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Press release

For immediate release

### **Aga Khan reaffirms commitment to Afghanistan**



**Brussels, Belgium, 5 October 2016** – His Highness the Aga Khan confirmed today that the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) would continue its long-standing commitment to Afghanistan by making new investments in education, health, poverty alleviation, energy and cultural heritage.

He made these remarks at the Brussels Conference on Afghanistan co-hosted by the European Union and the government of Afghanistan. President Dr Ashraf Ghani and CE Dr Abdullah Abdullah of Afghanistan, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and US Secretary of State John Kerry were among the attendees at the conference.

Since 2001, AKDN and its partners have channelled over US\$1 billion into the country. Its social development and humanitarian work is focused in 61 districts in seven provinces, impacting over 3 million people. In health, for example, AKDN's public private partnerships have provided treatment to over 1.6 million Afghan patients through four hospitals, 12 basic and comprehensive health centres, 11 sub-centres, one prison health clinic and over 125 health posts.

“It is urgent to drive efforts to sustain and develop Afghanistan's human and social capital,” remarked His Highness the Aga Khan, reiterating a commitment to education in Afghanistan that ranges from early childhood education to the training of doctors and nurses. The AKDN has supported the Ministry of Education's National Education Strategic Plan in over 850 schools and education centres. It has also trained over 13,000 doctors, nurses, and health workers. For example, the French Medical Institute for Children, which AKDN manages and operates with partners, runs post-graduate medical education that now covers seven disciplines (paediatric medicine, paediatric surgery, anaesthesiology, paediatric orthopaedics, paediatric cardiology, pathology and radiology).

The Aga Khan also emphasised the importance of civil society. “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.”

In many sectors, from culture to economic development, AKDN has been an important partner of the Afghan people. Its cultural programmes, which operate in Kabul, Herat and Balkh, have restored over 120 historic buildings. Its economic projects – notably the Roshan mobile phone network, which reaches 6.5 million subscribers -- span over 240 cities and towns in the country's 34 provinces.

The Aga Khan also noted the potential for regional solutions to development issues, including infrastructure challenges, and cited the example of Pamir Energy; a public private partnership between the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development and the Government of Tajikistan, which exports electricity from Tajikistan to nearly 35,000 Afghans.

For more information, please email: [info@akdn.org](mailto:info@akdn.org)

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