Speech by Dov Zerah
Official Opening of the Aga Khan Heart and Cancer Centre,
Aga Khan University Hospital, 25 July 2011

Your Highness,
Your Excellency,

It is a great honour for me to be here today for the inauguration of the Aga Khan University Hospital’s Heart and Cancer Centre.

France and the Aga Khan Development Network have developed a very strong partnership, formalised in 2008 with the signing of a memorandum of understanding between AKDN, the French ministry of Foreign Affairs and the French Development Agency.

This MoU covers twenty-one countries in Africa, the Middle-East and Central Asia. It aims at defining a common framework for activities in sectors such as health, education, microfinance or agriculture.

Your Highness, the MoU has proved to be very fruitful: over the past three years, we have developed many good projects, in Afghanistan, Mozambique, Madagascar and Eastern Africa.

I would especially like to praise the quality of our partnership here in Kenya, which has made this project possible.

We opened an office in Nairobi in 1997. Since then, we have developed very significant volumes of activities in the fields of infrastructure (energy, urban development, roads), water and sanitation, and environmental conservation.

In some of these fields, I believe I can state without being pompous that AFD has become one of Kenya’s key partners.

Your Excellency, I am pleased to underline the dynamism of Kenya’s economy and the quality of the policies implemented. Your country has become one of our main partners in sub-Saharan Africa, with a total of over eight hundred million euro lent to the government in less than fifteen years.

AFD also supports non-governmental actors engaged in activities with a positive social or environmental impact. This is why we chose to support the Heart and Cancer Centre. The centre will enhance health services in cardiology, oncology and obstetrics, thanks to modern equipment and to highly skilled health workers. AFD’s soft loan to AKDN aims at ensuring that the poor will access the facility through the “patient welfare programme”. The programme will enable thirty thousand poor people to be treated. The first results observed are telling; they should encourage us to extend this mechanism to other hospitals in the region.

Your Highness, Your Excellency,
You now understand why I am so proud to be with you this morning: the Heart and Cancer Centre stands as one of our emblematic projects in one of our main countries of intervention. Thank you very much.