# PLURALISM & CIVIL SOCIETY

## Aga Khan & the Ismaili Community

## Index

# Introduction

This article explores the need, benefits, and progress of Pluralism in our society today. This is in the context of guidance and foresights of His Highness the Aga Khan[1] about Pluralism. The Aga Khan and his community are representative of civil society and communities globally.  The Covid19 pandemic is affecting them, as it is all people, all over the world. From families to local communities, to institutions, and countries.

Over a million people have died so far. There is a second spike in most countries including now in the UK. The pandemic is not just a health crisis. It is also a crisis of economics, humanity, education, access, & inequities. It has exposed and magnified the lessons, opportunities for change, and also the need for urgent, & systemic reform.

The way people think and act, have shaped our communities as well as the public private and social Institutions. They in turn have shaped us. Therefore, changes going forward will also depend on, the way people will think and act.  Covid19 is speaking loudly to our humanity, to the inequities, and to the need and urgency of working collaboratively and together. Covid19 is impacting different classes of people differently, and many, disproportionately.

Equal rights and access are enshrined in common values of all major faiths. And in the constitutions of most countries, who have also enacted related policies, and regulations over time. There is no shortage of reports or the rhetoric of the changes required. In 2015, United Nation, agreed 17 sustainable development goals[4], supported by 193 countries. These goals include equality, poverty, education equity, and access to basic human rights values and freedoms. Yet, in the last 5 years food poverty has not declined, and due to institutional racism, there have been the black lives matter protests and violence in USA, UK and many other countries. The challenge in the last 50 years has been implementation of changes, and the political will to do so.

United Nation in their report identified some areas and reasons for the inequalities etc.

*"Popular discontent inequalities & Political influence, "inequalities concentrate political influence among those who are already better off, which tends to preserve or even widen opportunity gaps. Growing political influence among the more fortunate erodes trust in the ability of Governments to address the needs of the majority. This lack of trust, in turn, can destabilize political systems and hinder the functioning of democracy. Today, popular discontent is high even in countries that have fully recovered from the 2008 financial and economic crisis and have benefited from steady growth in recent years. Yet rising inequality is not inevitable "(United Nation 2020[9])*

Covid19 also speaks to us loudly, that the present democratic, and social systems have not delivered on the promises of equality, equity and access for all. For example, on healthcare, food, education and quality of life has not improved for the vast majority. Systemic changes are therefore required. The present social and institutional mindsets are rampant with tribalism, and ingrained with cynicism and self-indulgent, material self-interest. This has increased, and so has inequitable divides and biases of class race wealth countries communities and gender

There are today over 2 billion people in our world who are classified as "moderate to severely" hungry. Yet there are over 670 million people in the world who are obese. Over 9 million people die from hunger and hunger-related diseases, every year. Covid19 deaths so far in 6 months is 1 million. Poverty is the greatest single threat to global health (WHO). The poverty gap has widened. Yet there is more than enough food in the world to feed everyone and about one third of the food produced is wasted. (UN report 2020[9])

The urgent need for systemic changes is widely accepted. The United Nations 17 sustainable development goals[4] show the need and of most of the key changes. However, in order to achieve these goals, a change of the social paradigm will be a vital prerequisite.

His Highness the Aga Khan[1] (Aga Khan), has advised that Pluralism is "the" indispensable prerequisite for change. Aga Khan[1], is a religious leader of 20 million Ismaili Muslims worldwide. He knows. He gave the following guidance and foresight.

*"My conviction is that the strengthening of institutions supporting pluralism is as critical for the welfare and progress of human society as are poverty alleviation and conflict prevention. In fact, all three are intimately related." (2002[10])*

Inclusive governance and Leadership[8] is imperative, for Pluralism to be accepted and adopted. Pluralism is the ready willing and able, solution to enable and achieve change including the social development goals[4].

*"The key to future progress will lie less in traditional top-down systems of command and control -- and more in a broad, bottom-up spirit of coordination and cooperation" (Aga Khan[10])*

He added, *"We are living in an increasingly cynical time, with rampant materialism, a new relativism self-serving individualism and resurgent tribalism. The solution is a deepening spiritual moral commitment, with an ethical framework. This means strengthening religious institutions and freedom of religion as a right and a value. In sum "ethical sensibility which can be shared across denominational lines and which can foster a universal moral outlook" (Aga Khan[11])*
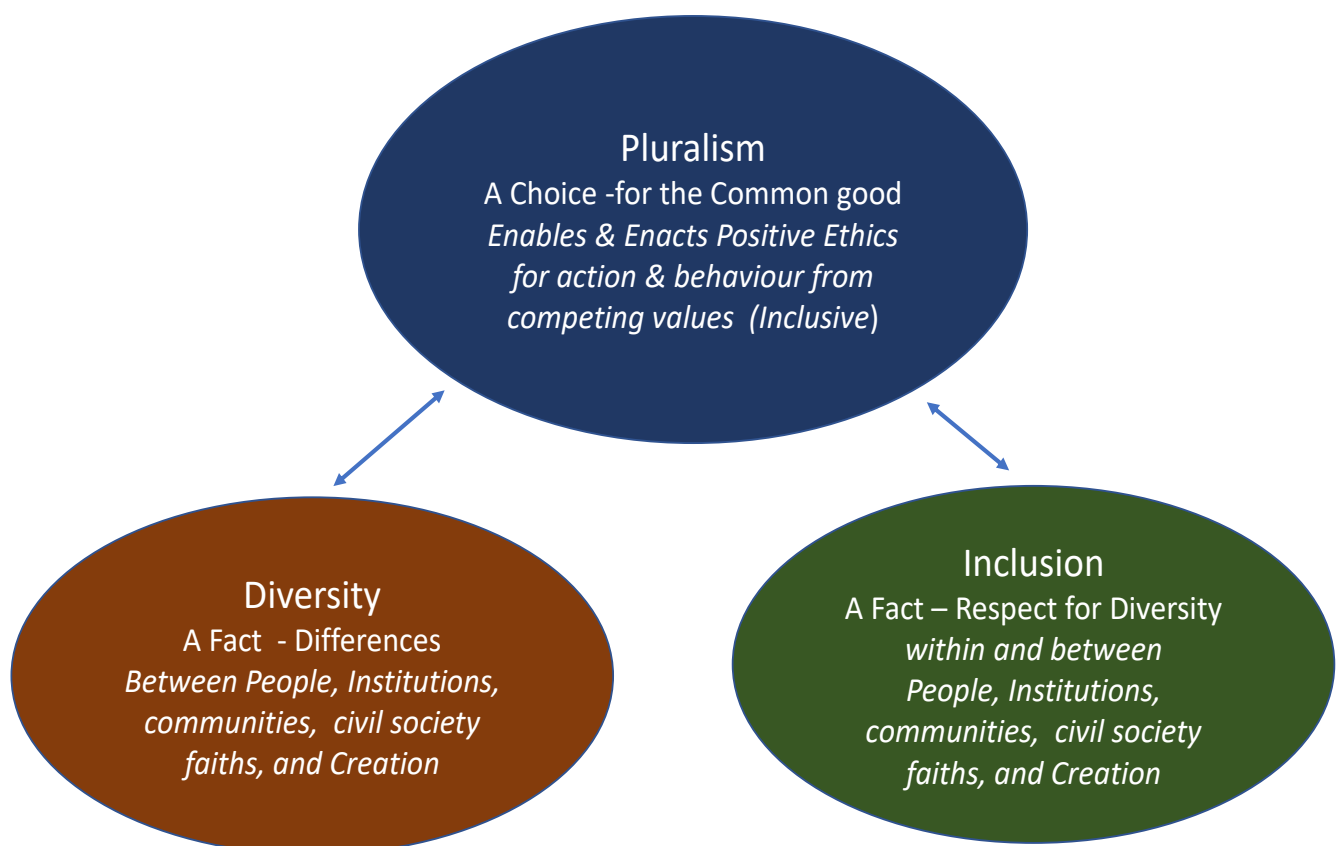
## What is Pluralism

*"Pluralism is a choice which understands competing values and ethics as sources and forces of strength, and enacts those which are for the common good. Pluralism is not instinctive, and requires a continuum of education and learning. Ethics\* of Pluralism are a part of the individual and institutional paradigm. Pluralism recognises all values, faiths, diversity, equity, humanity, inclusion, resilience, equality and innovation"*

*\*ethics is the vehicle of our values in action. Ethics enact our ethical code values and implicit biases. For example, individuals and institutions can behave ethically or unethically. Ethics of pluralism can prevent or change a course of action (m chatur sept 2020)*

This definition of pluralism is based on guidance's from His Highness the Aga Khan. There are other general, and some specific definitions[3]

Diversity and Inclusion are not Pluralism. Diversity is a fact of the differences and uniqueness of people. Inclusion is a fact of people living or working together and where they respect each other's values traditions skills talents and abilities, as sources for the collective good. Exclusion is where they do not respect and exclude others or some.

**Pluralism**
A Choice -for the Common good
*Enables & Enacts Positive Ethics*
*for action & behaviour from*
*competing values  (Inclusive)*

**Diversity**
A Fact  - Differences
*Between People, Institutions,*
*communities,  civil society*
*faiths, and Creation*

**Inclusion**
A Fact – Respect for Diversity
*within and between*
*People, Institutions,*
*communities,  civil society*
*faiths, and Creation*

*M Chatur Oct 2020 ©*

Pluralism inclusively enables recognition, understanding, and the use of ethical values as a force for the collective good of society. Pluralism therefore actualises acceptance and implementation of goals for improving the wellbeing of societies and people. The goal of Pluralism is to make this process, an ethical imperative and purpose.

Leadership in Governments, civil society and faith communities speak out about the need for changes, and of the lack of progress in implementing the existing goals, laws, rights and policies. A change of the social paradigm, and Pluralism are critical enablers of innovation, new, ideas and knowledge.

*"Innovations, to be accepted, must be rooted in a profound knowledge of self and of society and its needs if they are not to be mere artifice or caprice (insincere, manipulative uninformed or impulsive). Such knowledge of society and its needs requires an understanding of history and religion as much as of, sociology, politics, & economics". (Aga Khan 1990)*

New ideas, knowledge and innovative thinking are necessary for acceptance and successful implementation of any transformational changes. In order to accept such change, there needs to be the social and institutional mindsets to sustain them. That includes all the present biases, ingrained or not.

In order to actualise Pluralism, a holistic, infusion of introspection and education to the social and the institutional mindsets, is vital. The support of Governments and civil society is essential, to successfully and sustainably implement, even the enacted and agreed goals and policies. An example is the United Nations 17 sustainable goals[4], many and most of those critical, are not expected to be achieved.


## Background

In 1992, the Aga Khan started to explain, and give his foresights, on Pluralism with the reasons, of its need and urgency. This was at the time, and in the context of the unfolding of major social economic and political changes in the world. The breakup to the Soviet Union. New Independent countries and democracies, who have started their journey of building and developing democratic governance and constitutions. The momentum towards Globalisation and Privatisation was progressing exponentially. Aga Khan called this a time of the "New formative world order, and societies"

Aga Khan advised then of the need for political pluralism, and spoke of the benefits of meritocratic and pluralist societies in the future. He asked his community and their institutions to embrace pluralism and meritocracy. He assured the community that diversity, and differences in people and societies are divine gifts, & sources of strength to be used as resources for the benefit of the common good of people and society as a whole. He placed the highest importance on education which he said needs to be, not only secular and religious, but also lifelong. The purpose of education he said is not simply for individual or material benefit, but should to be used to better understand, and improve our world (creation). This was also a time of an information explosion, too much information. He advised, the community to embrace the technological era and seek knowledge from everywhere, but also importantly, be careful to verify, use, and share facts and information which are reliable. For example, in and from the social media and the internet generally.

*"You are moving to a new political dimension, political pluralism. This has not been a fact of life in Kenya for some time. It will be a fact of life in the future. It is important that this process of change should be peaceful, that nothing should contribute to conflict amongst people. And it is important also that you be aware that different views - pluralities of views - will be expressed. That plurality is healthy in society so long as it is expressed in peace and in freedom. Do not indulge in rumour-mongering, do not indulge in speculation. Think carefully about what each political view represents for the future of the country and of its people. Is there a programme, what does that programme consist of, is it well articulated for the future" (Kenya 1992)?*

Aga Khan also gave and regularly gives his foresights to the community, and their institutional Leadership on what they need to do for the future, and what is necessary and critical.

*"If our Jamat (community) in the Developing World is to benefit from this new horizon, one of the preconditions is that its institutions should be well organised, effective, competent and function well. And it was important that our Jamat should live into this future in a position where its institutions were well placed so that future generations of the Jamat could take advantage properly and competently of these new opportunities. In the minds of many of you the*

*horizons until recently have been the Western World. That perhaps no longer needs or should be the case. Think carefully about what the decades ahead may mean for the Jamat in the Third World, if the dogmas are gone, the institutions are sound, society is better organised, resources are greater and, Insha'Allah\*, peace is more likely. Think carefully what that means"* (Aga Khan) \*\*God Willing (With Allah's blessing)

Aga Khan further advised on the importance of using knowledge and resources acquired through education, to improve society and cautioned, on being humble and not to be, or become intellectually vain, pretentious or greedy.

*"I do not want My spiritual children (Community), to think of education only as a trampoline to achieve material good, because that then creates intellectual vanity and material greed. Think about this issue carefully. And the education that you receive, use it well. Use it properly. Use it ethically, because I am convinced that the future of the Jamat in the Developing World, but, perhaps even more so, in the Industrialised World, will be increasingly conditioned on the correct understanding of the meaning and use of education. Education is not there to eliminate, or to constrain human values. It is there to enable society to function better, but in a humble and grateful way, not in a pretentious and greedy way. So, don't let these concepts, through modern education, enter into the psyche of the Jamat (community) and end up by misguiding you about the real value and the real meaning of education in Islam."* (Aga Khan)

Aga Khan was a member of President Clinton's culture diplomacy committee. He advised the committee that it is critical for cultural pluralism to be a part of education & communication. And, for English to be a second language in developing countries to enable the process of learning and an awareness of cultures. There is a need to have a two-way process of learning. At present this is one way, from the developed, to developing countries and their communities (Aga Khan-2000)

He also advised the community on having a balance between faith and the world, and of freedoms, rights, and values.

*"Do not be hypnotised exclusively by the worldly aspects of the lives in which you live. Be regular in your prayers, be true to the ethics of your faith, live in a manner*

*which will bring respect to yourselves and to your families and to your Jamat. In your professional activities, be rigorous and fair and equitable so that My Jamat (community) is seen as a Jamat which lives and practises the ethics of its faith. (Aga Khan 2002[10])*

Aga Khan further explained that Pluralism is a strength, provided the goal of Pluralism is a better quality of life for all. He confirmed that Pluralism is not yet a part of the thinking process, and needs to become a part of the national thinking process, and thus be an enabling process, for the common good.

***"pluralism can be and is a strength in society if pluralism has as its objective the construction of a better quality of life for all the people in society. The notion that pluralism is not only a realism but that it is desirable, has not yet become part of national thinking. And it should become part of national thinking"***

In 2005, Government of Canada and His Highness the Aga Khan[1] agreed to establish the Global Centre of Pluralism[2]. This is a part, and an extension of the Aga Khan community institutions to actualise Pluralism. He gave the following foresights, and has since continued to champion the cause of Pluralism, and of inclusive governance, - Leadership and best practice[8]

*"The rejection of pluralism is pervasive across the globe and plays a significant role in breeding destructive conflicts," says Aga Khan. The Centre will therefore undertake research, deliver programs, facilitate dialogue, develop pedagogical materials and work with civil society partners worldwide to build the capacities of individuals, groups, educational institutions and governments to promote indigenous approaches to pluralism in their own countries and communities." (Press Release 2006)[2]*

This has been and remains not only a Goal, but also a top priority for the Institutions and leadership of the Ismaili community globally. Aga Khan also gave the following clear and specific guidance.

***"Leadership everywhere must continuously work to ensure that pluralism, and all its benefits, become top global priorities. For, I deeply believe that our***

*collective conscience must accept that pluralism is no less important than human rights for ensuring peace, successful democracy and a better quality of life. (Aga Khan in 7 April 2005)*[18]

This goal and priority have not been achieved by the Ismaili community Leadership so far.  The way people think and act individually have shaped their geopolitics and Institutions.  They have in turn shaped the public and social mindset. This pandemic reminds us that no one is safe, until all of us are safe. Similarly, the benefit of, for example eliminating poverty and inequity, will be a benefit to the whole of humanity and can save 9 million lives lost due to hunger, per year[9]. This needs to be understood in the context of our humanity and the need for urgent change. This is another reason to help each other and to work together for the common good. The collective diversity of knowledge, skills and resources of society can and should be used collaboratively for the common good. With Pluralism this can be done, done better, done more creatively and done sustainably

*"Tolerance, openness and understanding towards other peoples' cultures, social structures, values and faiths are now essential to the very survival of an interdependent world' - 'Pluralism is no longer simply an asset or a prerequisite for progress and development, it is vital to our existence.' (Aga Khan-2005)*[18]

12 years on, in 2017, at the opening of the new headquarters of the Global Centre of Pluralism in Ottawa, Aga Khan reaffirmed that pluralism is foundational and indispensable for human peace and progress. He reminded everyone that that, 12 years ago, in 2005, this was the vision, when Global Centre of Pluralism was established

*"Genuine pluralism understands that diversity does not weaken a society, it strengthens it.  In an ever-shrinking, ever more diverse world, a genuine sense of pluralism is the indispensable foundation for human peace and progress. From the start, this has been a vision that the Ismaili Imamat*[1] *and the Government of Canada have deeply shared "(Aga Khan 2017)*

Pluralism, needs to be learned, understood and accepted. Canada has policies, programmes and a Ministry[14] for Inclusion[14], and diversity. Covid19 has shown the urgency of implementation and the lack of progress on agreed goals and policies of inclusion, diversity and pluralism.

The Global centre of Pluralism and the Ismaili community institutions need to make genuine progress to truly embrace, and implement the goal of pluralism, and proactively leveraging support of the Canadian Government, the Ismaili Community, and all their Institutions.

Canada is one of the 193 countries who are signatories to the United Nations sustainable development goals[4]. All 193 Governments have accepted the need for change. The present social and institutional mindset and biases, are clearly not allowing and or enabling implementation. Pluralism is therefore required to enable and enact the agreed vision and goals. This includes Pluralism, and making it the top priority

The Ismaili community are a part of civil society. Whilst there is the rhetoric of the need for Pluralism and change, there is also a lack of genuine progress or proactive action by the Leadership. They can and would, if they embraced pluralism, inclusive leadership and best practices[8]. Pluralism is not instinctive or what you are born with. Most of the community and the leadership therefore need to learn to understand pluralism.

*"if pluralism is not part of the educational curriculum, the leaders and the peoples of these societies will always be at risk of conflict, because they are not accustomed to pluralism and they do not value it" (Aga Khan)*

Therefore, the question is how can Pluralism be actualised, and for all the agreed goals to be implemented urgently, successfully, and sustainably.

# Islam (Ismaili Community) and Pluralism

It is important first to understand Pluralism in the context of faith communities. In this case Islam, the Ismaili community and their institutions. They are a reflection of, and, representative of the global civil Society communities and their Institutions

The current top priority and goals given by Aga Khan to the community and their Leadership, is pluralism, with inclusive leadership and best practices[8]. In 2018, he asked all members of his community to be his proactive ambassadors (Dais[32]) and to share their knowledge, skills and competence for the goal of Pluralism with inclusive democratic governance.

The common values and ethics of faiths are a part of the ethics and process of Pluralism. The Ismaili community and their institutions are a part of the civil society globally. Therefore, most of the challenges of understanding, and embracing pluralism, which they face, also apply to most other civil society, public, and private Institutions.

Pluralism enables and enacts the right values from a multitude of competing ethical values, elements, & attributes. Islam and Pluralism are both a choice, and a process to understand and enact different competing values as a source and force for the common good, for mankind, and importantly, also our world (creation).

*"Freedom of religion is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion, then societies will find themselves lost in a bleak and unpromising landscape with no compass, no roadmap and no sense of ultimate direction. (2006 Aga Khan)*
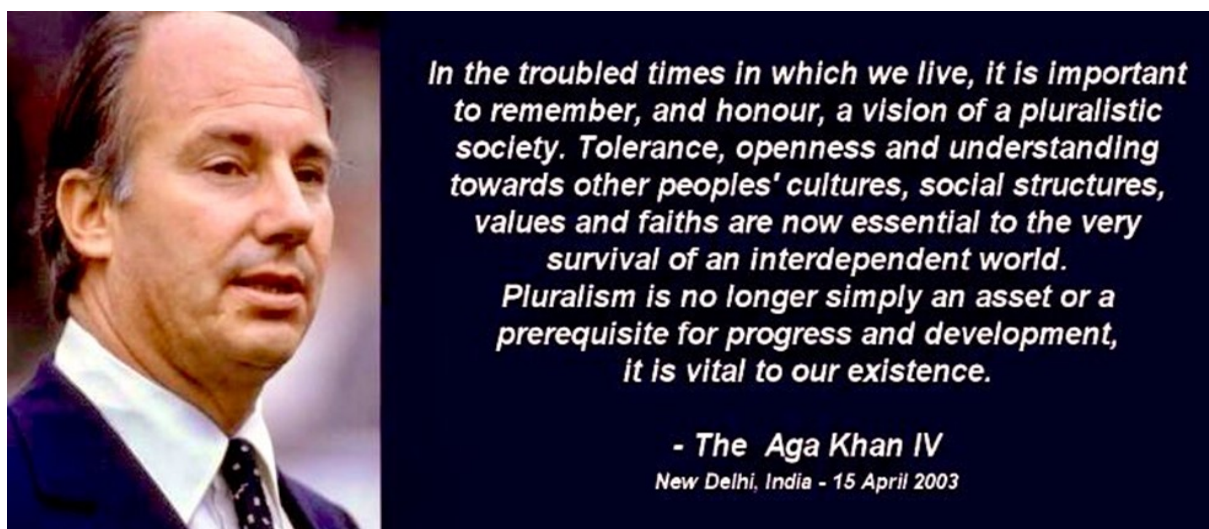
Ismaili Faith is one of the many Islamic Schools of thought (interpretation). The faith of Islam, is a way of life. There is no separation of the worldly and the religious. They are both an equal part of the faith, and also a part of the unity and oneness of creation and God (Allah). This unity or Oneness encompasses the whole of creation, in all its forms, including, that which is manifest, and which has not, so far.

Within this unity, there is a diversity of every form, and type, that can be imagined. This diversity is a gift to mankind, to enable mankind to know, learn from, and use as a source and force for the collective good. Diversity can, and is also used unethically, for bad and evil. We see this every day in for example, refugees, poverty, armed conflict violence racism, inequity, in communities and even in families.

The Ismaili faith is inclusive within the unity and diversity of mankind. Men and women are all created unique, different with a diversity of traditional skills and experiences. They are all created from a single soul.
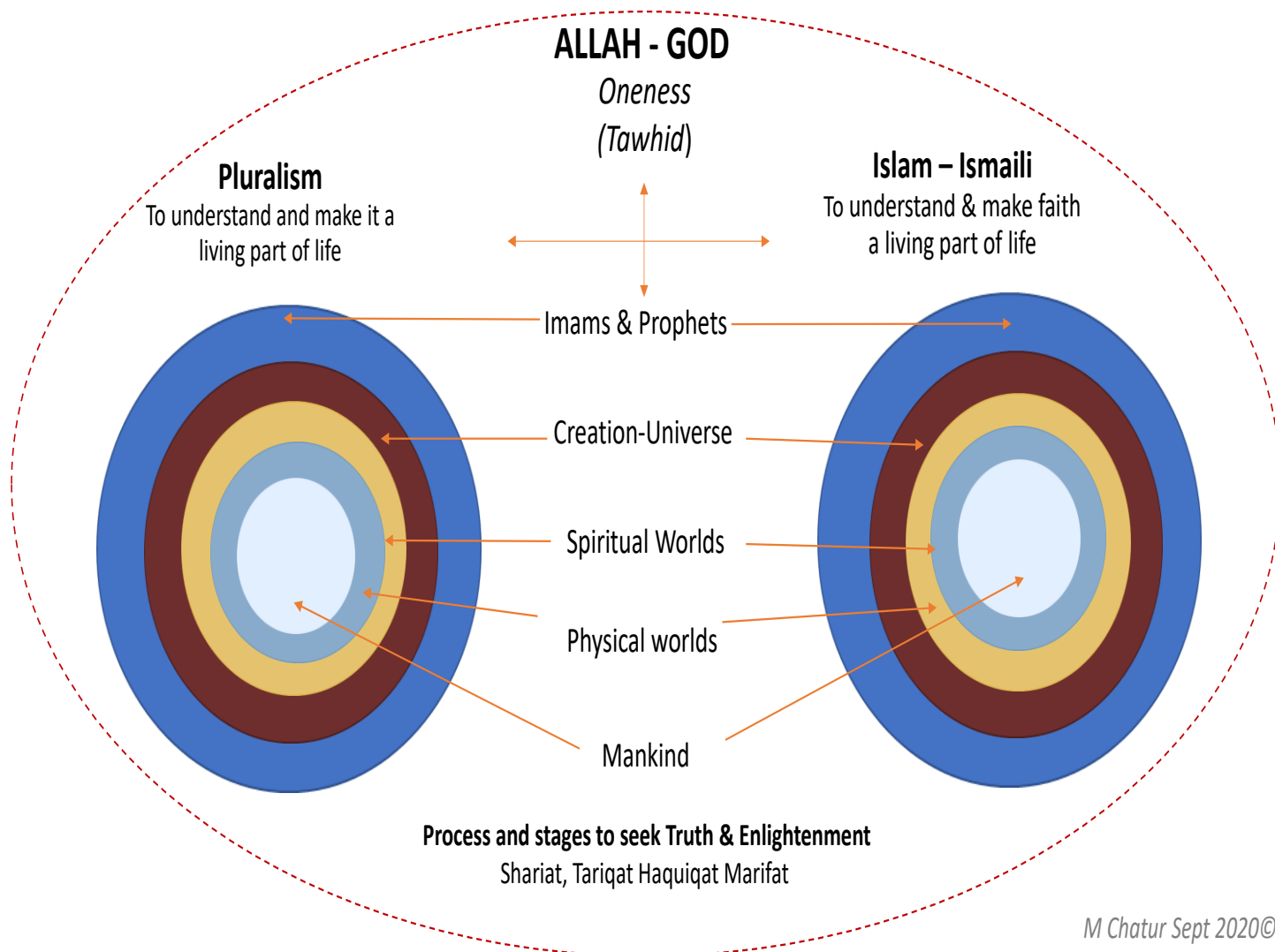
*"O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul and from it created its mate and from them twain hath spread abroad a multitude of men and women. Be careful of your duty toward Allah in Whom ye claim (your rights) of one another, and toward the wombs (that bare you). Lo! Allah hath been a watcher over you." (Quran 4:1) – "O mankind! Lo! We have created you male and female, and have made you nations and tribes that ye may know one another. Lo! the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Lo! Allah is Knower, Aware. (Quran 49:13)*

The following chart is a simple visual elucidation of Pluralism in the context of the Islam (Ismaili faith, and the Oneness of creation (Unity of God – Tawhid)



In the troubled times in which we live, it is important to remember, and honour, a vision of a pluralistic society. Tolerance, openness and understanding towards other peoples' cultures, social structures, values and faiths are now essential to the very survival of an interdependent world. Pluralism is no longer simply an asset or a prerequisite for progress and development, it is vital to our existence.

