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Press release

For immediate release

UK Government welcomes His Highness the Aga Khan on the occasion of his Diamond Jubilee

Event underscores deep partnership between the Ismaili Imam and the UK Government and a shared commitment to inclusive international development.



London, United Kingdom, 27 June 2018 - The UK Government today welcomed His Highness the Aga Khan, Imam (spiritual leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslims at Lancaster House. The Luncheon was hosted by the UK's Secretary of State for International Development and Minister for Women and Equalities The Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt, in honour of His Highness the Aga Khan's Diamond Jubilee.

The event commemorated decades of partnership between the UK Government and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) - the global network founded by His Highness. It was attended by the Aga Khan; senior leaders from the AKDN, the Ismaili community and the UK Government.

The AKDN and the UK Government have partnered in numerous joint projects designed to help improve the quality of life for people around the world, in areas including girls' education, community development, clean energy, financial inclusion and conflict resolution.

The Aga Khan's Diamond Jubilee visit to the UK has included the inauguration by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales of the Aga Khan Centre - an academic building for teaching, research and cultural exchange, situated at King's Cross in the heart of London's thriving Knowledge Quarter. Designed by world-renowned architect Fumihiko Maki, the Aga Khan Centre is the new permanent home for three institutions, the Aga Khan Foundation (UK), The Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS) and the Aga Khan University's Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilisations (ISMC), all of which have made a significant contribution to improving public understanding and appreciation of Muslim culture and heritage.

Later in the day, His Highness met with Prime Minister Theresa May. He will later meet with members of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community resident in the country.

The Aga Khan Development Network and the UK Government: A Partnership for Progress

The AKDN and the UK government have a long history of cooperation around the world, dating back to the 19th century. In 1988, the AKDN signed a strategic partnership agreement with the then Overseas Development Administration, now known as the Department for International Development (DFID). In recent decades, cooperation with DFID, CDC

(Commonwealth Development Corporation), and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has focused on regions of the world such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Central Asia, and East Africa.

Long-lasting achievements together include DFID's support of the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme in Pakistan in the late 1980's, which helped establish community-led programming as a new paradigm for development. Today, this approach has been adopted by governments, multilateral agencies, and NGOs throughout Asia and Africa.

The partnership has also rested on another shared principle: that women and girls can and must be included in all programmes in order for development to be truly effective, equitable, and sustainable. For over a century, AKDN has emphasised the education of girls as well as boys. Building on this legacy, DfID has recently partnered with the Aga Khan Foundation and its partners to improve girls' education across Afghanistan. The programme is one of the largest implemented under DFID's Girls Education Challenge, working in 16 provinces, and helping over 300,000 Afghan girls go to school, stay enrolled, and improve their learning.

AKDN and the UK government share the conviction that social development must also always be complemented with economic opportunities. In 2017 the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED), Industrial Promotion Services (IPS) and CDC Group plc invested US\$140 million to create a joint power platform to develop and invest in power projects in Africa (including Bujagali Hydro Power), mobilising further project funding of US\$ over 1 billion for new projects like the 147MW Ruzizi III project in the Great Lakes region.

Future cooperation was discussed in a range of areas, including education, early childhood development, entrepreneurship and access to finance, and community governance.

NOTE

The *Aga Khan Development Network* (AKDN) is working to improve the quality of life for tens of millions of people in 30 countries. Amongst the 1,000 or so AKDN programmes and institutions that currently operate in the developing world, many date back over 60 years, and some over 100. Today, the Network employs over 80,000 people. Its budget for non-profit social and cultural activities stands at nearly US\$ 950 million. The Network's economic development arm, the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development, generates annual revenues of US\$ 4.3 billion. All surpluses generated by its project companies are reinvested in further development activities, usually in fragile, remote or post-conflict regions. For more information, please visit www.akdn.org.

For more information about commemorations taking place around the world this year as part of the Diamond Jubilee of His Highness the Aga Khan, please visit www.akdn.org/diamond-jubilee

For more information on His Highness' Diamond Jubilee visit to the United Kingdom please visit: <http://www.akdn.org/UKvisit>

Read online: <http://www.akdn.org/press-release/uk-government-welcomes-his-highness-aga-khan-occasion-his-diamond-jubilee>