

I The Chancellor's Commission on the Future of the Aga Khan University was appointed by His Highness the Aga Khan in the summer of 1992. It was asked to look two or three decades ahead and consider what the long-term development of the University should be. Five specific charges were given to the Commission :

(1) to review the 'overall vision' of AKU as articulated in the 1983 Harvard Report;

(2) to suggest changes in this conception of AKU that may now appear appropriate or necessary;

(3) to recommend programmes and activities AKU might undertake, and the locations and legal structures they may have;

(4) to describe the financial characteristics of the University implied in the recommended vision of its future; and

(5) to recommend appropriate management and governance structures.

The Commission consisted originally of seven members (for whom brief biographies are given in an appendix to the report) :

*H.E. Sahabzada Yaqub-Khan, Chairman*  
*Dr. J. Fraser Mustard*  
*David E. Bell*  
*Vartan Gregorian*  
*Sharom Ahmat*  
*Mme. Fatima Mernissi*  
*Francis X. Sutton, Secretary.*

Mme. Mernissi participated in two meetings of the Commission but was unable to continue with its work because of other commitments. The full Commission met seven times in meetings extending over two or three days. Two of these meetings were held in Karachi, and on several occasions members of the Commission met with faculty and staff in Karachi. His Highness the Aga Khan met with the Commission on three occasions. (Details on the Commission's activities are given in an appendix to the report.) Dr. David Fraser (Head of the Social Welfare Department at the Secretariat of His Highness the Aga Khan), and Messrs. Guillaume de Spoelberch (Executive Director of the Aga Khan Foundation) and Shamsh Kassim-Lakha (President, Aga Khan University Centre) were regular observers and participants at Commission

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meetings, as was Dr. John Dirks after his appointment in 1994 as Acting Rector and chief academic officer. Reports to the AKU Board of Trustees on the progress of the Commission's work were made at intervals.

**II The Stated Aims and Mission of AKU** as presented in the Aga Khan University Order 1983 (the "Charter"), the Address of His Highness at the Charter Presentation Ceremony, and the Harvard Report of 1983, were reviewed by the Commission as basic reference points for its work.

**III Changes in Higher Education, Research and Scholarship in the Developing and Muslim Worlds Since 1983** were reviewed by the Commission. The Committee that produced the Harvard Report had studied the state of higher education and research in the arc of countries from Indonesia to East Africa and made severe judgements on the deficiencies they found. The Committee concluded that AKU, even as a small institution, could make an important contribution by achieving high quality and distinction in education and research. Our Commission found the general state of higher education and research in the regions of particular interest to AKU not significantly improved since 1983, and in some places, deteriorated. On this basis, it found the need for a high quality AKU undiminished.

The Commission took note of the rise of private higher education in the developing and Muslim worlds since AKU began and studied examples of universities seeking new patterns of education for the Muslim world.

**IV The Commission also studied Changes in the World at Large and Their Implications for AKU.** It reviewed political changes, particularly in Central Asia, East Africa and Pakistan. The first of these, following on the break-up of the USSR, has brought Muslim countries onto the world stage that offer new potentials for AKU; the deterioration of African conditions has concerned the Commission but not deterred it from envisaging a future for AKU in East Africa; the economic, social and political prospects in Pakistan have been reviewed as they may affect judgements on the location of new components of AKU in Pakistan or elsewhere. The Commission has also been generally concerned with the

failures of governance that have been widely prevalent in the developing and Muslim worlds in the past decade, and has sought to understand what universities like AKU might do in the interest of better governance. The "Developing World" is not now what it was, even a decade ago. The Commission reviewed changes in understanding of and attitudes toward development, and in the state of the developing world, concluding that **AKU should maintain its commitment to generic problems of development.** Changes in the Muslim world since 1983 and as they may occur in coming decades were also reviewed. The expansion and dispersion of Muslim populations were particularly noted along with the rise of radical Islamic movements and tensions over them within and outside the Muslim world. **The Commission concluded that AKU now and in the future will be facing a more challenging vocation as a Muslim university than it faced in 1983.** We also concluded that the progressive globalisation of the world and the rising influence of **multi-culturalism** present new opportunities and fresh challenges for AKU as an authentic representative of the developing and Muslim worlds.