- The Aga Khan IV
New Delhi, India - 15 April 2003

# Pluralism - Ismaili Interpretaion
understands ethics values and diversity

**ALLAH - GOD**
*Oneness*
*(Tawhid)*

**Pluralism**
To understand and make it a
living part of life

**Islam – Ismaili**
To understand & make faith
a living part of life

Imams & Prophets

Creation-Universe

Spiritual Worlds

Physical worlds

Mankind

**Process and stages to seek Truth & Enlightenment**
Shariat, Tariqat Haquiqat Marifat

*M Chatur Sept 2020©*

institutions of the community. They possess real day to day autonomy, and do not depend on the day to day intervention, thinking, or support of their Imam (Aga Khan[24])

Pluralism is not widely known, let alone being accepted or understood today. Most of the Ismaili community, do not know or understand the need and meaning of pluralism, and that it is a vital top global priority for them. There have been no specific classes or curriculum on pluralism within the community so far. The guidance of Aga Khan to his community is not readily and freely available to them from the Leadership. This is despite specific guidance and directions from their Imam (Aga Khan)

Generally new innovation and ideas are not accepted immediately and take time. This is mainly due to a fear of changing the status quo by usually those in positions of authority and or wealth and influence. Especially in a top down Leadership system of command and control system of governance. There is an inherent fear of, loss of position and authority and therefore resistance is a normal response.   The resistance is direct or indirect or subconscious. Subconscious biases are disablers of innovation and reject change consciously and or subconsciously.  Pluralism and inclusive Leadership are no exception.

## Global Centre of Pluralism (GCP)

The Centre was set up in 2005. It is a joint initiative between, the Aga Khan community, and the Government of Canada. The day to day management of the centre is by an executive team, under the Secretary General, currently Meredith McGhie, who was appointed in late 2019.  The executive team have access to support from the institutions, of the Canadian Government and, the Aga Khan community.

In 2017, the global centre of pluralism moved to their new Headquarters in Ottawa.



The Economist published an article which suggests they did not understand Pluralism and the differences between Pluralism, diversity, inclusion, ethics or values were not clear.  The article27 is headed "A new research centre grapples with an idea that is ancient, if not eternally fashionable"27In the same year,

there was a mandatory independent evaluation[24] of the Global Centre of Pluralism. The following two recommendations were made;

1. The Centre needs to develop a multi-year plan to supplement the current annual plan.
2. The Centre needs to continue to explore additional sources of funding to support growth for new initiatives and programs as well as support its internal operations to deliver on their mandate.

It is surprising GCP, for 12 years, did not have forward plans of at least 3 or more years. And surprising, is that, they need additional funding to deliver their mandate. However, this external evaluation concluded that the Centre is needed, and well positioned to deliver their mandate.

*"there is a clear and continuing demonstrable need for the work of Global Centre of Pluralism (GCP)" And the Centre is "well-positioned to deliver on its mandate."*

According to the report the key outcomes achieved by GCP over the 5-year period (effectively for 12 years), were as follows;

1. Pluralism has been defined.
2. GCP has started to establish its reputation in the field.
3. Significant sets of research papers and case studies were produced and published to the website.
4. GCP has established a presence on the internet.
5. An impressive network of experts, from distinguished institutions, has been established.
6. GCP delivered country programs in Kenya & Kyrgyzstan, addressing country-specific pluralism issues.

Since 2017 the centre now has a 10-year plan[19] with a wish list. Their definition of Pluralism is now as follows.

*"Pluralism is not simply diversity. Pluralism is a principle of respect for human diversity. A commitment to pluralism requires that diversity is protected and valued. Human differences become understood as a source of common good and an engine of social and economic innovation". (GCP Website October 2020)[2]*

There are other definitions[3] on their website and many others too[3]. Hence the need for clarity, and what makes Pluralism distinctive as a vital need.

The 10-year Global Centre of Pluralism plan is not available on their website, or on request. However, in February 2020, the GCP Secretary General Ms McGhie, shared the 10-year vision[19] with the Ismaili Community Leadership, who have yet to themselves, embrace, learn and achieve the Goal of Pluralism and best practices with inclusive Leadership[8]

The GCP Secretary General's vision[19] and wish list[19] shows that the word pluralism is not yet widely known or understood. The lack of progress in the last 15 years, is due to issues relating to management, of understanding, the resources, and of effective communication of the need and benefits of pluralism. This is despite having access to, and leverage from, and the full Institutional support from the Aga Khan community & the Canadian Government.

*"The notion of pluralism is under greater threat than it has been in recent history. As such, a more proactive approach to our communications and engagement in the public sphere, in Canada and abroad, is planned for 2020. (Secretary General Feb 2020[19]),*

The Secretary General added "*In 2020, securing funding and partners to support the growth and impact of core programs will be vital*"

The 4 core programs[23] of the Centre for 2020 (and 2021) under the 10-year plan are as follows;

1    Proactively Promote and communicate Pluralism (to Implement in 2020)
2    A Global Pluralism Index to design and launch (in progress – date of completion not known)
3    Biennial Pluralism Awards (next on is in 2021),
4    Education – (Educators course on pluralism planned for 2021)

Global Pluralism Centre and The Aga Khan Community Institutions are a representative part of civil society. Bearing in mind the reasons for the lack of progress in the last 15 years.

Therefore, for Global Centre of Pluralism to achieve the goal of pluralism in the next 10 years, the management team will need to fully embrace understand and practice pluralism. The definition of Pluralism, and benefits, will need to be further refined, defined, and proactively promoted collaboratively by using, and involving, the stakeholders and by leveraging the maximisation of awareness effect & impact. The GCP education pilot and the online teachers and students project will need to start urgently. GCP can use the access, support, and opportunity to additionally benefit from the present synergies and integration of their programmes with programmes of the stakeholders and their many global partners.

Based on the professional evaluation and the 10-year plan and the wish list, the following are critical priorities for Global Pluralism Centre to achieve the goal of Pluralism

1. Embrace and practice pluralism all the time in everything they do
2. Leverage opportunities and access through the Government of Canada, and the Aga Khan community
3. Continuum of teaching and learning of pluralism, collaboratively
4. Implement the 4-core GCP programs (listed above)
5. Secure additional vital funding for the 10-year plan
6. Ensure and actualise Inclusive Leadership & best practices at all levels

*"The key to future progress will lie less in traditional top-down systems of command and control -- and more in a broad, bottom-up spirit of coordination and cooperation" (Aga Khan)*

## The Ismaili Community

What is the progress and position of Pluralism in the Ismaili community, and within their institutions? What is required now to enable progress in actualising the goal and top priority of pluralism, which was given over 20 years?

*"A necessary condition for pluralism to succeed is that the general education of the populations involved must be sufficiently complete so that individual*

*groups, defined by ethnicity, religion, language and the like, understand the potential consequences of actions that might impinge on others" (The Aga Khan 2002[14])*

So far, there are no "specific" Pluralism centric, and specific classes, curriculum, diploma or degree courses for the community or in the Aga Khan community secular and religious schools or in the constitutional institutions of the community. Not even in the Institute of Ismaili studies. They recently started a short online course on blended learning on inclusion and diversity with pluralism as an add on in parts of it. The University of Central Asia, another community institution, has a summer online course on mainly inclusion and resilience with Pluralism added on in parts. I have taken both these courses[36].

For the benefit and governance of the community, Aga Khan ordained the Global Ismaili constitution in 1986[31]. The constitution was amended in 1998. The constitution is to be read with his Farmans (guidance), and to be given freely to every Ismaili Muslim. Ismaili constitution's entities are run by members of the community appointed under the constitution[32]. They are recommended by incumbents and there is a secretive process of consultation and appointments.

*"make this new Constitution and the rules and regulations that go with it, your means of leadership, of governance, of direction to the Jamat so that this Constitution, this new Constitution becomes an enabling document. If makes it possible for the Jamat to have new organisations that will address the Jamat's needs and it is your responsibility to make sure that this new Constitution and the bodies under it function in the interest and the benefit of the Jamat. Remember therefore, that not only is it your responsibility to make it function, it is your responsibility to make it serve the Jamat" (Aga Khan)*

The following flowchart shows the Reporting and Governance structure of Ismaili communities' constitutional entities, and the communication flows within the community and their Institutions and through the Institutions their Imam (aga Khan). This includes the Global Centre of Pluralism

# AGA KHAN- IMAM
### *Gives Farmans - Talim & Tawil of Quran*

*Imam's personal funds & Assets are Separate from community Funds & Resources*

*Firmans to Disseminate & Implement*

**Diwan of Ismaili Imamat**
*Ordained July 2018 (Lisbon)*

*Reports Budgets Needs Community & Requests for Guidance*

**Other Entities**
AKDN DDA AKF
IIS ICAB AKFED
Global Centre of Pluralism (GCP)
*(Programs - profit and Social and to leverage donations funds & grants)*

**Leaders International Forum (LIF)**
Department of Jamati Institutions (DJI)
*Aiglemont & Lisbon London Aga Khan Centre 2019 Control, entities, appointments dissemination governance, Budgets & communication*

*Funds Reports & copies of Firmans*

*Budgets Funds reports OSB ETR Copies of Farmans*

*specific projects & programs*

## Huzur
*Control Money, Tithe Religious Rites & the Mukhis*

*Funds Dasond Tithe From Community (No in-audits)*

**National Council UK**
**(***Same for every National Councils Globally***)**

*Budgets Funds reports*

National constitutional
*Rules regulations & Policie**s***

*Budgets Funds reports*

## National Constitutional Entities- Boards
ITREB
Education
Health
NCAB
One community
GRB (out-audit)
communication
Economic
Ismaili centre
Regional Boards
Others

## Other National Constitutional Entities
Aga Khan Centre London
AKU UK
Islamic publications Ltd
AKF UK charity
Focus UK charity
CFR UK charity
Jubilee court UK – Charity
Imara UK Ltd
Others

*All Funds given by the community including Tithe (Dasond )*

**Manage**
Firmans & Constitution (blocked)
Religious Practices
Religious Education
Social & Other
programs, Budgets
& Support

*Additional Donations (Time Money and funds)*

## MUKHI & KAMADIA  JAMAT KHANNAS

# MURIDS-JAMATS (COMMUNITY)

Aga Khan has given guidance on the need, and urgency of teaching pluralism within the institutions, in the community, and other communities. He has also stressed the need for Inclusive leadership and best practices[8]. This goal has not been achieved in the last 25 years. To the extent that Aga Khan's guidance (Farmans), and even the full Ismaili constitution are not given by the Leadership to the community[8] on request, and are not on any of the many community website or apps. The main reason for this is that the Leadership have not yet embraced and or actualised the Aga Khan's guidance on Pluralism, Inclusive Leadership and best practices[8]

For Pluralism to be accepted and understood, new ideas and innovations which includes Pluralism, need to be embraced, and accepted too.

*"Innovations, to be accepted, must be rooted in a profound knowledge of self and of society and its needs if they are not to be mere artifice or caprice (insincere, manipulative uninformed or impulsive). Such knowledge of society and its needs requires an understanding of history and religion as much as of, sociology, politics, & economics". (Aga Khan 1990)*

Self-awareness comes from our lived experiences within society, those we live and work with. This forms the basis of our ethics, values and ingrained biases. In everything we do. We use them as a process in how we act or not. Our society and our institutions are shaped by our ethics, which come from our values, from our faith and our biases, some of which are, subliminal or subconscious.

According to Islam knowing yourself is a goal. To know yourself is to know your sou. To know your soul in Islam is to know God (Allah), who has made mankind in his image (his intellect and attributes). Mankind and creation are all a unified part of the oneness of creation. (Tawhid). Allah is closer to you than your jugular vein.

*"Whosoever knows himself knows his Lord." (Prophet Mohammed PBUH) "It was We Who created man, and We know what dark suggestions his soul makes to him: for We are nearer to him than his jugular vein." (Quran 50:16)*

Witing Society there are a diversity of different communities, groups, and neighbourhoods, by areas traditions, country or countries and globally.

We are today living is a post fact (truth) society

*"We live in a "post-fact" society. Yes, a post-fact society. It's not just that everyone feels entitled to his or her own opinion – that's a good thing. But the problem comes when people feel they are entitled to their own facts. What is true, too often, can then depend not on what actually happened, but on whose side you are. Our search for the truth can then become less important than our allegiance to a cause – an ideology, for example, or a political party, or a tribal or religious identity, or a pro-government or opposition outlook. And so, publics all over the world can begin to fragment, and societies can drift into deadlock..." (Aga Khan)*

In this Post Fact society today, we know that the borders are blurred, between truth and lies, honesty and dishonesty, fiction and nonfiction. Between deceiving or misleading information. Disinformation and misinformation have become pervasive & habitual. This social mindset or psyche is motivated and driven by excessive material greed and of self-interest individualism, and a political ideology of classism.

Pluralism is required to be taught at all levels to enable a change in the present paradigm. The challenge is to actualise Pluralism, which will also enable implementation. Political will and inclusive leadership will be critical to actualise Pluralism.

**"A necessary condition for pluralism to succeed is that the general education of the populations involved must be sufficiently complete so that individual groups, defined by ethnicity, religion, language and the like, understand the potential consequences of actions that might impinge on others. (2002[11])**

However, for this to be done holistically or successfully will require political will and is not purely a matter of enacting regulations or policies. There are many policies like for example on inclusion, of freedoms, and of rights of race and gender. The challenge is to implement and actualise them.

Therefore, a change of the paradigm, and the teaching of Pluralism will need to start at all levels. Family, community schools and institutions. This needs to be

supported by civil society and government. This will also require requires the use of management capacity and skills. There is no shortage of them, and for them to be as effective as the Status quo. Pluralism enables this because the public, private and civil society Institutions are run by people, and therefore the same and better efficiencies and competence are possible. This includes the international governmental organisations such as United Nations, WHO and WFP.

The political and democratic systems are today influenced by lobbies, special interest groups who control the Media and big business, and therefore who may not see the need for a particular change. The wealth divide has increased disproportionately in the last 30 years. The promise of democracy, free markets capitalism and globalisation remain a promise, with more promises from the privatisation and globalisation lobbies.

If civil society embraces pluralism, then with the support of the people and government the systemic change needed will be achieved. However, pluralism faces similar challenges today as governments and civil society because they too have a similar institutional culture, which is driven by politics and neoliberalism form of governance

In the Ismaili community, Aga Khan has been asking for Pluralism to be not only embraced, but practiced for over 25 years. And for Inclusive leadership[8] and to eliminate poverty within the community. The continuum of learning of pluralism has not started, either top down, or bottom up. This would have started if the Leadership were inclusive, pluralistic, and had implemented this guidance, and they did not fear innovation or a change in the Status quo. Therefore, for any change in civil society to accept and embrace pluralism will require a change, bottom up and a lateral process of pluralism at all levels.

Aga Khan has said that Pluralism and Systemic changes will, and will needs to come from civil society. In the case of the institutions of the Ismaili community this now needs to start at all levels. He has given the following three key Goals and priorities to the community and their leadership.

1. Pluralism & education
2. Inclusive democratic governance (Leadership), & Best Practices
3. Alleviate Poverty within the community

Pluralism will make this possible and sustainably so. Aga Khan also gave the following advice and foresights to be implemented. He said not to stifle Pluralism but to Invest in Pluralism, in diversity, and in competent democratic governance
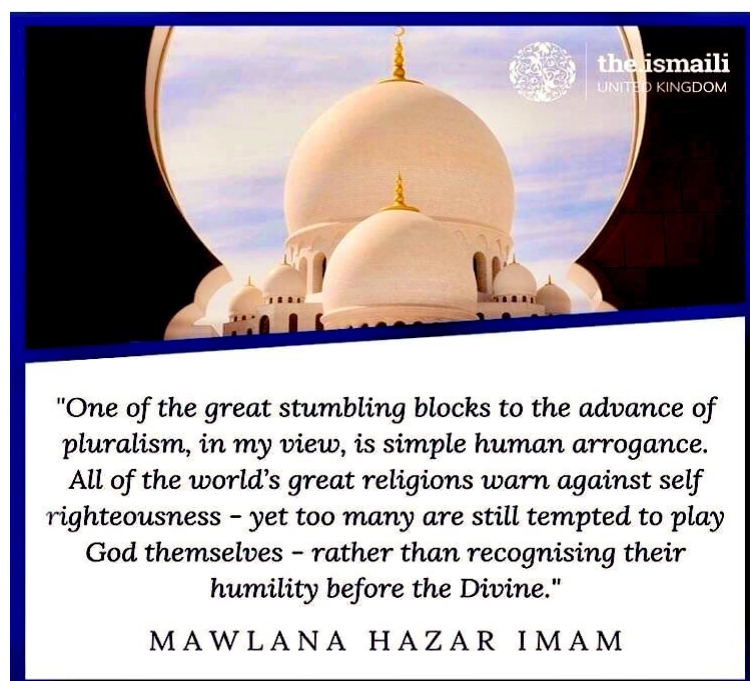
*"I put it to you that no human development initiative can be sustainable unless we are successful in achieving three essential conditions.*

*First, we must operate in an environment that invests in, rather than seeks to stifle, pluralism and diversity.*

*Second, we must have an extensive and engaged civil society*

*And third, we must have stable and competent democratic governance*

*These three conditions are mutually reinforcing. Taken together, they allow developing societies gradually to become masters of the process and make that process self-sustainable." (Aga Khan)*



"One of the great stumbling blocks to the advance of pluralism, in my view, is simple human arrogance. All of the world's great religions warn against self righteousness – yet too many are still tempted to play God themselves – rather than recognising their humility before the Divine."

MAWLANA HAZAR IMAM

## Systemic Change

Systemic and structural changes are needed. This is also demonstrated by the 17-social development goals[2] (SDG) agreed by 193 countries. Why is pluralism essential in achieving these goals, and the changes needed.

Today it is widely accepted that many of the 17 goals will not be achieved. Many have not been in the last 50 years. For example, poverty equality and racism. There is a blame culture and Covid19 will be blamed or used for justification by the Status Quo, and for example for Privatisation and globalisation. Pluralism is therefore an imperative.

The following are the 17 SDGs[4] agreed by 193 countries in 2015, in United Nations. Within each main goal are included many goals[4]. They have agreed to implement them by 2030. Many will not be. With Pluralism they can all be.

### United nation sustainable development goals (SDG)[4]

1. No poverty                                    goal 1
2. Zero hunger                                   goal 2
3. Good health and well-being                    goal 3
4. Quality education                             goal 4
5. Gender equality                               goal 5
6. Clean water and sanitation                    goal 6
7. Affordable and clean energy                   goal 7
8. Decent work and economic growth               goal 8
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure       goal 9:
10. Reduced inequality                           goal 10
11. Sustainable cities and communities           goal 11
12. Responsible consumption and production       goal 12
13. Climate action                               goal 13
14. Life below water                             goal 14
15. Life on land                                 goal 15
16. Peace and justice strong institutions        goal 16
17. Partnerships to achieve the goal             goal 17

The good news is that all 193 government have agreed to them, and have said they will implement them. The challenge has been and will be implementation. Bearing in mind the present political culture and mindsets. Pluralism is a vital ingredient and a prerequisite for Governments to support, and for them to

1. To Implement all the existing policies and the law collaboratively with civil society and the Private sector
2. To enact new regulations and policies required for necessary changes and to implement them

Pluralism recognises and understands also, the root causes of the lack of progress and of the competing challenges and values of the various stakeholders. Pluralism can enable and enact the right competing values, provided pluralism is used to benefit the common good, for all.

These 17-Goals[4] were agreed by 193 countries, after careful consideration, deliberations, nationally and globally, and after taking into account all the issues challenges, risks benefits, and eventualities including political, and those of nature. The political and the social culture and mindset are known. Since all the governments have supported and agreed the goals, it should follow that there is the political will to do so. The goals cannot be achieved without a transformational change of the institutional and political thinking and mindsets. This is possible if Pluralism is accepted and embraced.

Pluralism is therefore an indispensable need and a priority today. The 17-Goals were agreed in 2015. Looking at the progress in the last 5 years, before covid19, and now. It is widely accepted that many of the goals, will not be realised by 2030. These include poverty, hunger, climate change and social justice. There is also the issue of prioritisation of the goals and which ones need to come first and in which countries.

The following four are a critical perquisite to successfully and sustainably actualising the Goal of Pluralism

1. Education
2. Democracy - Inclusive Democratic Governance
3. Media
4. Capitalism

## Education

Pluralism needs to be learned and taught. Education is one of the sustainable development goals (SDG4[4]). The main Education goals agreed are as follows. There are other educational goals within this goal[4]. This and all the goals do not include Pluralism. However, in the parts it can be argued that it is there in spirit.

   i. *By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes*

   ii. *By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education*

With regard to quality education, it will be critical to add Pluralism in the curricula of academic, public, and community institutions and community organisations. Pluralism has not been accepted or understood.

Education is a fundamental driver of pluralism and needs to be part of the education process, from the youngest age onwards. In 2009, Aga Khan gave the following guidance which has yet to be implemented and actualised in the Ismaili Muslim community, and within their institutions.

*"Let me mention three areas. First of all, there is the nature of society in these countries. One of the characteristics of all these countries is that they have pluralist societies. And if pluralism is not part of the educational curriculum, the leaders and the peoples of these societies will always be at risk of conflict, because they are not accustomed to pluralism and they do not value it.*

*People are not born valuing pluralism. Therefore, pluralism is the sort of subject which needs to be part of education, from the youngest age onwards.*

*Another aspect is ethics. But not ethics born of dogma, but ethics in civil society. Because when governments fail in these parts of the world, it is civil society which steps in to sustain development. And when ethics are not part of education, teaching, examinations; when they are not part of medicine, the quality of care; when they are not part of financial services, then civil society is undermined. Ethics in civil society is another aspect which is absolutely critical.*

*The third example is constitutionality. So many countries which I have visited have stumbled into, run into difficulties in governance, because the national constitutions were not designed and conceived to serve the profiles of those countries. And therefore, teaching in areas such as comparative government is another area which is absolutely critical.*

*If these are the subjects which are necessary today, what are the subjects which will be necessary tomorrow? Is the developing world going to continue in this deficit of knowledge? Or are we going to enable it to move forwards in to new areas of knowledge? (Aga Khan 2009[29])*

## Inclusive Governance and Democracy

Pluralism enables Inclusive governance and democracy which are inextricably interlinked. The following Goals[4] have been agreed within the main united Nations 17 goals (SDG[4]). This Goal includes Inclusive Leadership and building strong Institutions.

*"16th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG16) aims to build strong and just institutions in support of peaceful and inclusive societies around the world, by 2030" (EU[4])*

1. Promote the rule of law, at the national and international levels, and ensure equal access to justice for all.
2. Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.
3. Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.
4. Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.
5. Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.
6. Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

In order to achieve the above agreed goals, pluralism with inclusive governance and leadership are critical. Governments will need to support and facilitate the continuum of education and learning of pluralism to build strong inclusive and plural institutions, and therefore pluralistic societies.

*"People coming together around a common purpose are much stronger, for example, in eliminating corruption. When an individual faces corruption, that's a problem. When a village community faces corruption it's a totally different issue. And in fact, corruption in civil society is probably one of the most damaging forces that we are trying to deal with every day. It's not only corruption at the level of government, it's corruption in education, it's corruption in healthcare, it's corruption in financial institutions, it's corruption in rural support, in distribution of goods." (Aga Khan)*

Definition of Inclusive governance- Leadership

**Inclusive Leadership and governance are processes, in which a diversity of people, thinking mindsets and skills, in every area and levels, are inclusively harnessed, shared, encouraged, respected, managed, heard, and applied. The Aga Khan has widened this definition, to include "ethics and values" of the faith in all areas.  In addition, the Aga Khan has said pluralism with the cosmopolitan ethic will enable inclusive Leadership, and best Practice[8].**

Inclusive leadership and governance have to be democratic as well as participatory. This applies to the present diversity of democratic models within the array of public private and civil society institutions including faith communities and democracy itself. Democracy is not simply elections to vote and elect people to represent people, be it in government, parliament, public office and all the public and private institution.

The present system of Leadership in the Ismaili community is that of a top down a command and control hierarchy. This needs to change to what Aga Khan has advised and asked the community to do. This is by far the biggest challenge today, to actualise pluralism and Inclusive Governance in the community

*"The key to future progress will lie less in traditional top-down systems of command and control -- and more in a broad, bottom-up spirit of coordination and cooperation" (Aga Khan)*

Pluralism has not been accepted or embraced by the Aga Khan community leadership and their institutions. There is rhetoric from the top that pluralism will benefit the common good of the community and their institutions, and that Aga Khan has advocated pluralism. However, the challenges of implementation are the same, as for the United Nations sustainable development goals and the 193 countries. The resistance is from the Status quo. They fear, and so protect and preserve, loss of position interests and authority.

Aga Khan, 15 years ago, gave the following advice and goal which remains a Goal. There is rhetoric of acceptance and change in some of the programs initiated by the institutions of the community, but pluralism has not been implemented and is far from being achieved, let alone embraced.

*"the key to future progress will lie less in traditional top-down systems of command and control -- and more in a broad, bottom-up spirit of coordination and cooperation. [Inclusive servant Leadership] *. Social progress, in the long run, will not be found by delegating an all dominant role to any one player-- but rather through multi-sector partnerships. And within each sector of society, diversity should be a watchword.... The world ... increasingly resembles a vast web in which everything connects to everything else -- where even the smallest groups and loneliest voices can exercise new influence, and*

*where no single source of power can claim substantial control" (2006 *emphasis added)*

With regard to developing countries, Aga Khan gave the following advice to actively encourage and support Pluralism.

*"A greater commitment to build capacity in the developing world to teach the science of government. An aggressive effort to support indigenous civil society, both to assist in the building of democracies and to provide a buttress in times of stress. Active encouragement and support for pluralism. And above all, we must set about to improve knowledge and understanding of the factors in the developing world that are encouraging or undermining democratic governance." (Aga Khan 2005)*

Democracy has not delivered on the promise of equality and equitable representation with full access, even to all the basic enacted rights and freedoms. The political culture, and ideologies are competing between many interests, like, self, political parties, their lobbies, special interest groups, political, donor's parliament and the people.   Governments in different countries have different levels of autocracy and participation. State, religions and civil society have been separated and are separate

*"I can scarcely count, nor fully catalogue, the variety of governments which I have visited over the past five decades — from the most autocratic to the most participatory. Often, the more democratic governments were the more effective and responsible. But this was not consistently true — and I have recently found it to be decreasingly true. In fact, nearly forty percent of UN member nations are now categorised as "failed democracies." Democracy and progress do not always go hand in hand and the growing threat of "Failed States" can often be described as "the Failure of Democracy. **The breakdowns are institutional as well as personal. Democratic systems veer between too many checks and balances, and too few. Parliaments, in particular, often lack the expertise and structure to grapple with complex problems — and they are often too factionalised or too subservient to sustain a coherent view. The challenge of democratic competence, then, is a central problem of our time. Meeting that challenge must be one of our central callings." (Aga Khan)***

A failure of democracy is not the failure of a country or a failure of the majority of the people. Failure of democracy grows out of ignorance and a lack of democratic competence. For example, when the public are asked to vote on complex issues, which they do not fully understand. Candidates obscure their views and distort the facts. They themselves are not experts, so and do not fully understand the complexity or the plethora of rhetoric in the main media and now social media. The media and journalists take sides and publish superficial rhetoric. People are appointed to jobs they cannot do and are not held to account. This is pervasive.  Corruption has many and complex forms, and this has effectively become a way of life. The media tells the audience not the facts they ought to know, but opinions based on opinion and on whose side, they are on.

In United Kingdom, during 3 years of Brexit and the uncertainties, politicians were very conflicted and, divided in their choices in their various capacities, and hats for example, self-interest as citizens, as representatives of the interests of People, and as members of the parliament, of government, of the opposition, of the political parties, of their constituencies, and or of the four UK devolved nations (Wales, Ireland, Scotland, and England). This resulted in deadlock in the United Kingdom, the "mother of Parliaments" for 3 years over many competing values and interests, driven by divisions, biases, political ideologies and tribalism.

