

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN



His Highness the Aga Khan is the 49th hereditary Imam (spiritual leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslims and Founder and Chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), one of the largest private development agencies in the world. In Islam, religious leaders not only interpret the faith but also have a responsibility to help improve the quality of life in their community and in the societies amongst which they live.

Since taking on his role as Imam in 1957, the Aga Khan has been deeply engaged in improving the quality of life of the most vulnerable populations, while emphasizing the need to uphold human dignity as well as respect for pluralism.

The AKDN's agencies, active in over 30 developing countries, focus on quality healthcare and education services, cultural and economic revitalization, economic development, advancement of civil society and the protection of the environment.

The Ismailis are a global, multi-ethnic community whose members, comprising a wide diversity of cultures, languages and nationalities, live in Central Asia, the Middle East, South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa, Europe and North America.

His Highness' initiatives in Canada include the Delegation of the Ismaili Imamat and the Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa, the latter in partnership with the Government of Canada; the Ismaili Centre in Burnaby; and in Toronto, the Aga Khan Park, which encompasses the Ismaili Centre and the Aga Khan Museum. Projects currently under development include the Aga Khan Garden, Alberta located in Edmonton, and a park in Burnaby, B.C.

In recognition of his contributions to human development and improving the condition of societies globally, the Aga Khan has received numerous decorations, honorary degrees, and awards, including honorary Canadian Citizenship and the Order of Canada. In February 2014, His Highness the Aga Khan was the first faith leader to address a joint session of the Canadian Parliament.