at a point where oncology and cardiology in East Africa are no longer served with outdated equipment and proficiencies. But to keep pace, we must plan ahead.

As part of this planning, we also need a fundamental reappraisal of the economics of health care. Throughout the world, the cost of good health care is prohibitively high - especially for poorer populations. This is why the Aga Khan University Hospital, through its Patient Welfare Programme, provides an average subsidy of 50% to those patients who are unable to afford their care. But in the longer run, we will also need an imaginative combination of cost redistributions, endowment funding, credit and insurance offerings and other innovative financial products. I hope that creative financial institutions will join the medical sector in addressing this difficult challenge.

For all of us, the medical frontier represents a compelling priority. A recent study by the International Finance Corporation - working with McKinsey & Company - describes what they call a "global travesty" - the fact that Sub-Saharan Africa - with 11 percent of the world's population - bears 24 percent of the global burden of disease. And yet Sub-Saharan Africa presently accounts for only one percent of global health expenditures. A "global travesty" indeed!

In addressing this situation, the IFC Report emphasizes the role of private, non-governmental institutions, including not only profit-making businesses, but also not-for-profit institutions - and the vast potential of what we call "civil society."

Such private resources already provide more than half of all health care in Sub-Saharan Africa. Their work cannot be replaced - and it does need to be enhanced.

Finally, let me mention two investment areas that are most sadly short-changed in the developing world. The first is research, and the second is education.

The intimate link between quality research and quality health care is well established. Productive research needs to be rooted in patient-based experience, even as sound practice must be informed by new knowledge. The two dimensions are mutually dependent.

This combination of informed practice and creative research will also provide an ideal context for superior medical education - and thus for building an expanded corps of accomplished medical professionals here in East Africa.

Let us put behind us the day when young Africans thought they had to go to other parts of the world for quality medical education - and then, too often, they stayed abroad. Similarly, let the day also pass when African patients think they must go to other parts of the world to find quality medical care.

As we pursue these goals, there is no time to lose. That is one reason we are focusing initially on Cardiac Disease and Cancer - chronic, non-communicable diseases that are on a rapid increase in Africa, stretching health systems and budgets even further beyond their existing limits. The World Health Organization warns us that heart disease and cancer will reach epidemic proportions in the next decade or two - unless we take decisive counter-measures.

In Kenya alone, some 80,000 new cancer cases are diagnosed each year, with an unusually high number among young people.

The mission of the Heart and Cancer Centre is to grapple with this pending African epidemic. It has been long established, for example, that there are forms of heart disease and cancer that may be Africa-specific. The new Centre will be ideally positioned to address such issues.

The Centre will offer specialized fellowship training in cardiology and oncology - training not now available in East Africa. It will recruit outstanding faculty from around the world - including returning East Africans who have been studying and practicing abroad.

Our goal is to assemble multidisciplinary teams - in fields such as radiation and chemotherapy, open-heart surgery, angioplasty, and others. And all of these resources will be accessible to those who cannot normally afford them.

The Heart and Cancer Centre represents a critical investment in the people of this region. We hope that future generations will look back on this moment - much as we look back to earlier steps along the way - and see that the work we undertake today does indeed mark an important benchmark on the path to a happier and healthier future.

My thanks to all of you for sharing in this memorable moment.

Thank you.





## Foundation ceremony for the AKU Graduate School of Media and Communications

### LOCATION

Nairobi, Kenya (27 July 2011)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Rt. Honorable Raila Amolo Odinga,  
Prime Minister of the Republic of Kenya  
Minister for East African Community and Acting Minister for Higher Education,  
Science and Technology,  
Hon. Professor Helen Jepkermoi Sambili  
Honorable Ministers  
Your Excellencies, Members of the Corps Diplomatique  
Chairman and Members of the Board of Trustees of the Aga Khan University  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

As Chancellor of the Aga Khan University, I am enormously pleased to welcome you all most warmly, not only as participants in this Foundation Ceremony - but also as continuing friends of our Graduate School of Media and Communications.

That name of the School signals its place as an institution of advanced, post-graduate and professional learning. It also signals the School's focus - not only on traditional news media - but on a broadening range of communication challenges.

We dedicate today the physical site for this School - an ideal location for the cutting-edge facilities that will be constructed here. But, beyond the physical planning, there are other Foundation stones that we also celebrate today - plans for the programmes the School will launch - the faculty and staff that will work here - the curriculum they will offer and the research they will carry out.

Let me also mention two older Foundation stones - strong pillars that have been in place for some time - which also support the creation of this School.

One, of course, is the Aga Khan University - now 27 years old and growing steadily from its base in health sciences and teacher education into new fields of learning, including new campuses and programmes here in East Africa.

The other Foundation stone is even older - an enterprise I launched here in Nairobi more than fifty years ago. I am referring of course to the Nation Media Group - now majority-owned by public shareholders, with an expanding presence throughout East Africa.

The Aga Khan Development Network thus comes to this project with useful experience both in the field of education and the disciplines of the media. We look forward now to continuing this learning experience.

The most important thing we can learn - or teach - at any School - in a world of perpetual change - is the ability to go on learning. None of us have all the answers - quite often we don't even know what questions to ask. Nor can we discern the road ahead by looking in a rear-view mirror. Past lessons must constantly be renewed and reapplied, as we adapt to new technologies and new expectations.

The years immediately ahead will be a time of breath-taking change for Africa - and for the field of media. I believe that Africa can emerge from this transformation as the home of some of the most capable, innovative, constructive and respected media enterprises in the world.

Helping to advance that vision is what our new Media and Communications School is all about.

Even as our School builds on strong existing Foundations - it will also break new ground. Let me mention just five of the most important ways in which the School, we hope, will be truly distinctive.

In the first place, the School will work on the newest frontiers of media technology - with state-of-the-art equipment and innovative pedagogies - producing professional graduates who can not only operate across today's multiplying media platforms, but can also help develop the media platforms of tomorrow.

This does not mean that we will ignore old skills and values. Our core concern must always be the ability of our students to think critically and creatively, to pursue the truth ethically and responsibly, and to articulate ideas clearly and vividly. Even as communicators learn new ways to "get a story out - and get it heard" we must also remember that our first obligation is to present the story correctly. At the same time,

however, we want all of our students to be at home and at ease with the newest media technologies.

The second distinctive emphasis of our School will be its sharp focus on the singular challenges facing media in the developing world. This will mean exploring local and regional realities in all of their complexity. And then, instead of relying heavily, for example, on the perspective of Western news agencies for information about developing societies, our students will be better able to share an indigenous sense of these realities with audiences all around the world.

One place where this emphasis will be the most evident will be our use of the case study method - a technique that is often employed at law schools and business schools. Case studies can be wonderful teaching tools. But the key for our new School will be to prepare case studies that relate specifically to the developing world, and indeed to Africa. It occurs to me, for example, that a case study on how media cover African election processes might be of particular value. As part of the new school, we have already set up an African Case Development Centre working in close alliance with Columbia University. We look forward to cooperating with other academic institutions as our work moves forward.

A third special element of the School will be one of the first programmes in this region in the field of Media Management. In my view, the quality of media depends not only on those who produce the content - writers and artists and editors. It also depends on those who manage media enterprises - and on the proprietors who own them. Media institutions cannot play their role as responsible and independent information sources if they are economically insecure and thus vulnerable to a variety of distorting influences. And yet relatively few proprietors and managers are sufficiently prepared for their increasingly demanding roles.

Let me put this challenge into historical perspective. One of the inheritances of the African colonial period was an absence of indigenous, independent media enterprises - and, thus, of effective media entrepreneurs.

A half century later, healthy, African media companies are no longer such a rarity, but they are still in short supply. And the remedy to this situation will lie not just in more and better content producers, but in stronger media management.

The role of media owners and managers has been prominently exposed in the news this month as result of the so-called hacking controversy in the British press. It is impossible to judge the specifics of that situation from a distance. But one lesson that I would commend to you is the importance of establishing an on-going culture of responsibility within any media enterprise.

The Nation Media Group decided to address this matter, proactively, at an early date, by creating a detailed set of editorial conduct guidelines - a code that has been adopted by our shareholders, enforced by our directors, and incorporated in our training programmes. No such code - and I want to be absolutely clear on this - no such code can eliminate errors. Errors are part of every human profession. But we feel that such guidelines can help to build responsible media cultures. That objective will be an important area of emphasis for our programme in Media Management.

And here I would just divert for a moment. It was a source I think of great satisfaction in the media field when not so long ago, elections were organised in the Republic Democratic du Congo, and the UN guidelines for media behaviour during those elections were read as if they had been copied from our own guidelines. So that was a demonstration I think that we are trying to bring to Africa the best of the industry.

A fourth distinctive dimension of the Graduate School of Media and Communications will be interdisciplinary study. The new School will work closely with other faculties of the Aga Khan University so that media students can deepen their knowledge in fields such as health, economics, political science, religion, and environmental studies. Our students will learn to combine their command of effective communication skills with a more sophisticated understanding of the subjects about which they are communicating.

The pursuit of this goal is particularly important at a time when information is flooding over all of us in ever-greater quantities. Someone has said that plugging into the media today can sometimes be like trying to drink water from a high-pressure fire hose!

In such a world, effective communicators must truly be effective educators - providing background as well as foreground, the big picture as well as the close-up detail. And this will be true not only for journalists, but also for communication professionals in government, at NGO's, in the business sector, at entertainment and cultural organisations -and with a host of civil society institutions. In brief, the School of Media and Communications is designed to serve a very wide range of constituencies - engaging a broad array of disciplines.

Fifth and finally, we like to say that our School will be demand-driven - which means that it will be flexible, evolving with the changing needs of both our students and their eventual employers. Masters degrees offerings will be central, but professional and continuing education courses will also be important. We believe this approach will attract outstanding students - and produce outstanding graduates.

We hope to enlist talented students of various ages and from many countries - helping to motivate the best and the brightest young people to enter the media professions. We also hope to involve people who are already in a mid-career situation - as well as those who would like to change careers and move into the communications arena.

These, then, are five ways in which the Graduate School of Media and Communications will seek to embrace the future. We might think of them as five new foundation stones that we will now put in place: an emphasis on new technologies, a focus on the developing world, a new programme in media management, an inter-disciplinary emphasis, and a governing perspective which is demand-driven and broadly responsive.

Allow me to conclude by mentioning one other word that I trust will permeate everything we undertake at this School - and that is the word "quality." Above all else, when people think in years to come about the Aga Khan University's Graduate School of Media and Communications, I would like them to think of its dedication to uncompromising quality.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I thank you again for joining us at this moment of foundation and dedication. With your support – and management reminds me I should add the word financial - intellectual and moral - this ambitious endeavour will surely thrive - making a major impact on the quality of media - and thus the quality of life - throughout this region - and across the world.

Thank you.



## Inauguration ceremony of the Dushanbe Serena hotel

01 November 2011, Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Your Excellency, President Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan  
Your Excellency, Davlatoli Saidov, Chairman of the State Committee on Investment  
and Management of State Property  
Honorable Ministers  
Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to begin my comments this morning by thanking His Excellency the President for the support he has given this institution and having told us that it will remain fully occupied for the next two years! And I should warn our financing agencies that I will use that excuse to negotiate even harder than before for good terms for our future projects in Tajikistan!

We join today at a special ceremony of inauguration and dedication - and I am so pleased that we can share this moment together with all of you.

It is a time for thinking and talking about the exciting future, as we launch a new facility that will be central to the growth of this community and this country in the days and years to come.

But I am also thinking today about the past - both the near past and the more distant past which are tied so intimately with today's ceremony - and with all the good things which we hope will come from it.

The spirit of our project, after all, reaches all the way back to the days of the ancient Silk Route - when this region was a key connecting point between people from many different cultures, languages and ethnicities - coming from opposite ends of the world as it was known at that time. And these travellers lived in some of the most magnificent caravanserais ever built and they constructed some of the world's most beautiful monuments: Samarkand, Khiva, Bokhara are iconic names. If we were using 21st century language to describe what was happening back then, we might have seen this place as one of the very first links in early processes of "globalization", although there existed at that time, no credit cards with which to pay for the Syrian, Turkish and other caravanserais.

It is in this context that many of us see a new future for Dushanbe and Tajikistan as important players again on the global stage.

As that process develops, we hope that the new beautiful Serena Hotel will reflect both the spirit of this country's ancient past and be a welcoming haven with professional staff for the global players of the coming century - as they flow in increasing numbers to this lovely and exciting part of the world. Just think of who may be coming here - traders, bankers, developers and business executives, government officials and diplomats, the leaders of civil society, travellers, vacationers, artists and writers, people from many backgrounds and from the farthest reaches of our world. All of them will learn, as they visit, about the exciting potential of this country and this region, and some of them will wish even to settle here in some way. Is this not exactly what happened at the time of the Silk Route?

Thinking of the past, I recollect the important dates of Tajik history. Twenty years ago, independence; sixteen years ago, an agreement between the Aga Khan Development Network and the government of Tajikistan in order to contribute to the development of this country. That agreement has enabled us to share as partners in the work of developing Tajikistan and improving the quality of life of the people of this country. We focused not only on building this hotel, but we worked on rural development, health and education at different levels, the production of energy and including the University of Central Asia and the Ismaili Centre here in Dushanbe.

What is the purpose? The purpose is to bring multiple-sector support to the development process of the countries in which we work in.



On a day like this, we look to the future and we seek to set out benchmarks and goals to achieve and in doing that we work with partners and I want to take this occasion - and I can see our partners in the audience- to thank them for enabling our work In Tajikistan.

I also want to salute especially the architects and designers, the contractors, the project managers and all those workers who gave of their skills and energies to realize this project. I am pleased that my brother - and yes he is my brother-- who has worked so closely with all of these people, is joining me in expressing these thanks - speaking as well for the parent organization under which the Serena Group operates, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development.

I hope that those of you who do decide occasionally to stay here, will find that what we have tried to achieve, will inshallah, be achieved.

Thank you.



## Ceremony conferring the Honorary Doctorate at the University of Ottawa

### LOCATION

Ottawa, Canada (13 January 2012)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Chancellor Labelle  
President Rock  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

First of all, allow me to express my deep gratitude for the great honour you have bestowed on me.

At the same time, I am delighted to share this moment with all those who have been invited here today, for you are all friends, some long-standing, others new. I would also like to show my appreciation of the excellent cooperation by members of your University, your city and your country from which the Aga Khan Development Network has benefited. A very recent example of this is, of course, the Global Centre for Pluralism, our joint venture with the Canadian government, a project which has now become a reality here in Ottawa.

I should point out that your Chancellor, Huguette Labelle, is a member of the Centre's Board of Directors, just one of the many ways in which she has personally contributed to projects in which I myself am deeply involved, not to mention the innumerable

services she has rendered to Canada and the rest of the world. Today, I am more than happy to offer her a very special greeting to mark the moment at which her high-level responsibilities at the University of Ottawa in her years as Chancellor – eighteen in all – come to an end.

The spirit of cooperation to which I referred, both at personal and institutional level, is very much a reflection of our shared concern with the challenges currently facing our world. In this regard I have been pleased to see that the University of Ottawa has focused attention on many of these challenges in its new strategic plan, Destination 2020. For example, your commitment to bilingualism reflects our own desire to promote a spirit of pluralism and our firm belief that the affirmation of cultural identity in no way inconsistent with the idea of encouraging intercultural cooperation. Indeed, the two movements sustain each other.

I am also impressed by the interest taken by the University in a wide range of health and molecular sciences and communications technology, an interest which our Network shares.

There are many topics of mutual interest that I could talk about today. But I have picked just one. In my eyes it is important – and I understand that it is also high among your priorities. I refer to the field of governance and public policy, and, specifically, to the difficulty of establishing workable constitutional systems – especially in countries with less experience in democratic governance.

As you know, my own interests in the last 50 years as Imam of the Ismaili community, have been primarily focused on Africa, South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle-East – and on improving the quality of life for the people who live there. The more I think about this matter, the more I am persuaded that one of the critical barriers to progress is the way in which governing processes occur.

The University of Ottawa has a long tradition of sharing internationally in the hard work of intellectual inquiry. Canada's Governor General recently referred to this process as "the Diplomacy of Knowledge." And it seems to me that questions of constitutional governance in the developing world deserve a particularly high place on that agenda.

The so-called Arab Spring has brought special attention to this challenge – illustrating that it is easier to rally people in opposition to a particular government than to forge agreement about new governing processes. But, while this pattern has recently been more dramatically evident, it has been a reality for a very, very long time.

In my life, the two moments which contributed most dramatically to this condition were the fall of the British and French colonial empires after World War II – and then the disintegration of the Soviet Union and its Eastern European empire two decades ago. The process continues today, as developing nations re-examine – sometimes peacefully, sometimes violently – the structures under which they are governed.

In some cases and I think here of Kenya's very new constitution – power has been diffused – in response no doubt to pressures from ethnic, economic, religious and other centrifugal forces. One risk of decentralization is that it can place more decision-making

power into the hands of communities that have had less access to education and governing experience, and less exposure to national and global issues.

Perhaps this is why, in some cases, the trend has been to consolidate governing authority – such as in Afghanistan, with the aim of overcoming inertia and inefficiency – as well as – fragmented and provincial outlooks.

The history of constitutions can be seen, as an oscillation between the two poles of centralization and diffusion – with new concentrations of power often amplifying the temptation to abuse, while new dispersions of power are often associated with stagnation, paralysis and even more opportunities for corruption. Arrangements that effectively balance power – through a federalist approach, for example, are elusive. What is critical is that constitutional arrangements should respect inherited traditions, ensure fairness to minority communities, respond to rural as well as urban concerns and underwrite equitable opportunity for a better life. Reconciling the global and the local, the urban and the rural, the regional and the national, is a formidable challenge – one that calls for the best of our intellectual energies and consistent fine-tuning over time.

There is a second question related to the experience of fledgling – and often failing – democracies. In much of the developed world, we have seen the emergence, over time, of two-pronged political structures – where one party forms a government and the other constitutes the opposition. This arrangement can foster greater accountability and even a certain stability. But I have to say, I am increasingly sceptical about the emergence of such constructs in many developing countries. To the contrary, I suspect that a continuing multiplicity of widely differentiated parties will mean that some form of coalition government will become the norm. This will especially be the case, of course, in societies that are – multi-cultural, multi-religious, or struggling to accommodate secular and religious political forces.

The difficulty is, however, that multi-party coalitions can be intrinsically undisciplined, with their differing agendas, and often unstable. In such situations, the threat of defection can be highly destabilizing, while accountability is often blurred and transparency is discouraged. Yet, coalition governance is now becoming a familiar form of government in many countries of Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

The broader the array of parties, the greater the risk that they will be based on personalities or narrow parochial identities, rather than a broadly-recognized, predictable point of view.

There is certainly no straightforward, universal formula to apply in such situations. We must not naively assume that what has worked in some parts of the western world, for example, will also work the same way in less developed contexts. Different places, different histories require quite different approaches.

The questions raised by coalition governance are not easy ones – either in the developing world or the developed world. What should be the rules under which parties and other governing entities are put together? How can we best find the glue that will hold them together – such as joint commitments to issues of clear national interest – and to a spirit of pluralism which values conciliation among diversified viewpoints?

Let me emphasize that I am not opposed to the concept of coalition government. Indeed it may be an inevitable response to the intrinsic pluralism of many of the countries in which I work. But the high level of political instability and failure around the world illustrates the need for creative new thinking about this particularly demanding form of democracy.

What constitutional options and best practices will give coalition government the greatest chance of stability and consistent, high quality performance?

The alternative is a world widely characterized by significant numbers of unstable states. It is a scenario to be avoided.

Again, the discussion of comparative political systems is just one of many conversations in which the great universities of the world should be vital participants. Our own Aga Khan University is now planning a new Graduate School of Government, Public Policy and Civil Society to help address these issues. And surely this is a discussion in which the University of Ottawa can make a special contribution – given the commitment you have articulated to research, the topic of “Canada and the World” – your focus on international intellectual engagement – including 140 bilateral university agreements – your emphasis on fostering democracy, and, indeed, the creation of a new premier Centre for Governance and Public Policy Research.

I know, too, that this University’s global effectiveness is reinforced by the high regard in which Canada is held as a valued international partner. In my experience, a country’s standing in our contemporary world is no longer recognised by what it can achieve for itself, but by what it can do for others. In this context, Canada has truly become a great, world power.

Thank you



## His Highness the Aga Khan: a life in the service of development

20 January 2012, France

*Reproduced with kind permission from Politique Internationale (English edition of special issue on Agence française de développement), n°134 - Winter 2011-2012*

I am thankful for this opportunity to share with your readers some thoughts about development problems in various parts of the world, and in particular about the difficult issues of poverty and inequality.

Allow me to begin with a word of personal and institutional background. I was born into a Muslim family, linked by heredity to Prophet Muhammad (May peace be upon him and his family). It was fifty-four years ago that I became the 49th Imam — the spiritual leader — of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims, succeeding my late grandfather.

The ethics of Islam bridge the realms of Faith and World — what we call Din and Dunya. Accordingly, my institutional responsibilities for interpreting the faith are accompanied by a strong engagement in issues relating to the quality of life, not only for the Ismaili community but also for those with whom they share their lives — locally, nationally and

internationally. This principle of universality is expressed uniquely in the Holy Quran where it is written, “O Mankind, be careful of your duty to your Lord who created you from a single soul ... (and) joined your hearts in love so that by His grace ye became brethren.”

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) consists of a series of specialised agencies that have been brought into existence over the years since 1957 in response to needs that have been identified in many of the developing countries of Asia and Africa. It is rooted in the ethics of our faith, and it serves all the populations we seek to support, without regard to gender, race or faith.

Since 1957, many of those communities have undergone massive political changes, in countries scattered globally, from Pakistan and Bangladesh to Uganda, Tanzania, Zanzibar, and Kenya; from Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Côte d’Ivoire, to Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Iran and others. The challenge for AKDN is thus to address the development needs not only of countries at peace, but also of nations that have been born from war, or suffer from internal conflict.

Many of these populations have lived through the Cold War, decolonisation, wars of independence, and racial, religious and ethnic division. The disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of British and French colonial rule in Africa and Asia have resulted in the birth of a number of new nations, struggling with the challenge of nation building, including the integration of ethnic groups, previously undivided, across the newly created political frontiers. Many approaches have been tested, including single-party centralised political systems, nationalised economies where civil society was suffocated, and the imposition of a single national language such as Swahili, Urdu, Arabic and others. Many of these early endeavours have failed — perpetuating poverty and division. They have since been replaced by multi-party political systems, a new space supporting individual initiative, and language policies which have accepted the unavoidability of the English language as the predominant global language of knowledge.

This trend of multiple forms of instability in much of Africa, Asia and the Middle East also had a detrimental impact on the relative values of national currencies, to the point where some countries simply demonetised their currency, thus destroying all forms of institutional and individual wealth. In this regard the corrective role of the International Monetary Fund has been remarkable.

One of the consequences of this instability for Ismailis but also for many others is that the community today lives in many more countries than in the past, with a significant number moving to the industrialised world, including Europe and North America. Situations such as Idi Amin’s rule in Uganda and his expulsion of all Asians simply because they were Asian caused massive unexpected and unjustified emigration. This tragedy was not limited to Uganda, as it undermined confidence for sister Asian communities throughout Eastern Africa.



The Aga Khan Development Network has drawn a number of conclusions from this complex past, helping us respond effectively not only to instabilities rooted in that past, but also to the fragilities of the future.

### **Predictability: critical for progress**

One important lesson we have learnt is that predictability is not only a critical condition for progress but also one of the most difficult objectives to achieve — given the impact both of natural hazards and man-made situations. Because of this reality, AKDN today consists of many entities, such as Focus Humanitarian Assistance, which can respond to natural disasters, and the many other agencies that address human development problems in healthcare, education, access to credit, rural development, and habitat improvement.

### **Civil society: the key to development**

A second conclusion is our belief that civil society is the single most important factor in the development equation. Because the popular image of civil society is often associated with advocacy or pressure groups, I want to clarify that, by civil society, I mean a realm of activity which is neither governmental nor commercial, composed of institutions designed to advance the public good, but powered by private energies. They include entities such as the Aga Khan Foundation with its branches and affiliates in 19 countries, educational institutions such as the Aga Khan University, the University of Central Asia and the Aga Khan Academies, and healthcare organizations, such as the Aga Khan teaching and service hospitals. Civil society also embraces science and research institutions, professional, commercial, labour, ethnic and arts associations, such as the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and others devoted to religion or to communication, such as the Nation Media Group in East Africa and Roshan Telecommunications in Afghanistan. Other entities deal with the built environment, including our Building and Construction Improvement Programme and the Water and Sanitation Improvement Programme.

Whether in Asia, or Africa, or in the countries of the Arab Spring, or indeed in post-conflict situations such as Afghanistan, it is civil society, which most often is best positioned to ensure developmental progress.

Civil society organisations are a bulwark against the potential weaknesses of poorly performing, weakly established or young governments. They make a particular contribution when governments are failing, taking responsibility for additional tasks to help sustain improvements in quality of life.

Investing in the institutions of civil society deserves far greater priority, attention, support and resources than has hitherto been the case, even as investments in building the State's institutions continue. They are well placed to ensure that progress is both public and transparent and that good governance is observed as the norm, just as they are the best tools for hastening visible socio-economic development.

## **Towards better governance**

A third caveat that AKDN considers central is that social and economic institutions, including civil society, should be governed by the concepts of transparency, meritocracy and competence.

This commitment underpins the Network's involvement in education — from early childhood programmes on through secondary and tertiary institutions, and post-graduate studies. The Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia (which is planning campuses in inhospitable mountainous areas of three former Soviet Republics) are a part of this effort, as is the newly developing network of Aga Khan Academies. Again, these initiatives reflect long-standing traditions in Islamic life, and indeed in Ismaili history, stretching back to the founding by my own ancestors a thousand years ago of the Azhar University, one of Cairo's oldest universities.

As we work to encourage the development of a stronger human resource base, we also work to discourage practices which impede and distort meritocratic processes. This is vitally important since corruption in health care, education, land management, the application of law and in financial services has damaging consequences which affect the performance of civil society, hence generation after generation of hard-working, honourable families seeking to extract themselves from seemingly irreversible poverty.

## **The roads to democracy**

The fourth conclusion that AKDN can draw concerns the urgent need for new forms of democratic government in the developing world.

I expect that countries of the Arab Spring — and many others — will, over time, become fully democratic, but this transition will necessarily take time. Should some of these post-revolutionary transformations fail, some commentators will say that democracy is antithetical to Islam. This is wrong. Public consultation about the nature of governance and its accountability has been a central precept of statehood since the revelation of the faith. Today the issue is whether these societies will be able to conceive and sustain well-functioning democratic institutions (1).

Practically no countries in Asia, Africa or the Middle East have a political landscape rooted in a strong two-party system as do many western democracies. The probable consequence is that in many if not most countries of the developing world, coalition government will be omnipresent in the decades ahead. Yet few of these countries have any established experience with coalition governance (this is true of even the most powerful countries of the industrialised world). This critical challenge will become even more complex in countries where functioning compromises must be found between secular and theocratic forces.

A possible common ground could be found if all the political forces accepted over-arching responsibility to nourish a cosmopolitan ethic among their peoples. This would be an ethic for all peoples, one that offers equitable and measureable opportunities for the improvement of their lives, measured in terms of their own criteria for quality living.

Clearly different peoples will have different visions about a desirable quality of life, in urban versus rural areas, for example.

But a commitment to a universal ethical system that welcomes and respects diversity will be of central importance. AKDN has sought to structure itself through its network of specialised agencies to optimise its contribution to civil society. These agencies are able to design various matrixes for interventions, which can be adapted to as many situations as possible.

### **Reducing poverty**

Our fifth of our conclusions concerns the multi-dimensional character of poverty alleviation. Left alone, poverty will provide a context for special interests to pursue their goals in aggressive terms. While humanitarian assistance is indispensable, it should be conceived as part of a long-term strategy of helping the recipient community develop its own resources. Experience has taught us that any notion of alleviation must begin with an in-depth analysis of the multiple causes that require responses. We have also learned that micro responses are often fragile and short-lived; hence responses must achieve a certain scale to achieve longevity. Where possible, these responses should be simultaneous rather than sequential. Hence, much of AKDN's work is built around the concept of MIAD: Multi-Input Area Development.

Development initiatives cannot be contemplated exclusively in terms of economics, but rather as an integrated programme that encompasses variables such as education and skills training, health and public services, conservation of cultural heritage, infrastructure development, urban planning and rehabilitation, water and energy management, environmental control, and even policy and legislative development.

Within this concept of MIAD, infrastructure improvement is a key element. Of course AKDN has been active in this sector, often cooperating in the financing of projects such as power generation, water provision, transport, tourism, and food processing, among others. French institutions have been among our active partners in projects such as the Azito Power project in the Côte d'Ivoire, Frigoken, a Kenyan food processing company, and the Serena Hotels which now are established in the capitals of eight countries in Africa and Asia — and which, in collaboration with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, have established a number of small inns in historic forts and palaces on the Silk Route. We have also worked closely with French institutions on projects in health services, including collaboration involving the French Medical Institute for Children in Kabul and our newly launched Heart and Cancer centre at the Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi.

If a development policy is built around MIAD's multi-pronged approach, then a fundamental component for success is the creation of an Enabling Environment for private initiative. This includes such conditions as political stability, safety and security, citizen rights, empathetic labour legislation and a legal, fiscal and administrative framework which is streamlined, efficient, impartial and effective. Such an Enabling Environment can be strengthened by the contribution of a wide spectrum of public/private partnerships.

The AKDN works towards these ends in a number of ways, notably through the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED) and the Aga Khan Agency for Microfinance (AKAM). The fund does not distribute any form of dividend, but reinvests all its surpluses in further development. AKAM is a not-for-profit foundation. While often these agencies and their projects may seem to involve high risks, they are also labour intensive, market responsive, imaginative, and diversifying in their impact. Both agencies recognise that risk must be measured against forecast outcomes.

An Enabling Environment also extends to creating the conditions for development organisations, like the entire Aga Khan Development Network, to work efficiently. To that end, AKDN has agreements or protocols, often including diplomatic privileges, with the following countries and organisations: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Canada, the European Commission, France, Germany, India, Côte d'Ivoire, Kazakhstan, Kenya, the Kyrgyz Republic, Mali, Mozambique, Norway, Pakistan, Portugal, Russia, Syria, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Uganda, the United Kingdom and the United Nations. Individual agencies also work closely with local, state and national governments, contributing significantly through taxes and other levies to governmental income.

## **Cultural development**

A sixth conclusion that is worth special mention is the emphasis which the AKDN has placed on cultural development as a contributing factor for both urban and rural development, helping to alleviate poverty while also contributing to a stronger, richer sense of local and national identity.

It is striking in this regard that nearly one-third of internationally recognised World Heritage sites are in the Muslim world, but like most such sites in the developing world they are inhabited by some of the poorest people. Traditional approaches to cultural regeneration — often designed simply to create museums at such sites — fail to address the full potentials of such situations and often become unproductive burdens. The central objective of our work, therefore, is to leverage cultural opportunities in pursuit of poverty alleviation. We do this through a critical mass of programmes — the creation of parks and gardens, heritage conservation, water and sanitation improvements, microfinance resources, open space and infrastructure improvements, and education and health initiatives. It is the MIAD approach which seems to work best.

We have found that local populations can benefit from these efforts in many ways — they can be equipped to assist in the demanding tasks of historic restoration, finding productive new uses for historic buildings while then also taking on major responsibilities for maintaining cultural sites and accommodating a substantially increased flow of visitors. In the process, they can become the key custodians of their own proud cultural heritage.

AKDN efforts in this field have been wide ranging, including projects such as the creation, in the midst of one of Cairo's poorest neighbourhoods, of the beautiful and historically significant Al Azhar park, which receives over 2 million visitors per year. Similarly, the restoration of the Mughal Emperor Babur's Tomb in Kabul, known as Bagh-e-Babur, receives over 500,000 visitors per year. And we have also been involved in a series of cultural heritage projects along the Asian Silk Route.

### **Promoting regional cooperation**

As a seventh conclusion, I would like to mention briefly one often neglected element in the development equation which has taken on increasing importance in recent years. It concerns the emergence of new political entities when neighbouring countries come together on a cooperative regional basis. The potential for such cross-border activities is critically important in a number of places. In Central Asia, for example, we have built on the demography of the region and on the common culture that has emerged over an extended period of time — as reflected in the history of the ancient Silk Road. For example the hydroelectric plant in Khorog in Eastern Tajikistan is now supplying energy to North East Afghanistan across the Pyanj River. We have also sponsored the construction of five bridges across the Pyanj River linking two heretofore-separated Badakhshani communities in Tajikistan and Afghanistan. Afghans in the North East of their country can now seek easy access to healthcare in Khorog instead of having to travel all the way to Faisabad in their own country.

Many civil society needs are clearly regional, hence also our creation of the University of Central Asia in partnership with the governments of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic to provide education specialised in high mountain studies on a regional basis.

### **The difficulty of living together**

Finally the experience of the past 50 years in practically all the countries in which AKDN is operating has shown that — whether in times of peace or crisis — one of the recurrent societal characteristics is the difficulty which peoples of different backgrounds experience in living together. Individuals and families identify closely, of course, with the civil structures which they have inherited from birth, but they live invariably in situations which are not monolithic and they must therefore learn to accept, understand and value the pluralism of their societies, rather than seeing diversity as a liability, a threat, or an opportunity to be abused. Because this feature of human life has been so consistently prevalent over so many decades in so many countries, AKDN views this issue as a major

societal problem, one that will need to be addressed successfully if the peoples of both industrialised and developing countries are to live together in peace.

Tolerance, openness and understanding towards other peoples' cultures, values and faiths are now essential to the very survival of an interdependent world. Pluralism is no longer simply an asset or a prerequisite for development, it is essential for the functioning of civil society. Indeed, it is vital to our existence. Our concern about this matter is reflected in our creation, with the Canadian government, of the Global Centre for Pluralism, which is dedicated to research on pluralism and its successful implementation.

Based in Canada, a country that boasts one of the most pluralist societies of the industrialized world, the Global Centre for Pluralism is committed to the creative study of the factors that have contributed to a healthy pluralism, throughout human history and in many parts of the world. Included in this perspective is an ancient Islamic heritage of conciliation, mediation and tolerance, an ethic which for many centuries fostered successful and progressive pluralistic societies in much of the Muslim world. The AKDN commitment to pluralism and progress over half a century grows out of that heritage.

The group of institutions that constitute the Aga Khan Development Network is one of the largest, perhaps the largest, group of private development agencies currently active. The Network is a model in its own right. We work with international financial institutions, government development agencies, the private sector, both local and international, for-profit and not-for-profit and civil society groups. Our endeavours are united by a single common theme: to improve the perceived quality of life of those people, essentially the poor and the weak, that we serve.

*(1) The Aga Khan also spoke on the subject of democracy in a recent [acceptance speech](#) during an honorary doctorate ceremony at the University of Ottawa.*





## **Urban Land Institute's annual conference leadership dinner**

31 January 2012, Paris, France

Thank you, Mr Rummell for your very generous and warm words.  
Good evening Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is a distinct pleasure for me to be here this evening – and I would like to begin by expressing my renewed and deep thanks to the Urban Land Institute for presenting to me the J.C. Nichols prize at your 75th anniversary conference last Fall. I was particularly honoured to learn that this was one of the first times a non-American had been given this award, a reflection of the increasingly global nature of your concerns. And your meetings in Paris this week further demonstrate the Institute's international character.

I was also happy to know that – as a direct outgrowth of this award – our two organizations will be joining in a new program to advance urban planning in the Muslim world – where so much change is occurring, and so quickly.



As you may know, my interest in Urban Planning has something of an historical precedent – going back 1000 years – to the founding of the City of Cairo by my ancestors, the Fatimid Imam-Caliphs.

The Fatimids are remembered for drawing, pluralistically, on the widest array of talent, from all cultures, in developing a great civilization. One of the ways I have tried to reflect this history has been to encourage the development of world class planning and design resources, including programmes such as the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and the Aga Khan Programme for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

I am genuinely pleased tonight to be with so many distinguished people whose work relates to the field of urban planning and development.

For my comments this evening it was suggested that I share some of the lessons the Aga Khan Development Network has learned from its 50 and more years of work, essentially in the developing countries of East and West Africa, South and Central Asia, and the Middle East. And it seemed that one of the subjects that I might discuss with you this evening and which bridges our interests of today, and perhaps our destinies for tomorrow is the subject of impact investing.

As you know, a wide spectrum of investors has been increasingly involved in “impact investing,” using a diverse array of assets, employing highly disciplined due diligence and accounting analyses, and pursuing a balanced mix of financial, social, economic and environmental goals.

It has been exciting to see the volume of such investments growing substantially in recent years – with growth expected to reach around 500 billion US dollars in the next ten years.

So let me briefly make three observations.

Number one – to the best of our knowledge, there has been relatively little history as yet of impact investing in the property development field. To me, this could mean a great deal of untapped, upside potential. What now is needed most are knowledgeable intermediaries who fully comprehend the realities of business risk and reward in the property field – while also understanding what it takes to improve the quality of life for the engaged populations. I believe that both the Urban Land Institute and the Aga Khan Development Network can bring a great deal to this stimulating discussion.

My second point is that the power of impact investing is only beginning to be seen in the less developed parts of the world. We have witnessed in recent decades the rapid, exciting development of newly industrialized countries – especially along the Pacific rim, and we have heralded the potentials of the so-called BRIC countries. But my suggestion to you

tonight is that there are many places in the less developed world that now hold similar promise.

Our Network has been working in these places for over half a century. Many of them have experienced the heavy legacies of colonialism, the rigidities of Marxism, the misleading hopes of various new nationalisms, and the naïve promises of undisciplined, and sometimes greedy capitalism. Meanwhile, inexperienced democracies have also struggled to find workable forms of coalition government, a global issue today.

These fragilities still exist, but to a much lesser extent. Over time, our faith has been reinforced in the potential of these regions, especially for competent impact investing. Indeed, I would say that sustainable development that improves the quality of life for the peoples of the developing world will depend in the end on efforts that make sense both socially and financially.

As this process goes forward, the disciplines and resources of the property investment community will be particularly well suited to such opportunities.

This is true, first, because of the growing demand for property in the developing world, reflecting not only higher birth rates but also the rapid pace of urbanization. We remember that dramatic economic development in the industrialized world was invariably accompanied by accelerated urbanization. Today, in less developed countries, population growth and urbanization are combining with the rapid growth of the middle class as well as with climatic and geographic constraints on the supply of land – and the likely result is a continuing increase in property values.

This scenario will be played out not only in the great capital cities of the developing world, but also, most probably, in its “secondary” cities.

There is another critically important factor that I would emphasize this evening – and that is the increasing importance for these populations of civil society institutions. By civil society, I mean those non-governmental institutions which serve great public purposes. They include organizations devoted to education, to culture, to health, and environmental improvement; they embrace commercial, labour, professional and ethnic associations, as well as religion and media. Improving the scale and the competence of civil society is a focal goal for the entirety of the Aga Khan Development Network.

Even when governments are fragile or disappointing, strong civil society organizations generally remain as key drivers of development. Strengthening the pillars of civil society is the most effective way I know of ensuring a positive social impact in the developing world.

Let me spotlight one other helpful variable in this equation – and that is the expanding opportunity for regional investment – across national frontiers. Strategies that cross

arbitrary political boundaries to engage cross-border communities of cooperation can enhance growth opportunities – while also spreading risks more widely.

My third and final message this evening is simply to explain why the Aga Khan Development Network can be a valuable resource in discussing these investment opportunities. We are one of the resources that you might wish to draw upon.

Let me sketch out quickly the work that we do. You have heard, AKDN is active in over 30 developing countries. We employ some 80,000 people, supported by tens of thousands of volunteers. And one of the characteristics of development in the third world is voluntary service. These volunteers and others work in a vast array of fields, reflecting what we call a Multi-Input approach. The majority of projects are in the not-for-profit sector, ranging from the building of bridges and the restoration of cultural heritage sites to far-flung institutions in the fields of health and education. The Aga Khan University, for example, has the leading health sciences faculty in Pakistan, and now has 13 campuses in eight countries, including major teaching hospitals which are shaping the future of health care in Pakistan and in Kenya. They use surpluses generated by one set of services to subsidize care for poorer patients as well as scholarships for medical and nursing students. Meanwhile, our Health Services programmes include medical outreach centres in many hundreds, literally hundreds, of rural and urban communities.

And, in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, the University of Central Asia has served some 30,000 students since its foundation in 2006.

At the same time, a broad portfolio of projects moves forward under the aegis of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, involving fields such as architecture, music, parks and the restoration of historic sites.

Another large portion of our work is entrepreneurial, channeled through the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development. These ventures, over ninety of them, are held to rigorous profit and loss disciplines. All surpluses they generate are reinvested in business expansion or in efforts to aid the less fortunate. These ventures range from banking and insurance companies to the tourism and leisure sector, from food processing and clothing manufacture to telecommunications and media, from energy generation to aviation —and, more recently, a micro-lending program which now has some 300 branches in 13 countries.

Let me illustrate one or two specific examples. I will start with our lead investment in a hydropower project which will almost double the supply of electric power to the grid in Uganda. In Afghanistan, a mobile phone company called Roshan is transforming the likely shape of the country's post-conflict situation by offering not only reliable communications to connect the whole country, but also sophisticated tele-medicine and financial services and that is happening today in Afghanistan.

The Serena Hotel group, with facilities now in eight countries in Africa and Central Asia – staffed almost entirely by local employees – contributes significantly to the diversification of their national economies. And let me mention Nation Media Group launched over 50 years ago and it is now a publicly traded entity, and one of the largest independent multi-media companies in Africa. And there are many other exciting examples.

I mention this wide spectrum of social, cultural and economic initiatives to reinforce what I have said earlier about the potential for sensible impact investing in places which have not been in the investment spotlight.

We envision the launch of additional major projects in the coming decade – including efforts to strengthen the education and health systems of the less developed world – opening new capital initiatives and expanding existing ones, while also providing opportunities for operating partnerships. As we move forward, we are encouraged by the growing interest of other potential partners, including international government agencies which often provide concessionary financing.

As you can see, the Aga Khan Development Network attaches central importance to the role, in the world in which we work, of property impact investment.

Whether one is developing a university, a hospital, a school, a park, an historical site, a commercial enterprise, a municipal facility, or a regional network of institutions, land planning, building development and financing are fundamental variables.

Nothing serious, long-lived, or self-sustaining can be achieved unless the suitability of the land that is involved – and the economic conditions under which it becomes available – are consistent both with long-range social purposes and sensible financial objectives.

Property impact investing represents an exciting new funding niche, positioned half way between enterprise financing and development funding. It is my hope that as all of us come to share, more and more, our knowledge and experience, we might also share in some new, highly original and satisfactory outcomes.



## 2012 Inaugural Pluralism Lecture at GCP

### LOCATION

Ottawa, Canada (28 May 2012)

Her Excellency Roza Otunbayeva  
Chief Justice McLachlin  
Ministers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

Welcome to this launching by the Global Centre for Pluralism of its annual Pluralism Lecture Series. This is a significant milestone – and I cannot think of an inaugural speaker better suited than the remarkable leader whom it is my honor to introduce. Her Excellency Roza Otunbayeva is a woman of courage, and conviction, whom I have come to admire and respect greatly, over the many years that the Aga Khan Development Network and I have been engaged in Kyrgyzstan and Central Asia. As a leader, President Otunbayeva understood and championed the democratic aspirations of her peoples, guiding the country, in all its diversity, through the region's first peaceful and constitutional transfer of power - a remarkable achievement with tremendous implications for governance inside and outside Kyrgyzstan. Excellency, I am so very pleased that you have graciously accepted my invitation to launch this lecture series with an address to the distinguished group assembled here today.

In the course of my work over the past half-century, I have become convinced that finding ways for diverse societies to live peacefully together is one of the principal challenges of the contemporary world. It has led me to the conclusion that pluralism as

an ethic of respect for diversity is an essential building block of successful and prosperous societies.

Canada is one of the best examples of a country that has embraced its diversity and cultivated a vision of nationhood based on shared and democratic citizenship. It should therefore come as no surprise that the Global Centre for Pluralism is headquartered in Ottawa. The Centre is founded on a strong and vital partnership with the Government of Canada, rooted in our common belief in respect for diversity and the importance of building inclusive societies.

Excellency, as a former Kyrgyz Ambassador to Canada, you are no stranger to this country's commitment to participatory democracy. And you have, through your own example, shown that an enlightened leadership recognizes that, nothing less than this, is acceptable for any society.

It is my hope that the Global Centre for Pluralism will serve the global community as a neutral space for dialogue and comparative exchange about the institutions, policies and practices that foster respect for diversity, cultivate shared citizenship, and ultimately build inclusive societies.

Much of the ongoing conflict we are witnessing in today's world is linked to a rejection of pluralism. One of the most important ways for the Centre to better apprehend this challenge and contribute to enhancing pluralism is to learn from world figures who have directly experienced it, and addressed it successfully. Our inaugural speaker has shown that it can be done.

Roza Otunbaeva guided her country through the initial stages of its democratic journey, but as she herself has repeatedly stressed, Kyrgyzstan's future as a democracy depends on the implementation of the rule of law, including respect for human rights and due process, judicial reform, and national reconciliation. These reforms will take time and will require continued leadership from the peoples and the Government of Kyrgyzstan as well as support from international partners, including Canada and the Global Centre for Pluralism.

Madam Otunbayeva, on behalf of the Board of the Global Centre for Pluralism it gives me great pleasure to welcome you here this evening to launch the Pluralism Lecture Series. We are extremely fortunate to have you with us to share your first-hand perspective on the prospects and challenges for democracy and pluralism in your increasingly important part of the world.





## Inauguration ceremony of the Bujagali hydropower project

08 October 2012, Jinja, Uganda

*Bismillah-ir-Rahaman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency, President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda, and Your Excellency, the First Lady,  
Your Excellency, President Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi,  
Your Excellency, President Salva Kiir of the Republic of South Sudan,  
Your Excellency, President Mohamed Abdelaziz, President of Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic,  
Your Excellency, Dr. Mohamed Gharib Bilal, Vice President of Tanzania,  
Your Excellency, Mr Alhaji Adam Yusuf, Vice President of the Republic of Southern Sudan,  
Hon. Minister of Defence of the Republic of Congo,  
Hon. Minister of Defence of Angola,  
Hon. Minister of Home Affairs, of Zambia,  
The Rt. Hon Prime Minister of Uganda,  
Hon. Minister of Energy and Mineral Development of Uganda,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Secretary General of the East African Community,



Secretary General of the Great Lakes Region,  
Your Excellencies, members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
All other holders of high office and distinguished guests,

I want to mark this occasion as an occasion of very very great significance.

First of all, we are here to celebrate the 50 years of independence of Uganda, the Pearl of Africa. And it is an honour to be celebrating this event in the presence of President Museveni and so many distinguished leaders of other African nations.

It is also a pleasure to be joined today by all of you at the inauguration of the Bujagali Hydropower Plant - a momentous accomplishment that will open the door for continuing and expanding progress. It is not only a transformative development in the economic life of Uganda – and of the continent – but it is also an inspiring model of how such change can best be accomplished.

As we inaugurate the model today, I have two short comments I want to share with you:

The first is my admiration for the extraordinary diversity of men and women who came together to produce this remarkable project. We had planners and financiers, engineers and architects, scientists and government officials, suppliers and contractors, consultants, construction workers, and community leaders. And we had President Museveni and his government.

Their story is a compelling one, because in a project of this complexity, there are surprises that occur. When you have that number of participants working together for a five year period, those surprises have to be addressed by consensus; they cannot be addressed in any other way. And I would like to express my admiration for all the stakeholders who worked in such a united manner moving forward in the interest of the project and the interest of Uganda.

Let me give you one small example of the sort of issues that arose. The grid had to link to 100 kilometres of cable, and in order to do that, we had to cross 2,632 separate land parcels. That was just one small part of this vast endeavour.

At its heart, the Bujagali project is a Ugandan project. It is a Ugandan success story and again I would like to thank the President for having led this initiative in a way where this unique public private partnership was able to move forwards.

But this is not only a Ugandan project - it is a global project. As Nizar Juma said, 37 different nationalities participated from around the world to make this project move forwards.

The second point I would make is that this project has not stopped at the delivery of energy. It is investing in education, it is investing in healthcare, it is investing in social development, it is investing in all those aspects which improve the quality of life of people who live within the ambit of the project. And I think this is an important lesson to be learnt, because ultimately the goal is to improve the quality of life of people in the most complete manner possible.

Finally, let me address my thanks to all the stakeholders who have worked so well here. And I would refer to the project managers, to the contractors, to the workmen, to the lenders, who were very empathetic at a time when we needed their empathy, and I hope what we have learnt from this project, will give Uganda replicable knowledge for the benefit of all of Africa.



## Foundation ceremony of the FMIC Women's Wing

### LOCATION

Kabul, Afghanistan (20 October 2012)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency Vice President Khalili  
Monsieur Laurent Fabius, Ministre des Affaires Etrangères de la République Française  
Ministers in the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan  
Parliamentarians  
Ambassadors  
Members of the Provisional Operating Committee of the FMIC  
Distinguished Guests and Friends  
Assalam-o-Alaikum, Good Morning and Bonjour

It is indeed a pleasure to welcome you today as we celebrate the success and the expansion of the French Medical Institute for Children.

As you know, the FMIC has been treating the children of Afghanistan for more than six years – offering care at the highest international standards – and transforming the lives of so many families in this country.

In a relatively short time, the hospital has developed a truly impressive facility and capability. For example, last year, over 300 heart surgeries were done on babies.

In its short history FMIC has performed more than 10,000 pediatric surgeries for cases such as birth defects, heart diseases, limb deformities, as well as accidents. It was the first hospital in Afghanistan to do heart surgeries, and already, 1,200 have been

performed. The hospital has treated more than 400,000 outpatients and more than 23,000 children have been admitted for treatment. This Institute has created more than a quarter million diagnostic images - and conducted over a million and a half lab tests.

And the impact of this facility has been felt across the region, as it also connects with other leading hospitals: the Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi, in addition to many hospitals in France.

This accomplishment results from a unique partnership – with inputs from four different sources. The four anchors are the governments of Afghanistan and France, joined by two private entities, the French NGO – La Chaîne de L'Espoir/Enfants Afghans – and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).

What we have created here, however, is not some highly exceptional showcase to benefit a privileged few.

What this project is doing is charting a course towards sustainable health solutions all across Afghanistan. In fact, FMIC is a critical hub for the AKDN Integrated Health system, which is designed to bring international standard primary, secondary and tertiary health care to the people of Central Asia, including those in the remotest areas. This system is built on three basic commitments.

The first of these commitments is to providing care of the very highest quality.

One mark of that quality is the fact that FMIC is the first hospital in Afghanistan to achieve ISO 9001: 2008 certification. And it is currently preparing to meet the most demanding standard in hospital quality - accreditation from the American Joint Commission International.

In addition, I am pleased to note, and I think that this is particularly important, is that the Bamyán Provincial Hospital managed by the Aga Khan Health Services, the Community Midwifery Education and our Basic Health Centres in Shiber District also achieved ISO 8001-2009 certification last month - the first provincial hospital and health programmes in the country to do so.

What all of this means for Afghanistan, quite simply, is that people here no longer need to feel they must venture outside the country in order to get quality health care.

A second core mission of the FMIC is broadening access to care – to reach the local population, including the indigent and needy. The key to meeting this challenge is the Hospital's generous welfare program. To put it very simply, no one is denied care at the FMIC because of his or her inability to pay.

Since 2006, over 200,000 patients coming from all 34 provinces of Afghanistan have benefitted from the welfare program. In 2012, that is this year, 90% of inpatients will receive welfare support. The four partner organizations have contributed generously to the cost of this program – some \$15 million – as have others donors such as Roshan Telecom – and our deepest gratitude goes out to all of them.

Financial access has not been the only problem. Physical access to care can also be a difficult barrier. But in this case, new technologies have opened up new pathways.

These are e-health facilities - electronic connections, which allow for tele-consultations to patients, tele-radiology and pathology analysis and e-learning sessions for continuing education. Telemedicine links to the Provincial Hospitals in Bamyan and Faizabad, and the Khorog General Hospital in Tajikistan, bring world-class care to remote areas. The number to date of such tele-consultations is 3,400, the number of tele-radiology images that have been interpreted is 3,300 – and altogether 2,000 staff have benefitted from e-learning.

Afghanistan has been a pioneer in using modern technology to reach out to the general population and we look forward to expanding such connections to other provincial hospitals in the country and in the region.

Expanding quality and broadening access would not be possible, however, without a third component – a rapidly growing pool of qualified health care professionals. This is why we have emphasized programmes for training and mentoring Afghan nationals for such roles. We are also working to attract health professionals in the diaspora to return to Afghanistan.

As a result, our earlier reliance on expatriates to do these jobs has been falling – in fact, of the 555 staff members here at the FMIC, 96 percent are now Afghans.

At the same time, the Continuing Medical Education program is helping doctors and nurses working elsewhere in Kabul to update and upgrade their skills. For example, we established in partnership with the Ministry of Public Health - a Post Graduate Program in Pediatric Medicine and Pediatric Surgery, with initial financing from the Canadian International Development Agency. I also wish to mention the training of community midwives in Badakhshan, which is supported by the German Government, through its development agency KfW, and nursing education at the Ghazanfar Institute of Health Sciences, supported by USAID. We express our gratitude to these agencies.

We are here today to celebrate a new project - one that promises to take us into an equally exciting future.

