

# AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Press release

For immediate release

## **Clean energy pioneer AKPBS receives prestigious Environmental Prize for BACIP Programme in Pakistan**

*Winners personally congratulated by His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales*



**London, United Kingdom, 16 June 2011** - The world's most prestigious green energy awards tonight announced that the Aga Khan Planning and Building Service's (AKPBS) innovative Building and Construction Improvement Programme (BACIP) has received the Award for Avoided Deforestation at this year's Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy. Princess Zahra Aga Khan, Head of the Social Welfare department of the Aga Khan Development

Network, accepted the award on behalf of AKPBS at a ceremony in London tonight addressed by Rt. Hon. Gregory Barker, UK Government Minister for Climate Change. Winners from India and Africa were also announced.

The Prince of Wales, Patron of the Ashden Awards, who personally congratulated the international winners in a meeting earlier today, said: "The Ashden Awards show what it is possible to do now in saving resources and cutting emissions. They remind us how, as individuals, we can make a huge difference to the world in which we live. In a nutshell, they remind us that acting locally is, in fact, acting globally."

The Ashden Awards showcase practical solutions to combat climate change and meet the energy needs of the poor, rewarding outstanding and innovative clean energy schemes across the developing world and in the UK.

Princess Zahra Aga Khan said: "We hope that this initiative will help lift thousands of families out of the vicious cycle of poverty."

The Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, Pakistan (AKPBS) was awarded £20,000 for helping families in remote mountain villages save energy and enjoy warmer and more comfortable homes by installing a range of energy-efficient products. The programme was inspired by a speech made by His Highness the Aga Khan in which he remarked that "...the visual, physical and emotional impact of a decent home can light the spirit of human endeavour. A proper home can provide the bridge across that terrible gulf between utter poverty and the possibility of a better future".

The programme has developed over 50,000 fuel-efficient products that have been installed in 27,000 households, benefiting almost 240,000 people in over 300 villages of the Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral regions Pakistan. The products not only cut energy costs, they also significantly reduce diseases, deforestation pressures and the workloads of women and children, while enhancing disposable household income.

Sarah Butler-Sloss, Founder Director of the Ashden Awards and chair of the judging panel, said: “The initiative of AKPBS is a perfect example of how by combining a seemingly simple set of energy-efficient technologies with a clear and well thought out marketing strategy, it is possible to improve the lives of thousands of families and successfully tackle the major challenges of deforestation and climate change. And the good news is that it is highly replicable”.

### **Summary of the work:**

AKPBS’s BACIP products – fuel-efficient stoves with chimneys to remove smoke, water heaters, roof-hatch windows to cut down draughts and wall and floor insulation – are built by local carpenters and metal workers and then sold to local families by village-based agents. Not only do they make the homes warmer, cleaner and less smoky, they also help families save hundreds of dollars a year by reducing the need for fuel wood.

Homes in the Hindu Kush and Karakoram mountains are cold in the harsh winters and very smoky due the large amounts of wood used for heating and cooking. Deforestation is also a major issue, both at a local level, due to the dangers of flooding, and nationally, because the region is the watershed for much of the country.

AKPBS developed its programme as a way of tackling some of these major environmental challenges and in order to improve conditions for people living in the region. The programme directly tackles deforestation and climate change, saving 100,000 tonnes of wood a year and preventing emissions of around 160,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually. Over 240,000 lives have been transformed by the efforts of AKPBS.

“For a working woman like me it’s great. I can go to the market in the morning and there is hot water when I get back. It means I can spend more time on farming and looking after my children,” said Bibi Safina, a local woman who has benefitted from the programme.

AKPBS aims to extend this approach to other Himalayan countries facing similar challenges and aims to reach another 17,000 homes by 2014. The United Nations has identified AKPBS programmes as “Good Practices to Achieve Millenium Development Goals”.