**V The mission of AKU at present and in the coming decades will be affected by its experience in its first decade and by its role as a member of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).** AKU has firmly established itself as an autonomous institution of quality and integrity. It has made commitments to medical and nursing education, and latterly to teachers' education. It has established firm roots in Pakistan without losing aspiration as an international university. Establishing a research capability in a developing country is a difficult undertaking and AKU's research has not yet been developed as well as it might be, but recognition of its importance and a determination to strengthen it are clearly held. AKU has much to contribute to other parts of AKDN and can in turn benefit from them in many ways. The expansion of the University into new fields that we envisage will extend AKDN relations already present with the Aga Khan Education Services (AKES) and the Aga Khan Health Services (AKHS). The Commission has in particular met with the leadership of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the Institute of Ismaili Studies and studied possible relations of AKU programmes

with their programmes. The Commission's general view is that AKU must seek to maintain close and mutually beneficial relations within AKDN, but must also hold faithfully to its own distinctive character and mission.

**VI The Vision of the Future AKU** that the Commission now holds after reviewing the many changes since 1983 does not differ in essentials from that voiced in the Charter Presentation Address and the Harvard Report. We believe AKU must be an autonomous institution, setting its own course in pursuit of distinctiveness and quality. It will remain small and can only be of wide consequence if it grasps its unique opportunities as a private, international, and Muslim institution. It must offer education of breadth and high quality and bring forth important intellectual products through its research and scholarship. It must loyally serve the countries where it works and the students who come to it, but it must accept the formidable challenges of being an international university, with branches in at least three widely separated geographic locations, and the aspiration to contribute knowledge and example that will be valuable in many places.

#### **VII The General Characteristics and Components of the Future Aga Khan University**

We have stressed that the future AKU should have three broad characteristics. It should be :

- (1) A University on the "information superhighways" of the world.
- (2) A University using superior educational methods and techniques.
- (3) A University devoted to advancing the status and professional opportunities of women.

The Commission offers broad proposals on what must be done in such matters as research and instruction on women's outlook and careers to assure that AKU will have those characteristics. But it also stresses that much planning and development must be left to more specialised efforts.

The components through which these characteristics may be expressed are recommended to be as follows :

**1 A Faculty of Health Sciences with some new programmes and emphases.** We expect that this Faculty will, in 2025, still be the largest part of AKU, continuing and extending its present programmes in medical and nursing education. We are recommending a strong expansion of research, with corresponding growth of graduate study in this Faculty. We also support previous recommendations and the recent action of the Board for the development of a programme in Health Policy and Management. Furthermore, we recommend that the recent proposals for giving a more general and liberal education to students in the Faculty be carried forward, either in the form of a preliminary year or otherwise.

**2 Continuation of the Institute for Educational Development (IED) or the Establishment of a Faculty of Education.** While we have no doubt that AKU should continue to seek an important role dealing with the educational needs of the developing and Muslim worlds, we think this role can in the future take different forms. IED may grow from its present start, adding other functions in curriculum development, examinations, or other educational matters, and spreading internationally. This could be an AKU contribution of notable importance. An alternative pattern would be to move toward a Faculty or School of Education, but here the Commission feels strongly that AKU should not become substantially engaged in first degree teacher education. In whatever direction AKU's educational efforts move, serious intellectual objectives and research should be maintained.

**3 An Institute of Islamic Civilisations.** The Commission believes that AKU has a unique opportunity as a Muslim university to address problems of great and urgent contemporary importance. It can do so through the establishment of an institute devoted to the study of Islamic civilisations, aiming to produce research and writings that would serve widely to bring more enlightened understanding of the Islamic heritage and its contemporary relevance, and to contribute to the development of Muslim societies. We believe that such an institute should be established in Europe, and preferably in the United Kingdom. It can begin on a modest scale, but should do so quickly; we give this recommendation for a new component of AKU priority over the others we are recommending.

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**4 An Institute of Human Development.** The Commission has been persuaded that understanding of the development of human beings through the life cycle, and in particular of the effects of conditions in early childhood on subsequent well-being and performance, will be of exceptional importance for the policies and practices of developing countries in coming decades. The health and energies of the populations of these countries will have decisive importance for their progress. AKU with its beginnings in the health sciences and education is well positioned to develop and apply this now-rapidly-advancing field of knowledge.

