



AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Press release

For immediate release

**Princess Zahra Aga Khan receives
prestigious Asia Society Texas Center's Huffington Award**

Recognised for her outstanding contributions to uplift lives around the world.



Houston, Texas, 10 October 2019 - Princess Zahra Aga Khan, daughter of His Highness the Aga Khan (Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims), today received Asia Society Texas Center's *Huffington Award* in Houston, Texas. The award is the highest honour bestowed by the Texas Center recognising leaders who are a major force on the international stage. Princess Zahra Aga Khan was honoured for her outstanding contributions that have furthered international understanding, uplifted lives, and advanced health and education through her work with the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).

“We were so humbled to honour Princess Zahra, and it was an inspiration to hear about the many projects in healthcare and education that she and the Aga Khan Development Network have spearheaded globally,” said Bonna Kol, President of Asia Society Texas Center. “Through her work, Princess Zahra is building hope and trust in a world where both are greatly needed.”

The award dinner began with opening remarks by Y. Ping Sun, Asia Society Texas Center's Vice Chair and First Lady of Rice University and Bonna Kol, President, Asia Society Texas Center. Dinner was followed by a musical performance by the Aga Khan Master Musicians of the Aga Khan Music Initiative, Homayoun Sakhi and Abbas Kosimov, who were joined by *tabla* player Nitin Mitta.

Past award recipient, David W. Leebron, President of Rice University, introduced a short honouree video that highlighted the many accomplishments of Princess Zahra—including her tireless work to uphold human dignity, develop future leaders, and spearhead health and education initiatives in 30 countries.

Mr. Leebron then led a moderated discussion with Princess Zahra, in which they discussed the impacts and motivations of the AKDN globally. Princess Zahra spoke of the value of pluralism, she said, “Pluralism is not just tolerance, tolerating the other, it's not just accepting that one lives in a diverse society, but it's having an active and profound understanding of the nature and culture of one's neighbours, so much so that one can then learn to appreciate the value that they bring to society.” Princess Zahra also spoke about the importance of values, global education, healthcare, economic opportunity and volunteerism.

In a special video presented by The Honourable James A. Baker, III and Susan Baker, Huffington Award Dinner Honorary Co-Chairs acknowledged Princess Zahra's passion and

commitment to “making the world a better place.” A formal award presentation by Nancy C. Allen, Huffington Dinner Honourary Co-Chair and Asia Society Board Member followed.

The award is named after former Ambassador Roy M. Huffington, who co-founded the Asia Society Texas Center in 1979 with former First Lady Barbara Bush. Past honourees of this prestigious award include President George H.W. Bush, and former Secretary of State James A. Baker III.

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NOTES

Asia Society Texas Center

With 14 locations throughout the world, Asia Society is the leading educational organisation promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among the peoples, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the west. Asia Society Texas Center executes the global mission with a local focus, enriching and engaging the vast diversity of Houston through innovative, relevant programmes in arts and culture, business and policy, education, and community outreach.

The Aga Khan Development Network

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) was founded by His Highness the Aga Khan, 49th Hereditary Imam (spiritual leader) of the Ismaili Muslims. It 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 nine development agencies focus on economic and social development, and cultural initiatives, for all citizens, regardless of gender, origin or religion. The AKDN’s underlying ethic is compassion for the vulnerable in society. Its annual budget for philanthropic activity is in excess of US \$900 million. For additional information on the Aga Khan Development Network, please visit www.akdn.org

Read online: <https://www.akdn.org/press-release/princess-zahra-aga-khan-receives-prestigious-asia-society-texas-centers-huffington>