Phase 2 of the FMIC project is the Women's Wing – designed to provide and inspire superior obstetric and gynaecological care here in Kabul – and throughout the region. The new wing will add a total of 52 maternal beds, along with two Operating Rooms and six delivery rooms. A new Neonatal Intensive Care Unit will be added, again first the first time in Afghanistan.

The building will carefully anticipate a wide variety of needs - at a cost of some 17.7 million dollars, provided by the Government of France, through the Agence Française de Développement and the Aga Khan Development Network. This cooperative project builds on a wide array of such partnerships between the AKDN and the Government of France. Together, for example, we are now developing Heart and Cancer Centres in East Africa, as well as a variety of cross-border health initiatives in Central Asia. Let me take this opportunity to pay special tribute to the French hospitals as well as missions of doctors and nurses, in addition to our partner, La Chaîne de L'Espoir, for their professional commitment and remarkable contribution. Thank you.

Monsieur le Ministre, permettez-moi, également, de vous dire combien je vous suis reconnaissant d'avoir voulu honorer cette cérémonie de votre présence.

There is one more dimension of our future vision that deserves to be mentioned before we conclude. I refer to an exciting plan to create, on the land adjacent to this site, a great new Kabul International Medical Centre – a Centre of Excellence for providing tertiary care services and medical education of the highest quality. This new complex will be an intellectual and service hub for an integrated health delivery system serving the entire Central Asian region.

The region includes the neighbouring countries of Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Northern Pakistan, Kazakhstan and even Western China, where the Integrated Health System would impact over 100 million people. The success of this regional initiative, in my view, is predicated on public-private partnerships that sustain the institutions through best practice. Indeed the relationship we have established with this hospital and those in Bamyan and Faizabad are models of such partnerships.

The Government of Afghanistan's commitment to this vision – like the generous spirit of our French partners – is something that continues to inspire us all – as we work together to improve the quality of life for the people of this country and this region – and for generations yet unborn.

Thank you.



## Transcript of a conversation between His Highness the Aga Khan and Synergos Founder Peggy Dulany at the Synergos University for a Night Event

### LOCATION

London, UK (22 October 2012)

**Robert Dunn:** My name is Bob Dunn and I have the privilege of serving as the President of the Synergos Institute.

This is our first University for a Night in Europe, although we have held similar events for more than a decade in New York and quite recently in Johannesburg. It's really wonderful to see some old friends and some new ones, new faces, and we are, of course, especially honoured to have with us His Highness the Aga Khan and also that we are joined by his daughter and son, Princess Zahra and Prince Rahim.

This is part of the Synergos 25th anniversary celebration and from its creation, Synergos has worked to establish a world that is just and fair and free of poverty. We work collaboratively with philanthropists and foundations, community leaders and corporations, governments and global entities. With them we tackle issues such as education, food security, health, nutrition, chronic isolation, social entrepreneurship and community economic development.

We do this work in every part of the world where we have an invitation to lend a hand. We are not however, subject-matter experts. We are instead a bridging organisation, helping to make it possible for people to come together across divides, build trusting relationships and join together to implement systems changing innovations.



Support for the event this evening makes it possible for us to do this work, and I want to particularly thank our wonderful sponsors this evening. The Hashoo Foundation and the Hashwani family, the Shell Corporation, Kim Samuel Johnson, all of whom are represented here this evening, and David Rockefeller who couldn't be with us this evening because he is recuperating from a recent surgery and happily doing very well. Special thanks also to the Nand & Jeet Khemka Foundation who have really been our hosts in London throughout the course of this week.

University for a Night brings together an extraordinary collection of change makers and provides an opportunity for them to identify common interests, share experiences and discover new partnership possibilities. We also use these occasions to honour individuals who exemplify the values we hold in our hearts and that we believe are vital in achieving the transformation of our global society. We are fortunate to have two previous honourees with us in the room tonight, Sir Fazle Hasan Abed and Mo Ibrahim. Thank you very much for joining us.

And now I would like to turn this over to Peggy Dulany, our beloved founder. Peggy's open heartedness and clear headedness have guided Synergos from its very inception and it's a treat for me to present her to you – my dear friend.

**Peggy Dulany:** Thank you Bob. Good evening everyone. It's very delightful to see you all here.

We're gathered this evening in the spirit of partnership which is a principle and a practice that Synergos tries to embody in all of our relationships with local groups, all the way up to national and global groups. We hold a shared vision of improving the lives of people in our own communities and countries and around the world.

But tonight, we're here to recognise and honour the work of an extraordinary leader who has done so much toward those goals: His Highness the Aga Khan, leader of the worldwide Shia Ismaili Community.

The award we are presenting has a long name: The David Rockefeller Bridging Leadership Award. It's named after my father, a friend of His Highness and a long-time supporter of Synergos and, at least for me, a model of a business leader using his influence and ideas to address major social and political challenges. As Bob mentioned, my father couldn't be with us tonight. This is the first time – well this year is the first time – that he hasn't been at our awards. However, he wrote a letter, that I'm going to present to you that if you don't mind I'd like to read to the group.

He's taken advantage of the friendship to address you as Karim.

*"It is my privilege to congratulate you on receiving the David Rockefeller Bridging Leadership Award. I am pleased and proud to see the honour bestowed on such an extraordinary individual. Through the Aga Khan Development Network, you have leveraged the social conscience of Islam in ways that benefit people of all faiths, promoting tolerance, pluralism, and broad-based development. From initiatives on the environment to health, food security and economic opportunity, your agencies are having a momentous impact on the lives of people in Africa and Asia. I also want to commend you for your support of education at all levels, from basic education to*

*institutions of higher learning that are helping transform these societies. In the cultural sphere, you are helping to preserve and to share traditional music, architecture and art in both the developing and developed world. Using investments in tourism and other endeavours to create jobs and infrastructure and channelling profits back into development programmes is an invaluable model which I hope might be expanded throughout the world.*

*Thank you for your leadership and vision.*

*With great respect and admiration.*

*Sincerely,  
David Rockefeller.”*

So the kinds of bridging actions that we're talking about: reaching out across divides and differences and outlook and political orientation, sectors of society, religious beliefs and other things that divide us, are what we at Synergos call “bridging leadership” and after which we have named this award.

And as my father said in his letter, His Highness represents all of those things. Pluralism and inclusion underlies these efforts while the motivation for this work comes from the social conscience of Islam, the network that he represents is non-denominational, working with and benefitting people of many faiths and origins. He would have it no other way – that is bridging.

The Aga Khan and his networks are innovative as well, using for profit businesses to fund development programmes and helping kick start broad economic development with critical business investments. The results are tangible improvements in the lives of people in more than 30 countries. For your work and the example that you set, I thank you.

And your Highness would you please join me so that I can present the award.

**H.H. the Aga Khan:** Thank you.

Peggy, dear guests, I would like to say how grateful and honoured I am by this prize that you have given me this evening. For many decades I have admired the work that your family has done in sustaining development in the United States and elsewhere. And for many of us in this domain, you and your family have been an example that we have learnt from and that we have tried to emulate.

As I have done my work over the past decades, I have concluded that one of the most important forces in development is civil society. If you think about the countries around the world which have had fragile governments but which have still made progress, there are umpteen examples of countries which have made progress because they have had strong civil society. And civil society means mobilising all the forces that can be mobilised in support of human development, and that is why I am so happy and gratified by the prize that you have given me, because you are bringing these forces together in the most remarkable way.

Thank you.

**Peggy Dulany:**

So now I feel very privileged to have the opportunity to ask His Highness a few questions that I'm sure are questions that all of us are interested in the answers to and from which we'll undoubtedly learn a lot.

So I'd like to begin with a question about pluralism and tolerance. In a world that we live in today, those are becoming in some ways increasingly rare, rare, features and I would really love your comments, as a leader in that field, as to how one can promote pluralism and tolerance and your own experience in that sphere.

**H.H the Aga Khan:** Well, I should start by saying that when I inherited my grandfather's role, the Ismaili community was distributed in many different countries around the world. The world was still divided by the Cold War. The Soviet Union was still in place. Many countries were still colonised and therefore the community as an international community of faith, did not have a strong dialogue, a strong international dialogue.

As a result, creating a sense of identity, a sense of common purpose, a sense of common values became a very, very complex exercise. And we started by seeking to know or to learn what we didn't know. And that was a long exercise in listening.

It was, for example, an exercise in recording oral tradition in rural communities; finding historic documents that had been hidden for years and years and trying to learn what made up the identity of these communities and how the faith had changed in various parts of the world, and to recognise the changes and then bring them together around a common value system.

And that, I think, was possible through a very, very strong effort in education, and we developed an educational system – our primary education curriculum took 7 years to develop. The secondary curriculum will take 15 years to develop, but I hope that at the end of that, there will be a sense of legitimacy of the pluralism of human society.

Now, that was within the community. Then we looked outside, and we found that through much of Africa, through much of Asia there was rejection of pluralism, there was competition, there was no common purpose and it was, I think, anchored in poverty. It was fighting to fight poverty. It was not fighting to fight for hope, for aspiration, for common purpose. It was fighting poverty. I think we were able to turn that around by working on the basis that there is a common human denominator which is the aspiration for a quality life. And if you can find that notion of a cosmopolitan ethic and you can bring people together around the definition of a cosmopolitan ethic, then I think you have the sound foundation on which to build pluralism.

**Peggy Dulany:**

That's a wonderful answer, thank you, and I'd just like to call out a couple of qualities that were mentioned and one that wasn't, which to us, in promoting the style of leadership for which we are honouring you, are fundamental.

So you mentioned the importance of listening. You demonstrated in your response, humility, which we also find essential. And you highlighted the importance of human dignity and the importance in helping people achieve dignity, of reducing poverty,

particularly the sort that robs people of their dignity. These are certainly principles which we agree with and feel very strongly about, so thank you for that answer.

I'm going to skip around to different subjects and the next one really has to do with cross-generational transfer of values. This is something that we talk about in my own family with regard to philanthropy and its larger meaning which is really the love of humanity and I wonder if you would be willing to comment in your family tradition, what are some of the ways in which you have also passed on over the generations your values and how you received them from your grandfather?

**H.H the Aga Khan:**

Well I think the change in our lives has been when my grandfather moved to the western world and so my grandfather established himself in the western world and my brother and I were educated in Switzerland and then the United States.

But we kept a very, very strong family tradition, and in fact my grandfather was very much the senior figure in the family as it was appropriate. And his values, which he had kept very much alive during his life, were evident in every day of his life and therefore he became not only the head of the family but a role model for the family, and in that sense that continuity of tradition has been very, very strong indeed.

**Peggy Dulany:** And perhaps it's awkward to talk about this with two of your children here but would you have any comments or would you like them to comment on how that is now getting passed down?

**H.H. the Aga Khan:** I think if they would like to comment that would be very welcome but I would simply say that they have taken on board, I think, the value systems that we have in the family and they are actively engaged in what we are doing and they are bridging the younger generations in the community and elsewhere, and bridging also the gender difference because the gender difference in many parts of our world in 1957 when I succeeded my grandfather was very, very acute indeed.

**Peggy Dulany:**

I know that in my own family if, as I think back, a lot of the transmission of values happened around the dinner table. Would you say that it was similarly [the case] – in family interactions?

**H.H the Aga Khan:** I think that we exchanged ideas and thoughts when we were doing sport together, when we were going to common events, there was no set pattern. Every opportunity was good.

**Peggy Dulany:** Yes, thank you. So now I wonder if you would comment a little bit on the relationship between philanthropy and development, which is certainly a principle that I share, and maybe some of the lessons learned through the network [AKDN] and also lessons that some of the people in this room could take advantage of, whether they are business people or philanthropists or NGOs.

**H.H. the Aga Khan:**

Well I think that this is a really central question for everybody who is engaged in development and I would start by saying that every decade, maybe a little bit less often

than that, we talk about new formulae to sustain development, and those new formulae started some decades ago with risk investment.

Then they went to microcredit, now they are going to impact investment, and every decade there's a new formula that comes up and that you live with and you try to interpret it.

But the fact is that ultimately you are looking at how society changes. What are the forces that enable it to change? And every decade I have found that there has been the absence of financial vehicles which enable you to address the issues that come up on the radar screen.

To me, today the big gap is between enterprise, only for-profit, and social development, only for social development. There is a massive gap in that area which is now being described as impact investment. I believe that impact investment is one of the most important concepts that I can recollect in the last 50 years. And the reason is that it harnesses social ethic to economic purpose.

And the harnessing of social ethic to economic purpose enables you to do things which you could never do otherwise because what you're talking about is a double dividend. You're talking about a reasonable dividend on the investment and you are talking about a reasonable dividend in social development.

Both of those can be measured and therefore those who make an investment in the impact domain can know what they're achieving with that impact investment. How many children go to school? How many poor people have access to tertiary care? How many people can improve their habitat? How many people can flee from fear? Fear is one of the most dominant forces in developing societies that I know.

So these are all aspects of improving the quality of life of people which I consider absolutely essential and it is only achievable I think, through this combination of ethical purpose in economic development and ethical purpose in social development.

To be practical, education is costing more and more every year. Peoples' incomes are not growing with the increasing cost in education. Therefore families are finding it more and more difficult to pay for their education, particularly if they have numerous children.

In tertiary [health]care; non-communicable disease is becoming the dominant force, the dominant type of sickness in the developing world. It's expensive. How do people access that? I believe that impact investment can respond to many, many of these issues by giving a new domain of resource that can be harnessed both to the social and economic purpose.

**Peggy Dulany:**

I wish you had been in the room this afternoon when we hosted a gathering for some people working with large corporations, many of whom are here tonight and the theme was social entrepreneurs and I wonder if you could relate the importance of social entrepreneurship to impact investing.

**H.H. the Aga Khan:**

Well I think the reality is that because of the fact that the Ismaili community is an

international community, we are particularly well placed for what I would call “gap analysis” and therefore we are able to, I think, get a good sense of where there are disequilibria occurring in education, in healthcare, in access to credit, in rural development etc.

And one of the critical things that we are looking at is how you close those gaps. Where things have been miscalculated or where I would call the capacity to project has not been analysed properly, you have major dysfunctions in society. And if you think about what you see in Africa and Asia you see dysfunctional education relations. Not enough investment in early childhood development, tertiary education which is all over the place. You have an incongruous educational system. That’s where social entrepreneurship should come in, I think, and help develop these institutions.

**Peggy Dulany:** To introduce it into the education system ...

**H.H. the Aga Khan:** To introduce it into the education system because governments don’t do it.

**Peggy Dulany:**

And I believe that’s what your organisation is trying to do in Central Asia in the universities that you are building.

**H.H. the Aga Khan:** Exactly, exactly. In Africa, in Central Asia we have sensed a massive insufficiency of commitment to tertiary education and to what I would call a research university, because just giving university degrees is one thing.

Keeping universities alive in the competitive global inter-world of intellect is a completely different exercise.

**Peggy Dulany:** Thank you.

Probably some people in this room are very familiar and others might not be as familiar with the traditions of social conscience within Islam and I wonder if you could enlighten us both about the thinking and also how you have translated that into practice.

**H.H. the Aga Khan:** What Islam says about supporting people in society is perhaps somewhat different from other communities and other faiths. The premise that Islam works on is not just helping but helping to render the individual capable of governing his or her destiny.

You are not just helping them away from poverty; you are giving them the means to propel themselves and their families into their future, in ways which they control. And therefore when you educate, when you help in healthcare, when you give access to credit, you are not looking at just helping the individual survive, you are trying to reposition the individual and the family in society. That is the basic premise of social support that I believe is the correct interpretation of Islam.

**Peggy Dulany:** It’s a great answer and it reminds me of the first time that I came across your network and I think it was about 1991 led by Rajesh Tandon who is over here.

We did a series of case studies of successful partnerships in Asia. They were quite difficult to find in 1991 but one was the Orangi pilot project in Pakistan in which the

amazing unique aspect of it was that the community members had decided for themselves how to handle their own sanitation issues and together with the network and UNICEF had made a huge difference in other health and wellbeing of the community. So it goes way back, that value system, I can see.

I have one final question: you mentioned earlier the devastating impact of fear and I think all of us are aware that in today's world there are many things to be fearful of and in my thinking and, sounds like yours too, fear is almost the opposite of love. What can we all collectively do to begin to reduce the fear and transform the way of being into a way of loving rather than fearing?

**H.H. the Aga Khan:** I've often asked myself how far interfaith dialogue could carry human development and I concluded that there will always be limits. I have not concluded that there are limits in defining society's wish to improve its quality of life.

And I think that the common denominator amongst all peoples is to improve the quality of life.

That is a basic fact and I have seen communities that have conflictual relationships over decades change their whole philosophy of life because they had come together around a common purpose that they had defined. Not our agencies. They had defined. They had told us in their societies, in their organisations, what were the priorities they wanted.

Our role was to come in and support them and once that happened, hatred disappeared. So what you call love was a consequence of people coming together and saying, we will share the burden of life in such a way that we make it an opportunity for a new future.

**Peggy Dulany:** And would you say that in doing that – because often the communities that you support are very poor and probably somewhat isolated – that the safety that you were able to create, the sense of safety, was an important piece of the giving up some of the fear, beginning to feel a sense of hope and then being able to live out of the heart?

**H.H. the Aga Khan:** Absolutely.

People coming together around a common purpose are much stronger, for example, in eliminating corruption. When an individual faces corruption, that's a problem. When a village community faces corruption it's a totally different issue.

And in fact, corruption in civil society is probably one of the most damaging forces that we are trying to deal with everyday. It's not only corruption at the level of government, it's corruption in education, it's corruption in healthcare, it's corruption in financial institutions, it's corruption in rural support, in distribution of goods.

So the lack of ethics in civil society is one of the really very, very great issues that we have to deal with. And what we've found is that community organisations, when they come together, what do they look at? It's very exciting. Their whole basis of hope is built around best practice. They reject all the things that have damaged them individually and they come together and say we want a new future built around new people whom we choose because we trust them.



**Peggy Dulany:** Thank you. That's a wonderful note on which to end our discussion.  
[Applause]



## Agreement of Cooperation between the government of Alberta and the Ismaili Imamat

23 October 2012, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Premier, dear guests,

There are days in one's life that mark an individual, that mark an institution and today is one of those days.

What are those days, those are days which I think open doors to the future, give you a sense of hope, a sense of confidence, a sense of not being alone in trying to achieve the goals that one has set one's self as an individual or as an institution and that is what you have allowed Premier for me today and I thank you for that. My community has lived obviously for centuries in a large number of countries and therefore we have a permanent presence in these countries. That's very different from being an occasional visitor; people live in these countries. And they live in good and less good circumstances, they think, they analyze, they live in hope, but also they live in sadness and in difficulty and the last few years have not been happy in many of the countries we are working in, so our duty is to try to convert these countries into countries of opportunity. We can't do that alone, but we can do it with

Canada and we can do it with the province of Alberta. So in that sense today is a day of magnificent opportunity and I thank you so much.

I would add that in the last decades I have come to an important conclusion about governance, about the fragility of governance in the developing world and what people can do to protect themselves from governance which is not effective. And I think that history is beginning to show that civil society in its complexity but also in its ability to impact the way people live is probably the most important single feature that I know and building civil society is a complex exercise, needs multiple input and that multiple input again, I hope we will develop with your institutions in Alberta. I would like to add also that this support that you are giving us should not be one way and I hope that we will be able to create new opportunity for Canadian institutions, Canadian enterprises, Canadian academic centers that need global knowledge to work with us to strengthen their ability to perform at home and to perform internationally. Today we are looking at number of case study situations. How do you build for the aged and how do you make sure that they don't get isolated in society? And what can we learn from an initiative in Canada that could be replicated elsewhere in Canada but also in the industrialized world. How do you convince western societies that Islam is a faith of civilization and not just a faith? Well I hope that the Islamic garden when it comes into place will be able to show a different aspect of our faith. We have other initiatives here, the collaboration with the University of Alberta.

We have a big problem in the developing world. We don't do research and because we don't do research we will constantly find ourselves running behind the capacities of the industrialized societies to deal with the evolution of healthcare. And the fact is that today non-communicable disease is becoming the dominant situation in many of the countries where we are living. Our universities are not research universities so we have to work with universities that are at the top of human knowledge to bring that knowledge to our communities and our populations. So these relationships that are being discussed today and that will I hope be part of this agreement, are very very important indeed for us. So when I say that there are days that mark ones own convictions and hope, now I hope you understand why that is such a day for me today.

Thank you Premier.



## UNESCO Conference in China

### LOCATION

Hangzhou, China (15 May 2013)

Madame Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

My warmest thanks go to all of you who have received us so generously here in Hangzhou, our Chinese hosts and our many friends from UNESCO.

I am honoured by your invitation, and pleased for this opportunity to talk about two subjects that are very close to my heart - culture and development.

UNESCO is to be saluted for keeping the work of cultural development high on the international agenda. And I also want to recognize the important work that China has been doing, in cooperation with UNESCO and through its own advances in cultural development. It is indeed striking to realize how many of UNESCO's World Heritage sites are here in China, with this beautiful city of Hangzhou high among them. We are deeply pleased to be here.

I referred to culture and development a moment ago as two separate subjects. In fact, as your participation here attests, they are inextricably linked.

It was not so long ago, however, that culture and development were not thought to be so compatible. “Cultural heritage” was often seen as a potential drain on fragile economies, even a barrier to modernization.

The closer linking of culture with development grew initially, I believe, out of an increasing respect for the pluralism of developing societies. We came to recognize, as UNESCO has emphasized, that “one size simply does not fit all.” And cultural diversity has thus become part of the development equation.

My intention today, however, is not simply to talk about cultural adaptation as another component of general development. What I propose to discuss with you is how cultural heritage can itself be a “trampoline” for social and economic development, in the same way that agriculture, water resources, power supplies or transportation systems have traditionally been perceived.

Even in settings of abject poverty, cultural legacies, though once dormant, can become powerful catalysts for change.

I propose to demonstrate that proposition by describing some experiences of the Aga Khan Development Network over the past three decades. More precisely, I will speak about our work in restoring historic buildings as well as public and domestic spaces of cultural significance, in the poorer parts of the world.

I noted that UNESCO, in its Background Paper for this conference, suggested that - and I quote - “one of the identified gaps in the Millennium Development Goals was their focus on outputs rather than on processes, what has been described as a concern for “what” at the expense of “how.”

My purpose, quite simply, is to talk to you about the “how.”

My attention to cultural legacies was triggered, over three decades ago, when I realized that the proud architectural heritage of the Islamic world was endangered. The art forms through which great Islamic cultures had expressed their identity and their ideals were deteriorating.

The result, for huge segments of the world’s population, was a fading of cultural memory. The world was threatened by an enormous cultural disaster.

Even worse, there were few resources for addressing this situation. Architectural thinking, globally, was dominated by western industrial models. Islamic architecture itself was abandoning its heritage in the face of an all-consuming modernity.

Our response to that situation began with the creation, in 1977, of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, dedicated to the renewal of this legacy. Soon afterward came the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and under its aegis, the Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme.

Over the last two decades, this programme has developed 20 major projects in nine different countries, many of them at UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Each one has taken about ten years to complete. In the process we have worked with dozens of partners and thousands of local employees. The projects have attracted sizeable

collateral investments and millions of visitors. And they have helped reduce poverty and improve the quality of life in the affected communities, and well beyond.

In the last ten years, capital investment in the Historic Cities Programme reached US\$182 million. Almost one-fourth of that came from partner donors. These may not seem like overwhelming figures, but the multiplier effect has been prodigious.

One of our first projects grew out of a seminar in 1984 about Public Spaces in large Islamic cities. We met in Cairo, a city that my ancestors, the Fatimid Caliphs, founded over 1000 years ago. Over the centuries an enormous dumping ground for debris had developed there, covering some 32 hectares. Almost unbelievably, it had never been built upon. In 2001, we undertook to transform that area into a state-of-the-art green space. And in 2005, a beautiful park was opened in the area of the Azhar.

Adjoining the park, however, was one of Cairo's poorest neighbourhoods, Darb al Ahmar. Some 200,000 inhabitants had been living there for centuries amid the ruins of Cairo's oldest buildings. The project quickly became a great archaeological adventure, uncovering and restoring ancient walls and gates, six historic mosques, and dozens of houses and palaces. Local residents were trained in restoration skills and some 200 are now permanently employed at the site.

Equally important, the work expanded into social dimensions, providing neighbourhood education and health services, and a supportive microcredit program. Our approach from the outset was that each reconstruction project should include a broad plan for social development. We call the approach Multi-Input Area Development.

Today the entire area, once one of the most dense and impoverished urban agglomerations on the planet, has become a remarkable residential and cultural cityscape. In 2001, most inhabitants were squatters, with no title to their property. Today, 24% have a legal title. Over the last decade, family earnings increased one-third faster than in the whole of Old Cairo. Literacy rates climbed by one-fourth. Meanwhile, the very nature of society has been transformed, in an area where evil social habits had been perpetuated for generations. Al Azhar Park, meanwhile, has attracted more than 13 million visitors.

Let me now move on from Egypt to Afghanistan, where we have engaged in similar work, restoring thirty buildings, monuments and public spaces in the heart of Kabul. The focal point has been the historic Babur gardens and the ancient Mausoleum of Timur Shah. As in Cairo, we have also prioritized the regeneration of nearby neighbourhoods. Since its completion in 2007, the Bagh-e-Babur Monument and the surrounding gardens have attracted over 400,000 annual visitors. And similar efforts are also underway in the West Afghan city of Herat.

Let me move, quite literally, from "A to Z" - from Afghanistan to Zanzibar, where my grandfather began to build schools over a century ago. In 1996, we developed, with the Zanzibar government, a master plan for the redevelopment of Stone Town. It involved restoring eleven historic buildings, creating a new Serena hotel, rehabilitating Kelele Square, rebuilding and extending the old seawall, and revitalizing the nearby Forodhani Park. And we hope, too, that it will lead to the creation of an Indian Ocean Maritime Museum, celebrating Zanzibar's rich history as a crossroads of commerce and culture.

But we need not confine this discussion to urban centres. Some of our most interesting work and challenges have come in the high mountain valleys of Northern Pakistan. Few international travellers visit there today, but the area was once a critical link along the historic Silk Route. The cultural lynchpin has been the restoration and repurposing of historic forts and palaces, watchtowers and mosques, homes and markets - expanding jobs and diversifying the economy. Here too, the inputs have been multiple: innovations in water and land management, a revival of village organizations and a productive infrastructure including roads, bridges, schools and clinics.

As you know, the mountain terrain not only separates Northern Pakistan from neighbouring regions, but it also isolates communities of each valley, one from the other. And yet, as word of the restorations spread, people of other villages began to ask, "How can we share in this work?" It was a heartening example of regional cohesion growing out of cultural diversity.

Another complex illustration is found in India. Our major restoration project in Delhi was conceived in 1997, marking the 50th anniversary of Indian independence. It focused on a proud historical symbol, the Gardens of the Tomb of the Emperor Humayun. The project combined disciplines such as archaeology, conservation science, soil analysis, stone carving and hydraulic engineering, drawing as well on local artisanal skills. As a result, the special grandeur of past centuries is today part of public life.

The life of the neighbourhood has also been revitalized. Important initiatives in health, education and sanitation grew out of our quality of life assessments, and we continue to monitor quality of life indices, through baseline studies, on a regular basis.

The most recent news from India has also been encouraging. The government there has approved the creation at the redeveloped complex of an Interpretation Centre, designed to make its complex story more accessible for residents and visitors.

The Delhi project extends over an area of some 100 hectares, three times the scale of the Cairo project. It is our largest development to date, and we have deliberated about its scale. Clearly, some projects will be too small to be worthwhile, but it is possible for projects to get too big, to become unmanageable or to collapse under their own weight. What is always needed is a keen sense of proper scale.

Complexity has been another central watchword for the Historic City projects. In the country of Mali, for example, the restoration of the Great Mosque of Mopti involved close collaboration at all levels of government. It also drew on a wide range of professionals and craftspeople: architects, masons, plasterers, metal workers, electricians and potters. Meanwhile, social inputs again complemented the construction work, including water and sewage networks, vocational training and again micro finance initiatives. The Great Mosque of Mopti is one of three ancient mud mosques that were restored in Mali, along with those at Djenne and Timbuktu. And yet another nearby project, the new Bamako National Park, is already receiving half a million visitors a year.

I cite these examples - Cairo, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Zanzibar, Delhi and Mali - as case studies from our experience. I could mention as well the restoration of three ancient citadels in Syria, the forthcoming rehabilitation of Nairobi's central city park in Kenya as well as the Khorog city park in Tajikistan, and other projects from Mostar to Samarkand.



For all of these journeys, the development process has been long and complex, but filled with stimulating lessons. Let me briefly summarize five of them.

First, these cultural projects depend upon an ethic of partnership. This means that traditional separations between public and private domains must be set aside. The concept of public-private partnership is an essential keystone for effective cultural development.

The role of governments, including municipalities, is fundamental in providing what we often term “an enabling environment” for development. But the public sector cannot do this work alone. A creative mix of participants is needed, corporations and development agencies, foundations and universities, individual donors, faith communities and local community groups.

I have one more comment to make about partnerships. It is absolutely essential that effective partnerships are maintained throughout the life of a project, including the post-completion period. Let me cite our own experience in support of this point. Of the 20 Historic City projects that we have undertaken, only two have failed the test of time. But in both cases what was missing was a strong partnership structure for post-project management.

This discussion leads me to a second conclusion: while cultural development often begins with physical legacies, planning must focus well beyond the cultural goals. We cannot somehow assume that a favourable social and economic impact will flow naturally as a by-product of cultural commitments. Issues relating to the quality of life must be considered from the beginning and monitored throughout the projects’ life.

A third point in this list of lessons learned is that the engagement of the local community from the earliest stages is imperative for success. Cultural endeavours, in particular, involve risks that go beyond external, economic factors. Their progress can depend heavily on variable qualities of human nature, including the pride and confidence of the peoples involved. In any development effort, there will be a tipping point along the way when we see the glass as half full rather than half empty. But these tipping points are more likely to tip in the right direction when attention to local confidence has become an ingrained reflex.

There is a fourth point that is also special to historic restoration projects. That is the fact that we can never be sure just what we will encounter as the work of rediscovery moves along. There are many unknowns going in, and we must be ready for surprises. I think, for example, of how little we knew, when we started, about the extent and condition of the Ayyubid Wall in Cairo, buried for 500 years or more. The Wall in fact had been so completely obscured that plans had been suggested for building a highway over it, until its remains were identified. In this case, as in so many others, the resilience and adaptability of all the partners, including the people of the local neighbourhoods, was critical.

Let me finally highlight a fifth lesson. Planning for such projects must anticipate how they will operate on a continuing basis after they are completed. In many cases, a permanent service facility will be put in place, a site museum perhaps, a scholarly centre, a children’s library, a training workshop, a clinical resource, or research

facility. Financial planning must take these opportunities into account, as a set of costs to be sure, but also a potential source of revenue. Up-front investment will be on everyone's mind at the start. But our financial strategies should include eventual income streams that will sustain the project over the long run. One of the least happy outcomes for any cultural initiative is that it becomes a net drain on the local population.

In this respect, I want to return to the example of Cairo because I think it is very illustrative of what can be achieved. There, Al Azhar Park not only provides important employment for the community, both directly and indirectly, but it also attracts over 2 million visitors a year. And with these visitors comes a stream of revenues; fees and charges for entrance and for special events, licenses, parking fees, retail sales and so on. The result is that the project now produces a surplus of some 800 thousand US dollars a year. That surplus is then reinvested in the same area, helping to ensure long term sustainability.

I have summarized for you here a complex array of information, hoping that it may spur attention and interest, especially in discussing not only the "what" of cultural development but also the "how."

Whether it be in Asia, Africa or the Middle East, in high mountain or coastal areas, in urban or rural environments, in peaceful or post-conflict situations, the case is proven in my mind that cultural development can contribute, in unique and distinctive ways, to the human aspiration for a better quality of life. And that of course, precisely, should be the objective of the post 2015 development agenda.

Thank you.



## **Global Centre for Pluralism - Introduction of Kofi Annan, who delivered the Pluralism Lecture**

24 May 2013, Ottawa, Canada

Your Excellency the Governor General  
Mrs Johnston  
Ministers  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am delighted to welcome all of you to the Global Centre's second annual Pluralism Lecture. And I am especially honored to introduce today's lecturer – Kofi Annan – the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Nobel Laureate, and global peacemaker.

J'ai le privilège de connaître Kofi Annan depuis de nombreuses années et je considère que, dans le monde d'aujourd'hui, peu de personnalités ont eu une carrière diplomatique aussi brillante que la sienne.

Ce remarquable diplomate a su concevoir des principes de solutions négociées aux crises auxquelles il a été confronté, mais aussi, très souvent il est arrivé à convaincre les protagonistes à tous les niveaux politiques de les mettre en œuvre avec ses conseils. Il doit ces succès non seulement à la finesse de ses analyses mais aussi à la façon éminemment personnelle avec laquelle il sait toucher les coeurs et les intelligences.

Pour préciser mon propos, je dirai que, par sa réflexion et sa façon d'analyser les problèmes, par sa capacité à identifier les équilibres justes entre les positions de chacun et à marginaliser les faux arguments et les positions extrêmes inacceptables, il a porté dans de nombreux pays une nouvelle philosophie de la diplomatie.

Notre Centre Mondial du Pluralisme est donc particulièrement honoré de ce que Kofi Annan ait accepté de devenir l'un de ses administrateurs fondateurs. Je suis heureux de dire qu'au cours des deux années et demie qu'il siège à notre Conseil d'administration, il a largement contribué par ses sages conseils au développement du Centre et à son envol.

As you know, Kofi Annan retired from his official post six years ago. But he has in no way retired from his role as an active global statesman – tirelessly working to foster peaceful dialogue around the world.

I remember vividly – and I know you do also – the role he played when violence erupted in Kenya after the 2007 election. He led the way in bringing clashing voices together, and the result was a successful power-sharing arrangement which ended the crisis and paved the way for major constitutional reform.

Now, six years later, another election in Kenya has recently come and gone – this time without major violence. I think we all have recognized and remembered – as the Kenyan people do – how important have been the foundations that Kofi Annan did so much to build in 2007.

We also recall the political violence in Cote D'Ivoire in 2011, when Kofi Annan, in his capacity as an Elder, once again pressed for resolution. And these dramatic moments are only particular examples of his continuing efforts – day by day and year by year – in the service of global harmony.

Our honoree also leads the Kofi Annan Foundation in dealing with critical global issues such as food security, governance, climate change, drug-trafficking and HIV/AIDS. And you may know as well about his leadership role in chairing the Africa Progress Panel.

The Panel – just this month – issued a deeply stirring report. Its study testifies eloquently to Africa's profound potential for development, but it also squarely identifies the scourge of corruption, and calls powerfully for a new strengthening of transparency and accountability, nationally and internationally, in the public and private sectors alike.

In welcoming Kofi Annan this evening, I want to emphasize what his personal example has meant to all of us. He has truly been an inspiration, demonstrating the power of patience and persistence – of a willingness always to listen – and a refusal to give up hope.

Our Global Centre for Pluralism was founded here in Ottawa in 2006 to address what I believe is the central challenge of our time – learning to live peacefully and constructively in a highly diversified and rapidly shrinking world.

As Kofi Annan has taught us, pluralism requires constant dialogue, a readiness to compromise, and an understanding that pluralism is not an end in itself, but a continuous process.

The Global Centre for Pluralism was established in partnership with the Government of Canada, and was inspired in part by Canada's experience as a highly diverse society. We want the Centre to be a place where we can all learn from one another about the challenges of diversity – and where we can share the lessons of successful pluralism.

And on evenings like this, we also help realize the Centre's potential as a destination for dialogue, a place where we can exchange ideas with true champions of global pluralism, like Kofi Annan.

Ladies and Gentlemen, together with you, I eagerly look forward to hearing from the Centre's honored Lecturer for 2013, Kofi Annan.

Thank you



## **Award Ceremony for the 12th Cycle of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture**

06 September 2013, Lisbon, Portugal

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency President Cavaco Silva  
Your Excellency Vice-Prime Minister Paulo Portas  
Honourable Mayor António Costa  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a special joy for me to welcome you this evening, and to thank you for being a part of this most auspicious ceremony, in this most appropriate place.

Returning to Portugal is always a great pleasure for me. The Ismaili Imamat and the Aga Khan Development Network have had a close, long-standing relationship with the Portuguese government and the Portuguese people, a relationship built on shared values.

This is the twelfth time over 36 years that we have presented the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. The award cycles have fostered a deeply enriching conversation during this time, one that has involved, altogether over 5000 nominated projects, and over 100 premiated ones.

Our ceremony tonight is only the second one we have held in predominantly Christian countries. I mention this point because it speaks to an essential dimension of the Award. While its roots lie deep in our concern for the state of Islamic architecture, the Award is also committed to a spirit of pluralism and a respect for diversity, a set of values which are deeply embedded in Portuguese history.

It was on the Iberian Peninsula, of course, that one of history's great pluralistic societies flourished for several centuries, a home for Christian and Jewish peoples that was also part of an Islamic empire. Portugal has for many ages nourished a profound sense of what we might call "world awareness". It was in that same spirit of "world awareness" that this Award was founded, and it is in that spirit that it is presented tonight.

We meet in a setting, this evening, which is one of Portugal's architectural monuments. Its walls have been built and rebuilt over many centuries, by people of many civilisations. It crowns the capital of a truly cosmopolitan city.

The story of Portugal is in part the story of people who came from far away to settle in this beautiful land. And it is also the story of people who have gone out from Portugal to shape the heritage of places in every corner of the globe, from Eastern and Southern Asia, to the Persian Gulf, from Eastern and Western Africa to South America. And, even as I say these words, I remember the sense of overpowering beauty I felt when I first walked through the streets of Manaus in Brazil.

This legacy, moreover, continues to be renewed. As you may know, the year 2013 has been declared the "Year of Portuguese Architecture," and Portuguese architects continue to be an important source of global inspiration.

You can see why a moment ago I spoke of Portugal's capacity for "world awareness".

As I think back to the origins of this Award almost four decades ago, I recall my own growing realisation at that time that the proud architectural heritage of the Islamic world was endangered. Here was one of the world's great architectural traditions, often inspired, as major architectural flowerings are so often, by one of the world's great religious faiths.

And yet, this flowering had been allowed to decay, and in some cases almost to disappear. Nowhere else, in no other great cultural tradition, had this sort of compromise threatened such a rich inheritance. The result was that, for huge segments of the world's population, cultural memory was fading, and an enormous cultural disaster seemed to be looming.



One part of the issue had been the effect of the colonial experience on Islamic cultures. But even in post-colonial or non-colonial settings, much of the Islamic architectural practice seemed to be consumed by a growing passion to be truly “modern”, or by a rudderless quest to be fashionably “global”.

At the same time, of course, some genuine architectural achievements were taking place. The problem was that these exceptional experiences were not widely shared, nor did they have a strong conceptual underpinning. It sometimes seemed as though a vast desert silence had set in. The purpose of the Award was to replace that silence with lively debate.

The Award was designed, from the start, not only to honour exceptional achievement, but also to pose fundamental questions. How, for example, could Islamic architecture embrace more fully the values of cultural continuity, while also addressing the needs and aspirations of rapidly changing societies? How could we mirror more responsively the diversity of human experience and the differences in local environments? How could we honour inherited traditions while also engaging with new social perplexities and new technological possibilities?

The three-year Award cycle was organised to take up such questions through a wide array of seminars, exhibitions, lectures, publications, and a highly decentralised award selection process. Over time, the Award has been joined by other programmes under the aegis of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, including our Historic Cities programme.

This new discourse, as wide as it has become, has had a continuing, common premise, a conviction that architecture has a capacity to transform the quality of human existence. More than that, we believed that our Quranic heritage gave us the responsibility, as good stewards of the Divine creation, to shape and reshape our earthly environment in the service of humankind.

In all this work, we were fortunate to be joined by a wonderful array of friends. It is heartwarming to think back on the contributions of so many people in so many places: architects, philosophers, artists, historians, and other professionals, from diverse faiths and cultures, who helped to shape and reshape our thinking. Their influence has been felt not only by professional architects and their clients, but also by an expanding array of participants; government officials and grant-makers, urban planners and village leaders, educators and researchers, engineers and financiers, and builders large and small. Also, many of them have contributed outside their own cultures, in order to help us rebuild our own.

Since the Award was presented in 1980 for the first time, successive Steering Committees have identified the pertinent issues of their time, and independent Master Juries have recognised exceptional achievements reflecting these concerns. The 2013 Steering Committee and this year’s Jury have continued in this great tradition.

Among the themes that have helped define this cycle is the concept of: “restoration” - interpreted as the revitalisation and re-adaptation of tradition. Another is the pursuit of design excellence in low-budget settings. Another key word is “infrastructure”, where imaginative rebuilding is a pressing public priority. And yet another important concept has been the “integration” of fragmented environments, urban and rural. And finally, community participation, an essential component for success.

In this respect, I would note that the world will soon reach a tipping point, where a majority of the world’s population for the first time will live in urban rather than rural environments. And so we must ask ourselves some searching questions: how, for example, can depopulated rural areas provide sufficient food and water to support dense urban agglomerations? And how can we best transform sprawling, impoverished human encampments into city neighborhoods that enhance the quality of human life?

Interestingly, we have had and we have seen in our own urban restoration programmes, the potential for bridging the urban-rural divide, for reintroducing something of the rural into the heart of the city. Parks and other open spaces, new and restored, can revive something of the balance between human construction and natural space. And they are astonishingly popular, with people of all economic backgrounds, and with people of all ages.

In these, as in so many other cases, it is amazing, and deeply humbling to see what a difference the built environment can make, in enhancing the everyday moments of everyday life.

The tasks are enormous. And these tasks must become our tasks. I have noticed, for example, that a significant number of the world’s new bleak and spreading cityscapes are in the Muslim world.

The pace of change is accelerating in our world and it is critical that the Architectural Award should continue to be positioned at the cutting edge of change. The future will bring an ever-demanding set of new challenges, such as global urbanisation. My hope is that the Award will always be responsive to the challenge of change.

Let me conclude by expressing my warmest congratulations to those who have been recognised by the Jury this evening, and by saluting those who have shaped this Award, over the past 36 years, and in this, its twelfth cycle. And finally, I am pleased again to extend my sincere gratitude to all of you for joining us at this presentation ceremony, and for sharing it with us, in a true spirit of “world awareness”.



## Inauguration ceremony for the restoration of Humayun's Tomb

18 September 2013, Delhi, India

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency Prime Minister Manmohan Singh  
Minister for Culture Shrimati Chandresh Kumari Katoch  
Mr. Ratan Tata  
Honorable Ministers, Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me first extend my special thanks to the Prime Minister, whose presence honours all of us.

There is another very important reason for me to salute the Prime Minister today. It was he who first recommended to the Aga Khan Trust for Culture that projects like this, should be built on public private partnerships. We heeded his suggestion. And today, the great majority of the 20 similar projects we have undertaken, are founded on public private agreements.

We are also pleased that so many friends – old and new – are sharing with us in this most significant ceremony – in this truly remarkable place.

Among those whom we welcome with special gratitude are the generous partners who have worked with us over many years. Let me take this moment to offer a special, grateful salute to the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust and the Sir Ratan Tata Trust, and its Chairman Sir Ratan Tata.

We are happy that you all are here – even as we have been overjoyed to know of the many millions who now visit this site annually. I understand that there has been a ten-fold increase in visitors to the Tomb Complex since our restoration efforts began here, more than a decade ago.

This inauguration ceremony marks the accomplishment of a great goal; the gardens and now the Mausoleum are fully restored. And we can be confident that the Complex will be able to welcome, on a sustainable basis, a larger number of additional annual visitors in the years ahead.

The fact that so many people want to share this extraordinary experience – as you do today – is a heartening affirmation of the Monument's continuing importance. We all feel its power to fascinate, to teach – and to inspire us – nearly half a millennium after it was originally built.

As you may know, this Mughal monument, which dates back to 1570, was the first garden-tomb complex on the Indian subcontinent. It inspired major architectural innovations, culminating in the construction of the Taj Mahal.

I recall happily how our own efforts began here in 1997, in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of Indian independence. Our initial objective was to restore the surrounding Gardens – including the fountains and pathways – according to their original plans. That was the first privately funded restoration of a World Heritage Site in India – and it had significant impact, vastly expanding the community's green space, and stimulating an impressive flow of new visitors.

As the Garden project was completed, we were proud to become part of a new Public Private Partnership, dedicated to the restoration of the Mausoleum and other notable buildings on this site. Our partners included the Archaeological Survey of India, the Central Public Works Department, and the Delhi Municipal Corporation. We extend our deepest gratitude to all of them. And we also note gratefully the generous support of the United States Embassy, the German Embassy, the Ford Foundation and the World Monuments Fund.

Over time, the restoration work has drawn not only on these supporting organizations, but also on many hundreds of highly skilled individuals from a vast array of disciplines – all working to recover here a grandeur enjoyed in past centuries and now, once again, a part of public life.

Since 2007, master craftsmen have spent some 200,000 work-days restoring Humayun's Tomb and its associated structures.

I think you will be as fascinated as I have been to hear just a little about this reconstruction work.

It is striking, for example, to learn that some one million kilos of cement concrete had been laid down here during the 20th century – and that it had to be removed from the roof using hand tools. Meanwhile, some 200,000 square feet of lime plaster had to be applied in areas where it had been lost or replaced with cement plaster that was already crumbling.

Similarly, over 40,000 square feet of concrete had to be removed from the lower plinth of the Mausoleum and major, two-ton paving blocks, had to be manually replaced.

In addition, original decorative patterns have been painstakingly recreated – work that required the talents of master ceramic tile makers. Happily, practitioners of this art in Uzbekistan were able to come here to train young residents of the Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, contributing not only to the beauty of this monument, but also opening new economic opportunities for these young people.

But even as we observe the beauty that is evident within the Humayun Complex, it is also important to situate this project within a larger context. We hope to link this monument to the adjacent seventy-acre site of the Sundar Nursery, once a significant Sufi graveyard, and now being transformed into an Archeological Park. We are planning new visitor facilities and an innovative Interpretation Center serving the two sites.

The combined sites will create a heritage zone of unmatched scale, value and visibility – a proud symbol of Indian history – featuring one of the world's largest concentrations of medieval Islamic buildings. This site is the largest of the 20 major projects developed in nine countries by our Historic Cities program over the past decades.

But cultural history is only one part of this story. A central premise of our work is that cultural enrichment and historic restoration can also be effective springboards for economic and social progress. Rather than being a drain on fragile economies, as some once feared, investment in cultural legacies can be a powerful agent in improving the quality of human life. The impact of such projects can begin by diversifying local economies, expanding employment and teaching new skills. And a continuing stream of visitors,

properly guided and welcomed, can provide income streams far into the future, which can be further invested in economic growth.

We have been encouraged by the impact of this project on the lives of some 20,000 inhabitants of the Nizamuddin Basti area. But we cannot assume that such favorable outcomes will emerge automatically from such work; they must be carefully considered and continually monitored. Here in Delhi, as elsewhere in our Network, an intimate part of our program is what we call a “quality of life assessment” concerning the surrounding community -- a measuring process that begins when a project is launched, and continues long beyond its completion.

In Delhi, this concern has led to a variety of initiatives in the core areas of health, education and sanitation, including job training and access to microfinance. All of this is being done in close cooperation with local community groups, close partners in our work.

The word “partnership,” in fact, could be the watchword of this celebration. What we honor today, above all else – is the spirit of partnership in which this work has unfolded.

In my view, an Ethic of Partnership must be at the center of any successful project of this sort. Among other things, an Ethic of Partnership means that traditional separations between public and private domains must be set aside, so that public-private partnerships can thrive as an essential keystone for effective development.

The role of governments – including municipalities – is essential, of course, in providing “an enabling environment” for development. But the public sector cannot do this work alone. A creative mix of participants is needed: corporations and development agencies, foundations and universities, faith communities and local community groups.

This Humayun Tomb project was the first Public-Private Partnership for cultural heritage in Indian history. It has been a model for our new project in Hyderabad – the restoration of the Qutb Shahi Tombs – in cooperation with the local government.

I believe that Public-Private Partnerships can be an increasingly useful approach, here in India and in other settings. India is one of the world’s richest countries in terms of historic heritage, with 30 World Heritage Sites – including 24 cultural sites. They represent a patrimony that cannot be preserved by the public sector alone. Public-private collaboration will be essential.

And so I would conclude as I began, with a heartfelt salute to the partners who have worked with us in making this day possible – and to all who have cared so deeply about this project – and supported it so thoughtfully.

You have helped to make the Humayun Tomb endeavor into a great gift to the people of this neighborhood, to the city of Delhi, to the people of India, and – indeed – the peoples of the world. And you have validated the foundations on which many similar initiatives here in India, and elsewhere, can be built.

Thank you





## **Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the inauguration ceremony of the Aga Khan Academy, Hyderabad**

20 September 2013, Hyderabad, India

**“Our purpose, as you know, is to educate the most talented young minds from many countries, for a global future.”**

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Shri Kiran Kumar Reddy  
Your Excellency, Honourable Union Minister for Human Resources Development, Dr Pallam Raju  
Honourable Ministers  
Distinguished Guests  
Staff and students of the Aga Khan Academies in Mombasa and in Mozambique  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is great joy for me to welcome you on this wonderful occasion. And I want to begin these comments by thanking the Chief Minister for his and his government's support to the creation of this institution.

It was exactly seven years ago this week that we gathered here to lay the Foundation Stone for this new Academy. It was a day of great promise, and a day of great expectations.

Now, seven years later, we come back to this same, special place to mark a moment of important progress on our journey.

When we met back then, we spoke gratefully of the natural beauty of this setting – and we thanked the Government of Andhra Pradesh for its magnificent generosity in making this site available. Today, as we renew our profound thanks, I thought I might also say a word about why this particular site is so important for us.

Site selection and availability is critical to our whole concept of creating an international network of academies in Asia and Africa.

Our purpose, as you know, is to educate the most talented young minds from many countries, for a global future. One key to doing that would be to enable students and teachers to move from an academy in one country, to an academy in another country. But that of course would require a residential school system.

There was a natural concern in some countries about having children leave the family environment at an early age. But, on balance, we felt that parents would recognise the immense benefits of having their children live together in a multi-national environment, offering rigorous academic values, along with a rich array of non-academic, extra-curricular activities. Indeed, children probably learnt as much from contacts amongst each other and extra-curricular activities, as they do from formal classroom education. This concept has to include, as the Chief Minister said, the provision of ample sports facilities.

In sum, we needed large sites for each academy, with room for residences, dining facilities and athletic accommodation. And that would be difficult, we concluded, on a site of less than 50 acres. But that is not all we were looking for. We felt that the sites should also be near to major cities, but in areas that were unlikely ever to be aggressively urbanised.

All of these criteria were generously fulfilled by the land gifted here by the government of Andhra Pradesh. Thank you.

Since this gift was made seven years ago, we have searched for similar sites in other countries. I am happy to say that we have made good progress, and that we are now certain that we can implement our concept for a broad network of academies that will meet our campus criteria.

While site selection has turned out to be a critical matter for our programme, an equally important issue has been the criteria for what we actually build on each site. And here too, Hyderabad has set a wonderful example for the rest of the network.

This site has been developing beautifully – and for that we recognise today the creative powers of the Architect Bimal Patel, the Sasaki Master Planners, the educators who have guided the planning, and the contractors who have realised these visions. We congratulate them all, even as we honor those who are shaping our educational programmes.

Our foundation stone ceremony seven years ago focused on the word “Beginning”. Today, we are proud and grateful that we can talk about “Continuing”.

The network concept that I have mentioned is something that makes our academy endeavour a unique and distinctive one. And if there is one central thought I would like to have you take away from this day, it is the interconnected, international dimension of our envisioned academy experience.

Our planning is that there eventually will be 18 Academies, situated in 14 countries. I would not name them individually for you, other than to illustrate the amazing permutations of languages, cultures and personal experiences that such a network will offer its faculty, its staff, and its students.

The Hyderabad Academy is the second to be inaugurated, following the one in Mombasa, Kenya. Construction is now underway in Mozambique and active planning is taking place for Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan, and Dhaka, Bangladesh. The other planned sites range from Afghanistan and Tajikistan to Uganda, from Tanzania to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, from Madagascar to Mali, from Syria to Pakistan, and Portugal. When the programme is complete, our students will have the opportunity to speak and learn in Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, Dari, Kyrgyz, Bengali, Swahili, Russian, French, English and Portuguese.

As each campus is developed in the months and years ahead, it will become a new link in a strengthening chain of Academies. This will be true not only for our students, but also for the designers of our path-breaking curricula, and for the teachers who implement these designs. The International Baccalaureate will be the standard curriculum throughout our network, but we intend to add five optional themes we consider essential for our students. These are optional themes that we have identified as being essential for the countries that I have listed for you, and amongst them, are comparative government and free market economics. To support this challenge, each Academy will have its own faculty Professional Development Centre, a rich pedagogical resource that will also be available to teachers from other state and private schools, as well as other schools that are part of the International Baccalaureate network.

In sum, we should think of this developing Academies Network, as a single, coherent institution, geographically dispersed but highly coordinated.

This systematic sharing, we are confident, will transform and elevate the quality of teaching and learning for everyone.

We intend, moreover, that our students should share not only in the broad resources of the Academy network itself, but also in the global activities of the Aga Khan Development Network. The AKDN, as you may know, works internationally in highly diverse endeavours – health care and medical science, agricultural development and urban renewal, business and finance, culture and education.