**5 An Institute of Economic Growth and Society.** The Commission has reviewed various ways in which AKU might pursue its mission in the service of development. The University is already deeply engaged in problems of health and education but there are many other problems it might address. Our review of the changes in the world has shown a new importance of markets and economic ties that stretch over national boundaries into whole regions. We have been impressed that continuing economic growth, and the arrest of decline in Africa, are essential to the future well-being of the developing and Muslim worlds. Understanding of economic growth and strategies for advancing it have been undergoing great changes and the opportunity exists for AKU to join in a search that could be of critical importance for countries such as those in Africa, South Asia and Central Asia that are of particular concern to it. We believe there is an opportunity for AKU to develop a first class institute in this field, such as does not now exist in or is not now focused on the Muslim world.

**6 An Institute of Planning and Management of Human Settlements.** The extensive engagement of the Aga Khan in the fields of architecture and historic preservation has made it natural to consider what role architecture may have in the future development of AKU. It is evident that it will be important in the work of the Institute of Islamic Civilisations we are recommending. In one of the Commission's meetings, staff of the Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture at Harvard and MIT and the General Manager of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture advanced the idea that institutions devoted to research and graduate study in architecture and development were needed in

many parts of the Muslim world. As the Commission has discussed this idea, it has broadened its concerns to embrace the study and planning of processes of rural and urban change throughout the developing countries. We conceive that such study and planning must embrace many subjects, including the design of infrastructure, environmental problems, migration, and local government. The work of such an institute will be able to build on AKU's experience in community health, economic development, education and other fields but it will not be easy to develop quickly. We have therefore concluded that the institution of this component of AKU should be delayed until the latter part of the period we are considering.

**7 A Faculty or College of Arts and Sciences.** The Commission has come to envisage the growth of a liberal arts college offering first level university degrees at some time in AKU's future. The reasons are several. One has been the deterioration of such education in AKU's areas of concern. Another has been the movement in the Faculty of Health Sciences, and in some AKES institutions, toward preliminary or post-secondary liberal education. With the feeling that such education may help AKU contribute better leaders for society and perhaps help bring better governance, these various motivations have come together to make us favourable to a liberal arts college or faculty in AKU's future. We think this will be an expensive undertaking if done well, as it must be; it should not be started in the first decade ahead, but steps toward it can be taken in that period.

The Commission has, in the course of its work, examined several other possible components of the future AKU which it has chosen not to recommend. Our concern over the problems of **governance of Muslim societies** was particularly stimulated by His Highness and the idea of a special unit of AKU devoted to governance or public administration was explored. We were not, however, persuaded that AKU could make an important contribution in this way. We have rather placed our hopes in what AKU may do through educating leaders and through better analysis of the origins and charter of governance problems through work on Islamic civilisations and the roles of government and political stability in economic growth. Likewise we are not recommending specific AKU programmes in information

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sciences and environmental studies though we recognise the great importance of both. Our views are that AKU must maintain first-class competencies in the use of modern information and communication technologies but that this does not mean it should establish special instructional and research programmes in them; somewhat similarly, we hope and expect that various AKU programmes earlier discussed will make significant contributions to the environmental problems of Pakistan and other countries, without attempting to establish a special programme devoted to them.

### VIII The Structure, Governance and Finance of the Future AKU

1 We perceive AKU as now entering a new phase of its development, expanding from its initial single focus on the Health Sciences in Karachi to other fields and to locations beyond Pakistan. We believe that AKU should spread internationally, adding locations in at least two geographic areas to its original home in Pakistan. Europe and East Africa beckon as likely future sites, with Central Asia, India, and other places as further possibilities. International universities with this sort of dispersion are not common and there is not much helpful experience to guide planning of AKU's future.

