

# AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Press Release

For Immediate Release

## **His Highness the Aga Khan receives the 2011 University of California, San Francisco Medal**



**San Francisco, California, USA, 26 April 2011** - His Highness the Aga Khan today received the 2011 University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Medal, the University's most prestigious award. The Medal, established in 1975, replaces the granting of honorary degrees, and recognises outstanding personal contributions in areas associated with the University's fourfold health science mission, such as attracting and educating the

nation's most promising students for future careers in the health sciences and health care professions, providing top-quality patient care, improving the understanding of the factors that affect human health and serving the community. Recipients are honoured at the University's annual Founders Day Banquet in the spring.

Other 2011 recipients of the medal are Dr Elizabeth Blackburn, 2009 Nobel Laureate and professor of biology and physiology in the Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics at UCSF, and Dr Marvin H. Sleisenger, emeritus professor of medicine and distinguished physician, department of veterans affairs.

"The Aga Khan Development Network has a goal to try to make the countries where we work, countries of opportunity for their populations," said the Aga Khan at the award ceremony. Citing the volatility of economics and governance as key concerns in many of the countries in which the AKDN works, he noted that "the best answer to this volatility in these countries is civil society — that it is really the sum of human endeavour in structured non-governmental organisations that aim to impact positively all the key forces which condition peoples' quality of life."

"In developing civil society, education and healthcare are absolutely critical," he continued. "We are not trying to bring mediocrity to the developing world. We are trying to do exactly what UCSF is doing, which is to bring quality and excellence."

The Aga Khan added that "at the same time, UCSF needs to reach out to the world at large. I hope that the Aga Khan Development Network will be one of your partners."

UCSF is a leading university dedicated to promoting health worldwide through advanced biomedical research, graduate level education in the life sciences and health professions and excellence in patient care. It is a world-class institution with extensive resources and specialist capacity in the medical field.

AKDN's collaboration with UCSF's Global Health Institute extends back to 2006 when programmes were established to strengthen the Aga Khan University's training and research

programme in family medicine based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The Global Health Institute is the University's key international interdisciplinary programme bringing expertise in the health, social and biological sciences to address global health.

In November 2009, the Ismaili Imamat entered into an Agreement of Cooperation with the State of California to enable partnerships between the AKDN and Californian institutions in areas such as healthcare, education, environment, seismic risk management, and culture. Also in 2009, AKU and UCSF signed a Memorandum of Understanding to develop a strong long-term partnership with the objective of improving the quality, access, and integration of health care for promoting equitable human advancement and social justice in the less privileged parts of the world. Programmes will aim to focus on health system strengthening and building research capacity in primary healthcare. The Memorandum also envisages collaboration on stem cell research, recognising UCSF as a leading global stem cell and regenerative medicine research centre, housing one of the largest and most comprehensive programs of its kind in the USA.

During his visit to San Francisco, the Aga Khan met with the Chancellor, Dr Susan Desmond-Hellman, and senior leadership of UCSF, including the Deans of the Schools of Medicine and Nursing and the Founding Executive Director of Global Health Sciences, Dr Haile Debas, who is also a trustee of the Aga Khan University.

The Aga Khan also toured UCSF's Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regeneration Medicine and Stem Cell Research. Spectacularly situated into the cliff behind previously existing health science buildings, it is one of the largest and most comprehensive research centres of its kind in the United States, combining the talents of molecular biologists, development and cell biologists, neurobiologists, immunologists and cancer researchers. The Aga Khan also visited the University's Kanbar Center for Simulation, Clinical Skills and Telemedicine Education which supports UCSF's educational mission of teaching, learning, assessment and research through realistic simulations of traumatic situations and inter-professional team training, thereby improving patient care and safety.

Read online at: <http://www.akdn.org/press-release/his-highness-aga-khan-receives-2011-university-california-san-francisco-medal>