These far-flung AKDN programmes can be thought of as part of an extended global campus for the Academies. I think for example, of the rich experiences that our students of the Mombasa Academy already have enjoyed through entities such as the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme – learning there to think creatively about complex social and economic challenges, while also being steeped in a powerful ethic of service.

Another example is the interdisciplinary unit developed by two of our teachers right here in Hyderabad, based on the history of the Ancient Silk Route with its many constituent cultures. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture has been particularly active along the Silk Route, including its Silk Route Music Initiative, with its emphasis on cross-cultural influence and collaboration.

Just two days ago, we were in Delhi to re-dedicate the restored Humayun's Tomb, a monument of enormous cultural importance as is the Qutb Shahi complex which is being restored here in Hyderabad. Such restoration projects, we are convinced, can also provide splendid opportunities for education for the students of our Academies.

It has become commonplace to talk of an inter-connected planet, with global communities of trade and finance, science and medicine, governance and diplomacy, education and culture. It is our intention that our Academy graduates will eventually become accomplished leaders in all of these fields. But why should a profound immersion into global experience come only when one reaches the higher levels of education or actually begins a career? Why should world awareness and active international participation be thought of as something that is supplemental, rather than essential, to education throughout one's early life?

We believe that our Academies network will foster a lively sense of world awareness among all its students. Our student body already includes people from a variety of economic and social backgrounds, as our financial aid programme enables us to admit excellent students without regard to their economic resources. Nor is admission geared in any way to the national, religious or ethnic background of any applicant. Our faculties will

be similarly diverse. And, of course, the goal of global engagement will be powerfully re-enforced by the integrated flow of people and ideas among the various Academies.

The ongoing objective in all of this work is to provide an outstanding education for outstanding students – to prepare men and women of exceptional ability to meet extraordinary challenges. While our graduating classes should qualify for the best national and foreign universities, it is also our hope that they will strengthen the applicant classes to the two universities that we have created in the last quarter century – the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia.

Our engagement in education has been a long, continuing story. It is a hopeful and exciting story, a story of expanding impact all around the world.

And we are grateful to all of you for sharing with us today as this story continues to unfold.

Thank you.





## **Presentation of the Gold Medal by the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada**

27 November 2013, Ottawa, Canada

President Frank and leaders of the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada,  
Madame Clarkson  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies & Gentlemen

Monsieur le Président, je voudrais vous remercier pour l'honneur que votre institut me fait aujourd'hui. Je remercie Monsieur Baird de m'avoir nommé pour recevoir ce prix si prestigieux et de ces paroles élogieuses.

Je suis profondément flatté de recevoir votre médaille d'or, tout d'abord à cause des personnalités qui me la remettent – mais aussi par l'esprit d'excellence que votre Institut représente. C'est aussi un grand honneur si l'on considère la qualité des récipiendaires depuis sa création en 1907; je suis fier d'en faire partie a présent. Je suis d'autant plus heureux qu'il s'agisse d'une récompense canadienne – car comme vous le savez, mes sentiments d'amitié à l'égard du Canada perdurent depuis longtemps.

You may know that I recently became a citizen of Canada - at the gracious invitation of the Canadian government. That honour made me feel even more closely a part of the Canadian family - even as this honour today makes me feel more closely a member of Canada's architectural family. Thank you.

I have often been asked what has caused my interest in architecture. I think it is right to begin by clarifying that my definition of architecture goes beyond a concern for buildings designed by architects. I see architecture as embracing practically all aspects - all aspects - of our entire built environment.

Let me also explain that in Islam, the role of an Imam is not limited to the domain of faith. It also includes a deep engagement in the world, in all of the wide and complex issues that affect our quality of life. Among those issues, not many have more impact than architecture and the buildings in which we spend, at all ages, so many days and nights of our lives.

Is it not true that the quality of our lives is fundamentally shaped by the spaces in which we live, spaces that provide physical security, and spaces where we seek spiritual enrichment? They are spaces where we work, and where we pause from work; where we expand our minds and restore our health, places where we congregate and where we meditate; and they are places where we are born, as well as places of final rest.

Some are spaces we may only visit briefly - but where we learn how others live - from the extremes of abject poverty, for example, to the extremes of great wealth.

People everywhere - independent of their particular background or educational level - almost instinctively understand the importance of place, and how the spaces of our lives are shaped and reshaped - for better or for worse. I thought about this universal capacity for comprehension again, these past weeks, as the world reacted to photographs of the Haiyan typhoon in the Philippines.

This universal sensitivity to changes in the built environment also helps explain the profound impact of architecture on the way we think about our lives. Few other forces, in my view, have such transformational potential.

I am pleased that you could see a brief video about some of our architectural projects through the years and around the world - both new projects and historic restorations, some of them serving our own community and our Network activities, some done in partnership with other public and private institutions, and some that have been selected for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture for over nearly four decades.

What I would like to describe in particular this evening, however, is my experience with Canadian architecture. The story goes back to 1972, when the then President of Uganda, Marshall Idi Amin, expelled all the Asians from Uganda no matter what their faith, their



citizenship, or position in society. Many thousands left Uganda in a matter of days; most took nothing more with them than their brains and the languages they spoke. Most members of my community, the Ismailis, came to Canada, while a minority who had retained their British citizenship at Ugandan independence went to the United Kingdom. It was one of the ugliest experiences of ethnic cleansing in those times.

The leaders of the Ismaili communities in the UK and Canada consulted with one another and with me as to how to respond to this forced migration. There was unanimity that wherever we would settle we would never become a demotivated, marginalized minority and that we would, instead, demonstrate the will and the capacity to rebuild our future. We therefore decided to build new spaces for the gathering of our communities, and for the practice of their faith, in the countries that were welcoming us.

But we also agreed on one more thing. These new buildings, which we decided to call Ismaili Centres, had to reflect our aspirations for the future, rather than the tragedy of our recent past. We saw them as structures where we could receive other communities and institutions in a dignified manner, and where we could demystify our faith - which was sometimes badly misunderstood. They would be symbols of new hope, replacing past pain.

It was against this background that we built the two first Ismaili Centres in the industrialized world, the first in London in 1985 - and the second in Vancouver. In both cities, we built on the best sites we could find, and we engaged some of the most respected architects to join us.

As we proceeded, in England, and here in Canada, we were also aware of the risk that our cultural continuity might be eroded over time. The Ismailis were a global people, after all, with roots in many parts of the diverse Islamic world. We decided to build, therefore, in our own, varied architectural languages, often making a synthesis of them, adapting them to the requirements of younger generations, and applying them as well, to the open spaces around our new buildings.

In taking this approach, we were comforted to know that Canada welcomed a pluralistic approach to questions of cultural continuity. We knew, for example, that Bruno Freschi, who designed the Ismaili Centre in Vancouver, had earlier designed a gurdwara, a Sikh place of worship. He reflected Canada's practice of drawing strength from cultural diversity, as well as from universal inspirations such as faith and family, and the celebration of great events and great people. This combined embrace of both the particular and the universal has made Canada one of the most respected pluralist societies in today's heavily fractured world.

We continue to build in Canada. Soon a second Ismaili Centre, now nearing completion in Toronto, will join the first one in Vancouver, making Canada the only country in the foreseeable future with two Ismaili Centres, one in the West and another in the East. For this work, we retained another great architect, Charles Correa, who was born into a

Christian family that originally lived in Goa. He, too, has designed for many faiths, including Hindu and Christian.

The story is similar for another new Toronto building, The Aga Khan Museum. It has been designed by a remarkable international partnership with one of the great Japanese professionals, Fumihiko Maki, and a major Canadian firm, Moriyama and Teshima.

In all this work, we continue, of course, to honor our Islamic architectural inheritance. That inheritance has been shaped by many forces - climate, accessible building materials, available technologies and others. But I believe that the Islamic faith has played a particular role in the development of Islamic architectural expression. For our faith constantly reminds us to observe and be thankful for the beauty of the world and the universe around us, and our responsibility and obligation, as good stewards of God's creation, to leave the world in a better condition than we found it.

The garden is, in this context, a particularly important space in Islamic cultures, the Moghul garden in urban environments, or the Bustan in rural environments. Bringing such beautiful spaces to Canada is one of our intended contributions to Canadian landscape. An example is the new park in Toronto which will surround the Aga Khan Museum and the Ismaili Centre, as well as new projects in Edmonton and Burnaby, and our endeavour to link area development to our rebuilding of Ottawa's War Museum for the Global Centre for Pluralism.

The future will present us with ever-evolving architectural challenges - urbanization, water management, air pollution, protection from manmade and natural hazards and the efficient use of limited resources. Men and women of recognized talent worldwide must be mobilized to meet these challenges - as the RAIC has done so impressively, including your efforts to attract "Broadly Experienced Foreign Architects" - the B-E-F-A programme. Not only have you been able to streamline the licensing here of internationally trained architects, but you have also reaffirmed a global ethic of openness and cooperation. Let me conclude by emphasizing again the potential of Architecture to communicate across the boundaries that may otherwise divide us. Architecture provides us with ways to express that, which is distinctive in our own experiences, even as it responds to what is universally human. And this, above all, it seems to me, is why "Architecture Matters" - to use the phrase with which your organization is so strongly identified.

The language of architecture speaks in different idioms, but it also provides powerful connections, resonating in landscapes both urban and rural, global and local, monumental and humble, secular and spiritual. An "Architecture of Pluralism" is one that will encourage all of us to listen to one another and to learn from one another, with a deep sense of humility and a realization that diversity itself is a gift of the Divine.

The work that you do at the RAIC is more than simply mattering. You are shaping forces that influence the essence of human life. And this is the fundamental reason that I am so deeply honoured by your recognizing me today.

Thank you.



## Aga Khan University Convocation

19 December 2013, Karachi, Pakistan

His Excellency, Dr Ishrat Ul Ebad Khan, the Governor of Sindh;  
His Excellency, Qaim Ali Shah, the Chief Minister of Sindh;  
Acting Chairman, Dr Robert Buchanan and Members of the Board of Trustees;  
President Firoz Rasul;  
Provost, Deans, Faculty and Staff of the University;  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps;  
Members of the National and Provincial Assemblies;  
Parents, supporters and distinguished guests;  
and Graduands:

As Salaam-o-Alaikum

It is truly a great pleasure for me to celebrate this milestone moment with all of you today. It is a significant time for our University and for this country.

As Chancellor, I am delighted, first of all, to extend my warmest congratulations to our graduands and to your families. Bravo! We wish you enormous success in your future careers, knowing that your success will be a mark of our success.

I earnestly hope, however, that you will not think of this convocation as a farewell ceremony. We look forward, rather, to your continuing participation in University life. Perhaps, like many graduates, you may become members of our faculty or senior staff as time goes by, or participants in continuing education programmes or alumni groups, or sponsors of special programmes, including scholarships for students of promising ability but scarce material resources.

As graduands you will be joining an illustrious family of earlier graduates. Many of our alumni are here today and I am pleased to extend to them, as well, my heartfelt greetings. When you first came as students to AKU, you did not know us and we did not know you, and yet we came to have great faith in one another. And you have fully justified that faith, using your education for good and great purposes.

The academic heart of the University, of course, is our Faculty, and I know I speak for all of you in paying special tribute to them today. The exemplary devotion of our Faculty, both to their students and to their disciplines, is the bedrock on which our University is built.

Another constituency that I am proud to salute today are the donors who have shared the goals of this young institution, and have assisted it so much in their accomplishment. University success stories down through history, in the Islamic world and the West, have depended, inevitably, on a variety of external resources, and we are indebted to those who have provided such resources for AKU. Those resources, let me add, include not only material gifts, but also the great gifts of time and knowledge that so many contribute to our progress.

The University's Management, of course, also deserves special thanks, as it works daily to coordinate our energies and sustain our functioning, not only here in Karachi, but, uniquely, on multiple international campuses.

Finally, let me mention the immense good fortune we have enjoyed through the work of our distinguished Trustees. From the start, they have been leaders of exceptional competence and dedication, bringing to us the fruit of their distinctive personal experiences, as well their wise global perspectives. Each of our trustees over the past thirty years has left a lasting imprint on the University.

All of you from these and other constituencies have provided the energies and the talents, the dreams and the discipline, that drive this institution forward. And, as we go forward, we will take continuing strength from one another.

At the same time, on a day like this, we can also take renewed strength from our past, and from a great legacy of Islamic accomplishment in pursuing educational excellence.

That legacy has long been an inspiration to me, even from the time when I succeeded my grandfather as Imam in 1957, when I was a University student at Harvard. That's some time ago!

My grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, was deeply aware of Islam's rich intellectual heritage. Of equal significance, he was also convinced of the enormous importance of higher education for the future of the Ummah around the world.

He had engaged personally in developing educational opportunities for Muslims in pre-partition India – and was largely responsible for creating Aligarh University. He saw that effort as fulfilling a tradition going back one thousand years, to the role of his predecessors, the Fatimids, in founding the Azhar University and the Dar ul-Ilm in Cairo, known through the ages as the “House of Knowledge.”

He knew as well about other great Muslim institutions of scholarship and culture which flourished over many centuries, serving the whole of the Ummah and much of the known world, engaging the most advanced thinking from many cultures, ethnic groups and faith communities.

It was true of the Fatimids 1,000 years ago and of the Abbasids in Baghdad even earlier. It was true of the Mughal Emperor Akbar in the 16th century as well as the Ottoman Sultans, including Mehmed the Conqueror and Sulayman the Magnificent. And there were many others; the Safavid ruler Shah Abbas in Isfahan in Iran, and the great Timurid Sultan, Ulugh Beg, who built the world's greatest observatory in Samarkand. You have just heard about some of the great intellects who flourished under these auspices.

Whenever and wherever it may have been, in the Middle East, or South, or Central Asia, or Northern Africa, the most brilliant periods in Islamic history were marked by an expansive quest for intellectual excellence.

It was this tradition that I inherited from my grandfather – and it was not a static tradition, but one that was built around the power of new knowledge and the great adventure of learning how to go on learning.

Now, of course, we also know that institutions of higher learning are very costly. We know, too, that as the industrialised world grew economically, and as the Ottoman empire faded, prominent centres of knowledge emerged most rapidly in the West. Meanwhile, universities in the Muslim world, with some exceptions, generally tended to tread water.

It was this situation that confronted us as we began to plan AKU. We had high hopes, but, to be candid, we also felt some trepidation. Was higher education still a central pillar around which to build the quest for human development? Were the costs justifiable when compared to other priorities? If we went forward, could we find appropriate allies,

including a distinguished faculty? Would graduates emigrate to developed societies - rather than staying to serve their home communities?

The fundamental question, in sum, was whether a new university in the developing world, in this day and age, could achieve sufficient levels of excellence - as measured by global standards - to bring genuine value to those we were committed to serve.

We felt that we answered these questions successfully, but preliminarily if not conclusively, when we began this great adventure. And I think we can fairly say that the University has performed well when measured against our original goals.

Simply in quantitative terms, AKU expanded over the years into eight different countries, opening unique opportunities for combined study in Asia and in Africa. We created two degree or diploma programmes in the 1980's, two more in the 1990's, and another 21 programmes since the year 2000, reflecting expanding arcs of knowledge. These programmes have now graduated over ten thousand students.

But this growth in numbers would mean little, in fact it would have been impossible, without an uncompromising commitment to quality.

Happily, as we heard earlier, the quality of AKU's performance has been widely affirmed, by the Joint Commission, by the World Health Organization, and by governmental and educational bodies in Pakistan and elsewhere. We are proud, too, that our graduates are consistently judged to be among the best when they take licensing exams or apply to other leading institutions, or assume growing career responsibilities.

A key ingredient in this story has been our open-access philosophy, enabling us to enrol students, on merit, from a vast array of backgrounds; some 70 percent of current students receive some form of financial support. And another critical standard, of course, has been AKU's resolute commitment to social relevance, to addressing real problems and improving the quality of daily life.

For all of these reasons we can say that our recent past, like our distant past, has been one of proud accomplishment. And it is upon these accomplishments that we now seek to build the University's future.

As we do so, we are sharply aware that the pace of change is accelerating, that our global neighbourhood is shrinking, and that the best prediction about the future is that it is highly unpredictable.

In such a world, creativity and flexibility will be essential to our success.



Our founding blueprint for AKU embraced this understanding and an evolving development process. It called for concentrating, in AKU's first years, in the fields of healthcare and education, responding to the most pressing national and regional needs. But it also anticipated the University's expansion into new geographic areas and into new fields of knowledge. In fulfilling that vision AKU has become a multi-campus university, indeed a multi-continental one, launching new programmes in Kenya, in Tanzania and Uganda, countries with significant Muslim populations.

In addition, the Trustees have also embraced a second great challenge - the challenge of becoming a distinguished liberal arts university.

We are planning now to build new undergraduate Faculties of Arts and Sciences, one in Karachi and one in Arusha in Tanzania. We plan to achieve this goal progressively as circumstances and resources allow. Yes, it will be a time-consuming exercise, but our planning has been advancing very quickly indeed.

Again, developing a liberal arts capacity will not only fulfil AKU's founding vision, but it will also follow in the tradition of the great Islamic Universities of past centuries, and their effort to expand, and to integrate a wide array of knowledge. At that time, of course comprehending the full expanse of knowledge was seen as an achievable goal; today, the explosion of knowledge seems overwhelming. But the knowledge explosion is precisely what makes a liberal arts platform even more valuable. The liberal arts, I believe, can provide an ideal context for fostering inter-disciplinary learning, nurturing critical thinking, inculcating ethical values, and helping students to learn how to go on learning about our ever-evolving universe.

A liberal arts orientation will also help prepare students for leadership in a world where the forces of civil society will play an increasingly pivotal role.

By civil society I mean a complex array of organisations that operate on a private, voluntary basis, but are driven by public motivations. They include institutions dedicated to culture, health, education, and the environment; they embrace commercial, labour, professional, scientific and ethnic associations, as well as institutions of religion and the media. We have seen the growing role of civil society in many places - in the industrialised West, in the developing societies of Africa, and through the Islamic world as well, from Egypt and Tunisia to Iran and Bangladesh.

In places where government has been ineffective, or in post-conflict situations, civil society has demonstrated its potential value for maintaining, and even enhancing, the quality of human life. But civil society requires leaders who possess not only well-honed specialised skills, but also a welcoming attitude to a broad array of disciplines and outlooks.

This is why we believe that an investment in liberal arts education is also an investment in strengthening civil society. And this is also true of another, complementary investment we will be making at AKU – the creation of seven new graduate professional schools.

These schools will work in fields of particular relevance to developing societies. Through their degree programmes, through their research and through continuing education, they will also develop able and ethical leaders who can strengthen the role of civil society among the people we seek to serve.

To guide our planning for these schools, we have set up special Thinking Groups in each of these fields, drawing on global expertise and best-practice experience. Our planning has been deeply enriched by their remarkable analyses.

These new graduate schools are exciting.

Our new School of Media and Communications is already building capacity in Nairobi to help lift the quality of media industries in the developing world, engaging with new technologies and with appropriately educated proprietors, managers, and practitioners.

The School of Leadership and Management will develop the capacity of its students to guide business organisations, but also social enterprises and civil society institutions amid the complex challenges that face developing countries.

The Leisure and Tourism programme, meanwhile, will focus on the broad tourism value-chain, from public policy to infrastructure to cultural assets, while helping to fill an important research gap in this critical field.

The School of Architecture and Human Settlements, on the other hand, will build enhanced design professionalism, emphasising functionality and cultural sensitivity, in urban and rural environments, recognising the profound impact of the built environment on the quality of life.

The School of Government, Public Policy and Civil Society will prepare and empower professionals to formulate and implement public policies in developing societies, while our new School of Law will focus on subjects such as constitutional devolution, international law, dispute resolution, intellectual and real property, and the management of capital markets.

Finally, a programme in Economic Growth and Development will respond to the particular needs of developing economies, including fields such as agriculture and horticulture, tourism and leisure, the extractive industries, and digital arts and services.

We intend that each of these schools should work closely with our existing faculties, in nursing, medicine and education, while coordinating effectively with our new Faculties of Arts and Sciences, and indeed with one another, sharing perspectives and inter-disciplinary opportunities.

Meanwhile, we also expect to continue our geographic expansion and to build new partnerships with universities in the West, in the East and the Global South.

This is an outline then of what AKU may look like thirty years from now. These will seem to be ambitious goals – some may say they are too ambitious. But I disagree. Our goals were ambitious, after all, back in 1983. And yet, if we could have glimpsed into the future then – if we could have forecast what this day would look like – I think we would have been very happy with the way the story has unfolded.

And so it is that we see ourselves today in the context of a rich historical tradition, and a recent past filled with genuine achievement. For that, I want to express again, to all of you, the deep sense of joy and gratitude that I feel as I join you for this celebration, and as we look together to our challenging, promising future.

Thank you.



## Address to both Houses of the Parliament of Canada in the House of Commons Chamber

27 February 2014, Ottawa, Canada

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Mr Prime Minister,

Speaker Kinsella,

Speaker Scheer,

Honourable Members of the Senate and House of Commons,

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court

Honourable Members of the Diplomatic Community

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Prime Minister's generous introduction has been very kind. I am grateful for this invitation, for our association, and for so thoughtfully enabling leading representatives of our community and institutions, around the world, to join us on this occasion. I am thankful they will have this opportunity to see for themselves why Canada is a leader in the community of nations.

I must also thank you, Prime Minister, for inviting me to become an honorary citizen. May I congratulate you on the gold medals of your remarkable hockey teams in Sochi. As an ex-player myself I was hoping you would require your honorary citizens to join your team. I am convinced that the Dalai Lama and I would have been a formidable defence.

Merci encore Monsieur le Premier Ministre pour votre invitation. Je ressens cet instant comme un honneur sans précédent. C'est à la fois un sentiment intime, et une perception objective, puisque l'on m'a rapporté que c'est la première fois depuis 75 ans qu'un chef spirituel s'adresse au Sénat et à la Chambre des Communes réunis, dans le cadre d'une visite officielle. C'est donc avec humilité et conscient d'une éminente responsabilité que je m'adresse à vous, représentants élus du Parlement fédéral canadien, en présence des plus hautes autorités du gouvernement fédéral.

J'ai le grand privilège de représenter ici l'Imamat ismaïli, cette institution qui, au-delà des frontières et depuis plus de 1,400 ans, se définit et est reconnue par un nombre croissant d'Etats comme la succession des Imams chiites imamis ismaïlis.

Quarante-neuvième Imam de cette longue histoire, je porte depuis plus de cinquante ans, deux responsabilités inséparables : veiller au devenir spirituel des ismaïlis ainsi que, concomitamment, à l'amélioration de leur qualité de vie et de celle des populations au sein desquelles ils vivent.

Même s'il fut une époque où les Imams ismaïlis étaient aussi Califes, c'est-à-dire chefs d'Etats — par exemple en Egypte à l'époque fatimide — ma fonction est aujourd'hui apolitique; tout ismaïli étant avant tout un citoyen ou une citoyenne de son pays de naissance ou d'adoption. Le champ d'action de l'Imamat ismaïli est pourtant considérablement plus important qu'à cette époque lointaine, puisqu'il déploie aujourd'hui ses activités dans de nombreuses régions du monde. C'est dans ce cadre que j'évoquerai successivement devant vous quelques réflexions qui me paraissent dignes de vous être présentées.

I propose today to give you some background about myself and my role, and then to reflect about what we call the Ummah — the entirety of Muslim communities around the world.

I will comment, as a faith leader, on the crisis of governance in so much of the world today, before concluding with some thoughts about the values that can assist countries of crisis to develop into countries of opportunity, and how Canada can help shape that process.

First then, a few personal words. I was born into a Muslim family, linked by heredity to the Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him and his family). My education blended Islamic and Western traditions, and I was studying at Harvard some 50 years ago (yes 50 years ago — actually 56 years ago!) when I became the 49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims.

The Ismaili Imamate is a supra-national entity, representing the succession of Imams since the time of the Prophet. But let me clarify something more about the history of that role, in both the Sunni and Shia interpretations of the Muslim faith. The Sunni position is that the Prophet nominated no successor, and that spiritual-moral authority belongs to those who are learned in matters of religious law. As a result, there are many Sunni imams in a given

time and place. But others believed that the Prophet had designated his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, as his successor. From that early division, a host of further distinctions grew up — but the question of rightful leadership remains central. In time, the Shia were also subdivided over this question, so that today the Ismailis are the only Shia community who, throughout history, have been led by a living, hereditary Imam in direct descent from the Prophet.

The role of the Ismaili Imam is a spiritual one; his authority is that of religious interpretation. It is not a political role. I do not govern any land. At the same time, Islam believes fundamentally that the spiritual and material worlds are inextricably connected. Faith does not remove Muslims — or their Imams — from daily, practical matters in family life, in business, in community affairs.

Faith, rather, is a force that should deepen our concern for our worldly habitat, for embracing its challenges, and for improving the quality of human life.

This Muslim belief in the fusion of Faith and World is why much of my attention has been committed to the work of the Aga Khan Development Network.

In 1957, when I succeeded my grandfather as Imam, the Ismaili community lived for the most part in the colonies or ex-colonies of France, Belgium and the British Empire, or behind the Iron Curtain. They are still a highly diverse community, in terms of ethnicity, language, culture, and geography. They continue to live mostly in the developing world, though increasing numbers now live in Europe and North America.

Before 1957, individual Ismaili communities had their own social and economic institutions where that was allowed. There was no intent for them to grow to national prominence, and even less a vision to coordinate their activities across frontiers.

Today, however, that situation has changed, and the Aga Khan Development Network has a strong presence in several dozen countries, where appropriate regional coordination is also useful.

The AKDN — as we call it — is composed of a variety of private, non-governmental, non-denominational agencies implementing many of the Imam's responsibilities. We are active in the fields of economic development, job creation, education, and health care, as well as important cultural initiatives.

Most of our AKDN activities have been born from the grass roots of developing countries, reflecting their aspirations and their fragilities. Through the years, of course, this landscape has changed fundamentally, with the creation of new states like Bangladesh, the horrors of ethnic cleansing in Uganda, the collapse of the Soviet empire and the emergence of new countries with large Ismaili populations such as Tajikistan.



More recently, of course, we have faced the conflicts in Afghanistan and Syria. But through all of these experiences, the

Ismaili peoples have demonstrated an impressive capacity to persevere and to progress.

Our work has always been people-driven. It grows out of the age-old Islamic ethic, committed to goals with universal relevance: the elimination of poverty, access to education, and social peace in a pluralist environment. The AKDN's fundamental objective is to improve the quality of human life.

Amongst the great common denominators of the human race is a shared aspiration, a common hope, for a better quality of life. I was struck a few years ago to read about a UNDP survey of 18 South American states where the majority of the people were less interested in their forms of government, than in the quality of their lives. Even autocratic governments that improved their quality of life would be more acceptable for most of those polled than ineffective democratic governments.

I cite that study, of course, with due respect to governmental institutions that have had a more successful history — including certain very distinguished parliaments!

But the sad fact behind so much instability in our world today is that governments are seen to be inadequate to these challenges. A much happier fact is that, in the global effort to change this picture, Canada is an exemplary leader.

Let me now describe a few examples of a quarter century of close collaboration between AKDN and Canada.

One of our earliest collaborations was to establish the first private nursing school in Pakistan, in cooperation with McMaster and the CIDA of that time. It was the first component of the Aga Khan University — the first private university in that country. The nursing school's impact has been enormous; many of those who now head other nursing programmes and hospitals in the whole of the region — not just Pakistan — are graduates of our school. Canada was also one of the first donors to the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme in Northern Pakistan, tripling incomes in this remote, marginalised area. The approaches developed there have shaped our further collaborations in Tajikistan, in Afghanistan, in Kenya, and in Mozambique. Canada has also helped establish the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development in Karachi and in East Africa, along with other educational initiatives in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Mozambique, Afghanistan, Tajikistan, and Pakistan, including pioneering work in the field of Early Childhood Development.



I could speak about our close ties with Canadian universities also, such as McMaster, McGill, the University of Toronto, and the University of Alberta, enhancing our own institutions of tertiary education — the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia.

The latter institution has resulted from the Imamat's unique, tripartite treaty with the governments of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. It serves some 22 million people who live in Central Asia, in hillside and high mountain environments, areas of acute seismic and economic vulnerability.

I could list many more examples in cultural development and in scientific research. And we are especially proud of the Global Centre for Pluralism here in Ottawa, a joint project of the Imamat and the Canadian government.

In just three years, Canada will mark its 150th anniversary, and the whole world will be ready to celebrate with you. Sharing Canada's robust pluralistic history, is a core mission of our Global Centre, and 2017 will be a major opportunity for doing so, operating from its headquarters in the former War Museum on Sussex Drive. Perhaps 2017 and the celebrations can be a catalyst with our neighbours to improve the entire riverfront area around that building.

Our partnership in Canada has been immensely strengthened, of course, by the presence for more than four decades of a significant Ismaili community. Like most historic global communities the Ismaili peoples have a variegated history, but surely our experience in Canada has been a particularly positive chapter.

I happily recall the establishment of the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat here in 2008 and the Prime Minister's description that day of our collaborative efforts to make Canada "the headquarters of the global effort to foster peace, prosperity, and equality through pluralism."

We are deeply pleased that we can sign today a new Protocol with your Government — further strengthening our ongoing platform for cooperation.

As we look to the next 25 years of the AKDN, we believe that our permanent presence in the developing world will make us a dependable partner, especially in meeting the difficult challenges of predictability.

Against this background, let me move on to the broad international sphere, including the role of relations between the countries and cultures of Islam — what we call the Ummah — and non-Islamic societies. It is central to the shape of global affairs in our time.

I would begin by emphasising a central point about the Ummah often unseen elsewhere: the fundamental fact of its immense diversity. Muslim demography has expanded

dramatically in recent years, and Muslims today have highly differing views on many questions.

Essential among them is that they do not share some common, overarching impression of the West. It has become commonplace for some to talk about an inevitable clash of the industrial West and Islamic civilizations. But Muslims don't see things in this way. Those whose words and deeds feed into that point of view are a small and extreme minority. For most of us, it is simply not true. We find singularly little in our theological interpretations that would clash with the other Abrahamic faiths — with Christianity and Judaism. Indeed, there is much that is in profound harmony.

When the clashes of modern times have come, they have most often grown out of particular political circumstances, the twists and turns of power relationships and economic ambitions, rather than deep theological divides. Yet sadly, what is highly abnormal in the Islamic world gets mistaken for what is normal. Of course, media perceptions of our world in recent years have often been conveyed through a lens of war. But that is all the more reason to shape global conversation in a more informed direction. I am personally aware of the efforts the Prime Minister has made to achieve this. Thank you, Prime Minister.

The complexity of the Ummah has a long history. Some of the most glorious chapters in Islamic history were purposefully built on the principle of inclusiveness — it was a matter of state policy to pursue excellence through pluralism. This was true from the time of the Abbasids in Baghdad and the Fatimids in Cairo over 1,000 years ago. It was true in Afghanistan and Timbuktu in Mali, and later with the Safavids in Iran, the Mughals in India, the Uzbeks in Bukhara, and Ottomans in Turkey. From the 8th to the 16th century, al-Andalus thrived on the Iberian Peninsula — under Muslim aegis — but also deeply welcoming to Christian and Jewish peoples.

Today, these Islamic traditions have been obscured in many places, from Muslims and non-Muslims alike. The work of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, including the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and our Historic Cities Programme, is to revive the memory of this inclusive inheritance. Another immediate initiative is the Aga Khan Museum which will open this year in Toronto, an important testimonial in a Canadian setting to the immense diversity of Islamic cultures.

Perhaps the most important area of incomprehension, outside the Ummah, is the conflict between Sunni and Shia interpretations of Islam and the consequences for the Sunni and Shia peoples.

This powerful tension is sometimes even more profound than conflicts between Muslims and other faiths. It has increased massively in scope and intensity recently, and has been further exacerbated by external interventions. In Pakistan and Malaysia, in Iraq and Syria, in Lebanon and Bahrain, in Yemen and Somalia and Afghanistan it is becoming a disaster. It is important, therefore, for non-Muslims who are dealing with the Ummah to communicate

with both Sunni and Shia voices. To be oblivious to this reality would be like ignoring over many centuries that there were differences between Catholics and Protestants, or trying to resolve the civil war in Northern Ireland without engaging both Christian communities. What would have been the consequences if the Protestant-Catholic struggle in Ireland had spread throughout the Christian world, as is happening today between Shia and Sunni Muslims in more than nine countries? It is of the highest priority that these dangerous trends be well understood and resisted, and that the fundamental legitimacy of pluralistic outlooks be honoured in all aspects of our lives together — including matters of faith.

Permettez-moi à ce point de mon discours de m'adresser à vous à nouveau en français.

Je viens d'évoquer les incompréhensions entre le monde industrialisé et le monde musulman et les oppositions qui flétrissent indument les relations entre les grandes traditions de l'Islam.

Pourtant, le cœur, la raison et, pour ceux qui en sont animés, la foi, nous disent qu'une plus grande harmonie est possible. De fait, des évolutions récentes nous donnent une ouverture.

Parmi ces évolutions, je voudrais dire combien la démarche constitutionnaliste est importante pour corriger l'inadéquation de nombreuses constitutions existantes, avec l'évolution des sociétés, notamment lorsqu'elles sont en développement. C'est un sujet essentiel que les devoirs de ma charge m'interdisent d'ignorer.

Vous serez peut-être surpris d'apprendre que trente-sept pays du monde ont adopté une nouvelle constitution dans les dernières dix années, et douze sont en phase avancée de modernisation de la leur, soit au total quarante-neuf pays. Dit autrement, ce mouvement concerne un quart des états membres des Nations-Unies. Sur ce total de quarante-neuf pays, 25 pour cent sont des pays à majorité musulmane.

Ceci montre qu'aujourd'hui, la revendication par les sociétés civiles de structures constitutionnelles nouvelles, est devenue incontournable.

Je voudrais ici m'arrêter un instant pour souligner une difficulté particulière du monde musulman. Là, les partis religieux sont structurellement porteurs du principe de l'inséparabilité de la religion et de la vie de la Cité.

La conséquence en est que lorsqu'ils négocient les termes d'une constitution avec des interlocuteurs qui revendiquent la séparation entre Etat et religion, le consensus sur la loi suprême est d'évidence difficile à atteindre.

Cependant, un pays vient de nous faire la démonstration que cela est possible : la République tunisienne.

Ce n'est pas le lieu de commenter par le menu sa nouvelle constitution. Disons toutefois qu'elle est la résultante d'un débat pluraliste assumé, et qu'elle semble contenir les règles nécessaires pour assurer le respect mutuel entre composantes de la société civile.

Ceci se traduit en particulier par une appropriation de la notion de coalition, que ce soit au niveau électoral ou gouvernemental. Il s'agit là d'une grande avancée pour l'expression de ce pluralisme accepté que le Canada et l'Imamat ismaïli appellent de leurs vœux.

Remarquons enfin une conséquence que cette évolution laisse espérer : le forum des débats et conflits inhérents à toute société pluraliste n'est plus la rue ou la place, mais la Cour constitutionnelle d'un état de droit.

Outre le génie propre des constitutionnalistes tunisiens, les travaux préparatoires ont été l'occasion de consultations de droit constitutionnel comparé. Je voudrais saluer en particulier le rôle des juristes portugais, citoyens d'un pays pour lequel j'ai beaucoup de considération et qui, comme le Canada, a développé une civilisation du respect mutuel entre communautés, et d'ouverture aux religions. Je fais référence ici à la loi à dimension concordataire qui régit les relations entre la République portugaise et l'Imamat ismaïli depuis 2010. Devant votre très honorable assemblée, je suis heureux d'ajouter que cette loi, votée à l'unanimité, prend acte de la qualité d'entité supranationale de l'Imamat ismaïli.

Pour conclure sur la constitution tunisienne, Monsieur François Hollande, Président de la République française, a dit à Tunis : "Ce qui fait l'originalité de votre révolution, et même de votre Constitution, c'est le rôle de la société civile." Clearly, the voices playing a major role in Tunisia were the voices of "Civil Society."

By Civil Society I mean an array of institutions which operate on a private, voluntary basis, but are motivated by high public purposes. They include institutions devoted to education, culture, science and research; to commercial, labor, ethnic and religious concerns; as well as professional societies in law, accounting, banking, engineering and medicine. Civil Society encompasses groups that work on health and safety and environmental matters, organisations that are engaged in humanitarian service, or in the arts or the media.

There is sometimes a tendency in the search for progress to focus solely on politics and government, or on the private, profit-making sector. And surely they both have roles to play.

But my view is that the world needs to pay more attention — much, much more attention — to the potential role of Civil Society.

We see it expanding in many places, from Sub-Saharan Africa to Tunisia and Egypt, from Iran to Bangladesh. At a time of extreme danger in Kenya a few years ago — the beginnings

of a civil war — the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, led the way to a peaceful solution which rested heavily on the strength of Kenya's Civil Society.

Increasingly, I believe, the voices of Civil Society are voices for change, where change has been overdue. They have been voices of hope for people living in fear.

They are voices that can help transform countries of crisis into countries of opportunity. There are too many societies where too many people live in a culture of fear, condemned to a life of poverty. Addressing that fear, and replacing it with hope, will be a major step to the elimination of poverty. And often the call for hope to replace fear will come from the voices of Civil Society.

An active Civil Society can open the door for an enormous variety of energies and talents from a broad spectrum of organisations and individuals. It means opening the way for diversity. It means welcoming plurality. I believe that Canada is uniquely able to articulate and exemplify three critical underpinnings of a quality Civil Society — a commitment to pluralism, to meritocracy, and to a cosmopolitan ethic.

A cosmopolitan ethic is one that welcomes the complexity of human society. It balances rights and duties, freedom and responsibility. It is an ethic for all peoples, the familiar and the Other, whether they live across the street or across the planet.

The Aga Khan Development Network has worked over five decades to assist in the enhancement of Civil Society. And as we look to its future, we are honoured that Canada views us as a valued partner. Thank you Prime Minister. One key to Canada's success in building a meritocratic Civil Society is your recognition that democratic societies require more than democratic governments.

I have been impressed by recent studies showing the activity of voluntary institutions and not-for-profit organisations in Canada to be among the highest in the world. This Canadian spirit resonates with a cherished principle in Shia Ismaili culture — the importance of contributing one's individual energies on a voluntary basis to improving the lives of others.

This is not a matter of philanthropy, but rather of self-fulfillment — “enlightened self-fulfillment.”

During my Golden Jubilee — and this is important — six years ago Ismailis from around the world volunteered their gifts, not only of wealth, but most notably of time and knowledge, in support of our work. We established a Time and Knowledge framework, a structured process for engaging an immense pool of expertise involving tens of thousands of volunteers. Many of them traveled to developing countries as part of this outpouring of service — one third of those were Canadians. Their impact has been enormous in helping

us to achieve best practice standards in our institutions and programmes, making us we hope an even better partner for Canada!

Such efforts thrive when multiple inputs can be matched to multiple needs, which is why Canada's immense economic diversity is such a valuable global resource.

One of the foundational qualities of Canada's Civil Society is its educational emphasis. Studies show that Canadian students — whether native or foreign born — perform in the very top tier of students internationally, and indeed, that more than 45 per cent of the foreign born population in Canada has a tertiary degree.

This record of educational opportunity resonates strongly with the Shia Ismaili belief in the transformative power of the human intellect, a conviction that underscores AKDN's massive commitment to education wherever we are present — not only education for our faith, but also of education for our world. To do this we are engaged in all levels of education.

The Aga Khan University in Karachi and East Africa are expanding to create a new Liberal Arts faculty, and to establish eight new post-graduate schools in collaboration with several Canadian universities.

We also share with Canada a deep appreciation for the potential of early childhood education. It is the period of the greatest development of the brain. This education is one of the most cost-effective ways to improve the quality of life for rural as well as urban populations. Congratulations, Prime Minister, for your initiative on this.

In this regard, let me take a moment to salute the late Dr Fraser Mustard, whose work in Early Childhood Development will impact millions of people around the world. The AKDN has been fortunate to have been inspired and counselled by this great Canadian scientist and humanist.

Quality education is fundamental to the development of a meritocratic Civil Society, and thus to the development of pluralistic attitudes.

The history of Canada has a great deal to teach us in this regard, including the long, incremental processes through which quality civil societies and committed cultures of pluralism are built. One of the watchwords of our new Global Centre for Pluralism is that "Pluralism is a Process and not a Product." I know that many Canadians would describe their own pluralism as a "work in progress," but it is also an asset of enormous global quality.

What more will a quality Civil Society now require of us? Sadly, the world is becoming more pluralist in fact, but not necessarily in spirit. "Cosmopolitan" social patterns have not yet

been matched by “a cosmopolitan ethic.” In fact, one harsh reality is that religious hostility and intolerance seems to be on the rise in many places — from the Central African Republic, to South Sudan, to Nigeria, to Myanmar, the Philippines and other countries — both between major religious groups and within them.

Again, Canada has responded in notable ways, including the establishment — just one year ago — of the Office of Religious Freedom. Its challenges, like those facing the Centre for Global Pluralism, are enormous and its contributions will be warmly welcomed. And surely it will also serve as a worthy model for other countries.

In sum, I believe that Civil Society is one of the most powerful forces in our time, one that will become an increasingly universal influence, engulfing more countries, influencing, reshaping and sometimes even replacing ineffective regimes. And I also believe that Civil Society around the world should be vigorously encouraged and wisely nurtured by those who have made it work most successfully — Canada first amongst all.

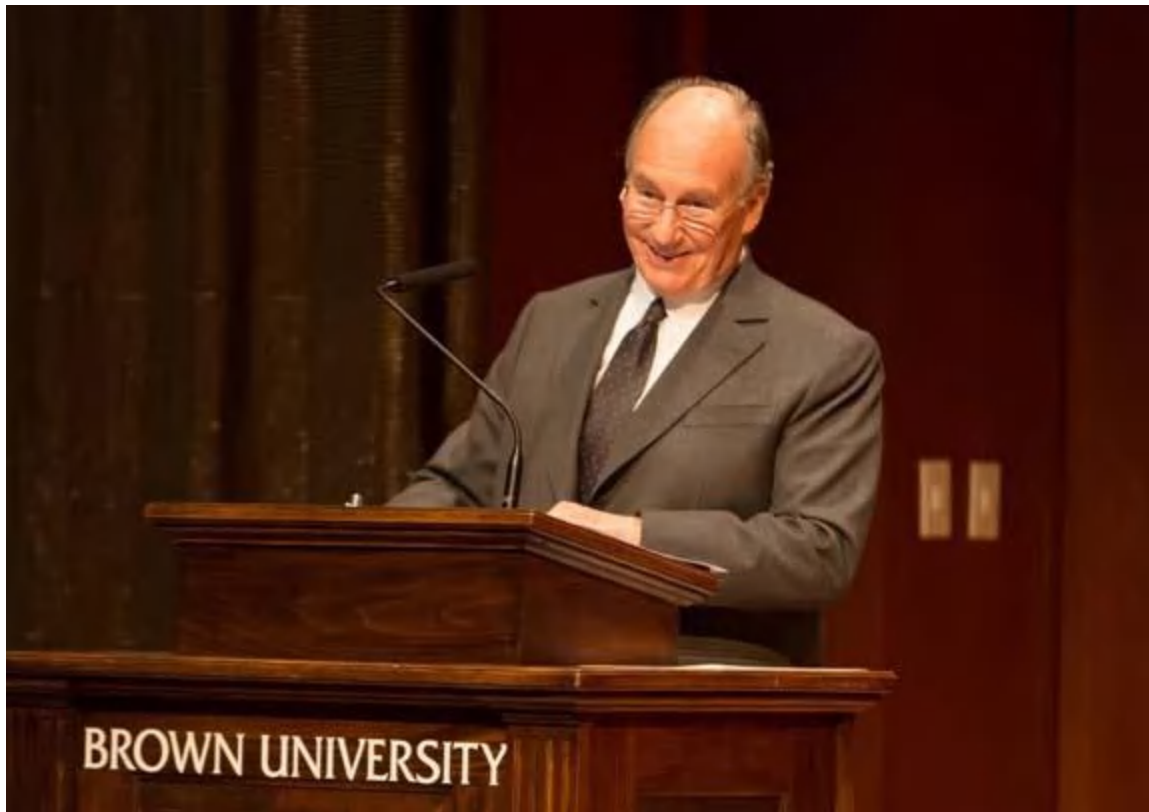
I am most grateful to the Prime Minister and to you who have given me this opportunity to share — from a faith perspective — some of the issues that preoccupy me when looking ahead. I hope I have explained why I am convinced about the global validity of our partnership for human development.

Let me end with a personal thought. As you build your lives, for yourselves and others, you will come to rest upon certain principles. Central to my life has been a verse in the Holy Quran which addresses itself to the whole of humanity. It says: “Oh Mankind, fear your Lord, who created you of a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them scattered abroad many men and women...”

I know of no more beautiful expression about the unity of our human race — born indeed from a single soul.

Thank you.





## **The 88th Stephen Ogden Lecture delivered by His Highness the Aga Khan at Brown University**

10 March 2014, Providence, Rhode Island, USA

**“More information at our fingertips can mean more knowledge and understanding. But it can also mean more fleeting attention-spans, more impulsive judgments, and more dependence on superficial snapshots of events. Communicating more often and more easily can bring people closer together, but it can also tempt us to live more of our lives inside smaller information bubbles, in more intense but often more isolated groupings.”**

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

President Paxson,  
Ogden Family representatives,  
Brown University Faculty, Students and Alumni,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Thank you very much, Madame President, for your very kind introduction. It is a great honour for me to give the Ogden Lecture, to be included in the distinguished company of past Ogden Lecturers, and to pay tribute to the memory of Stephen Ogden.

I am also delighted to be present for the opening weekend of Brown's 250th Anniversary, or one might say, the happy conclusion of Brown's first quarter of a millennium!!

I have long felt a close sense of belonging at Brown; my eldest son was a member of the Brown Class of 1995, and I treasure the fact that I received an honorary degree from Brown, and was privileged at that time to give the Baccalaureate Address.

My own education has blended Islamic and Western traditions. I was studying at Harvard some 56 years ago when I inherited the Ismaili Imamatus. It is not a political role, as has been mentioned, but let me emphasise that Islamic belief sees the spiritual and material worlds as inextricably connected. Faith should deepen our concern for improving the quality of human life in all of its dimensions. That is the overarching objective of the Aga Khan Development Network, which President Paxson has described so well.

It has been said that giving an effective university lecture requires the boldness to make some strong predictions about the future. I might suggest that President Paxson has put me in a slightly embarrassing position today, by inviting me to return to speak on the Brown campus. The challenge with coming back to give a second such lecture is that you have to explain what you got wrong the first time!

As I look back, over some 18 years now, to 1996, I think I actually under-estimated how many things would change in the years ahead. If you were a student at Brown 18 years ago, you would not have had any Facebook friends and you wouldn't be following anyone on Twitter. And, even more sadly perhaps, no one would be following you!

There was no instant messaging at that time; indeed, as I recall, people actually used their telephones primarily for talking!

In fact, email itself was still quite a new thing in 1996. And those are only the most obvious examples of transformative change in our world.

What has been the impact of such changes? We often think about technological innovation as a great source of hope for the world. We hear about how the internet can reach out across boundaries, helping us all to stay in touch, and giving us access to information from every imaginable source.

But it is worth remembering that the same affirmations have greeted new communication technologies for centuries, from the printing press to the telegraph to television and radio. Yet in each case, while many hopes were fulfilled, many were also disappointed. In the final

analysis, the key to human cooperation and concord has not depended on advances in the technologies of communication, but rather on how human beings go about using – or abusing – their technological tools.

Among the risks of our new communications world is its potential contribution to what I would call the growing “centrifugal forces” in our time – the forces of “fragmentation.” These forces, I believe, can threaten the coherence of democratic societies and the effectiveness of democratic institutions.

Yes, the Information Revolution, for individuals and for communities, can be a great liberating influence. But it also carries some important risks.

More information at our fingertips can mean more knowledge and understanding. But it can also mean more fleeting attention-spans, more impulsive judgments, and more dependence on superficial snapshots of events. Communicating more often and more easily can bring people closer together, but it can also tempt us to live more of our lives inside smaller information bubbles, in more intense but often more isolated groupings.

We see more people everywhere these days, standing or sitting or walking alone, absorbed in their hand-held screens. But, I wonder whether, in some larger sense, they are really more “in touch?” Greater “connectivity” does not necessarily mean greater “connection.”

Information travels more quickly, in greater quantities these days. But the incalculable multiplication of information can also mean more error, more exaggeration, more misinformation, more disinformation, more propaganda. The world may be right there on our laptops, but the truth about the world may be further and further away.

The problem of fragmentation in our world is not a problem of diversity. Diversity itself should be a source of enrichment. The problem comes when diverse elements spin off on their own, when the bonds that connect us across our diversities begin to weaken.

Too often, as the world grows more complex, the temptation for some is to shield themselves from complexity, we seek the comfort of our own simplicities, our own specialities. As has often been said, we risk learning more and more, about less and less. And the result is that significant knowledge gaps can develop and persist.

The danger is that knowledge gaps so often run the risk of becoming empathy gaps. The struggle to remain empathetically open to the Other in a diversifying world is a continuing struggle of central importance for all of us.

The danger of having knowledge gaps grow into empathy gaps – that was the theme of my address in 1996. I discussed then what was becoming an enormous knowledge gap, nearly an ignorance gap, between the worlds of Islam and the non-Muslim world. Since that time,

to be sure, there have been moments of encouraging progress on this front, including academic-centred efforts here at Brown, with your wonderful Digital Islamic Humanities Project.

But in many ways, that knowledge gap has worsened.

We have heard predictions for some years now about some inevitable clash of the industrial West with the Muslim world. These multiplied, of course, in the wake of the 9/11 tragedies and other violent episodes. But most Muslims don't think that way; only an extreme minority does. For most of us, there is singularly little in our theology that would clash with the other Abrahamic faiths, with Christianity and Judaism. And there is much more in harmony. What has happened to the Islamic tradition that says that our best friends will be from the other Abrahamic Faiths, known as the "People of the Book", all of whose faith builds on monotheistic revelation?

Of course, much of what the West has seen about the Muslim world in recent years has been through a media lens of instability and confrontation. What is highly abnormal in the Islamic world thus often gets mistaken for what is normal. But that is all the more reason for us to work from all directions to replace fearful ignorance with empathetic knowledge.

Down through many centuries, great Muslim cultures were built on the principle of inclusiveness. Some of the best minds and creative spirits from every corner of the world, independent of ethnic or religious identities, were brought together at great Muslim centres of learning. My own ancestors, the Fatimids, founded one of the world's oldest universities, Al-Azhar in Cairo, over a thousand years ago. In fields of learning from mathematics to astronomy, from philosophy to medicine Muslim scholars sharpened the cutting edge of human knowledge. They were the equivalents of thinkers like Plato and Aristotle, Galileo and Newton. Yet their names are scarcely known in the West today. How many would recognise the name al-Khwarizmi – the Persian mathematician who developed some 1,200 years ago the algorithm, which is the foundation of search engine technology?

In the Muslim world itself, as is true outside of it, much of our history, culture and art, has been obscured, and with it a clear sense of Muslim diversity. Among other "in-comprehensions" is the increasing conflict between Sunni and Shia Muslims. In places like Pakistan and Malaysia, Iraq and Syria, Lebanon and Bahrain, Yemen and Somalia and Afghanistan, the Sunni-Shia conflict is becoming an absolute disaster.

The harsh truth is that religious hostility and intolerance, between as well as within religions, is contributing to violent crises and political impasse all across the world, in the Central African Republic, in South Sudan and Nigeria; in Myanmar, in the Philippines and in the Ukraine, and in many other places.

Such hostilities, of course, represent the most sinister side of what I have described as the centrifugal, fragmenting patterns of our times.

How can we respond to such tendencies? The response, I would emphasise today is a thoughtful, renewed commitment to the concept of pluralism and to the closely related potential of civil society.

A pluralist commitment is rooted in the essential unity of the human race. Does the Holy Quran not say that mankind is descended from “a single soul?” In an increasingly cosmopolitan world, it is essential that we live by a “cosmopolitan ethic,” one that addresses the age-old need to balance the particular and the universal, to honour both human rights and social duties, to advance personal freedom and to accept human responsibility.

It is in that spirit that we can nurture bonds of confidence across different peoples and unique individuals, welcoming the growing diversity of our world, even in matters of faith, as a gift of the Divine. Difference, in this context, can become an opportunity – not a threat – a blessing rather than a burden.

This brings us to the challenges for governance in our time. How do we organise our complex societies to achieve harmony and perhaps some progress, even at this time of growing diversity? These have always been difficult questions and they are not getting any easier. As you know, they were particularly difficult questions for the United States back in this university’s earliest years, as 13 former colonies tried to write a new national constitution.

George Washington, who had presided over the Constitutional Convention, came to this campus in 1790, after just one year as President, when Brown itself was only a quarter of a century old. He travelled to Providence to mark the recent adoption of the new US Constitution by the state of Rhode Island – the last of the original 13 states to do so. His visit was to celebrate the completion of that constitution-writing process. You may have known about this from reading the plaque that still hangs on the wall of University Hall, on the Brown Main Green, where Washington strolled that day with the university’s president.

I am told, incidentally, that Washington was greeted here with “the roar of cannons and the ringing of bells, and in a spirit of great Decorum.” I don’t know about the cannon and the bells, but I must testify, as a current university guest, that the “great decorum” has not changed at all! Thank you!

Washington’s visit in Providence marked a moment of historic constitutional significance. And the questions we have raised today, balancing centrifugal, fragmenting realities on the one hand with the imperatives of national bonding and governing on the other, were central concerns for Washington at that moment and throughout his career. After eight years of coping with these issues as the first American president, he made them the major theme of his famous Farewell Address.

