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## UN Deputy Secretary-General calls for global action to address inequality in the 2019 Pluralism Lecture



**Lisbon, Portugal, 11 June 2019** - In delivering the seventh Annual Pluralism Lecture, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed addressed the links between pluralism and development, highlighting the dangers posed by growing inequalities.

“Inequality is at extraordinary levels and is growing, both within and between our countries. After a decade of decline, the number of chronically hungry people in our world recently began to rise again – despite there being abundant food for everyone.”

Ms. Mohammed was one of the architects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an ambitious set of 17 development goals adopted unanimously by members of the United Nations in 2015. While underscoring the interconnected nature of the goals, and their intention of benefitting all members of society, she called on leaders to address “the gap between the words and the actions; between the ideal of pluralism, and the policies and strategies that will enable us to reap its benefits in our daily lives.”

“We have growing evidence that greater diversity and inclusion, particular in relation to the inclusion of women, is correlated with higher GDP, more responsive governments, better bottom lines, greater stability, and more sustainable peace and development. But if the business case for inclusion is clear [...] our actions fail to reflect this.”

In introducing the UN Deputy Secretary-General, His Highness the Aga Khan foregrounded her long-standing commitment to gender equality and girls’ education; her instrumental role in post-2015 development planning as Special Adviser to former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon; and her passionate advocacy on the threat of climate change, including as a former Nigerian Environment Minister.

His Highness cited Portugal as an example of a country that is embracing pluralism, even as it addresses its many challenges: “As populations in many Western countries are aging, and even dwindling, Portugal is among the few that recognize that newcomers are essential to secure the country’s future.”

Hosted by the [Global Centre for Pluralism](#), an Ottawa-based charitable organisation founded by His Highness the Aga Khan in partnership with the Government of Canada, the Annual Pluralism Lecture provides an opportunity to learn from individuals whose work has made a practical difference in the world.

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Read online: <https://www.akdn.org/press-release/un-deputy-secretary-general-calls-global-action-address-inequality-2019-pluralism>