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Press Release

For Immediate Release

**His Highness the Aga Khan receives  
Asia Society's Game Changer Lifetime Achievement Award**

***“Any leader of any global community hopes and prays for one thing – peace,”  
says the Aga Khan***



**New York City, USA, 1 November 2017** - His Highness the Aga Khan today received the Asia Society's Lifetime Achievement Award - the Society's most esteemed - at the organisation's Game Changer Award ceremony in New York. The awards are presented annually to individuals, organizations, and movements, that have inspired, enlightened, and shown true leadership in areas that reflect Asia Society's core pillars of policy and business, arts and culture, and education.

Accepting the award “for improving the lives of millions in Asia and around the world,” through the initiatives of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), the Aga Khan, accompanied by his brother Prince Aynur Aga Khan, said, “Any leader of any global community hopes and prays for one thing – peace; peace in every community, in every country of the world, so that men and women can live in safety, build their futures with strength, courage, hope and wisdom. These are the values that the leaders of my community, my institutions and myself, are intimately linked with and will continue to work for, for many, many decades ahead.”

The Aga Khan was addressing a distinguished audience upon receiving the award which was presented to him by Sharon Rockefeller, President and CEO of WETA-TV and wife of former Senator John “Jay” Rockefeller, together with Michael Bloomberg, former Mayor of New York City. It represents the fourth major honor bestowed on the Aga Khan in New York City this year, which also marks his Diamond Jubilee as Imam (spiritual leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community. Earlier this year, he was awarded the Foreign Policy Association Medal, and received the Architectural League of New York's President's Medal, and the United Nations Foundation's Champion for Global Change Award.

“Through the Aga Khan's network and his role as a spiritual leader, he has worked for decades to help build a more peaceful and tolerant world,” said Bloomberg. “He has brought important attention to areas and issues that need it most, including protecting vulnerable communities from climate change, and helping young people develop new skills that can help them succeed. He has also been a champion of using public-private partnerships to spread economic opportunity, improve public health, and expand access to education.”

Asia Society's President Josette Sheeran also paid tribute to the Aga Khan, recognizing the role of the AKDN and its efforts in Afghanistan and Tajikistan. “We know the power of your work; I know the power of your network; I know what you have built. And we need more networks of people determined to say this is a world of good, this is a world of standing by each other, and this is what we honor here tonight,” she said.

In addition to the Aga Khan, eight other honorees were selected by the Asia Society's global network this year, for making a transformative and positive difference for the future of Asia and the world. Honorees included: Sesame Street, for proving learning can be fun anywhere in the world; actor Dev Patel for shining a spotlight on India's poor; Sonita Alizadeh, for using rap music to fight trauma in Afghanistan; Leng Ouch, for risking his life to draw attention to illegal logging in Cambodia; Jean Liu, for revolutionizing transportation in China; Grammy winner Wu Tong, for showing that musical virtuosity has no bounds; Tadashi Yanai, for building a global retail empire that gives back to local communities; and famed eagle huntress, Aisholpan Nurgaiv, for breaking gender barriers at a remarkably young age.

Showcasing the music heritage of Asia at the event, were artists of the Aga Khan Music Initiative Ensemble: Homayoun Sakhi, Salar Nader and Wu Man, master musicians who create new music inspired by their own deep cultural roots.

## NOTES

**The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)** was founded by His Highness the Aga Khan, 49th hereditary Imam (spiritual leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. It is a group of private, non-denominational development agencies working to empower communities and individuals to improve living conditions and opportunities, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, Central and South Asia, and the Middle East. The Network's agencies focus on economic and social development, and cultural initiatives, for all citizens, regardless of gender, origin or religion. The AKDN's underlying ethic is compassion for the vulnerable in society. It operates in 30 countries around the world, employing 80,000 people, and has an annual budget for its social activities exceeding US \$900 million.

For additional information on the Aga Khan Development Network please visit [www.akdn.org](http://www.akdn.org)

**The Asia Society** was founded in 1956 by John D. Rockefeller 3rd, as a nonpartisan, nonprofit institution with major centers and public buildings in several cities around the world. It is the leading educational organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among peoples, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the United States in a global context. Across the fields of arts, business, culture, education, and policy, the Society provides insight, generates ideas, and promotes collaboration to address present challenges and create a shared future.

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