He was worried, principally, he said then, about what he called the spirit of “faction” and its ability to undermine a sense of democratic nationhood. He described faction as a spirit, that “kindles the animosity of one part against another,” creating a “fatal tendency to elevate a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community” against the whole. It threatened, he said, “a frightful despotism”, one that could “render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together...”

Such threats to bonding, and thus to balance, have long presented a central governance challenge, here and elsewhere. And these issues are now being addressed with new intensity all across the world.

Amazing as it may seem, fully 37 countries have been writing or rewriting their constitutions in the last ten years, with another 12 countries recently embarking on this path. This means that nearly 25 per cent of the member countries of the United Nations have been rethinking these central governance concerns. And nearly half of these 49 countries have majority Muslim populations.

Clearly, many Muslim societies are seeking new ways to organise themselves. And there can be no “one size fits all”. The outcomes obviously are going to be many and varied. The process will challenge the creativity of the world’s best political and legal thinkers. Especially in the developing world, such matters will increasingly be in the hands of younger, more educated men and women, provided the system allows them to come to the forefront.

These governance issues are frankly today, of global concern. And I believe that the great universities of the world and Brown University in particular, can also play an especially creative role in responding to them.

The challenge, as we have said, will be one of balancing values and interests, honouring the importance of religious and ethical traditions, for example, while also respecting the free will of individual human beings; accommodating both the role of central governments and regional demands, reconciling the urban and the rural; providing for democratic change, and institutional continuity.

Creating new governance frameworks is obviously not an easy task. But it can be accomplished. In Kenya just three and a half years ago, for example, a new constitution ratified by two-thirds of the voters, redistributed power dramatically from the central level to 47 county governments. In Tunisia, just a few weeks ago, a new “consensus” constitution with 94 per cent approval from the elected Constituent Assembly reaffirmed the Islamic identity of the Tunisian state, while also protecting the human rights of religious and ethnic minorities.

In these cases, and in other places such as Bangladesh, one of the fundamental constructive forces at work has been the strength of civil society, it is a topic that is worth serious



attention. And, I am happy to say, that it has been getting increasing attention, including the exemplary, cutting-edge work here at Brown of the Watson Institute for International Studies.

By civil society I mean an array of institutions that operate on a private, voluntary basis, but are motivated by high public purposes. They include institutions devoted to culture, to science and to research; to commercial, labour, ethnic and religious concerns; as well as a variety of professional societies. They include institutions of the media and education.

I think the conclusion is the success of democratic societies will depend in the end on more than democratic governments. The scale and the quality of civil society will become a factor, I believe, of enormous importance.

A quality civil society has three critical underpinnings: a commitment to pluralism, an open door to meritocracy, and a full embrace of what I described earlier as a cosmopolitan ethic.

The voices of civil society will reflect and express the growing complexity of society, not as autonomous fragments, but as diversified institutions seeking the common good. And I believe that the voices of civil society can be among the most powerful forces in our time. Where change has been overdue, they can be voices for change. Where people live in fear, they can be voices of hope.

One of the energising forces that makes a quality civil society possible, of course, is the readiness of its citizens to contribute their talents and energies to the social good. What is required is a profound spirit of voluntary service, a principle cherished in Shia Ismaili culture, and honoured, I know, here at Brown.

Progress is possible when the multiple, diversified needs of any society can be matched by multiple, diversified inputs; that is also what civil society is all about. This is why great universities, with their broad, diversified programmes, can be a resource of importance in the development of quality civil society, in their own countries but also around the world. And again, Brown offers a powerful example.

Perhaps the biggest quandary we face in our economic and social development programmes is the problem of “predictability”; knowing what changes are going to arise, and then deciding what is more or less likely to work in a given situation. But again, progress is possible when complex issues are subjected to competent, intelligent, nuanced and sophisticated analysis, free from dogmatism, and based upon what I would describe as “empathetic knowledge.” This happens best in open, meritocratic societies, where people’s responsibilities are based on their competence. It also happens best when the intellectual resources of the world’s great universities, like Brown, are brought into play.



One of the important values of the Shia Ismaili tradition is the transformative power of the human intellect – that conviction underscores AKDN’s strong commitment to education, at all levels, wherever we are present. These activities include the Aga Khan University – now thirty years old – our newer University of Central Asia, our Aga Khan Academies at the primary and secondary levels, and our major commitment to the potential of Early Childhood Development.

The Aga Khan University in Karachi and East Africa is in the process today of creating a new Liberal Arts faculty, while also establishing eight new post-graduate schools. I would emphasise both these initiatives. Professional education is sorely needed in the developing world, but equally important is the capacity to integrate knowledge, to nurture critical thinking and ethical sensitivity and to advance interdisciplinary teaching and research.

A quality civil society, in any setting, will require well-informed leaders who are sensitive to a wide array of disciplines, and outlooks and cultures. It will require people with the ability to continue their learning in response to new knowledge. I know these are central concerns for Brown University, articulated so well in its new Strategic Plan and its call for “Building on Distinction.”

As we look ahead, in sum, we face a world in which centrifugal and fragmenting influences are of growing importance, presenting new governance challenges all across the planet, and especially in fragile societies. In such a world, the voices of pluralistic civil society can help ensure that diversity does not lead to disintegration, and that a broad variety of energies and talents can be enlisted in the quest for human progress. Diversification without disintegration, this is the greatest challenge of our time.

Over the past six decades I have been immersed in the problems of developing societies, grappling with ways to assist their populations, despite both natural hazards and human errors. It is my conviction that a strong, high-quality, ethical and competent civil society is one of the greatest forces we can work with to underwrite such progress. And, if this is correct, then the role of great universities has never been more important.

I am convinced that Brown will be among the greatest universities stepping up to this challenge, as it finishes its first 250 years, and embarks on its next quarter of a millennium!

Thank you.



## **Keynote remarks made at the MNCH Summit in Toronto**

29 May 2014, Toronto, Canada

Thank you Ms Brown for that kind introduction.

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Prime Minister Harper,  
President Kikwete,  
Your Majesty,  
Your Excellencies,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

Like you, I am here today because of my conviction that improving maternal, neonatal and child health should be one of the highest priorities on the global development agenda. I can think of no other field in which a well-directed effort can make as great or as rapid an impact.

I am here, as well, because of my enormous respect for the leadership of the Government of Canada in addressing this challenge. And I am here too, because of the strong sense of partnership which our Aga Khan Development Network has long experienced, working with Canada in this critical field.

Leadership and partnership – those are words that come quickly to mind as I salute our hosts today and as I greet these distinguished leaders and partners in this audience.

Mr Prime Minister – I recall how our partnerships were strengthened four years ago when you launched the Muskoka Initiative. It led to an important new effort in which our Network has been deeply involved in countries such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Mali.

In all of these efforts, we've built on our strong history of work in this field. It was 90 years ago that my late grandfather founded the Kharadhar Maternity Home in Karachi. In that same city, for the last thirty years, the Aga Khan University has worked on the cutting edge of research and education in this field – including its new specialised degree in midwifery.

One of our Aga Khan University scholars helped fashion the new series of reports on this topic that was released last week – an effort that involved more than 54 experts from 28 institutions in 17 countries. The reports tell us that right intensified steps can save the lives of an additional 3 million mothers and children annually.

To that end, our Development Network has also focused on building durable, resilient healthcare systems. One example is the not-for-profit health system by the Aga Khan Health Service in Northern Pakistan – a community-based network of facilities and health workers, including a growing number of nurse-midwives.

We have extended these approaches to other countries, including a remarkable partnership in Tanzania funded by the Canadian government and implemented in close partnership with the Tanzanian government.

Such AKDN activity now serves some two-and-a-half million people in 15 countries, with 180 health centres both in urban and rural areas, often in high-conflict zones, and embracing some of the world's poorest and most remote populations.

Last year alone, these facilities served nearly 5 million visitors, inpatients and outpatients, with more than 40,000 newborn deliveries.

So our experience has been considerable. But what have we learned from it? Let me share a quick overview.

First, I would underline that our approaches have to be long-term. Sporadic interventions produce sporadic results, and each new burst of attention and activity must then start over again. The key to sustained progress is the creation of sustainable systems.

Second, our approaches should be community-oriented. Outside assistance is vital, but sustainable success will depend on a strong sense of local “ownership”.

The third point I would make is that our approaches should support the broad spectrum of health care. Focusing too narrowly on high-impact primary care has not worked well – improved secondary and tertiary care is also absolutely essential.

Our approaches should encourage new financial models. Donor funding will be critical, but we cannot sustain programmes that depend on continuing bursts of outside money. Let me underscore for example, the potential of local “savings groups” and micro-insurance programmes, as well as the underutilised potential for debt-financing. Also – and I think this is very, very important indeed – we have watched for many years as many developing countries, and their economies of course, have created new financial wherewithal among their people. These growing private resources can and I think should, help social progress, motivated by a developing social consciousness and by government policies that encourage tax-privileged donations to such causes.

Our approaches should also focus on reaching those who are hardest to reach. And here, new telecommunications technologies can make an enormous impact. One example has been the high-speed broadband link provided by Roshan Telecommunications, one of our Network’s companies, between our facilities in Karachi and several localities in Afghanistan and in Tajikistan. This e-medicine link can carry high-quality radiological images and lab results. It can facilitate consultations among patients, doctors and specialists at various centres. And it can contribute enormously to the effective teaching of health professionals in remote areas.

Our approaches should be comprehensive, working across the broad spectrum of social development. The problems we face have multiple causes, and single-minded, “vertical” interventions often fall short. The challenges are multi-sectoral, and they will require the effective coordination of multiple inputs. Creative collaboration must be our watchword. This is one reason for the growing importance of public-private partnerships.

These then are the points I would emphasise in looking back at our experience. I hope they might be helpful as we now move into the future, and to the renewal and re-expression of the Post Millennium Development Goals.

As we undertake the new planning process, the opportunity to exchange ideas at meetings of this sort can be enormously helpful. And potential partners must be able to talk well together if they are going to work well together.

I would hope such occasions will be characterised by candid exchange, including an acknowledgment of where we have fallen short and how we can do better. The truth is that our efforts have been insufficient and uneven. We have not met the Post Millennium Development Goals.

At the same time, we must avoid the risk of frustration that sometimes accompanies a moment of reassessment. Our challenge – as always – is a balance [between] honest realism with hopeful optimism.

And surely there are reasons to be optimistic.

In no other development field is the potential leverage for progress greater than in the field of maternal and newborn health.

I have spoken today about some of the approaches that have been part of our past work. But I thought I might close by talking about some of the results. My example comes from Afghanistan – a heartening example from a challenging environment.

The rural province of Afghan Badakhshan once had minimal infrastructure and few health-related resources. Less than a decade ago it had the highest maternity mortality ratio ever documented.

It was about that time that the Afghan government, supported by international donors, contracted with the Aga Khan Health Service to create a single non-governmental health organisation in each district and in each province. Today, the Badakhshan system alone includes nearly 400 health workers, 35 health centres, two hospitals, serving over 400,000 people. Its community midwifery school has graduated over 100 young women.

The impact has been striking. In Badakhshan in 2005, six percent of mothers died in childbirth – that is 6,000 for every 100,000 births. Just eight years later, that number was down twenty-fold – for every 100,000 live births, death has gone from 6,000 down to 300.

Meanwhile, infant mortality in Badakhshan has fallen by three quarters, from over 20 percent to less than 6 percent.

For most of the world, science has completely transformed the way life begins, and the risks associated with childbirth. But enormous gaps still exist. These gaps are not the result of fate – they are not inevitable. They can be changed, and changed dramatically.

When government and private institutions coordinate effectively in challenging a major public problem, as this example demonstrates, we can achieve substantial, genuine, quantifiable progress – and fairly rapidly.

This is the story we need to remember, and this is the sort of action we need to take as leaders and as partners in addressing one of the world's most critical challenges.

Thank you.



## Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the North-South Prize Ceremony, Portugal

12 June 2014, Lisbon, Portugal

**“At the very time that we talk more and more about global convergence, we also seem to experience more and more social divergence. The lesson it seems to me is that technologies alone will not save us-- the critical variable will always be and will always lie in the disposition of human hearts and minds.”**

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

President of the Republic of Portugal  
President of the Parliament  
Secretary-General of the Council of Europe  
Government Ministers and Members of Parliament  
President of the Portuguese Parliament’s Delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe  
Chair of the Executive Committee of the North-South Centre  
Fellow laureate, Suzanne Jabbour



Excellencies  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a singular pleasure for me to be here with you and to tell you how deeply honoured I am by this remarkable award.

This ceremony is particularly meaningful for me - for several reasons.

This award, first of all, has special significance because of who shares it - Madame Suzanne Jabbour. Her dedication to those who are tortured is an example that inspires us all. I know she will agree when I mention the list of those - from both South and North - who have received this award since 1995. It is a moving experience to have one's work recognized alongside theirs.

In addition, of course, this prize has particular meaning because of those who organize it - the men and women of the North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, who contribute so much to advancing democratic citizenship in our world. The Aga Khan Development Network has been proud to join with the Centre in distinguished projects such as the annual Lisbon Forum held at the Ismaili Centre.

The significance of this award is also enhanced for me by the fact that it has been presented by the President of Portugal, in the presence of so many eminent leaders, and in this splendid Parliamentary setting.

The Ismaili Imamat and the Aga Khan Development Network have had a long, close relationship with Portugal, built on shared values. Over many centuries, Portugal has welcomed and integrated people of diverse cultures. It was here on the Iberian Peninsula that Al-Andulus flourished for so long as a model of effective pluralism, a home for Christian and Jewish peoples that was also part of an Islamic empire. This is surely an appropriate place for celebrating the values associated with this award.

The North-South prize affirms principles which have long been animated and sustained by the work of the Aga Khan Development Network. Our Network seeks in many ways to improve the quality of human life, in health, education, in cultural and economic development. But our core conviction is that human progress depends on human cooperation, even across difficult lines of division.

As I observe the world, I am struck by the insufficiency of well-informed debate, of richer dialogue, of deeper education in our quest to avoid human conflict. That insufficiency often plagues relations between the North and the South-- and increasingly between the North and the Islamic world. Some have called this a clash of civilizations—I think it is, essentially, a clash of ignorances. What it means, in any case, is that institutions such as the North-South Centre have never been more important.

A related problem is the failure of so many to recognize that pluralism is not only a growing fact of life but also a blessing for their communities—an opportunity to be welcomed rather than a threat to be feared.

Since ancient times, great cultures have thrived because of their openness to diversity, and not because of their exclusivity. It was to address this issue that the Government of Canada and I created a new Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa in 2006.

Recently the Global Centre held its Third Annual Pluralism Lecture—a platform for global leaders to reflect on this topic. Our first two Lecturers in 2012 and 2013 were the former President of the Kyrgyz Republic, Roza Otunbayeva, and the former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan. This spring our guest lecturer was Antonio Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees since 2005. One reason I mention him here, of course, is because he was, for seven years, the Prime Minister of Portugal. Before that, as many of you know, he also played a key role in the refugee affairs with the Council of Europe, and its Parliamentary Assembly. His recent Lecture described, eloquently, the unprecedented scale and severity of the world's refugee crises. He addressed, passionately, the moral challenge this crisis presents, the tragic impulse of some to exploit it, and the critical importance of standing together on behalf of human tolerance. I commend his words to you; they resonate powerfully with the purposes of the North-South Centre.

We inhabit an overcrowded and interconnected planet and yet we share a common destiny. A weakness or pain in one corner can rapidly transmit itself across the globe. The pervasive rejection of pluralism in all its forms plays a significant role in breeding destructive conflicts.

An example is the current situation in the Middle-East, where conflict is having a profound destabilising impact— in the region but also well beyond—including here in Europe.

Instability is infectious, but so is hope. And that it is why it is so important for us to carry the torch of hope as we seek to share the gift of pluralism.

Pluralistic values have been articulated since ancient times. Profound expressions about our common humanity are embedded in the world's great religious traditions, including my own. But now it is for us to re-articulate those traditions. As we do so, our support for one another can be a source of renewed and growing strength.

It is ironic that a sense of intensified conflict comes at a time of unprecedented breakthroughs in communication technology. At the very time that we talk more and more about global convergence, we also seem to experience more and more social divergence. The lesson it seems to me is that technologies alone will not save us-- the critical variable will always be and will always lie in the disposition of human hearts and minds.

That, it seems to me, is what the work of the North-South Centre is all about, including our gathering today.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share with all of you in this experience - and in the great purposes to which it calls us.

Thank you.



## Opening of the Aga Khan Museum and the Ismaili Centre, Toronto

12 September 2014, Toronto, Canada

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Prime Minister Harper,  
Words fail me — and that's not often the case — but words fail me to thank you enough for  
your most gracious and warm comments on this occasion.  
Madame Clarkson,  
Excellencies,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Chancelier de Broglie,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is indeed a magnificent day.

It is not so often that we have an opportunity of this sort -- to come together in a beautiful setting, in a wonderful spirit of friendship, and to dedicate such a splendid architectural accomplishment.

As we inaugurate this building, we also have the opportunity to contemplate what it represents: the inspiring traditions of the past, the stirring challenges of the future, and the continuing search for peace through prayer.

Depuis les 1 400 ans qui se sont écoulés depuis la révélation de la foi musulmane, le monde de l'Islam a évolué en un vaste ensemble d'interprétations et de traditions -- comme ce fut le cas des autres grandes religions monothéistiques du monde. La communauté ismailie compte bien entendu au nombre de ces expressions, spécifique dans sa reconnaissance d'un Imam unique et vivant mais aussi dans son historicité géographique très diverse, qui s'exprime sous la forme d'importantes communautés dans de nombreuses parties du monde.

Canada, of course, has become a significant newer homeland for our community, as Ismailis have come here from so many places -- from East Africa, from Tajikistan, from Afghanistan, from Syria and from other parts of the world -- all choosing to develop their destinies under the Canadian flag.

One of the ways in which Ismailis have expressed their identity wherever they have lived is through their places of prayer, known today as the Jamatkhana. Other Muslim communities give their religious buildings different names: from ribat and zawiyya to khanaqa. And, in addition, there are other places where Muslims of all interpretations can come together, such as non-denominational mosques.

What we dedicate today is what we identify as an Ismaili Centre — a building that is focused around our Jamatkhana, but which also includes many secular spaces. These are places where Ismailis and non-Ismailis, Muslims and non-Muslims, will gather for shared activities — seminars and lectures, recitals and receptions, exhibitions and social events. These meeting halls and lounges, work offices and conference rooms will serve the organisational needs of the Ismaili community. But they will also, we trust, be filled with the sounds of enrichment, dialogue and warm human rapport, as Ismailis and non-Ismailis share their lives in a healthy gregarious spirit!

Yes! We are a community that welcomes the smile!

And soaring above it all is the great crystalline dome that you have observed, through which light from the prayer hall will provide a glowing beacon, symbolising the spirit of enlightenment that will always be at the heart of the Centre's life.

The size and complexity of what we celebrate today has been immense, and so is the list of those whom we salute for having made it possible.

Certainly our list should begin with the Prime Minister, with whom we have shared so many magnificent moments and so many worthwhile endeavours. On many fronts, in this country and beyond, the Canadian Government has been a strong, significant partner for the Ismaili Imamat and the Aga Khan Development Network. And we recall with special pleasure, of course, the Foundation Ceremony on this site, at which the Prime Minister so graciously presented me with the enormous honour of Canadian Citizenship.

We are grateful as well, to all the officials who have facilitated this accomplishment, in the Federal government, and in the Provincial government, where the Premier's unwavering enthusiasm has meant so much to us. And the same thing is true of the City of Toronto, and its dedicated councillors and staff, as well as the Bata family, and the people of this neighbourhood.

I am also deeply pleased to salute the donors who have so generously supported the building of outstanding Ismaili Centres across the world, including this Centre here in Toronto, as well as the dedicated leaders, staff and volunteers from the Ismaili community who have also played such a significant role.

And, of course, I want to recognise with special appreciation those who designed, built and decorated this space, especially the eminent architects Charles Correa and his daughter Nondita. Let me underscore as well, the important contributions of the Toronto firm of Moriyama and Teshima, of Gotham Notting Hill, and of the great German-Muslim artist, Karl Schlamming.

And, of course, it is with deepest admiration that I thank the person whose guiding hand has been so important at every stage of this project: a member of my family, my brother, Prince Amyn Aga Khan.

Our focus today is on two splendid new buildings here on Wynford Drive, but I would be remiss not to mention the new public space that will tie these two new buildings together: the Aga Khan Park, which will have its official opening when the vegetation matures next year.

When our planning for the Toronto Ismaili Centre started in 1996, we decided to ask the younger generation of Ismailis about their vision for this building. What did they want it to represent? How did they see it functioning? In response, young people from the ages of 18 to 27 generously shared their aspirations with us. They told us that they wanted a building that would be forward looking, while also being anchored in traditional community values. They also wanted a building in which they could strengthen their personal relationships -- a place where they could not only unite in prayer, but could also develop new life-shaping associations — amongst themselves and with other Canadians.

They hoped that the Centre would become, and I quote, "... a great avenue through which they could integrate into society at large," a place that would command the respect of all those who would visit it.

It was with all of these thoughts in mind that we selected for the Centre a world-class architect who had designed for many faiths, but always in an idiom for today and tomorrow. He was a man who deeply believes, as he puts it, that "tradition and modernity are not opposites." And the result, as you can see, is a building in which traditional elements of Muslim architecture are given a confident, forward-looking vocabulary.

The young men and women whose views we sought back in the year 2000 are now between 32 and 41 years old — in the middle of their careers. It is my earnest hope that the formation of this Centre, which will now become theirs, has responded to their hopes of 14 years ago.

Let me acknowledge, of course, that a part of that response is found in the entirety of this new complex on Wynford Drive — including the Aga Khan Museum — welcoming the public with its unique concentration of cultural assets, and the surrounding Park — providing a remarkable environment for relaxation and contemplation for peoples of all ages and backgrounds.

In sum, I am pleased to think that the complex being opened today does indeed meet the requests that were articulated 14 years ago... even if I have not been able to concentrate them all in one building!

The fusion of tradition and modernity which this building achieves, and the blend of spiritual, educational and social objectives that it embodies, have also characterised our other Ismaili Centres — in Vancouver, London, Lisbon, Dubai, and Dushanbe. All of them were designed by architects of great international standing, and, I would emphasise, of great multi-cultural sensitivity.

Charles Correa, for example, comes from an Indian background and has also designed Hindu and Christian buildings. The architect for our Vancouver Centre 30 years ago was Bruno Freschi, whose family is of Italian background, and whose earlier work had included a Sikh place of worship. The new Aga Khan Park was designed by an architect of Lebanese heritage, Vladimir Djurovic. And the Aga Khan Museum is the work of a superb Japanese professional, Fumihiko Maki. How pleased we are that all of these fine artists are with us today.

In its origins, in its design, and in its programmes and activities, the complex we inaugurate today is animated by a truly pluralistic spirit. In this respect too, it reflects the deep-set Ismaili values — pluralistic commitments that are so deeply embedded in Canadian values.



These commitments have been strikingly evident in a recent government initiative that I would like to mention today. I refer to the establishment, less than two years ago, of the new Office of Religious Freedom, led by Ambassador Andrew Bennett. We hope that our organisations in Canada can be helpful allies of the Office of Religious Freedom, as it works to support people throughout the world who are targeted because of their religious affiliations.

Just a week ago, Ambassador Bennett and the Minister for Multiculturalism, Mr Kenney, received the leader of an ancient religious minority as he arrived from Egypt for an extended visit to Canada. He was Pope Tawadros, of the Christian Coptic Orthodox Church. Canada's effort to extend the hand of friendship to Pope Tawadros, whose people have come through difficult times, confirms and renews the great Canadian message of universal welcome.

Let me conclude by returning to another context in which the hand of friendship has been playing a major role. When I mentioned that our planning for this complex began 18 years ago, some of you probably wondered how people sustained their enthusiasm through such a long process — yes 18 years! My response is to say that throughout these 18 years, we have been inspired by a great sense of common purpose, as we have sought to create places and spaces of true enlightenment. And, in doing so, we have also been strengthened by a pronounced spirit of friendship.

And what a joy it is to celebrate that spirit, at a time when so much of the world's attention is focused on climates of belligerence.

This first step in the planning of the Centre in the late 1990s was to find an appropriate building site, one that would be convenient to a large number of Ismailis. This was a challenge in and of itself, as we tried to reconcile the needs of more established Ismailis with the requirements of newly arriving and less settled immigrants. After a long search, we selected a site which was little more than half of the site we have today — it was located where the new Museum is now standing. Happily, we were successful in acquiring that land, and it was evident that the hands of friendship helped to make that acquisition possible.

As the project progressed, we learned that the Bata family was intending to give up its office building on a site adjacent to ours — an elegant building, but one where time had taken its toll. Once again the hand of friendship was extended, and Mrs Bata made it possible for us to acquire that building. Because it stood on the highest point in the area, we decided to move the Ismaili Centre to this site, and to redesign it accordingly.

The next step, of course, was to seek approval to remove the Bata building. As it became apparent over time that the Bata building had little residual life, the spirit of friendship again was present and we were authorised to replace it.

As these events unfolded, my late uncle, Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan, passed away, and his widow, Princess Catherine, invited me to become the owner of their remarkable Islamic art collection. Here again the hand of generous friendship was extended, this time by my own family. Regrettably, Princess Catherine cannot be with us today. But I might note in passing that the decisive role at critical junctures in this process was played by two remarkable women: Princess Catherine and Mrs Bata.

And so it was that things came together. I was able to join my late uncle's collection with part of the collection that I had assembled for The Institute of Ismaili Studies in London, and with some of my personal objects. But where should this assembled collection then be situated? After numerous discussions with many thoughtful people, the decision was made to build a museum on the very site that had been selected originally for the Ismaili Centre.

And here we are today. The story, over eighteen years indeed, has been one of deeply shared purpose.

I hope you will join in my profound happiness in recalling the cradle of friendship in which this Centre has been born. And I know that all of you will also share my profound wish that the Centre will now prolong decade after decade, its beautiful legacy of friendship and enlightenment.

Thank you.



## Statement at the London Conference on Afghanistan

04 December 2014, London, UK

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Mr. Chairman, the Right Honorable Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond  
Honourable President Ghani,  
Chief Executive Dr. Abdullah,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to express my gratitude to the Governments of Afghanistan and the United Kingdom for co-hosting this Conference. We welcome the reform agenda of the Government of National Unity, and we re-affirm our commitment to the peoples of Afghanistan in their journey towards a stable, peaceful and prosperous future.

For the Ismaili Imamate and its Aga Khan Development Network, or AKDN as it is known, it is fundamental that the construction of civil society has been chosen as a national development priority in the Government's reform agenda. The AKDN has been designed and grown specifically to support that goal, wherever we are present. We vigorously support the commitment of the National Unity Government in that endeavour. It can be

achieved through partnerships, pluralistic equitable development, creating an enabling environment for peace and an improved quality of life in both the rural and urban contexts.

An effective enabling environment for civil society should seek to foster meritocracy, ethics and mutual accountability.

As a longstanding partner, including as one of the largest private employers and contributors to the Exchequer, AKDN's investments and development objectives follow an integrated, multi-sector approach. We have established long-term institutions in the region, including schools and hospitals, banking institutions, leisure facilities, and telecommunications. We are pleased to announce further innovations, including in cross-border hydropower, mobile banking, tele-medicine, and support to small and medium enterprises to serve even the most marginalised populations..

Allow me to highlight four areas for consideration:

First, we must focus on inclusive economic participation. This will require approaches that go beyond traditional instruments or investment criteria. AKDN is pioneering, with its international partners, a multi-input area development facility that engages both the public and private sectors. Just as investments in agriculture, energy and infrastructure are important, culture too is a trampoline for development.

Second, we must accelerate human resource capacity creation from early childhood to tertiary education, including in particular, market-relevant skills development and vocational training. Afghanistan needs more teachers, and special attention must be directed to enhance the quality of education, in order to achieve international standards. We will contribute to this priority through our school network and our two Universities, the Aga Khan University and the University of Central Asia, which has campuses in Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan.

Third, women's participation in society is vital to ensure an improved quality of life. From education to health, participation in local governance to leadership in business, we have witnessed the potential for women and men to work alongside each other, while respecting the ethics of Islam, to build their communities.

Fourth, we recognise the importance of regional cooperation and trade. This requires stabilizing Afghanistan's frontiers. AKDN, with other governments of the region, has sought to initiate the necessary steps by building 5 bridges across the Pyanj and creating local markets, thereby linking Afghan Badakhshan to Tajik Badakhshan. Perhaps this initiative deserves replication. In this context it is equally important to ensure that the rich pluralism of Islam within Afghanistan is respected, and sustained for the peace and serenity of all Afghans, as is necessary today throughout the Muslim world.

Let me finish by saying that the priorities identified by the government will require sustained commitment and new mechanisms to create a meritocratic civil society. AKDN will most certainly contribute with its variegated resources.

Thank you.



## Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the Aga Khan University Convocation, Dar es Salaam, 2015

24 February 2015, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

**“As we look to the future, I am increasingly impressed by one overriding insight. It reflects the vast flow of information that has come my way as I have watched the ups and downs of the developing world. More and more, I am convinced that the key to improving the quality of human life, both in places that are gifted with good governments and in places that are not so fortunate, is the quality of what I describe as Civil Society.”**

Honorable Ministers,  
Trustees and President of the University,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Deans, Faculty and Staff of the University,  
Parents, Donors, Supporters and Distinguished Guests,  
And Graduands.

Humjambo and Karibuni. Hongera, Wanafunzi wote

What a remarkable day this is – and what a pleasure it is to be here.

This is a very important day in your lives, of course, and I must say that this first chance to share in an East African AKU convocation makes this a singular day in my life, as well.

As your Chancellor, it was I who first proposed to our Trustees that AKU should expand from Asia to Africa, to meet its chartered international mandate. Therefore it was with particular happiness that I received the Charter for the Aga Khan University from President Kikwete yesterday at a ceremony at State House. This is the first Charter in Tanzania granted to an international University. It reflects, I believe, AKU's demonstrable record of producing outstanding graduates in Tanzania for the last 13 years. This is a historic milestone as it sets the stage for expanding the University and introducing new schools, faculties and institutes in Tanzania and the region.

In the search for Africa's development, how can any of us forget that throughout human history there has never been greatness without expanded knowledge? And is that not the precise purpose of a great University?

I have always felt that there is a kind of magical feeling about a graduation ceremony. Think about it, all of you graduands! You have walked in here earlier today as students of the Aga Khan University. And you will walk out of here later today as graduates of the Aga Khan University – and distinguished AKU Alumni. Bravo!

That transformation, of course, symbolizes the transformation you have experienced throughout your time at the Aga Khan University. You may look the same as you did when you arrived here for the first time – perhaps slightly plumper, or skinnier, or balder, or grayer – but surely a great deal more fascinating. And more confident, too, I would hope, in your ability to contribute to the betterment of our world. The degree or diploma that you receive today is something you will take with you for the rest of your lives. The education you have achieved here is something that no one can ever take away.

We celebrate each of you graduands today. Bravo! And we also celebrate so many who have contributed to your success – your parents and families, friends and colleagues – and those who have contributed to your University life – faculty, staff, donors, and trustees, as well as government and community leaders.

Like each of you, personally, the University also remembers its heritage on a day like this. That heritage is rooted in the rich history of Islamic intellectual accomplishment – including the work of my own ancestors in ancient Cairo 1000 years ago, when they founded the Azhar University and the Dar-ul-ilm – the House of Knowledge. This story continued over several centuries, as Muslim centers of scholarship and culture involved and inspired people of many traditions and faith communities. A respect for diversity – a welcoming, cosmopolitan ethic – has been a hallmark of this heritage – an increasingly



relevant legacy in the emerging “borderless” world that President Rasul has so aptly described.

It was this heritage that inspired my grandfather, as Imam of the Ismaili Muslim community, to make education a top priority. In fact, he started the first Aga Khan School in Africa over 110 years ago in Bagamoyo, here in Tanzania. And that same legacy was in our minds when we began planning for this new Aga Khan University.

I well remember those conversations – as early as in 1975 – and I remember them, to be exact. We asked a host of questions and a host of wise people helped us address them. Harvard University drew up our blue print. Our biggest question was whether a new university in Asia and Africa, in this day and age, could achieve sufficient levels of excellence as measured by world standards.

Well, we decided to try it. The Aga Khan University was founded in Karachi in 1983. It recently celebrated its 30 year anniversary. And then, in the year 2000, we expanded into East Africa.

Today, the Aga Khan University remains the only privately supported University with major academic programs on both the Asian and the African continents. Over a relatively short time span, we have extended our work into eight different countries. We created two degree or diploma programs in the 1980s, two more in the 1990s, and another 21 programs since the year 2000. Altogether, we have graduated over twelve thousand students – over 2000 here in East Africa. And you will soon become the most recent!

Altogether in these 15 years some 1900 nurses have been trained here, almost half of them earning Bachelor of Nursing degrees. So have some 3000 teachers, including 250 with Masters of Education degrees. But the most important point is the multiplier effect that you can have as you pass along your skills and your standards. I think, for example, of programs which have trained almost 1000 head-teachers of secondary schools – just in the last year – a striking example of this powerful multiplier potential.

The quality of these programs has been endorsed not only by the World Health Organization, but by standard setters such as the UK College of Physicians and Surgeons and the US Joint Commission International. But the best endorsement, by far, is the success of our graduates, when they take licensing exams, or apply to other schools, or go to work for new employers.

In the end, however, our most important accomplishments are not measured by quantity – but by quality. It’s not so much that twelve thousand people were educated at AKU, but rather that ONE person was educated here and that this individual life-transforming story has happened, now, some twelve thousand times.

As we look to the future, I am increasingly impressed by one overriding insight. It reflects the vast flow of information that has come my way as I have watched the ups and downs of the developing world. More and more, I am convinced that the key to improving the quality of human life, both in places that are gifted with good governments and in places that are not so fortunate, is the quality of what I describe as Civil Society.

By Civil Society I mean that array of institutions which are neither public, nor profit driven, but which are motivated by voluntary commitments and dedicated to the public good. They include, for example, institutions dedicated to culture, to public information, to the environment and to religious faith. And they include, very importantly, the fields of health and education in which you are so centrally involved.

A healthy Civil Society is a meritocratic one, where ethics are honored, and excellence is valued. And the great question now confronting us here in Africa is how rapidly the institutions of a healthy Civil Society can be established and reinforced. In this process, the role of the University will be central as it advances and shares new knowledge.

From the start over thirty years ago, this University's founding blueprint envisioned a multi-campus, multi-continental university – comprehensive, broadly integrated, and research- driven. That vision, as you have heard, is now coming true. A major building block will be our new campus in Arusha – opening in just four years – as home to our new Faculty of Arts and Sciences, plus two Professional Graduate Schools. When you visit the Arusha campus in a few years you will also see a new teaching hospital, a training hotel, new community schools and housing facilities, a technology and research park, and an important new library.

Other AKU initiatives, across the region, as the President has mentioned, include our Graduate School of Media and Communications, opening this year in Nairobi. Other Graduate Schools will follow – specifically designed to advance a healthy Civil Society – in specific African contexts. They will include Schools of Leadership and Management; Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism; Architecture and Human Settlements; Government, Civil Society and Public Policy; Economic Growth and Development; Law; and Education.

At the same time, a new campus in Dar es Salaam will house the Institute for Educational Development. Our Faculty of Health Sciences will develop new undergraduate medical and nursing programs in Kenya, a new teaching hospital and medical outreach centres in Uganda, and post-graduate residency programs throughout the region. So, as the East African Community is built politically, so will AKU become increasingly regional. Meanwhile, we will continue to expand our inter-university partnerships across the world, lending further global credibility to our work – and to your degree.

That is a long list of new initiatives, but not an unrealistic one, any more than it was unrealistic to plan for an intercontinental University three decades ago. And let me emphasize that we see these various units as integrated parts of one University, working

closely together – across academic disciplines and also across nations and continents – in our increasingly “borderless” world.

These developments also mean that AKU will continue to be a valuable reference point for you, with its Africa and Asia-specific research, and its Continuing Education opportunities. Even as the AKU story develops, so can your relationship with the University.

Let me put you on notice! This is not a Farewell Ceremony! In fact, an event like this is often called a “Commencement”, since it marks the beginning of so many great new stories. We hope that you will share your stories with us, in the days ahead. And we hope, whenever possible, that you will continue to be a part of the University’s story.

And so it is that we come together, today, both as grateful inheritors, looking back on an accomplished past – and as eager explorers – looking ahead to an exciting future. It has been an honor for me to share this day with all of you.

Thank you.



## 2015 AKU Convocation, Kampala, Uganda

26 February 2015, Kampala, Uganda

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Rt. Honorable Speaker of Parliament  
Honorable Ministers,  
Trustees and President of the University,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Deans, Faculty and Staff of the University,  
Parents, Donors, Supporters and Distinguished Guests,  
And Graduands.

Humjambo and Karibuni. Hongera, Wanafunzi wote, I'm learning a little Swahili.

What a remarkable day this is – and what a pleasure it is to be here.

This is a very important day in your lives, of course, and I must say that this opportunity to share in an East African AKU convocation makes this a singular day in my life, as well.

As your Chancellor, it was I who first proposed to our Trustees that AKU should expand from Asia to Africa, to meet its chartered international mandate.

In the search for Africa's development, how can any of us forget that throughout human history there has never been greatness without expanded knowledge. And is that not the precise purpose of a great University?

I have always felt that there is a kind of magical feeling about a graduation ceremony. Think about it, all of you graduands. You have walked in here earlier today as students of the Aga Khan University. And you will walk out of here a little later as graduates of the Aga Khan University – and distinguished AKU Alumni.

The degree or diploma that you receive today is something you will take with you for the rest of your lives. The education you have achieved here is something that no one can ever take away.

We celebrate each of you graduands. And we also celebrate so many who have contributed to your success – your parents and your families, your friends and your colleagues, and those who have contributed to your University life – faculty, staff, donors and trustees, as well as community leaders.

Like each of you personally, the University also remembers its heritage on a day like this.

That heritage is rooted in the rich history of Islamic intellectual accomplishment, including the work of my own ancestors in ancient Cairo 1000 years ago, when they founded the Azhar University and the Dar-ul-ilm, the House of Knowledge. This story continued for several centuries, as Muslim centers of scholarship and culture involved and inspired people of many traditions and faith communities. A respect for diversity – a welcoming, cosmopolitan ethic – has been a hallmark of this heritage – an increasingly relevant legacy in the emerging “borderless” world that President Rasul has so aptly described.

It was this intellectual heritage that inspired my grandfather, as Imam of the Ismaili Muslim community, to make education a top priority. In fact, he started the first Aga Khan School in Africa over 110 years ago in Bagamoyo, Tanzania.

And that same legacy was in our minds when we began planning for this new Aga Khan University.

I well remember our early conversations – as early as 1975, to be exact! We asked a host of questions, and a host of wise people helped us address them. Harvard University developed our blue print. Our biggest question was whether a new university in Asia and Africa, in this day and age, could achieve sufficient levels of excellence – and be measured by world standards.

Well, we decided to try it. The Aga Khan University was founded in Karachi in 1983. It recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. And then, in the year 2000, we expanded into East Africa.

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But the most important point is the multiplier effect that you can have as you pass along your skills and your standards. I think, for example, of programs which have trained almost 1000 head-teachers of secondary schools – just in the last year – a striking example of this powerful multiplier potential.

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As we look to the future, I am increasingly impressed by one overriding insight. It reflects the vast flow of information that has come my way as I have watched the ups and downs of the developing world. More and more, I am convinced that the key to improving the quality of human life – both in places which are gifted with good governments and in places that are not so fortunate – is the quality of what I describe as Civil Society.

By Civil Society I mean the array of institutions which are neither public, nor profit driven, but which are motivated by voluntary commitments and dedicated to the public good. They include, for example, institutions dedicated to culture, to public information, to the environment and to religious faith. And they include, very importantly, the fields of health and education – in which you are so centrally involved.



A healthy Civil Society is a meritocratic one, where ethics are honored, and excellence is valued. And the great question now confronting us in Africa is how rapidly the institutions of a healthy Civil Society can be established and reinforced.

In this process, the role of the University will be central as it advances and shares new knowledge.

From the start over 30 years ago, this University's founding blueprint envisioned a multi-campus, multi-continental university – comprehensive, broadly integrated, and researched. That vision, as you have heard, is now coming true.

One milestone along that journey occurred earlier this week when I received the first Charter ever granted to an International University in Tanzania. That ceremony reflected, I believe, AKU's record of producing outstanding East African graduates. And it sets the stage for expanding the University in the years ahead through a series of new schools, new faculties, new institutes and other facilities throughout the East African region.

Here in Uganda, we will focus on achieving international levels of health care – especially for non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes. With the cooperation of the Government, we plan to establish a new Aga Khan University Hospital in Kampala – as the President has just mentioned – as well as several medical centres in other places across the country. Our goal, with this integrated health system, is that no Ugandan should have to leave the country to seek quality medical care.

But this cannot happen, of course, without a significantly expanded corps of qualified health professionals. And this is where you come in. Our commitment to this country in the years ahead is to educate an ever-growing number of medical specialists, nurses and other specialists – people like you – who can perform, consistently and impressively, at an international world level standard.

We have similar exciting goals throughout the East African region. As the President has said, we plan to open a new campus in Arusha in just four years. It will be home for our new Faculty of Arts and Sciences – plus two Professional Graduate Schools and a variety of other training and research facilities. We are also planning a new campus in Dar es Salaam for our Institute for Educational Development.

Other AKU initiatives that will serve the entire region include new undergraduate medical and nursing programs in Kenya as well as our Graduate School of Media and Communications, opening this year in Nairobi. Seven other Graduate Schools will follow – designed to advance healthy Civil Society – in specific African contexts. They will include Schools of Leadership and Management; Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism; Architecture and Human Settlements; Government, Civil Society and Public Policy; Economic Growth and Development; Law; and Education.



It is our belief that developing graduate schools is one of the quickest ways in which the university can impact the improvement in the quality of life of people in developing countries.

As the East African Community is built politically, so will AKU become increasingly regional. Meanwhile, we will continue to expand our inter-university partnerships – across the world – lending further global credibility to our work and to your proud credentials.

An example is in the field of neurosciences where the whole domain of stem cell technology needs to be brought massively and competently to Africa.

This is a long list of new initiatives – but not an unrealistic one – any more than it was unrealistic to plan for an intercontinental University three decades ago. And let me emphasize that we see these various units as integrated parts of one University, working closely together – across academic disciplines and also across nations and continents – in our increasingly “borderless” world.

These developments also mean that AKU will continue to be a valuable reference point for you, with its Africa and Asia-specific research, and its Continuing Education opportunities. Even as the AKU story develops, so you can enhance your own relationship with the University.

Let me put you on notice. This is not a Farewell Ceremony. In fact, an event like this is often called a “Commencement”, since it marks the beginning of so many great new stories. We hope that you too will share your stories with us, in the days ahead. And we hope, that whenever possible, you will continue to be a part of the University’s story.

And so it is that we come together, today, both as grateful inheritors, looking back on an accomplished past, and as eager explorers looking ahead to an exciting future.

It has been an honor for me to share this day with all of you.

Thank you.



## 2015 Aga Khan University Convocation, Nairobi, Kenya

02 March 2015, Nairobi, Kenya

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Trustees and President of the University,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Deans, Faculty and Staff of the University,  
Parents, Donors, Supporters and Distinguished Guests,  
and Graduands.

Hamjambo and Karibuni. Hongera, Wanafunzi wote. You see, I'm learning a little Swahili.

What a remarkable day this is, and what a joy it is to be here.

It is a singular pleasure for me because this is the first year that I have been able to attend an AKU convocation in East Africa. That means a lot to me because it was I, as your Chancellor, who first proposed that AKU should expand from Asia to Africa, to meet its chartered international mandate.

In the search for Africa's development, it seemed clear that expanded knowledge would be the key to progress – as it has been throughout human history. And expanding knowledge, of course, is precisely the mission of AKU.

I know, too, what a special moment it is for all of you. I have always felt there is a certain magical feeling about a graduation ceremony. Think about it, all of you graduands! You walked in here earlier today as students of the Aga Khan University. And you will walk out of here a little later as graduates of the Aga Khan University – and distinguished AKU Alumni. Bravo!

The degree or diploma that you receive today is something you will take with you for the rest of your lives. The education you have achieved here is something that no one can ever take away.

We celebrate each of you graduands. And we also celebrate so many who have contributed to your success: your parents and families, friends and colleagues, and those who have contributed to your University life – faculty, staff, donors, trustees, and community leaders.

Like each of you personally, the University also remembers its heritage today.

That heritage is rooted in the rich history of Islamic intellectual accomplishment – including the work of my own ancestors in Cairo 1000 years ago, when they founded Al Azhar University and the Dar-ul-ilm, the House of Knowledge. This story continued for several centuries, as Muslim centers of culture involved and inspired people of many traditions and faith communities. A respect for diversity – a welcoming, cosmopolitan ethic – has been a hallmark of this heritage – an increasingly relevant legacy in the emerging “borderless” world that President Rasul has so aptly described.

It was this intellectual heritage that inspired my grandfather, as Imam of the Ismaili Muslim community, to make education a top priority. In fact, he started the first Aga Khan School in Africa over 110 years ago in Bagamoyo, Tanzania.

That same legacy was in our minds when we began planning for this new Aga Khan University.

I well remember our early conversations – as early as 1975, to be exact. We asked a host of questions, and a host of wise people responded. Harvard University, yes, my alma mater, developed our blue print. Our biggest question was whether a totally new university in Asia and Africa could achieve sufficient levels of excellence – measured by world standards.

Well, we decided to try it. The Aga Khan University was founded in Karachi in 1983 and it recently celebrated its 30th anniversary. And then, in the year 2000, we expanded into East Africa.

Today, the Aga Khan University remains the only privately supported University with major academic programs on both the Asian and the African continents.

Over a relatively short time span, we have extended our work into eight different countries. We created two degree or diploma programs in the 1980s, two more in the 1990s, and another 21 programs since 2000. Altogether, we have graduated over 12,000 students – over 2000 here in East Africa. And you will soon become the most recent!

Altogether some 1900 nurses have been trained here, almost half of them earning Bachelor of Nursing degrees. So have some 3000 teachers, including 250 with Masters of Education degrees.

But the most important point is the multiplier effect our graduates can have as you pass along your skills and your standards. I think, for example, of AKU programs which have trained almost 1000 head-teachers of secondary schools – in just one year – a striking example of this powerful multiplier potential.

The quality of our programs has been endorsed by many standard setters, including the World Health Organization, the UK College of Physicians and Surgeons and the US Joint Commission International. But the best endorsement, by far, is the success of our graduates, when they take licensing exams, or apply to other schools, or go to work for new employers.

In the end, however, our most important accomplishments are not measured by quantity, but by quality. It's not so much that 12,000 people were educated at AKU, but rather that ONE person was educated here – and that this individual life-transforming story has happened – now some 12,000 times.

And what for the future? As I have watched the ups and downs of the developing world over the years, one central point has become increasingly clear. More and more, I believe, progress in improving the quality of human life in any setting is linked directly to the quality of Civil Society.

By Civil Society I mean the array of institutions which are neither public, nor profit driven, but which are motivated by voluntary service and committed to the public good. They include, for example, institutions dedicated to cultural enrichment, to independent public information, to protecting the environment and to religious faith. And they include, very importantly, the fields of health and education in which you will make your mark.

A healthy Civil Society is a meritocratic one, where ethics are honored, and excellence is valued. And the great question now confronting us in Africa is how rapidly the institutions of a healthy Civil Society can be established and reinforced.

In this process, AKU's role can be central.

From the start over 30 years ago, this University's blueprint envisioned a multi-campus, multi-continental university – comprehensive, broadly integrated, and research-led. That vision, as you have heard, is now coming true.

One milestone along that journey occurred last week when the Tanzania Government presented to me the certificate recognizing the founding charter of the Aga Khan University. It reflected, I believe, AKU's record of producing outstanding East African graduates.

As we expand our work in Kenya, one of our highest priorities is to achieve international standards of healthcare – especially for non-communicable diseases, such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes. Another special focus will be neuroscience, where the promises of stem cell technology must be brought massively and competently to Africa.

Our overall plan is for a nationally integrated health system, built on the strong foundations already in place at the Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi. And our overall goal can be simply stated: we believe that no Kenyan should have to leave the country to seek quality medical care.

All this cannot happen, of course, without an expanded corps of qualified health professionals. And this is where you come in. Our commitment in the years ahead is to educate an ever-growing number of medical graduates – at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels – who can perform, consistently and impressively, at world standards of excellence.

Let me mention some of the other AKU initiatives here in Kenya:

- One of the newest is our Institute for Human Development, launched in Nairobi earlier this year, with a focus on children between one and three years of age. It is no secret to you that that is the age where the human brain grows most quickly.
- At the same time, our new Graduate School of Media and Communications here in Nairobi will offer professional development courses, as well as a master's degree program, in the fields of journalism and media management and NGO communication. Specialized reporting skills will be emphasized – in fields such as the Environment, Business and Finance, and the analysis of Social Impacts. The School will serve a broad range of students, from both the public and the private sectors, from traditional media backgrounds and the worlds of advanced information technology.
- This new Media and Communications School will share a new building here in Nairobi with two other new Graduate Professional Schools, one in Leadership and Management, and the other in Hospitality, Leisure and Tourism.

Over 15 years, the total investment in Kenya for these programs will exceed US\$ 350 million.

We have similar exciting goals throughout East Africa. As the President noted, we will open a new campus in Arusha in 2019 – home for our new Faculty of Arts and Sciences. And we also plan a new campus in Dar es Salaam for our Institute for Educational Development.

In addition to the three new Professional Graduate Schools I just mentioned, we are also planning new Graduate Schools of Government, Civil Society and Public Policy; Economic Growth and Development; Law; and Education.

Each of these Graduate programs is designed to advance a healthy Civil Society – in specific African contexts – and thus quickly accelerate improvement in the quality of human life.

As the East African Community builds politically, so will AKU become increasingly regional. Meanwhile, we will continue to expand our inter-university partnerships – across the world – lending further global credibility to our work, and to your credentials.

This is a long list of initiatives, but not an unrealistic one, any more than it was unrealistic to plan for an intercontinental University three decades ago. Let me emphasize that we see these various units as integrated parts of one University, working closely together – across academic disciplines, across nations and across continents – in our increasingly “borderless” world.

These developments also mean that AKU will continue to be a valuable reference point for you, as Alumni, with its Africa and Asia-specific research, and its Continuing Education opportunities. Even as the AKU story develops, so you can develop your relationship with AKU.

Let me put you on notice. This is not a Farewell Ceremony. In fact, an event like this is often called a “Commencement”, since it marks the beginning of so many great new stories. We hope that you too will share your stories with us, in the days ahead. And we hope that you will continue to be a part of the University’s story.

And so it is that we come together, today, both as grateful inheritors, looking back on an accomplished past – and as eager explorers, looking ahead to an exciting future.

It has been an honor for me to share this day with all of you.

Thank you.





## Foundation stone laying ceremony for the Humayun's Tomb Site Museum

07 April 2015, Delhi, India

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Honorable Minister of Tourism and Culture Dr. Mahesh Sharma  
Secretary Mr. Ravindra Singh  
Secretary Dr. Lalit Panwar

You have been most generous with your comments this afternoon and I thank you warmly for the encouragement you have given to the people of the Trust for Culture and myself. And I would like to begin these comments by repeating what I said when the foundation-stone was laid sometime ago of the restoration of the Humayun's Tomb.

We are a partnership. We are not working alone with the Trust for Culture. We are working in a magnificent partnership between public authority and private initiative.

And if we did not have that support from the government, the Archeological Society and others we could never achieve what we have been able to achieve up to now.



His Excellency the Minister referred to the Taj Mahal. We have learnt in the Trust for Culture to be very humble in front of exceptional historic buildings. I am not sure we would dare touch the Taj Mahal. But if that is what is requested and we can contribute in some way, we will.

Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

I would like to extend to you all my warmest welcome as we share together in this foundation stone ceremony.

Even as I welcome you, I also want to thank you – not only for your presence, but also for the support you have given in so many ways, as partners in this path-breaking restoration project.

Some of you were here – just a year and a half ago – when we inaugurated this Tomb complex. I said that day that “partnership was the watchword” in the work of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture – and for this project in particular. So I welcome you – and I salute you – in that Spirit of Partnership.

This Museum, as you may know, has been designed as a Gateway – a Connecting Point - located at the juncture of three historically connected sites: Humayun's Tomb and its Gardens, Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti, and the Sundar Nursery.

In connecting these sites, the Museum will also serve as a bridge between the present and the past – linking the modern city of Delhi to its remarkable heritage – and thus providing a Gateway to a truly extraordinary period of human history.

That remarkable chapter in the human story extended over 170 years – the era of the Mughal empire. It was a time of enormous accomplishment – and enormous significance. Geographically it covered much of what is now India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan. In terms of governance, it included hundreds of millions of people, covering an enormous spectrum of religious faiths, cultural practices, and ethnic identities.

It was led by men whose talents in statehood and in military affairs were remarkable – and their impact was felt in virtually every dimension of human existence, both within the empire and outside. Many of the Mughal rulers, perhaps most of them, were also exceptional leaders in the acumen and insight which they brought to their leadership roles. They were statesmen who would have excelled in any time.