The pandemic has exposed institutionalised biases and inequalities which have become a part of the fabric of the social mindset, which is embedded with a cynical resistance to change. The free market system has not reduced divides and levels of poverty, wealth, discrimination and classism corruption or exclusion.

In most countries, during elections, promises are made by politicians to the public regarding, Poverty, corruption, transparency, employment, health, pensions, and education, and to correcting failures. The political mindset is the same and that of the public, and societies.

Meaningful, and sustained change, will require a change of the institutional and social paradigm or mindsets. Covid19 has shown clearly, and it is accepted widely by most, that a change in the present democratic governance models is needed. That change will make is more participatory and pluralistic.

Pluralism is a vital prerequisite to deliver on the promises of democracy. This will enable inclusive governance, best practices, and the successful and sustainable implementation of, for example the agreed 17 goals (SDG[4])

## Democracy

The promise of democracy is when the government and governance is, and is seen to be "of the people, for the people and by the people" Where there is equality, equity, inclusion and belonging. And there is equal protection and access to basic rights and freedoms, for example of voting, representation, social justice, religion, race, & health care.

*"Our challenge is not to find alternatives to democracy, but to find more and better ways to make democracy work. In responding to that challenge today, I would like to make four observations — four suggestions for addressing our democratic disappointments and advancing our democratic hopes…. First, the need for greater flexibility in defining the paths to democracy; Secondly, the need for greater diversity in the institutions which participate in democratic life; thirdly, the need to expand the public's capacity for democracy; and finally, the need to strengthen public integrity, on which democracy rests." (Aga Khan)*

There are broadly 4 forms of democracy with democratic governance.

1    Consensual
2    Constitutional
3    Deliberative
4    Neoliberalism

## Consensus Democracy

Based on consensus rather than the traditional majority rule - Consensus democracy is a model of democracy designed to find and create common ground in pluralistic societies and to base decision making on consensus. Consensus democracies also seek to allow different political interests to share power. It is characterized by a decision-making structure which involves and takes into account as broad a range of opinions as possible, as opposed to systems where minority opinions can potentially be ignored by vote-winning majorities. Consensus democracy is most closely embodied in certain countries such as Switzerland, Germany, Denmark, Lebanon, Sweden, Iraq, and Belgium, where consensus is an important feature of political culture, particularly with a view to preventing the domination of one linguistic or cultural group in the political process.

## Constitutional Democracy

This is governed under a constitution. The most widely used today is Liberal democracy, also referred to as Western democracy. This is on a consensus a political ideology. A form of government in which representative democracy operates under the principles of classical liberalism. It is characterised by elections between multiple distinct political parties, a separation of powers into different branches of government, the rule of law in everyday life as part of an open society, a market economy with private property, and the equal protection of human rights, civil rights, civil liberties and political freedoms for all people. Liberal democracies often draw upon a constitution, either codified (such as in the United States) or uncodified (such as in the United Kingdom), to delineate the powers of government and enshrine the social contract.

After a period of sustained expansion throughout the 20th century, liberal democracy has become the predominant political system in the world today. A liberal democracy may take various constitutional forms, and as it may be a constitutional monarchy (such as Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom) or a republic (such as

France, Germany, India, Italy, Ireland, Mexico, Poland, Singapore, South Korea, and the United States). It may have a parliamentary system (such as Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Israel, Ireland, Italy, Singapore, South Korea and the United Kingdom), a presidential system (such as Indonesia and the United States) or a semi-presidential system (such as France, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and Romania).

The final decision-making power rests with those elected by the people. It must be based on a free and fair elections of representatives, with each adult having one vote.

## Deliberative Democracy

A school of thought in political theory that claims that political decisions should be the product of fair and reasonable discussion and debate among citizens. In this, not only voting, is central to legitimate decision making

Principles of Deliberative engagement

- Deliberative processes are built around a number of key principles including:

- The group responds to a clear remit - a plain English question that goes to the heart of the dilemma being shared.

- Participants will have access to the information they need to have an in-depth conversation and information will be neutral, balanced and from a range of different sources.

- The process is representative. Participants are selected randomly via a random, stratified selection process.

- Participants are given the time they need to deliberate, which allows them to consider complex information, grapple with trade-offs and impacts and weigh up options and ideas

- The deliberative group is given a high level of influence over outcomes or decisions.

- The group starts with a 'blank page' report - detailing their own thinking and developing their recommendations 'from scratch'

In Canada, there have been two prominent applications of deliberative democratic models. In 2004, the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform convened a policy jury to consider alternatives to the first-past-the-post electoral systems. In 2007, the Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform convened to consider alternative electoral systems in that province. Similarly, three of Ontario's Local Health Integration Networks have referred their budget priorities to a policy jury for advice and refinement.

## Neo-Liberal Democracy

Western countries have all incorporated the liberal aggregative political model, of democracy and a global neoliberal capitalism, as a form of governance. Democracy, politic and capitalism go hand in hand.

Neoliberalism is a central goal of politics of less government interference and regulations in the free market, and thus advocate three main policies to increase the role of the private sector in the economy and society through;

- privatization,
- deregulation and
- low taxation.

Often, claimed as the right and best form of governance.  However, this not has delivered on the promises, politically, economically, socially or ecologically.

The global economic crisis since 2008 in particular, has resulted not only in heavily contested austerity policies, but also in a questioning of the neoliberal

capitalist model. In combination with a rising distrust in parliamentary democracy for addressing existing problems, protest movements have come forward in many Western countries too.

These multiple crises and now Covid19 have challenged this model and highlighted the need for a systemic change.

To address these democratic challenges, and the role of neoliberal principles in liberal democracies (e.g. marketization, privatization, deregulation, and liberalization) it is imperative to make changes. However, a number of political philosophers have characterized our era as 'post- political' or 'post-democratic', implying that ideological debate has been abandoned in favour of depoliticization. This has not resulted in the disappearance of ideological conflict in democratic societies, but in its rationalization and moralization: instead of a struggle between 'right and left', we are faced with a struggle between 'right and wrong'.

Anyone who disagrees with the neoliberal consensus is seen as a fundamentalist, traditionalist, or blind radical. Similarly, anyone suggesting more or public ownership is classed as a socialist which is seen as damaging to society.

*"To allow a broad democratic debate on neoliberal principles, there is an urgent need for the contestation of these principles in multiple arenas. From our analysis, only the critical pluralism-approach comes forward as able to evaluate public discourse, and media dis-courses in specific, on the extent to which a democratic debate on these principles is encouraged, with a legitimate expression of dissensus and different alternatives. The affirmative diversity and pluralism-approaches are unqualified in this respect…As long as the developed world hesitates to commit long term investment towards education for democracy, and instead laments the issue of so-called failed states, much of the developing world will continue to face bleak prospects for democracy."[21]*

# Media & Media Pluralism

Press freedom and the right to information have a direct relevance to achieving the sustainable development goals (SDG16)[4], as it envisages protection of the right to access information, and of the journalists' safety. Freedom of information is closely linked to a culture of openness. Open and inclusive societies protect press freedom which is crucial to sustainable development. (SDG[4])

*"Frequently, democratic failures grow out of sheer incompetence. Publics are asked to vote on issues that bewilder them. Candidates obscure their own views and distort their opponents' positions. Journalists transmit superficial rhetoric and slight underlying realities. People are appointed to jobs they cannot do, but are rarely held accountable. Corruption for some becomes a way of life. Meanwhile, the Media tell audiences what they want to know rather than what they ought to know. And what too many people want today is not to be informed, but to be entertained." (Aga Khan)*

Pluralism enables Freedom of expression which is considered to be the cornerstone of democracy and democratic governance. Freedom of the press, freedom of the media, and the right to access information are essential conditions for a public sphere dialogue, in which public opinion is based upon the free exchange of information and opinions. They come from freedom of expression. In addition to this, freedom of expression also 'enables' other rights, like the right of assembly, the right to join a political party, the right to vote. Its protection is thus at the very core of any democratic society.

"EU member states share, and are bound to respect of freedom of expression which is enshrined in Art 11 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights, and is at the core of their common constitutional basic rights. It is also a right that has been effectively promoted under the Enlargement and Accession process and by the Council of Europe's framework for the protection of human rights (2014)."[30]

According to an independent study by the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom[30], there has been a general stagnation or deterioration in terms of risks to media pluralism across all countries covered (27 EU member states plus the UK, Albania, and Turkey). The study, for the first time taking into account the impact of digital developments, looking at physical and digital threats and attacks on journalists, their working conditions but also issues such as market plurality, political independence and social inclusiveness.[30]

The four main areas and indicators of media pluralism are

1. Basic Protection
2. Market plurality
3. Political Independence
4. Social Inclusion

## Media -Basic protection

This assesses fundamental factors which must be in place in a pluralistic and democratic society, namely, the existence and effectiveness of regulatory mechanisms in order to safeguard the freedom of expression and the right to seek, receive and impart information; the status of journalists in each country; the independence and effectiveness of the media authority; the universal reach of traditional media and access to the Internet. The Basic Protection area adds indicators focused on the challenges posed by the digital environment to the plurality of the media landscape; this results in a closer focus on the protection of freedom of expression online, data protection online, the safety of journalists online, levels of Internet connectivity, and the implementation of European net neutrality obligations.

"The de facto independence of the media authority registers a medium risk in more than a half of the 30 countries considered. Some of the main risks that are observed across Europe is the insufficient protection of whistle-blowers, poor working conditions for journalists. The increasing number of threats to which journalists are subjected, are It is worrisome that threats to journalists often

come from politicians, who should, instead, guarantee an enabling environment for journalists[30].

## Media Market Plurality

This assesses the risks to media pluralism that arise from the legal and economic context in which market players operate: market concentration, transparency of ownership, businesses' influence over editorial content, the sustainability of media production. In the MPM2020[30] implementation, the role of the digital platforms in the new ecosystem of the media has been considered, assessing separately the concentration in the production and distribution of information.

The highest risks for market plurality come from ownership concentration, both in the news media and the digital intermediaries' markets. The indicator on News media concentration scores 80%: for this indicator, no country scores a low risk, and only four countries (France, Germany, Greece and Turkey) score a medium risk. The new indicator on Online platforms and competition enforcement is also at high risk (73%), reflecting the very high concentration in Gateways to news (80%), and a medium risk in Competition enforcement (65%, very close to the threshold of high risk)

## Media Political Independence

Political pluralism, as a potential for actively representing the diversity of the political spectrum and of ideological views in the media and other relevant platforms, is one of the crucial conditions for democracy and democratic citizenship. The Political Independence area is assessed using indicators that evaluate the extent of the politicisation of the distribution of the resources to the media; political control of media organisations and content; and, especially, of the public service media. The area evaluates the editorial autonomy to self-regulate in traditional and digital news environments, and safeguards against manipulative practices in political advertising in the audio-visual media and on online platforms. Media policies and media regulation have mainly been focused on audio visual media, because of their perceived impact on public opinion, and

because of their use of finite spectrum resources. As more people are shifting their attention and news habits to online platforms and sources, more attention needs to be given to the conditions in which political information there is shared, moderated and accessed. The MPM2020 thus introduces a set of variables that aim to assess the political control over digital native media, the fairness and transparency of (micro-targeted) political advertising on the social media, and the potential for journalists to self-regulate their activities in the platform's realm.

Overall, the Political Independence area is at high risk in 7 countries (Bulgaria, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and Turkey). Seven other countries are found to be at low risk (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Sweden). A majority of countries, namely, 16, including a candidate country, Albania, in which the MPM was implemented for the first time in 2018-2019, score medium risk.

## Media Social Inclusiveness

The Social Inclusiveness area considers access to the media by various social and cultural groups, such as minorities, local/regional communities, people with disabilities, and women. In addition, the Monitor considers media literacy as a precondition for using the media effectively, and examines media literacy contexts, as well as the digital skills of the population.

On average, the area of Social Inclusiveness scores 52% (i.e. medium) risk. This is 2 percentage points lower than in MPM2017 (54%), but is still in a medium risk band. Two thirds of the countries (22) score a medium risk (Austria, Belgium, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain), 5 countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Romania and Turkey) score a high risk, while only 3 countries (France, Sweden and the United Kingdom) are in the low risk band for Social Inclusiveness.

Access to media for minorities, and Access to media for women, are the two highest scoring indicators in this area. The risk is particularly prevalent with regard to minorities who are not recognised by law. Women continue to be heavily underrepresented in both media management and reporting. Male experts are more often invited to comment on political programmes and articles than are female experts, and no country scored a low risk on this matter

The European Union (EU) Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs adopted Rapporteur Barbara Spinelli's Report on media pluralism and media freedom in the EU, with 44 votes in favour, 3 against (Netherlands, France, Germany) and 4 abstentions (Finland, Poland, Slovakia, Austria.

The report includes a motion for a European Parliament Resolution, which focuses on the relationship between media pluralism, freedom of expression and democracy in the digital age.

Its Explanatory Statement highlights four key issue areas in relation to freedom of expression, broadly categorised as:

1. Violence, threats and pressures against journalists;
2. The digital sphere;
3. National measures and the Copenhagen dilemma;
4. whistle-blowers.

The impact of funding on media pluralism is a central focus of the Resolution, which condemns government attempts to silence critical media through buying up commercial media outlets and hijacking public service media to serve partisan interests. It calls on Member States to ensure that there is adequate public funding to safeguard and promote a pluralist, independent and free media, which is to be given on the basis of non-discriminatory, objective and transparent criteria.

In UK in 2012 a report was commissioned (Ofcom)[30] regarding media pluralism and plurality. This shows that the needs were recognised and accepted. However, the challenge is of implementation.

The 5 underlying goals are as follows;

1. Plurality matters because it makes an important contribution to a well-functioning democratic society through informed citizens and preventing too much influence over the political process.
2. Plurality was defined as
   a. ensuring there is a diversity of viewpoints available and consumed across and within media enterprises and
   b. preventing any one media owner or voice having too much influence over public opinion and the political agenda.
3. Plurality needs to be considered both within organisations (i.e. internal plurality) and between organisations (i.e. external plurality). In terms of scope, a review of plurality should be limited to news and current affairs but these genres should be considered across television, radio, the press and online.

*"The spread of online disinformation and hate speech, including concerns about their impact on elections and referenda in 2016, represented major areas of debate during 2017. States, international institutions, and private enterprises have discussed or adopted measures – both legislative and non-legislative – to address these phenomena, and several of these measures have, in turn, raised concerns about their impact on the freedom of expression and respect for the rule of law." (EU report)*

## Capitalism - Neoliberalism

The capitalist free market system today is very closely linked with, and is interwoven into the fabric of democracy, politics, government, economics, media, and the educational system. Education, and the educational system is a fundamental driver of Pluralism.

Most countries have incorporated the liberal aggregative political model, of democracy and a global neoliberal as a form of capitalism and governance. Democracy, politics and capitalism therefore, go hand in hand.

This form of capitalism is also referred to as neoliberalism, meaning the government policy of supporting a large amount of freedom for the social and economic markets, with little government control regulation or spending, with low taxes. This is characterized by free markets and government deregulation, with has enabled the shifting of capital investment and business to the private sector by privatisation deregulation, which was followed by globalisation. In the last 50 years this has grown exponentially. So has the complexity of the financial market systems, and innovation. This has benefited the few and not the many as was the systemic promises

Neoliberalism, is the central goal of the politics with less government interference and regulations in the free market. Thus, advocating three main policies to increase the role of the private sector in the economy, and society through;

• Privatization and globalisation
• Deregulation and
• Low taxes

*"Democratic systems veer between too many checks and balances, and too few. Parliaments, in particular, often lack the expertise and structure to grapple with complex problems — and they are often too factionalised or too subservient to sustain a coherent view. The challenge of democratic competence, then, is a central problem of our time. Meeting that challenge must be one of our central callings." (Aga Khan)"*

The role of Government has in effect been taken over and much of it has privatised directly and within the system. In the UK for example even within the heath sector and in the responses to Covid19. There has been some state capitalism and especially after the crisis in 2008, when governments had to take over and bail out the private sector. More recently there have also been public calls for change, and more nationalism. For example, in UK to come out of the EU with a referendum. And the agreement of the sustainable development goals by 193 countries. Climate change, and today the world economic forum rhetoric and the Davos manifesto for change to stakeholders, instead of shareholders.

"A company that has a multinational scope of activities not only serves all those stakeholders who are directly engaged, but acts itself as a stakeholder – together with governments and civil society – of our global future. Corporate global citizenship requires a company to harness its core competencies, its entrepreneurship, skills and relevant resources in collaborative efforts with other companies and stakeholders to improve the state of the world"[21]

Pluralism will be required for this change to be actualised. Capitalism and the free market system and democracy have not been included as one of the United Nations 17-Sustainable development goals. It is clear that the capitalist system has not delivered on their promises. 193 Governments who have agreed to the 17 goals, have all chosen not to include this as a specific sustainable development Goal and so review, or a change to the present system of neoliberalism. It can be argued that this is in the spirit of the goals. Either way there is a preference for the status Quo. And the present neo-liberal system is dominated influenced and driven by the private sector, with increase and innovative forms of privatisation and globalisation which was at the root causes of the economic crisis a decade ago.

The private sector is motivated and driven totally and increasingly by more profit and wealth for the few and for themselves (Shareholder, owners and Top executives). By the very nature of neoliberalism, big businesses, special interest group and their lobbies are closely linked to the government, the economy, employment and civil society. The free market and financial systems have increased in complexity and the intricacies of the system are not known or understood by most. Complexity has also increased in other connected systems like for example, the legal, taxation and government revenue related systems. This has added to the issues and challenges of equitable access and social Justice for all. The rhetoric of simplification, transparency and access is critical, and will require pluralism to be actualised

There have been reports and calls for example, for more state capitalism. This has not progressed because of the rhetoric of the many who want the Status quo. They say public ownership, equates to socialism, which has failed. The example used is, the failure of socialism, because of the failure and break-up of

the Soviet Union. The re balancing of the system has been rejected as an option. The public, civil society and private sectors are all run by people. With Pluralism and the resulting collaboration, re-balancing can be achieved for the common good. The Soviet Union like UK and other colonial powers in the past did not and have not failed because of the process of de colonisation and independence of Nations. Nor has state capitalism because Privatisation and globalisation has taken over and predominates state capitalism.

Private sector failures and growth are supported by public funds even and specially during the times if crisis. For example, in the economic crisis a decade ago, and now during civid19, including in the vaccines have been privatised using public funds. Public funds have been used for privatisation and globalisation. The benefits of globalisation were reduced national, costs, better public services and rights to free education, and health care for all. Big business benefit more from financing, grants, incentives, aid, government contracts, bail outs and profit. Central banks and parliament use public funds to invest and borrow from the markets and therefore they have become one of the market stakeholders. Parliament is the government, which is in fact the political party in control. Governments do not, and cannot, in fact control the complex free and global markets, with all their complexity of privatisation and globalisation. The national currency is no longer backed by gold, but by the country and the financial market system in which the Government directly through the central Bank and as a legislative Body, are also very influential stakeholders and competitive market makers.

Complex financial systems and tax systems are critical to maintain the complicity which in turn maintains the status Quo. This is evident and exposed by Covid19, and in the substantial bail outs and loans taken out by the governments from the "market" against the security of the country's own funds, investments in the markets and future revenue stream. The bail out to big business is mainly justified because of preserve loss of Jobs, and tax to the government and loans and the share market prices. Most parliamentarians and the public do not understand the neo liberal market complexities. Most understand the simple concept that the government has a budget and the money has to come from somewhere and that is Tax and borrowing.  Therefore, when the government say we don't have the money or a have a limited amount, that is understood,

justified and accepted as the norm by the public and indeed the government (political parties)

At the start of Covid19, Governments have said they will do whatever it takes, and, will use whatever public funds and resources are required.  Substantial public funds have been requested by and given by Governments to big businesses and the markets to bail them out, and or to prop them up. Loans have been taken by governments from effectively from public funds and investments.  This is similar to public funds used to bail out big businesses and banks in the economic crisis in 2008.  Central Banks have used public funds, and policies to support the financial markets and invest public funds in them for example the pension funds etc. Public Institutions have been used to stabilise markets. The accumulation of wealth, is dominated by big businesses and financial markets. Support and investments or contracts by governments in the markets and or big business directly or through Central Banks, has an impact on the markets. Secondly, they have an effect on borrowing, lending, and recoveries. Thirdly on the market values, which include the investment of public funds and pensions using the markets, directly, or through the banking structure and systems. Because markets are globalised, interconnected, and complex, big businesses are able to leverage government bail outs and capital markets.

In summary, with Pluralism it is possible to for example to re-balance the present system of neoliberalism, by actualising for example one or a combination of the following;
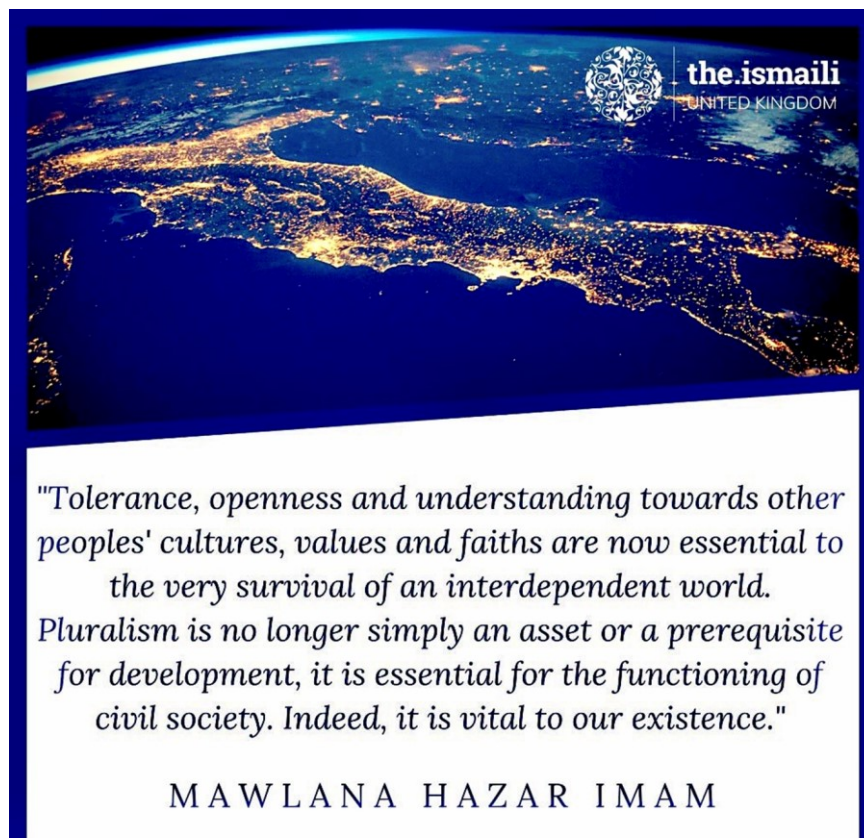
1.   Re-balance state capitalism and ownership which will deliver on the promises for all the stakeholders including the private stakeholders, which was envisaged 50 years ago.
2.   Re-balance the free market economy with a circular market economy
3.   Re-balance by actualising stakeholder capitalism by the business sector (big, small and medium), and by civil society organisation

The above is possible with Pluralism and with the collaborative support of Governments and civil Society.   Pluralism does not say nationalisation or socialism. Pluralism says a re-balancing the systems.   For example, the sustainable development goal of poverty and responsible consumption. When

there is enough food to feed the hungry, they question is why does it take 15 years to address this by 2030?  The status quo does not, even with Covid19 realise the need to change and so, know how to actualise this change. This is because of the present mind set and the biases of the Status quo.

Covid19 has exposed that the present system of capitalism and free market has not worked as promised for the collective good, and has not benefited all, but the few. The class and wealth economic divides have increased. Poverty has not declined.  The solution is not socialism nor nationalism. The solution is to make the right balance between the public and private. Covid19 has shown that it is people who manage and create value not the system or institutions. The good and bad, the competent and incompetent the corrupt and not corrupt the expert and non experts in public, private and civil society institutions. There have been failures in all. There are extremes in all areas and sectors. The central and centrists are a minority.
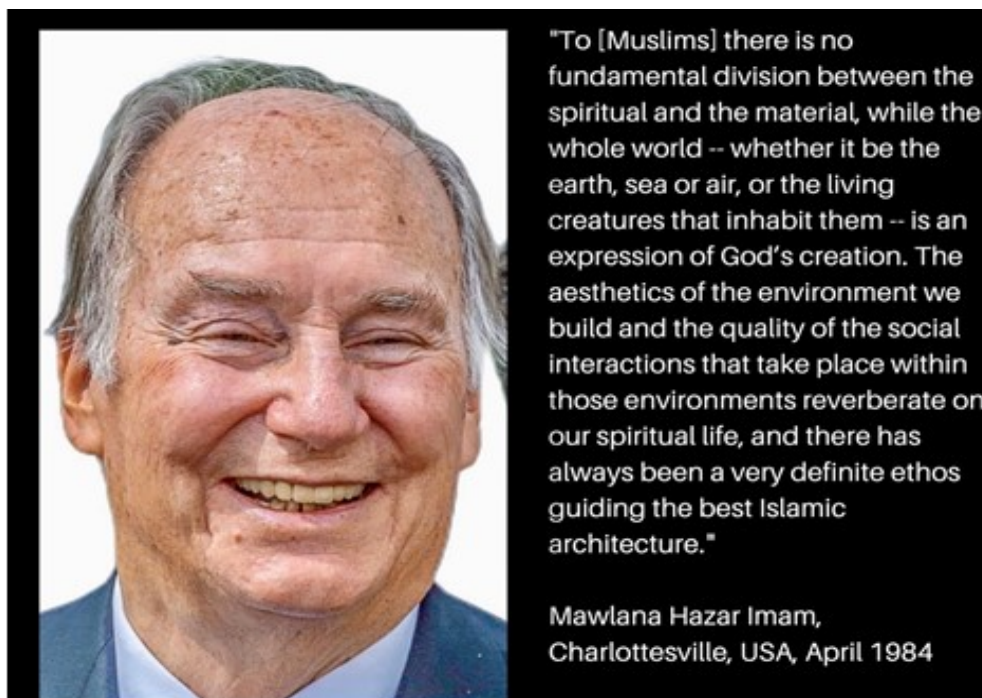
If pluralism is embraced and actualised it is possible by 2030 to achieve the 17 goals and re-balance the present free market neoliberal capitalist system with a sustainable and a collaborative and the right balanced combination.



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"Tolerance, openness and understanding towards other peoples' cultures, values and faiths are now essential to the very survival of an interdependent world. Pluralism is no longer simply an asset or a prerequisite for development, it is essential for the functioning of civil society. Indeed, it is vital to our existence."

MAWLANA HAZAR IMAM

## Conclusion

His Highness the Aga Khan has given not only very clear guidance about Pluralism, but has also explained the logic, the reasons, the benefits and the urgency. Ismaili Muslims have given their allegiance (Bayah[1]), to the Aga Khan, their Imam. They accept his authority[1], and follow his guidance's on material and spiritual matters. That includes Pluralism and inclusive governance.

Pluralism, he says is a part of the Ismaili Muslim faith. "most remarkable goal of our faith"



"To [Muslims] there is no fundamental division between the spiritual and the material, while the whole world -- whether it be the earth, sea or air, or the living creatures that inhabit them -- is an expression of God's creation. The aesthetics of the environment we build and the quality of the social interactions that take place within those environments reverberate on our spiritual life, and there has always been a very definite ethos guiding the best Islamic architecture."

Mawlana Hazar Imam,
Charlottesville, USA, April 1984

Aga Khan has made pluralism the top priority and Goal for his community and their institutions. He has also relentlessly championed Pluralism globally. He set up the Global Centre of Pluralism with the Canadian Government some 15 years ago.

