

Al-Karim Haji Welcome Address

Nairobi, Nov. 10, 2016

Bismillah-i-Rahman-i-Rahim

Thank you, Dr Mogere.

Dr Nicholas Mur-aguri, Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Health, Kenya

Mr. Yusuf Keshavjee, Trustee of the Aga Khan University,

Dr Azim Lakhani, Diplomatic Representative for the Aga Khan Development Network in Kenya,

Mr. Frank Velveert, Managing Director, Johnson & Johnson Corporate Citizenship Trust,

Dr Rudi Eggers, World Health Organization Representative to Kenya, and
Conference participants

Hamjambo na kari-buni

On behalf of the Aga Khan University, a warm welcome and thank you for joining us at this conference that will focus on, *“The Health Care Quality Challenge: Making Quality Matter Now and in the Future”*. With this conference, we celebrate 15 years of health professional education by the AKU in East Africa as well as 15 years of support for our School of Nursing and Midwifery by the Johnson & Johnson Corporate Citizenship Trust.

During this conference, we will be discussing the need to take a *systematic* approach to enhancing quality throughout the health system with the goal of improving health for ALL East Africans.

Education and health have been critical components to the Aga Khan Development Network's mission to improve the quality of life through a holistic and integrated approach. AKDN's activities in East Africa dates back more than a century when the first Aga Khan girls' school was opened in Zanzibar. The first Aga Khan dispensary in the region was opened in 1929.

Establishing the Aga Khan University is another example of His Highness the Aga Khan's commitment to East Africa.

I thank the Johnson & Johnson Corporate Citizenship Trust for supporting nearly 90 percent of the 2,100 plus graduates of AKU's School of Nursing & Midwifery. Today, more than 100 of our alumni hold senior leadership positions across East Africa.

We recently completed a study that details the impact of our nursing graduates and the remarkable contribution that they make to their communities. I invite you to pick up a copy of the impact study during this conference.

Our partnership with the Trust is one example of the significant impact that can be made when like-minded institutions come together with the goal of making a positive contribution to the societies they serve.

Delivering high-quality health care to all of East Africa's people will be challenging, **but it is a challenge that must be met** to make the kind of progress that the Sustainable Development Goals envision. AKU faculty members recently published in *The Lancet*, that the lives of **2 million mothers and children** worldwide could be saved by improving the quality of obstetric care, **at a cost of less than \$1 per capita**.

At AKU, we believe East Africa can meet the quality challenge because of our own experience. We have transformed the Aga Khan University Hospital in Nairobi into a 280-bed tertiary care facility offering advanced heart and cancer care. We have met the rigorous quality standards of the U.S.-based Joint Commission International, both at our hospital in Nairobi and at the Aga Khan Hospital in Dar es Salaam. The same is our aspiration when we open an Aga Khan University Hospital in Kampala.

In 2015, the AKDN health system across East Africa received more than 1.3 million patient visits and provided over \$1 million in patient welfare to thousands of low-income patients. In addition, our free medical camps served 76,000 people.

Every day, graduates of our nursing programmes are positively impacting the quality of health care. So are graduates of our residency programmes, which train specialist doctors in nine disciplines.

Dr Mogere is one example of the impact our residency programme. After completing AKU's programme in surgery, he did sub-specialty training in neurosurgery in South Africa and returned to Kenya. He is currently the only surgeon in East Africa trained in neuro-endo-vascular surgery, an advanced technique for treating stroke patients.

In April, we launched the *Kenya Countdown to 2015 Country Case Study* with the First Lady of Kenya, Her Excellency Margaret Kenyatta, in attendance.

This study is perhaps the most comprehensive analysis to date, of maternal and child health in Kenya. We look forward to working with the government to implement its recommendations to help save the lives of mothers and children.

AKU and Aga Khan Health Services will work with nearly 100 government health facilities to improve care for over half a million mothers and children in Kenya and Tanzania.

AKU's Centre of Excellence in Women and Child Health, will conduct implementation research that bridges the gap between academia, service providers and policymakers to help contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

All this activity reflects the **commitment to quality that the Chancellor of AKU, His Highness the Aga Khan**, spoke of nearly a decade ago, here in Nairobi. As he said, QUOTE **“we need new universities in the developing world...with access to the right human resources, as well as global perspectives on higher education, and a sense of complete dedication to the highest educational standards.”** UNQUOTE

We have been able to adhere to that vision thanks *not only* to the Johnson & Johnson Corporate Citizenship Trust, but also to the French Development Bank, AFD, Global Affairs Canada, the German Government through BMZ and KfW, the Lundin Foundation, and many other generous supporters.

In the years ahead, we will continue building on our success to help enhance the quality of care for all East Africans **to complement efforts of government.**

We know that we are not alone in pursuing excellence. That is why you are here today. We look forward to learning from, and working with you. Perhaps, 15 years from now, we will be celebrating the impact of a partnership that traces its roots back to a conversation that started at this conference.

Thank you.

[For *The Lancet* article mentioned above see:

[http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(14\)60792-3.pdf](http://www.thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(14)60792-3.pdf)