Consider, for example, Humayun himself, who governed an area of one million square kilometers – and who was remembered as much for his peaceful and forgiving temperament as for his military conquests. His rhetoric was said to be non-provocative, his

style that of a diplomat. And it was these qualities that were inherited by his son, the Emperor Akbar, who further broadened the Empire – and who strengthened it through a policy of universal tolerance – one that welcomed the vast diversity of his many subjects.

So to use a well-worn but well-considered phrase, it “staggeres the imagination” to think of what was created here during the Mughal period, on a scale and with a splendor that had not existed before. And its accomplishments have continued to inspire subsequent generations.

Through the centuries, millions of people have made their way here. They have come to see these architectural achievements – the oldest and largest Indo-Islamic architectural complex. They have come to admire the decorative genius that we have around us – and to think about its continuing influence in contemporary life.. They have come to enjoy the green spaces that are such an essential part of this complex – reflecting the profound harmony that can ideally unite our natural and our built environments.

And now, as a new Museum is born on this site, visitors will be able to learn in greater depth why these legacies were built, how they served the court and society more generally, and what they have meant since.

They will also be able to share in the lessons that have been learned as these sites have been restored – in ways that have enhanced the social and economic life of the surrounding communities. New jobs have been created, new skills have been mastered, new commercial opportunities have been opened, and new environmental protections have been fostered.

I would mention here, as one example, the lessons we have learned about urban green spaces – which too often have been seen as unproductive areas, at best, and even as financial liabilities. But the experience of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture has been very, very different. In places as varied as Cairo and Kabul, and now here in Delhi, green spaces have generated enough income not only to cover their maintenance costs, but also to drive a broad range of further developments – while immensely enriching the quality of urban life.

In these and many other ways, the valuable lessons that have been learned here will make this space a model for other cultural sites around the world.

And so it is that we express our gratitude to The Ministry of Tourism, and to all the other partners who have joined with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in this important work. We are deeply thankful for the opportunity we have been given by the Government of India to participate in the revival of 170 years of unique human history here in India.

And again, we thank you for celebrating with us today the legacy of a distinguished past – and its potential to enrich our future. Thank you.



## Inauguration of Amir Aqsunqur Mosque, Cairo

02 May 2015, Cairo, Egypt

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency the Minister of Antiquities,  
Your Excellency, the Governor of Cairo,  
Your Excellencies, Honourable Ministers,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is an immense pleasure to join all of you once again, in this special celebration. The inauguration of the Aq Sunqur Mosque is an extraordinary moment in its own right. And it also marks the culmination of a larger revitalisation that has taken place over many years in historic Cairo.

As Muslims, we are invited to protect and enhance the world in which we live during our lifetimes. We are trustees of God's creation, hence the word Trust in the name of the agency responsible for this restoration.

I remember well when the seeds for our cultural engagement in Cairo were first planted at a seminar more than thirty years ago.

You may know about the enormous dumping ground of debris that had developed over the centuries, and surrounded one of Cairo's poorest neighbourhoods. And you will also know of our effort to create a state-of-the-art green space, the Azhar Park - and how that effort soon extended into a great archaeological adventure, uncovering and restoring some of Cairo's oldest buildings.

The 12th century Ayyubid wall, for example, was almost completely covered in debris. We could not even tell how long it was! Today, thanks to the work on site, important remains of the Fatimid and Mamluke walls have been discovered and preserved. The minarets of the Khayrbek and Umm al Sultan Shabaan, like other landmark structures, were badly compromised. Six centuries of wear and tear had taken a toll - one that was difficult to reverse, especially given the vast array of heritage sites in Egypt that were competing for scarce resources.

Nonetheless, with the approach of a new century, the work of restoration began here in the Darb al Ahmar neighborhood. And today, thanks to so many of you, we celebrate another important milestone in that stirring story.

That story has featured a great many partnerships - with the Egyptian government, the Governorate of Cairo, the Supreme Council of Antiquities, the World Monuments Fund, the Social Fund for Development, the Swiss Egyptian Development Fund, the Ford Foundation, and the French Institute of Archaeology and the people of Darb al Ahmar. It has truly been a "team" effort - joining a host of local, national and international players.

The restoration of the Aq Sunqur Mosque was itself executed by a team of 60 to 80 craftsmen and conservators. They had first to remove the temporary supports installed after the 1992 earthquake - and then to implant seismic retrofit measures to protect against future earthquakes. They worked to conserve extensive roofing and facades on the one hand, and delicate marble panels and Iznik ceramic tiles on the other. And if you look at the global map you will see that the Ummah often lives in seismic areas.

But it is not enough only to conserve an architectural treasure. Restoration projects can also serve as springboards - as trampolines - for broad social and economic development and poverty reduction. In that process, they can help create both the human constituency needed to sustain a project - and the flow of funding needed to maintain it.

The Aga Khan Trust for Culture strives to approach such opportunities through a multi-tier, multi-dimensional strategy, drawing on experts not only from fields such as archaeology, conservation, restoration, and engineering, but also from the worlds of finance, tourism, education, sanitation and public health - among others. The cultural components of such projects are numerous, varied, and much less finite than most other development

initiatives. The Trust therefore remains engaged with its projects, as will be the case here in Egypt, for long periods.

The result of pooling a wide array of talents is that we can also talk about a wide array of accomplishments. We can begin, of course, by saying that seven major monuments were restored here in Darb-al-Ahmar, and that three public open spaces were created. We can take pride in the 17 million visitors that have already come to the Azhar Park. We can talk about how one thousand people were employed directly in this work, while another sixteen hundred were assisted in finding other long-term jobs. We can talk of 175 craftsmen who were trained in restoration skills, while another two thousand people finished other forms of technical and vocational training.

The overall impact on the quality of life in this community has been palpable. Disposable family income in Darb al-Ahmar, for example, increased by 27% between 2003 and 2009 - one third faster than in the whole of Old Cairo. Literacy rates climbed by one-fourth. And the impact will continue to ripple out beyond this community. For example, hundreds of young Egyptians have been trained in restoration by some of the world's best experts; and they have gone on to create autonomous teams which can take on restoration projects anywhere in Egypt.

Let me also underscore another central motivation for this work. Through revitalisation of the sort we celebrate today, we hope to preserve an extraordinary panorama of Islamic history, from the Fatimid Caliphs to the present. At a time when fractures in the unity of the Ummah are so highly visible, I see such projects as particularly hopeful. They are important symbols for the identity of all Muslims, sources of pride for the entire Ummah.

And finally I would like you to know that a young Muslim walking here in the 22nd century will be able to feel the pull of his or her own history, even in a radically transformed world.

And let us be reminded, too, that in undertaking this work, we are not only attending to our own Islamic heritage, but also preserving an essential part of the patrimony of all humankind.

I can say to you today that the potential power of Islamic cultures is such that the Ummah is capable of achieving global recognition for its amazing heritage of unique spaces and buildings.

Thank you.





## Historic agreement signed between Province of Ontario and the Ismaili Imamat

25 May 2015, Toronto, Canada

I want to tell you how happy and grateful my community and I are for this agreement that we have just signed.

Our history, our interpretation of our faith is anchored in the intellect and we rejoice in investing in the human intellect. It's part of the ethics of what we believe in and it's part of what we believe distinguishes us obviously from the environment in which we live. So the agreement that we have is giving us new opportunities to widen our exposure to education in the industrialized world but to widen that education within a context where our values are the same. That is very important because it's clear that with the global community such as the Ismaili community we need to invest in global values, in values which can be applied to any society at any time in any part of the world. And this is what we are finding in Canada, that we will have a partnership with you and in investing in that partnership we are investing in a profession which I have to say has difficulty in the developing world.

There are three professions in the developing world which are undervalued. First is nursing, the second is education and the third is journalism. And yet all those professions

are critical for the development of a quality civil society in the third world and the partnership that you have allowed us to create is going to come in and assist us to reposition one of the greatest professions that we need in the third world. So I would ask you to think of this not only in terms of what we will be able to achieve in terms of collaboration but in a much wider context of the teaching profession and its position in the developing world.

But then we were discussing something else. We were discussing dialogue. We were discussing policy. We were discussing what ideas we need to move forwards in various parts of the developing world and sharing these ideas and talking about them openly and freely but within the context of common values, shared values is an absolutely wonderful opportunity and I thank you very much for making that possible.

Thank you.





## Inauguration of the Aga Khan Park, Toronto

25 May 2015, Toronto, Canada

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

The Honourable Kathleen Wynne  
Madame Clarkson  
Mrs. Weston  
Excellencies  
Honourable Ministers  
Mayor Tory  
Distinguished Guests

Madame Premier may I thank you for your most warm and thoughtful words on this occasion. The Ismaili community are relatively recent arrivals in Canada and they've been here really as a result of the sorts of situations that you've mentioned including Karachi where people of different groups, different faiths, different ethnic backgrounds, have lived in societies governed by fear, pain, poverty, insecurity... an inability to predict anything into the future for themselves, or for future generations.

And what happened in Uganda with Idi Amin, you all know. I don't need to remind you of that. And Canada and the province of Ontario opened their arms. And you said, please come to Canada. There's a joke, which I may repeat to you, of a Canadian who goes into an Ismaili home. He sees a big picture of Idi Amin on the wall. What's that? Why is he there? And the answer from the Ismaili family is that every day we thank him for throwing us into Canada.

Many of you will remember the day when we formally opened two stunning buildings on this site, the Aga Khan Museum and the Ismaili Centre. That was just eight months ago. We promised that we would be back in the spring to dedicate the park that joins those two buildings. Spring would be a time, we thought, when the park's natural beauty could be seen to the fullest advantage. And I have to admit that I spent much of this morning wondering whether it was going to rain or not!

Well, spring is here, and here we are! And what a privilege it is to share this occasion with all of you.

I spoke last September of the spirit of friendship which infused this project from its very beginnings. And surely that is the spirit that fills our hearts today.

The building process here on Wynford Drive began five years ago – and that is not just a rough estimate. We actually launched the process on May the 28th, 2010 – five years ago almost to the day!

But the complex project that now culminates actually began much earlier – back in 1996 – when we first started planning for a new Ismaili Centre in Toronto. At that time the community was looking at Toronto, it was looking at Vancouver. I was in the uncomfortable position of having to keep an equitable balance between the East and the West. And as a result the Ismaili community is presided over every term by either a member of the Jamat from the East or from the West. And I have to warn you Madame Premier that the president of my community today is from – guess where? Not here!

We began by locating this site. But then, our plans expanded as an adjacent site also became available. Happily, with the help of many friends, we were able to obtain the added land and the permission for our plans to be accepted.

And here I would like just to thank Madame Bata. It was Madame Bata who made it possible for us to have the additional land we needed. We were able to develop two magnificent portions of the land with the park in between and that is thanks to you. Thank you.

I think of so many who helped us to advance this project, including young Ismailis who told our interviewers of their hopes that the Centre could be a place of lively social exchange –

but not only among Ismailis. It was just as – if not more important – that they were able to talk to other Toronto neighbours.

I think, too, of so many community members who helped us to advance our shared dreams. I think of the inspired artists who gave shape to those dreams – and those who then turned those visions into physical reality. And I think of so many others who provided vital assistance including officials at all levels of government. And again, I want to express my community's and my gratitude to everyone in government who has made this lovely park come into existence.

We learned a great deal from this experience. We learned that patience is rewarded. We learned that the unexpected can often become a blessing. We learned, once again, that civil society is cemented when people of many backgrounds come together in places of peace and joy, of inspiration and contemplation, of interaction and of common purpose.

I hope this park will contribute to strengthening Toronto's already vibrant pluralism, showcasing to the world Canada's rich example of pluralism in action.

Cette conjonction d'efforts de si nombreux Canadiens en faveur de cette initiative, je la situe dans le contexte de ce partenariat vivant, sur tant de fronts, qui nous lie au gouvernement et au peuple canadien, qu'il s'agisse de réalisations locales un peu partout au Canada, qu'il s'agisse de projets d'envergure nationale conduits en commun, tel que le Centre Mondial du Pluralisme à Ottawa, ou encore de notre coopération en faveur du développement de l'éducation, de la santé et de la culture dans le monde, toutes choses qui nous permettent de poser des fondations nouvelles en faveur du progrès humain.

Permettez-moi d'exprimer de nouveau ma gratitude à la Première Ministre de l'Ontario, Madame Kathleen Wynne, pour sa présence aujourd'hui.

En début d'après-midi, la Première Ministre et moi-même avons signé l'Accord de Coopération qui, tout à la fois, institutionnalise les relations entre l'Ontario et l'Imamat Ismaïli et lance de nouvelles initiatives de collaboration.

Un exemple: nous voulons faire progresser la connaissance des civilisations de l'Islam par l'éducation, mission qui est en parfaite harmonie avec celle du Musée Aga Khan.

Autre exemple: nous souhaitons, au sein du nouveau Centre Ismaïli, susciter des occasions de dialogue sur la société civile en ayant notamment à l'esprit la qualité de vie des nombreuses communautés en Ontario.

Ainsi, cette journée est grande car elle marque l'aboutissement d'un magnifique projet, mais aussi parce qu'elle est l'occasion de nouveaux départs.

I have already mentioned one word that expresses the significance of this day, and that is the word: “Completion.”

But allow me to suggest one other word that also leaps to mind today. And that is the word: “Connection.”

In the first place, of course, we celebrate a striking new “connection” between the two buildings we dedicated last year. The Aga Khan Park now connects those buildings in a special way – not just as a passage way, or empty space between two structures, but as a work of art in its own right.

The Park grows out of the inspiration of its Lebanese architect, Vladimir Djurovic – and I think you will agree that it possesses its own strong artistic identity. That identity completes and connects these two buildings.

Too often in recent years, urban architecture – under pressure from urbanising rural populations, greater human longevity and shrinking budgets – has neglected the importance of open spaces in a healthy city landscape. We keep crowding more buildings into dense concentrations while short-changing the enormous impact that well designed open spaces – green spaces – can have on the quality of urban life.

To restore and create beautiful green spaces has become a prime goal of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture – with some ten notable achievements in places ranging from Cairo to Zanzibar, from Delhi to Kabul, from Dushanbe in Tajikistan to Bamako in Mali. And more projects are coming, including two contemporary Islamic Gardens to be built at the University of Alberta and in Burnaby.

The Aga Khan Park in Toronto will be an added prime example of the inspired, intelligent development of significant open spaces.

The Park and its Gardens can serve as a symbol of “connection” in other ways as well. Among them are rich connections across time linking us to the past.

The Garden has for many centuries served as a central element in Muslim culture. The Holy Qur’an, itself, portrays the Garden as a central symbol of a spiritual ideal – a place where human creativity and Divine majesty are fused, where the ingenuity of humanity and the beauty of nature are productively connected. Gardens are a place where the ephemeral meets the eternal, and where the eternal meets the hand of man.

The tradition of Islamic Gardens places an emphasis on human stewardship, our responsibility to nature and to protect the natural world. We see that principle expressed in the disciplined use of geometric form – framing the power and mystery of nature.

And, of course, the Garden of ancient tradition, like the Garden here today, is a place where – whatever difficult moments may come our way – we can always find, in the flow of refreshing water, a reminder of Divine blessing.

As we walk through this place we can feel a deep sense of connection with those who walked through similar gardens centuries ago. And, by renewing our connection with the past, we can also connect more effectively with one another – and, indeed, with those who will walk these paths in the future.

Finally, let me mention one other point of profound connection that we should ponder, and that is the connection across cultures. Think for example, of those who designed this complex. On one side, looking at the Museum, we see the work of a Japanese master. On the other side, looking at the Centre, we see the work of an Indian architectural giant. And in between we recognize the masterpiece of a young landscape artist of Lebanese descent.

All of this, of course, is done in the service of rich Islamic traditions – expressed in a 21st century idiom. And it is all set, in a Canadian context, where the ideals of cultural pluralism are so deeply rooted.

The age-old question is a profound one. How can human-kind honour what is distinctive about our separate identities and, at the same time, see diversity itself as a source of inspiration and blessing? Rather than fearing difference, how can we learn to embrace difference so that we can live together more peacefully and productively?

This city and this country have been among the world leaders in providing positive answers to that ancient question.

I understand that a local public school, the Thorncliffe Park School, just a few kilometres from this site, has students who trace their origins to almost 50 different countries. That is just one school, but it speaks to the rich diversity of local community life.

Sadly, there are too many moments when differing identities lead to worlds of fierce belligerence. At such moments, it becomes even more important that we reaffirm the human capacity to connect across lines of division.

One reason I take such joy from our experience here today is that this project sends a profoundly encouraging message about the human capacity to and for cooperative connection.

So thank you again for joining with us at this important moment – a time of satisfying completion, and of profound connection – across cultures, across generations and across the ages, not only with those who have gone before us but also with those who will come after. Thank you.



## 2015 Annual Pluralism Lecture

### LOCATION

Ottawa, Canada (28 May 2015)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin  
Madame Adrienne Clarkson  
Your Excellencies Ministers  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen  
Chers amis,

Permettez-moi de vous souhaiter la bienvenue à la quatrième Conférence annuelle sur le pluralisme que nous avons le plaisir d'organiser pour la première fois au Musée Aga Khan de Toronto. Ces conférences offrent une plateforme unique pour le dialogue international et soulignent le leadership de ceux et celles qui font une différence concrète en faveur du pluralisme et de la citoyenneté inclusive. Nous avons l'immense honneur d'accueillir aujourd'hui, la juge en chef du Canada, qui partagera ses réflexions sur les défis et les perspectives du pluralisme au 21<sup>e</sup> siècle.

I am delighted to welcome the Right Honourable Beverley McLachlin to deliver the Global Centre's fourth Annual Pluralism Lecture and to welcome you all to the Aga Khan Museum. The Chief Justice is a great champion of pluralism, with a wide range of judgements that demonstrate a profound respect for inclusion and accommodation. As you may know, she also made history in the year 2000, when she was the first woman to be appointed Chief Justice in Canada – you understand the hint about gender issues

– and in 2013, when she became the longest-serving Chief Justice of the Canadian Supreme Court.

When the Chief Justice first came to the Supreme Court in 1989, The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms had recently come into force. The justices were hearing numerous controversial human rights cases and often rendering divided decisions. But the Chief Justice's appointment ushered in an era of consensusbuilding among her colleagues. Through her thoughtful, articulate leadership, she has reinforced respect for the Supreme Court, while also fostering greater public understanding about the justice system. By working to uphold the rights of all Canadian citizens, the Chief Justice has contributed in a major way to Canada's robust pluralism.

Certainly, Canadians will insist that there is still work to be done. But on the world stage, there is a great need for experiences of pluralism that work and Canada is providing a powerful example. In her LaFontaineBaldwin lecture in Toronto in 2003, the Chief Justice said and I quote, "One problem, more than any other, dominates human history – the problem of how we deal with those who are different than us." Those words have sharp, continuing relevance as we move further into the 21st century.

Whether the challenge involves new waves of migrants moving into European societies, or political participation for the indigenous peoples of Latin America, or working towards democratic change in the Middle East and North Africa, there is a profound need to focus on the values and hopes that unite all human beings. As the Chief Justice has stated and I quote again, "The creation of a harmonious society where every individual feels not only accepted but truly welcome is the responsibility of all citizens."

This responsibility is why the Global Centre for Pluralism exists to help us learn from one another about the challenges of diversity. And on evenings like this, we are fortunate to realize the Centre's mission to convene change leaders and inspire dialogue about the benefits of inclusion and respect. Ladies and Gentlemen, together with you, I eagerly look forward to hearing from the Centre's honoured lecturer for 2015, the Right Honourable Beverley McLachlin.





## Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan at the International New York Times Athens Democracy Forum

15 September 2015, Athens, Greece

**“One ultimate requirement for any effective democracy is the capacity to compromise. Social order rests in the end either on oppression or accommodation. But we can never find that balancing point – where the interests of all parties are recognised – unless competing leaders and their diverse followers alike, are committed to finding common ground. That common ground, in my view, is the global aspiration for a better quality of life – from the reduction of poverty to quality longevity – built upon opportunities that will provide genuine hope for the future.”**

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Former Prime Ministers  
Ms Alkistis Protopsalti, Minister of Tourism

Your Worship, Giorgos Kaminis, Mayor of Athens  
The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Former Governor General of Canada  
Ms Annika Savill, Executive Head of the UN Democracy Fund  
Mr Stephen Dunbar-Johnson, President, International, The New York Times Company  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

I am grateful indeed for this opportunity to discuss with you *the challenges facing democracy in our world* – and to do so in such an appropriate setting. My warmest thanks also go to the people of Athens for their gracious welcome, and to my friends at the New York Times.

I have long admired – since my undergraduate days at Harvard – what the Times has meant to the pursuit of truth and justice in our world. And I have appreciated our opportunities to work together through our Diplomatic Academy in Paris for example, and also through the good counsel the Times provides for our media company in East Africa.

The topic of democracy and its challenges is one that I have followed closely for a long time, most intently in the developing world of South and West Asia, the Middle East and Africa, where so many members of the Ismaili community live and where so much of our development work takes place.

I assumed my role as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims in 1957. It was a time when old colonial empires were crumbling and democratic hopes were rising. But too often, high expectations were not fulfilled. At the same time there was a crisis only a few years later, following the collapse of communist hegemonies.

It was expected that newly independent countries would be able to make huge economic and diplomatic choices between capitalism, socialism, alignment and non-alignment, even while they were fashioning new frameworks of governance. But it was a tough assignment. Often, when old autocratic orders yielded, new democratic orders were not ready to thrive or were walled in by political and ideological dogmas.

Today, all across the world, we continue to hear increasingly about “a crisis of confidence” in governments. While the pace of history accelerates, democratic governments often deadlock.

Scholars now count a growing percentage of countries as failed democracies. The Fund for Peace reports that in more than two-thirds of the countries regarded as the world’s most fragile, conditions have actually worsened this year. The enormous refugee crisis that now confronts us is one manifestation of that challenge.

I believe that the progress of democracy in our world is fundamentally linked to improving the quality of human life. The promise of democracy is that the people themselves best know how to achieve such progress. But if that promise is disappointed, then democracy is endangered. A UNDP survey of South American publics some years ago demonstrated that most people preferred an effective authoritarian government to an ineffective democratic one. Quality of life was the prime concern.

But what can we say then, about why democratic systems often fall short in their efforts to improve the quality of their constituents' lives? Let me suggest four elements that could help strengthen democracy's effectiveness in meeting this central challenge.

They are: improved constitutional understanding, independent and pluralistic media, the potential of civil society, and a genuine democratic ethic.

My first suggestion is that the current challenges to governance should be seen less as problems of democracy than as problems of constitutionality. There are more countries today than I can ever recollect before that are grappling with outdated constitutions – frameworks that seem unable to reconcile opposing factions, advance economic priorities, encourage civil society, or protect human rights.

But constitutional revision, especially in developing countries, is not easy. One problem is a poor understanding of comparative government systems. That subject is not part of most educational curricula, and in the countries I know best, the media rarely explain the logic or the options of constitutional change.

In some countries there actually is no clear constitutional means for constitutional change. Even when a referendum is held to validate such change, most people are neither prepared nor willing to express a considered judgment. The result is that governments in power often have an open field.

In my view then, a first step to better democratic governance is a better public understanding of constitutional principles.

It is easy for example, to say that we want government “of, by and for the people” – that governments should be servants of the people, and ultimately responsible to them. But that does not mean that most governmental decisions must be made by an enormous range of far-flung participants: by vast plebiscites, or popular referenda, or public opinion polling, or the number of hits on an internet blog. Such misapplied versions of democracy can produce irrational leadership choices and poorly informed policies. Sometimes, efforts to impose simplistic popular democracy can create voids of governance, which can be exploited to dangerous ends – and I have seen this in various countries in the developing world.

But then, who should make various governmental decisions? My response would emphasise the idea of balanced authority, including the concept of healthy federalism. For increasingly diverse societies, a constitution that divides and balances power is essential.

In discussing constitutional challenges, it is impossible to ignore the recent revival or creation of new theocratic political parties in the Islamic world. The question is how theocratic principles of governance can operate constitutionally in increasingly secular political environments. It seems essential to me that such principles should be regularly tested by the electoral process, if only so that the Muslim world can have a better understanding of the secularisation processes, which are inherent in western democracy. And democratic principles in turn, must respect the broad diversity of human faiths and cultures.

Finding the right constitutional balance is no easy matter, and we make a great mistake if we think that one size can somehow fit all. Effective constitutions must be adapted to a variety of cultural and demographic realities. But it can be done. One recent example is that of Tunisia, where after intense and arduous negotiation, a promising new constitution won broad public support. My central point, in sum, is that we cannot build better democratic performance over time without a better understanding of constitutional values.

A second key variable for enhancing democratic effectiveness is the critical role of competent and independent media voices. We often forget that ancient Greek democracy required a highly compact community living within the sound of a “crier’s voice,” as Aristotle said. Under such conditions, face-to-face dialogue could foster a sense of trust and political accommodation.

But these ideal conditions now obtain only rarely. Populations are much larger, more widely scattered, and more diverse. They can most easily be mobilised around vivid but superficial symbols and negative propositions. Often what counts most in our extended societies is not what one is for, but whom one is against.

In such circumstances, polarisation and impasse are constant risks.

Nor can we rely on advances in communication technologies to overcome the obstacles of distance and diversity. In fact, new media technologies have often made matters worse (and I don’t mean the New York Times!) From the development of written language to the invention of printing, to the development of electronic and digital media – quantitative advances in communication technology have not necessarily produced qualitative progress in mutual understanding.

To be sure, each improvement in communications technology has triggered new waves of political optimism. But sadly, if information can be shared more easily as technology advances, so can misinformation and disinformation. If truth can spread more quickly and more widely, then so can error and falsehood.

Throughout history, the same tools – the printing press, the telegraph, the microphone, the television camera, the cell phone, the internet – that promised to bring us together, have also been used to drive us apart.

The age-old promise of democracy is that social cohesion and public progress could be achieved by consensus rather than by coercion. But genuine democratic consent depends on dependable public information.

The danger in an age of mass media is that information also can be misused to manipulate the public. All around the world, authoritarian rulers increasingly use media to “coerce” the consent of the governed. Our hosts today, the International New York Times, recently published a remarkable description of this phenomenon under the headline, “The Velvet Glove.”

The power of a leader’s reasoning or the truth of his arguments, the report suggests, are often less important than his command of media influence. What results can be the illusion of democracy, but not its substance.

No, our technologies alone will not save us. But neither need they ruin us. It is not the power of our tools, but how we use them that will determine our future.

Among other things, this means prioritising the role of independent media, and indeed, of a multiplicity of independent voices. Demographic pluralism must be reflected in healthy media pluralism.

I mentioned earlier my own involvement in the African media scene – as founder of the Nation Media Group. It was launched at the time of Kenyan independence, and for nearly six decades media independence has been its watchword – a *sine qua non* for democratic health.

This leads me to my third observation. Government, while critical, can only take us so far. At a time of democratic disappointment, we must re-emphasise the immense potential of those non-governmental institutions that we call “civil society.”

Too often, our thinking is trapped in a false dichotomy. We talk about the public sector and the private sector, but we often undervalue a third sector – that of civil society.

Civil society is powered by private energies, committed to the public good. It draws on the ancient, classical link between democracy and the publicly-committed citizen.

It includes institutions of education, health, science and research, embracing professional, commercial, labour, ethnic and arts organisations, and others devoted to religion, communication, and the environment.

It seeks consensus through genuine consent. It can experiment, adapt and accommodate diversity. It can in the fullest sense be “of, by and for the people.” It can in the fullest sense be a remarkable support – but only on condition that it is sustained, accepted and encouraged by government.

Finally, let me mention a fourth concern that underlies this entire discussion – the central importance of fostering a “democratic ethic.”

At the heart of a democratic ethic is a commitment to genuine dialogue to achieve a better quality of life, even across new barriers of distance and diversity. This means a readiness to give and take, to listen, to bridge the empathy gaps as well as the ignorance gaps that have so often impeded human progress. It implies a pluralistic readiness to welcome diversity and to see our differences not as difficult burdens but as potential blessings.

One ultimate requirement for any effective democracy is the capacity to compromise. Social order rests in the end either on oppression or accommodation. But we can never find that balancing point – where the interests of all parties are recognised – unless competing leaders and their diverse followers alike, are committed to finding common ground.

That common ground, in my view, is the global aspiration for a better quality of life – from the reduction of poverty to quality longevity – built upon opportunities that will provide genuine hope for the future.

Democracy can only survive if it demonstrates – across the years and across the planet – that it is the best way to achieve that goal.

Thank you.





## 50th anniversary of ICOMOS, London

22 October 2015, London, UK

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Royal Highness, the Duke of Gloucester  
Mr David Thackray, President, ICOMOS-UK  
Mr Gregory Hodkinson, Chairman, Arup  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

What a pleasure it is for me to be marking with you the 50th anniversary of ICOMOS – happy birthday!

Yours is an organisation for which I have long had enormous respect. And I have noted with interest the impressive, recent development of your Cultural Heritage Manifesto.

The creation of ICOMOS 50 years ago came during my first decade as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community, and from the start many of my interests have closely resembled yours.



All Muslims are called upon to improve the physical condition of our world, and honouring our cultural heritage is vital to that calling. Our response in simple terms is that not a day goes by where my institution – the Ismaili Imamate – is not building or rebuilding something somewhere: a historic site perhaps, but also a hospital, a university, an industry.

Our central objective is to improve the quality of life for people in the developing world, and it is from this perspective that I will speak to you today.

Our work extends to 35 countries in fields such as education and medical care, job creation and energy production, media and tourism, the fine arts and micro-finance. We believe that by improving the largest numbers of variables in the shortest possible time, we can obtain stable, long-term improvement in the quality of human life.

Cultural heritage, of course, plays a central role in this endeavour. This focus was sharply intensified for me some 40 years ago when I came to realise that the proud architectural heritage of the Islamic world was progressively vanishing. The physical legacy of great Muslim empires was collapsing, and the response in the Islamic world seemed to be oblivion. What was in fashion, what was prized and taught throughout the Islamic architectural world, increasingly reflected Western preoccupations. Quality was viewed as occidentalisation. We searched throughout the Muslim world for any serious mention of Islamic architectural history and found none. There were no processes for revival, just the occasional misplaced dome or minaret.

Our time-honoured cultural heritage had been buried – obscured not only by the shifting sands of time, but also by an all-consuming occidentalisation. As one observer commented, the physical identity of the Islamic world had been reduced to coffee table books.

It was out of these concerns that the Aga Khan Award for Architecture was established in 1977, followed by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and its Historic Cities Programme.

As our agenda grew over time – and most excitingly – we also came to another critical understanding. We began to see the added potential of heritage projects for advancing an economic and a social agenda, for fighting poverty and driving development. To be sure, this potential was often ignored as culture was too easily miss-labelled as a luxury amid pressing social and economic needs.

But my colleagues and I became convinced that cultural heritage projects are not a diversion from development priorities. Culture is in and of itself a development resource of immense potential value.

Some who share this view refer to cultural investments as a springboard for development. Similarly, I like to say that cultural heritage can be a trampoline, propelling dramatic improvements in the quality of human life.

I have seen this trampoline in action again and again. One of my early such experiences came three decades ago at a conference on urban growth in Cairo, a city founded by my own ancestors 1,000 years ago.

As we looked out over medieval Cairo that week, one glaring anomaly stood out: a stretch of barren land, some 30 hectares, covered largely in heaps of debris.

What an amazing surprise – in a city that was 1,046 years old and as densely populated as Cairo – to find a site in its oldest area on which no building had ever been built! Even the famous Ayyubid walls, which once ran alongside this site were covered by 5 to 6 metres of waste.

This rubble dump was a repellent deformity, but it was also a stirring opportunity. And the result was that on this forsaken site there was created a state-of-the-art green space: Al-Azhar Park.

Opened ten years ago, the Park has since attracted some 17 million visitors. Their access fees produce a re-investable annual surplus of some \$800,000 US dollars.

But there is more to this story.

Adjoining the park was one of Cairo's poorest neighbourhoods – Darb al-Ahmar – its ancient ruins sheltering some 200,000 poor, marginalised inhabitants. Out of those ruins there grew a great archaeological adventure – uncovering and restoring ancient ramparts and gates, six historic mosques and dozens of houses and palaces.

From the start, the local residents were deeply involved in this adventure. They were trained in restoration skills, and some 200 are still employed in this initiative. Others were trained to support the site and to accommodate the flow of visitors.

The restoration project also included major improvements in local education and health services, in neighbourhood infrastructure, in vocational training, and microcredit initiatives.

The result: family earnings there have increased one-third faster than in the whole of Old Cairo, literacy rates have climbed by one-fourth and today the whole area – once one of the most impoverished urban agglomerations on the planet – has become a remarkable residential, recreational and cultural site.

Similar stories can be told about other places in the developing world, where historic cities can be among the poorest, often serving as makeshift transition spaces from rural poor populations to becoming city dwellers.

Our Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme was created to address these needs. It has now completed 20 major projects in ten countries, with a capital investment of over \$190 million.

One compelling example is the restoration in Delhi of the 16th century tomb of the first Mughal emperor Humayun, and its surrounding gardens and monuments. A grand urban space has been created there covering over 150 hectares, hosting over 2 million visitors annually.

In Afghanistan, comparable restoration efforts in Kabul involve thirty buildings and public spaces, including the historic Babur gardens and the Mausoleum of Timur Shah. And nearby in Northern Pakistan, we have worked to restore and repurpose a series of historic buildings – forts and palaces – along the ancient Silk Route.

Another interesting initiative has been in the high mountain areas of Central Asia, to restore and enhance traditional water systems. Some 3,000 projects to date have rehabilitated old irrigation canals and related systems for bringing water from melting glaciers and snowfields to over a million people. And they have also improved water management structures through local water-user associations. The impact has been impressive, not only on human health and agriculture, but also in reducing conflict over scarce resources.

A continent away, in Mali, the restoration of ancient mud mosques in Mopti, Djenne and Timbuktu also involved close collaboration with government officials and local craftspeople, some employing age-old mud building skills. And I could cite other instructive examples – from Kenya, Syria or Tajikistan, from Mostar to Samarkand.

All across these highly diversified situations moreover, social inputs have been critical – including innovations in water and land management, new educational and medical facilities, vocational training, and nascent micro-tourism and micro finance projects.

But let me conclude by mentioning a different sort of example, one that demonstrates how the work of protecting cultural heritage in the developing world can resonate powerfully in the developed world – and sometimes in surprising ways!

I learned this at first hand. After decades when our energies had extended over dozens of international frontiers, I was reminded ten years ago that a classic preservation challenge was growing right under our own noses, in the heart of the French countryside.

I refer to the Domaine de Chantilly – home since the Middle Ages of leading French families: rivals, allies and even members of the Royal House. The Domaine includes its beautiful Chateau, its famous Grand Stables, and its superb gardens – the oldest of which were originally designed by Le Notre, reportedly the artist's own favourite work.

And all of this – can you imagine! – lies just down the road from my personal residence, a short walk away!

Like so many familiar challenges, Chantilly was a noble, honoured but fading asset, with plunging visitation levels and a backlog of deferred maintenance. There was no collaboration amongst the key stakeholders, and not even an attempt to share a vision of the future.

One person who appreciated the importance of cultural heritage was the Duke of Aumale, son of the last French king. He inherited the Domaine in 1830, and rebuilt it to house his many treasures, including an antique painting collection that is second in size only to that of the Louvre. And he bequeathed it to the Institut de France in 1884.

And he did that on purpose! He didn't want to give it to the French Government – that's true! He wanted to give it to the Institut de France.

However, it was not until a century later that the Institut made it a priority to revitalise the Domaine. And I was invited to become a part of the response.

The Institut and I quickly agreed that a short-range burst of attention was not the answer. We needed a long-term plan. And we also agreed to build on the principle of public-private partnership.

Increasingly, we realised the success of cultural projects in the developed world and the developing world alike requires a variety of actors animated by a robust spirit of cooperation and an overriding “ethic of partnership.”

And so it was, at Chantilly in December of 2005, that a partnership agreement was signed between the Institut de France and a new private foundation – one that includes both governmental and private contributors. Operating under my presidency, the foundation was assigned the responsibility over affixed period of 20 years to preserve and promote the entire cultural area of Chantilly as an international model of heritage management.

That 20-year period is half over, but already the foundation has overseen extensive physical renovations, while also improving reception and visitation facilities. We have expanded publicity and we have created a rich programme of cultural events. And we also re-established a unique Horse Museum (surprise, surprise!) within the Grand Stables, reinforcing the historic place of Chantilly as one of Europe's great equestrian centres.

Meanwhile, the flow of visitors to Chantilly has increased by 50 percent. By next year, we expect to welcome half a million visitors, making the whole initiative financially self-sustaining for the first time.

From this base we intend now to involve even more stakeholders and supporters, building an ever-stronger base of broad local support. As we do so, I know we can learn from many of you who have faced similar challenges.

Planning ahead for long-term sustainability is critical. At Chantilly and elsewhere, our plans have included permanent service facilities – a museum perhaps, or a scholarly research centre, a children’s library, or a training workshop – so that their eventual income streams, along with public access fees, can provide re-investable income.

But the real requirement – the sine qua non – is building a constituency for sustainability, including an engaged local community.

Let me conclude by underscoring my conviction that the work of cultural heritage is more critical today than ever before. In the developing and the developed worlds alike, societies are plunging into an increasingly bewildering future at an ever-accelerating pace.

At such a time – and on occasions such as this – it is important that we commit ourselves ever more ardently to the essential work of cultural heritage as a powerful contributor to improving the quality of life for the entire human community.

Thank you.



## His Highness the Aga Khan's interview with Professor Diana L. Eck of Harvard University

12 November 2015, Cambridge, MA, USA

**Cambridge, MA, USA, 12 November 2015** - *After delivering the Samuel L. and Elizabeth Jodidi Lecture, His Highness the Aga Khan sat down with Harvard University Professor Diana L. Eck for an on-stage conversation.*

Diana L. ECK: Your Highness, thank you for that speech. It was a great pleasure to listen to, and I think I feel especially honored because there are hundreds of people here who would like to be asking you questions this afternoon, and I'm the person who is sort of appointed to do so, and I am delighted and deeply honoured.

AGA KHAN: Thank you very much.

ECK: You ended with what is a remarkable theological foundation of pluralism. You began with the political situation of the world, and the multicultural situation of the Ismailis. So from all standards you have a basis for underlining pluralism as one of the most important issues in our world. But I think the theological understanding is one that may be new to many people who think primarily in terms of the practical issues of day-to-day life.



AGA KHAN: Right, right. Well I think that's absolutely correct, and in fact this notion of one humanity in the faith of Islam is a very, very powerful force. But it's not always presented in the form that I tried to present it today. And it is there, it is clear for those who wish to see it and understand it, but not all Muslim societies take that on board.

ECK: Well, it is interesting because Jewish, Christian and Muslim societies all are founded on theological principles that stress the oneness of God and also that begin with the theology of creation in the way in which you had. So there should be — and I think there has been — a kind of theological reaching out. I think especially of the Amman Declaration that you were part of, and of the message that was delivered called A Common Word Between Us and You, from so many Muslim leaders to Christian leaders across the country.

AGA KHAN: I hope that is true. I have been watching in parts of the world that has become a thought process. I am fearful of the parts of the world where that is not part of let's say government philosophy, but I think that in time this understanding of unity of human society will end up by being seen as a condition sine qua non of good governance. I think you will see governments fail because they do not practice this principle. They will have so many divisions within them, so many attempts at achieving positions of power by certain groups or influence by others, that it will be impossible to create a sense of nationhood, a sense of building around common values, which after all is what most governments would wish to have.

ECK: I think one of the most striking things about the writings you've done on these issues and speeches like we've heard today, is your relentless linking of issues of poverty and education and human development with the foundation of pluralism as you've just articulated.

AGA KHAN: Well, if you try to analyse the causes of poverty in the developing world, as we have tried, there is absolutely no doubt that the marginalisation of communities is one of the fundamental causes of this poverty. And this marginalisation is so structured in society that minorities find it very difficult to break out of that situation. And the work that you are doing here in your field of pluralism, teaching about pluralism, having people understand that it is not a threat, on the contrary it is a foundation of civil society in the modern world. These things I think are absolutely essential. I think the more we have seen societies work, which are fractured, putting little groups of people in one box or another box, that is a way of guaranteeing conflict and poverty.

ECK: One of the things I think that we take from this, is because your Centre for Global Pluralism really looks at global issues which are so important, it also is the case that so much has changed in the United States and indeed in Canada and indeed at Harvard, since the days that you were in Leverett House with two secretaries, and that is the tremendous movement of people as migrants, as refugees from one part of the world to another, and in the US with the 1965 Immigration and Nationalities Act the opening of the US to immigrants really from all over the world, so that's really changed the face of Harvard, and



the message that you bring is one that is very relevant to universities today. I'm not sure how large the Harvard Islamic Society was when you were here.

AGA KHAN: Well in fact, it didn't exist I think until Sir Hamilton Gibb came to teach here at Harvard. My recollection is that he was the juried professor of Islamic Studies at Oxford if I'm not wrong and he came to Harvard from Oxford and he started the program here at Harvard. But that's my recollection — that's a long time ago.

ECK: You know the thing that's amazing today, as you would walk around Harvard you would see dozens and dozens of women going just from here to Leverett House wearing hijab, that you would find a very active Islamic prayer space just next door, in one of the floors of the freshman dormitory and some places where the Juma prayers every week are in the largest lecture halls where they can remove all the chairs. So the transformation of our university from being a rather parochial university in some ways, to a global and cosmopolitan university is something that has not only to do with the fact that people come here from all over the world, but that our own nation has changed so much and these issues of marginalisation that you speak of, that are divisive in so many ways, are issues that that America faces profoundly in dealing with race and culture, and indeed with a multi-religious society.

AGA KHAN: Well I'm deeply pleased that Harvard has, is moving towards what Harvard wants to be, even when I graduated. And I remember President Bok telling me extensively about, how he was seeing Harvard becoming a global university rather than a US university. That was in his mind at the time, the goal for this university, and what you are saying today is that that goal is in the process of being achieved. So I have to say well, alhamdulillah.

ECK: Well it's been achieved but we haven't really moved in some ways from what our current President Drew Faust calls the necessity of moving from diversity to belonging. To a sense of really creation of a community that is respectful of our differences, which are so many, and that move, I think one of the profound things that I hear you say time and again is that pluralism doesn't just happen by itself. It requires a certain amount of conviction and support of institutions across the spectrum of civil society.

AGA KHAN: I think that's absolutely right. And indeed I would encourage education on pluralism even in secondary education and in fact neuroscientists are saying that newly born children recognise the pluralism of other children being next to them in a cot even if they can't see the child. So the individual, the human individual, has extraordinary means of sensing somebody who is from a different society. But that sensing has nothing negative in it. It's a constatation — I can't find the word in English, but you know what I mean. So I find that very, very exciting that when children are born the notion of differences in background or race, is not at all a feature which has value attached to it, neither negative nor positive. It's a constatation.

ECK: That issue that you have raised again and again, that our differences are part of the richness that we bring to life, we could say from a theological standpoint that's a God-given difference from scattering of people from this one soul.

AGA KHAN: But I have to nonetheless point out that many countries in the developing world where we have been working were governed on the principle of divide of communities. For years we worked in countries where the educational system was African, Asian or European. There was no single educational system in those countries. So that is the phenomenon which people have inherited even today and which is difficult to overcome. I can remember situations where hospitals were not entitled to take people of different backgrounds.

ECK: In the development network that you have created spanning the world, I know education is a very big piece of this, from the Aga Khan Universities to local education that must be a daunting task. A few years ago, your daughter Princess Zahra was here and spoke at the Harvard School of Education about her role in this with a great attention to women's education. I'm not sure if that is a particular emphasis that you bring, but it certainly is one that is profoundly important.

AGA KHAN: Well my grandfather in fact pushed very hard to have women's education as part of our overall educational process, so that's part of the way we think, the way we live today. Now you were talking about universities etc. And it's clearly a critical issue that in the developing world, the universities should upgrade their performance and that their degrees should be recognised, that their research should be of global importance and I was taught when I came to Harvard that plagiarism was a bad thing, well I am here to plagiarise (laugh) and I don't hide it from Harvard.

ECK: When you talk about the cosmopolitan ethic that emerges from this recognition of difference and yet a foundation in human oneness, the elements of that are what? What would you say are the elements of a cosmopolitan ethic?

AGA KHAN: I think the first of all you need to accept the premise that human society is pluralist, and it has been pluralist for as long as we know about the human race if I'm not wrong. So there is a basic premise that has to be accepted, that issue of accepting pluralism also means that you need to attach equity to that notion. If there is no equity in pluralist societies, then you don't have functioning pluralist societies, you don't have institutions that function properly etc. And I have admired a number of governments in developing countries for example, where without saying it, they have fought very hard to create equal opportunity for various communities in various parts of the country, whereas that was not the case in colonial societies.

ECK: So equity would be one element of that ethic...

AGA KHAN: Equity would certainly be one element.

ECK: And a respect for justice would be another piece of it?

AGA KHAN: Respect for justice and I would say equal opportunity for the intelligentsia... I have seen situations where there has been an attempt to marginalise the intelligentsia of a given community and that of course is an extremely unwelcome feature of a society.

ECK: One of the things I recall from having been involved with interfaith leaders, not that I am one myself, but I'm an observer of these events, was the effort over a number of years ago, to create a global ethic, out of the distinctive ethical norms of different religious traditions and even of secular traditions and there were certain things everyone could agree on. And I think equality, justice, opportunity, dignity, etc. were very much agreeable. When it came to what equity meant, I hesitate to say the biggest issue in equity among these dignified religious leaders was the issue of women and men, and whether gender equity, whether that really meant gender equity. It seems to me that is an issue to a great extent and yet my own impression of the Ismaili community is that leadership in Jamatkhanas and other elements of the Development Network and leadership in these positions is shared by women and men. Am I right about that?

AGA KHAN: Absolutely, and in fact I have spent considerable time trying to make sure that whether it's leadership amongst women... the community could benefit from that. Leadership qualities is not gender driven so actually, if you don't respect the fact that both genders have competencies, outstanding capabilities, you are damaging your community by not appointing those people.

ECK: So as we think about, I'm thinking now about the kind of responsibility that you have both for the spiritual as well the material well-being, the welfare of the Ismaili community — but as you put it, it's not just the welfare of the Ismaili community but those with whom they share their societies as well.

AGA KHAN: Absolutely.

ECK: So in those, are there societies in which you find it almost impossible to have leadership of women in your own community rise?

AGA KHAN: No, not really I think. I think people tolerate our decisions, I'm not sure they are always welcome (laugh).

ECK: That seems to have struck a chord here.

AGA KHAN: I think the women in the audience know what I mean. (Laughter and applause)

ECK: So as you think about your successor, is there any chance that Princess Zahra could, or would not that be tolerated —

AGA KHAN: No that would not be tolerated.

ECK: We were very impressed with her here. But we have not met your two sons.

AGA KHAN: Well she is the first member of my family who's received a University degree. So she is an important member of my family because the gender balance is all now Harvard related. (laugh) Not Radcliffe.

ECK: One of the things that has been so, I'm sure very much on people's mind, is that to intentionally cultivate pluralism in a society, there are some societies in which the civil society and our educational institutions are welcoming of this. But of course, pluralism within our own religious communities is often a very difficult thing, and I speak as a Christian who knows perfectly well the number of anti-pluralists there are within the Christian tradition and people who are convinced that the only possible way of conceptualising religious truth is through the lens of the Christian tradition. This also is probably true in the Muslim tradition and the effort that must be made to cultivate the kind of appreciation of mutual respect and difference is certainly a huge task.

AGA KHAN: I would strongly agree that pluralism is a subject that is taught; it's not instinctive in a human society.

ECK: It's not instinctive.

AGA KHAN: It's not instinctive. So I would strongly support any initiative at any level of age that is from the newly born child up to the post-graduate student, that there should be continuous exposure to the notion of pluralism in society. It's much easier with children obviously than with grown ups. But to me, it must be a feature of any modern society in any part of the world. I can't travel in any part of the world today, without observing the amazing mix of backgrounds of people today that wasn't there years ago. And that is happening more and more through happy events, unhappy events — you can see what is happening with refugees today. But I am more worried about societies preparing themselves to accept foreigners. That's not a big story of success in my mind. The only country that I can think of that actually has a process is Canada.

ECK: And you have lived certainly in France, and have deep connections in England as well. And you have seen the ways in which they are struggling with the diversity of their own societies.

AGA KHAN: Absolutely and for different reasons, but they are struggling, and in many ways I consider them somewhat unprepared.

ECK: I think the preparedness here in the United States is also very much, I mean the Pluralism Project has been studying the changing religious landscapes of the US for 25

years. And I think, along the lines of your point, if I had been teaching Kindergarten in Houston, Texas, I would have realised far earlier how much our society had been changing. But it wasn't until till the 1990s that the children of this new immigration came to college and began transforming our own demographic and university in which we live and teach.

AGA KHAN: Well I think that your point is very important, because what you are effectively saying is awareness in United States of the issue. I am thinking of countries where there has not been that awareness until much too late.

ECK: Yes and among some Americans as well, even though scarcely, you can't really find a state in the US where the Muslim and Hindu and Sikh presence hasn't become a significant one. But still, we hear this in some of our public leaders this is only a slow dawning awareness. They sometimes don't like it, as well.

AGA KHAN: Yes, I realise that, but I mean I think these are people who are thinking against or in contradiction with a roadmap that you can extend from history and you extend that road map and you reach the correct conclusions.

ECK: You have often said, and I think it's right, as we look at the world today that the instability and divisiveness of societies is infectious, and at the same time you say so is hope. So can you give us in conclusion just a sense of the infectiousness of hope from your experience.

AGA KHAN: Well, I think I mentioned in my comments, to me one of the most important issues for society in any part of the world, is that it should be driven by hope. The moment that people of any generation, of any age, lose hope, it is a very, very damaging thing for that community, that society. So creating circumstances of hope, is to me very, very important indeed. And much of the Aga Khan Development Network their work is to try to assist countries to become countries of opportunity. That is one of the main goals that I have is that as many countries where the community is living should be countries of opportunity. Definition of opportunity of course is a different thing, but a life that sees itself with no opportunity is a very, very sad prospect.

ECK: Your Highness this has been a great pleasure to have the opportunity to speak with you and thank you for your return to Harvard for this afternoon. Thank you very much and may you come again and again.

AGA KHAN: Well thank you for your generosity and your questions.



## Speech at the Samuel L. and Elizabeth Jodidi Lecture at Harvard University

12 November 2015, Harvard University

**“The developing world is now facing a major challenge: how does it care for the elderly? Even in more developed societies, social changes have eroded some of the domestic support that once eased the burdens of the aging. How, we must all ask, will we manage the new challenges of longevity?”**

**SPEECH BY MAWLANA HAZAR IMAM  
The Samuel L. and Elizabeth Jodidi Lecture  
at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts  
Thursday, 12 November 2015**

**“The Cosmopolitan Ethic in a Fragmented World”**

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*



Mark Elliott, Vice Provost  
Michele Lamont, Director of the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs  
Ali Asani, Director of the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program  
Diana Eck, Professor of Comparative Religion  
Members of the Harvard Community  
Distinguished Guests

Thank you for your warm welcome.

It is indeed a great pleasure for me to return to Harvard and this wonderful campus. And it is a particular pleasure to be welcomed here by the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies Program — two of the world's leading forces for informed global understanding.

I am honored as well, to be giving the Jodidi Lecture for 2015, and to join the distinguished list of those who have given this lecture over the past 60 years. Believe it or not, the Jodidi Lecture actually was founded during my freshman year at Harvard — but I had nothing to do with that! I would note too, that the Harvard Center for International Affairs was also founded while I was a student here, although it did not yet have the illustrious Weatherhead name.

Now I must admit in all candor that I do not recall attending the Jodidi Lecture when I was an undergraduate, although I am sure I would have benefited from doing so! I was probably having too much fun at Wigglesworth or Leverett House to venture out to something so serious as the Jodidi lecture. On the other hand, I wonder what I might have thought if some seer had looked into a crystal ball and told me that some 60 years later I would actually be giving this lecture. I might have immediately transferred to Yale!

My ties to Harvard have been re-enforced in many ways through the six decades since my graduation, including the fact that my brother and my daughter also received their undergraduate degrees here at Harvard. And I was deeply gratified to come back to receive an honorary degree in 2008.

Whenever I return to Harvard I am impressed both with the wonderful qualities that have stayed the same over time, and also by some of the things that have changed. Surely one of the most notable changes has been the remarkable success in recent years of Harvard's athletic teams all across the board: individual competition, team competition, women's and men's teams. Bravo Harvard!

Of course one cannot arrive in Cambridge this week without noticing that the football team — to mention just one example that remains undefeated again this year.



But it was not always that way. In fact, during the years that I was at Harvard, the football team never had a winning record.

Of course, I am referring here to the “American” football team. Coming from European schooling, what I called the football team is what you probably call the soccer team. And I must tell you that for the men’s soccer team, those were golden years at Harvard — including two Ivy League championships. Goodbye Yale! And I must also tell you, with all due humility, that I was a happy member of that championship team.

Now, you may have been wondering just what I have been doing over these past six decades since I left the Harvard playing fields. Let me begin by saying a word about that topic.

As you know, I was born into a Muslim family, linked by heredity to the Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon him and his family). My education blended Islamic and Western traditions in my early years and at Harvard, where I majored in Islamic History. And in 1957 I was a junior when I became the 49th hereditary Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims — when my grandfather designated me to succeed him.

What does it mean to become an Imam in the Ismaili tradition? To begin with, it is an inherited role of spiritual leadership. As you may know, the Ismailis are the only Muslim community that has been led by a living, hereditary Imam in direct descent from Prophet Muhammad.

