Aga Khan applauds Canada for decades long partnership

Ottawa, Canada, 2 May 2018 - This evening, Her Excellency the Right Honourable Julie Payette, the Governor General of Canada, hosted an official dinner at Rideau Hall to mark the Diamond Jubilee of His Highness the Aga Khan – celebrating six decades of leadership as Imam (Spiritual leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslim community.

Guests included Princess Zahra Aga Khan, past Prime Ministers Jean Chrétien and Joe Clark, Prime Minister Trudeau, past Governors General David Johnston and Adrienne Clarkson, NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh, His Worship Mayor Naheed Nenshi, various ambassadors, Ministers and Members of Parliament. Leaders from the Ismaili community as well as the Aga Khan Development Network were also present.

Addressing a room filled with guests representing what Her Excellency called “all political stripes,” she spoke of the longstanding relationship between His Highness and Canada and the way in which the work of the AKDN represents Canadian values. She applauded the extensive efforts made by His Highness and the AKDN to improve quality of life in the most marginalised parts of the world.

A former astronaut, Her Excellency also recounted an anecdote about a spaceflight in which she saw Mecca, alone amongst all other cities, gleaming brightly. She concluded by saying that it was a beacon of light, “just as you are.”

In his remarks, His Highness the Aga Khan commented on the strength and length of the relationship between the AKDN and Canada. "Thank you Canada. Thank you Canada for the advice, the support, the encouragement you've given to our institutions."

The Aga Khan is in Canada as part of his Diamond Jubilee visit to Canada and will be travelling on to visit the Ismaili communities in Western Canada later in the week.