



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

## Kenya Charter Granting Ceremony of the Aga Khan University



**Nairobi, Kenya, 11 June 2021** - The Aga Khan University (AKU) received its Charter from President Uhuru Kenyatta and inaugurated its new US\$ 50 million (Ksh 5 billion) state-of-the-art University Centre in the President's presence on Friday at a ceremony featuring an address by His Highness the Aga Khan. Professor Chacha Nyaigotti-Chacha, Chairman of the Commission for University Education, and AKU President Firoz Rasul also addressed the audience.

The Charter details AKU's functions, powers, obligations and governance. It sets forth the University's mission, which is to improve quality of life by educating individuals for leadership in the knowledge-based economy, by generating and sharing problem-solving knowledge and innovations in partnership with other institutions, and by meeting international standards of quality.

Located opposite the Aga Khan University Hospital in Parklands, Nairobi, the University Centre will be AKU's main campus in Kenya, housing its Graduate School of Media and Communications, Medical College, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Institute for Human Development, Brain and Mind Institute and other programmes. It features 23 floors above and below ground, encompasses 37,500 square metres (400,000 square feet), and was designed by the internationally renowned architecture firm Payette, which has designed buildings for Harvard, MIT, Princeton and Columbia. This development is a further testament to the Aga Khan Development Network's ongoing commitment and contribution to Kenya's development.

“The phrase 'Aga Khan' has become synonymous with elevating educational standards and delivering holistic training,” said President Uhuru Kenyatta. “From pre-school to tertiary learning, its footprints are felt in this nation and region as a whole; with the present university that we are awarding a Charter today, being the latest testament of the journey of academic excellence that is, the Aga Khan brand.”

“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,” said His Highness the Aga Khan, Chancellor of the Aga Khan University. His Highness called the awarding of the University's Charter by President Kenyatta “a vote of confidence in AKU” and thanked the President “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.” He also thanked the Kenyan and international donors whose gifts made it possible for AKU to build the Centre, praising their “extraordinary generosity”.

The Centre’s classrooms are equipped with the latest technology, and its science, microbiology and pathology laboratories are state-of-the-art. Its library will feature a Digital Scholarship Centre to help faculty and students integrate new media into teaching and learning, study rooms with videoconferencing equipment for webinars, a laptop borrowing programme, and access to 65,000 books and 100,000 journals. The Graduate School of Media and Communications’ facilities include a multimedia newsroom and radio and television studios.

One of the University Centre’s most notable features will be East Africa’s first cutting-edge centre for simulation-based education in the health sciences. The US\$ 2.5 million (Ksh 250 million) Centre for Innovation in Medical Education will enable AKU’s nursing and medical students to hone their clinical skills using high-tech, lifelike patient mannequins in simulated hospital suites. Students will be able to safely practice delivering babies, performing advanced lifesaving procedures, caring for patients with highly contagious diseases such as COVID-19 and many other skills. As a result, AKU graduates will be exceptionally well-prepared to deliver high-quality care.

The University Centre also features an array of spaces that will enhance the experience of working and learning for faculty, staff and students, including a soaring atrium and adjacent courtyard, an outdoor amphitheatre, large terraces for studying and socializing, a café and cantina. It also has a 100-seat auditorium equipped for video streaming, as well as an exhibition hall.

“The Aga Khan University becomes the 21st private university to be chartered in Kenya. This is a milestone, not only to the institution but also to the country given the university’s global status,” said the Chairman of the Commission for University Education, Prof. Chacha Nyaigotti-Chacha. “This offering aligns well with the government development goals such as the Big Four Agenda, especially Universal Health Care (UHC).”

“The University Centre will be an exciting place to work, to learn, to teach and to expand the frontiers of knowledge,” AKU President Firoz Rasul said. “Just as the Aga Khan University Hospital has been at the forefront of efforts to improve the quality of health care in East Africa, AKU’s new campus will be at the centre of the drive to raise standards in university education.”

The University Centre will enable the University to expand its enrollment – giving more Kenyans access to international-quality education – and to add new programmes. Amongst the degree programmes AKU plans to launch is a Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (the equivalent of the North American M.D.) and a 4-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

### **About the Aga Khan University:**

The Aga Khan University is a pioneering institution of higher education whose mission is to improve the quality of life in the developing world and beyond, through world-class teaching, research and health-care delivery. AKU educates students for local and global leadership from campuses and teaching hospitals in six countries, primarily in Asia and Africa. It generates new knowledge to solve problems that affect millions of people, especially the most vulnerable. The University is a private, not-for-profit institution and an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network.

**About the Aga Khan Development Network:**

Founded by His Highness the Aga Khan, the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is a group of private, international, non-denominational agencies working to improve living conditions and opportunities for people in specific regions of the developing world. The Network's organisations have individual mandates that range from health care (400 health facilities, including 13 hospitals) and education (with over 200 schools) to architecture, rural development, the built environment and the promotion of private-sector enterprise. Together, they work towards a common goal – to build institutions and programmes that can respond to the challenges of social, economic and cultural change on an ongoing basis. The AKDN works in 30 countries around the world, employing approximately 96,000 people, the majority of whom are based in developing countries. The AKDN's annual budget for non-profit development is approximately US\$ 1 billion. AKDN agencies conduct their programmes without regard to faith, origin or gender.

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