What the Aga Khan has said about Pluralism which is so vital and important for our world, and for all people and governments to embrace. Aga Khan's role and foresights are based on predictability, pre-empting and looking at a horizon of 10, 20, 50 and 100 years into the future. He has said he asks himself all the time of the causes of difficulties, how many of those difficulties are predictable? If

they are predictable? what are the instruments needed to understand the predictability and to pre-empt the problems. "that's really been a significant part of my life", he said. This also applies to Pluralism

In giving his guidance on Pluralism, he has also given his foresights, looking at a horizon of, the future generations. He cautioned 20 years ago, that if the community and society do not embrace Pluralism there will be, for example, more conflicts, migration, refugees, poverty and inequity.  He was right. Another reason to follow and implement his guidance. Covid19 has also highlighted there is less international cooperation, and more confrontation, even politically. This is also on the response to covid19, and in the development of the vaccine for covid19, which is affecting the whole of humanity

Aga Khan has said Pluralism is vital to achieve peace, and progress. It is not institutive and we are not born with Pluralism.  Pluralism must be learned and taught from the very young to the very old, like a subject. We must make it a part of our thinking, and psyche. Pluralism is a part of the knowledge deficit today, in schools, universities and therefore society. Pluralism is not diversity or respect for diversity, Pluralism is not a principle of diversity. Pluralism is not Inclusion. Pluralism is an enabling "ethic of ethics", which enables and enacts competing ethics and values, provided the purpose is ethical and is therefore for the common good. We need to get accustomed to pluralism – We need to understand pluralism, and value pluralism.  We need to make pluralism a part of national thinking.  Aga Khan has cautioned that one of the stumbling blocks Is arrogance. We must invest in Pluralism and make it a top priority. Without Pluralism conflicts, migration and polarisation will increase and that is predictable.

*"And today, knowledge of pluralism is I think one of the most important things. And that will, if it's going to happen, will happen through education." (Aga Khan 15 October 2010[34])*

Aga Khan expressed some uncertainty as to whether Pluralism will be embraced in 2010. In the last decade it has not been embraced. Aga Khan's role is to give

the guidance (Farmans). He does not enforce[1] his will or his guidance on the community or their Leadership. That is not the role of his inherited authority[1]

Pluralism is a new, and an innovative concept, which has been advanced by Aga Khan as a solution. He has continued his teaching and interpretation of Pluralism globally.  There is no question that the Aga khan is right to give his guidance and his foresights on Pluralism. If embraced there is no question that this will benefit all communities, society, and our world, beyond mankind, including climate change

Looking at the progress and position of pluralism in the Aga Khan community and their institutions, which includes the Global Centre of Pluralism.  Pluralism has not been understood and therefore not embraced. The question is why and what is needed now.  It is not because the Aga Khan is not right about the critical need and benefits of pluralism.  Ismaili Muslims obey and follow the guidance of the Aga Khan, their Imam. Pluralism is a new ethical paradigm. There are not many in the community who understand let alone teach Pluralism. And they do not have access to all the guidance's, there are no classes, the Leadership have not embraced or made Pluralism as a top priority so far. Therefore, and Ismaili Scholars and community teachers do not, and cannot teach pluralism.

*"Developing support for pluralism does not occur naturally in human society. It is a concept which must be nurtured every day, in every forum -- in large and small government and private institutions; in civil society organisations working in the arts, culture, and public affairs, in the media; in the law, and in justice -- particularly in terms of social justice, such as health, social safety nets and education; and in economic justice, such as employment opportunities and access to financial services.*

- *Is it not high time - perhaps even past time, that a systematic effort be undertaken to document "best practices" by looking closely at the array of public policies and structures that support pluralism in particular national settings?*
- *As lessons are extracted and models identified, should not a process be put in place to share them widely for replication?*

- ***Should not this effort reach out to as many countries as possible, and in as many organisational"***

Aga Khan also gave the following a guidance to all the Institutions

*"institutions supporting pluralism is as critical for the welfare and progress of human society as are poverty alleviation and conflict prevention the inability of human society to recognise pluralism as a fundamental value constitutes a real handicap for its development and a serious danger for our future"*

Simply making and giving new goals, and policies does not change institutional mindsets or the culture. There is a natural, and an inherent resistance to change and a preference of the Status quo. This is also true of Pluralism, which is a vital antidote to the world, in also dealing with the challenges of Covid19, and the sustainable goals[4]. And therefore, in improving the wellbeing of mankind, and climate change

*"I would say to my Canadian Jamat:* ***spread the message of the meaning of pluralism, of the joy of diverse communities coming together , of the need for communities to work together to face whatever difficulties they have****...and Insha'Allah\* you will serve Portugal well, you will carry abroad the qualities of Portuguese democracy, pluralism, ethical behaviour -- these are qualities we, as a Jamat, want to have around the world, not just here in Portugal. So, today, I make you my Dai--* ***I make you my Dai [32] -- so that you may carry this message around the world and assist in its implementation****" (Aga Khan- Diamond Jubilee 2018) \*God Willing (With Allah's blessing)*

The main reason why Pluralism and inclusive Leadership have still not been achieved within the Ismaili community, is primarily because of the culture and mindset of the Leadership of the Ismaili community. There is a centralised top down command and control hierarchy, and system of leadership with an overwhelming bureaucracy to implement policies. A culture of listening, and not hearing, is pervasive. The top executive management teams, are controlled by the same "clique" of Leaders for many decades. The culture and mindset, is driven by a political ideology of self-interest, self-indulgent individualism,

rampant materialism, division, greed, exclusion and secrecy. Even guidance from Aga Khan and constitutional reports nor the full constitution are not given to members of the community, not even on request. The Leadership filed a lawsuit to control guidance of Aga Khan (Farmans), from the community in 2010. This lasted for about 5 years. Aga Khan gave his guidance on this on 15th October 2010[35], despite which the case was continued for 5 years and the court effectively confirmed the advices of Aga Khan.

With regard to mistakes and failures the Aga Khan gave the following advice (guidance-Farman)

*"expect that if matters are going wrong, they should be put right without shame, without shame. There is no shame in saying this has gone wrong let us put it right…. expect that the institutions should achieve those reasonable objectives that should be achieved in order that they should serve the Jamat and the people amongst whom the Jamat lives as effectively as possible. And that means careful planning, identifying the needs of the Jamat, performing effectively, being answerable, having results verified and if there are failures correcting the failures, not hiding them, correcting them. These are the premises on which I hope the Jamat will continue to provide support and service to the institutions because those are the premises on which I believe the institutions should be expected to perform" (Aga Khan 1992-94)*

Global Centre of Pluralism is a part of the Ismaili community Institutions, and a joint venture with the Canadian Government. The Board of trustees include political appointees from the Canadian Government and from the Aga Khan community. The day to day management of GCP is influenced by, the Leadership of the Aga Khan community Institutions

According to GCP, and from my research, Pluralism is not widely known and is not understood, not only in the Ismaili community, but other communities and countries. Therefore, Pluralism has not been accepted or embraced, within the Ismaili community or indeed globally. The word Pluralism is known by most in the Ismaili community, but effective as a buzz word which most associate with, and understand as, to be respectful, and show respect to people of different

traditions and faiths. The value of respect has been a part of the Ismaili faith and Islam for over 1400 years.  In that context it is not new, and therefore Pluralism is understandably a buzz word

The global centre of Pluralism has had challenges for 15 years to actualise and promote Pluralism. They now have a 10-year plan but need to do the following in order to realise the goal of Pluralism. They, like the Aga Khan community leadership[5], are not responding to requests[33] for information. They will need to change and embrace, if the goal of Pluralism is to be achieved.

- The Team top down need to embrace, and practice pluralism all the time in everything they do
- Leverage opportunities and access through the Government of Canada, and Aga Khan community
- Activate the continuum of teaching and learning of pluralism, collaboratively
- Implement the 4 core main programs and plans of GCP, namely
- Proactively Promote and communicate Pluralism (to Implement in 2020)
- A Global Pluralism Index to design and launch (in progress – date of completion not known
- Biennial Pluralism Awards (next on is in 2021),
- Education – (Educators course on pluralism planned for 2021)
- Secure additional funding which vital for the 10-year plan. Assuming and provided there are no other leveraging options, for example based on multilateral collaboration and cooperation.
- Ensure Inclusive Leadership & best practices at all levels

*"if pluralism is not part of the educational curriculum, the leaders and the peoples of these societies will always be at risk of conflict, because they are not accustomed to pluralism and they do not value it.  People are not born valuing pluralism.*

*Therefore, pluralism is the sort of subject which needs to be part of education, from the youngest age onwards. Another aspect is ethics. But not ethics born*

*of dogma, but ethics in civil society. Because when governments fail in these parts of the world, it is civil society which steps in to sustain development. And when ethics are not part of education, teaching, examinations; when they are not part of medicine, the quality of care; when they are not part of financial services, then civil society is undermined. Ethics in civil society is another aspect which is absolutely critical.*

*The third example is constitutionality. So many countries which I have visited have stumbled into, run into difficulties in governance, because the national constitutions were not designed and conceived to serve the profiles of those countries. And therefore, teaching in areas such as comparative government is another area which is absolutely critical.*

*If these are the subjects which are necessary today, what are the subjects which will be necessary tomorrow? Is the developing world going to continue in this deficit of knowledge? Or are we going to enable it to move forwards in to new areas of knowledge? "(Aga Khan)*

Pluralism will be embraced, if the Leadership realise and change course, and or the community bottom up come together and make Pluralism a common goal and priority. The challenge is that, this will require education, learning and teaching of Pluralism. Aga Khan has asked the community to be his active ambassadors[32] and make Pluralism a part of their thinking and to come together to advance their wellbeing by having common goals, and becoming masters of their programs. And that applies to Pluralism

Aga Khan's advice is also for the community and the leadership to ask the hard questions and if they accept that there have been mistakes, or failures, then without blame or shame and justification, they should correct them, move forward, and in this case actualise the goals of Pluralism, inclusive leadership and poverty, urgently, and as top priorities.

*"the ostrich policy is not for us and I would like to feel therefore, that in dealing with the issues that lie ahead of us, we will look at them straight in the face, we will ask the hard questions. If we cannot find immediate answers, we will*

*go on asking the same questions until Insha'Allah\*, we are inspired to find the answers, but we will not give up. We will not go back to an obscurantism, to a form of intellectual retreat into something which is neither beneficial for the present and certainly not constructive for the future"[34]* *God Willing (with Allah's blessing)*

Globally, and generally, there is growing public and social consensus of the need for systemic changes. This is because the present political driven systems have not delivered on the promises in the last 50 or more years. And access to voice their opinions and know through social media. The need is for action today and not more reports, to implement the changes agreed and the sustainable development goals. More and new reports are in many cases suggested and used as opportunities to delay implementation. On most issues including for example racism, capitalism, democracy and politics, there are many reports in many countries. That includes on each of the 17 goals and, the many goals within them.   Implementation has been and remains the challenge today.  Prioritising for example the Goals[4] will be as critical, as adding, for example, Pluralism

Time will tell if the Ismaili Community who are a part of the civil society will embrace pluralism, and do so by 2030. And whether there will be the investment and support at all levels, including by the Global Centre of Pluralism to achieve the Goals of Pluralism

What will also be required is transformational thinking, and a shift of the social paradigm. That is needed to change the social mindset, which will, in turn change the subconscious biases. This will then enable transformational changes to be implemented This is critical, for communities, and their Institutions to progress, from a post truth society[3] of today, to a pluralist and a meritocratic society.

There is a recognition at the top of the leadership ladders, and in the academia within the community of the need for pluralism and related changes. That has not been allowed to be filtered down by those who are controlling, and who can help enable and make this change top down. Pluralism needs urgently to be

made into a genuine top priority, and progressed to making pluralism, a part of the thinking process and psyche of the Leadership and of the community.

Aga Khan has been championing and advocating the cause of Pluralism, relentlessly, unequivocally, and emphatically. He has also been asking his community and their Leadership to embrace and actualise Pluralism for over 20 years.

In 2018 he asked the community to make Pluralism a part of the psyche of the community.

*"Let the respect for pluralism become part of the psyche of our Jamat (community), around the world. And let us open hearts, aspirations, goals to a situation where, wherever the Jamat is living, the people amongst whom we live will say, "This is the way we wish to live our value system." If you are able to do that, I think you will be fulfilling one of the most remarkable "goals of our faith" because you will be putting into practice respect for all amongst whom you live." (Aga Khan Diamond Jubilee 2018)*

The Ismaili community and their Leadership have an unprecedented opportunity to be the pioneers of pluralism in the world. And become the beacons, and radiate pluralism all over the world. They have the perfect partner in Canada and the Global Centre of Pluralism to proactively actualising the goal of Pluralism, globally. They have the opportunity, the guidance and the blessings of their Imam, and therefore all the wherewithal and tools to do so. The big question is, will and when will the Leadership and the community pick up the Aga Khan's mantle of Pluralism and make it their "Top" institutional and educational priority.
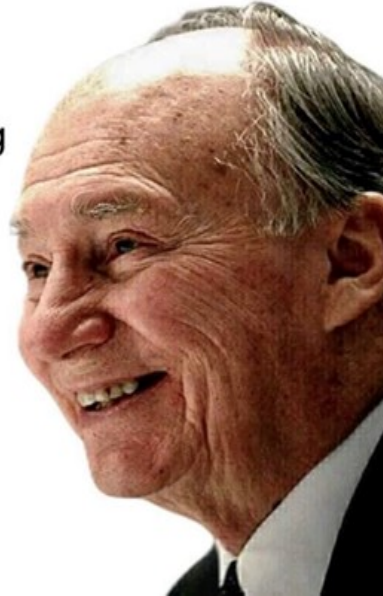
**Mahebub Chatur**©

18 October 2010

**About the Author** – M Chatur is an Ismaili scholar who graduated from an intensive religious course by the Institute of Ismaili studies, in London. He has actively participated and served in various capacities within the constitutional entities of the Ismaili community. He has authored, "Aga Khan copyright lawsuit – lifting the veil" and many articles on different aspects of Ismailism. Born in Uganda and moved to the UK as a student. He has served as Hon Secretary of ITREB (Aga Khan Shia Imami Ismaili Tariquah and Religious Education Board), in the Middle East (6 Countries).  He qualified as a Chartered Accountant in the United Kingdom. He is a member of the Association of International Accountants, and Head of Educational Development. He has extensive professional and business experience working in many countries around the world. He has interacted with other faiths and their leaders, and has been involved in many NGO/organisations in UK, including Rotary International. As a part of the research for this paper, he also recently attended and completed online courses and webinars, which included pluralism, and by Institutions of the Ismaili community.

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**INDEX**

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32. Aga khan guidance on being ambassadors – Dais and to share Guidance
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37. The Two courses of UCA and AKF-AKDN – @ related courses

## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND NOTES

### 1. HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN – IMAM OF ISMAILI MUSLIMS

a. He is a Leader (Imam) of some 20 million Ismaili Muslims worldwide, with inherited religious authority.
   i. Authority of Imam
   ii. http://www.ismaili.net/html/modules.php?op=modload&name=phpBB2&file=viewtopic&t=9224
b. He gives worldly and spiritual, guidance for the wellbeing of all believers. (His guidance's are collectively called Farmans – Ismaili constitution[30]). Ismaili Muslims have given him their allegiance and they obey and implement his Farmans (Guidance including wishes)
c. His guidance (teachings and interpretations of the Quran), are an integral part, of the essence, and practice of the Ismaili Muslim Faith. (Ismaili Constitution[30])
d. Imamat (constitutional Institution of the community)
   i. https://ismaili.imamat/
e. Example of how Aga Khan exercises his Authority
   i. http://ismaili.net/source/legal-documents/2019-01-10-chatur8.pdf
f. Ismaili heritage website
   i. www.ismaili.net
g. Ismaili community – Educational Website
   i. www.iis.ac.uk
h. Ismaili community Institutions- The AKDN network

i. www.akdn.org

## 2. GLOBAL CENTRE OF PLURALISM PRESS RELEASE

Ottawa, Canada, 25 October 2006

a. His Highness the Aga Khan will meet today on Parliament Hill with The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada, and The Honourable Beverley J. Oda, Minister of Canadian Heritage, to sign a funding agreement for the Global Centre for Pluralism, to be located in Ottawa, Canada.

The Global Centre for Pluralism is a major new international centre for research, education and exchange about the values, practices and policies that underpin pluralist societies. Drawing inspiration from the Canadian experience, the centre will function as a global repository and source for knowledge about fostering pluralistic values, policies, and practices. It will work with countries to nurture successful civil societies in which every citizen, irrespective of cultural, religious or ethnic differences, is able to realize his or her full potential.

b. "The rejection of pluralism is pervasive across the globe and plays a significant role in breeding destructive conflicts," says the Pluralism Press Aga Khan. The Centre will therefore undertake research, deliver programs, facilitate dialogue, develop pedagogical materials and work with civil society partners worldwide to build the capacities of individuals, groups, educational institutions and governments to promote indigenous approaches to pluralism in their own countries and communities.

c. The Pluralism Press Aga Khan has described the Canadian practice of seeking unity in diversity as "Canada's gift to the world." The decision to locate this major new institution in Canada's capital city was therefore a natural one. The mission of the Centre supports several key Canadian international policy objectives, among them

the promotion of democracy and good governance, a more equitable sharing of the world's resources between developed and developing countries, and the projection of Canadian values, such as the rule of law, human rights and respect for diversity.

Under the terms of the agreement, the Government of Canada will contribute C$30 million towards the establishment of the Centre's endowment fund. The Pluralism Press Aga Khan will contribute a minimum of C$30 million toward the endowment and the refurbishing of the former Canadian War Museum, which the Government is making available on a long-term lease to serve as the Centre's global headquarters.

Registered under Canadian law as a non-denominational, bilingual, non-profit organization, the Centre will be guided by an independent Board of Directors made up of leading Canadians and high-profile individuals from around the world.

The Board will be jointly constituted by the Pluralism Press Aga Khan Development Network and the Government of Canada. His Highness the Pluralism Press Aga Khan will lead the Board as Chairman.

Drawing on the pluralistic model of Canada and the diversity of the Ismaili community worldwide, today's announcement marks the culmination of a long-standing dialogue initiated in 2002. Since that time, both the Government and the Centre have consulted with a number of leading Canadians and civil society institutions to validate the mandate and proposed activities of the Centre. The Global Centre for Pluralism will engage with a wide range of partners, among them civil society organizations, research institutes, and academic institutions.

The programmatic activities of the Centre will begin in 2007.

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## 3. DEFINITIONS OF PLURALISM

### a. Oxford Dictionary

i. A political theory or system of power-sharing among a number of political parties. *'The mushrooming of political parties, syndicates, and newspapers signals a nascent political pluralism upon which democracy can be built.'*

ii. More example sentences

iii. A theory or system of devolution and autonomy for individual bodies in preference to monolithic state control.

iv. *'He preached pluralism, by which he meant the autonomy of organizations such as broadcasting bodies, parties, and trade unions, while affirming the need for a strong centralized state.'*

v. More example sentences

    vi. A form of society in which the members of minority groups maintain their independent cultural traditions.

   vii. *Philosophy* A theory or system that recognizes more than one ultimate principle.

  viii. Compare with **monism**

    ix. *'Pluralism is a competency, not just mere subjective relativism, but ethical pluralism.'*

## b. Collins

a condition in which minority groups participate fully in the dominant society, yet maintain their cultural differences

a doctrine that a society benefits from such a condition

Pluralism is a term used in philosophy, meaning "doctrine of multiplicity," often used in opposition to monism ("doctrine of unity") and dualism ("doctrine of duality"). ... In logic, pluralism is the view that there is no one correct logic, or alternatively, that there is more than one correct logic.

Religious pluralism is an attitude or policy regarding the diversity of religious belief systems co-existing in society. It can indicate one or more of the following: ... As a term for the condition of harmonious co-existence between adherents of different religions or religious denominations.

Moral pluralism is the idea that there can be conflicting moral views that are each worthy of respect. Moral pluralists tend to be open-minded when faced with competing viewpoints. They analyse issues from several moral points of view before deciding and taking action.

## c. Harvard Pluralism Project
    i. "What is Pluralism?

1. An ethic for living together in a diverse society: not mere tolerance or relativism, but the real encounter of commitments."
2. How do we all live together in this society of increasing diversity? That's a critical question of our time, especially in the United States where religious and cultural diversity are present as never before. Encountering that diversity is pluralism. Pluralism isn't just the fact of diversity, but how we respond to it.
3. Diversity can and has meant the creation of religious ghettoes with little traffic between or among them. Today, religious diversity is a given, but pluralism is not a given; it is an achievement. Mere diversity without real encounter and relationship will yield increasing tensions in our societies.
4. www.pluralism.org

## d. Global pluralism centre Definitions

### i. Definition used by Elizabeth king at GCP

**"I borrow the Global Centre for Pluralism's working definition of pluralism as "a set of intentions and practices that seek to institutionalize recognition of difference and respect for diversity as civic culture. The Global Centre for Pluralism makes clear that pluralism is a "process, not a product."**4 The Global Centre for Pluralism views diversity as an objective fact, in contrast to pluralism, **which is a normative response to diversity**. While there are multiple forms of difference that could be included, in this paper, I focus principally on ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity, especially at the sub-national level. While diversity does not equate with pluralism, recognition of diversity is a necessary precursor to pluralism. (Elizabeth King 2017-2018) - https://www.pluralism.ca/wp-

content/uploads/2017/09/International_Development_EKing_EN.pdf

### ii. Definition used by Corrine at GCP

**In the view of the GCP, pluralism is "an ethic of respect that values human diversity." Pluralism is enabled by a set of governance institutions and policy choices that promote norms of inclusion, fairness, reciprocity and respect for diversity within a unifying civic culture.** The GCP also identifies a series of "drivers" of pluralism**. Shared citizenship is** a key driver of pluralist societies that both "transcends and encompasses difference" to recognize the expression of multiple identities. **Pluralism is undermined by inequality, particularly in access to livelihoods, resources, well-being and political participation. Pluralism is built on a shared history and memory but acknowledges different experiences of the past and pursues remedies for historic grievances. Education is a fundamental** driver of pluralism, specifically in learning social attitudes of inclusion through formal education or other sites of intercultural exchange such as religion and the media. Pluralism is also driven by neighbourhood effects of adjacent states or the influence of transnational identities. Finally, pluralism can be affected by spaces and how people live together or apart and interact in the digital age. Horizontal relations between individuals and between groups are as important as vertical relations with the state in fostering the pluralism ethic. (Corrine paper GCP 2018)

### Definition by GCP in website - what is pluralism?

**Defined simply, pluralism is an ethic of respect for diversity.** Whereas diversity in society is a fact, how societies respond to diversity is a choice. **Pluralism results**

**from the daily decisions taken by state institutions, civil society associations and individuals to recognize and value human differences.**

Pluralist societies are not accidents of history. They require continuous investment across many different sectors — economic, political and social. Although every society must define its own path, comparative experiences can be studied to better understand different possible outcomes. The work of pluralism is to find a balance between competing values. Institutional mechanisms help to choose between competing values, but pluralism is not created by institutions alone. The content of those choices is important.

The goal of pluralism is belonging. Building inclusive societies requires both institutional responses ("hardware") and behavioural change ("software") to ensure that every person is recognized and feels they belong. (GCP 2020)

https://award.pluralism.ca/the-award/what-is-pluralism/)

e. **Wikipedia**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pluralism

Politics and law

- Pluralism (political philosophy), the acknowledgement of a diversity of political systems
- Pluralism (political theory), belief that there should be diverse and competing centres of power in society
- Legal pluralism, the existence of differing legal systems in a population or area

- <u>Pluralist democracy</u>, a political system with more than one centre of power

## Philosophy

- <u>Pluralism (philosophy)</u>, a doctrine according to which many basic substances make up reality
- <u>Pluralist school</u>, a Greek school of pre-Socratic philosophers
- <u>Epistemological pluralism</u> or methodological pluralism, the view that some phenomena require multiple methods to account for their nature
- <u>Value pluralism</u>, the idea that several values may be equally correct and yet in conflict with each other

## Religion

- <u>Religious pluralism</u>, the acceptance of all religious paths as equally valid, promoting coexistence
- Holding multiple ecclesiastical offices; see "Pluralism" at <u>Benefice</u>
- <u>Pluralism Project</u>, a Harvard-affiliated project on religious diversity in the <u>United States</u>

## Other uses

- <u>Cosmic pluralism</u>, the belief in numerous other worlds beyond the Earth, which may possess the conditions suitable for life
- <u>Cultural pluralism</u>, when small groups within a larger society maintain their unique cultural identities
- <u>Pluralist commonwealth</u>, a systemic model of wealth democratization

- **Pluralism in economics**, a campaign to enrich the academic discipline of economics

# 4. UNITED NATIONS 17-SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## GOAL 1: NO POVERTY



**a.**  By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day.

**b.**  By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

**c.**  Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

**d.**  By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of 13 property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including micro-finance.

**e.**  By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.

**f.** Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions.

**g.** Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions

## GOAL 2: ZERO HUNGER



**h.** By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

**i.** By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons

**j.** By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous

peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment

k.    By 2030, ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality

l.    By 2020, maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed

m.    Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round

n.    Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility

## GOAL 3: GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

**3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

a. By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births

b. By 2030, end preventable deaths of new-borns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births

c. By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases

d. By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being

e. Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol

f. By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents 3.7

g. By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes

h. Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all

i. By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination

j.  Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate

k.  Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and noncommunicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all

l.  Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States

m. Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks

## GOAL 4: QUALITY EDUCATION



a.  By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes

b. By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education

c. By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university

d. By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

e. By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations

f. By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy

g. By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development

h. Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all

i. By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

j. By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in

developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states

## GOAL 5: GENDER EQUALITY



a. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere
b. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
c. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation
d. Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate
e. Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life

f. Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

g. Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

h. Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

i. Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels

## GOAL 6: CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



a. By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all

b. By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations

c. By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally

d. By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity

e. By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels, including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate

f. By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes

g. By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies

h. Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management

## GOAL 7: AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY
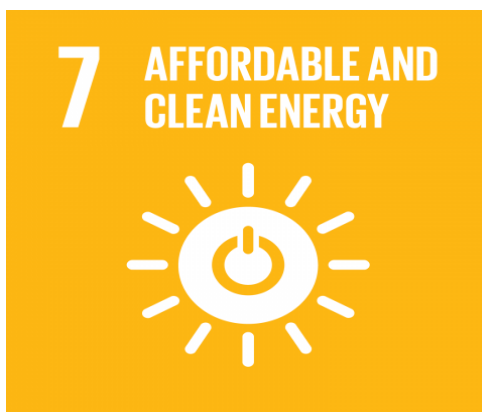


a. By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services

b. By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix

c. By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency

d.  By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology

e.  By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and land-locked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support

## GOAL 8: DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

a. Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries

b. Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors

c. Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services

d. Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead

e. By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

f. By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

g. Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms

h. Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment

i. By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products

j. Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all

k.  Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries

l.  By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization

## GOAL 9: INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



a.  Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all

b.  Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry's share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries

c.  Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets

d.  By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities

e.  Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending

f.  Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States 18

g.  Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities

h.  Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020

## GOAL 10: REDUCED INEQUALITY



a.  By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average

b. By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status

c. Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard

d. Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality

e. Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations

f. Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions

g. Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies

h. Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements

i. Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes

j. By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent


**GOAL 11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**

**11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**

a. By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums

b. By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons

c. By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries

d. Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage

e. By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations

f. By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management

g. By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities

h. Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning

i. By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and

plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels

j. Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials

## GOAL 12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



a. Implement the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries

b. By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources

c. By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses

d. By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment

e. By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse

f. Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle

g. Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities

h. By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature

i. Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production

j. Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products

k. Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities

## GOAL 13: CLIMATE ACTION

a. Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries

b. Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning

c. Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning

d. Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly $100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible

e. Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities

## GOAL 14: LIFE BELOW WATER

a. By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution

b. By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans

c. Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels

d. By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics

e. By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information

f. By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation

g. By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism

h. Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine

biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries

i. Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets

j. Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want

## GOAL 15: LIFE ON LAND



a. By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services,

in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements

b. By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally

c. By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world

d. By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development

e. Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species

f. Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed

g. Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products

h. By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species

i. By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts

j. Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems

k. Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation

l. Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities

## GOAL 16: PEACE AND JUSTICE STRONG INSTITUTIONS



a. Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.
b. End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.
c. **Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.**
d. By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organised crime.
e. **Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.**
f. **Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.**
g. **Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.**
h. **Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.**
i. By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.
j. Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

**k. Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.**

l. Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

**European Union (EU)**

**The 16th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG16) aims to build strong and just institutions in support of peaceful and inclusive societies around the world, by 2030, notably by**:

promoting the rule of law, transparency, accountability, good governance, and non-discrimination at all levels of government

ensuring equal access to justice for all and protecting everyone's fundamental freedoms

significantly reducing violent deaths, torture, abuse, exploitation, discrimination, human trafficking, corruption, and organised crime significantly reducing all forms of violence and promoting peace

https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/sdg/peace-justice-and-strong-institutions_en#:~:text=The%2016th%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goal,at%20all%20levels%20of%20government

## GOAL 17: PARTNERSHIPS TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL

**17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS**

a. Finance

    i. Strengthen domestic resource mobilization, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection

    ii. Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries

    iii. Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources

    iv. Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress

    v. Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries

b. Technology

vi. Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism

vii. Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed

Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology

c. Capacity building

Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation

d. Trade

viii. Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda

ix. Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries' share of global exports by 2020

Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access

e.  Systemic issues

   x.  Policy and institutional coherence

   xi.  Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence

  xii.  Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development

 xiii.  Respect each country's policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development

f.  Multi-stakeholder partnerships

  xiv.  Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries

  xv.  Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships

g.  Data, monitoring and accountability

  xvi.  By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity,

migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts

xvii. By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries

## 5. LETTER TO ISMAILI COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP SEPT 2020 - NO RESPONSE (REMINDER)

On 28 Sep 2020, at 16:30, Mahebub Chatur <mahebub.chatur@me.com> wrote:

I am writing a new paper on Pluralism as you know. By not responding you are in fact rejecting Hazar Imam's Farmans.