2 The future AKU will need **governance** at two levels, for the University as a whole and for its individual parts. **The Commission believes that AKU can and should go ahead to develop internationally under its existing Pakistan charter until such time as revisions or change in its charter may seem necessary. We also believe that the legal establishment of branches in different countries may encounter less difficulty than appeared to be the case some years ago. Advisory councils for branches of AKU should possess the stature in their areas and in relevant professions that will be needed to support and guide these branches.**

The responsibilities of the central leadership of the University, in the Board and in the senior executive and academic staff, will grow apace with the University's growth and expansion into new areas and fields. The composition of the Board will need appropriate adjustment and the appointment of a fully empowered Rector will be needed in the not-distant future. We also believe

that the senior academic and executive leadership of AKU needs to be strengthened promptly by addition of an officer we have called a **Director of Planning**. Rectors of AKU will need to be persons with very high orders of talent, energy, and experience. We anticipate that, with variations depending on their backgrounds, future Rectors will need to maintain collegial patterns of senior leadership such as AKU has had thus far, in order to deal with the many communities and contexts on which AKU will depend.

3 The **core financial requirements** of AKU we project at about 2025 have been roughly assessed by the Commission. In constant 1994 dollars, we foresee the University growing in annual core budgets somewhat more than four-fold from \$ 10 million at the present time to more than \$ 40 million in 2025. These estimates include provision for space and equipment but not for major capital expenditures. We have also made estimates of the larger budgets AKU will face if higher education costs continue to rise at higher rates than general price levels. We do not see these financial requirements as dismayingly large in a world we expect to be richer in 2025 than it is now. AKU has thus far benefited from very generous donors. We have been encouraged by the results of recent fund-raising and project that if recent levels of generosity are maintained over the coming decades, AKU will by 2025 have received large gifts for capital expenditures and for an endowment that will produce income covering fractions of its expenditures comparable to those that rich private universities elsewhere have.

### IX Conclusion

1 In **summary of our conclusions**, we have found that the "overall vision" of the Aga Khan University as it was set forth more than a decade ago does not need basic change: AKU should be a private, autonomous, Muslim university, open without discrimination to all qualified applicants, and devoted to the needs of the developing and Muslim worlds. The changes since AKU was founded and that we can anticipate in the next decades sharpen the need for AKU and the challenges it faces as a Muslim institution, and as a university of quality and creativity in research, instruction, and service. We have proposed a future for AKU as a highly distinctive international university; it will not have some

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conventional schools or faculties but will seek through institutes that combine different disciplines and draw on links to the Aga Khan Development Network to address major subjects like Islamic civilisations, human development and economic growth in creative ways. It will be a university spread broadly both geographically and over the fields of pure and applied knowledge from the sciences to the humanities. It will have both spiritual and technocratic elements for the needs of its own students and those of the worlds it aims to serve.

2 The Commission was charged to consider the long-term future of AKU but we have also necessarily given thought to **the start toward that future in the next decade**. We are anxious to see AKU's development go ahead promptly in an orderly, planned way. To this end we have recommended the early appointment of a Director of Planning to strengthen the senior executive leadership, and extended responsibilities for the Strategic Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees. With the support and commitment of the Chancellor and the Board of Trustees and the active engagement of faculty and staff we are confident of early progress toward the goals we have proposed.

A rough sequence of new developments in AKU is indicated in Sections VII and VIII of our report. The Institute of Islamic Civilisations would come first, along with the start of the new developments we have proposed in the Faculty of Health Sciences, and already planned developments in IED; following as soon thereafter as financial and administrative constraints permit, would come the Institutes of Human Development and Economic Growth, and further growth in IED. The start of the Faculty or College of Arts and Sciences would not come until after the end of the first decade ahead, and the Institute of Human Settlements still later.

We thus conceive that a decade hence AKU should be well started toward being a more widely spread and diversified university, while continuing to grow in the health sciences and education. But we recognise that what can be done in the next ten years will be subject to serious financial constraints. Existing commitments and a slow rise of significant new income from endowment means that developments in the

next years ahead look more difficult than in the longer-run. There may be disappointments but we urge that they bring only delays, not abandonment of plans and purposes.

### 3 Envoi

Realisation of the future we have proposed for AKU will require talents and commitments far beyond the ordinary. But we see them as balanced by the historic opportunity AKU has as a new institution at a time when university education and research are in disarray in parts of the world that particularly concern it. The Chancellor is rightly proud to recall that his ancestors established a historic university in Cairo a thousand years ago. In the new century that will soon begin, we look forward to AKU winning historic distinction in a world where universities like it are too rare and sorely needed.