

**Chief Guest Remarks by Dr Rashid Aman,  
Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Health  
Convocation of the Aga Khan University  
Nairobi, Kenya, 12 February 2020**

The President of Aga Khan University Firoz Rasul,  
Diplomatic Representative of the Aga Khan  
Development Network Dr Azim Lakhani,  
Aga Khan University Trustees,  
The Provost,  
Government representatives, members of the diplomatic  
corps,  
Deans, faculty and staff of the University,  
Parents, and, most importantly, graduating students,



Salaam Aleikum and Good morning.

It gives me great pleasure to officiate this 16<sup>th</sup> convocation ceremony of the Aga Khan University. Today is a day of great celebration, not only for you graduands, but also for your parents, guardians, faculty and staff of the University, and indeed all of us.

I share the joy and pride of everyone associated with achievements of the 94 graduands before us, whom I am informed are from the University's Medical College, School of Nursing and Midwifery, Graduate School of Media and Communications and the Institute for Educational Development.

Graduands, my warmest congratulations!

The University has prepared you to deal effectively with emerging issues and provide solutions to societal challenges as you step into the world of professional practice as physicians, nurses, researchers, educators and experts in digital journalism.

I would also like to extend my warmest congratulations to the Aga Khan Development Network for the sustained growth realised over the years. I note with pride that through the various institutions in the network, AKDN continues to contribute positively to the improvement of living conditions and opportunities in specific regions in the developing world. Especially in the areas ranging from the fields of health and education, to rural development and promotion of private sector enterprise. Indeed, your focus on excellence, humanity, justice, mercy and partnership has ensured your continued growth.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, education is the greatest means of transforming society. It enables society nurture young leadership with requisite ability to drive the development agenda

with regard to generation of wealth, provision of healthcare, reversal of poverty, and sustainability of the environment.

I am aware that the Aga Khan Development Network is also building a multi-storey University Centre in Nairobi to provide state of the art research and learning facilities. And plan to add an array of new undergraduate and graduate degrees. I am aware too that your plans for the future include the construction of a children's specialty hospital. To this end, the government assures AKU of our full support as you undergo this significant expansion.

Specialised healthcare and the need to opt and reverse the rise in non-communicable diseases especially cancer remains a key government concern, and we can never be complacent. Your expansion of molecular imaging and oncology services in the recent past, are of particular importance to government as they provide an opportunity to increase access to specialised healthcare in this region, making Kenya a medical tourism hub in line with the country's vision 2030.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, as you are aware our country is at the threshold of unprecedented accelerated growth and transformation, thanks to His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta's Big Four agenda that includes universal health coverage, manufacturing, affordable housing and food security.

The Ministry of Health is committed to continue implementation of health systems and reforms to accelerate movement towards Universal Health Coverage. Our approach towards UHC is centered on three critical drivers that focus on i) expanding the population accessing basic health interventions, ii) improving the quality of healthcare services being provided, and iii) developing sustainable financing models for health and providing financial protection for those seeking healthcare.

We are grateful to note that AKDN is making tremendous contribution and collaborating with us in these areas of focus through the very work you're doing in the 300-bed Aga Khan University Hospital, your 42 medical centres in Kenya and the free medical camps and Patient Welfare programme run by the network, and not to forget why we are here today, which is turning out the human resource for health that we need for UHC.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you know too well, resources are not limitless. The Ministry of Health and our county governments operate with resource-constrained budgets. Support, collaboration, and investments in healthcare from the private sector, development partners, and faith-based and non-governmental organisations, complements the mandate of government in the health sector and is well appreciated.

To accelerate attainment of UHC in Kenya, the Ministry will continue enhancing multi-stakeholder and cross-sectoral collaborative partnerships. Indeed we will soon be launching a partnership coordination framework that will entrench further regular engagement, support reporting and mutual accountability between various stakeholders in the health sector.

To you graduands, no effort has been spared in ensuring that you achieve the success you celebrate today. Always remember that true growth is as a result of hard work, dedication and focus. You're entering into a world that is not only ready for you, but also testing for your creative solutions and service as professional givers of healthcare, education of skills and journalistic ethos. May you bring reason and hope to all of whom you touch in your professional and personal lives. May you find your future endeavours deeply rewarding.

Finally distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I take this opportunity to wish the University and indeed the entire network continued success in the years to come.

Thank you.

Read online: <https://www.akdn.org/speech/dr-rashid-aman/kenya-2020-convocation-aga-khan-university>