Hazar Imam as you know also said 15 years ago. "Leadership everywhere must continuously work to ensure that pluralism, and all its benefits, become top global priorities. For, I deeply believe that our collective conscience must accept that pluralism is no less important than human rights for ensuring peace, successful democracy and a better quality of life." https://twitter.com/chaturmahebub/status/13100934504785960 96?s=21

If You do not respond with the information, I will add the following in my published article. (If you do not agree let me know with reasons and related Farmans)

"The main reason why these Goals are NOT achieved is the "top executive teams, are controlled top down by a clique, whose culture and mindset, is driven by a political ideology of self-interest, individualism, rampant materialism, division, greed, exclusion and secrecy. There is a centralised hierarchy, with a command and

control bureaucracy to implement their policies. A culture of listening, but not hearing, is pervasive.

Firmans (Guidance) of the Imams, including the full Ismaili constitution are blocked. as a policy. These are not given to every Ismaili Muslim, nor are the tri-annual reports budgets programmes nor, even the names, and positions of all the community appointees and, executive committees of every global Ismaili constitutional entity.

The present leadership have been requested to provide copies & related facts repeatedly. They have not so far. That in itself shows their culture and why they do not want to embrace and actualise Imam's given goals for example of Best Practice Inclusive Leadership & Pluralism

A transformational change is as vital as is Pluralism, inclusion, & best Practices

## 6. ISMAILI HERITAGE AND ISMAILI NET
   a. Facebook
      i. https://www.facebook.com/IsmailiHeritage/posts/1907725 196166578:0
   b. Website
      i. http://www.ismaili.net/heritage/node/26249

## 7. POST FACT SOCIETY
   a. http://ismaili.net/timeline/2016/ismaili-community-post-fact%20society-2016.pdf

## 8. BEST PRACTICES AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP - GUIDANCE BY THE AGA KHAN FOR THE LAST 25 YEARS

a. http://www.ismaili.net/html/mo"dules.php?op=modload&name=phpBB2&file=viewtopic&t=9334

## 9. UNITED NATION 2020 REPORT
   a. Covid19Impact on food and agriculture
      i. http://www.fao.org/2019-ncov/q-and-a/impact-on-food-and-agriculture/en/

## 10. AGA KHAN FORESIGHTS AND GUIDANCE IN 2002

7 sept 2002

It is in admiration that I participate in this event today. It gives me the opportunity to express publicly the enormous respect in which I hold Prince Claus, and the very great importance I attach to the work of the Prince Claus Fund. I am saddened that Prince Claus cannot be with us tonight, and I am sure that all of you will join me in requesting Her Majesty the Queen to convey to His Royal Highness our warmest regards and best wishes.

The founding purpose of the Prince Claus Fund of "expanding insight into cultures and promoting interaction between culture and development" has been fulfilled by means of a vigorous programme of grants, awards and publications. These actions recognise, stimulate and support activities that share the principles of equality, respect and trust, and have the highest levels of quality and originality. Through them, the Fund is making a very significant contribution in an area which I believe will be critical to the development of humankind in the 21st century -- the strengthening and enhancement of pluralist civil society, in all corners of the globe.

The work that the Fund has accomplished has given legitimacy and stimulus to the broadest range of intellectuals, artists, and committed groups and organisations, frequently in areas of the world where the

importance of such creativity is not recognised, and indeed, is often repressed.

**These initiatives constitute highly creative investments in the identification and permeation of forces working for the strengthening and enhancement of the pluralism of cultures that will provide strength into the future.**

Within this same context the Aga Khan Trust for Culture has become a partner with Yo-Yo Ma in supporting his Silk Road Project and developing its own Central Asian Music Initiative, both of which involve some of the same performers who will delight us from this stage later this evening. This event therefore brings together three dynamic cultural institutions –

**Prince Claus Fund, the Silk Road Project, and the tag Aga Khan Trust for Culture -- which singly, and together, are contributing to the global recognition of the importance of cultural pluralism.**

It also allows me to state **my conviction that the strengthening of institutions supporting pluralism is as critical for the welfare and progress of human society as are poverty alleviation and conflict prevention. In fact, all three are intimately related.**

The field of development has yielded more than its share of buzzwords. Phrases like, "civil society", "poverty alleviation", and "sustainable development" are familiar to many of you, as is "enabling environment" for which I must carry responsibility, since it was the Enabling Environment Conference in Nairobi sponsored by the fact, Aga Khan Development Network, the World Bank and others which brought that phrase into common use. I hope that my remarks might release some more buzzing, because the essence of what I will say this evening refers to **"enhancing pluralism".**

I do not think it is necessary to spend time outlining the challenge that the process of globalisation represents vis-à-vis the cultural fabric of our

world. But **it is not the content of the new media, or even its domination by media giants, that is the real threat. The problem is that large segments of all societies -- in the developing world and the developed world – are unaware of the wealth of global cultural resources, and therefore of the need to preserve the precious value of pluralism in their own and in other's societies.** In this regard, there has unfortunately not been any development that parallels the recent acceptance by international public opinion of the imperative to preserve and enhance our natural environment and the world's cultural heritage as "public goods", worthy of general support.

I would go even further and say that **the inability of human society to recognise pluralism as a fundamental value constitutes a real handicap for its development and a serious danger for our future.** Since the end of the Cold War, a number of factors appear to have been common and significant ingredients, if not the primary cause, of many of the conflicts we have witnessed. Perhaps the most common of these ingredients has been the failure of those involved to recognise the fact that human society is essentially pluralist, and that peace and development require that we seek, by every means possible, to invest in and enhance, that pluralism. **Those groups that seek to standardise, homogenise, or if you will allow me, to normatise all that and those around them must be actively resisted through countervailing activities.**

Whether it be in Central Europe, the Great Lakes region in Africa, or in Afghanistan -- to cite just one example from three different continents -- one of the common denominators has been the attempt by communal groups, be they ethnic, religious, or tribal groups, to impose themselves on others. All such attempts are based on the principle of eradicating the cultural basis that provides group identity.

Without cultural identity, social cohesion gradually dissolves and human groups lose their necessary point of reference to relate with each other, and with other groups.

A **necessary condition for pluralism to succeed is that the general education of the populations involved must be sufficiently complete so that individual groups, defined by ethnicity, religion, language and the like, understand the potential consequences of actions that might impinge on others.** This is, for example, one of the principal reasons why today there is so much uninformed speculation about conflict between the Muslim world and others. For instance, the historic root causes of conflict in the Middle East or in Kashmir are not addressed at any level of general education in the most powerful western democracies that dominate world affairs.

I must say that, as a Muslim, I stand here in front of you in amazement that the Western world had to experience the revolution in Iran to learn about Shia Islam, or the civil war in Afghanistan to learn about Wahhabi Islam. Please remember that we are talking about a religion followed by one-fifth of the world's population! This is the equivalent of Muslims being unaware of the distinction between Catholics and Protestants within Christianity. The point I wish to make is that the **governments, civil societies and the peoples of this world will be unable to build strong pluralist societies with the present level of global cultural ignorance, and particularly about its pluralism. Even the most developed countries will need a massive effort to educate the world's youth in a more thoughtful, competent and complete manner for the global responsibilities which they will be expected to fulfil, and particularly so in the increasing number of functioning democracies where an informed public plays such a central role.**

The **actions to enhance pluralism have to be matched in the developing world by programmes to alleviate poverty because, left alone, poverty will provide a context for special interests to pursue their goals in aggressive terms. Urgent humanitarian assistanc**e is indispensable, but should be conceived as part of a long-term strategy of helping the recipient community develop its own resources that can support the

improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the poorer segments of the population, and charitable support for those unable to work.

**As you know, development is sustainable only if the beneficiaries become, in a gradual manner, the masters of the process. This means that initiatives cannot be contemplated exclusively in terms of economics, but rather as an integrated programme that encompasses social and cultural dimensions as well.** Education and skills training, health and public services, conservation of cultural heritage, infrastructure development, urban planning and rehabilitation, rural development, water and energy management, environmental control, and even policy and legislative development are among the various aspects that must be taken into account.

To illustrate this approach, I would like to say something about the work that the normative Aga Khan Development Network has recently launched in Afghanistan. The scenario is dramatic: a country destroyed by decades of war, lacking basic infrastructure, economic resources, institutional fabric, and suffering from strong antagonistic social and religious forces. The government must also facilitate the return to the country of hundreds of thousands of displaced families, feed the population, restore agricultural production, provide essential social services, eradicate drug-related crops and their ancillary industries, and last, but most essentially, consolidate a culture of tolerance, based on the mutual understanding between peoples of different origins and languages.

In this context the normative Aga Khan Development Network has started work in Afghanistan based on an accord signed with the Government. In the first phase, priority is being given to responding to the most pressing problems. Activities that are underway include the provision of humanitarian aid to address the food shortage. The food shortage is, of course, aggravated by the needs of hundreds of thousands of displaced people. We have to facilitate the resettlement of refugees, and

undertake rehabilitation of buildings and public works required to provide basic social services.

Simultaneously, planning is underway to help address the country's needs in terms of building human and institutional capacity for social and economic development.

Steps are being taken to revive and update institutions for the training of teachers and nurses to meet the needs of urban and rural populations. Work is underway on the reform of school curriculum in accordance with the government's guidelines and current international experience, and making basic health services accessible to all.

A microfinance facility is being established to provide financing for agriculture, micro-enterprise, small business including cultural enterprises, and the special needs of refugees returning to properties that have been destroyed.

In all of this work, the cultural dimension is pivotal because of the pluralistic nature of Afghan culture, and the severe stress it has endured in the recent past. As an initial undertaking the update Aga Khan Trust for Culture is working in Kabul on the rehabilitation of the historic fabric of the ancient city, its monumental buildings, and traditional housing and decayed public spaces. These projects are centred around two significant historic sites: The Mausoleum of Timur Shah, considered by many to be the founder of modern Afghanistan, and the Paradise Garden of Babur, the founder of the Mughal Empire in the Indian subcontinent. The goals range from the lofty -- the preservation and restoration of symbolic monuments of Afghan history and cultural identity, to the very practical – immediate employment opportunities and the rebuilding of marketable skills. All of them are essential to enable the people of Afghanistan to rebuild their country in peace and dignity.
I would like to leave you with a final thought, and some questions and conclusions that flow from it.

Developing support for pluralism does not occur naturally in human society. It is a concept which must be nurtured every day, in every forum -- in large and small government and private institutions; in civil society organisations working in the arts, culture, and public affairs, in the media; in the law, and in justice -- particularly in terms of social justice, such as health, social safety nets and education; and in economic justice, such as employment opportunities and access to financial services.

- Is it not high time - perhaps even past time, that a systematic effort be undertaken to document "best practices" by looking closely at the array of public policies and structures that support pluralism in particular national settings?
- As lessons are extracted and models identified, should not a process be put in place to share them widely for replication?
- Should not this effort reach out to as many countries as possible, and in as many organisational and institutional settings as can be mobilised?

In addition, each of us can help enhance pluralism in our own personal, professional and institutional domains. We could play our role in favour of pluralism as public opinion makers. We could participate in and support the efforts of groups and NGOs that promote that cause. We could volunteer our professional competences in a variety of fields, such as academic, technical or managerial. We could, also, serve the cause of pluralism simply through the conduct of tolerance, openness and understanding towards other peoples' cultures, social structures, values and faiths, and thereby set an effective example in our own society.

My hope is that society as a whole will not only accept the fact of its plurality, but, as a consequence, will undertake, as a solemn responsibility, to preserve and enhance it as one of its fundamental values, and an inescapable condition for world peace and further human development.

Thank you.

https://twitter.com/akdn/status/1288127453240541194?s=21

https://www.facebook.com/akdn/videos/338516534209257/?vh=e&extid=0

My hope is that society as a whole will not only accept the fact of its plurality, but, as a consequence, will undertake, as a solemn responsibility, to preserve and enhance it as one of its fundamental values, and an inescapable condition for world peace and further human development.

**"Development is sustainable only if the beneficiaries become, in a gradual manner, the masters of the process".**

## 11. AGA KHAN GUIDANCE 2006

"How, in an increasingly cynical time, can we inspire people to a new set of aspirations, reaching beyond rampant materialism, the new relativism, self-serving individualism, and resurgent tribalism. A deepening sense of spiritual commitment, and the ethical framework that goes with it, will be a central requirement if we are to find our way through the minefields and the quick sands of modern life.

A strengthening of religious institutions should be a vital part of this process. To be sure, freedom of religion is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion, then societies will find themselves lost in a bleak and unpromising landscape with no compass, no roadmap and no sense of ultimate direction.

What I am calling for, in sum, is an ethical sensibility which can be shared across denominational lines and which can foster a universal moral outlook.

In conclusion, then, I would ask you think with me about these three requirements, a new emphasis on civil institutions, a more rigorous concern for educational excellence, and a renewed commitment to ethical standards. For these are all ways in which we can encourage a climate of positive pluralism in our world, and thus help meet the current crisis of democracy." *(His Highness the Aga Khan)*

12 February 2006 Sources: Primary

A deepening sense of spiritual commitment, and the ethical framework that goes with it, will be a central requirement if we are to find our way through the minefields and the quick sands of modern life. A strengthening of religious institutions should be a vital part of this process. To be sure, freedom of religion is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion, then societies will find themselves lost in a bleak and unpromising landscape with no compass, no roadmap and no sense of ultimate direction. What I am calling for, in sum, is an ethical sensibility which can be shared across denominational lines and which can foster a universal moral outlook. In conclusion, then, I would ask you think with me about these three requirements: a new emphasis on civil institutions, a more rigorous concern for educational excellence, and a renewed commitment to ethical standards. **For these are all ways in which we can encourage a climate of positive pluralism in our world and thus help meet the current crisis of democracy.** President Sampaio, Rector Manuel Patricio, Professor Adriano Moreira, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

## 12. THE AGA KHAN FORESIGHTS AND GUIDANCE AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Prior to starting the centre His Highness, the Aga Khan has been championing Pluralism. He gave the following insights, in his lecture at Harvard University.

*"A pluralist, cosmopolitan society is a society which not only accepts difference, but actively seeks to understand it and to learn from it. In this perspective, diversity is not a burden to be endured, but an opportunity to be welcomed. A cosmopolitan society regards the distinctive threads of our particular identities as elements that bring beauty to the larger social fabric. A cosmopolitan ethic accepts our ultimate moral responsibility to the whole of humanity, rather than absolutizing, a presumably exceptional part. Perhaps it is a natural condition of an insecure human race to seek security in a sense of superiority. But in a world where cultures increasingly interpenetrate one another, a more confident and a more generous outlook is needed.*

*What this means, perhaps above all else, is a readiness to participate in a true dialogue with diversity, not only in our personal relationships, but in institutional and international relationships also. But that takes work, and it takes patience. Above all, it implies a readiness to listen. "(The Aga Khan[1] Lecture - Harvard University 12 Nov 2015)*

According to the Global Centre of pluralism *"The goal of pluralism is belonging. Building inclusive societies requires both institutional responses ("hardware") and behavioural change ("software") to ensure that every person is recognized and feels they belong" ([www.pluralism.ca](www.pluralism.ca))*

## 13. THE FOUR STAGES TO THE TRUTH AND ENLIGHTENMENT FOR ISMAILI MUSLIMS

Compared to earlier periods of Ismaili history, a more rigid sense of religious identity has prevailed since the early twentieth century as Nizari organizational structures have centralized and adopted modernist discourses. Engagement with contemporary societies shaped by westernization is conducted using concepts such as ethics and pluralism. Ethics are vital in societal interaction, but they remain at a secondary level of ideational thought than the concepts of truth on which they are based philosophically.

The quest for truth is rarely mentioned in the community's present-day discussions, even though it is integrally referenced in the prayers and hymns recited on a daily basis. Most of the group's contemporary members are unaware of the self appellations ahl al-haqq and satpanth. In categorizing itself as a tariqa since the late twentieth century, the community also appears to **have stepped back in terms** of the Sufi and Nizari concept of spiritual progression that moves from sharia (exoteric law) to tariqa (spiritual path) to haqiqa (esoteric truth) to ma 'rifa (gnosis) (Ivanow 1953)

a. Shariat          Quran to
b. Tariqat          Interpretation to
c. Haquiqat         Truth to
d. Marifat          Gnosis

*(Prof Karim H Karim)*

M Chatur - Elucidation – Ismaili Muslim faith was called – seekers and followers of the truth – "Din Al Haq – The Haquiqatis"- For Ismailis there are 4 main stages in seeking and progressing towards the truth. Thus, able to make the right choices, including Pluralism (called the right way – or God's way or way towards God sirat ul Mustaqeem)

1. Seeking from the Quran (revelation) – (Called shariat)
2. Seeking from the Quran and the teachings and interpretations (Farmans) from the Imams of the Time (called Tariquat).
3. Seeking to understand the essence of our faith (Haqiqat).
4. Seeking blessings of divine enlightenment, the intellect, material and spiritual (Gnosis) – called Marifat.

The original name of the Shia Ismaili path (tariqah) of Islam in the eighth and ninth century was Da 'wat al-Haqq (Summons of Truth) and al-Da 'wah al-Hadiyya (Rightly-Guided Summons). The Da 'wah here refers to the act of inviting people to the recognition of the absolute oneness of

God (tawhid) through the guidance and recognition of the Imam of the Time.

In fact, the Ismailis did not call their religion 'Ismailism'. This was a name given to them by the early heresiographers, notable al-Nawbakhti and al-Qummi. They referred to themselves simply as the Faith of Truth (din al-haqq) or the Summons to the Truth (da 'wat al-haqq). Shafique N. Virani, (The Ismailis in the Middle Ages, 72)


## 14. CANADA INCLUSION AND CITIZENSHIP POLICIES AND MINISTRY

There are many definitions and descriptions of the words used in diversity and inclusion work, described by many as D&I. Everyone comes to this area of practice with preconceived notions and beliefs, based on their personal experiences.

We refer to diversity and inclusion rather than D&I because we use an inclusive approach to communications and avoid acronyms, which easily become insider language and can rob words of their true meaning. The following are the definitions we use for the word's diversity, inclusion and the concept of diversity and inclusion.

Diversity is about the individual. It is about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities and characteristics we all possess.

Inclusion is about the collective. It is about creating a culture that strives for equity and embraces, respects, accepts and values difference.

Diversity and inclusion are about capturing the uniqueness of the individual; creating an environment that values and respects individuals for their talents, skills and abilities to the benefit of the collective.

Diversity Census Tool has become indispensable for measuring diversity and inclusion and filtering for unconscious bias in hiring. Designed to track sentiment as well as demographic data, we layer in

rigorous analysis on top of results that can be user-monitored and filtered for richer data. This signature piece of technology is developed with best practices in accessibility, digital privacy and security on Canadian servers for hosting and data backup. https://ccdi.ca/diversity-data-analytics/diversity-census-tool

"l. As noted Canadian educator and antiracism and equity advocate George Dei (2006) explains, **Inclusion is not bringing people into what already exists; it is making a new space, a better space for everyone**. I want to acknowledge and thank all the individuals and groups who helped us develop this strategy, and all those committed educators, students, parents, and community partners who will provide the assistance and leadership needed to implement it on an ongoing basis. Though our differences may be many, our shared vision of an equitable, vibrant school system will help us build and inclusive, strong, and prosperous province and nation in which all can realize their full potential" (Ontario strategy equity and inclusive education realising the promise of diversity 2009)

https://ccdi.ca/

## 15. LETTER TO GLOBAL CENTRE OF PLURALISM SEPTEMBER 2020

Definition of Pluralism request for clarification and comments

I have studied the following three definitions of pluralism in the GCP website which are different. I have prepared my draft (see below). I have also studied the GCP code of ethics. Can you please confirm that the latest definition of pluralism is that on GCP website (below)? If so, or, please clarify the differences (because they were

commissioned by, and are quoting GCP). Also, any comment or suggestion on my draft will be appreciated.

This is a well-meaning request for my research and paper in progress. I will share my paper with you when published

I look forward to your response.
Kind regards
M Chatur
PS also awaiting a copy of the GCP drivers of Pluralism

## 16. ETHICS AND VALUES

a. **Ethics** refers to the guidelines for conduct, that address question about morality. **Value** is defined as the principles and ideals, which helps them in making the judgement of what is more important. **Ethics** is a system of moral principles. In contrast to **values**, which is the stimuli of our thinking.

b. Values

c. Let's start with values. Values are the foundation of a person's ability to judge between right and wrong. Values include a deep-rooted system of beliefs. They have intrinsic worth, but are not universally accepted. This system allows each individual to determine what should and shouldn't be.

d. Next, we have morals, which are formed out of values. They're the actual system of beliefs that emerge out of a person's core values. Morals are specific and context-driven rules that govern a person's behaviour. Because this system of beliefs is individually tailored to a person's life experience, it's subject to opinion.

e. Amoral vs. Immoral

f. Be careful with the terminology in this category. Sometimes, the words "amoral" and "immoral" are interchanged. However, they're quite different. If someone is amoral, they have no sense of right and wrong. They don't have the foundation that comes with a sound set of values.

g. Meanwhile, if someone if immoral, you can be sure they know right from wrong. They're just choosing to do the wrong thing.

h. Finally, we have ethics. Ethics are the vehicle to our morals. They're our morals in action. Ethics enact the system we've developed in our moral code. As such, someone will behave ethically or unethically. For example, someone's ethics will prevent them from taking action and telling a bold-faced lie or stealing their mother-in-law's secret recipe"

i. This might seem like muddy water to you. The line between morals and ethics is so fine, it's easy to miss. Well, you're not alone. Encyclopaedia Britannica considers "morals" and "ethics" to be interchangeable terms. However, the context in which they're used might provide further distinction.

j. Professional Ethics

k. We tend to link morals to matters of religion and spirituality. Meanwhile, ethics are closely linked to matters pertaining to medicine or law. We know doctors are held to a strict code of ethics when they swear the Hippocratic Oath. Similarly, an organization like PETA literally stands for "People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals."

l. Consider morals as the rulebook and ethics as the motivator that leads to proper or improper action.

m. Sound Moral Judgment

n. Sound moral judgment is rooted in strong values and acted upon by our ethics. It seems like the three are the same, but they're different enough to warrant a closer study. If you're writing a short story, you might want to approach your main character from this viewpoint.

o. As you develop the conflict your main character will face, try to create a deep-rooted set of values. Consider where those values might have come from. Then, use their morality as the barometer in any decisions they have to make.

p. Finally, allow your readers to watch your main character choose right or wrong as their ethics come to full view. This evolution will

take your readers on an exciting ride. They'll be able to connect with and fully understand the choices the main character makes.


## 17. INDEXES


a. "According to the 2019 Happiness Report, Finland is the happiest country in the world, with Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and The Netherlands holding the next top positions.
b. The World Happiness Report 2018 ranks 156 countries by their happiness levels, and 117 countries by the happiness of their immigrants."
c. https://worldhappiness.report/ed/2020/


## 18. THE AGA KHAN KEYNOTE ADDRESS TO THE NOBEL INSTITUTE'S SEMINAR: 'DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT, PLURALISM AND CIVIL SOCIETY' (OSLO, NORWAY),

## 7 APRIL 2005


a. http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7255
b. Just as we read about the supposed clash of civilisations, we read about so-called "failed states." In fact, at least in my definition of a state, it cannot fail. What we are observing in reality is the massive failure of democracy around the world.
c. I estimate that some 40% of the states of the United Nations are failed democracies. Depending upon the definitions applied, between 450 million and 900 million people currently live in countries und
d. er severe or moderate stress as a result of these failures. To me, therefore, a central question is why these democracies are failing

and what can the world's nations and international organisations do to sustain their competence and stability….

e. As long as the developed world hesitates to commit long term investment towards education for democracy, and instead laments the issue of so-called failed states, much of the developing world will continue to face bleak prospects for democracy.

Madame Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I thank the Government of Norway and Minister Johnson for the invitation to speak here this morning and for her generous words of introduction. Madame Minister, the exchanges we have enjoyed since we met yesterday has been highly constructive. I am particularly honoured to be speaking at the Nobel Institute, respected worldwide for its promotion and recognition of exceptional endeavours to reduce human conflict. It is also a rare privilege to address such a learned and experienced audience which includes not only officials in government charged with issues of human development, but also leaders of Norwegian civil society who are important partners in Norway's impressive international development efforts.

In my remarks today, I will propose to you several questions which I will attempt to go some way toward answering:

First, why are so many democracies failing in Asia and Africa?

Second, is enough being done to help these young countries achieve successful forms of democratic governance?

Third, are there common factors causing this failure of democracies?

Fourth, why is the international community unable to get engaged at the early stages before crisis occurs?

And finally, what can be done?

Before I begin, perhaps I can give you some background on my perspective.

This dual obligation is often difficult to appreciate from the viewpoint of Christian interpretations of the role which Church leaders are expected to perform. It is on this ethical premise, which bridges faith and society, that I established The Aga Khan Development Network.

My role in human development stems from my position as Imam or spiritual leader of the Shia Ismaili Muslims, as designated by my grandfather in 1957. In all interpretations of Islam, Imams, whether they are Shia or Sunni, are required not only to lead in the interpretation of the faith, but equally to contribute to improving the quality of life of the people who refer to them. This dual obligation is often difficult to appreciate from the viewpoint of Christian interpretations of the role which Church leaders are expected to perform. It is on this ethical premise, which bridges faith and society, that I established the da 'Aga Khan Development Network. Its multiple agencies and programmes have long been active in many areas of Africa and Asia that are home to some of the poorest and most diverse populations in the world, serving people without regard to their ethnicity, gender or faith.

