



Aga Khan Health Services

New hospital facility brings world-class healthcare to Afghanistan's Bamyan Province



Bamyan, Afghanistan, 24 April 2017 – His Excellency the Second Vice President of Afghanistan, Sarwar Danesh, and Princess Zahra Aga Khan inaugurated a US \$22.8 million hospital today that will serve the people of Bamyan.

The state-of-the-art 141-bed facility places particular emphasis on the needs of women and children, and represents a new chapter for the Bamyan Provincial Hospital.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Vice-President Danesh said: “It is my deep hope that this new hospital with its expanded facilities will be a role model for health facilities in Afghanistan and will provide essential healthcare to the people of Bamyan and the neighbouring provinces.”

The Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS) began operating the Bamyan Hospital in 2004. At that time, the Hospital had only 35 beds – 15 of which were housed in a tent. Medical staff struggled to meet the needs of the population.

As part of a public-private partnership with the Government of Afghanistan, AKHS undertook the challenge of upgrading the hospital. The old facility was expanded to 100 beds, and new equipment was installed. Training was provided to staff and a steady supply of medicines was stocked.

The impact was remarkable: admissions rose from 1,900 in 2004 to more than 11,000 in 2016; outpatient attendances increased from 43,000 to 175,000; deliveries from 100 to more than 3,000 and the number of major operations from 150 to more than 600.

“I also am very supportive of the innovative approach for the country that Aga Khan Health Services will implement in the not too distant future in Bamyan and other hospitals that it supports,” said Afghanistan’s Minister of Public Health, His Excellency Dr Feruzuddin Feroz. “The innovation is setting a fee for non-essential health services -- that is, those not in the basic package of health services and the essential package of hospital services. The fee will be ploughed back into the hospitals to help pay for the running costs.”

In response to the clear need for a purpose-built facility, the Bamyan Provincial Government allocated 6.4 acres of land on the outskirts of the town. The new hospital was built by the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, which specialises in ecologically friendly and seismic resistant construction. Over half of the facility’s power is supplied by solar panels located on a hilltop behind the hospital.

The Governor of Bamyan Province, His Excellency Mohammad Tahir Zahir, remarked that AKHS has been upgrading the Hospital since 2004 and that it was now “a state of the art hospital”. He continued with the proposal “to make this hospital a regional one that serves five more provinces.”

The construction of the new facility was funded by the Government of Canada (US \$17 million), the Aga Khan Foundation Canada (US \$3.2 million) and the Government of France (US \$2.3 million). The hospital’s operations continue to be principally funded by the Aga Khan Health Services; since 2004, this funding has amounted to over US \$15 million.

“I know that all of you share Canada’s deep belief that access to quality health care for all the citizens of this vast country of Afghanistan is one of the most important building blocks for a better future,” said Canadian Ambassador His Excellency Kenneth Neufeld. “We can see here in front of us a model of quality sustainable health care which can offer first-class health solutions to remote areas and under-served segments of the population. I know too that you share Canada’s deep commitment to ensuring that the rights of women and children to equal access to health care are achieved.”

“France is proud of being a partner in such an achievement,” said His Excellency the Ambassador of France, Mr. François Richier. “I am convinced that the Bamyan Provincial Hospital will bring a major contribution in the well-being and future of the people of the city and the province.”

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) has been active in Bamyan since 2003. The upgrading of the hospital is part of the AKDN’s broad contribution to the improvement of health services in Afghanistan, which include the upgrading of health facilities, the training of nurses, midwives and doctors, and wider support for the delivery of quality health services and the rebuilding of the country’s health infrastructure.

The Bamyan Provincial Hospital and the Faizabad Provincial Hospital in Badakhshan (also operated by AKHS), are the only provincial hospitals in the country to have received ISO-9001 certification. The French Medical Institute for Mothers and Children in Kabul is managed by the Aga Khan University, having been established through a public-private partnership with the governments of France and Afghanistan, the Aga Khan Development Network and the French NGO La Chaîne de L’Espoir.

Earlier in the day, Princess Zahra Aga Khan met with His Excellency President Ashraf Ghani and Her Excellency First Lady Rula Ghani, His Excellency Chief Executive Dr Abdullah Abdullah, His Excellency Second Vice President Sarwar Danesh, and His Excellency Governor of Bamyan Mohammad Tahir Zahir.

The Aga Khan Development Network has been committed to the reconstruction of Afghanistan since the beginning of this century, having channelled close to a billion dollars towards the country’s development.

“Through investments in the private sector – telecommunications, hospitality, tourism and microfinance – as well as concurrent investments in the social and cultural sector, including health systems strengthening; health professionals training including post-graduate medical education and diploma level nursing through the Aga Khan University; primary, secondary education and adult literacy programmes; facilitating village community organisations; the restoration of the Bagh-e-Babur gardens and the urban environment around

it,” noted Princess Zahra, “the AKDN seeks to harness and influence the various dimensions of human life such that, together, they chart a course for growth while building social protection.”

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The *Aga Khan Health Service* (AKHS) in Afghanistan is an active partner of the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) in the implementation of the Basic Package of Health Services and the Essential Package of Hospital Services. Through its activities, AKHS provides basic health and hospital services to a population of more than 1.6 million people in some of Afghanistan's most remote and inaccessible districts in the provinces of Badakhshan, Baghlan, and Bamyan. AKHS is also working with the Government of Afghanistan to develop and maintain qualified health human resources in all areas of health care by offering continuous education for doctors, nurses, health professionals and administrators, as well as providing technical advice and support on health policy, nursing standards and midwifery education.

The *Aga Khan Development Network* (AKDN), which was founded by His Highness the Aga Khan, is a private, international, non-denominational development organization. It employs over 80,000 people in over 30 countries. AKDN agencies address complex development issues, including the provision of quality healthcare and education services, cultural and economic revitalization, micro-enterprise, entrepreneurship and economic development, the advancement of civil society and the protection of the environment. For more information, please see: www.akdn.org/afghanistan

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