Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 6 March 2018 – The Aga Khan Agency for Habitat (AKAH) is pleased to announce the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Centre for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction (CESDRR) in Almaty. The MoU was signed under the framework of the project Fostering Disaster Resilience in Isolated Mountain Environments of Tajikistan Phase X, part of the the DIPECHO disaster preparedness programme funded by the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations.

The partnership between the Centre for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction and the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, Tajikistan will lead to greater regional collaboration in emergency response and disaster risk reduction in Central Asia, a region which is extremely prone to natural disasters due to its mountainous terrain. The Government of Tajikistan reported that the country had been affected by 887 incidents of natural disasters during 2017, including avalanches, landslides and earthquakes.

The Centre for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction in Almaty began work in 2016, under an Agreement ratified by the parliaments of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Kyrgyz Republic. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan joined as an observer member state in 2017. The Centre was established to ensure effective mechanisms to decrease the risk of emergencies in Central Asia and to organise joint or cross border response.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, the Director of CESDRR, Mr. Valeriy Petrov noted that it was a “great achievement” to have the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, Tajikistan join as partner, and was “another step forward for regional partnership.”

In addition to the signing of the MoU, the trip included an exchange visit for Tajik national stakeholders involved in Emergency Management. During the visit, Protocols for Regional Emergency Response Procedures were also discussed during the visit. In addition, the delegation from Tajikistan were able to participate in a regional technical workshop, for the launch of the monitoring process for the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, organised by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), with participation of their offices in Bonn and Brussels.

The partnership will greatly enhance the regional collaboration in the sphere of disaster risk reduction, leading to greater knowledge information and best practice exchange, and also help build national government capacity for disaster preparedness in Tajikistan.
NOTES

The **Aga Khan Agency for Habitat** (AKAH), which merges the capabilities of Focus Humanitarian Assistance, the Aga Khan Planning and Building Services, and the Aga Khan Development Network’s Disaster Risk Management Initiative focuses on preparing for both sudden and slow-onset disasters. AKAH works to ensure that poor people live in physical settings that are as safe as possible from the effects of natural disasters; that residents who do live in high-risk areas are able to cope with disasters in terms of preparedness and response; and that these settings provide access to social and financial services that lead to greater opportunity and a better quality of life. Initially, priority areas of AKAH will include Afghanistan, Pakistan, Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and India.

http://www.akdn.org/our-agencies/aga-khan-agency-habitat

The **Centre for Emergency Situations and Disaster Risk Reduction** (CESDRR) in Almaty is a permanent intergovernmental body and an international organisation, which was established to ensure effective mechanisms to decrease the risk of emergencies, to mitigate the consequences of disasters, to organise joint emergency response, and to stimulate regional and international cooperation in the field of emergency management. The centre is in compliance with the universally recognised norms and principles of international law. For more information please visit: http://cesdrr.org/en/general/

The **European Commission Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations** (ECHO) is one of the biggest donors for humanitarian aid worldwide. With its funding nearly 20 million victims of natural or man-made disasters are helped each year in about 70 countries. The aid is distributed through 200 partner organisations (Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, specialised UN agencies, and European NGOs) impartially to those who need it most. For further information, please visit: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm

For more information, you can view a video on the DIPECHO programme, featuring CESDRR and the work on emergency management in Tajikistan and Central Asia here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nnLPY0quFZI

**For further information, please contact:**

Malika Giles
malika.giles@akdn.org