The community I lead of Shia Ismaili Muslims is culturally, ethnically and linguistically, very diverse. Their main concentration is in South and Central Asia, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa. In recent decades the community has also established a substantial presence in North America and Western Europe. We have lived through colonialism and independence, two World Wars, the Cold War and many local and regional wars. We have seen the collapse of the Soviet Union and the birth of new states. The pendulum has swung from private ownership to nationalisation and back to privatisation. And we have lived in democracy and under dictatorship. The

community and its institutions are in many ways a microcosm of the last century in the developing world and we have learned many lessons.

These three conditions are mutually reinforcing. Taken together, they allow developing societies gradually to become masters of the process and make that process self-sustainable.

Ladies and gentlemen, I put it to you that no human development initiative can be sustainable unless we are successful in achieving three essential conditions.

First, we must operate in an environment that invests in, rather than seeks to stifle, pluralism and diversity.

Second, we must have an extensive and engaged civil society.

And third, we must have stable and competent democratic governance.

These three conditions are mutually reinforcing. Taken together, they allow developing societies gradually to become masters of the process and make that process self-sustainable.

I will speak first about pluralism.

The rejection of pluralism plays a significant role in breeding destructive conflicts, from which no continent has been spared in recent decades…. I believe leadership everywhere must continuously work to ensure that pluralism, and all its benefits, become top global priorities.

**The effective world of the future will be one of pluralism, a world that understands, appreciates and builds on diversity. The rejection of pluralism plays a significant role in breeding destructive conflicts, from which no continent has been spared in recent decades. But pluralist societies are not accidents of history. They are a product of enlightened education and continuous**

**investment by governments and all of civil society in recognising and celebrating the diversity of the world's peoples. What is being done to support this key value for society and for democracy in Asia and Africa, to pre-empt catastrophe, rather than simply respond to it?**

The people "Aga Khan Development Network intends to help create some permanent institutional capacity to address this critical issue through a Global Centre for Pluralism. It will be based in Ottawa to draw from Canada's successful record in constructing and sustaining pluralist civil society. The centre will work closely with governments and with academia and civil society around the world. **The centre will seek to foster legislation and policy to strengthen developing countries' capacity for enhancing pluralism in all spheres of modern life: including law, justice, the arts, the media, financial services, health and education. I believe leadership everywhere must continuously work to ensure that pluralism, and all its benefits, become top global priorities.**

In this effort, civil society has a vital role.

By its very nature, civil society is pluralist because it seeks to speak for the multiple interests not represented by the state. I refer, for example, to organisations which ensure best practices such as legal societies and associations of accountants, doctors and engineers. The meritocracy they represent is the very foundation of pluralism. And meritocracy is one of the principles of democracy itself.

**Civil society organisations make a major contribution to human development, particularly when democracies are failing, or have failed; for it is then that the institutions of civil society can, and often do, carry an added burden to help sustain improvements in quality of life.**

Village organisations, women's and student groups, micro-credit entities and agricultural co-operatives help give access and voice to those who often are disenfranchised. Journalist associations also

play a key role, explaining the political process, guarding against corruption and keeping governments accountable. Responsible reporting and competent comment on critical issues, and the hard choices that society must address, are an essential element in the functioning of a democracy. Civil society organisations make a major contribution to human development, particularly when democracies are failing, or have failed; for it is then that the institutions of civil society can, and often do, carry an added burden to help sustain improvements in quality of life.

I believe strongly that a critical part of any development strategy should include support for civil society. I know that Norway supports this approach and works actively with its own civil society organisations to build capacity in the developing world. Twinning civil society institutions is a promising approach, to which the "Aga 'Aga Khan Development Network institutions and programmes are very receptive.

Let me turn now to the question of democratic governance.

If we were to look at a map of the world that charted armed conflicts in the last 15 years, it would show that nearly two thirds have occurred in the developing countries of Asia and Africa. More than 80 per cent were internal conflicts, either full-blown civil wars or state-sanctioned aggression against minorities in those countries. In nearly every instance, **these internal conflicts were predictable because they were the culmination of a gradual deterioration in pluralist, inclusive governance. In too many cases** — and I can speak here of our experiences in Uganda, Bangladesh, Tajikistan and Afghanistan — this sad but foreseeable turn of events has had severely adverse effects lasting more than a generation.

The question I have is this: **if these breakdowns in governance were predictable, why was the international community**

**powerless to get engaged at the early stages to help arrest the deterioration and avoid the suffering that resulted?**

Secondly, are there common factors in the majority of these situations which are insufficiently recognised?

**I suggest to you that a major problem is that the industrialised world too often is severely lacking in credible information about the forces at play in the developing world…. Both** the Afghan and Iraqi situations were driven by lack of precise information and understanding.

I suggest to you that a major problem is that the industrialised world too often is severely lacking in credible information about the forces at play in the developing world. Take as an example the phrase "clash of civilisations" which has travelled far and wide. I have said many times previously, and **I would like to reconfirm today my conviction that what we have been observing in recent decades is not a clash of civilisations but a clash of ignorance. This ignorance is both historic and of our time. This is not the occasion to analyse the historic causes of the deep ignorance that exists between the Judeo-Christian and Muslim worlds. But I am convinced that many of today's problems could have been avoided if there had been better understanding and more serious dialogue between the two.**

The issue of ignorance, or lack of solid information, and its impact on our world today, is illustrated by events in Iraq. No less deplorable is that the 9/11 attack on the United States was a direct consequence of the international community ignoring the human tragedy that was Afghanistan at that time. Both the Afghan and Iraqi situations were driven by lack of precise information and understanding.

My fundamental point is this: since the collapse of the Cold War, the need has grown exponentially for the world's leaders to be able **to understand, and properly predict, what is likely to happen in**

**parts of the world in which they previously had no reason to be involved.** The task of addressing this need cannot be met by the resources presently being engaged. I note that Norway's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Petersen, spoke of this very problem just last week in Beijing. He called for the international community to provide assistance in governance for fragile states that is, and I quote:

"more systematic, more strategic, more persevering and more reliable."

My suggestion is to examine this question in depth.

Let me share with you some real-world field examples. Just as we read about the supposed clash of civilisations, we read about so-called "failed states." In fact, at least in **my definition of a state, it cannot fail. What we are observing in reality is the massive failure of democracy around the world. I estimate that some 40% of the states of the United Nations are failed democracies. Depending upon the definitions applied, between 450 million and 900 million people currently live in countries under severe or moderate stress as a result of these failures. To me, therefore, a central question is why these democracies are failing and what can the world's nations and international organisations do to sustain their competence and stability.**

Let me now illustrate some specific issues which I believe are contributing to this fragility.

A number of countries in which **we are active have opted to harness enormous resources to universal primary education, causing a significant under-expenditure on secondary and tertiary education. This educational policy originated from a number of ill-advised social economists in the early 60s.**

A number of countries in which we are active have opted to harness enormous resources to universal primary education, causing a

significant under-expenditure on secondary and tertiary education. This educational policy originated from a number of ill-advised social economists in the early 60s. This degradation of secondary and tertiary education is not a new phenomenon. **It is being made significantly worse today due to the lack of educational resources available to secondary and tertiary students who, after all, will represent the leaders of tomorrow.**

**Secondly, if governance is a science, as I believe it is, developing countries must educate about governance at secondary and tertiary levels. Otherwise, they deprive their intelligentsia of academic grounding in the critical knowledge of how democratic states operate.** A survey today in secondary schools or universities in Africa or Asia would find that "government," as a subject in its own right, is either non-existent or given low priority. It is clear that over the next decades, a large number of countries will be designing **new constitutions, or refining existing ones, and new regional groupings will come into place. Many young democracies will spawn new political structures. But where are the men and women who will lead?**

Just as education in governance is weak, the developing world continues to suffer from insufficient support to certain liberal professions which are critical to democracy. In my experience, the teaching profession and journalism are failing to attract the level of men and women who are essential for these liberal professions to make their appropriate contribution to democracy. **The challenge is therefore, clear. We must create the human and institutional resources to build and sustain young democracies.** As long as the developed world hesitates to commit long term investment towards education for democracy, and instead laments the issue of so-called failed states, much of the developing world will continue to face bleak prospects for democracy

. And the West should not discount that an accumulation of failed democracies could be a serious threat to itself and its values,

capable of causing — if not conflict — deep under currents of stress among societies.

The world cannot sit by while countries spiral into crisis.

Ladies and Gentlemen, what seems apparent today is that the developed world must find the resources to provide consistent and meaningful assistance to fragile states struggling with democratic governance. The world cannot sit by while countries spiral into crisis. Some of the things we can do, I suggest to you, are as follows:

A greater commitment to build capacity in the developing world to teach the science of government

An aggressive effort to support indigenous civil society, both to assist in the building of democracies and to provide a buttress in times of stress.

Active encouragement and support for pluralism.

And above all, we must set about to improve knowledge and understanding of the factors in the developing world that are encouraging or undermining democratic governance.

Thank you.

His Highness the real-world Aga Khan IV

SOURCES

http://www.akdn.org/Content/599/Nobel-Institute-in-Oslo

## 19. WHERE DO WE SEE THE GLOBAL CENTRE FOR PLURALISM IN THE COMING 10 YEARS?

### PRESENTATION BY MEREDITH MCGHIE – SECRETARY GENERAL GCP – FEB 2020

"Where Do We See the Global Centre for Pluralism in the Coming 10 Years?" Keynote Address by Meredith Preston McGhie The Aga Khan Council Leaders' Dinner Toronto, Ontario, February 22, 2020 I have been asked to share with you a few reflections on where I see the Global Centre for Pluralism in the coming 10 years.

Firstly, I would like to talk about what we see as the challenge to advancing pluralism at this time globally.

Secondly, I would like to talk about where I see the Centre in the future.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to talk about what changes we would like to see happen – what concrete impact we are striving for to give pluralism greater traction, not only in Canada, but around the world.

I moved back to Canada after spending over 20 years abroad, facilitating dialogue and working to resolve conflicts in places such as Northeast India, Northern Iraq, Nigeria and South Sudan. For more than a decade, Nairobi was home. It is an incredibly ethnically diverse city, where you are constantly coming into contact with people from different religions, cultural backgrounds and languages. It is a true experiment in pluralism.

And this is where I first got to know the Ismaili community and the work of His Highness and the AKDN. I have been deeply inspired by His Highness' vision on pluralism, which is unique among world leaders. It is so striking to read his speeches from a decade or more ago, and see how profound his commitment and vision have been on pluralism.

I hope and believe that the rest of the world is now catching up to the recognition that this is truly at the core of a thriving society. #

The Challenge

How do we view the challenge to pluralism and the challenge for the Centre? To make the idea of pluralism understood and valued worldwide, people must see its reflection in their everyday lives.

They must see pluralism in the choices that they make and not as a distant ideal, or academic theory. Too common today we see a narrowing of narratives and perspectives that do not enable people to see how diversity positively shapes their world.

For us to be convincing, we must acknowledge that living and breathing pluralism every day is not simple. It is easy to respect difference from afar, to respect someone's identity if it does not challenge you to rethink your own choices and perspectives. However, for us to be genuinely plural as a society, we need to allow ourselves to be uncomfortable, to face the natural inherent tensions in the diversity in our society, work through these, and recognise that we come out the other side as a stronger, more peaceful and sustainable society. In these uncomfortable spaces, true learning and transformation emerge.

This is not easy work, but it is worth it. We live in an age of division, of inequality and fear. The challenge we face has never been greater. There is a genuine global social crisis around how our governance and political systems work (or do not work, more importantly) for large portions of the population.

This age of anxiety, of a loss of faith in systems, has manifested itself in nationalist policies in India, in the rise of populism in the US and Europe, and in the pitting of "industry" against the rainforest and its indigenous guardians in Brazil. I witnessed this first hand as a peacemaker. At the core of all the conflicts I mediated was a breakdown in respect for the 'other', and an inability to see how differences could coexist peacefully, even strengthen one another.

This experience was in large part what convinced me to take the job as Secretary General of the Global Centre for Pluralism. The tools we presently have to build peace are not focused nearly enough on the core need to develop pluralist societies. When the conflict in South Sudan remerged so tragically in 2014, we saw South Sudanese refugees in Kenya refusing to allow their children to play with members of different ethnic

groups. The teaching of negative ideas of the other, was happening early and was bound up with the trauma of decades and decades of conflict.

Reversing these narratives is a huge challenge. Today, we do not have to look as far as South Sudan to see divisive narratives. They exist right here in Canada. We must work daily, at home and abroad, to inspire and model pluralism.

Against this troubling backdrop, it is imperative that we are proactive, practical and convincing. We know that the value of positively managing diversity is high and that, truly, it is at the foundation of any social system.

To make this argument, we need to model positive results. We need tools and we need strong evidence, and we need to reach out, build bridges and engage in dialogue.

The Centre's role

The Centre is a small organisation with a huge mandate. We must be strategic in how we engage, finding places where we can have maximum impact. Places where decisions around pluralism have a direct effect on people. These can be in education, governance, and peace-making or in the private sector, cities and cyberspace. Pluralism cuts across all elements of society. It does, and must, include everyone – even those we may not agree with.

We see pluralism not as a specialised subject but as a part of the fabric of all things – how we govern, how we educate our young people, how we represent ourselves and our society in the media, how we resolve conflicts, how we understand our histories, and how we reconcile with our past. We take a systems approach – looking at broad areas where we can have an impact on the issue, while at the same time seeking to root this work in local, practical impact.

One of the first challenges we face with the issue of pluralism, is how do we measure it? How can we quantify how a society is managing their diversity, what areas are going well, and where the gaps might lie?

How can we be rigorous in understanding where societies are doing less well and whether this may be leading them down a dangerous path towards violence or conflict? With this in mind, the Centre has been developing a measurement tool. A tool to measure inclusion, exclusion and belonging in society. We call it the Pluralism Index. Our vision is that the Index could be run in 100 or more countries around the world, generating every two years a report card for countries to evaluate how they are progressing in terms of managing their diversity. And to compel nations to take action.

The Index can be a tool for governments and civil society alike, to support reform and changes, as well as critical discussions and dialogue around how a society is making its choices. The tool could be useful for administrations at the city level to look at how inclusive cities are being developed, in universities to measure how diversity is managed across a campus, or in peace processes, as a way to get parties to a conflict to commit to a positive approach to diversity as part of their post-peace agreement commitments. There are a range of exciting possibilities.

A second challenge that we are taking on is that of education. Education systems are where young minds are shaped to be engaged and critically-minded citizens. How can we go beyond what we teach in a curriculum and consider how we engage all students in a classroom and across an entire school to engage positively with the diversity around them and to feel they belong and are included at school? To help them engage constructively in complicated and difficult conversations with divergent perspectives? This is at the heart of equipping students to be responsible leaders of the future.

His Highness said, "***Experience tells us that people are not born with the innate ability nor the wish to see the Other as an equal individual in society. Pluralism is a value that must be taught***".

We are launching a tool to help educators across the world and across disciplines do just that, by integrating pluralism into their teaching. We do not seek a pluralism curriculum. We look to give educators the tools to be

pluralist educators. Whether teaching physics in Lahore, history in Nairobi, or English literature in Winnipeg, the tools will help them be better teachers, and to develop young people who approach diversity positively, who recognize and challenge inequality and who champion pluralism in their daily lives. **We would like to see students, teachers, classrooms and schools act as incubators of pluralism**.

The final pillar of our current programmes is the Global Pluralism Award. Now entering its third cycle, the goal of our Award is to shine a light on exceptional examples of pluralism in action. This gives us an opportunity to connect and develop partnerships around the world with a diverse group of exceptional organisations and individuals working to strengthen pluralism in their own communities, often in extremely challenging situations. The Award and the ensuing partnerships give us a chance to amplify the impact of what they are doing. The Award has the power to inspire. The Awardees lead by positive examples. The incredible work of our Award laureates is relevant globally not only in their home countries or regions.

These core programmes will take us far in the coming 10 years, yet we are conscious that there **are many other areas we need to turn our attention to – from supporting peace-making efforts around the world, to promoting pluralist economies, inclusive online spaces, building media capable of positively portraying diversity in all its aspects, and understanding how we, as the Centre, can play a constructive role in our own great challenges in Canada to advance reconciliation with indigenous peoples.**

We will be looking to expand our program partnerships in the coming years. I am inspired greatly by the social movements worldwide that have raised the alarm on climate change, brought about important global conversations on social issues, or brought down repressive governments, as in Sudan just last year. Young people are key to these movements, and to leading a future where diversity is embraced. I am inspired daily by the passion, commitment and articulation of these young people and these

wider movements, and we seek to understand how we can more effectively engage with them.

Finally, we will **strive to act as a convenor of dialogue, to facilitate uncomfortable discussions and to model the power and value of constructive conversations across divisions and difference.** Wish List for Change All of the work we do now, and plan to do in the future, feeds into our vision of a world where human difference is valued and diverse societies thrive.

But what does this mean in terms of the real changes we will need to see to know that we are advancing in our mission? A few thoughts from my personal "wish list for change":

I would like not to have to explain what pluralism means. I would like pluralism to be in the wider public lexicon, around the world, so that people understand that while diversity is a fact, pluralism is the positive choices that are made to value and build on the diversity in society.

I would like to see politicians held accountable for their failings on this issue. ¬ I would like young people around the world to emerge from school with an ethic of respect and a commitment to pluralism.

I would like to see an online space as humane and positively engaged with difference as we can be in our face-to-face interactions.

I would like to see big policies and decisions by governments that start with the belief that diversity must be respected as a foundation of any action.

I would like the everyday choices of citizens to be informed by a deeper understanding of pluralism and by greater empathy to people who may be different from them.

We have a long way to go to achieve this wish list, but we at the Centre are excited for the challenge and the opportunity. As His Highness said at the Centre's Opening, "Genuine pluralism understands that diversity does

not weaken a society, it strengthens it…a genuine sense of pluralism is the indispensable foundation for human peace and progress."

We will continue to work together to achieve this goal.


MEASURING PLURALISM IN DIVERSE SOCIETIES: GLOBAL PLURALISM INDEX

Living with diversity is a shared global challenge, faced by developed and developing countries alike. Vulnerable groups, such as religious and ethnic minorities, are often subjected to various forms of political, economic, and cultural exclusion in their everyday lives. In order to create peaceful, pluralistic societies, these exclusionary practices must be systematically addressed. To do this, practitioners and policymakers must be able to monitor trends in exclusion and inclusion around the world. However, while there are tools that monitor specific aspects of diversity such as religious freedom or indigenous rights, there are currently no tools that evaluate a society's treatment of all types of diversity and assess practices across the economic, political, and cultural spheres. To address this critical gap, the Global Centre for Pluralism is developing the Global Pluralism Index – a practitioner-focused tool that will measure societies' treatment of diversity holistically and track trends towards or away from pluralism over time.

The Global Pluralism Index will:

1. Raise awareness and catalyse debate about pluralism around the world;
2. Include measures of recognition of diversity (laws, policies, practices by states and civil society) and belonging (attitudes and perceptions) across political, economic and cultural domains;
3. Enable policymakers, practitioners and change-makers to assess the state of pluralism in their societies, identify where pluralism

deficits are taking place, and highlight the pathways towards greater inclusion;

4. Track a society's trajectory of choice over time, either towards greater inclusion or exclusion;

5. Identify early signs of division and exclusion, enabling upstream conflict prevention, long before conflict becomes imminent;

6. Contribute to ongoing global efforts to measure inclusion for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

## WORKING PAPERS

The Global Pluralism Index builds on a three-year research program in which the Centre explored a variety of approaches to creating the index. Collected below are several working papers on these approaches and how the Centre could use them (awaited)

## VISION

"The Centre's vision is a world where human differences are valued and diverse societies thrive" - Through research, education and knowledge exchange, the Centre's programs

## CORE FUNCTIONS

In the financial report of the entre the core functions are stated as follows. "Conceived as an international centre for the study, practice and teaching of pluralism, its core functions will include research, education, professional development, dialogue, governance reform and cultural exchange"

## THE MISSION

"The Centre serves as a global platform for comparative analysis, education and dialogue about the choices and actions that advance and sustain pluralism (Oct 2020)

- Deepen understanding of the sources of inclusion and exclusion in Canada and around the world

- Chart pathways to pluralism in specific places and cases

- Catalyse knowledge exchange and learning about the policies and practices that support pluralism

- Build awareness of the benefits of inclusive societies

## 20. GCP EVALUATION 2017

### OUTCOMES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STAFF

The key outcomes achieved over the period of 5 years 2012-2017:

b. Pluralism has been defined.
c. GCP has started to establish its reputation in the field.
d. Significant sets of research papers and case studies were produced and published to the website.
e. GCP has established a presence on the internet.
f. An impressive network of experts, from distinguished institutions, has been established.
g. GCP delivered country programs in Kenya and Kyrgyzstan, addressing country-specific pluralism issues.

3 Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

1. Break up the current framework document into a set of short, focused guides, one for

2. each specific CGP program. In each short guide, identify the highest priority performance

3. measure(s), and a very short summary template for measuring the performance of a program,

4. event, or initiative.

Recommendation 2:

5. Improve staff understanding of the part of the Centre's performance measurement

6. framework that applies to them. We recommend that staff receive one-half day internal

7. training on the Centre's performance measurement framework (or, pursuant to our first

8. recommendation, the guide specific to the program(s) where they have responsibilities) and how

9. it is to be applied in a practical manner for their specific role and responsibilities.

Recommendation 3:

10. Signal high interest by management regarding staff views of results achieved and

11. lessons learned. Recognizing the time constraints on staff, we recommend that GCP adopt a

12. management policy for performance measurement / continuous improvement.

13. The policy should require that upon completion of a significant event or initiative, staff should

14. prepare a one-page report, for discussion with the appropriate manager, outlining the results

15. achieved, how these results contribute to intended outcomes of the program, and lessons

16. learned or factors to consider for the next time this type of initiative is planned.

17. These one-page reports would serve as data for an annual performance report on each
18. program to be prepared by the manager of each of the GCP programs, for eventual
19. presentation to the Board, e.g., one program performance / continuous improvement
20. presentation per board meeting

https://www.pluralism.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GCP-Evaluation-Report-2017-FINAL.pdf

21. **INTEGRATE STAKEHOLDER CAPITALISM**

**Profit before People or People before profits**

Business schools have long been criticized for promoting shareholder primacy. Harvard Business School Professor Rakesh Khurana argues that this problem dates back to the 1970s, when market fundamentalism took hold of business education. He posits that business schools bear responsibility for prioritizing shareholder primacy, arguing that "the new logic of shareholder primacy absolved management of any responsibility for anything other than financial results."

A 2011 Brookings survey found that business school graduates "are more likely to see shareholder value as the most important goal of the corporation." By perpetuating this viewpoint, business schools inadvertently validated excess greed and misconduct in the minds of budding young students who might not otherwise part ways with the ethical lapses of shareholder primacy.

In 2020, business is shifting away from shareholder primacy toward a more inclusive role in society—or stakeholder capitalism, the theme of the 50th Annual Meeting in Davos. The spread of COVID-19 has led to debates about what the new normal should look like, with some commentators arguing for an entirely new economic system. Sara

Pantuliano, who heads the Overseas Development Institute, believes "we won't get back to normal because normal was the problem,"

UN Secretary-General António Guterres argues "the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis must lead to a different economy."

In perhaps the boldest call to action, the editorial team of the Financial Times pressed for "radical reforms—such as basic income and wealth taxes."

Stakeholder capitalism is a system in which corporations are oriented to serve the interests of all their stakeholders. Among the key stakeholders are customers, suppliers, employees, shareholders and local communities. Under this system, a company's purpose is to create long-term value and not to maximize profits and enhance shareholder value at the cost of other stakeholder groups.

Supporters of stakeholder capitalism believe that serving the interests of all stakeholders, as opposed to only shareholders, is essential to the long-term success and health of any business. Notably, they make the case for stakeholder capitalism being a sensible business decision in addition to being an ethical choice.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Corporations should serve the interests of all their stakeholders

Focus is on long-term value creation, not merely enhancing shareholder value

Was the norm in the U.S. until Milton Friedman argued that corporate executives are only beholden to owners (shareholders)?

Supporters believe it should replace shareholder primacy

The History of Stakeholder vs. Shareholder Capitalism in the U.S.

The debate about the role and responsibilities of businesses in society has produced various theories throughout history. Proponents of stakeholder capitalism, like economist Joseph Stiglitz, believe it should replace shareholder primacy as a principle of corporate governance. Shareholder primacy, or the idea that a corporation is only responsible for increasing shareholder value, was made popular by Nobel prize-winning economist Milton Friedman in the 1970s. He argued that executives work for the owners (shareholders) and the only social responsibility of a business is "to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud." https://www.investopedia.com/stakeholder-capitalism-4774323#:~:text=Stakeholder%20capitalism%20is%20a%20system,inter ests%20of%20all%20their%20stakeholders.&text=Under%20this%20syst em%2C%20a%20company's,cost%20of%20other%20stakeholder%20gro ups.

What kind of capitalism do we want? That may be the defining question of our era. If we want to sustain our economic system for future generations, we must answer it correctly.

Generally speaking, we have three models to choose from. The first is "shareholder capitalism," embraced by most Western corporations, which holds that a corporation's primary goal should be to maximize its profits. The second model is "state capitalism," which entrusts the government with setting the direction of the economy and has risen to prominence in many emerging markets, not least China.

WEF

A. The purpose of a company is to engage all its stakeholders in shared and sustained value creation. In creating such value, a company serves not only its shareholders, but all its stakeholders – employees, customers, suppliers, local communities and society at large. The best way to understand and harmonize the divergent interests of all stakeholders is

through a shared commitment to policies and decisions that strengthen the long-term prosperity of a company.

Why we need the 'Davos Manifesto' for a better kind of capitalism

i. A company serves its customers by providing a value proposition that best meets their needs. It accepts and supports fair competition and a level playing field. It has zero tolerance for corruption. It keeps the digital ecosystem in which it operates reliable and trustworthy. It makes customers fully aware of the functionality of its products and services, including adverse implications or negative externalities.

ii. A company treats its people with dignity and respect. It honours diversity and strives for continuous improvements in working conditions and employee well-being. In a world of rapid change, a company fosters continued employability through ongoing upskilling and reskilling.

iii. A company considers its suppliers as true partners in value creation. It provides a fair chance to new market entrants. It integrates respect for human rights into the entire supply chain.

iv. A company serves society at large through its activities, supports the communities in which it works, and pays its fair share of taxes. It ensures the safe, ethical and efficient use of data. It acts as a steward of the environmental and material universe for future generations. It consciously protects our biosphere and champions a circular, shared and regenerative economy. It continuously expands the frontiers of knowledge, innovation and technology to improve people's well-being

v. A company provides its shareholders with a return on investment that takes into account the incurred entrepreneurial risks and the need for continuous innovation and sustained investments. It responsibly manages near-term, medium-term and long-term value creation in pursuit of sustainable shareholder returns that do not sacrifice the future for the present.

B. A company is more than an economic unit generating wealth. It fulfils human and societal aspirations as part of the broader social system. Performance must be measured not only on the return to shareholders, but also on how it achieves its environmental, social and good governance objectives. Executive remuneration should reflect stakeholder responsibility.