That spiritual role however, does not imply a separation from practical responsibilities. In fact for Muslims the opposite is true: the spiritual and material worlds are inextricably connected. Leadership in the spiritual realm — for all Imams, whether they are Sunni or Shia — implies responsibility in worldly affairs; a calling to improve the quality of human life. And that is why so much of my energy over these years has been devoted to the work of the Aga Khan Development Network.

The AKDN, as we call it, centers its attention in the developing world. And it is from this developing world’s perspective, that I speak to you today. So what I will be referring to is knowledge that I have gained from the developing world of Africa, Asia, the Middle East. What I will be speaking about has little to do with the industrialised West.

Through all of these years, my objective has been to understand more thoroughly the developing countries of Asia, Africa and the Middle East, and to prepare initiatives that will help them become countries of opportunity, for all of their peoples.

As I prepared for this new role in the late 1950s, Harvard was very helpful. The University allowed me — having prudently verified that I was a student “in good standing” — to take

eighteen months away to meet the leaders of the Ismaili community in some 25 countries where most of the Ismailis then lived, and to speak with their government leaders.

I returned here after that experience with a solid sense of the issues I would have to address, especially the endemic poverty in which much of my community lived. And I also returned with a vivid sense of the new political realities that were shaping their lives, including the rise of African independence movements, the perilous relations between India and Pakistan and the sad fact that many Ismailis were locked behind the Iron Curtain and thus removed from regular contact with the Imam.

When I returned to Harvard, it was not only to complete my degree, but I was fortunate to audit a number of courses that were highly relevant to my new responsibilities. So as an undergraduate, I had the opportunity to benefit from the complete spectrum of courses offered by this great university.

Incidentally, I must have been the only Harvard undergraduate to have two secretaries and a personal assistant working with me. And I have always been very proud of the fact that I never sent any of them to take notes for me at my class!

Harvard has continued to be a highly valued partner for our Network since this time. The University played a key role in developing the blueprint thirty years ago for the Aga Khan University — working first in the fields of medicine and nursing education, and now offering a broad variety of degrees on three continents. Another close Harvard relationship has involved the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, launched here and at MIT in 1977.

My concern for the future of Islamic architecture grew out of my travels between 1957 and 1977 in countries with large Muslim populations. What I observed was a near total disconnect between the new built environment I encountered and Islam's rich architectural legacy. There was no process of renewal, no teaching in architectural schools, no practices that were rooted in our own traditions. Except for the occasional minaret or dome, one of the world's great cultural inheritances was largely confined to coffee-table books. It seemed to me that this state of affairs represented a monumental menace to our world's cultural pluralism, as well as a dangerous loss of identity for Muslim communities.

The Aga Khan Programme for Islamic Architecture was one response to this situation, as was the creation of the Aga Khan architectural award, which also continues today.

Bringing the art and architecture of the Islamic world to be understood and admired in the West, as it had been in the past, was a goal that also inspired the creation, just one year ago, of the Ismaili Centre and the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto — the only museum in the western hemisphere devoted entirely to Islamic culture.

Today, the Aga Khan Development Network embraces many facets and functions. But, if I were trying to sum up in a single word its central objective, I would focus on the word “opportunity”. For what the peoples of the developing world seek above all else is hope for a better future.

Too often however, true opportunity has been a distant hope — perhaps for some, not even more than a dream. Endemic poverty, in my view, remains the world’s single most important challenge. It is manifested in many ways, including persistent refugee crises of the sort we have recently seen in such an acute form. And of course confounding new challenges continue to mount, such as the looming threat of climate change. My interest in climate change has been sharpened by recent studies linking it to the threat of earthquakes. This could be an issue in the high mountain areas of South Asia for example, where so many Ismailis live and are concentrated.

Sixty years ago as I took up my responsibilities, the problems of the developing world, for many observers, seemed intractable. It was widely claimed that places like China and India were destined to remain among the world’s “basket cases” — incapable of feeding themselves let alone being able to industrialise or achieve economic self-sustainability. If this had been true, of course, then there would have been no way for the people of my community, in India and China and in many other places, to look for a better future.

Political realities presented further complications. Most of the poorest countries were living under distant colonial or protectorate or communist regimes. The monetary market was totally unpredictable. Volatile currencies were shifting constantly in value, making it almost impossible to plan ahead. And while I thought of all the Ismailis as part of one religious community, the realities of their daily lives were deeply distinctive and decidedly local.

Nor did most people yet see the full potential for addressing these problems through non-profit, private organisations — what we today call “civil society.”

And yet, it was also clear that stronger coordination across these lines of division could help open new doors of opportunity. We could see how renovated educational systems, based on best practices, could reach across frontiers of politics and language. We could see how global science could address changing medical challenges, including the growing threat of non-communicable disease. We could see, in sum, how a truly pluralistic outlook could leverage the best experiences of local communities through an effective international network.

But we also learned that the creation of effective international networks in a highly diversified environment can be a daunting matter. It took a great deal of considered effort to meld older values of continuity and local cohesion, with the promise of new cross-border integration.

What was required — and is still required — was a readiness to work across frontiers of distinction and distance without trying to erase them. What we were looking for, even then, were ways of building an effective “cosmopolitan ethic in a fragmented world.”

This often meant working from the bottom up, learning to follow what was sometimes called “field logic.” Most of our initiatives began at a local, community level, and then grew into regional, national and international institutions.

As we moved forward, we learned a number of important lessons. We learned that lifting health and education services to world class standards was a global promise that could inspire local support. We learned to attack poverty simultaneously with multiple inputs, on a variety of fronts. We learned to work with effective partners — including the not-for-profit institutions of civil society. We learned to see our role as one of supporting the public sector, not competing with it. And we learned the importance of measuring carefully the outcomes of our efforts, and then applying that knowledge.

All of these approaches were facilitated by a determination to overcome linguistic barriers through a language policy that promoted better use of the national language, and network-wide English as a strong connecting tool.

And so our Network grew. Today it embraces a group of agencies — non-governmental and non-denominational — operating in 35 countries. They work in fields ranging from education and medical care, to job creation and energy production; from transport and tourism, to media and technology; from the fine arts and cultural heritage, to banking and microfinance. But they are all working together toward a single overarching objective: improving the quality of human life.

Meanwhile, in the Industrialised West, many things were happening that paralleled our AKDN experience. For one thing, an impulse for international cooperation was advancing in the late 1950s at an impressive pace. After half a century of violent confrontation, determined leaders talked hopefully about global integration. New international organisations and cross-border alliances blossomed. And Harvard University decisively expanded its own involvement in world affairs.

When the Jodidi Lectureship was established here in 1955, its explicit purpose (and I quote) was “the promotion of tolerance, understanding and good will among nations.” And that seemed to be the way history was moving. Surely, we thought, we had learned the terrible price of division and discord, and certainly the great technological revolutions of the 20th century would bring us more closely together.

In looking back to my Harvard days, I recall how a powerful sense of technological promise was in the air — a faith that human invention would continue its ever-accelerating conquest of time and space. I recall too, how this confidence was accompanied by what was described as a “revolution of rising expectations” and the fall of colonial empires. And of

course, this trend seemed to culminate some years later with the end of the Cold War and the “new world order” that it promised.

But even as old barriers crumbled and new connections expanded, a paradoxical trend set in, one that we see today at every hand. At the same time that the world was becoming more interconnected, it also became more fragmented.

We have been mesmerised on one hand by the explosive pace of what we call “globalisation,” a centripetal force putting us as closely in touch with people who live across the world as we are to those who live next to us. But at the same time, a set of centrifugal forces have been gaining on us, producing a growing sense — between and within societies — of disintegration.

Whether we are looking at a more fragile European Union, a more polarised United States, a more fervid Sunni-Shia conflict, intensified tribal rivalries in much of Africa and Asia, or other splintering threats in every corner of the planet, the word “fragmentation” seems to define our times.

Global promise, it can be said, has been matched by tribal wariness. We have more communication, but we also have more confrontation. Even as we exclaim about growing connectivity we seem to experience greater disconnection.

Perhaps what we did not see so clearly 60 years ago is the fact that technological advance does not necessarily mean human progress. Sometimes it can mean the reverse.

The more we communicate, the harder it can sometimes be to evaluate what we are saying. More information often means less context and more confusion. More than that, the increased pace of human interaction means that we encounter the stranger more often, and more directly. What is different is no longer abstract and distant. Even for the most tolerant among us, difference, more and more, can be up close and in your face.

What all of this means is that the challenge of living well together — a challenge as old as the human-race — can seem more and more complicated. And so we ask ourselves, what are the resources that we might now draw upon to counter this trend? How can we go beyond our bold words and address the mystery of why our ideals still elude us?

In responding to that question, I would ask you to think with me about the term I have used in the title for this lecture: “The Cosmopolitan Ethic.”

For a very long time, as you know, the term most often used in describing the search for human understanding was the word “tolerance.” In fact, it was one of the words that was used in 1955 text to describe one of the objectives of this Jodidi Lecture.

In recent years our vocabulary in discussing this subject has evolved. One word that we have come to use more often in this regard is the word “pluralism.” And the other is the word “cosmopolitan.”

You may know that our AKDN Network, a decade ago, cooperated with the Government of Canada to create a new Global Centre for Pluralism based in Ottawa, designed to study more closely the conditions under which pluralist societies can thrive.

A pluralist, cosmopolitan society is a society which not only accepts difference, but actively seeks to understand it and to learn from it. In this perspective, diversity is not a burden to be endured, but an opportunity to be welcomed.

A cosmopolitan society regards the distinctive threads of our particular identities as elements that bring beauty to the larger social fabric. A cosmopolitan ethic accepts our ultimate moral responsibility to the whole of humanity, rather than absolutising a presumably exceptional part.

Perhaps it is a natural condition of an insecure human race to seek security in a sense of superiority. But in a world where cultures increasingly interpenetrate one another, a more confident and a more generous outlook is needed.

What this means, perhaps above all else, is a readiness to participate in a true dialog with diversity, not only in our personal relationships, but in institutional and international relationships also. But that takes work, and it takes patience. Above all, it implies a readiness to listen.

What is needed, as the former Governor General of Canada Adrienne Clarkson has said, and I quote, is a readiness “to listen to your neighbour, even when you may not particularly like him.” Is that message clear? You listen to people you don’t like!

A thoughtful cosmopolitan ethic is something quite different from some attitudes that have become associated with the concept of globalisation in recent years. Too often, that term has been linked to an abstract universalism, perhaps well-meaning but often naïve. In emphasising all that the human race had in common, it was easy to depreciate the identities that differentiated us. We sometimes talked so much about how we are all alike that we neglected the wonderful ways in which we can be different.

One result of this superficial view of homogenised, global harmony, was an unhappy counter-reaction. Some took it to mean the spread of a popular, Americanised global culture — that was unfair and an assessment that was erroneous. Others feared that their individual, ethnic or religious identities might be washed away by a super-competitive economic order, or by some supranational political regime. And the frequent reaction was a

fierce defense of older identities. If cooperation meant homogenisation, then a lot of people found themselves saying “No.”

But an either-or-choice between the global and the tribal — between the concept of universal belonging and the value of particular identities — was in fact a false choice. The road to a more cooperative world does not require us to erase our differences, but to understand them.

A responsible, thoughtful process of globalisation, in my view, is one that is truly cosmopolitan, respecting both what we have in common and what makes us different.

It is perhaps in our nature to see life as a series of choices between sharply defined dualities, but in fact life is more often a matter of avoiding false dichotomies, which can lead to dangerous extremes. The truth of the matter is that we can address the dysfunctions of fragmentation without obscuring the values of diversity.

A cosmopolitan ethic will also be sensitive to the problem of economic insecurity in our world. It is an enormous contributing factor to the problems I have been discussing. Endemic poverty still corrodes any meaningful sense of opportunity for many millions. And even in less impoverished societies, a rising tide of economic anxiety can make it difficult for fearful people to respect, let alone embrace, that which is new or different.

This problem has been compounded by the very advances that have long been the source of so much hope. I am thinking here for example about medical advances that have dramatically increased human longevity. People live longer, but they often find that they have outlived their resources.

The developing world is now facing a major challenge: how does it care for the elderly? Even in more developed societies, social changes have eroded some of the domestic support that once eased the burdens of the aging. How, we must all ask, will we manage the new challenges of longevity?

All of these considerations will place special obligations on those who play leadership roles in our societies. Sadly, some would-be leaders all across the world have been tempted to exploit difference and magnify division. It is always easier to unite followers in a negative cause than a positive one. But the consequences can be a perilous polarisation.

The information explosion itself has sometimes become an information glut, putting even more of a premium on being first and getting attention, rather than being right and earning respect. It is not easy to retain one’s faith in a healthy, cosmopolitan marketplace of ideas when the flow of information is increasingly trivialised.



One answer to these temptations will be found, I am convinced, in the quality of our education. It will lie with our universities at one end of the spectrum, and early childhood education at the other — a field to which our Development Network has been giving special attention.

Let me mention one more specific issue where a sustained educational effort will be especially important. I refer to the debate — one that has involved many in this audience — about the prospect of some fundamental clash of civilisations between Islam and the West. In my view, the deeper problem behind any prospective “clash of civilisations” is a profound “clash of ignorances”. And in that struggle, education will be an indispensable weapon.

Finally, I would emphasise that a cosmopolitan ethic is one that resonates with the world’s great ethical and religious traditions.

A passage from the Holy Quran that has been central to my life is addressed to the whole of humanity. It says: “Oh Mankind, fear your Lord, who created you of a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them scattered abroad many men and women...”

At the very heart of the Islamic faith is a conviction that we are all born “of a single soul.” We are “spread abroad” to be sure in all of our diversity, but we share, in a most profound sense, a common humanity.

This outlook has been central to the history of Islam. For many hundreds of years, the greatest Islamic societies were decidedly pluralistic, drawing strength from people of many religions and cultural backgrounds. My own ancestors, the Fatimid Caliphs, founded the city of Cairo, and the great Al Azhar University there, a thousand years ago in this same spirit. That pluralistic outlook remains a central ideal for most Muslims today.

There are many, of course, some non-Muslims and some Muslims alike, who have perpetrated different impressions.

At the same time, institutions such as those that have welcomed me here today, have eloquently addressed these misimpressions. My hope is that the voices of Islam itself will continue to remind the world of a tradition that, over so many centuries, has so often advanced pluralistic outlooks and built some of the most remarkable societies in human history.

Let me repeat, in conclusion, that a cosmopolitan ethic is one that will honour both our common humanity and our distinctive Identities — each reinforcing the other as part of the same high moral calling.

The central lesson of my own personal journey — over many miles and many years — is the indispensability of such an ethic in our changing world, based on the timeless truth that we are — each of us and all of us — “born of a single soul.”

Thank you.



## Creation of the Aga Khan University hospital

17 December 2015, Kampala, Uganda

**"I am here today as the Chancellor of the Aga Khan University. And it is in this role that I can officially announce the establishment of an Aga Khan University Hospital in Kampala."**

Right Honorable Prime Minister,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Distinguished Guests

I'd like to begin my comments this morning by expressing my very great gratitude for the warmth with which I have been received here in Uganda, the support that the President and the Government have been offering to this new project of creating an Aga Khan University Hospital here in Kampala.

It is very clear that without this partnership between the Government and AKDN it would be impossible to realise the sorts of things, the sorts of initiatives that we have been able to implement during the last 50 years here in Uganda. These initiatives cover enormous areas,

not just in health care, but in education, in economic development, in cultural activities – in other words, in all the key endeavors that governments and civil society invest in.

I am here today as the Chancellor of the Aga Khan University. And it is in this role that I can officially announce the establishment of an Aga Khan University Hospital in Kampala.

We started the Aga Khan University in Pakistan some 32 years ago and it has grown into a truly international institution, with major campuses in Africa as well as in Asia, and with programmes in many fields. But right at the centre of its mission, from the very start, has been one principle goal: to help ensure the people living in the developing world are able to access international standards of health care.

We are here today because of this common conviction. We have to bring to Africa and Asia global standards of health care. The populations of these countries cannot be isolated from the best simply because they have been born in countries outside the Western world.

It's clearly a challenge to build institutions of global quality in environments which haven't had those institutions before. And in order to achieve that goal the essential is human resources – men and women who are educated to perform to the highest standards of their profession. And that is why the Aga Khan Health Network has invested, and will continue to invest, in education.

It adds cost. It adds management issues. It is not entirely satisfactory, in the sense that graduates leave, they go to other parts of the world, and they don't always return. But the fact is that we have to educate on an ongoing basis in Africa, in Asia, to global standards of medicine and nursing, and that is our goal.

Now these standards cannot be maintained without research. Therefore the Aga Khan University is investing – and will continue to invest very heavily – in research, in postgraduate studies, not undergraduate studies. It is this research which will enable the Aga Khan University and others in the area to bring new knowledge, appropriate knowledge to Africa, Asia, which we desperately need.

Now you certainly remember that at some time medical care in Sub-Saharan Africa was solid. But there have been moments of difficulty, and we now have to rebuild in a number of countries in Asia and Africa, standards of institutional performance, which will bring these institutions back to global standards. And that means harnessing the youth to our future. And I would like to emphasise to you how important it is that you should bring to bear on young men and young women a commitment to serve at home, and not to leave home in a position where the homeland does not have the benefit of the knowledge which has been imparted.

It's important to keep in mind that disease is changing in its nature. We are more and more confronted in modern society by non-communicable disease and therefore in the decades ahead we will be concentrating through the Aga Khan Health Network and other medical institutions in dealing with non-communicable diseases. And I refer to diabetes, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, mental and neurological illness, cancer and others. These are the areas where we must concentrate properly, to serve future generations of society.

There is no doubt that developing countries need to improve health standards and the hospital will therefore seek to treat everyone who needs care. Modern medicine is expensive, but it is our responsibility to make it available to all the population, and we undertake to do that.

As I said earlier, training doctors, nurses, therapists, bio-medical engineers, laboratory technicians, and other medical professionals is a long, complex exercise, but our health institutions in Africa and Asia are committed to doing that so that our institutions have a complete educational process and we train people for all the different needs in serving health care around the world.

Let me come back to Uganda. Uganda has doctors and nurses who are successful in their professions but who are not in Uganda. It is my hope that by building the Aga Khan University Hospital here in Uganda, the wonderful doctors and nurses who are Ugandans, who are working outside Uganda, will come back and work here in an institution which not only will welcome them, but give them the best professional conditions in which they can work.

Let me spend a very short time and explain to you what it is that we are seeking to achieve in East Africa through the Aga Khan Health Network. Essentially we are trying to build a network of tertiary care hospitals, teaching hospitals, throughout Eastern Africa. We are trying to add to that network of teaching hospitals, medical units which are part of the educational system, but which will become referral institutions to our major network institutions. And our hope is that over the years we will have a system covering East Africa where an individual needing care will be able to enter the system at any point and receive the appropriate health care, whether it be in Uganda or in Kenya or in Tanzania or even further afield.

So we are working on the concept of an integrated regional health system. That will be supported by e-medicine, and that e-medicine will be supported by international relationships. So in order that we be able to educate properly, we are not depending on our own resources. We are looking to other partners to work with us from around the world to educate our students, to keep our faculty up to speed, so that in the new areas of, for example, stem cell technology, we can bring through our institutions to Africa the best of modern science.

This ceremony today marks a long engagement in healthcare in Eastern Africa and it may amuse you that it is exactly 27 years ago that the President and I had our first meeting here in Uganda. Those 27 years have resulted in multiple agreements. So we had protocols of agreement in 1989, in 1999, in 2002, and we have an agreement in place today. So we are working in a context of an ongoing partnership, and that brings to us as a network of non-governmental capacity, a great sense of comfort that we are working in a long-term structure, in a structure, which is related to the public sector here in Uganda.

When this institution is built, it is my hope that it will have brought to Uganda modern medicine in the best conditions, in intimate partnership with public sector healthcare. We see the system working as one system, building on capacity, human resources, programming, and forward thinking.

And I take this occasion to thank the President for the land that he has made available for our new institution, and to all of you I say, please join us in this exciting journey.

Thank you.



## Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the land grant and initiation ceremony in Nakawa, Uganda

17 December 2015, Nakawa, Uganda

**“I underline the issue of ongoing knowledge, because healthcare and medicine are moving very quickly and it is essential that the institutions of healthcare in Eastern Africa should keep up to date with modern science. So the faculty of medicine at the Aga Khan University is not only going to provide service, it is also going to provide research, it is going to provide continuing education to the nursing and medical communities in East Africa.”**

Mr President,  
Prime Minister,  
Guests,

This is an important day for me because it represents an opportunity to contribute to Uganda’s development, to my community’s integration within the institutions of Uganda and in East Africa more widely.



Higher education and science are two of the most important factors in development. And Africa requires having institutions that will assist in the development of those resources.

It isn't only sufficient to create the resources but we have to be able to measure them against global standards, so that the institutions of Africa – whether they be in healthcare or in other areas – come up to global standards and indeed will, I hope, meet global standards in time.

So the creation of the Aga Khan University Hospital in Uganda has a purpose not only in serving Uganda, but has the purpose of serving East Africa, and bringing knowledge and competence of sophisticated science on an ongoing basis.

I underline the issue of ongoing knowledge, because healthcare and medicine are moving very quickly and it is essential that the institutions of healthcare in Eastern Africa should keep up to date with modern science. So the faculty of medicine at the Aga Khan University is not only going to provide service, it is also going to provide research, it is going to provide continuing education to the nursing and medical communities in East Africa.

I want to thank the President for making this site available. Because when all is said and done, the institutions also depend on their location. And this location is one of the best locations we could have asked for in this wonderful city of Kampala.

Your President is a man of action – he likes results! I have to tell you Sir, I don't have a magic wand, but I will move as quickly as I can!

And we will build this institution quickly but we will not compromise on quality; we will not short-cut difficult decisions and we will prepare our work with great intensity using knowledge from here and knowledge from other areas of the world. And I hope that in due course, our Ugandan graduates will stay in Uganda.

You know the expression “golden handcuffs”? Well the one thing I don't know how to make is golden handcuffs! But I hope that the institution which will come up here will be so important that our graduates will actually choose to be here, because that is the best form of loyalty that we could expect.

President thank you for the land, thank you for the support of your government and I hope that we will have a long long ongoing partnership so that the private sector higher education in Africa can work in absolute intense empathy with national goals.

Thank you.



## Supporting Syria and the Region Conference

04 February 2016, London, UK

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Co-hosts of the Conference on Supporting Syria and the Region,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank the co-hosts for organising this much needed initiative to deepen the understanding of, and garner international support for, the peoples of Syria. Alongside all those present here today, I am deeply distressed over the indiscriminate and widespread devastation of life and property, including that of irreplaceable cultural assets which are the manifestation of Syria's stunningly rich pluralistic history.

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), which is the Ismaili Imamat's global agency for supporting development, is fully engaged with the peace process under UN leadership, and is firmly committed to helping build a Syria that continues to respect pluralism, remains secular, and embarks on a political process led by Syrians.

AKDN's development and humanitarian work in Syria began many years before the war. In the present situation, we have committed resources and efforts to ensure that Internally Displaced People receive humanitarian assistance, and are supported to sustain their livelihoods. We are taking two approaches:

First, we are supporting local community leaders, teachers, doctors, engineers and others to foster stability, protecting their families and their communities. We are thus building and strengthening civil society to take as much responsibility as possible for their own future.

Second, we are investing in communities, by supporting agriculture, income generation, early childhood education, schools, and hospitals. We also provide vocational training to create skills. Our goal is to sustain hope.

We aim to meet the urgent needs of the present, but where also possible to protect and strengthen the foundations for the future. We seek to create "islands of stability", where there is public consensus, in the face of war. It is my conviction that "islands of stability" can be replicated wherever security permits. Investing in them will help prevent displacement of people and anchor communities that would otherwise flee as refugees.

Since the onset of conflict in 2011, AKDN has dedicated \$50 million towards these endeavours in Syria and is now committing to increasing this investment to \$200 million over the next four years. Our efforts will expand to wider areas of the country. Our goal is peace, stability, and reconstruction.

Thank you



## "Africa 2016" conference

21 February 2016, Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim  
Excellencies,  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,  
Distinguished Leaders of Africa  
Ladies and Gentlemen

What a great pleasure it is for me to be part of the Africa 2016 Forum. I thank President Sisi, most warmly, for his kind invitation. What a wonderful opportunity to meet with old and new friends, from all over the world, and to talk together about Africa's future.

My enthusiasm today is especially strong because of the message which is at the heart of this Forum. And that message is, quite simply, that Africa's Moment has come.

I am proud to add my strong endorsement to that statement.

To be sure, and to be realistic, serious challenges confront the African peoples. One example is the enormous problem of unemployment among the young - in countries with the highest percentage of youth in the world.

But the story of Africa's progress and potential is also impressive – whether we talk about growing GDP and foreign direct investment, whether we look at economic diversification and national resiliency, whether we chart the role and the rise of a vital middle class - and the expansion of consumer spending - now breaking through the one trillion-dollar mark.

The experience of our Aga Khan Development Network supports this positive picture. We are now active in 13 African countries, in fields ranging from health and education, to travel and hospitality, from food and clothing companies to banking and finance, media and culture.

Many of these involvements go back several decades - with some ups and downs, of course. But as we look at these experiences on the ground, we can say with conviction that Africa's moment has come.

What supports that statement, however, is not only economic data. My own optimism is also based on intangible qualities, including an inspiring new spirit of African confidence.

What I see emerging today is a refreshingly, balanced confidence in Africa - a spirit that takes encouragement from past progress, while also seeking new answers to new challenges - understanding that the best way to move into the future is to walk hand-in-hand with partners who share one's goals. And we are all here to fulfil that role.

I highlight the part played by confidence because it addresses a problem that has long plagued the human race. I refer to the fear we so often have that our environment will be controlled by others, to the point where we distance ourselves from potential worthy partners.

This difference can extend to people of different ethnic groups, different tribes, different nationalities, different religious traditions. It can also extend to people with different political or economic loyalties. And the frequent result is a fragmenting of society, a breakdown of cooperation, an undercurrent of fear, and even a paralysing polarisation in our public life. It can be a distinctly disabling environment.

The problem of fragmentation has often afflicted Africa, separating tribe from tribe, country from country, the private sector from the public sector, those who hold political power from those who are in opposition. In such cases, the fact of being different is often seen as a burden, or a threat, a source of fear and suspicion.

But there is another way to look at our differences. What a wonderful, liberating thing it would be if more of us, more of the time, could see diversity not as a burden but as a blessing; not as a threat, but as an opportunity.

I believe this changing attitude toward diversity is now happening in Africa, in part because of a new sense of African confidence. We see more cooperation today across tribal and religious lines, across political divisions and national boundaries. One powerful example was the tripartite trade agreement signed here in Sharm el-Sheikh last June.

And we have also seen new forms of cooperation among people in the private and the public sectors. The concept of Public Private Partnerships has been a keystone for many of our own Network's projects in Africa and elsewhere.

Cooperating across traditional lines of division does not mean erasing our proud, independent identities. But it does mean finding additional, enriching identities as members of larger communities, and ultimately as people who share a common humanity. It means committing ourselves to an Ethic of Pluralism.

I would like to mention one particular arena in which Africa's embrace of pluralism will be tested in the coming years, and where I believe, Africa's success can be forged. I refer to the ability of African peoples and their leaders to strengthen the institutions of "Civil Society."

By Civil Society, I mean that range of social activity that does not stem from private business organizations, nor from governmental authority. The institutions of Civil Society are motivated, rather, by voluntary energies, and their purpose is to improve the quality of community life. They are private institutions, devoted to the public good.

When I speak of a vital Civil Society I think of path breaking efforts in the field of education, from early childhood to advanced post-graduate programs. I think of health-related innovators, whether they are extending quality maternal and natal care or creating new tertiary care facilities. I think about efforts to advance the arts and culture, to improve environmental quality and foster scientific research. Civil Society includes a host of professional, labour, ethnic and religious groups and a broad array of non-governmental organizations – NGOs - as well.

I focus on Civil Society because I think its potential is often under-appreciated as we become absorbed in debates about the most effective programs of governments and others, or the most successful business strategies. But, in fact, it is often the quality of the third sector, Civil Society, that is the "difference-maker". It not only complements the work of the private and public sectors; it can often help complete that work.

Similarly, there is a great deal that leaders in the business sector and in government can do to strengthen the work of Civil Society, to help provide Civil Society with what I have called an “Enabling Environment.”

In sum, I believe that social progress will require quality inputs from all three sectors: public, private and Civil Society. Sustainable progress will build on a three-legged stool. And that progress can be particularly impressive when the three sectors work closely together.

One prominent example of such cooperation that I know well is the Bujagali dam in Uganda - a project in which our Economic Development Fund has joined with the government of Uganda, and a private investment fund based in the United States. All three sectors; public, private and civil society have jointly created this project which, after just three years, provides nearly half of Uganda’s electric power.

Another example is the National Park of Mali - opened in Bamako in 2010 - when our Trust for Culture partnered with the national government to create not only a glorious green space, but also an infrastructure which ensures the Park’s long-term sustainability.

A third example is our own Network’s East African educational initiative, in which we now invest 10 million dollars a year, reaching some 400,000 students and 6000 teachers, and again working closely with government education offices and local community organizations.

The examples could go on and on. But, despite such successes, the role of Civil Society is often misunderstood or taken for granted. At times, Civil Society has been marginalized, discounted, or dismissed. One worrisome development has been the dwindling of international support; some two-thirds of sub-Saharan countries face a reduction in development assistance by 2017.

Even more disturbing have been efforts in some places to constrain or even repress these institutions, stereotyping them as illegitimate, unelected and unaccountable. These attitudes may simply reflect a reluctance to share power and influence, or perhaps a feeling that the creative energy and sheer diversity of Civil Society is daunting and dangerous.

Such attitudes have been exceptional, but they are highly regrettable, discouraging the qualities of vision, innovation and forward thinking that progressive societies so badly need.

But there is good news too. For, at a fundamental level, the cultures of Africa bode well for the future here of a vibrant, healthy Civil Society.



For centuries, African life has been characterized by a vast array of indigenous informal groups, sustained by citizen donations and voluntary service. They include ethnic and kinship groups, councils of elders, religious bodies, and community fora. Many Africans have grown up amid such groupings, learning to emphasize their mutual interests, to pool their resources, and to share in shaping their local communities. It is part of the African Way.

The influence of Civil Society has also been felt at seminal moments in the continent's recent history, for example: in shaping the Arusha Accords which recently ended 12 years of civil war in Burundi, in the peaceful resolution of the violent clashes in Kenya following the 2007 elections, in the drafting of a new promising Tunisian Constitution, and in the courageous response to the Ebola crisis. I think too of how sophisticated young Africans have been incubating noteworthy internet-based ventures to expand and coordinate a range of civil society ventures, with high social impact.

In conclusion, there are many reasons to believe that this is Africa's Moment and that Africans will seize it. Among those positive elements is a growing sense of confidence that encourages Africans to work together across old lines of division, including cooperative engagements with the institutions of Civil Society.

The growing vitality of Civil Society should be a key source of encouragement when it comes to investing in Africa. When it is advanced and enabled, it is the best underwriter of development. It can, I know, be a key force in seizing Africa's Moment and making the most of it.

Thank you.



## New printing press for Nation Media Group

### LOCATION

Nairobi, Kenya (17 March 2016)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Cabinet Secretary Joe Mucheru  
Cabinet Secretary Adan Mohamed  
Governor of Machakos County, Dr Alfred Mutua  
Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
NMG Chairman Wilfred Kiboro  
Mr Muganda  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

This is a great day for the Nation Media Group and for the media community in Kenya, as we take a major step forward in our efforts to serve this country and this region ever more effectively.

What does a new printing press mean? Several things. It means more attractive newspapers. It means faster printing and earlier delivery. It means fewer delays and quicker responses when breaking news develops. It means better quality for our advertisers – more colour for example, for readers and advertisers alike. And, its construction has also meant more investment in the local economy.

At a moment like this, I find myself thinking back to the days when we first launched the Nation – that was more than half a century ago. It's hard to believe sometimes that it

has been that long. And frankly, it is even harder to believe that so much time has passed since my childhood days in Kenya, and my continuing early visits to this country.

Over that time, as you know, our Development Network has built a range of activities here – in education, in health care, commerce, tourism, finance, and other fields – that we hoped would help to improve the quality of life for the people of this country and this region.

Over those many years a great deal has changed, of course. And the change has been particularly striking for the Nation Media Group. We have expanded by launching new newspapers like the East African and the Business Daily, by moving into the television and radio worlds, and by expanding into other countries in East Africa. And we have also moved decisively into on-line, computerised distribution of news and information.

Our celebration today marks one other important transformation. We hear a lot about technological marvels these days. And the one we often hear the most about is how we can serve readers through their computer screens and mobile phones. But that's not the full modernisation story.

The new press we commission today is also a technological marvel. What it symbolises is our determination to use the very best technology we can find in any part of the world to do a better job for our customers – including the customers we serve on paper and through the printed word.

When I think back to the founding of the Nation, and when I reflect on how much has changed and how far we have come, I think especially about the hopes and dreams with which we launched this company. Our goal then was to create a news medium that belonged to the whole of the nation of Kenya – and that of course is why we chose our company name. That dream moved ahead in a big way when we took the company to the public shareholding market, so that today a majority of Nation shares are owned by the general public of Kenya.

Our additional central goal at the time of our founding was to create a news medium that would be truly independent: a place where the public could find a voice it could trust; an objective and thoughtful voice; a voice that would tell people what the facts are, as reliably as possible. Our goal was not to tell people what to think, but to give them reliable information so that they could think, more clearly, for themselves.

To help us move down that challenging road we also created a formal set of editorial guidelines. These guidelines emerged as a great deal of discussion and debate took place internally and externally, and they were then endorsed at a meeting of our public shareholders. These guidelines represent a set of ethical and procedural standards – our honour code as independent journalists. Adhering to them is something we think of as a moral obligation.

We continue to think and talk a great deal about those editorial guidelines. We had a major meeting just yesterday where we talked again, with our editors and with our Board of Directors, about how we could implement those standards most effectively. We all concluded that the role of a truly independent media house is more important now

than ever – in Africa and all around the world. And we also acknowledged that fulfilling that independent role may be more difficult now than ever before.

All over the world, the number of media voices is exploding – websites, bloggers and social media voices multiply every day. The result is often a wild mix of messages: good information and bad information, superficial impressions, fleeting images, and a good deal of confusion and conflict. And this is true all over the world.

On top of that, this is also a time when public emotions and political sentiments are intensifying and even polarising – again, all over the world.

The result, some people say, is that we live in a “post-fact” society. Yes, a post-fact society. It’s not just that everyone feels entitled to his or her own opinion – that’s a good thing. But the problem comes when people feel they are entitled to their own facts. What is true, too often, can then depend not on what actually happened, but on whose side you are. Our search for the truth can then become less important than our allegiance to a cause – an ideology, for example, or a political party, or a tribal or religious identity, or a pro-government or opposition outlook. And so publics all over the world can begin to fragment, and societies can drift into deadlock.

In such a world, it is absolutely critical – more than ever – that the public should have somewhere to turn for reliable, balanced, objective and accurate information, as best as it can be discovered. No one, including the Nation Media Group, will ever be able to do that perfectly. But it is critically important that all of us should try.

That may sound idealistic, but that is the reason that I founded the Nation a half century ago. That is also why we have also recently started a new Graduate School of Media and Communication here in Nairobi as part of the Aga Khan University. And it is why I wanted to be here today... to share in another milestone moment for the Nation Media Group.

As we often do at milestone events in our personal lives as well as in our institutional lives, we think today about our dreams of the past and our hopes for the future. Milestone moments are times for celebration, and they are also times for rededication. As we commission this new press today, we are also rededicating ourselves to the ideals which gave birth to this company almost six decades ago, and that have since propelled it forward ever since.

I am deeply pleased to be part of this moment, and to share in it with all of you.

Thank you for being here, and thank you for your attention.



## Global Centre for Pluralism Annual Lecture 2016 Introductory Remarks

### LOCATION

Toronto, Canada (19 May 2016)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Justice Albie Sachs  
Madame Adrienne Clarkson  
Your Excellencies  
Ministers  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

What a great pleasure it is for me to welcome you, most warmly, to the Aga Khan Museum and to this Lecture. I am particularly pleased to extend this welcome on behalf of the Global Centre for Pluralism and the members of the Board of Directors.

This is the Fifth time that the Centre has sponsored this annual event - we call it the Pluralism Lecture. It is one of the highlights of the Centre's activities each year. It is something we look forward to, beforehand, with great anticipation - and something we remember, afterward, with great appreciation.

And this year, it is our special honour to welcome as our Pluralism Lecturer - Justice Albie Sachs.

Au nom du Conseil d'administration du Centre mondial du du pluralisme, permettez-moi de vous souhaiter la bienvenue à la cinquième Conférence annuelle sur le pluralisme que

nous avons le plaisir d'organiser pour la deuxième fois au Musée Aga Khan à Toronto. Ces conférences offrent une plateforme unique pour le dialogue international et soulignent le leadership de ceux et celles qui font une différence concrète en faveur du pluralisme et d'une citoyenneté basés sur le respect mutuel. Aujourd'hui, nous avons l'immense honneur de recevoir le juge Albie Sachs.

Justice Sachs' career has been a truly inspiring one.

He has been a heroic freedom fighter, an insightful legal scholar, a compelling author and for fifteen years a member of South Africa's Constitutional Court. And, as most of you undoubtedly know, he was a chief architect of South Africa's new, post-apartheid Constitution - one of the most admired Constitutions in the world.

The creation of that Constitution is a story with continuing relevance as nations across the world look for better ways of governing themselves. And it is about that Constitution - and how it was created - that Justice Sachs will speak to us tonight.

Justice Sachs' commitment to the cause of justice and equality has been the central theme of his life. Even at the age of seventeen, he was a passionate anti-apartheid activist. As an engaged freedom fighter, he was arrested, held in solitary confinement without a trial and forced into exile. And he was not deterred even when a bomb was planted in his car, resulting in the loss of his arm and the sight in one eye.

As a senior member of the African National Congress, he helped to draft the organization's Code of Conduct - a key document in advancing the ideal of an inclusive South Africa. And then, of course, came his role in creating the post-apartheid Constitution, and later his long career on South Africa's Constitutional Court.

All of us who try to understand the challenges of pluralism in our modern world also understand that viable constitutions are the sound foundations on which healthy pluralism must rest. They are the vehicle through which the nations can reconcile the quest for national identity with the protection and the bridging of differences. In the pursuit of an effective pluralism we can learn a great deal from studying the South African constitution - and how it works - and how it was created.

Constitution-making requires a strong sense of idealism, married to a practical sense of realism. It requires a willingness to listen as competing priorities are expressed, and a readiness to negotiate as differences are reconciled. As the challenges of governance grow in complex and changing societies, a widely respected Constitution is essential to the preservation of peace and the pursuit of progress.

Canada's own Charter of Rights and Freedoms has played a central role in making Canada a leading example of a successful pluralist society. And I should also point out that Canada was a helpful contributor to the successful Constitutional transition in South Africa.

That Canadian contribution in South Africa was principally made through the work of the International Development Research Centre - IDRC as most Canadians know it - a resource created during the Prime Ministership of Pierre Trudeau - whose dedication to effective pluralism was so important in Canadian history, and is, not surprisingly, mirrored in the commitments of the present Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau.

The mission of the Global Centre for Pluralism is to convene Global leaders and to learn from their experience how to bring about a more inclusive, pluralistic society. On an evening like this, we see how well that mission can be achieved in practice.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are grateful that all of you are here to share in that experience, and to join me in welcoming, most warmly, the Centre's honoured lecturer for 2016, Justice Albie Sachs.

Thank you.





## Accepting the Adrienne Clarkson Prize for Global Citizenship

21 September 2016, Toronto, Canada

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Madame Adrienne Clarkson  
Dr. John Ralston Saul  
Premier Kathleen Wynne  
Madame Reid, First Lady of Iceland  
Your Honour Elizabeth Dowdeswell  
Your Worship John Tory  
Ministers  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

This is a deeply memorable moment for me. My warmest thanks go to Adrienne Clarkson, John Ralston Saul and the Institute for Canadian Citizenship for this wonderful Award, and to all of you for sharing in this important moment in my life.

Imagine the honour one feels - to receive an Award named after Adrienne Clarkson, presented by Adrienne Clarkson, and dedicated to the ideals of which Adrienne Clarkson is such a leading example.

As you know, Madame Clarkson has experienced, in her own life, what the concept of Global Citizenship really means. Arriving as a two-year old refugee from outside Canada, she became a Canadian citizen in the fullest and best sense. And she also became an extraordinary advocate for what Global Citizenship truly means. In so many roles over so many years, as a thoughtful journalist and broadcaster, as Canada's distinguished Governor General, and as a forceful national matriarch, she has continually been reaching out to diverse peoples in Canada, and around the world, not only in eloquent words but also in decisive action.

Madame Clarkson ne s'est pas contentée d'être une amie et une inspiratrice ; elle a aussi été pour moi un partenaire pour qui j'ai la plus grande estime. Sa contribution aux travaux de notre Réseau de Développement a été marquée par son mandat d'Administratrice du Centre Mondial du Pluralisme à Ottawa, l'un des nombreux projets collaboratifs dans lesquels mes institutions, avec une profonde reconnaissance, se sont engagées aux côtés du gouvernement canadien.

One might say that to receive an Award for Global Citizenship from Adrienne Clarkson is a bit like receiving an Excellence in Hockey Award from Wayne Gretzky!

As for the concept of Global Citizenship, that was something I began to think about seriously when I became the Imam of the Ismaili Muslims almost 60 years ago. Happily, I was able to share my thinking about Global Citizenship with the dedicated people of the Aga Khan Development Network - with whom I want to share this honour today. What we learned from the very start was that advancing our development agenda, we would be required to respect the immense diversity of ethnicities, of languages and of cultures, of faiths, of philosophies. In short, we learned to embrace the values of Global Citizenship.

As we discuss this concept, and the spirit of Pluralism on which it rests, it is only realistic, in my view, to acknowledge an increasing frustration concerning the pluralism story. We talk sincerely about the values of diversity, about living with complexity. But in too many cases more diversity seems to mean more division; greater complexity, more fragmentation, and more fragmentation can bring us closer to conflict.

The stakes seem to be getting higher as time goes by, but so do the obstacles. And that is why I will focus my brief remarks today on the continuing challenges to the ideals of Global Citizenship.

One enormous challenge, of course, is the simple fact that diversity is increasing around the world. The task is not merely learning to live with that diversity, but learning to live with greater diversity with each passing year.

One aspect of this changing reality is the challenge of human migration. More people are moving, willingly and unwillingly, across national frontiers than ever before. In country after country, the migration question is a central issue of political life. Often it is THE central issue. And old habits of mind, including narrow, exclusionary definitions of citizenship, have not met the challenge.

That was true three months ago when Great Britain voted to leave the European Union. It is true in pre-election debates in France, where I now live, and in the United States, where I went to university. It is true in Canada, as you well know, though Canada has certainly been a world leader in expanding the concept of citizenship. But the challenge is felt everywhere. Nor is the migration challenge likely to dissipate any time soon, especially as war, and violence, and economic deprivation, displace more and more people.

In such a world, the “Other” is no longer a distant someone whom we encounter primarily in the pages of a magazine, or on a video screen, or an exotic holiday trip. The “Other” increasingly is someone who appears in what we think of as “our space”, or even, “in our face.” And that reality can be hard to handle.

When the Other is seen as a potential competitor, for a job for example, even when this fear is unfounded, then the challenge of pluralistic attitudes becomes even more difficult. For those who feel insecure, it is tempting to look for scapegoats, for someone to blame, when their self-esteem seems threatened. Often, we then find it easier to define our identity by what we are against, than by what we are for.

Such fears may be culturally based, or economically driven, or psychologically rooted. But they should not be underestimated. And they will not be driven away by nice sounding words proclaiming lofty ideals.

This is why I would emphasize, as Adrienne Clarkson has always done, our responsibility to improve the quality of life in places throughout the world where that quality is unsatisfactory - fighting poverty, improving health and education, expanding opportunity - as the first manifestation of a healthy pluralistic ethic. Pluralism means responding to diversity not only at home, but on a global basis, creating genuine “visions of opportunity” wherever constraints or reversals are in the air.

But the growing challenge to pluralistic values does not happen only when people move physically from one place to another. As new technologies shrink the planet, distant forces become dire threats. We worry about the perils of environmental degradation, for example, including the spectre of climate change. We see how every local economy can be affected by distant economies. We realize how dangerous forces can spread across national borders - deadly diseases, or deadly weaponry, criminal networks or terrorist threats. And often, the human impulse is not to work across borders to meet these dangers, but to withdraw from a threatening world.

One element that complicates this challenge is the way in which we communicate with our global neighbours. We think sometimes that the new technologies can save us. If we can connect faster, at lower cost, across greater distances, with more people, just think what could happen! We would all learn more about one another and perhaps understand one another better. But I am not sure that things are working out that way. The explosion of available information often means less focus on relevant information, and even a surfeit of misinformation. Thoughtful leadership often gives way to noisy chatter.

Media proliferation is another challenge: what it often means is media fragmentation. Many now live in their own media bubbles, resisting diverse views. New technologies can make communication seem easier, but they can also make pluralism much more difficult. Yet another dimension of the challenge has to do with the realities of human nature. We often hear in discussions of Global Citizenship that people are basically alike. Under the skin, deep in our hearts, we are all brothers and sisters - we are told - and the secret to a harmonious world is to ignore our differences and to emphasize our similarities.

What worries me, however, is when some take that message to mean that our differences are trivial, that they can be ignored, and eventually erased. And that is not good advice. In fact, it is impossible. Yes, our understanding and our underlying humanity should motivate our quest for healthy pluralism. But such a quest must also be built on an empathetic response to our important differences. And that, again, is a point which Adrienne Clarkson has emphatically articulated.

Pretending that our differences are trivial will not persuade most people to embrace pluralistic attitudes. In fact, it might frighten them away. People know that differences can be challenging, that disagreements are inevitable, that our fellow-humans can sometimes be disagreeable. As Madame Clarkson has famously said, and I am quoting her here: "the secret to social harmony is learning to live with people you may not particularly like." My fear is that talking only about our common humanity might seem to threaten people's distinctive identities. And that can complicate the challenge of pluralism.

Who am I? *Qui suis-je?* We all must pose that question. Answers will grow out of basic loyalties - to family, faith, community, language, which provide a healthy sense of security and worth. But if the call for pluralism seems to dilute those old loyalties, then that new call may not be effective. Embracing the values of Global Citizenship should not mean compromising the bonds of local or national citizenship. The call of pluralism should ask us to respect our differences, but not to ignore them, to integrate diversity, not to depreciate diversity.

The call for cosmopolitanism is not a call to homogenization. It means affirming social solidarity, without imposing social conformity. One's identity need not be diluted in a pluralistic world, but rather fulfilled, as one bright thread in a cloth of many colours.

When Adrienne Clarkson gave the Massey Lectures on CBC two years ago, she used a phrase that became her book's title: "Belonging, the Paradox of Citizenship." The word "paradox" expresses precisely the challenge I have been discussing.

Perhaps the key to resolving the Paradox of Citizenship is to think about layers of overlapping identity. After all, one can honour a variety of loyalties - to a faith, an ethnicity, a language, a nation, a city, a profession, a school, even to a sports team! One might share some of these identities with some people, and other identities with others.

My own religious community identifies proudly as Ismaili Muslims, with our specific interpretation of Islamic faith and history. But we also feel a sense of belonging with the whole of the Muslim world, what we call the Ummah. Within the Ummah, the diversity of identities is immense - greater than most people realize - differences based on language, on history, on nationhood, ethnicity and a variety of local affiliations. But, at the same time, I observe a growing sense within the Ummah of a meaningful global bond.

When the question of human identity is seen in this context, then diversity itself can be seen as a gift. Diversity is not a reason to put up walls, but rather to open windows. It is not a burden, it is a blessing. In the end of course, we must realize that living with diversity is a challenging process. We are wrong to think it will be easy. The work of pluralism is always a work in progress.

Some of that work will be done in our schools. What I have called the Cosmopolitan Ethic is not something that we are born with, it is something that must be learned. Similarly, the Institute for Canadian Citizenship, under the inspirational leadership of Adrienne Clarkson and John Ralston Saul, has been working to give people who are new to Canada a sense of belonging. But this process does not simply take care of itself. It requires planning, it requires persistence and ever-fresh thinking. It is work that is never finished.

Finally, advancing the cause of Global Citizenship is not only a matter of building healthy, diversified societies, but also of maintaining them. Inevitably, new challenges will arise. Canada's Chief Justice, the Right Honorable Beverly McLachlin, spoke of such challenges last year when she delivered the annual Lecture for our Global Centre for Pluralism. She spoke of how a cosmopolitan society needed, continually, to sort out the balance between healthy diversity and social cohesion. To do that well, she said, required a respect for human dignity, strong legal institutions, and a pluralistic institutional environment.

For me, that latter strength implies a broadly diversified civil society - a healthy array of private organizations that are dedicated to public purposes. For pluralism to thrive will require the successful integration of diverse institutions and diverse leadership.

These are just a few thoughts as I look to the future of Global Citizenship. The challenges, in sum, will be many and continuing. What will they require of us? A short list might include these strengths: a vital sense of balance, an abundant capacity for compromise, more than a

little sense of patience, an appropriate degree of humility, a good measure of forgiveness, and, of course, a genuine welcoming of human difference.

It will mean hard work. It will never be completed. But no work will be more important.

Thank you.



## Brussels Conference on Afghanistan

05 October 2016, Brussels, Belgium

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim  
Your Excellency Federica Mogherini and  
Your Excellency Salahuddin Rabbani;  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I thank the Government of Afghanistan and the European Union for bringing the international community together. I am very pleased to be here, as the Ismaili Imamate and the Aga Khan Development Network have an enduring commitment to Afghanistan.

Since 2001, AKDN and its partners have channelled over \$1 billion to enhance self-reliance and improve the quality of life of Afghans. Between now and 2020, AKDN plans similar investments in cultural heritage, education, energy, health, and poverty alleviation.

In supporting the Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework, I wish to highlight three areas we believe are crucial to its success.



First, it is urgent to drive efforts to sustain and develop Afghanistan's human and social capital. For this purpose, AKDN supports the Ministry of Education's National Education Strategic Plan in over 850 schools and education centres. In health, AKDN's public private partnerships have provided treatment to over 1.6 million Afghans and trained over 13,000 doctors, nurses, and health workers. Together with our partners, we will soon inaugurate the Mothers and Children's wing of the French Medical Institute in Kabul and the new Bamiyan Provincial Hospital.

Second, supporting civil society is essential. Decades of experience have taught us that effective civil society is fundamental to lasting progress, helping ensure development that is inclusive and participatory. Civil society can unleash constructive talents from a broad spectrum of organisations and individuals, including the private sector. We are gratified to see these principles reflected in the Citizen's Charter adopted last week by the government.

Third, area development should be supported. Ensuring sustained social and economic gains often requires working across frontiers. One promising example is Pamir Energy, a public private partnership between the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development and the Government of Tajikistan. Since 2008, it has exported electricity across the border, reaching nearly 35,000 Afghans, and much more is possible.

Finally, I would reiterate my profound belief in the power of sustained, long-term, multi-dimensional development that empowers individuals and communities to improve their quality of life. It is with that conviction that I support this meeting and reconfirm our commitment to Afghanistan's future.

Thank you.



## Inauguration of the Naryn Campus of the University of Central Asia

### LOCATION

Naryn, Kyrgyz Republic (19 October 2016)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency, Sooronbay Jeenbekov, Prime Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic  
Your Excellency, Amanbai Kayipov, Governor of Naryn Oblast  
Honourable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Students,  
Faculty and Staff of the University  
Distinguished Guests

This is a great day for the University of Central Asia and for me, and for all those who have participated in the development of this University in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. And I know that now is also a very special day for the people of the Kyrgyz Republic and for the leaders and the citizens of Naryn. It is indeed a great pleasure to join with you in celebrating a truly historic moment as we inaugurate the Naryn campus of the University.

It has been a great honor, and also a great pleasure, for my colleagues and for me to work with all of you in building here in Central Asia a great new institution. Your contributions have come in many ways; through your wise advice, through financial resources, through building materials, and through the energies of local workers. Everyone who has made a contribution will always be a part of this place.

You all have our warmest thanks not only for your generous material support, but also for your friendship and for your vision.

Let me mention, too, how honored I was when the President presented to me yesterday this country's esteemed Danaker Order. This award has special meaning for me because it represents important ideals - values that the people of the Kyrgyz Republic honor in daily practice.

I gratefully accepted this award as a symbol of the partnership which has grown up through the years between the people of Central Asia and the people of the Aga Khan Development network, a reminder of the road we have walked together, and of the wonderful journey that still lies before us.

As a result of your efforts, the University of Central Asia is already helping to lead the peoples of this Central Asian Mountain Region to an exciting new chapter in their history. As we take this new step forward, I am also thinking of some of the developments already underway that have highlighted the story of these past sixteen years while providing a great sense of momentum as we move into the future.

