



## AGA KHAN DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

Press release

For immediate release

### **Ismaili Imamat and Portugal's Ministry for Health deepen partnership and sharing of knowledge**

*State-of-the art robotics surgical equipment will improve  
healthcare for the people of Portugal*



**Lisbon, Portugal, 8 November 2019** - His Excellency the President of the Portuguese Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, today inaugurated the state-of-the-art robotics surgical technology in the presence of His Highness the Aga Khan, Imam (hereditary Spiritual Leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslims at Lisbon's Curry Cabral Hospital.

Donated by the Ismaili Imamat to Lisbon's Centro Hospitalar Universitario de Lisboa Central (Central Lisbon University Hospital Centre), the da Vinci Surgical System, is the first of its kind to be available in a National Health Service hospital in Portugal. It was presented to the hospital at a ceremony attended by His Excellency Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, President of the Portuguese Republic, Marta Temido, Portuguese Minister of Health, government officials, diplomats and leaders in the fields of medicine, academic research and other civil society organisations.

Speaking to the media following the ceremony, President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa acknowledged the partnership between Portugal and the Ismaili Imamat: "This is a big leap that was only possible due to the donation of His Highness. It implies a transition, it implies training, training inside and outside - and it is very significant that it is happening in the National Health Service - in public units that are dedicated to the health of the Portuguese people."

"The donation of the Da Vinci system is further evidence of the strengthening bond between the Ismaili Imamat and the Portuguese Republic, and of our joint commitment to improving quality of life in Portugal, the Portuguese-speaking countries of Africa, and beyond," said Firoz Rasul, President of the Aga Khan University. Describing the many growing linkages between the institutions of the Aga Khan Development Network and the government of Portugal, he noted that these linkages were built upon shared values and "a belief in the power of partnership to improve people's lives and positively impact institutions and societies."

The da Vinci surgical system, a 2 million euro, cutting edge, robotics assisted technology, expands surgeons' capabilities by enabling them to perform minimally invasive surgical procedures with precision and accuracy. The equipment, controlled by surgeons from a console, will expand the Portuguese public's access to high-quality surgical care, improving their quality of life through better outcomes from difficult surgical procedures. It is used for

a wide range of conditions in specialties including cardiac, urologic, gynaecologic, paediatric and general surgery.

“This new robotic machinery is very welcome. It will enhance the precision of surgeries undertaken at our hospital, reduce the time that patients need to stay in hospital to recover, and allow them to get back to work faster,” said Professor Luis Campos Pinheiro, Director of Urology.

The ongoing partnership between Portugal’s Ministry for Health and the Aga Khan University (AKU) illustrates the importance of sharing of knowledge and capabilities between the two entities. The Ministry of Health will assist AKU hospitals in Kenya and Pakistan to commence liver transplant operations whereas AKU will assist local Portuguese hospitals to establish cutting-edge simulation centres such as those operating in Karachi, Pakistan.

In 2015, His Highness the Aga Khan signed a landmark agreement between the Republic of Portugal and the Ismaili Imamat for the establishment of a formal Seat of the Ismaili Imamat in Portugal to intensify cooperation in the areas of research and the knowledge society and in improving the life of Portugal inhabitants.

The Ismaili Imamat and the Government of Portugal share a long history that has encompassed partnerships to help improve quality of life for people in Portugal and around the world. The Aga Khan Foundation, an agency of the AKDN, has been active in Portugal since 1983, working on initiatives related to early childhood education, poverty alleviation, economic inclusion, strengthening of civil society, and care for the elderly.

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