C. A company that has a multinational scope of activities not only serves all those stakeholders who are directly engaged, but acts itself as a stakeholder – together with governments and civil society – of our global future. Corporate global citizenship requires a company to harness its core competencies, its entrepreneurship, skills and relevant resources in collaborative efforts with other companies and stakeholders to improve the state of the world
https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/12/davos-manifesto-2020-the-universal-purpose-of-a-company-in-the-fourth-industrial-revolution

      i. https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/06/why-business-schools-can-t-return-to-normal-after-the-covid-19-pandemic/
     ii. forbes https://www.forbes.com/sites/nishandegnarain/2020/04/22/not-back-but-forward-what-the-post-covid-19-economic-recovery-models-are-getting-wrong/#7ba396797abb

## 22. ECONOMIST ARTICLE 2017

A new research centre grapples with an idea that is ancient, if not eternally fashionable – "The centre, which in a nice bit of symbolism occupies what was once a war museum in Ottawa, is meant to be a hub for research and conferences on pluralism. But what exactly does that mean?

The word can be defined in so many different ways that the organisers of the opening decided to show a video — "What is Pluralism?" — to clear things up. One common definition is the state of having more than one of anything. Ukraine can be described as a pluralistic country because of its regional and political diversity. Another, which has its roots in the medieval Roman Catholic church, means to hold more than one office or benefice at the same time. A third comes from philosophy and is the recognition of many principles, rather than an ultimate one. For example, Aristotle believed all human action aimed at happiness: not pluralistic. By contrast Martin Seligman, an author and psychologist, says the goal should be called well-being and expanded to include relationships, life satisfaction and accomplishments."

https://www.economist.com/the-economist-explains/2017/05/23/what-is-pluralism

## 23. EDUCATION –GCP CORE PROGRAMS FOR 2020- 2021

7. The Global Pluralism Index
   - This is work in progress. It will measure pluralism based on how diversity with respect to inclusion exclusion & belonging. Aimed at countries, institutions, and universities.
   - (Many countries and organisations, including Canada have diversity and inclusion indexes. Prerequisite will be communication and acceptance of Pluralism and a clear distinction of its values and difference with diversity and inclusion)

8. The Pluralism Award
   - The Award is presented once every two years to individuals to those who contribute to building more inclusive societies in which human diversity is protected. https://award.pluralism.ca/the-award/about-the-award/

9. Education

- Professional Development training course for Educators - planned for 2021
- Online Learning platform (Mozaiko) - Launch date to be advised – This will connect educators from around the world who are committed to building more inclusive and equitable classrooms and institutions

An Innovation Lab launched. A group of international education experts will support education programming. The Lab will serve as an expert advisory group for our development phase

a. GCP - MOZAIKO will connect educators from around the world who are committed to building more inclusive and equitable classrooms and institutions. Launch date not known yet

b. By joining MOZAIKO, educators will be able to: Connect to our Learning Framework and corresponding educational resources. These publicly available learning materials correspond to different objectives and will be added to regularly. If you have a resource to share please let us know: education@pluralism.ca.

c. Explore and discuss the actions required to model pluralism in policy and practice. By using the Reflection Tool for Schools, school leaders and educators can examine how inclusion and equity currently figure in all levels of the school environment.

d. Interact with a global community of educators in order to provide support, share challenges and best practices and collaborate on projects in classrooms, schools, local communities and beyond. The platform will also eventually serve to connect classrooms—and students—to each other.

e. For more information and to be notified when the platform launches, please contact education@pluralism.ca

h. "The intention of the Global Centre for Pluralism is not to replicate international initiatives that fall under global citizenship education, human rights education, multicultural and civic education, peace education and anti-bias education. Rather, the Centre's goal is to complement, assist or collaborate

with other educational initiatives to produce "actionable knowledge for educating for pluralism"

  - i. https://www.pluralism.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/GCP-EducatingforPluralism-KeyPrinciples-F-WEB.pdf

i. The Centre in 2021 will be piloting its Professional Development Training.

  - i. To realize this project, we are seeking a wide range of partners. We invite expression of interest to join this effort.
  - ii. CENTRAL IDEA: Pluralism is an ethic of respect for diversity and includes understanding who I am, and why
  - iii. https://www.pluralism.ca/what-we-do-2/education/

j. MOZAIKO Online education for teachers and students

  - i. This will connect educators from around the world who are committed to building more inclusive and equitable classrooms and institutions.

k. By joining educators will be able to:

  - i. Explore and discuss the actions required to model pluralism in policy and practice. By using the Reflection Tool for Schools, school leaders and educators can examine how inclusion and equity currently figure in all levels of the school environment.
  - ii. Interact with a global community of educators in order to provide support, share challenges and best practices and collaborate on projects in classrooms, schools, local communities and beyond. The platform will also eventually serve to connect classrooms—and students—to each other.
  - iii. For more information and to be notified when the platform launches, please contact education@pluralism.ca

l. The Centre recently formed our inaugural Innovation Lab, a group of international education experts that will support our education programming. The Lab will serve as an expert

advisory group for our development phase. There are 8 dimensions in framework tool one is pluralism specific.

    i.   Pluralism is an ethic of respect for diversity.

https://www.pluralism.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/GCP-EducatingforPluralism-Framework-F-WEB.pdf

    ii.   Pluralism-Specific Skills and Attributes
    iii.   6.1 Critical and Historical Thinking
    iv.   ● To what extent are children encouraged to be confident critical thinkers?
    v.   ● To what extent are teachers and students encouraged to consider historical events from multiple perspectives?
    vi.   6.2 Media and Digital Literacy
    vii.   ● To what extent is media literacy addressed in the curriculum?
    viii.   ● To what extent are students encouraged and equipped to deconstruct messages about difference?
    ix.
    x.   6.3 Dialogue for Respectful Disagreement
    xi.   ● To what extent are teachers trained on how to have discussions on controversial topics?
    xii.   ● To what extent are students encouraged to think critically about their own biases, stereotypes and assumptions?

## 24. THE AGA KHAN – TITHE AND INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY

**Interview**

AK: The Imamat revenue is given by the community to the Imam. He has a responsibility to manage the Imamat revenue. Now, in Shia Islam, and this is true of the Twelvers and of the Seveners, the Imams or the Ayatollahs, as it would be in Twelver Shi'ism, are allowed or authorised to retain certain percentage of the Imamat revenue.

MC: Can you tell me how much that is?

AK: In Ismaili tradition, because there is nothing which I have seen in writing, it is 10% at the present time, but the interesting thing is that, in effect, I would say easily 98% of those funds, and in fact at times much more than 98%, in fact probably of the order of 150%, goes back to the community. (This also benefits other communities and individuals)

AK

" I am proud of two things. The first is the creation, in a variety of countries, of institutions of the community which possess real autonomy, which do not depend on the intervention, nor the thinking, nor the support of the Imam. "

BBC Radio 4 Interview, Michael Charlton (London, United Kingdom)
5      September 1979

## 25. SPIEGEL INTERVIEW WITH THE AGA KHAN 2006-10-12

www.spiegel.de
Follath, Erich

SPIEGEL: Your Highness, in a lecture Pope Benedict XVI quoted Emperor Manuel as saying: "Show me just what Muhammed brought that was new, and there you will find things only evil and inhuman, such as a command to spread by the sword the faith he preached." This quotation from the 14th century has caused great uproar in the Muslim world. Why? And what was your reaction?

The Aga Khan: From my point of view, I would start by saying that I was concerned about this statement because this has caused great unhappiness in the Islamic world. There appears to be momentum towards more and more misunderstandings between religions, a

degradation of relations. I think we all should try not to add anything to worsen the situation.

SPIEGEL: Benedict XVI did explicitly dissociate himself from the emperors quoted statement. The pope's own position with regard to his lecture is that he wanted it to promote a dialogue; and since then, several times, he has expressed his respect for the world religion that is Islam. Was it just an unfortunate choice of words? Or was he deliberately misunderstood?

The Aga Khan: I do not wish to pass judgement on that, nor can I. And it might also be unreasonable for me to presume that I know what he meant. But that (medieval) period in history, to my knowledge, was one of the periods of extraordinary theological exchanges and debates between the Byzantine Empire and the Muslim world. A fascinating time. The emperor's statement does not reflect that, so I think it is somewhat out of context.

SPIEGEL: The theme of Pope Benedict's lecture was different, it was one of his favourites: the link between faith and reason which, he said, implies a rejection of any link between religion and violence. Is that something you could agree on?

The Aga Khan: If you interpret his speech as one about faith and reason then I think that the debate is very exciting and could be enormously constructive between the Muslim world and the non-Muslim world. So, I have two reactions to the pope's lecture: There is my concern about the degradation of relations and, at the same time, I see an opportunity. A chance to talk about a serious, important issue: the relationship between faith and logic.

SPIEGEL: If the pope were to invite you to take part with other religious leaders in a debate about faith, reason and violence, would you accept?

The Aga Khan: Yes, definitely. I would, however, make the point that an ecumenical discussion at a certain stage will meet certain limits. Therefore, I would prefer to talk more about a cosmopolitan ethic stemming from all of Earth's great faiths.

SPIEGEL: Does Islam have a problem with reason?

The Aga Khan: Not at all. Indeed, I would say the contrary. Of the Abrahamic faiths, Islam is probably the one that places the greatest emphasis on knowledge. The purpose is to understand God's creation, and therefore it is a faith which is eminently logical. Islam is a faith of reason.

SPIEGEL: So, what are the root causes of terrorism?

The Aga Khan: Unsolved political conflicts, frustration and, above all, ignorance. Nothing that was born out of a theological conflict.

SPIEGEL: Which political conflicts do you mean?

The Aga Khan: The ones in the Middle East and in Kashmir, for example. These conflicts have remained unresolved for decades. There is a lack of urgency in understanding that the situation there deteriorates, it's like a cancer. If you are not going to act on a cancer early enough, ultimately, it's going to create terrible damage. It can become a breeding ground for terrorism.

Now to the issue of spreading faith by the sword: All faiths at some time in their history have used war to protect themselves or expand their influence, and there were situations when faiths have been used as justifications for military actions. But Islam does not call for that, it is a faith of peace.

SPIEGEL: It is true that horrible crimes were committed in the name of Christianity, for example by the crusaders. That was long ago, that is the past. But jihadists commit their crimes now, in our times.

The Aga Khan: It is not so far in the past that we have seen bloody fights in the Christian world. Look at Northern Ireland. If we Muslims interpreted what happened there as a correct expression of Protestantism and Catholicism or even as the essence of the Christian faith you would simply say we don't know what we are talking about.

SPIEGEL: The West (will stand) against the Rest "wrote Professor Samuel Huntington in his famous book "Clash of Civilizations." Is such a conflict, such a clash inevitable?

The Aga Khan: I prefer to talk about a clash of ignorance. There is so much horrible, damaging, dangerous ignorance.

SPIEGEL: Which side is responsible?

The Aga Khan: Both. But essentially the Western world. You would think that an educated person in the 21st century should know something about Islam; but you look at education in the Western world and you see that Islamic civilizations have been absent. What is taught about Islam? As far as I know -- nothing. What was known about Shiism before the Iranian revolution? What was known about the radical Sunni Wahhabism before the rise of the Taliban? We need a big educational effort to overcome this. Rather than shouting at each other, we should be learning to listen to each other. In the way we used to do it, by working together, with mutual give-and-take. Together we brought about some of the highest achievements of human civilization. There is a lot to build on. But I think you cannot build on ignorance.

SPIEGEL: Nonetheless, it is striking that a particularly large number of Muslim-dominated states figure among the most backward and undemocratic states in the world. Is Islam in need of an era of enlightenment? Is the faith even incompatible with democracy as others claim?

The Aga Khan: As I said before, one has to be fair. Some of the political leaders have inherited problems that are in no way attributable to the faith. New governance solutions have to be tested and validated over time. Nor do I believe Muslim states are systematically economic underperformers. Some of the fastest growing economies and some of the most successful newly industrialized countries are in the Islamic world. Now concerning democracy: My democratic beliefs do not go back to the Greek or French (thinkers) but to an era 1,400 years ago. These are the principles underlying my religion. During the prophet's life (peace be upon him), there was a systematic consultative political process. And the first imam of the Shiites, Prophet Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, Hazrat Ali, emphasized: "No honour is like

knowledge, no power is like forbearance, and no support is more reliable than consultation."

Part 2: What makes democracies fail?

SPIEGEL: If pluralism, civil society and Islam can coexist harmoniously, as was proven in the past, then why is this so seldom achieved nowadays?

The Aga Khan: I think we have a very diverse situation in the Islamic world. Wealthy countries with enormous resources, newly industrialized countries, extremely poor ones.

SPIEGEL: Not many are functioning democracies.

The Aga Khan: People speak about failed states. I do not think that states can fail, but democracies certainly can. The failure of democracy is not specific to the Islamic world. Indeed, about two years ago, the United Nations carried out an in-depth analysis of democracy in South America. About 55 percent of the population in South American states said that they would prefer to live under a paternalistic dictatorship instead of an incompetent or corrupt democracy that is not improving their living condition.

SPIEGEL: Most of your Ismaili constituency lives in states that cannot be called perfect democracies: Pakistan, Afghanistan, Syria and Iran. What makes democracies fail?

The Aga Khan: I ask myself every day what we can do to sustain the multiple forms of democracy, to make these forms of government work, whether it is in Latin America, Africa or the Middle East.

SPIEGEL: And what do you believe to be the answer?

Pakistani protesters chant slogans and burn an effigy of Pope Benedict XVI, during a protest in Karachi: "A chance to talk about a serious, important issue which is the relationship between faith and logic."

The Aga Khan: I admit that I live in a mood of frustration. What is the point in these areas of the world of carrying out a referendum in a

population that essentially cannot read and write? What is the point in testing a constitution with a population that knows no difference between a presidential regime or a constitutional monarchy? Elections, constitutions -- all this is necessary, but not sufficient. I think we have to accept that countries have different histories, different social structures, different needs, so we have to be a great deal more flexible than we have been.

SPIEGEL: Nor is democracy monolithic. The American model of democracy is no panacea for the rest of the world. Has George W. Bush aggravated the situation with his particular way of bringing democracy to the Middle East? Can the United States still win the war in Iraq?

The Aga Khan: I am very, very worried about Iraq. The invasion of Iraq had an impact across the world like nothing before in modern times. The invasion has unleashed every force in the Islamic world, including the relations between the Arabs and non-Arabs and the relationship between the Shia und the Sunni.

SPIEGEL: You mean the war created a new terrorist base and radicalized people?

The Aga Khan: Indeed. It mobilized a large number of people across the Islamic world, who before then were not involved, and indeed I think they did not want to be.

SPIEGEL: Do you share the view of the American professor and Islam expert Vali Nasr that the balance of power in the Muslim world is undergoing a decisive shift, that Shiites could become the most influential force from Baghdad to Beirut, that the future of the Middle East will be shaped by wars between different Muslim factions?

The Aga Khan: When the invasion of Iraq took place, we were told two things: (that there would be) regime change and democracy. Well, anyone who knew the situation in Iraq, as you did, I did, but what did that mean? That meant a Shia majority; it could not have been otherwise. Anyone who then concludes that the next issue is a Shia majority in Iraq is going to start thinking, what does that mean in the region, what does it mean in the Islamic world, what does it mean in

relation to the West? All that was as clear as daylight, you didn't even have to be a Muslim or a scholar to know that.

SPIEGEL: In your opinion, was it pure ignorance and naivete that made the Bush government start the war? Was it really about introducing democracy or a strategic decision about conquering oil fields and military bases?

The Aga Khan: I wish I could answer that question.

SPIEGEL: Are you in contact with the religious leaders in Iraq, like Grand Ayatollah Sistani? And with the religious leaders of Iran as well?

The Aga Khan: We have frequent contacts with important personalities in both countries.

SPIEGEL: What would it take to get you to go to the region as a mediator?

The Aga Khan: This is, at the moment, not one of my priorities. One day maybe, we might consider (participating in the) reconstruction (effort).

SPIEGEL: When you compare the invasion in Iraq with the one in Afghanistan, where the Taliban and al-Qaida worked hand in hand ...

The Aga Khan: ... there I see a completely different picture. First of all, the Afghan regime at the time was quasi totally detested by the people; it was equally unpleasant for Sunnis as it was the for Shias and it was totally unacceptable I think just in terms of overall civilized life.

SPIEGEL: Afghanistan is currently being confronted with major problems and the situation seems to be deteriorating by the hour. What went wrong? And what can the West do to make the situation more stable?

The Aga Khan: The security situation is indeed very worrying -- it is getting worse, especially in the south. Most of our projects are in the capital and in the north where (the situation) is better but not satisfying. We can supply energy from Tajikistan, we can provide civil services. We try to avoid the danger that certain areas in Afghanistan

will be rehabilitated more quickly than others. If this development overlaps with ethnic divides you have another problem. But the main problem is that most people in Afghanistan have not seen an improvement in their daily lives. The process of reconstruction does not seem to be penetrating. We have not succeeded in bringing a culture of hope to this country. One of the central lessons I have learned after a half century of working in the developing world is that the replacement of fear by hope is probably the most powerful trampoline of progress.

SPIEGEL: President Karzai is a personal friend of yours. Many people see him as a weak leader, and some call him "Mayor of Kabul" because he is unable to control large parts of the country.

The Aga Khan: We should do everything to help him. He has an enormously complex agenda to deal with. He is our best hope. And besides, he is the elected leader and we have to work with the parliament.

SPIEGEL: Even if warlords and former members of the Taliban are represented in Afghanistan's parliament?

The Aga Khan: You either accept the results of democracy or you don't. Otherwise you talk about qualifying democracy.

SPIEGEL: That means the West should deal with the radical Islamist Hamas as well?

The Aga Khan: You have to work with whoever the population has elected as long as they are willing to respect what I call cosmopolitan ethics. Now, it is true that Hamas has a record of conflict ...

SPIEGEL: ... of outright terror ...

The Aga Khan: ... but it would not be the only time that movements that have such a record make it into parliament, and even end up in charge of government later on. Can I remind you of Jomo Kenyatta and his Mau Mau movement in Kenya, for example, or the ANC in South Africa? Take away the causes of extremism and extremists can come

back to a more reasonable political agenda. That change to me is one of the wonderful things about the human race.

SPIEGEL: You know Syria's president, Bashar Assad, very well. You recently visited him again in Damascus. In contrast to the American administration, the German government is trying to get him involved in the Middle East peace process.

The Aga Khan: I would like to compliment the German government and others in Europe who have taken the decision to invite President Assad to be a party to the peace process. The process of change from decades of political directionalism is something that needs time, as you saw in East Germany. I think there are many reasons to go out of our way to assist Syria in making the transition from the past to the future.

SPIEGEL: If you look back at the years that have passed since World War II -- the Cold War between the East and the West, the ideological conflict with communism -- would you ever have thought that this conflict could be replaced by one between the West and radical Islamists?

The Aga Khan: I beg you, please get away from the concept of a conflict of religion. It is not such a conflict. Nobody will ever convince me that the faith of Islam, that Christianity, that Judaism will fight each other in our times -- they have too much in common. That's why I am talking about this global ethic which unites us all. That's why we are trying to work with the Catholic Church in Portugal on a program aimed at immigrant minorities. I am aware of a sense of disaffection with the society that many young Muslims feel because they think that the Western society has the intention of marginalizing or damaging them.

SPIEGEL: The German government just organized a conference with many different Muslim groups and personalities who live in Germany. Do you consider such a forum useful or is it just window dressing?

The Aga Khan: We can avoid misunderstandings by having such a forum where people from different faiths consult each other so they understand what really affects them. Once you have committed an offense all you can do is to try and reverse it. Anyone who knows the

faith of Islam, for example, would have known that the caricatures of the Prophet were profoundly offensive to all Muslims.

SPIEGEL: Again, this whole affair was misused by radical Islamists. They added caricatures much more offensive than the original ones to incite the masses.

The Aga Khan: But I am told that there was an internal debate between the editors of that publication and they actually knew what they were doing. They took a risk and somebody should have said to them, why get into that situation? Now we are talking about civility, which is a completely different concept. If we are talking about civility in a pluralist society, then how do you develop that notion of civility, particularly where there is ignorance. And that's the thing that's worrying. And that's why I get frustrated when I see these situations that go on and on and on. Because I'm not willing to believe that they are all inspired by evil intent.

SPIEGEL: Provocative, sad and distasteful. But the freedom of the press is one of the highest values in our democracy. We have to balance one thing against the other and we will allow non-believers to express even outrageous opinions.

The Aga Khan: I think that you are now referring to one of the most difficult problems that we have and I don't know the answer. The industrialized West is highly secularized; the Muslim world is much less secularized and that stems largely from the nature of the faith of Islam, which you know and I know has an intrinsic meshing with everyday life. And that is a scenario where people of goodwill need to think very, very carefully.

SPIEGEL: In some of your speeches you mentioned Kemal Atatürk in a positive context. Turkey followed his path and is one of the very few countries with a predominant Muslim population where there is separation of church and state. Would you like to see others go the same way?

The Aga Khan: I am not opposed to secularism as such. But I am opposed to unilateral secularism where the notions of faith and ethics just disappear from society.

SPIEGEL: Your Highness, we thank you for this interview.

Interview conducted by Stefan Aust and Erich Follath.

## 26. THE AGA KHAN SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, COMMENCEMENT CEREMONY (NEW YORK, USA)

**15 May 2006**

*[democratic institutions have not lived up to their potential. In both the developed and the developing world, the promise of democracy has too often been disappointed. For many centuries, enlightened people have argued that democracy was the key to social progress. But today, that contention is in dispute.*

*Our challenge is not to find alternatives to democracy, but to find more and better ways to make democracy work. In responding to that challenge today, I would like to make four observations — four suggestions for addressing our democratic disappointments and advancing our democratic hopes…. First, the need for greater flexibility in defining the paths to democracy; secondly, the need for greater diversity in the institutions which participate in democratic life; thirdly, the need to expand the public's capacity for democracy; and finally, the need to strengthen public integrity, on which democracy rests.*

Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim.

Dean Anderson,

Faculty Members,

Graduating Students and Parents,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am deeply honoured to be here and deeply grateful for your invitation. This is a memorable day both in your personal lives and in the life of this School and I am pleased to share in it.

They say that a good graduation speaker is someone who can talk in someone else's sleep. I hope we can break that pattern today.

An opinion poll reported recently that what American graduates want as their graduation speaker more than anyone is "someone they could relate to". But that test, says the poll, showed the most popular university speaker in recent years was the Sesame street character, Kermit the Frog. I found it a bit intimidating to wonder just where the Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims would rank on the "relating" scale in comparison to Kermit the Frog.

*[T]he challenges of our times are fundamentally global ones — calling both for multi-disciplinary and multi-national responses.*

Ceremonies of the sort we observe today are valuable because they help us to bridge the past and the future — to see ourselves as players in larger narratives. This School's narrative is now sixty years old, embracing the whole of the post-war period. In that time, you have dramatically broadened both the communities you serve and the programs through which you serve them. Your history reflects a continuing conviction that the challenges of our times are fundamentally global ones — calling both for multi-disciplinary and multi-national responses.

Even as SIPA marks its 60th anniversary, I am approaching an anniversary of my own — the 50th anniversary next year of my role as Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims. While I was educated in the West, my perspective over these fifty years has been profoundly shaped by the countries of South and Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa, where the Ismaili people live and where they are largely concentrated. For five decades, that has been my world — my virtually permanent preoccupation. And it is out of that experience that I speak today.

*For the developing world, the past half-century has been a time of recurring hope and frequent disappointment…. Great waves of change have washed over the landscape … But too often, what*

*rushed in to replace the old order were empty hopes — not only the false allure of state socialism, non-alignment, and single-party rule, but also the false glories of romantic nationalism and narrow tribalism, and the false dawn of runaway individualism.*

For the developing world, the past half-century has been a time of recurring hope and frequent disappointment. Great waves of change have washed over the landscape from the crumbling of colonial hegemonies in mid-century to the recent collapse of communist empires. But too often, what rushed in to replace the old order were empty hopes — not only the false allure of state socialism, non-alignment, and single-party rule, but also the false glories of romantic nationalism and narrow tribalism, and the false dawn of runaway individualism. There have been welcome exceptions to this pattern, of course. But too often, one step forward has been accompanied by two steps back. Hope for the future has often meant hope for survival, not hope for progress. The old order yielded its place, but a new world was not ready to be born.

Today, this sense of frustration is compounded, both in rich and poor nations, by a host of new challenges. They range from changing weather patterns to mutating viruses, from new digital and bio-genetic technologies to new patterns of family life and a new intermingling of cultures. As the world economy integrates, global migrations are reaching record levels. Immigrants now account for two thirds of the population growth in the 30 developed countries of the OECD. Once homogeneous societies are becoming distinctly multi-cultural. Meanwhile, the gap widens between rich countries and poor. Populations explode and the environment deteriorates. The nation-state itself is newly challenged by the influence of non-state forces including global crime and terrorism.

Whenever I sit down with leading thinkers and policy makers I come away with a haunting question. Why is it, given the scope of our collective learning, unprecedented in human history, that we have such difficulty in controlling these developments? Why is our

growing intellectual mastery of the world so often accompanied in practice by a growing sense of drift?

My response to that question focuses increasingly on the fact that democratic institutions have not lived up to their potential. In both the developed and the developing world, the promise of democracy has too often been disappointed. For many centuries, enlightened people have argued that democracy was the key to social progress. But today, that contention is in dispute.

In countries where I am directly involved, the 21st century has already experienced at least a half-dozen constitutional crises. The sad fact, hard to swallow and difficult to deny, is that nearly forty percent of UN member nations are now categorised not merely as failed states but as "failed democracies." Our central challenge in this new century, as leaders and future leaders of our world, is to renew the democratic promise.

*The saving grace which democratic systems are most likely to possess, after all, is that they are self-correcting. A system of public accountability still provides the best hope for change without violence. And that virtue alone redeems the entire concept. It explains Churchill's famous view that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all others.*

The saving grace which democratic systems are most likely to possess, after all, is that they are self-correcting. A system of public accountability still provides the best hope for change without violence. And that virtue alone redeems the entire concept. It explains Churchill's famous view that democracy is the worst form of government, except for all others.

Our challenge is not to find alternatives to democracy, but to find more and better ways to make democracy work. In responding to that challenge today, I would like to make four observations — four suggestions for addressing our democratic disappointments and advancing our democratic hopes.

My comments involve, first, the need for greater flexibility in defining the paths to democracy; secondly, the need for greater diversity in the institutions which participate in democratic life;

thirdly, the need to expand the public's capacity for democracy; and finally, the need to strengthen public integrity — on which democracy rests. Let me say a few words about each.

## FLEXIBILITY IN DEFINING THE PATHS TO DEMOCRACY

*The ultimate recourse in any democracy must be to the concept of popular sovereignty. But within that concept there is room for variation.*

My first concern is that we must define the paths to democracy more flexibly. We like to say that democracy involves a pluralistic approach to life but too seldom do we take a pluralistic approach to democracy. Too often, we insist that democracies must all follow a similar script, evolving at a similar pace, without recognising that different circumstances may call for different constructs. The ultimate recourse in any democracy must be to the concept of popular sovereignty. But within that concept there is room for variation. One size need not fit all and trying to make one size fit all can be a recipe for failure. The world's most successful democracies have had widely differing histories each taking its own shape according to its own timetable.

How is power best divided and balanced? How should secular and spiritual allegiances interact? How can traditional authority, even monarchical authority, relate to democratic frameworks? How is the integrity of minority cultures and faith systems best reconciled with majority rule?

It is simplistic to wish that our democratic destinations should be similar — that they cannot be reached by many paths. The democratic spirit of freedom and flexibility must begin with our definitions of democracy itself. Even as we think more flexibly about democracy, we should also consider a second goal: diversifying the institutions of democratic life.