UCA is not a typical start-up university. I would point, for example, to the remarkable School of Professional and Continuing Education. Since it launched its first courses in 2002, it has engaged a remarkable number of learners - over 90,000 in all - ranging from members of parliament to young people from the regions and from villages. I would also point to the Humanities Project with its valuable array of courses that have attracted support from 77 other universities and colleges throughout Central Asia. We could also talk proudly about The Institute of Public Policy and Administration, as well as the Mountain Societies Research Institute, two places that are already doing path-breaking research, cooperating with international partners on issues that will be central to the region's progress. In yet another area of learning, the Cultural Humanities and Cultural Heritage Unit's work on the musical heritage of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are harbingers of what can be expected. Meanwhile, through our faculty development programme, scores of Central Asians have completed their doctorates at leading universities, also providing a unique talent pool for UCA. All of these assets are building blocks which now can help the Naryn campus to play its own central and vibrant role.

This event today brings back some wonderful memories for me. It was just sixteen years ago that I joined the Presidents of the Founding States in signing an extraordinary International Treaty. It was an unprecedented event. The Treaty was then a unique example to the entire world of how these three countries could actually dream together about their common future. And it was also a wonderful example of how they could join hands together, across national boundaries, to make their dreams come true.

When I have talked about this project with people in all parts of the world over these past sixteen years, many of them have been a little bit surprised, and they were also extremely impressed. Do you mean, they asked me, that this new university will have these different bases, in three different countries, all working together in the pursuit of common goals? And my answer of course is yes - not only has this been our plan, but that is what is actually happening today. We would like to build our three campuses in the quickest succession possible.

What this University is all about is not only the power of education, but also the power of international cooperation. It is a power that can change peoples' lives.

It is important to know that what we are doing here will be a valuable example of international cooperation for the future not only here in the region, but also for people far beyond the region.

And it is also important to remember how this example also grows out of this region's past.

Students of world history remind us how Central Asia, a thousand years ago, "led the world" in trade and investment, in urban development, in cultural and intellectual achievement. This was the place that leading thinkers from around the known world would look to for leadership. What were the latest breakthroughs in astronomy or mathematics, in chemistry or medicine, in philosophy or music? This was the place to find out. This region is where algebra got its name, where the earth's diameter was precisely calculated, where some of the world's greatest poetry was penned.

Why did this happen then? Why did it happen here? Above all, I would suggest, it was because of the quality of "openness." By that I mean openness to new ideas, openness to change, and openness to people from many backgrounds and with a variety of gifts. The people of the cities here, even all those centuries ago, joined hands with the people of the steppes, and together they reached out to people who were far, far away.

That kind of openness can again be the key that unlocks the doors to the future. This will be true not just for people who live down the road, or others who may live over the immediate horizon, but also for people who are even farther away. They are potential partners and potential beneficiaries as we take on the great questions of our time and place: How can we best improve our schools, head off climate change, deal with natural disasters, and advance the public's health?

The University of Central Asia can do a great deal to help address and answer these questions, not only through its undergraduate and graduate programs, but also through faculty and student research, through relevant interdisciplinary programs - and through partnerships with other institutions - in each case, geared to the specific challenges and circumstances of the region. And the impact of what we do can not only be global and regional - it can be local as well. By working with the leadership of the Oblast, we hope, for example, that Naryn will become a dynamic university town, enhancing the quality of life for all its citizens.

Some examples are already in place: the renovation of the Jakypov Park is one; the medical and diagnostic centre is another. New plans are underway for an early childhood development center, a residential development for faculty, staff and other local citizens, as well as a university inn for the many visitors that will come to share in the beauty and vitality of the Naryn region, and the new university community.

Finally, let me mention that we are also taking some very important organizational steps as we reach this milestone moment in the early history of the University of Central Asia. Not only is UCA launching its first undergraduate degree programme, but, as an autonomous institution, it is now ready for self-governance under a Board of Trustees

as envisaged in the International Treaty and the University's Charter. As the Chancellor of the University, I am making the first appointment to the Board by naming, as its chairman, Shamsh Kassim-Lakha.

Shamsh has had a remarkable career as a successful leader in the field of education. For almost three decades, he led the building, planning and operation of the Aga Khan University, based at first in Pakistan, but now extending into three continents. He was also a former Minister of Education, as well as a Minister of Science and Technology in Pakistan. After making his appointment official, we will now also be moving to appoint other Trustees as Members of that Board, a task I will undertake in cooperation with the Presidents of the Founding States who are the Patrons of the University.

It is under their leadership that we will now go forward. What we celebrate today is not the first phase of this story of growth and progress - but it is still an early step.

Even as we rejoice today, we look forward to the many wonderful steps that are still to come.

Thank you.



## The Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2016 Ceremony

### LOCATION

Al-Ain, UAE (6 November 2016)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum,  
Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, and Ruler of Dubai  
Your Highnesses  
Excellencies  
Distinguished guests

*As-salaam-o-aleikum*

It is a genuine pleasure to welcome you to the 2016 ceremony of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture.

As you may suspect, I have the privilege of attending many wonderful ceremonies as I carry out my responsibilities. But this Architectural Award Ceremony is one of those that I look forward to with a special sense of anticipation.

Perhaps that is partly because it happens only once every three years – there is more time for the anticipation to build up! But there is a much more important reason: Architecture is the only art form which has a direct, daily impact on the quality of human life.

Again this year, the award shines a spotlight on six architectural masterpieces – calling attention to them not only within the professional community, but with the global public as well. In doing so, we believe the Award can help instruct and inspire those who will

shape the future of Global Architecture. The Award seeks to guide and inspire better building in the future.

At the same time, of course, the Award Ceremony gives us a welcome opportunity to look back. The purpose of the Award when it was first launched was to help renew one of the world's great cultural legacies, the rich traditions of Islamic architecture. Those traditions were being lost, we feared, amid a rush of modernising, westernising enthusiasms - depriving people everywhere of the insights, the intuitions and the idioms of some of the richest cultures in world history.

There was a genuine sense of urgency about the effort to reclaim that precious heritage.

How appropriate it is that we meet this evening at this magnificent Fort, a beautiful example in its own right of thoughtful historic preservation.

As we gather in this special place – and for this special purpose – we hope to remind people everywhere, of all backgrounds and identities, of a powerful lesson: The way in which a thoughtful concern for the built environment can characterise an entire civilisation.

When I speak of a thoughtful concern for the built environment, I think of several qualities which the Award seeks to honour and to promote. Let me mention just four of them.

I think, first, of how great architecture can integrate the past and the future – inherited tradition and changing needs. We need not choose between looking back and looking forward; they are not competing choices, but healthy complements. We can learn valuable lessons from history without getting lost in history; we can look boldly ahead without ignoring what has gone before.

Secondly, I think of how architectural excellence can integrate the Gifts of Nature and the potentials of the Human Mind. Natural Blessings and Human Creativity are Divine gifts – and it is wrong to embrace one at the expense of the other. The best architecture teaches us to engage with Nature respectfully; not by conquering or subduing it, nor by isolating ourselves away from it. Our host country, the United Arab Emirates, itself offers impressive examples of integrating well the natural and the human environments.

A third quality we see in the projects we honour tonight is the balance between aesthetic inspiration and practical utility. Throughout history, the challenges of change have been central to the architectural mission. But today, the pace of change has been accelerating so fast that it sometimes seems overwhelming.

Technological changes have revolutionised our lives in communication and travel, industry and agriculture, medicine and education. Natural changes – including Global Warming – also present central challenges. In a globalised world, dangerous threats can circulate more widely and quickly: weapons and pollution, drugs and crime, disease and terrorism, poverty and violence. One result has been an unprecedented increase in the migration of displaced peoples.



Some of these problems directly challenge the architectural world. At a time when old ties of community seem to erode, a sense of discipline and personal responsibility can also be diluted. In such contexts, we hear more about professional incompetence, deteriorating engineering and building standards, and even dishonest contracting practices.

All of these realities – technological, economic, social and ethical – present important challenges for responsible architecture. The projects we honour tonight have addressed such challenges, each engaging with the particular demands of its own time and place, while expressing the important values of cultural continuity.

A fourth major value that the Award for Architecture seeks to highlight is the Spirit of Pluralism – an approach to life that welcomes difference and diversity – one that embraces diversity itself as a Gift of the Creator, honouring cultural differences as the valued legacies of our predecessors.

The Spirit of Pluralism has been central to the great achievements of past Islamic cultures, and it remains a central principle for these Awards.

One of the questions we addressed four decades ago was how the selection process for the Award could best reflect the pluralism of peoples and of their habitats.

One response was to set up a three year selection cycle – a schedule that would encourage wide-ranging discussion among a diversified array of participants. Through the years, they have included architects, philosophers, artists, and historians from diverse faiths, cultures and places – people of different generations and genders. I am happy to underline that three of the awardees this year are women architects. We have drawn upon governmental and foundation friends, urban planners and village leaders, educators and researchers, engineers and financiers, and builders large and small.

To all who have contributed their time and talents to the Award process over the past three years – and down through all the years – we extend our deepest appreciation.

The Spirit of the Award has been an inclusive one, valuing all manner of buildings and spaces from skyscrapers to mud huts, from residences to work and gathering spaces, from reforestation and financing projects to cemeteries, bridges and parks, from the accomplishments of signature architects to those of anonymous craftsmen. This pluralistic approach may not echo the usual definition of the word “architecture”, but it is the closest we can get to the central inclusive message we want this Award to convey.

The jury again this year has explored projects that extend the boundaries of the architectural discipline itself, recognising that new knowledge sometimes emerges in the lines between old categories. In doing so, they have acknowledged how the architectural endeavour can provide stages on which the tensions of our time can be choreographed and negotiated, bridging, for example, the gap between the cosmopolitan and the local. Great architecture can remind us that Pluralism begins with difference, and that it does not require us to leave behind our cherished identities. That is why Pluralism, the fourth of the qualities I have discussed, is so important to the architectural mission.

These four qualities, I would submit, are worth bearing in mind as we mark the Thirteenth Presentation of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture: The integration of the Past and the Future, the harmony of Nature and Humanity, the Adaptation to Unprecedented Challenges, and the dedication to Pluralistic Ideals.

The six architectural projects we celebrate this evening reaffirm the Award's Founding Principles, even as they help us project those principles into the programme's fifth decade.

The Holy Quran commands humankind to shape our earthly environment, as good stewards of the Divine Creation. In that spirit, in moments both of elation and disappointment, we hope that the Aga Khan Award for Architecture will always point towards an architecture of optimism and harmony, a powerful force in elevating the quality of human life.

Thank you.



## Opening ceremony of the new headquarters of the Global Centre for Pluralism

### LOCATION

Ottawa, Canada (16 May 2017)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahaman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency the Governor General  
Madame la Ministre  
Excellencies  
Fellow Directors of the Global Centre for Pluralism  
Friends of the Centre

What a great day this is for all of us. And what a special ceremony, as we honour a beautiful symbol of Canada's rich past, and rededicate it to the great cause of a pluralistic Global future.

As you know, the War Museum Building was designed well over a century ago by the great Canadian Architect, David Ewart. For its first half century, it was the home of the Dominion Archives, and then, for another half century, we knew it as the War Museum. For over one hundred years, all told, it was a place where the record of Canada's proud and confident past was preserved and honoured.

I think you will agree with me that the past still speaks to us in this place. The architects, designers, engineers and so many others who have rehabilitated this wonderful Tudor Gothic building have taken enormous care to respect its distinctive historic character. We all join today in saluting the design and engineering team led by

KPMB, the construction team, led by MP Lundy Construction, and so many other dedicated staff and volunteers who have contributed to this project.

J'aimerais partager une autre pensée alors que nous tournons nos regards vers ce passé si digne de respect. Je trouve en effet très approprié que cette cérémonie ait lieu cette année, l'année du 150<sup>ème</sup> anniversaire de la Confédération canadienne.

Je suis heureux de pouvoir me compter au nombre de ceux qui, cette année, évoquent avec une fierté particulière "notre" histoire canadienne. La raison en est bien sûr la générosité dont ce pays a fait preuve à mon égard, il y a plusieurs années, en m'octroyant le titre de citoyen honoraire du Canada.

But even as we celebrate the past today, we are also looking ahead, with joy and confidence, to a particularly exciting future.

That future has also been symbolized by those who have renewed this building, in two compelling ways.

First, they created a new garden in the forecourt, a tranquil space for contemplating the past and thinking about the future. And then, secondly, they made a dramatic new gesture for the future by opening this building to the river.

When I first visited this site, I went across the Ottawa River, to see things from the opposite side. From that perspective, I noticed that many buildings on the Ontario side had, over the years, turned their backs to the river. But as we began to plan, another possibility became evident. It seemed increasingly significant to open the site to the water.

Water, after all, has been seen, down through the ages, as the great source of life. When scientists search the universe for signs of life, they begin by looking for water. Water restores and renews and refreshes. And opening ourselves and our lives to the water is to open ourselves and our lives to the future.

In addition, the Ottawa River represents a powerful connection to other places, nearby and far away. It is not only a refreshing symbol, it is also a connecting symbol, connecting this site to the rest of Canada and the rest of the world.

Throughout the history of Canada, the Ottawa River has been a meeting place for diverse peoples, originally the First Nations, and then the British and the French, and more recently Canadians from many different backgrounds. It symbolizes the spirit of connection. And the spirit of connection, of course, is at the very heart of the Global Centre for Pluralism.

The new forecourt garden suggests that the Centre will be a place for contemplation and reflection. And the opening to the River suggests that it will also be a place for connection and engagement.

What happens at 330 Sussex Drive in the years ahead will radiate out well beyond its walls, to the entire world.

Let me emphasize a point about the concept of pluralism that is sometimes misunderstood. Connection does not necessarily mean agreement. It does not mean

that we want to eliminate our differences or erase our distinctions. Far from it. What it does mean is that we connect with one another in order to learn from one another, and to build our future together.

Pluralism does not mean the elimination of difference, but the embrace of difference. Genuine pluralism understands that diversity does not weaken a society, it strengthens it. In an ever-shrinking, ever more diverse world, a genuine sense of pluralism is the indispensable foundation for human peace and progress.

From the start, this has been a vision that the Ismaili Imamat and the Government of Canada have deeply shared.

My own close association with Canada began more than five decades ago, with the coming to Canada of many thousands of Asian Ismailis, essentially as the result of Idi Amin's anti-Asian policies in Uganda. That relationship has been re-enforced through the years as we have shared with our Canadian friends in so many great adventures, here in Canada and in other lands, including the Global Centre for Pluralism.

The Centre has been, from the start, a true partnership - a breakthrough partnership - a genuine public-private partnership. And one of my central messages today is how deeply grateful we are to all of those who have made this partnership so effective.

It was with Prime Minister Jean Chretien, that we first discussed the idea of founding a new pluralism centre, and it was Prime Minister Paul Martin who helped develop the plan. Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government sealed the partnership and Minister Bev Oda then signed with me the establishing Agreement. Minister Mélanie Joly has also given strong support to the GCP. And Prime Minister Trudeau has articulated, with conviction and with passion, the need for pluralism in our world.

I think, too, today of so many other public servants who have helped guide this effort, including Universities Canada, the IDRC and other past and present members of the Corporation of the GCP. And I also thank the fine cooperation we have received from the Canadian Mint, who will share with us in occupying one wing of this building.

As we celebrate the progress we have made today, we also recognize the growing challenges to our mission, as nativist and nationalist threats to pluralism rise up in so many corners of the world. In responding to these challenges, the Global Centre for Pluralism has planned a variety of new initiatives. Among them are the new Global Pluralism Awards which will recognise pluralism in action around the world, as well as a distinguished series of new publications.

As we look today both to the past and to the future, we do so with gratitude to all those who have shared in this journey, and who now share in our pursuit of new dreams. Among them is someone whom we welcome today not only as a distinguished Statesman, but also as one whose personal support has inspired us all.

It is a pleasure and an honour to present to you His Excellency the Right Honorable David Johnston, the Governor General of Canada.

Thank you



## Speech by His Highness the Aga Khan upon receiving a doctorate honoris causa from Universidade NOVA de Lisboa

20 July 2017, Lisbon, Portugal

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Your Excellency President Professor Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa  
Your Excellency Vice-President of the Parliament Jorge Lacão  
Honorable Rector of the NOVA University, Professor António Rendas  
President of the NOVA University's General Council, Professor Arantes e Oliveira  
Patron of the Doctorate, Francisco Pinto Balsemão  
Members of the Diplomatic Corps  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

I am deeply honoured by this recognition from Universidade NOVA, and by the presence of so many of this country's distinguished leaders, including the President of the Portuguese Republic. I am grateful to Mr. Francisco Pinto Balsemão, as the Patron of the Doctorate, for his warm gesture and long friendship.

The University may be young compared against the more than 700-year history of higher education in Portugal, but it has quickly developed a truly outstanding reputation for the quality of its teaching and scholarship, and for its pluralistic, global outlook – foundations that will last for centuries.

I have always felt at home in Portugal, and now ever more so since the signing in 2015 of an historic Agreement between the Ismaili Imamat and Portuguese Republic to establish the Seat of the Ismaili Imamat in this country – an important milestone in the 1,400-year history of the Ismaili Imamat. It marks the culmination of our long and deep relationship here and one that will now deepen further. While we work in 30 countries, we hold an enduring affinity for Portugal and its institutions, its history and its people. And the historic Palacete Henrique Mendonca will become the most fitting host for the Seat.

Underpinning this partnership with Portugal is our admiration for the country's pluralism and bridge-building initiatives with people from disparate cultures and faiths.

In addition to Universidade NOVA's significant and international partnerships, your student body now includes people from an impressive 103 countries! Your principles are embodied within your motto, and I quote, "every city divided against itself shall not stand". The world would do well to adopt it.

The University promotes sustainable development across a range of human activity, all working together to raise the quality of human life. The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) also emphasises integrated approaches. In Portugal, our urban community and early childhood programmes are particularly important in driving holistic results that transform lives, across a diversity of individuals and communities.

You are purposeful about building partnerships; a true hallmark of an exceptional institution. Some of your partners are also ours, for example Catholica University and Gulbenkian Foundation. Another example is an innovative partnership between the Ismaili Imamat and the Portuguese Republic, supporting research here and in Africa. And I would also mention our work with the Agrarian Institute of Bilibiza in Mozambique to strengthen agriculture, which now seeks partnerships in Portugal. It is clear that the production of food is a critical issue for the destiny of all African countries.

Universities are important civil society institutions, and it is essential to focus on their role in the years ahead. The AKDN has two universities that, like yours, are relatively new. The Aga Khan University, started in 1983, promotes standards for healthcare and education in Pakistan, Afghanistan, the U.K. and across East Africa. More recently we started an institution in Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan. In naming it, we sought to signal local roots and the word "new" or "NOVA" Aga Khan University did not sound quite right! We called it University of Central Asia. Indeed, Portugal's emphasis on learning and knowledge aligns with Islam's emphasis on these areas.



I reiterate in closing my profound appreciation for our partnership, and for honouring me and by extension the Ismaili Imam and the AKDN, especially as this honour comes during my Diamond Jubilee year, marking 60 years as the 49th Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims worldwide.

Our commitment to Portugal reflects our deep respect for this country and our deep affection for its people.

Thank you.



## United Nations Foundation Award

### LOCATION

New York, USA (18 October 2017)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahaman-ir-Rahim*

President of the General Assembly Miroslav Lajčák,  
Secretary-General António Guterres,  
Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed,  
Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan,  
The many Permanent Representatives in attendance,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you so much Kofi Annan for your generous words of introduction. There is no person alive today who has made a greater contribution to world peace than you, and thanks are due to you from all around the world.

It is a pleasure for me to share this beautiful evening with all of you, and what a special honor it is to be receiving from the United Nations Foundation its “Champion of Change Award.” I must also say that it is a very humbling experience - especially as I look around this room at so many people who have truly been outstanding “Champions of Change” in so many fields of endeavour - including the others being honored tonight. I am indeed humbled to be in their presence.

I have come to know about the United Nations Foundation through our admired friend, Kofi Annan, who has been one of our “educators-in-chief” in spreading the good word about the UN Foundation - of which he is an extremely devoted and effective board member.

I am also an enthusiastic supporter of the UN Foundation for another reason. What has caught my attention for many years is how closely its philosophy about global development actually parallels our own. The words that leap out of its mission statements include terms like “linking” and “connecting...” not only with the United Nations itself, but with a host of other organisations. Some of these are private, some are governmental, and some are private but not-for-profit. I refer to this third category of institutions as “Civil Society” - by which I mean essentially private organizations that are fundamentally devoted to public purposes.

For a long time, political debate all around the world focused on the competing merits of government action versus private enterprise. My conviction, which has deepened through the years, is that these are false alternatives - and that is the central message I would emphasize in these brief remarks tonight. The question is not which sector can be most effective in the march towards progress - the central question is how these sectors can best become effective partners in this quest.

The concept of public-private partnerships has been one of the keys to the best work of our agencies, in many fields and many countries around the world in the last sixty years since I became the Imam of the Ismaili Muslim community. The public-private partnership formula alone, however, is incomplete - unless we also insert the words “Civil Society.” The partnerships that will most dramatically change the world are those in which all three components - private, public and civil society institutions can connect - one with the other - in all-embracing common effort.

When that happens, other concepts emphasised by the UN Foundation also come alive. I have been impressed, for example, by the innovative terminology the Foundation uses in expressing its goals: like these three dynamic words: “Catalyzing” – “multiplier” – and “effects.” Think about it.

The notion of “catalyzing multiplier effects” reflects a similar dynamic to what I refer to as “trampoline” projects for development. These projects are best-practice examples of balanced partnerships between governments, private entities and civil society, threaded together by innovative thinking, intelligent structures, and clear lines of communication. Well-defined goals and responsibilities are essential, as is the buy-in of the target constituency.

Such projects offer the potential for long-range impacts, which go well beyond immediate, short-term results.

This goal is - to be candid - sometimes easier to talk about than to accomplish. But one of the great global models of how best to pursue this aim has been the United Nations Foundation.

Another central part of our Aga Khan Development Network’s approach is one that we also share with the United Nations Foundation: an emphasis on what we call “countries of opportunity”. The issue is to do what we must to set them alive by creating and sustaining an enabling environment.

And fundamental to all of this, of course, is a basic philosophical commitment which is expressed by another important word and that word is “pluralism”. This is a frame of

mind which regards diversity, multiplicity, and indeed difference itself - not as a burden nor a threat but as a gift - a Gift of the divine - an opportunity to learn rather than a danger to be avoided.

So - it is with all of these thoughts in mind that I say again how proud I am to be here to accept your award - recognising how it reinforces not only the important "words" but also the useful concepts, and indeed the central "values"- that we - all of us - hold in common.

Thank you very much.



## Inaugural Global Pluralism Award Ceremony

### LOCATION

Ottawa, Canada (15 November 2017)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

The Right Honourable Beverley McLachlin  
The Right Honourable Joe Clark  
Excellencies  
Friends of the Global Centre for Pluralism

What a great pleasure it is to join all of you in this wonderful celebration.

The extraordinary people we honour this evening have all demonstrated the same inspiring quality - the ability to respond creatively to the challenges of diversity. At the same time, however, what is also most impressive tonight is the sheer diversity of their own particular stories. As you may have noted, the three Pluralism Awardees come from three continents, and our Honorary Awardees come from seven additional countries. But more than that, the nature of their work is itself truly multi-dimensional, as you will see as you learn about their accomplishments in more detail.

As you have heard, I am currently marking sixty years in the role I inherited in 1957. This role has taught me a great deal about the challenges of pluralism - about the way those challenges can be met, but also the way those challenges are growing. These are not new challenges, they are as old as the human race. They include the human temptation to define our personal identities by what we are against - rather than what we are for. They include the temptation to view difference, whenever it may appear, as something that might complicate one's life, rather than as something

that can enrich one's life. And they include the sometimes instinctive reaction that difference is a threat to be avoided rather than an opportunity to be embraced.

Some people make the mistake of thinking that pluralism requires them to dilute or de-emphasise their own distinctive identities. That's not true. What it requires is to ensure that one's individual identity is strong enough to engage confidently with those of other identities as we all walk together along the road to a better world.

And as we walk together on that road, the example set by others can be a powerful source of inspiration—and that is why the Global Centre for Pluralism has established these awards. Their essential purpose is to share the power of inspiring examples with an ever-wider Community of Pluralism all across our world, a Community that will then create a growing momentum for inclusion - rather than exclusion – as a way to respond to the changes of our world.

In many ways, the establishment of this Award follows the pattern of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture which was established several decades ago. The final outcome of the Awards process is important, of course, but what is also important (both for Architecture - and now for Pluralism), is the far-reaching process that leads to the selection of our Awardees. It is a process that engages, over a two-year period, scores - indeed hundreds - of dedicated individuals. It includes those who search for qualified nominees, those who explore and investigate, and who then reflect on the difference that pluralistic commitments can make in specific contexts, at specific moments, in specific places.

It is one thing for us to talk about the general principles and theories of Pluralism. But it is even more exciting to see, close up, what Pluralism can mean in practice.

As I mention that process, I want to salute all who have participated in it -including the Selection Committee, and our Jury - led by former Canadian Prime Minister Joe Clark and including His Worship Naheed Nenshi, Advocate Bience Gawanas, Dr. Dante Caputo and Madame Pascale Thumerelle.

I am also deeply pleased to be joined here tonight by the Right Honorable Beverly McLachlin, Chief Justice of Canada. I well recall her groundbreaking 2015 Pluralism Lecture in Toronto, when she reminded us that living harmoniously amid diversity demands, and I quote her, "great generosity of spirit and openness of mind."

Those very qualities certainly characterise the Chief Justice herself. Her leadership of the Supreme Court will be greatly missed when she retires at the end of this year.

It is my honour tonight to express to her our profound thanks for her powerful example, as I ask you to join me in welcoming her to this podium.

Thank you.



## Inauguration of the Sunder Nursery, New Delhi

20 February 2018, New Delhi, India

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Honourable Vice President of India  
Lieutenant Governor of the National Capital of Delhi  
Honourable Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs  
Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs  
Excellencies  
Distinguished Guests

I am deeply honoured - and so very happy - to share with you in today's ceremony. I have followed the Sunder Nursery project with keen interest for many years – going back at least to the year 2000, when the Aga Khan Trust for Culture first undertook the restoration of the Gardens of Humayun's Tomb, just next door.

I also remember the day ten years ago when we signed - with the Government of India and its agencies - the Public-Private Partnership which has so effectively advanced this great



cultural complex. We signed that agreement in 2007, and our partnership over these past ten years has been remarkable.

Our deepest gratitude goes out today to all of our partners - including the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, the Central Public Works Department, and the Archaeological Survey of India, as well as to the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the US Embassy through the US Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation. Likewise, the hundreds of craftsmen – stone carvers, plasterers, masons and gardeners - deserve our warmest appreciation and recognition.

And I would also salute the memory of the late Professor M. Shaheer - who sadly is no longer with us. Professor Shaheer worked with the Aga Khan Trust for Culture for 18 years. He was the landscape architect for our project here at Humayun's Tomb, as well as restorations in Kabul and in Hyderabad. His contribution to the Sunder Nursery project was immense -from the original master plan through to the detailed drawings. We think gratefully of him today as we see the results of his planning.

The ground on which we stand has been a centre of cultural history for a very long time. It was nearly seven centuries ago, for example, when the Sufi Saint, Nizamuddin Auliya, walked these paths and shared his teachings of universal love. That same message of tolerance and humanity would soon infuse the splendid Mughal empire – also centred here - with its Grand Trunk Road passing through this very terrain. From here, some one-quarter of the world's population was once governed in a remarkably pluralistic, harmonious, spirit.

It is in that same spirit of universal harmony that we dedicate these Gardens today. For it is the Garden, down through history, that has often symbolised the harmonious interaction of Divine Blessing and Human Creativity.

This merging of Nature's Gifts with Human Design is an ideal that is deeply embedded, of course, both in Indian culture and in Islamic traditions, with the flow of refreshing water reminding us of the abundance of Divine Blessing.

The Sunder Nursery expressed these same values when it was created here - almost one century ago, in 1924. The name, Sunder, itself, has its roots in ancient Sanskrit - often described as the world's oldest language - where "Sunder" simply means "beautiful."

The purpose of the Sunder Nursery a century ago was to gather the most beautiful plant species from every corner of the British Empire - and then to share them with the rapidly developing city of New Delhi.

But even as we reflect on these rich traditions, we also know that they have sometimes been neglected. Under pressure from exploding populations and shrinking budgets, too

often crowded buildings have been squeezed into dense spaces – overlooking the importance of open greenery in healthy urban landscapes. Some have suggested that open spaces are unproductive - or even wasteful - ignoring their aesthetic, recreational and economic potentials - as catalysts for tourism, for education, for community development and for sport.

To restore, create and revitalise beautiful green spaces has been a prime goal of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in recent years - with ten notable successes in places ranging from Cairo to Zanzibar, from Toronto to Kabul, from Dushanbe in Tajikistan to Bamako in Mali – and, of course, here in India.

All of these projects were designed to honour the past – while also serving the future. And it is with the future in mind that we now dedicate the Sunder Nursery as one of the world’s great public parks - open to all for recreation, for contemplation, for education, and for inspiration.

Just think of what a lively, energetic place this will be in the days and years to come. Already, we are told, a vast array of birds and butterflies have made their new homes in these restored spaces. And soon they will be joined by school children coming here to experience a variety of new micro-habitats, by scientists advancing their ecological research, by artists meeting audiences in the beautiful Garden amphitheatre, by historians and other visitors engaging with dozens of preserved historical monuments.

As we think about this lively future, we also know one more thing: our economic planning means that the Sunder Nursery will also be a self-sustaining entity.

It will truly be - a gift from the past that will keep on giving - long into the future.

Thank you.



## Opening of the Aga Khan Centre, London

### LOCATION

London, UK (26 June 2018)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Royal Highness,  
Lord Ahmad, Foreign Office Minister, Mr Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London,  
The leadership of Camden,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen

What a pleasure it is to welcome you to this celebration!

We celebrate today a beautiful new architectural accomplishment. As we do so, we also honour those who have made this Centre possible - and the values that have inspired their work.

Two of those values which deserve special mention today - the value of education as a force for cooperation and healing in our world - and the value of architecture as a source of inspiration and illumination.

Both of these values - education and architecture - have been significant in the life and work of today's guest of honour, His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales. As you know, Prince Charles' commitment to creative education - through organisations such as the Prince's Trust and the Prince's School of Traditional Arts - has transformed the

lives of countless young people from many backgrounds - over many years, and in many places.

Prince Charles has also consistently affirmed the transformative power of architecture - including the rich traditions of Islamic architecture. You may know, for example, about his development of an award-winning Islamic garden at his home in Highgrove.

The value of education, of course, is at the heart of this project. We are proud to open here a new home for two important educational institutions associated with the Aga Khan Development Network and the Ismaili Imamate. One is the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations of the Aga Khan University. The other is the Institute of Ismaili Studies. The UK offices of the Aga Khan Foundation will also be located here.

These institutions - through their teaching and research, their rich library and archival resources, as well as their tours and public programmes - will enrich the lives of people from the entire world.

For those of us who have seen these institutions grow from infancy, it will be a special joy to see them pursue their mission from this beautiful setting.

And what a mission it is!

One of the central challenges that faces our world today is the challenge of harmonising many highly diversified voices within an increasingly globalised world.

I use the word “harmonising” carefully - for our ideal here is not a chorus that sings in unison, but one that blends many distinctive voices into an intelligent, resonant whole. But to do that requires a deep understanding of what makes each voice distinctive. And that is the essential function of the educational endeavours that will make this place their home.

The challenge is particularly important in the area of religion – and it has been especially challenging for Islamic-Western relations. For centuries, the Muslim and Western cultures were largely separated geographically – although there have been memorable periods of integration as well - on the Iberian Peninsula and in South Asia - among other places. But those were hopeful exceptions to what some observers came, over time, to describe as an inevitable pattern of clashing civilisations.

When I came to my role as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community - just sixty years ago - I found it impossible to accept the notion of inevitably clashing civilisations. My own early life experiences were in both worlds – and so were those of millions of Muslim peoples. So rather than talk about clashing civilisations, I began to talk - again and again, as some of you may recall - about a clash of ignorances. And the assumption behind that phrase was that ignorance could yield to understanding through the power of education.

That continuing conviction is what brings me here today. I believe that is what brings all of us here.

My strong expectation is that, from this new home, our education-oriented institutions will contribute powerfully to building new bridges of understanding across the gulfs of ignorance.

As that happens, one important source of inspiration will be the place from which these institutions will be working - and that brings us to the second value I mentioned earlier - the inspiring power of architecture.

The places from which we look out at the world - and the places into which we welcome the world – can deeply influence how we understand ourselves - and our world.

And what place could be more ideal for both our educational hopes and our architectural enthusiasm than the place where we meet today - in the heart of London's "Knowledge Quarter." King's Cross is one of the central connecting points for a city which itself has been one of the great connecting points for the entire world.

This place has been shaped by many diverse influences – and among them we now welcome the rich traditions of Islamic architecture.

One of those traditions - one that is appreciated by both the Islamic and the British cultures - is the special importance of the garden. We see the garden not merely as an adjunct to other constructions, but as a privileged space unto itself.

And that is why I have emphasised, since our role began here in 2010, my own hope that the value of garden spaces should be embraced here. As we perambulate together through these spaces today, I trust that you will share my delight in seeing how that hope has been fulfilled.

What we will see as we walk along are not only beautiful buildings - but also a unique series of gardens, courtyards and terraces - eight of them, in all, across our two buildings. Each one of them, moreover, has a distinctive identity: each one is inspired by a different region of the Islamic Ummah.

Taken together, this winding ribbon of special spaces is an eloquent tribute to the rich diversity of the Muslim world.

What they will make possible for those who walk these pathways, the people who will live and work here and public visitors as well, is a wonderful journey of refreshment and discovery.

Now, as I mentioned earlier, an extraordinary Islamic garden already exists in this part of the world, the one that Prince Charles created at his own home. But, since it is something of a journey to get out to Gloucestershire, we thought we might save people the trip by locating something here! For now they can actually see eight Islamic gardens right here in the heart of London!

As we open this remarkable site, it is a privilege to salute those who have brought us to this moment. I would recognise, in particular, our fine relationship with the government of this borough, this city, and this country, as well as our rewarding partnership with the people at Argent. We are grateful, as well, for the talents of Maki and Associates, Allies and Morrison, Madison Cox and Nelson Byrd Woltz, as well as Rasheed Araeen and

the late Karl Schlamminger. I would also like to thank our splendid team of staff and volunteers, including my brother Prince Aryn, who have stewarded this project to completion.

And we especially salute the magnificent generosity of supportive donors from around the world.

Finally, as we open this building, I proudly welcome a guest whose commitment to the promise of inter-cultural education - and to the power of architecture - resonates ideally with the spirit of this place and this moment.

Ladies and gentlemen, His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales.



## Address to the Parliament of Portugal

### LOCATION

Lisbon, Portugal (10 July 2018)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency, President of Parliament, Eduardo Ferro Rodrigues  
Distinguished Members of Government and Members of Parliament  
Honourable Mayor of Lisbon, Fernando Medina  
Excellencies  
Distinguished guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by expressing my most sincere gratitude to the President and the members of the Parliament, for your very warm welcome in this remarkable setting, and to the President of the Republic for the invitation to visit Portugal.

I recognise what a great honour it is to have been invited to speak to you today.

It is always a personal pleasure for me to return to Portugal. I treasure wonderful memories of earlier visits here - including the gracious hospitality of the last five Presidents of the Parliament. Portugal is surely an ideal place for me to conclude my Diamond Jubilee anniversary - celebrating my sixtieth year as Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims.

During this Jubilee year, I have visited Ismaili communities in many parts of the world. And now the anniversary events come to a happy culmination here in Portugal,



so graciously facilitated by the strong collaboration of the Portuguese diplomatic service abroad, and the civil service here in Lisbon.

I am told that some 40 thousand members of the Ismaili community have come here this week to share in our Jubilee celebrations. In the process, of course, they will also have the opportunity to discover Portugal, many of them for the first time. In doing so they are joining a great wave of foreign visitors who have made Portugal one of the fastest growing travel destinations in the world.

Of course, when we use the word “discover” in connection with Portugal, we are immediately reminded of the leading role that Portugal played in the great Age of Discovery - a half a millennium and more, ago. The spirit of discovery - of reaching out, of connecting and engaging, has long been a central part of Portuguese culture.

It was here, on the Iberian peninsula, between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, that the History of Al-Andalus was written - when Muslim administrations worked constructively with people of the Christian and the Jewish faiths, viewing a diversity of talents and energies as a source of strength – rather than a cause for division.

This pluralistic outlook has been reflected at many points throughout Portuguese history – and it has been powerfully expressed in the recent re-emergence of this country as an influential leader on the global stage. I think of the strong roles played by Portuguese leaders at the United Nations, and UNESCO, at the European Commission, and - as of just last week - at the International Organization for Migration, to mention only a few examples.

As I have travelled throughout the world in recent years, one of the most hopeful developments I have identified is the emergence of countries with the potential to become “Countries of Opportunity.” And certainly Portugal has been earning a high place on that list.

To become a Country of Opportunity is not an easy matter, it is something that the people and the government of a nation must work at, creatively, patiently, and persistently.

A Country of Opportunity is one that builds on the strengths of its past, while also addressing its problems, embracing enduring values while respecting a variety of viewpoints. Countries of Opportunity value legal structures that create a climate of predictability and confidence, an enabling environment for creative change.

A Country of Opportunity is one that encourages cooperation among diverse interests, fostering partnerships between government and the private sector, for example, while also encouraging those private organisations that are designed to serve public goals, what we often call the institutions of civil society.

It is because of such factors that we can think today of Portugal as a Country of Opportunity, a country that seeks to honour both its past achievements and its future opportunities, to embrace both the gift of social stability and the promise of social progress. And the Portuguese Parliament is to be commended for its role in that encouraging story.

My viewpoint on this matter is widely shared. One example, is the Global Peace Index for 2018, a report for the Institute for Economics and Peace. The Global Peace Index measures some 23 economic, social and political factors which contribute to peaceful societies in 163 countries. And it came as no surprise to see that, among all the nations in the world, Portugal is ranked in the top five.

It was with these values in mind that we signed an historic agreement in Lisbon in 2015 - an Agreement to establish here a new Seat of the Ismaili Imam. This means that Lisbon, already a leading international crossroads city, will also now serve as a central connecting point for the global Ismaili community.

After that Agreement was signed three years ago, it was approved by the Portuguese Parliament, and I am pleased to thank the Parliament today, in person, for that welcoming endorsement.

Of course, we can trace the story of Ismaili engagement with Portugal back many years - even to the time when Ismailis settled in Portuguese Territories in India in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, or when later Ismaili settlers came to Mozambique. Another milestone moment was the generous welcome that Portugal offered almost half a century ago to many Ismailis fleeing the Mozambiquan civil war.

Since that time, Ismaili ties to Portugal have multiplied. The Aga Khan Foundation in Portugal was established in the mid-1980's. In 1998 we created a new Ismaili Centre in Lisbon. Protocols of Cooperation between the Imam and Portugal were signed in 2005, in 2008, in 2009, and in 2016, as well as a Memorandum of Understanding between the Aga Khan University and the Catholic University of Portugal.

The word momentum comes to mind! What we celebrate today is an advancing sense of momentum - a spirit of progressive partnership between the Portuguese nation and the Ismaili Imam.

Today, the Ismailis are a highly diversified community, living in more than 25 countries, mostly in the developing world, but with increasing numbers in Europe and North America.

The Ismaili Imam himself, as you may know, is an international institution that goes back some 15 centuries, to the time of Prophet Muhammad (may peace be upon Him and his Family). This means that when I inherited my role just 61 years ago, I became the 49<sup>th</sup> hereditary Imam of the Ismaili Muslims.

Through the centuries, the Seat of the Ismaili Imam has been formally designated in one or more locations by the Imam-of-the-Time, depending on the requirements of the day. It has known many homes over the years - throughout the Arabian Peninsula, in the Middle East, in South Asia, and in North Africa. It moved to Cairo in the tenth century, when my ancestors founded that city.

The decision to establish a new Seat here in Portugal, at the gracious invitation of your Government, is one that has been taken after much reflection and consultation. It represents a true milestone moment in the long history of the Imam.

The authority of the Ismaili Imam is spiritual rather than temporal in nature. At the same time, Islam believes fundamentally that the spiritual and material worlds are inextricably connected. This means that the Imam-of-the-Time also has a responsibility for improving the quality of life - the quality of worldly life - for his people, and for the people among whom the Ismailis live. It is to advance those responsibilities that so much of my attention over these sixty years has been committed not only to strengthening the Imam's capacities to fulfill its mandate, but also to the work of what we now call the AKDN - the Aga Khan Development Network.

The AKDN includes a variety of agencies working in the fields of economic development, education, health care, and cultural enrichment. Our fundamental objective is to do whatever we can to help to improve the quality of human life. And that is the spirit that will continue to inspire our partnership with the people and the Government of Portugal.

We know that the days ahead will be demanding ones, a time of profound global change. Economic developments are bringing new prospects for influence in the Global East, and a new sense of hope in the Global South. One new study suggests that two-thirds of the world's growth in the next few years will be centered in the cities of the developing world.

At the same time, new technologies of communication and transportation are inter-connecting the world more closely than ever before.

What will these new realities mean for all of us? On the one hand, we must recognise, realistically, that our inter-connected world could bring about an increasing sense of suspicion, fear, and perhaps even vertigo as we look into the future. Diverse peoples, sadly, can sometimes interpret their differences as threats rather than as opportunities, defining their own identity by those they are against, rather than what they are for.

On the other hand, closer interactions in our world will also produce wonderful new opportunities for creative cooperation, for healthy inter-dependence, for new discovery and inspiring growth. When that happens, the opportunity to engage with people who are different from us need not be seen as a burden, but rather, as a blessing.

The welcoming attitude is often described as a pluralistic outlook. It was the animating concept behind one of our major AKDN projects, our establishment, together with the Government of Canada, of the Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. Since its founding 12 years ago, the Centre has worked to advance what we all refer to as a Cosmopolitan Ethic. Fostering strong Cosmopolitan Ethic in our world is surely a central challenge of our time.

As we face that challenge, Portugal is a most encouraging example. A Cosmopolitan Ethic has contributed abundantly to Portuguese culture in the past, and I know it will continue to animate this country's future. It is a value that we will deeply enrich with our continuing partnership, as we establish here in Lisbon, a city with a true global vision, a new Seat of the Imam, a committed global institution.

The Ismaili Imam will now be proudly moving some of its activities into the magnificent, historic Palacete Mendonça. There we will establish our Department of

Diplomatic Affairs and our Department of Jamati Institutions. We are already planning to host, here in Lisbon, next year's meeting of the Board of the Global Centre for Pluralism, as well as the inaugural Aga Khan Award for Music. And there will be much more to follow.

And so, our planning moves forward. We know that we face a demanding future. But as we engage with those demands, the Ismaili Imamat will draw strength from our continuing sense of partnership with the people and the Government of Portugal.

So let us, then, go forward together, bound by our shared past, committed to our shared values, and inspired by our shared hopes for a constructive, purposeful future.

Thank you.



## Remise des Insignes de Grand-Croix de la Légion d'Honneur

### LOCATION

Paris, France (19 September 2018)

Dear Friends,

I don't have a prepared speech. Which means I am going to talk to you from the heart and share with you my sense of enormous gratitude, deep friendship, and partnership with France, at this important moment in my life.

For years, we have worked together in different fields, in France and abroad, always in close partnership, sharing common perspectives and goals, with respect, above all, for the great values of France. For me this partnership is particularly important. It's a partnership built on historical values. And these historical values have proven their worth the world over. They are values that originated in France, but are now universal.

My institution and my community are committed to defending, developing and promoting these values. We seek to educate the institutions in the countries where we work to include these values in their own philosophy and educational programmes so that it is no longer something new, but an integral part of the quality of civil society in the countries where the Ismaili community lives.

I want to thank France today for its wise counsel and the examples you have set. I have witnessed their implementation, especially in Africa where there are political regimes that have learned a great deal from France; thanks to what they have learned from you, today these regimes demonstrate a high level of management quality.

Thank you for the award you have given me. I am extremely touched. I hope that, in the years I have left, I will be able to make myself even worthier of this honour.

Thank you.



## **GCP Annual Pluralism Lecture 2018**

### **LOCATION**

London, UK (4 October 2018)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellencies,  
Ministers,  
Ms. Armstrong,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the Board of the Global Centre for Pluralism, to the 2018 Pluralism Lecture at the new Aga Khan Centre here in London.

At the outset, I should like to remark on the passing of our fellow Director, the late Kofi Annan.

I was privileged to know and work with Mr. Annan for many years. He made an enormous contribution to the Global Centre for Pluralism, just one of his many remarkable contributions to humanity. He will be greatly missed. Our thoughts are with Mrs Annan at this difficult time. It is gratifying that the important work of the Kofi Annan Foundation for a fairer, more peaceful world is continuing.

Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me a moment to speak of this beautiful building and the transformative power of architecture. I hope you will have the opportunity to explore the building and especially to visit its unique series of gardens, courtyards and terraces, each one inspired by a different region of the Islamic world.



The building also stands as a testament to the value of education: it is the new home for two educational institutions - the Aga Khan University's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations and the Institute of Ismaili Studies.

Through research and learning, they will contribute to increased understanding of the rich history and varied traditions of different Muslim civilisations. In so doing, they should help bridge the gulf of ignorance that has characterised Islamic-Western relations for far too long.

Tonight's speaker, Karen Armstrong, is a person who has contributed in a remarkable way to illuminating Islam, Judaism and Christianity, and indeed, understanding all of the great religious traditions.

One of the world's most respected and prolific historians of religion, Ms. Armstrong has written more than 20 books, translated into 45 languages. Notably, in *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence*, she challenged the view that religion has been the cause of many of history's violent conflicts, and argued convincingly that in many cases, religion has been the pretext. An original thinker and activist, her work has resonated well beyond the realm of theologians and philosophers.

A graduate from the University of Oxford with a degree in literature, Ms Armstrong went on to teach, and in 1982 she had become a freelance writer and broadcaster. After being retained to work on a documentary on St Paul, she spent time in the Middle East. She was inspired by the time she spent there. She learnt and she reflected on the great religions, and found her vocation as a writer exploring the commonalities shared by the faiths of Islam, Judaism and Christianity - commonalities such as the Golden Rule - behave towards others how you would like them to behave towards you.

In February 2008, Ms. Armstrong was invited to participate in the TED speaker series where she made the case for the creation of a Charter for Compassion. Her talk had a great impact and led to her winning the coveted TED prize which allowed her to implement the beginnings of the Charter for Compassion.

A year and a half later, the final Charter for Compassion was released. The process of its creation included the contributions of more than 150,000 people from around the world, who submitted their thoughts online. Their ideas were then refined into a final draft by a panel of leading theologians.

This idea of compassion resonates with people. When Amin Hashwani, a business executive and activist in Pakistan, heard Ms. Armstrong's TED Talk, it affected him deeply. In 2011, Amin Hashwani founded the Compassionate School Network, a programme to train schools and educators to build student skills in compassion, which is still operating with great success.

The momentum and excitement behind this global initiative led to another remarkable book by Ms Armstrong: *Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life*.

Ladies and Gentlemen, looking into the future, I think that one of the greatest challenges for the entire world will be finding ways in which we can all achieve a deeper understanding of the other, and what makes each of us distinct, as human beings and as communities.

To achieve this vital goal, reflective, creative and empathetic thinkers and writers will be critically important.

Tonight, we are privileged to hear from one of their most respected voices, Karen Armstrong.

Thank you.



## Inauguration of the Aga Khan Garden, Alberta

### LOCATION

Edmonton, Canada (16 October 2018)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahaman-ir-Rahim*

Your Honour Lois Mitchell,  
The Honourable Rachel Notley,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Your Worships,  
Chancellor Stollery,  
President Turpin,  
Distinguished Guests,

It is always a great pleasure to greet old friends and welcome new friends at a celebration like this. But today's inauguration stands out for me as particularly joyous.

For one thing, the old friendships we renew today are especially meaningful. We look back, of course, to the welcome in Alberta of members of the Ismaili community who settled here almost a half century ago, often in very difficult circumstances. And those bonds of welcome have been continually renewed through the years, especially through our rewarding partnerships with the University of Alberta.

One of the special gifts that old friends offer is introducing us to wonderful new friends, and that has also happened here. The project we celebrate today – the inauguration of the Aga Khan Garden – is a particularly happy example.

I think all of you have had the pleasure – in your personal life or your professional life – of seeing a fascinating story develop happily from beginning to end. We recall the excitement of a new beginning – as well as that deep sense of grateful satisfaction when the planning works – when the hope is realised, and the vision is achieved.

Well that is exactly how I feel today. I was fortunate to have been part of this project's conception – and I feel fortunate to be here today to help mark its realisation.

I remember well my visits to the University of Alberta during my Golden Jubilee year – in 2008, and again for the graduation ceremonies in 2009. That was when we first discussed this dream of creating here, together, a new Islamic garden. I paid my first visit to the proposed garden site at that time, wondering, even then, just how this dream might come true in practice.

It seemed like an unlikely dream to many. After all, the great tradition of Islamic gardens has its roots in very different times and places. The symbol of the garden as a spiritual symbol goes back to the Holy Qur'an itself - where the garden ideal is mentioned many times. Down through many centuries, Islamic culture has continued to see the garden as a very special place, where the human meets further proof of the divine.

The development of the garden as a symbol of Islamic ideals flourished most magnificently some 500 to 600 years ago – and that happened, of course, in the warmer climates of Southern Asia. And yet, there we were in Edmonton a decade ago, proposing to extend that lovely eastern and southern tradition, at the start of the 21st Century, to the unique natural environment of northern and western Canada. This proposed new garden, to be precise, would be the northern-most Islamic garden ever created.

Over the past nine years I have been able to watch the dream come true – as we agreed on the configuration of the site, assembled a Steering Committee, chose an architectural firm, and reviewed development plans. And then, with the planning completed, the building process took just some 18 months – finishing “on time and on budget,” as planners like to point out!

As I look out at this garden today, what I think about – above all – are the people who made it possible - their dedication, their talent, and their remarkable energy. I want them all to know that in celebrating this new garden today – we are also celebrating them. Theirs is a highly valued gift to the generations to come, who also must be privileged by experiencing the spirituality and harmony of multiple life forms.

They include construction workers and gardeners, planners and administrators, artists and scholars, architects and designers – including the landscape design firm of Nelson Byrd Woltz. They include dedicated members of the Ismaili and other Muslim communities in Alberta – and other parts of Canada, the remarkable family of the University of Alberta, governmental officials at all levels, and those who serve the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the Aga Khan Development Network.

At the heart of their efforts, of course, was the inspiring power of the Islamic garden itself. For a central part of the garden tradition is the high calling of human stewardship, our responsibility to honour, to protect, and to share the gifts of the natural world.

Gardens in this context can be seen not as imitations of nature but as humanity's interpretations of nature, their geometric structures providing a human framework in which we can experience – in this case – the magnificent fluctuations of the Albertan landscape.

The garden of Islamic tradition is also a place where the flow of refreshing water reminds us of divine blessing. It is a place for meditation, and quiet renewal. But I would likewise emphasise that the garden, through history, has also been seen as a social space – a place for learning, for sharing, for romance, for diplomacy, for reflection on the destiny of the human race. And even as we share the garden experience with one another, we can feel a connection with those who walked through similar gardens in the past.

I would also mention one additional aspect of the particular garden we inaugurate today. It symbolises not only the creative blending of the natural and the human – but also the beauty of multiple inter-cultural cooperation.

One of the great questions facing humanity today is how we can honour what is distinctive about our separate identities – and, at the same time, welcome a diversity of identities as positive elements in our lives.

This city and this country have been among the world leaders in providing positive answers to that ancient question. The project we inaugurate today is a beautiful extension of that Canadian tradition.

In Canada and in many other places, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture has made a major commitment to creating and renewing important green spaces in recent years. We can look back on ten recent successes in places ranging from Cairo to Zanzibar, from Toronto to Kabul, from Dushanbe in Tajikistan to Bamako in Mali. In 2018 alone, I helped to inaugurate three such garden projects – in London, in Delhi, and now here in Alberta.

But the story does not end here. In fact, the story of Canadian Islamic gardens itself is not yet completed. Our plans are now advancing, in fact, for a new park to be developed a few hundred miles southwest of here, in Burnaby, British Columbia.

Yes – to be sure – it will surpass Edmonton as the western-most Islamic garden. But, of course, we can be rest assured, that Edmonton’s garden will still have a lasting claim as the northern-most!

I have talked about the past, today, but I would close by emphasising the future. It is wonderful at a moment like this to think of all those who will visit here in the years to come. Our work now is to sustain this space, to create new experiences and to meet new challenges.

As you walk through these Gardens, you will see evidence of the ways in which future generations will be able to make the most of this site. It is our hope and expectation on this special day that the Aga Khan Garden here at the University of Alberta will truly be a gift that keeps on giving.

Thank you.



## Geneva Ministerial Conference on Afghanistan

### LOCATION

Geneva, Switzerland (28 November 2018)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to thank the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations for bringing the international community together to reaffirm our commitment to Afghanistan, and, most importantly, to its people.

Two years ago, many of us gathered in Brussels for a similar purpose. And there have been several such gatherings over the past some seventeen years. Commitments have been made, challenges overcome, hopes raised and sometimes dashed.

It would seem at times that hope is difficult to sustain. The challenges of building security, alleviating poverty, addressing the impact of climate change, and the complexities of pursuing reconciliation are a few of the cross-cutting areas that dominate our thinking.

I would suggest that we should be guided equally by acknowledging and supporting the resilience of the Afghan people. They have recently voted in record numbers, often at great personal risk. And their spontaneous reactions during this year's brief ceasefire gave us all a glimpse of the country that could be: people from every region and background unified in their desire for peace.