AKPBS has been implementing its social and infrastructural development programmes with the help of local communities and village organizations as well as with the support of the Government of Pakistan and partners such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF); Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF); Japan Counter-Value Fund (JCVF); The World Bank; The Alcan Prize for Sustainability; Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA); Kreditanstalt fur Wiederaufbau (KfW); Embassy of Finland; Royal Netherlands Embassy; United States Agency for International Development (USAID); Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF); United Nations Development Program (UNDP-Pakistan); Climate Care Trust Limited; United States Environment Protection Agency (USEPA); European Commission (EC), Austrian Development Agency (ADA); Hundreds of Original Projects for Employment (HOPE’87); Australian Agency for International Development (AusAid); Aga Khan Foundation; SDC-Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation; World Wildlife Fund (WWF-Pakistan) and many other partner agencies.

For Information on all International Award winners: [www.ashdenawards.org](http://www.ashdenawards.org)

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**Notes for Editors:**

The *Ashden Awards for Sustainable Energy* were founded in 2001 to encourage the greater use of local clean energy to address climate change and alleviate poverty. Since then they have rewarded over 120 winners across the UK and the developing world. The Ashden Awards work to show-case and celebrate best practice, encourage the expansion and replication of winners' work, raise awareness of the potential of local sustainable energy, and advocate on their winners' behalf. For further information, including photos, films, and case studies on past winners, go to [www.ashdenawards.org](http://www.ashdenawards.org). The Ashden Awards Patron is HRH The Prince of Wales.

The 2011 Ashden Awards are supported by Christian Aid, The Waterloo Foundation, NTR Foundation and Citi.

The *Aga Khan Development Network* (AKDN) is a group of private, non-denominational development agencies working to empower communities and individuals to improve living conditions and opportunities, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, Central and South Asia, and the Middle East. The Network's development agencies focus on social, cultural and economic development for all citizens, regardless of gender, origin or religion. For more information, please visit [www.akdn.org](http://www.akdn.org)

The *Aga Khan Planning and Building Service, Pakistan* (AKPBS,P), an agency of the AKDN, has been working to improve the built environment in Pakistan since 1980. Its areas of focus include safe housing design and earthquake resistant construction, water supply and sanitation, improved indoor living conditions, energy efficient products, institutional construction management, village planning and natural hazard mitigation, mainly for rural communities. AKPBS,P has won several awards including National Energy Globe Award (2009 & 2010), the Partnership for Clean Indoor Air Global Leadership Award (2009), the Dubai International Award for Best Practices (2008), the Alcan Prize for Sustainability (2005) and the World Habitat Award (2006). For more information, please visit [www.akdn.org/akpbs\\_pakistan.asp](http://www.akdn.org/akpbs_pakistan.asp)

AKPBS,P's developmental programme BACIP provides a life cycle approach to household energy efficiency, market development and entrepreneurship and has been universally

commended by local communities, public sector organisations and donors for having a visible impact on the lives of the community in terms of economic benefits, social improvement, and environmental rehabilitation.

The Northern Areas of Pakistan are located in a seismically unstable zone. The degradation of natural resources, especially the loss of foliage and vegetation cover, has been proceeding at an alarming rate, causing land degradation and soil destabilization which, in turn, has led to diminished economic prospects for residents and even the loss of life (due to mudslides and floods associated with deforestation). The main cause of this deforestation is use of wood in house construction and for fuel. An estimated 15 percent of all household income is spent on heating, cooking and house maintenance needs.

To find solutions to this problem, the Building and Construction Improvement programme (BACIP) was set up as a research and extension programme. To date, over 50,000 energy efficient and living condition improvement products have been installed in 27,000 rural households benefitting about 240,000 people.

When applied, such techniques and products can, on average:

- Reduce biomass consumption of up to 60 percent -- app. 3.3 tons/ per month
- Reduce the incidence of ARI, pneumonia and other health related disease in women and children by up to 50 percent (especially during winters)
- Save health related household expenditure
- Increase household disposal income by 25 percent
- Reduce recurring house maintenance cost by 10 percent

Read online at: <http://www.akdn.org/press-release/clean-energy-pioneer-akpbs-receives-prestigious-environmental-prize-bacip-programme>