The National Unity Government also deserves our recognition and support for its efforts to implement critical reforms and advance Afghanistan on the road to self-reliance.

Two years ago, in Brussels, we promised to deepen our commitment in three critical areas: building human capital; strengthening institutions and civil society; and promoting regional development.

I have always maintained that my institutions would make a permanent commitment to the country. Therefore, on behalf of the Ismaili Imam and the Aga Khan Development Network, I underline, once again, our enduring commitment to Afghanistan and to its peoples.

As we come together to support the National Unity Government, investing in civil society - encouraging private organisations designed to serve public goals - deserves equal attention. Such institutions can be stabilising factors and points of continuity. That is why AKDN supports the full spectrum of civil society, devoting special attention to health, education, culture, community governance, and public-private partnerships to deliver other services.

Therefore, since our last meeting, working in cooperation with our partners, we have opened the Bamyan Provincial Hospital, and the Mothers' Wing of the French Medical Institute for Mothers and Children in Kabul. We have expanded our work with Afghanistan's education system to improve the quality of learning and to help over 150,000 girls to go to school. In the coming years, we intend to build a full-service tertiary research hospital in Kabul linked to the Aga Khan University, to deepen our work in primary and secondary education, and to expand activities of the regional University of Central Asia.

In the area of civil society, our ongoing commitment to Afghanistan's diverse culture was marked by the recently-completed Chihilstoon Palace and Gardens, joining over 140 other heritage sites around the country restored by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture with the strong support of the Afghan government and international partners. This year, we have together launched an ambitious plan to rejuvenate the Kabul Riverfront. We are also working directly to harness the power of people coming together: through the Aga Khan Foundation, we have helped thousands of community groups and district authorities deliver the government's vital Citizen's Charter and promote more inclusive development in remote areas.

To foster regional integration, we have expanded the transmission lines of Pamir Energy from Tajikistan into Northern Afghanistan, providing some villages with power for the first time. We will soon start work on a sixth cross-border bridge and market between those countries, and are in advanced discussions to increase substantially electrification from the border to Faizabad.

Mr Chairman, the experience of the past seventeen years has strongly reinforced my conviction that the path to sustainable peace in Afghanistan depends heavily on two key principles – regional cooperation, which is key for national development and stability; and a commitment to pluralism – the country's diversity must be cultivated as a source of strength. Everyone in all regions should benefit from investment that creates hope for the future. This is a guiding principle of our investment in Afghanistan. I hope that

these are principles on which we can all work together, and to which we remain committed in Afghanistan.

Thank you.



## KfW "Weiterdenken" ("Thinking Ahead") event

### LOCATION

Berlin, Germany (15 January 2019)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Minister of State, Mr. Niels Annen,  
Professor Dr. Joachim Nagel,  
Members of Parliament,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to celebrate here today the special partnership between Germany and the Aga Khan Development Network, or AKDN. Over the past 25 years, we have implemented almost € 600 million of programmes together in Asia and in Africa - spanning clean energy and infrastructure, water supply and sanitation, financial services and tourism, as well as education, health and civil society.

In all of this work, our relationship with the KfW Development Bank and DEG remains vital. And while AKDN has also cooperated with most of Germany's development actors, I should especially thank the Federal Foreign Office and the Ministry of Development, or BMZ, for their key support.

Tonight, we gather to recognise our shared commitments and achievements in Afghanistan, and reflect on lessons that might apply towards other contexts of fragility and crisis.



## Entretien de Son Altesse l'Aga Khan avec Henri Weill de La Cohorte

### LOCATION

Gouvieux, Chantilly (8 March 2019)

*(Interview on 29 January 2019)*

*In 1957, the Aga Khan succeeded his grandfather as the leader of the Ismailis. He is the 49<sup>th</sup> Imam of a community estimated at between 12 and 15 million believers living in 25 countries. Prince Karim Al-Husseini (his birth name) created the Aga Khan Development network (AKDN), committed to development in the world, regardless of whether there is a community in the country in question. Grand Croix of the Legion of Honour, this discreet man, aged 82 years old, welcomed us for one of his rare French interviews in his property in Gouvieux, Oise.*

**Your Highness, you are a head of state, but a head of state without a State.**

In fact, I am the Imam of an international community. As you know, there is no state that is totally Ismaili. The community is in South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, in Africa, and now in Europe, North America and Australia. A part of it was in the former Soviet Union, because there is a large community in Tajikistan. It has become internationalised since my grandfather died in 1957.

**But how should we consider you internationally? As a Head of State? A prince? An Imam?**

As an Imam.

**What is the community for which you are the 49th Imam?**

It is a Shia Muslim community which has been in existence for centuries with successive Imams and is probably now more international than ever. I think that is the major difference with the past. We have created institutions in countries, especially in the West in which we previously had no presence. We have universities, schools, financial institutions in a very large number of countries that serve both the community and the local population.

**What is your goal? To reduce poverty?**

It is to improve the quality of life and that indeed involves reducing poverty, but it also provides people with the means to improve their quality of life. That is the goal. For example, we try to eliminate disease when we can eliminate it, we want to build national or international institutions, such as universities, schools and hospitals which help the community and societies. It is therefore necessary for the community to be valued, recognised and its institutions must serve the countries in which they are based.

**But isn't it rather unusual for a spiritual leader to be involved in development?**

Not in Islam. This is one of the major differences between Islam and many other religions. Here, the Imam is responsible for the quality of life of the men and women who look up to him. He gets involved in their daily life.

**But there are many Islams. Are you representing the social side?**

In Shia Islam, Imams have always been concerned with the community's quality of life. In Sunni Islam, it is much more dispersed since there are many more Imams.

**But are you not in fact, looking to show the religion in another light?**

I think it is more a question of interpreting what you mean by religion. The 48th Imam had his own views and an enormous political career. Personally, I was not interested in a political career, but I have one through the community. It represents a large population in countries where there is a political life. And that is why we have set up national councils in twenty countries, made up of volunteers committed to improving quality of life.

**Do you also want to project a very ethical image?**

Yes. I think that having a community that is committed to ethics, is very important and particularly in democratic countries.



**You just mentioned your predecessor (your grandfather). You are the 49th imam. And have been for over 60 years, now. What have you learned from these six decades?**

There are certainly some things that stand out. In 1957, the Cold War was a major problem for Western governments, and the world in general. That Cold War had a significant impact on the Third World. The Cold War no longer exists. It has been replaced by other visions of what a State is, so now the core issue is one of good governance.

**When we look at the world we are not moving towards this type of governance, on the contrary, it seems to me we are regressing?**

I think it is a fluctuating, unstable situation. That is what makes planning quite difficult. The former Soviet countries came out of the orbit of the Soviet bloc, other countries, which had been colonised, decolonised themselves and became independent. Then there was a whole series of regional agreements that have played their role. Financial institutions have become very important and have an impact on Third World economies in particular. We are living in a totally different world. And the most important thing is to be able to predict change such that a community's institutions can start anticipating and preparing themselves. And it's a very complex job, but it's fascinating and if it's well managed will produce excellent results.

**Do you never have moments when you feel disillusioned?**

Certainly, and moments when I am worried, because often disillusionment follows on from worrying. Firstly, we are concerned, then we start to feel forces that are not necessarily those we want and we try to anticipate. A big debate, which existed as far back as the 1960s and still goes on today is the role of the State in the life of its people.

**Through your foundation, are you replacing the unsatisfactory roles of certain states?**

We are indeed trying to get involved wherever we can play a positive role, and not just for Ismailis. We often have partners who work with us and even international partners such as the World Bank and other similar institutions.

**Is that why you became a partner of the Peace Forum?**

Yes, it is one of the things I have done. Peace is clearly something that we are trying to stabilise, and above all to strengthen. It's very complicated. However, it is very important to make dialogue a part of everyday political life. We're getting there, but it's slow.

**You work through your foundation, AKDN, which is one of the largest private development organisations in the world...**

When you look at the Third World, where the Ismaili community is particularly present, we have to ask ourselves about governments. And I have always taken the view that civil society must play a fundamental role in the future of all populations. So, we have to consolidate and strengthen it. And that means taking the most important institutions of civil society and giving them support and encouragement wherever we can perhaps help them do things differently from anything we have known up till now. Especially when it comes to decolonisation.

**Do you want to embody a voice of reason?**

Oh, I'm not sure that's the case, but I hope it's a voice of logic. The Imam's role is also to anticipate change, to help make positive changes. In the end, it is the strength and quality of civil society that determines people's quality of life.

**It seems that your message of peace, forged from logic and reason is one that is heard with decreasing regularity today.**

Yes, that's right, but I think it's also because of the problems with governance and economic imbalances. Foreign influences also have a big role to play. We are faced with a world that is changing and trying to develop. I am optimistic yet cautious.

**Do you only work in those countries who ask you to get involved or is it you who makes the request?**

We work in countries where there is a community or in countries that ask us to get involved, even if there is no community. We have realised that regional phenomena are very important. Even if we are not present in a given country, if a neighbouring country has a large community, you try to build with that State.



**Do you consider yourself a benefactor of humanity?**

Not a benefactor. Benefactor means that we are involved in philanthropy; I work within the framework of the institution of the Imamat. We certainly do philanthropy of course, but we also set up economic institutions, which have their own business life and are intended to last and grow.

**In sixty years, you have built so much.**

Yes, I have built things because circumstances demanded that I do so and that it was what the community needed; but this process of growth is an infinite process at the same time. So, what is important is to try and predict future developments in society and then create institutions that can contribute to positive growth. For example, it is important to reduce poverty as much as possible.



**That is an uphill battle.**

It is probably a battle that is limitless in time. We try one direction. We don't necessarily know what will happen, but we know we are on the path. For example, in health or micro loans, we can measure progress in improving quality of life.

**Do foreign heads of state often ask for your advice?**

Yes, that is true. Especially in countries where there is a large Ismaili community or strong institutions. And it also works the other way. I talk to them because I need to know what their thoughts are on the future, what is the best academic or economic institution.

**But by investing, you're not looking to proselytise?**

No, we do not proselytise. We could, but we don't feel the need. There are certain religions where proselytising is recommended. We however, take the attitude that everyone should do whatever they want. If they want to become a Shia, they can become a Shia, if they want to become a Shia Ismaili, they can become a Shia Ismaili.

**What is the next major project that is really dear to your heart?**

I believe that the civil society today is very influenced by large institutions, when they have been well founded, are stable and extend their influence to civil society. And this is what I am trying to support the Third World. For example, in education, we have universities in Central Asia, Pakistan and East Africa. They have an enormous influence. We are trying to create strong institutions to support society. Not only with universities but also with hospitals, banks, financial companies, etc.

**You're not a businessman?**

No, but I have had to learn what that is. We have our own institutions which are not at all limited to the Ismaili community. We start with microfinance and go as far as financing the largest companies. We are trying to support economic development. There are countries that have emerged out of poverty and wherever we find ourselves, we must contribute to this development and ensure that it is positive and stable. And these two things don't necessarily go together.



**Development programmes that include improving housing, for example.**

I will tell you why. When we studied the economic development of poor societies, we realised that when poor families manage to put money aside for the first time, they invest in their homes. Often it is a tin roof, running water or a sewerage system. In other words, human beings first look at everything that happens around them and their family. By working on people's homes, we are working on basic needs and this then has an impact on several generations in the family. It is often an asset which increases in value if the property is well managed. So, housing has an impact on many areas in a family's life and that's why I wanted to monitor the development and try to support institutions that help to drive change.

**Culture is also a priority. You support architects as much as music. Even to the point of creating awards?**

I am interested in music because we are trying to broaden the international reach of Third World cultures. If we can make them known and appreciated in the West, we can bring them stability as well as knowledge about the cultures in these countries. And often there are connections that are extraordinary, especially, for example, in 'devotional' music. For example, the music of Central Asia.

**Would you make a perfect head of state?**

(Laughs...) No, no. Let's say I work in many countries, so I learn. Then since I have been around for a while...

**But that desire is still with you.**

I was educated in a country where development is seen as a phenomenon of world life and so I observe as much as possible, I try to ensure that our institutions look to the future. Because in the end, anticipating is necessary in life, whether you are dirt poor or fabulously rich. You need to be able to anticipate intelligently.

**Anticipate and think about others?**

And build.

**Are human beings at the centre of everything?**

Clearly. And then, I have a conviction: poverty exists, but is not inevitable. We need the courage to analyse and understand it. A few years ago, we analysed Ismaili demographics and realised that the environment was the biggest contributor to poverty in poor communities. Some communities are born and live in a place in our world where the local economy cannot support human life. So, when we came to this conclusion, we recommended these communities to move and settle elsewhere. There are places on our planet where human life is unsustainable and if there are communities that, for historical reasons, live there, you know that there is no future for them. This is not subjective, it is an economic fact. We are duty bound to tell the people this, and then we try to develop the resources to help them move. There are countries where 50 years ago our community lived in really very difficult conditions and we told them, "Listen, take your time, it may not be possible for today's generation but perhaps for tomorrow's generation, but educate yourself, prepare yourself to go and settle elsewhere".

**It that a painful process?**

Yes, and it is always difficult to move communities. It is a decision that you take unwillingly. The circumstances make it necessary. If the measurable evidence shows you that quality of life is impossible, you are obliged to draw such conclusions. So then, you prepare the younger generation with education, in other words with languages and technical knowledge. In this case, we are not being subjective, we must be rigorous and even quite hard sometimes. Because communities do not move alone. We have to prepare the place they will move to, create institutions, schools, financial institutions, etc. That is what we did in Tajikistan for example.

**Your Highness, are you considered to be a good man?**

That is the role of the Imam, but not only mine.

**That is your vision.**

I think that is the right vision for an Imam.

**Why did you choose Portugal as the headquarters of your Imamat?**

The Imamat is an institution that is originally from the East. And I wanted it to have a head office in a Western country that would recognise the Imamat as a religious institution. Portugal is a country that has signed the Concordat with Rome and therefore there was a precedent that allowed me to sign a Concordat with a Western state that was somewhat similar.



**Yet, you are deeply French, or at least you are a Francophile?**

Yes... Many of my studies were in French and I live in France. We have extremely cordial relations with the State but there is not a Concordat such as we could have with Portugal.

**You have embassies in many countries, but not in Paris.**

No, but we have an agreement with the French government and our institutions operate in France under this agreement, which commits the Imamat.

**You are also very committed in and for Chantilly. Why?**

It's a tradition with us. In the past, many eminent figures in the history of the Imamate contributed to the quality of life in their place of residence... it's a tradition that I've applied here.

**You are also known around the world for horses. You own 700 thoroughbreds?**

I don't know what the actual number is right now, because it obviously varies depending on the time of year, but in fact it's a business that I inherited. It was my grandfather who started it, first in England and then in France. My father took it over, and upon his death, the family wondered if we wanted to continue this business or not. And we decided that yes, we wanted to try to continue this tradition. It is very common in the Muslim world. It is a very enthralling sport.

**Your jockeys wear green silks and red shoulder pads, why is that?**

It's the family's colours. My grandfather used brown and green in England and red and green in France and I kept both.

**Your father and grandfather hit the newspaper headlines more often than you do. You opt for a more discreet approach.**

I believe that as a Muslim institution in the West, I can be more effective without constantly making headlines. There is no reason for me to be in the news. When there are problems I try to solve them discreetly. I don't always manage, but in general, discretion has served me well.

**You are a Grand Croix of the Legion of Honour. What does this distinction mean to you?**

It is a recognition which is very dear to me. France welcomed my grandfather, my father, my brother, myself, my uncle. It is a country that is very dear to us.

*Translated with the permission from La Cohorte*

The breadth of AKDN's global partnership with Germany is reflected in extensive cooperation in Afghanistan. Together our institutions have strengthened regional connectivity through cross-border infrastructure; improved health through public-private partnerships; and restored Afghanistan's rich cultural heritage at the Bagh-e-Babur and Chihilsitoun Gardens, and now the Kabul riverfront project.

We have also used an innovative programme of small, community-led infrastructure projects to encourage local people to take charge of their development. This Stabilisation Programme for Northern Afghanistan was the springboard for today's conference and tonight's dialogue. Over € 100 million has been programmed through community consultations into 430 projects, responding to the needs identified by local people as most important to them. These build more than infrastructure: they also build trust, they enhance government legitimacy and civic engagement.

Those are vital ingredients for stability within any country, but especially for fragile regions. These are hallmarks of AKDN's approach, developed in places such as Northern Pakistan, post-conflict Tajikistan or Afghanistan, as well as Syria, Mali, Mozambique and elsewhere.

From this experience in stabilisation, we would emphasise three crucial elements:

The first key lesson is to concentrate at the local level. Wherever the national conditions are unfavourable - in fragile or conflict situations they rarely are favourable - meaningful changes often start fastest locally, quickly building credibility and confidence.

The second lesson is that commitment to pluralism is essential. The consultations must be wide, and everyone in the community must benefit. I have learnt this lesson during my more than 60 years as the Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, responsible for the spiritual and physical well-being of my Jamat and - most crucially in this context - for those with whom they live, whatever their faith or creed.

Finally, we would insist on the critical importance of civil society, which we refer to as private organisations designed to serve public goals. Such institutions are stabilising factors and points of continuity where security is fragile and politics are volatile. Consequently, investing in them, alongside the state, remains critical.

I look forward to the rest of tonight's discussion and reflection on these important topics.

The world needs Germany's principled and pragmatic leadership role - now more than ever. As Germany reflects on the future of its commitment in Afghanistan and the nature of its engagement in other parts of the world, I hope that it will draw on these principles that have guided our cooperation together over such a long time - emphasising local participation, promoting pluralism and strengthening the institutions of civil society.

Thank you very much.



## Remarks by His Highness the Aga Khan at the inaugural Aga Khan Music Awards

31 March 2019, Lisbon, Portugal

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency, President of the Republic, Professor Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa,<sup>[SEP]</sup>  
Your Excellency, Vice-President of the Parliament, Mr. Jorge Lacão,  
Madame Isabel Mota, President of the Gulbenkian Foundation,  
<sup>[SEP]</sup>Members of Government and of Parliament,  
<sup>[SEP]</sup>Diplomats, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,<sup>[SEP]</sup>  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure - and a great honour - to welcome all of you who have come to this exceptional venue tonight, on this extraordinary occasion.

As I welcome you, I do so on behalf of many others - all around the world - who have made this occasion possible.

I speak of course of those who are part of the Ismaili Jamat and the Aga Khan Development Network, but, more generally, all those who have helped to organize the Aga Khan Music Awards. I salute them all - the nominators, the members of the Awards Steering Committee, the Master Jury, and the Awards Secretariat. And of course all the participants. I salute all the Awardees whose musical talents have so generously enriched today's events.

I am grateful, too, to those here in Lisbon who have helped to plan this Inaugural program, and to the Gulbenkian Foundation for their invaluable support. This event is one that celebrates artistic talent and the sociological effects of artistic accomplishment in and from diverse places and cultures. And this place, in my estimation, is the perfect location for doing that. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is respected across the world for its role in honouring the arts and the sciences, while Lisbon has long been one of the world's most welcoming cities for people of diverse cultures and backgrounds, and Portugal itself has played a major role over the centuries in bringing to the countries of this continent the cultures of distant lands.

The presence here tonight of the President of Portugal, the Vice-President of Parliament, the Minister of Culture, and so many other members of Government, speaks eloquently to the commitment of this country to pluralistic ideals in pursuit of a better tomorrow. We are deeply honoured to have you all with us.

The musicians we recognise this weekend represent highly diverse forms of the Muslim musical heritage. Now I know that in some parts of the world, the words "Muslim" and "music" are not often linked together in the public mind. But they should be. The cultural heritage of Islam has long embraced musical language as an elemental expression of human spirituality. Listening to music, practicing music, sharing music, performing music - have long been an intimate part of life for Muslim communities across the world, as has been the chanting of devotional and historical or epic texts.

I learned at a young age about how my own ancestors, the Fatimids, cultivated music in the city of Cairo a thousand years ago. And I also learned about how the Iberian region where we are now meeting, the territory known as al Andalus, produced new forms of music and poetry in the late medieval period. It was here in al Andalus that Muslims, Jews, Christians, created together an exemplary culture of tolerance, fostering musical creativity that even included new types of musical instruments and pioneering approaches to music education.

I also remember a visit I made to Tajikistan in 1995, during which I was deeply impressed by the richness of musical life among those whom I had visited. I began to think even more about the ways in which music can be a strong cultural anchor, deepening a sense of community, identity and heritage, while simultaneously reaching out in powerful ways to people of different backgrounds.



I recall sharing these thoughts with my brother, Prince Ayn Aga Khan, whose guiding hand helped to lay the groundwork, in 2001, for what we called the Aga Khan Music Initiative. And that program has led directly to the Music Awards we inaugurate today.

The initial focus of the Aga Khan Music Initiative was in the countries of Central Asia. This mission was urgent, for the old Soviet Union, when it controlled these regions, had actively discouraged, or even suppressed, music linked to traditional ways of life. The Music Initiative worked first to build a heightened awareness of their musical heritage in local communities themselves, to ensure that a new generation of musicians playing traditional instruments was formed, and then to introduce this music and these musicians to international audiences. And it worked - on two levels. It helped musicians, first of all, to earn a livelihood so that they could continue to develop their talents. And, it also advanced a pluralistic understanding of Muslim cultures and inter-cultural sharing.

The initial success of this work in Central Asia led to the expansion of the Music Initiative beyond Central Asia's borders to include countries in South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. In so doing, it reached beyond performance to new composition, to creation, and all of this work complemented our other efforts to advance economic and social development, contributing to more stable communities, nurturing a new sense of inspiration and hope, and building vectors of human connectivity across old divides.

One other point we learned to appreciate and to share is the remarkable diversity which exists within the world of Muslim music! It comes in many styles, forms and classical repertoires. It includes simple folk melodies, contemplative mystical music and driving dance rhythms; and it reflects the immense diversity of different Muslim cultures themselves, including musical traditions that have been carefully cultivated over the centuries within the Ismaili community.

In creating the Music Awards, we now hope to expand the reach and impact of the original Music Initiative. To this end, our Award winners will not only each receive a monetary prize, but will also be asked to collaborate with the Music Awards secretariat in broadening the impact of their creative work in dialoguing with each other. The goal is not only to help today's generation of artists, but also to inspire a new generation of young performers and composers in both the East and the West.

In all of the performances that are taking place on this occasion, you will hear outstanding musicians expressing themselves in their own authentic artistic languages. Here in Lisbon today - and across the world in the months and years to come - their voices will, we trust, continue to transcend old boundaries of time and place, reminding the world that every individual can respond to art and music, whether it emanates from a different culture or not.

For, after all, art is a matter of humanity just as much as it is a matter of identity. As the Islamic tradition has reminded us for many centuries, the Divine spark that bestows upon us our individuality also bonds individuals in a common human family.

In this light, we learn to see our differences in a new way. We can understand that cultural diversity is not a burden or a threat. In fact, it is rather a Divine Gift, an opportunity to learn and to grow, an opportunity to understand and to appreciate the Identity of the Other and thereby one's own essential identity.

The technological forces that are re-shaping our world now mean that neighbors who live on the other side of the planet are as close to us as our neighbors who live across the street. In such a world, peace and progress require that we promote a pluralist agenda, that we invest in a Cosmopolitan ethic. These Music Awards aim to be an investment in that promotion.

Thank you.



## His Highness the Aga Khan conferred with the Keys to the City of Porto

### LOCATION

Porto, Portugal (2 May 2019)

Your Worship the Mayor,  
Honourable Guests,

I would like to begin my comments this afternoon by saying how touched I am by the recognition that you have given to me this afternoon.

In my work I look at peoples from all environments — cities, rural urban areas, deserts, industrialised areas — and I look at how people live, and I ask myself, “How can we improve the living conditions of people in all these environments?”

And we learn, all the time, from all our contacts in all the cities we work with, and Portugal has set an example of a pluralist society, which is remarkable, which should be honoured, which should be recognised, which should be copied. So I want to take this occasion to congratulate you for creating a functioning, happy, pluralist society.

The world over — Africa, Asia, the Middle East, South America — there is not a geography in our world which would not benefit from learning from the Portuguese experience. It is a historical experience, it is not a new experience. It is something which Portugal has defended over the years in different parts of the world, establishing healthy

premises for civil society and I want, on behalf of all of us who live in the developing world, to express to you our gratitude and our recognition for the exemplar leadership which you have been giving for decades here in Western Europe, but also in many other parts of the world.

We have inherited, in many parts of the world, from your leadership, and I am thinking in particular of a country where my community and I have done a lot of work and that is Mozambique. And the foundations that you have laid in Mozambique — the importance of discussion, of talking, of sharing thoughts, of discussing issues — is exemplar. So, I am happy to recognise that this afternoon, and thank you for setting that wonderful global example.

I also want to thank you for the keys of this magnificent city. This is an old, historic tradition that has existed in many countries in many parts of the world, but I am going to use these keys to open as many doors as possible. Doors to happiness, doors to peace, doors to unity, doors to human progress. So I thank you, and I treasure those keys very much indeed. And I will not make copies of them.



## GCP Annual Pluralism Lecture 2019

### LOCATION

Lisbon, Portugal (11 June 2019)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Ms. Mohammed,  
Your Excellency, the President of the Assembly,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the Board of the Global Centre for Pluralism, to the 2019 Pluralism Lecture here at the Ismaili Centre in Lisbon.

I am delighted that this seventh annual Lecture is being delivered in Portugal. And I say that not only because this beautiful country is steeped in global history and culture, and usually drenched in sunshine. For those of us who believe in the bridge-building work of pluralism, Portugal has much to teach, even as it confronts its own challenges.

This country is blessed with a long history of productive co-existence among Christians, Jews, and Muslims. The History of Al-Andalus was written here, on the Iberian Peninsula, between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. This blending of cultures, religions and

languages brought innovations in architecture, agriculture, medicine and even cuisine that are woven now into the very fabric of modern Portugal.

In July last year, the Global Peace Index ranked Portugal amongst the five most peaceful nations in the world. And for good reason. At a time of rising intolerance, this country has established some of the most welcoming policies for migrants in Europe. As populations in many Western countries are aging, and even dwindling, Portugal is among the few that recognise that newcomers are essential to secure the country's future.

This welcoming attitude is one of the most strongly associated with pluralism, which is the core mission of the Global Centre for Pluralism. As a beacon of research, education and dialogue, the Centre is drawing lessons from the political, social and cultural dynamics in diverse and divided societies around the world. I encourage all of you to explore what the Centre has to offer. By learning from others' successes, we may help our own societies to "inoculate" themselves against the temptation to set various people against one another – including the temptation to exclude marginalised populations.

Tonight's speaker, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed, has had an extraordinary life journey, and we are all privileged to be able to benefit from her insights. Thank you.

Ms. Mohammed's active involvement with global development, and her passionate commitment to girls' education – both go back almost twenty years, when she coordinated the Task Force on Gender and Education for the United Nations Millennium Project. In 2005, as Senior Special Assistant to the President of Nigeria on the Millennium Development Goals, she was charged with steering Nigeria's debt relief funds toward achieving those Goals. The MDGs, in shorthand, refer to the eight Goals that gave the world a blueprint for tackling its greatest social and economic challenges from 2000 to 2015.

Ms. Mohammed at first described herself as something of a sceptic about that project – *how could one possibly reduce the world's challenges to eight goals?* – she asked. Nonetheless, she embraced the cause. With dogged persistence, she helped to ensure that some one billion dollars a year went where it was needed and intended – to reducing maternal mortality, giving communities safe water access, and providing good schools and teachers for Nigerian students.

In 2012, Amina Mohammed took on another global role as Special Adviser to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the next stage of the United Nations Development Planning – the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Her new challenge was to work with, a small number, 193 nations to replace the MDGs with a new overarching framework for global development up to 2030.

In characterising this new framework era, Ms. Mohammed has said and I quote: “Development is no longer an issue of the Global South. It is an issue of the Global North, South, East and West.” Indeed, all member nations of the United Nations – including Canada, Portugal and Nigeria – and 190 other countries, have accepted the Goals as their own national objectives. Agenda 2030 calls for action by *all* countries for *all* people.

Ms. Mohammed then stepped from the conceptual stage at the United Nations back into the implementation area at home. As Federal Minister of Environment, she steered Nigeria’s action on climate change and resource conservation for sustainable development.

Ms. Mohammed is an outspoken advocate for global action on climate change, for children’s education, and for the protection of human rights. Above all, she has described gender equality – Sustainable Development Goal number 5 – as the quote “docking station” for all the other Goals, an essential conduit for their achievement.

She has served as Director, Governor or Advisor on numerous Boards, including the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data, Canada’s International Development Research Centre, and the Global Development Program of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. And she has received too many honours and awards for me to name, for I fear I will leave no time for her lecture.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my very great privilege to welcome our annual Pluralism Lecturer for 2019, Ms. Amina Mohammed.

Thank you.





## The Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2019 Presentation Ceremony

### LOCATION

Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan, Russian Federation (13 September 2019)

*Bismi'l-lahi'r-rahmani'r-rahim  
As-salamu 'alaykum, Peace be upon you*

Your Excellency Mintimer Shaimiev,  
Your Excellency Eleonora Mitrofanova,  
Respected Members of the Government,  
Distinguished Guests

What an enormous pleasure it is to welcome all of you to this ceremony.

We gather today with a group of extraordinary people, in an extraordinary place, and for an extraordinary purpose.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture is organised around a series of three-year cycles - each one culminating in the recognition of our Award recipients.

Tonight we celebrate the outcomes of our Fourteenth Cycle.

This is an extraordinary moment for me as I think back to our decision to launch this programme - more than four decades ago.

What led to that decision? - You may ask - as many have asked, then and since. Just why should the Ismaili Imam become so deeply involved in the world of professional architecture?

The simple answer lies in my conviction that Architecture - more than any other art form - has a profound impact on the quality of human life. As it has often been said, we shape our built environment - and then our buildings shape us.

This close relationship of architecture to the quality of human experience has a particularly profound resonance in the developing world. I believe that we all have a responsibility to improve the quality of life whenever and wherever that opportunity arises. Our commitment to influencing the quality of architecture - intellectually and materially - grows directly out of our commitment to improving the quality of human life.

As you may know, over these four decades, we have recognised a vast array of architectural contributions, including over nine thousand nominated projects.

But the value of this programme goes far beyond recognising specific projects.

The Aga Khan Architectural Award is not simply a prize; it is a process.

This process involves a wide range of conversations - all across the world - that shape the selection process.

The theme of the Cycle, which culminates today is: "*Architecture in Dialogue*". This theme, which emerged out of the deliberations of the Steering Committee and Master Jury, sees architecture as a robust interchange, one that can embrace a variety of diverse and even divergent perspectives.

A true dialogue requires not only that we articulate one perspective, but also that we listen – attentively - to other perspectives. More than that, it asks us not only to listen to one another, but also to learn from one another.

There are several ways in which architecture can blend different perspectives. Let me briefly describe just four of them,

First of all, we must foster a healthy dialogue among the actual participants in the architectural process. I do not mean only the skilled architects themselves, but also those who collaborate with them - clients, community leaders, public officials, educators, and the builders, designers, and craftsmen who help realise their plans. Our Master Jury for this cycle paid close attention to this dimension, looking at qualities such as leadership, cooperation, and openness - qualities that help produce creative dialogue.

A second dialogue that advances the best in human architecture is an open dialogue between the past and the future. This means more than simply copying the past - or merely tacking some ancient arch or minaret or calligraphy onto a new building. On the

other hand, it also means more than a heedless modernistic approach that ignores our rich heritage. Our realisation, more than 40 years ago, that architectural practice in Muslim societies had recently been forgetting its own history, helped us to shape the nature of this Award.

The dialogue we seek is one that will blend the inspiration of the past with the demands of the future. The demands are many: environmental, social, technological, and economic, not to mention the challenges of political polarisation. In all of these respects, looking back can help us look ahead - and vice versa.

A third dialogue that commands architectural attention is the dialogue between nature on the one hand and human creativity on the other. Both the natural world and the world of human capacities are divine gifts, but it is tempting sometimes to embrace one without thinking much about the other.

The Holy Quran asks Muslims not to be passive recipients of our Natural Habitat but instead to be faithful stewards of the divine creation; we need to expand our commitment in all directions. This means not merely conforming to the power of nature, but actively engaging with its challenges. At the same time we must be careful not to exaggerate the capacities for human mastery – trying to defy nature is counterproductive in many ways. A reflective dialogue between natural realities and human capabilities is also at the essence of architectural excellence.

Fourth and finally, I would emphasise the importance of intercultural dialogue in meeting the Architectural opportunities of our time. I have mentioned how this Award grew out of a concern with the deterioration - what some of us called the “hibernation” - of rich Muslim architectural traditions. But honouring one’s own historic identity, should not imply some sort of narrow isolation.

The rich architectural dialogue we seek to foster should include a renewed respect for the rich diversity of Islamic cultures themselves. As a way to exemplify this concern, we recently opened a new Aga Khan Centre in London in which seven Islamic gardens have been created, reflecting seven different Muslim traditions.

In addition, we should also be working to foster a rich dialogue with non-Islamic cultures - including diverse religious traditions. Architecture can lead the way in this effort - as we listen to one another and learn from one another across old divides.

Pluralism means more than merely tolerating a diversity of influences and ideas. It also means welcoming the learning opportunities that diversity provides, finding ways to honour that which is unique in our individual traditions as well as those values that connect us to all of humankind.

We must think of diversity itself as a divine gift, a blessing and not a burden.

I mentioned earlier that we are meeting today in a special place. Tatarstan has, for centuries, been a place of exceptional commitment to pluralistic values. The city of Kazan and the larger region have long been renowned for their rich mix of ethnicities, and cultures, including the impressive way in which their architectural heritage has been preserved and respected.

It is striking to realise that nearby Bolgar, which I visited yesterday, became a Muslim religious centre as early as 922 - almost eleven hundred years ago. Through the centuries the spirit of pluralism in Tatarstan has known times of difficult challenge and times of inspiring renewal. But through everything, a commitment to inclusiveness has persisted. This spirit was encouraged under the pluralist leadership of several of the Muslim Khanates that governed the area in the 14th and 15th centuries, and also some later Russian rulers, such as Peter the Great and Catherine the Great. And it has been dramatically evident here in recent years.

On my visits in Kazan, and in Bolgar, I have seen how committed people can honour the power both of cultural identity and cultural pluralism. It is striking to see how churches and mosques, for example, have been built and preserved right next to one another as powerful symbols of a profound intercultural Dialogue.

I would hope that we all can help point the rest of the world to the powerful pluralistic model of places like Kazan and Bolgar.

The world is in need of such examples. Human challenges seem to intensify at an accelerating pace these days - climate change, economic and technological inequalities, epidemics, political polarisation, population displacements and the daunting task of helping one another to live together in dignity.

I believe deeply in the potential of the architectural world to help inspire and enrich a creative dialogue in all four of the areas I have mentioned: a dialogue between creative architectural partners, a dialogue between past and future, a dialogue between natural reality and human creativity, and a dialogue among diverse cultures.

When I first anticipated this visit to Tatarstan - my thoughts went back to other Award presentations through these four decades. The very first presentations were held in Lahore in Pakistan and I remember expressing my hope that night that these Awards would not be seen as the end of a story but rather as a bold beginning - stimulating further discussion, insights, questions, debates, and “perhaps even more, some worries” – as I put it then - about our architectural future. And I must say today how pleased I am that my hopes I expressed in Lahore four decades ago have been fulfilled.

The fact that our theme today is built around the word “Dialogue” testifies to our continuing aspirations. My thanks go to all of you for being a part of this extraordinary

celebration - as we reflect, gratefully, on both the inspiring gifts of the past and the rich possibilities of the future.



## 2019 Global Pluralism Award Ceremony

Ottawa, Canada (20 November 2019)

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson,  
The Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean,  
The Right Honourable Joe Clark,  
The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario,  
Excellencies,  
Friends of the Global Centre for Pluralism,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you this evening to the second Global Pluralism Award ceremony.

Thank you, Meredith, for the warm introduction. On behalf of the Board of Directors, we are delighted that you have joined the Centre as Secretary General.

This evening, we are honouring ten remarkable organisations and individuals.

Some have come from as far away as Myanmar, others are working right here in Canada.

Their areas of focus are diverse and include history education, music, political empowerment and virtual exchange.

Taken together, this outstanding group of recipients represents a new wave of leadership working around the world for a brighter future free of exclusion and division.

The Award should serve as a reminder that we can all take steps, in both our personal and professional lives, to foster a more positive and productive response to the changing diversity in our world.

A more inclusive, understanding approach to diversity is needed more than ever today. The Award offers examples to inspire how we take on that challenge.

This year's recipients join the inaugural group of honourees from 2017, to form a growing global community of pluralism leaders.

Their stories and expertise are being shared in all parts of the globe, illustrating how pluralism can be put into practice even in the most intractable situations.

The three Award winners are receiving \$50,000 each to further their endeavours. The Centre will collaborate closely with them over the next year to help amplify their important work.

By bringing their stories to an international audience, the Centre aims to help deepen awareness of their accomplishments and connect them to global partners. Shortly, we will have the opportunity to learn more about each of them.

But first, I would like to salute the international jury. The jurors had the very difficult task of selecting three winners and seven honourable mentions among a very impressive pool of submissions.

Their diligent work in selecting these ten from over 500 submissions, received from 74 countries, is very much appreciated.

I congratulate the jury's skilful chair, former Canadian Prime Minister the Right Honourable Joe Clark, as well as its other distinguished members: Ms. Paula Gaviria Betancur, Dr. Siva Kumari, Dr. Tarek Mitri, His Worship Naheed Nenshi, Ms. Ory Okolloh, and Ms. Pascale Thumerelle.

Finally, I would like to thank each and every one of you for joining us for what will certainly be a dynamic evening of celebration and storytelling.

I invite you to sit back and let the achievements of the Global Pluralism Award honourees inspire you and move you.

Thank you.





## **Address by Mawlana Hazar Imam at the Global Virtual Convocation of the Aga Khan University 22 May 2021**

22 May 2021

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Our Chief Guest, Melinda French Gates  
Chairman Haile Debas and the Members of the Board of Trustees  
President Firoz Rasul  
Provost, Deans, Faculty and Staff of the University  
Generous donors and well wishers of the University from around the world  
Distinguished guests  
Parents, family members and Graduates

It is a great privilege to join you today in recognising and celebrating the Class of 2020.

I do so in circumstances unlike any the world has faced in my lifetime, reminding us all, how vital, how essential, nurses, doctors, researchers, and teachers are to our collective health and well-being.

And so, to our graduates, I begin by thanking as well as congratulating you. Each of you has chosen a path of service to humanity that is admirable and necessary.

We are honoured on this occasion by the participation of Ms. Melinda French Gates. Through her leadership, the Gates Foundation has helped improve human health, advance economic development, and empower women and girls across the globe. The longstanding partnership between the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network and the Gates Foundation has featured collaboration in each of these areas, working together in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and East Africa.

In light of this special relationship, we are particularly pleased to welcome her to this Convocation.

For decades, both the Aga Khan Development Network and the Gates Foundation have devoted significant effort to improving health and health systems. Indeed, this university was founded upon the conviction that the quality of healthcare professionals is fundamental to any progress in these domains. It therefore gives me great pride to see the response of AKU and its hospitals during this pandemic, undertaken with the generous support from the Gates Foundation and others. I salute the courage of AKU's health-care staff and administration, who have worked tirelessly through months of crisis, braving these difficult times with fortitude and resolve.

The University has made a critical difference – advising national governments, training public sector medical staff, working with teachers and schools, raising awareness through media and journalism, and doing everything possible to treat patients and to save lives.

I would also like to recognise the resilience and agility of our University faculty and students.

In these challenging times, all of you have shown impressive adaptability, dedication and perseverance. Thank you.

AKU's contributions represent another chapter in the long story of great universities that have helped guide the world through the turbulence of history. The global pandemic response has been built on decades of earnest research, often conducted in relative obscurity, but making possible the development of new tests, tracing strategies, therapies, and vaccines. While we should regret the unequal distribution of these achievements, we must also appreciate the intellectual triumph that their development represents.

Melinda French Gates and the Gates Foundation have played a crucial and catalytic role. As you know, AKU researchers have also been part of this progress, identifying and tracking new Covid mutations, assessing vaccines and evaluating therapies.

AKU aims to be as relevant for the next global health crisis as it has been for this one. Today, AKU is building its capacity for cutting-edge research applicable to the distinctive health risks for populations in Asia and Africa. It will seek to harness the enormous potential of advances in artificial intelligence, genomic medicine, and stem cell science to address tomorrow's challenges, as well as today's.

Translating this potential requires more than innovation. It requires professionals capable of complex judgements in balance with the cultures and traditions of these regions. This is why AKU is evolving into a comprehensive University, active in the humanities and social sciences.

As our thoughts turn to the future, and the bright potential of AKU and its graduates, I must pause to reflect on this moment of significant transition.

Today's Convocation marks a meaningful juncture in our University's history. For only the third time since our founding in 1983, AKU will have a new President.

As you all know, President Rasul has asked to retire, and I have reluctantly agreed, understanding how important it will be for Firoz and Saida to spend the coming years with their children and grand-children in Canada.

Under Firoz's leadership, our University has known remarkable growth in the past 15 years: new facilities, new campuses, new faculties and impressive new technologies. The University has also grown as a leading academic and intellectual force. AKU graduates are reaching the highest levels of qualification and accomplishment. It is most gratifying to see that some of them are now returning to AKU as faculty and leaders.

These achievements are a source of great happiness for our Trustees and me. President Rasul's impressive accomplishments have given us the confidence to broaden our horizons and expand our aspirations of excellence.

With these aspirations in full view, I have appointed Sulaiman Shahabuddin as President of AKU. Sulaiman, who began his career at AKU 35 years ago, is coming "home," along with his wife, Zeenat, who is a graduate of the University and holds a PhD in nursing.

I have known Sulaiman for many years. He has been the Regional CEO of the Aga Khan Health Services in East Africa for a decade, and previously CEO of the Aga Khan Hospitals in Kenya and Tanzania. I have been continually impressed by his commitment, his capacities as a leader, and his continuing dedication to learning.

Please join me in welcoming them both back to AKU.

I spoke earlier of transitions. You came to this convocation as students. At the end of today's ceremonies, you will be graduates of the Aga Khan University, stepping into new roles and new responsibilities.

I am confident that the Class of 2020 will walk in the footsteps of your fellow alumni, as leaders in the pursuit of excellence, wherever your paths may lead you.

As you start that journey, this is a day for all of us to renew our commitment to an ever more hopeful future, one that will be richer in the products of human ingenuity, more just in their distribution, and more abundant in respect and compassion for one another.

I offer you my sincerest congratulations.

Thank you.



## **Address by Mawlana Hazar Imam at the Kenya Charter Granting Ceremony of the Aga Khan University**

11 June 2021, Nairobi, Kenya

*Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim*

Your Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta

Professor George Magoha, Cabinet Secretary for Education

Professor Chacha, Chairman of the Commission for University Education

Excellencies

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

It is with the greatest satisfaction and the deepest gratitude that I accept the Kenya Charter of the Aga Khan University. My only regret is that, due to the pandemic, I cannot be present in person to receive the instruments of authority, and to celebrate this momentous occasion in the University's history.

The Charter details AKU's functions, powers, obligations, and governance. But it is more than a legal document. It is a vote of confidence in AKU and all those who are part of it – our faculty, our staff, administration, students, alumni, friends, and supporters.

Your Excellency – Thank you for your confidence in the Aga Khan University. Thank you for creating an enabling environment that has allowed AKU to flourish, and for recognising that private institutions can play a vital role in promoting public welfare.

I would also like to thank the Commission for University Education, which has managed the difficult feat of acting as both a demanding regulator and a supportive partner. AKU is a better university because of the Commission's efforts to improve the quality of tertiary education in Kenya.

In this venue we see dramatic confirmation that the University is indeed thriving. Our new University Centre is the soaring embodiment of AKU's commitment to Kenya, and determination to ensure that its people have access to the very best in higher education and health care. It is also a testament to the power of giving. The construction of the Centre was made possible by the extraordinary generosity of a number of individuals and families who are joining us today, and whose names will be permanently engraved on its walls and glass balustrades.

I am profoundly grateful for their support, as is the entire AKU community.

While its Charter is new, AKU is a firmly established institution in Kenya: it has been operating here since 2002, under a letter of interim authority from the Government. Moreover, as an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network, the University is part of a wide-ranging effort to improve quality of life in East Africa, and that dates back more than 100 years, to the schools founded by my grandfather, Sir Sultan Mahomed Shah Aga Khan, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Milestones in the Network's history include the founding of enduring institutions such as Jubilee Insurance, the Aga Khan Hospital in Nairobi – now the Aga Khan University Hospital – and the Nation Media Group, all of which have now been serving Kenya for more than 60 years.

Today, I think we can say without exaggeration that AKDN and its agencies, including the Aga Khan University, are part of the fabric of life in Kenya and East Africa.



What then has the University achieved in its first two decades? And what does its future hold? Let us begin with its accomplishments thus far.

First, the University has educated much-needed leaders.

In total, nearly 4,000 students have graduated from AKU in East Africa. Among them are more than 1,400 Kenyan nurses, doctors, educators, and journalists – 70 percent of whom, I would note, are women.

Across the country and the region, AKU alumni are leading departments, institutions, and professional organisations. They are founding schools and clinics. They are winning awards, including Kenya's 2018 Teacher of the Year Award. They are raising standards in both the public and the private sectors, and in rural areas as well as cities.

Second, AKU has developed into an institution capable of delivering problem-solving knowledge, and of sharing its expertise with other organisations.

AKU's Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health has published one of the most comprehensive analyses of maternal and child health in Kenya and is working with its fellow AKDN agencies to help government health facilities in Kilifi and Kisii counties to improve health for thousands of women and children.

Our Institute for Human Development has trained hundreds of professionals in the science of early childhood development and is conducting a multi-faceted research and intervention project to support child development in underprivileged communities.

The University's new Cancer Centre is one of the few centres in Sub-Saharan Africa equipped to conduct cancer clinical trials. As such, it will bring new treatments to cancer patients that would otherwise be unavailable in Kenya.

Throughout the pandemic, AKU researchers have been working to deliver new insights and tools in the fight against the novel coronavirus. For example, the University was one of only two institutions in Africa to contribute to an international clinical trial that evaluated the use of the drug tocilizumab to treat patients with COVID-19. It is now part of the standard treatment protocol worldwide.

AKU experts have also provided advice and training on caring for patients with COVID-19 to government clinics and hospitals.

As these and many other efforts demonstrate, AKU is no ivory tower. It is deeply concerned with, and connected to, the lives of ordinary Kenyans.



Third, the University has expanded access to high-quality health care, and raised standards in health-care delivery.

The Aga Khan University Hospital, Kenya's only internationally accredited teaching hospital and its 45 outreach clinics serve almost every major centre in the country. The Hospital also provides free health screening to tens of thousands of individuals through its medical camps.

During the pandemic, the Hospital has treated over 2,000 seriously ill COVID patients, conducted more than 76,000 tests for the coronavirus and vaccinated over 10,000 people.

All this was possible because we are the only private institution in Kenya to train specialist doctors who provide the country with much needed medical knowledge and skills. We also create opportunities for working nurses to upgrade their training to earn degrees at an international standard. Not to mention, the master teachers we develop to improve schools and the journalists whose capabilities we raise to be able to report using multiple platforms, including digital media.

In short, as called for in its Charter, Aga Khan University has "prepared individuals for constructive and exemplary leadership....responded to identified needs in the countries it serves....and provided meaningful contributions to society."

In the years to come, it will continue to do so.

Charter in hand and newly housed in a dynamic urban campus unlike any other in the region, the University will launch new programmes in nursing and medicine. And its new Nairobi-based Brain and Mind Institute will undertake cutting-edge research aimed at improving mental health, especially among women, adolescents, and disadvantaged populations.

As its student body and its faculty grow in size, its visibility and impact will increase, new programmes will come online, much about the Aga Khan University will change. What will not change is its principle of uncompromising quality and its mission of improving quality of life in Kenya.

I look forward to continuing to pursue that mission together with the University's trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, volunteers, donors, and partners; in accordance with the Charter we have been granted today; and with the support and encouragement of the Government of Kenya.

Thank you very much.



## **Address by Mawlana Hazar Imam at the first Convocation of the University of Central Asia**

19 June 2021, Kyrgyz Republic

Bismillah-ir-Rahman-ir-Rahim

Your Excellency President Rahmon

Your Excellency President Japarov

Honourable Ministers

Honourable Governors

Chairman Dr Shamsh Kassim-Lakha and Members of the Board of Trustees

Rector, Deans, Faculty and Staff of the University

Parents, supporters, and distinguished guests and Graduates

It is truly a genuine pleasure for me to celebrate this milestone moment with you – the graduation of the first class of students from the School of Arts and Sciences at the

University of Central Asia. This event is also a very significant moment in my own life as it represents the culmination of more than two decades of effort in conceptualising, planning and building this institution with the valuable support of Patrons, Presidents and administrations of the Founding States.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and everyone at UCA, I extend deep appreciation to the Patrons of the University, the Presidents of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and the Republic of Kazakhstan and their administrations for their support and for creating an enabling environment for the University to thrive and achieve its mission and goals.

It was only in 2016 and 2017 that the campuses in Naryn and Khorog welcomed their students. And here we stand today to celebrate each of you graduates; and your parents and families who contributed to your success. Each one of you is here today through your sustained hard work. You needed to develop certain qualities of character and mind to face the challenges of university learning. With these qualities, you are now empowered to seek out new opportunities with confidence. As the first graduates you will always have a special place in the history of the University. As you go forward, you will be UCA's ambassadors, our envoys and representatives. This is a special responsibility that I am certain you will be able to fulfill admirably.

I offer my warmest congratulations to UCA's faculty, management, staff, Trustees and the very generous donors all of whose contributions made it possible to establish quality academic programmes and beautiful residential campuses. This was not an easy task, and UCA had to navigate uncharted waters. This new university demonstrated enormous resilience in rising to the challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and capably re-configured the institution to remote teaching. During this period, UCA succeeded in receiving accreditation by educational authorities in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, putting the institution on a solid academic footing.

Today's event brings back some wonderful memories. Twenty-one years ago, I joined the Presidents of the Founding States in signing an extraordinary International Treaty that brought three countries together to establish the University of Central Asia as a single, multi-campus, regional institution of higher learning. Today's graduation event, held simultaneously in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, is an example of the power of education and international cooperation. It is a power that can change people's lives. It has always been the Founders' hope that this power will come through the efforts of the class of 2021 and those which will follow, and from the research and civic engagement of the faculty.

In partnership with the Founding States, we established a type of institution that is new to Central Asia and the larger world. Planning for an original concept, and making it operational, was a complex process that involved purposeful architectural design, construction, detailed academic planning, training and recruiting faculty. All of this was accomplished in a decade, which is a fast-forward speed for most universities. The many

who worked on the UCA project in the past and the University community today can take pride in this achievement and have our warmest appreciation.

However, a measure of a university's success is the quality of the education it delivers and the careers of its graduates. This starts with the recruitment of students, for without good students, a university will never achieve excellence. A key ingredient in this story has been our open-access philosophy, enabling us to enrol students on merit alone, with the vast majority of students receiving financial support. The result is that 70 percent of our students are from small towns and rural areas, and half are women. They gained admission through a transparent and rigorous selection process and completed a demanding course of study with rigorous standards of academic integrity.

Research is the other measure of a university's success. UCA defines itself as a “research-oriented” university. Central Asia and its mountain communities face many challenges, including the impacts of climate change, building resilient communities, alleviating poverty through quality economic growth and advancing technological innovation. These problems are analytically complex, and there are no easy solutions. The fundamental goal is to achieve levels of excellence in research, measured by global standards to bring genuine value to those we are committed to educating.

As we celebrate the first steps of a new university, we should also recall the past. Students of world history remind us how Central Asia, a thousand years ago, led the world in cultural and intellectual achievements. This region is where medicine was founded, where algebra got its name, where the earth's diameter was precisely calculated, where some of the world's greatest poetry was penned. This happened because the societies were open to new ideas, open to change, open to scholars and people from many backgrounds. That kind of openness can again unlock the doors to the future, and allows us to take on the great questions of our time and place.

It is in the context of this illustrious historical background that the Trustees and I see the evolution of scholarship at this University. We accept that the revival of this tradition of high quality and relevant research in Central Asia will need to be carefully charted and will require the requisite human and material resources over an extended period of time.

UCA has made a good start. Research output by the faculty of the School of Arts and Sciences has markedly increased. And, of course, the Graduate School of Development, with its institutes, has achieved a significant presence on the Central Asian knowledge landscape and established international collaborations. The School is now collaborating with its sister institution, the Aga Khan University, in new research on maternal and child health and nutrition. I urge the faculty and students to give utmost attention to enhance the current learning and create new knowledge through research, which is a most important vector for improving the quality of life of those who live in these mountain ranges.

UCA is also a development university. And an essential aspect of this mission is its relationship with the host communities. The University is partnering with the local governments and its sister agencies in the Aga Khan Development Network to develop the host mountain towns into vibrant university communities and transform them by bringing new technology, innovation and entrepreneurship hubs. Over the coming decades, the University will expand as new areas of teaching and research emerge, and the towns that are home to UCA campuses will benefit from the new economic opportunities and attain a better quality of life.

Let me conclude by expressing again, to all of you, the deep sense of joy and gratitude I feel as we celebrate this historic day. To the graduates, I wish you a bright future. We look forward to working together with the Founding States, the Board of Trustees, the faculty and now the alumni towards the challenging and promising future of this University.

Thank you.