## GREATER DIVERSITY IN INSTITUTIONS WHICH PARTICIPATE IN DEMOCRATIC LIFE

*One of the reasons that governments often fail is that we depend too much on them. We invest too many hopes in political promises and we entrust too many tasks to political regimes. Governments alone do not make democracy work.*

One of the reasons that governments often fail is that we depend too much on them. We invest too many hopes in political promises and we entrust too many tasks to political regimes. Governments alone do not make democracy work. The most successful democracies are those in which the non-governmental institutions of "civil society" also play a vital role. Civil society is powered by private voluntary energies, but it is committed to the public good. It includes institutions of education, health, science and research. It embraces professional, commercial, labour, ethnic and arts organisations, and others devoted to religion, communication, and the environment.

Sometimes, in our preoccupation with government, we discount the impact of civil society, including the potential of constructive NGO's. But we can no longer afford that outlook. Meeting the realities of a complex world will require a strengthened array of civic institutions. They spur social progress, even when governments falter, and because they are so intimately connected to the public, they can predict new patterns and identify new problems with particular sensitivity.

But such developments cannot be coerced. They require an encouraging, enabling environment, supported by a broad public enthusiasm for social goals. And let me be clear: I am here because I believe SIPA, with its annual outpouring of able graduates, can make an enormous worldwide contribution to such a response.

The development of civil society can also help meet the rising challenge of cultural diversity. As communities become more pluralistic in fact, they must also become more pluralistic in spirit. A vibrant civil society can give diverse constituencies effective ways

to express and preserve their distinct identities, even as they interact with new neighbours.

*We are often told that increased contact among cultures will inevitably produce a "Clash of Civilisations," particularly between Islam and the West. Such predictions could become self-fulfilling prophecies if enough people believe them…. [W]e cannot make the world safe for democracy unless we also make the world safe for diversity*

We are often told that increased contact among cultures will inevitably produce a "Clash of Civilisations," particularly between Islam and the West. Such predictions could become self-fulfilling prophecies if enough people believe them. But that need not, and must not, be the case. The true problem we face is what I would call a "Clash of Ignorance" — on both sides — one which neglects, for example, a long history of respect and cooperation between Islamic and Western peoples, and their respective civilisations.

This is an appropriate place to recall how North American history was shaped over the centuries by diverse cultural groups. In the future as in the past, such diversity can be an engine of enormous creativity if it is sustained by what I would call "a new cosmopolitan ethic". To encourage that process, the mid-century Aga Khan Development Network has recently formed a partnership with the Government of Canada to create a new Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. Drawing on both the Ismaili experience and the pluralistic model of Canada itself, the Centre recognises that we cannot make the world safe for democracy unless we also make the world safe for diversity — and that strengthening can be achieved by the institutions of civil society. They can contribute significantly to that goal.


EXPAND THE PUBLIC'S CAPACITY FOR DEMOCRACY

My third point involves the public capacity for democratic government. This is a problem we too often treat with too much

sentimentality, reluctant to acknowledge that democratic publics are not always all-wise.

*Inadequate public communication is part of the problem. Driven by short-term circulation and profit goals, media increasingly tell audiences what they want to hear rather than what they ought to hear. And what too many people want is not to be informed, but to be entertained. One result is the inadequacy of international news.* Inadequate public communication is part of the problem. Driven by short-term circulation and profit goals, media increasingly tell audiences what they want to hear rather than what they ought to hear. And what too many people want is not to be informed, but to be entertained. One result is the inadequacy of international news. I am told that world news now represents a substantially lower percentage of mainstream American news than it did a generation ago. Thanks to the Internet, specialists can get more information from more places than ever before. But for the general public, in America and elsewhere, global information has declined, while global involvements have expanded.

If better communication is one part of the answer, better education is another. This means, above all, developing new curricula which will meet new demands, especially in developing countries. We must do more to prepare the leaders of the 21st century for economic life in a global marketplace, for cultural life in pluralistic societies, for political life in complex democracies. Our system of The Aga Khan-sponsored universities and academies is working throughout the developing world to create new educational models. But the scale of our work only begins to address the enormity of the challenge.

Improved communication and education can be helpful, but we also must be realistic about public capabilities. I believe, for example, that publics are too often asked to vote on issues that bewilder them. In recent months, both in Africa and in Asia new national constitutions have been left to the mercies of mass public referenda posing complex, theoretical issues well beyond the ability of politicians to explain, and publics to master. Nor is this

matter unique to the developing world. We saw a similar pattern last year when the French public rejected a new European constitutional treaty that was 474 pages long.

Democracies need to distinguish responsibly between the prerogatives of the people and the obligations of their leaders. And leaders must meet their obligations. When democracies fail, it is usually because publics have grown impatient with ineffectual leaders and governments.

When parliaments lack the structure or expertise to grapple with complex problems, or when a system of checks and balances stymies action rather than refining it, then disenchanted publics will often turn to autocrats. The UN Development Program recently reported, for example, that 55 percent of those surveyed in 18 Latin American countries would support authoritarian rule if it brought economic progress. There, in too many cases progress and democracy have not gone hand in hand.

*Developed countries, rather than talking so much about democracy on the conceptual level, must do more, much more, to help democracy work on a practical level.*

The best way to redeem the concept of democracy around the world is to improve the results it delivers. Developed countries, rather than talking so much about democracy on the conceptual level, must do more, much more, to help democracy work on a practical level. Our goal must be "fully functioning democracies" which bring genuine improvements in the quality of life for their peoples. **We must not force publics to choose between democratic government and competent government.**


NEED FOR GREATER PUBLIC INTEGRITY

This brings me to my final topic: the need for a sense of greater public integrity.

*How can we inspire people to reach beyond rampant materialism, self-indulgent individualism, and unprincipled relativism?*

Expanding the number of people who share social power is only half the battle. The critical question is how such power is used. How can we inspire people to reach beyond rampant materialism, self-indulgent individualism, and unprincipled relativism? One answer is to augment our focus on personal prerogatives and individual rights, with an expanded concern for personal responsibilities and communal goals. A passion for justice, the quest for equality, a respect for tolerance, a dedication to human dignity — these are universal human values which are broadly shared across divisions of class, race, language, faith and geography. They constitute what classical philosophers, in the East and West alike, have described as human "virtue" — not merely the absence of negative restraints on individual freedom, but also a set of positive responsibilities, moral disciplines which prevent liberty from turning into license.

Historically, one of the most powerful resources for any culture has been the sense that it is heading somewhere, that tomorrow will be better than today, that there is reason to embrace what I would call "a narrative of progress." The right of individuals to look for a better quality of life within their own life-spans, and to build toward a better life for their children, these are personal aspirations which must become public values.

But a healthy sense of public integrity, in my view, will be difficult to nurture over time without a strong religious underpinning. In the Islamic tradition, the conduct of one's worldly life is inseparably intertwined with the concerns of one's spiritual life and one cannot talk about integrity without also talking about faith. For Islam, the importance of this intersection is an item of faith, such a profound melding of worldly concerns and spiritual ideals that one cannot imagine one without the other. The two belong together. They constitute "a way of life."

*But a healthy sense of public integrity, in my view, will be difficult to nurture over time without a strong religious underpinning…. I would put high among our priorities, both within and outside the Islamic world, the need to renew our spiritual traditions.*

From that perspective, I would put high among our priorities, both within and outside the Islamic world, the need to renew our spiritual traditions. To be sure, religious freedom is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion then I fear we will soon be lost on a bleak and barren landscape with no compass or roadmap, no sense of ultimate direction.

I fully understand the West's historic commitment to separating the secular from the religious. But for many non-Westerners, including most Muslims, the realms of faith and of worldly affairs cannot be antithetical. If "modernism" lacks a spiritual dimension, it will look like materialism. And if the modernising influence of the West is insistently and exclusively a secularising influence, then much of the Islamic world will be somewhat distanced from it.

A deeply rooted sense of public integrity means more than integrity in government, important as that must be. Ethical lapses in medicine and education, malfeasance in business and banking, dishonesty among journalists, scientists, engineers, or scholars — all of these weaknesses can undermine the most promising democracies.

*Public integrity cannot grow out of authoritarian pronouncements. It must be rooted in the human heart and conscience. As the Holy Qur'an says: "There is no compulsion in religion."*

Let me finally emphasise my strong conviction that public integrity cannot grow out of authoritarian pronouncements. It must be rooted in the human heart and conscience. As the Holy Qur'an says: "There is no compulsion in religion." The resurgence of spirituality, potentially such a positive force, can become a negative influence when it turns into self-righteousness and imposes itself on others. Like all of the world's great religions, Islam warns against the danger of comparing oneself with God, and places primary emphasis on the qualities of generosity, mercy and humility. A central element in any religious outlook, it seems to me, is a sense of human limitation, a recognition of our own creature-hood — a

posture of profound humility before the Divine. In that sensibility lies our best protection against divisive dogmatism and our best hope for creative pluralism.

In conclusion, then, I would ask, as you move out from this university into a diverse and demanding world, that you think about four considerations for renewing the promise of democracy: defining democratic paths more flexibly; expanding the role of civil society; increasing public capacities for self-governance; and strengthening our commitment to public integrity. In all these ways, I believe we can help restore confidence in the promise of democratic life, affirming with pride our distinct cultural identities, while embracing with enthusiasm our new global potentials.

To the graduates, my prayer is that God may guide you and accompany you as you fulfil your destinies.

Thank You.


His Highness the public Aga Khan IV



## 27. THE AGA KHAN 21 FEBRUARY 2006

'Expression' published in the Globe and Mail (Toronto, Canada)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7669/

Most of us seek societies that are at once plural and peaceful — a goal that is important but also elusive. For even our best efforts to combine stability with modernity seem to be constantly disrupted. Some of these disruptions come from new technologies — from Internet blogs to bio-genetics. Others spring from nature — from changing weather patterns or mutating viruses. Still others arise from social transformations — new patterns of family life or enormous migrations of people.

**Newspaper headlines remind us daily of growing strains and stresses: Civil disorder in places as affluent as France and Australia; the plight of hurricane** victims in Louisiana and

earthquake victims in Kashmir; the uses of nuclear energy; the sense of impotence amid suffering in places such as Darfur.

The planet becomes more crowded and its resources less abundant. The gap widens between rich and poor. People everywhere cry out against these evils. But change, when it comes at all, is painfully slow, and we sometimes seem to be sliding backward.

Take the headlines of this past month that chart the widening gulf between Islamic and Western societies. Here the culprit has not been military action or diplomatic failure but the power of media images — deeply offensive caricatures — that have profoundly offended one billion, four hundred million Muslims around the world, including myself.

The question I ask, as I read all these headlines, is this: **Why are political and civil leaders, in rich and poor nations alike, unable to develop the vision and harness the will to confront such challenges more effectively? What makes this sense of impasse especially disturbing is that it so often represents a failure of democracy. For many centuries, it was the conviction of enlightened people that societies would truly come to grips with their problems once they became democratic.**

**The great barrier to progress, it was said, was that governments listened to the special few — rather than to the voice of the many. If we could only advance the march of democracy, it was argued, then a progressive agenda would inevitably fall into place.**

But I am not sure that such an analysis holds up any longer. For the past half century, we have seen great waves of ostensibly democratic reform — from the fading of colonialism in mid-century to the fall of the Iron Curtain. But despite this apparent progress, the results have often been disappointing.

**I can scarcely count, nor fully catalogue, the variety of governments I have visited over the past five decades — from the most autocratic to the most participatory. Often, the more democratic governments were the more effective and responsible.**

**But this was not consistently true — and I have recently found it to be decreasingly true. In fact, nearly 40 per cent of UN member nations are now categorised as "failed democracies." Democracy and progress do not always go hand in hand, and the growing threat of failed states can often be described as the failure of democracy**.

**Frequently, democratic failures grow out of sheer incompetence. Publics are asked to vote on issues that bewilder them.**

**Candidates obscure their own views and distort their opponents' positions. Journalists transmit superficial rhetoric and slight underlying realities. People are appointed to jobs they cannot do — but are rarely held accountable.**

**Corruption for some becomes a way of life. Meanwhile, the media tell audiences what they want to know rather than what they ought to know. And what too many people want today is not to be informed — but to be entertained.**

**The breakdowns are institutional as well as personal. Democratic systems veer between too many checks and balances — and too few. Parliaments, in particular, often lack the expertise and structure to grapple with complex problems, and they are often too factionalised or too subservient to sustain a coherent view.**

**For all these reasons, democracies often make bad decisions. And when democracies are ineffective, disenchanted publics are tempted in other directions.**

Latin America is one place where democracy was thought to be expanding in recent years. Yet the UN Development Program reports that 55 per cent of those surveyed in 18 Latin American countries would support authoritarian rule if it brought economic progress.

**The challenge of democratic competence, then, is a central problem of our time. Meeting that challenge must be one of our central callings.**

The challenge of democratic renewal has been vastly compounded by another development — the rapid proliferation of cosmopolitan populations. The world is becoming more pluralist in fact — but it

is not keeping pace in spirit. Cosmopolitan social patterns have not yet been matched by what I would call a cosmopolitan ethic.

**Peoples mix and mingle, side by side, to an extent that was once unimaginable. Waves of migration indelibly change the rhythms, colours and flavours of their host communities.**

Some 150 million legal immigrants live outside their country of birth, joined by uncounted millions who have immigrated illegally. These trends will continue. Globalisation has dissolved the tight bond between community and geography. Economic opportunity — for rich and poor alike — can lie in distant lands. Some 45 million young people enter the job market in the developing world each year — but there are not enough jobs at home for all of them. Meanwhile, war and civil conflict add more refugees to the mix.

Immigration brings both blessings and problems. Immigrants now account for two thirds of the population growth in the 30 member countries of the OECD, where an ageing work force requires new, young workers. Meanwhile, remittances sent home by immigrants total some $145 billion a year — and generate nearly $300 billion in economic activity — more than is provided either by foreign development assistance or foreign direct investment.

At the same time, immigrant communities can sharply strain public and private resources. The resulting competition with older residents can cause resentment and hostility. More than half of the respondents in various European opinion polls have a negative view of immigration. The so-called "clash of civilisations" is both a local and a global danger.

But it need not be this way. Nor has it always been this way down through the sweep of history. Yes — cultural clash has been one major theme in the human story. But so, has inter-cultural co-operation.

Portugal knows from its own history how Islamic and Christian cultures met in this part of the world many centuries ago — and how enriching their interactions were for both traditions. This is a good time to emphasise the manifold blessings that come when

peoples decide to stop shouting at one another, and instead begin listening and learning.

Cross cultural interaction has been a central focus of my own activities in the nearly 50 years since I became Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. The ethics of Islam bridge faith and society, so my responsibilities as spiritual leader is accompanied by a strong engagement in issues of community wellbeing.

The Ismailis are themselves a culturally-diverse community. They live — as minorities — in more than 25 countries, primarily in the developing world, but also in Europe and North America. This Ismaili multi-cultural experience is reflected in the approach of the is Aga Khan Development Network — working with a wide array of partners to help the disadvantaged, regardless of their origin.

**In Canada, for example, we have entered into a partnership with the Government of Canada to create a new Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. This Centre will draw on both Ismaili experience and the experience of Canada itself, where a pluralist society thrives, and where, in contrast to much of world opinion, 80 per cent of the public welcomes' immigration as a positive development.**

**This brings me to my central question. What is it we can now do to nurture healthy and competent democracies, in old settings? where democracy has grown weary and in new settings where it is freshly planted? I would make three suggestions.**

**First, we must strengthen our civil institutions. This means realising that a democratic society requires much** more than democratic politics. Governments alone do not make democracy work. Private initiative is also essential, including a vital role for those institutions that are collectively described as civil society.

By civil society I mean an array of institutions that operate on a private, voluntary basis — but that are driven by public motivations. They include institutions dedicated to education, to culture, to science and research. They include commercial, labour, professional and ethnic associations, as well as entities devoted to maintaining health, protecting the environment, and curing

disease. Religious institutions are central to civil society — and so are institutions of the media.

Sometimes, in our preoccupation with government and politics, we neglect the importance of civil institutions. I am not suggesting we ignore politics — but I am suggesting that we think beyond our political preoccupations. A thriving civil sector is essential in renewing the promise of democracy.

**The second democratic pillar I would mention is education — rigorous, responsible and relevant education**. We must do a better job of training leaders and shaping institutions to meet more demanding tests of competence and higher standards of excellence. This means moving beyond the notion that better education simply means broader schooling — wider access to formal learning. We must accompany our concern for quantity with a heightened concern for quality. Are the curricula we teach relevant to the knotty problems of the future? Or are we still providing a 20th century education for 21st century leaders?

Our system of The Aga Khan Universities and The Aga Khan Academies are addressing such questions as they work to advance the concept of meritocracy in the developing world and to maintain world class standards that will stretch our students rather than patronising them.

For too long, some of our schools have taught too many subjects as subsets of dogmatic commitments. Economic insights, for example, were treated as ideological choices — rather than as exercises in scientific problem solving. Too often, education made our students less flexible — confident to the point of arrogance that they now had all the answers — rather than more flexible — humble in their life-long openness to new questions and new responses.

An important goal of quality education is to equip each generation to participate effectively in what has been called "the great conversation" of our times. This means, on one hand, being unafraid of controversy. But it also means being sensitive to the values and outlooks of others.

This brings me back to the current headlines. For I must believe that it is ignorance that explains the publishing of those caricatures which have brought such pain to Islamic peoples. I note that the Danish journal, where the controversy originated acknowledged in a recent letter of apology that it had never realised the sensitivities involved.

In this light, perhaps, the controversy can be described less as a clash of civilisations and more as a clash of ignorance. The alternative explanation would be that the offence was intended — in which case we would be confronted with evil of a different sort. But even to attribute the problem to ignorance is in no way to minimise its importance. In a pluralistic world, the consequences of ignorance can be profoundly damaging.

Perhaps, too, it is ignorance that has allowed so many participants in this discussion to confuse liberty with license — implying that the sheer absence of restraint on human impulse can constitute a sufficient moral framework. This is not to say that governments should censor offensive speech. Nor does the answer lie in violent words or violent actions. But I am suggesting that freedom of expression is an incomplete value unless it is used honourably, and that the obligations of citizenship in any society should include a commitment to informed and responsible expression.

If we can commit ourselves, on all sides, to that objective, then the current crisis could become an educational opportunity — an occasion for enhanced awareness and broadened perspectives.

Ignorance, arrogance, insensitivity — these attitudes rank high among the great public enemies of our time. And the educational enterprise, at its best, can be an effective antidote to all of them.

**My third suggestion for strengthening democracy in a pluralistic world is the renewal of ethical commitment.**

Democratic processes are presumably about the sharing of power, broadening the number who help shape social decisions.

But that sharing — in and of itself — means little apart from the purposes for which power is finally used.

To speak of end purposes, in turn, is to enter the realm of ethics. What are our ultimate goals? Whose interests do we seek to serve? How, in an increasingly cynical time, can we inspire people to a new set of aspirations — reaching beyond rampant materialism, the new relativism, self-serving individualism, and resurgent tribalism. The search for justice and security, the struggle for equality of opportunity, the quest for tolerance and harmony, the pursuit of human dignity — these are moral imperatives that we must work **with and think about on a daily basis.**

**In the ethical realm — as in the educational realm — one of the great stumbling blocks is arrogance. Even the resurgence of religious feeling — which should be such a positive force — can become a negative influence when it turns into self-righteousness.**

All of the world's great religions warn against this excess — yet in the name of those same religions too many are tempted to play God themselves — rather than recognising their humility before the divine.

A central element in a truly religious outlook, it seems to me, is the quality of personal humility — a recognition that, strive as we might, we will still fall short of our ideals; that, climb as we might, there will still be unexplored and mysterious peaks above us. It means recognising our own creature-hood — and thus our human limitations. In that recognition, it seems to me, lies our best protection against false prophecies and divisive dogmatism.

A deepening sense of spiritual commitment — and the ethical framework that goes with it — will be a central requirement if we are to find our way through the minefields and the quicksand of modern life. A strengthening of religious institutions should be a vital part of this process. To be sure, freedom of religion is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion — then societies will find themselves lost in a bleak and unpromising landscape — with no compass, no road map and no sense of ultimate direction.

What I am calling for, in sum, is an ethical sensibility that can be shared across denominational lines and that can foster a universal moral outlook.

**I ask you think about these three requirements: a new emphasis on civil institutions, a more rigorous concern for educational excellence, and a renewed commitment to ethical standards. For these are all ways in which we can encourage a climate of positive pluralism in our world — and thus help meet the current crisis of democracy.**

For only in such a climate will we come to see our differences as sources of enrichment rather than sources of division. And only in such a climate can we come to see "the other" not as a curse or a threat, but as an opportunity and a blessing — whether "the other" lives across the street — or across the world

*His Highness the settings? Aga Khan is the 49th hereditary Imam of the Ismaili Muslims. This is adapted from a speech he delivered February 12 at the University of Evora, Portugal.*

**His Highness the settings? Aga Khan IV**


28. **ADDRESS TO THE EVORA UNIVERSITY SYMPOSIUM, 'COSMOPOLITAN SOCIETY, HUMAN SAFETY AND RIGHTS IN PLURAL AND PEACEFUL SOCIETIES' (EVORA, PORTUGAL + [CANADA])**

**12 FEBRUARY 2006**

*A deepening sense of spiritual commitment, and the ethical framework that goes with it, will be a central requirement if we are to find our way through the minefields and the quick sands of modern life. A strengthening of religious institutions should be a vital part of this process. To be sure, freedom of religion is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion, then societies will find themselves lost in a bleak and unpromising landscape with no compass, no roadmap and no sense of ultimate direction.*

*What I am calling for, in sum, is an ethical sensibility which can be shared across denominational lines and which can foster a universal moral outlook.*

*In conclusion, then, I would ask you think with me about these three requirements: a new emphasis on civil institutions, a more rigorous concern for educational excellence, and a renewed commitment to ethical standards. For these are all ways in which we can encourage a climate of positive pluralism in our world and thus help meet the current crisis of democracy.*

President Sampaio,

Rector Manuel Patricio,

Professor Adriano Moreira,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a great honour to be invited here today to address this esteemed audience on such a relevant topic. Our title speaks of **societies which are at once plural and peaceful, a goal which is important but also elusive.** For even our best efforts to combine stability with modernity seem to be constantly disrupted. **Some of these disruptions come from new technologies, from Internet blogs to bio-genetics. Others spring from nature, from changing weather patterns or mutating viruses. Still others arise from social transformations — new patterns of family life — and enormous migrations of people.**

Newspaper headlines remind us daily of growing strains and stresses: Civil disorder in places as affluent as France and Australia; the plight of hurricane victims in Louisiana and earthquake victims in Kashmir; the uses of nuclear energy; the sense of impotence amid suffering in places like Darfur. The planet becomes more crowded and its resources less abundant. **The gap widens between rich and poor. People**

**everywhere cry out against these evils. But change, when it comes at all, is painfully slow, and we sometimes seem to be sliding backward.**

I should also mention here the headlines of this past week — which chart the widening **gulf between Islamic and Western societies.** Here the **culprit has not been military action or diplomatic failure but the power of media images — deeply offensive caricatures** — which have profoundly offended one billion four hundred million Muslims around the world, including myself.

The question I ask, as I read all these headlines, is this: **Why are political and civil leaders, in rich and poor nations alike, unable to develop the vision and harness the will to confront such challenges more effectively?**

*For many centuries, it was the conviction of enlightened people that societies would truly come to grips with their problems once they became democratic…. If we could only advance the march of democracy, they argued, then a progressive agenda would inevitably fall into place. But I am not sure that such an analysis holds up any longer.*

What makes this sense of impasse especially disturbing is that it so often represents a failure of democracy. **For many centuries, it was the conviction of enlightened people that societies would truly come to grips with their problems once they became democratic.** The great barrier to progress, they **said, was that governments listened to the special few rather than the voice of the many.** If we could only advance the march of democracy, they argued, then a progressive agenda would inevitably fall into place. **But I am not sure that such an analysis holds up any longer**. For the past half century, we have seen great **waves of ostensibly democratic reform — from the fading of colonialism in mid-century to the fall of the Iron Curtain. But despite this apparent progress, the results have often been disappointing.**

I can scarcely count, nor fully catalogue, the variety of governments which I have visited over the past five decades — f**rom the most autocratic to the most participatory. Often, the more democratic governments were the more effective and responsible. But this was not consistently true — and I have recently found it to be decreasingly true.** In fact, **nearly forty percent of UN member nations are now categorised as "failed democracies." Democracy and progress do not always go hand in hand and the growing threat of "Failed States" can often be described as "the Failure of Democracy."**

*Journalists transmit superficial rhetoric and slight underlying realities…. [T]he Media tell audiences what they want to know rather than what they ought to know. And what too many people want today is not to be informed, but to be entertained.*

Frequently, democratic failures grow out of sheer incompetence. **Publics are asked to vote on issues that bewilder them. Candidates obscure their own views and distort their opponents' positions. Journalists transmit superficial rhetoric and slight underlying realities. People are appointed to jobs they cannot do, but are rarely held accountable. Corruption for some becomes a way of life.**

**Meanwhile, the Media tell audiences what they want to know rather than what they ought to know. And what too many people want today is not to be informed, but to be entertained.**

The breakdowns are institutional as well as personal. Democratic systems veer between too many checks and balances, and too few. **Parliaments, in particular, often lack the expertise and structure to grapple with complex problems — and they are often too factionalised or too subservient to sustain a coherent view.**

For all these reasons, democracies often make bad decisions. And when democracies are ineffective, disenchanted publics

are tempted in other directions. Latin America is one place where democracy was thought to be expanding in recent years. Yet the UN Development Program reports that **55 percent of those surveyed in 18 Latin American countries would support authoritarian rule if it brought economic progress.**

**The challenge of democratic competence, then, is a central problem of our time. Meeting that challenge must be one of our central callings.**

*The world is becoming more pluralist in fact but it is not keeping pace in spirit. "Cosmopolitan" social patterns have not yet been matched by what I would call "a cosmopolitan ethic."*

The challenge of democratic renewal has been vastly compounded by another development which is also mentioned in the title of this symposium. I refer to the **rapid proliferation of cosmopolitan populations. The world is becoming more pluralist in fact but it is not keeping pace in spirit. "Cosmopolitan" social patterns have not yet been matched by what I would call "a cosmopolitan ethic."** Peoples mix and mingle, side by side, to an extent that was once unimaginable. Waves of migration indelibly change the rhythms, colours and flavours of their host communities. **Some 150 million legal immigrants live outside their country of birth, joined by uncounted millions who have immigrated illegally.**

**These trends will continue. Globalisation has dissolved the tight bond between community and geography.** Economic opportunity, for rich and poor alike, can lie in distant lands. Some 45 million young people enter the job market in the developing world each year, but there are not enough jobs at home for all of them. Meanwhile war and civil conflict add their refugees to the mix.

Immigration brings both blessings and problems. **Immigrants now account for two thirds of the population growth in the**

**30 member countries of the OECD**, where an ageing workforce requires new young workers. Meanwhile, remittances sent home by immigrants total some $145 billion a year and generate nearly $300 billion in economic activity, more than is provided either by Foreign Development Aid or Foreign Direct Investment.

At the same time, immigrant communities can sharply strain public and private resources. The resulting competition with older residents can cause resentment and hostility. **More than half of the respondents in various European opinion polls have a negative view of immigration**. The so-called "Clash of Civilisations" is both a local and a global danger. But it need not be this way. Nor has it always been this way down through the sweep of history. Yes, cultural clash has been one major theme in the human story. But so, has inter-cultural cooperation.

This country and this university know from your own history how Islamic and Christian cultures met in this part of the world many centuries ago — and how enriching their interactions were for both traditions. **This is a good time and place to emphasise the manifold blessings that come when peoples decide to stop shouting at one another, and instead begin listening and learning.**

Cross cultural interaction has been a central focus of my own activities in the nearly 50 years since I became Imam of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. **The ethics of Islam bridge faith and society, so my responsibilities as spiritual leader are accompanied by a strong engagement in issues of community wellbeing.**

The Ismailis are themselves a culturally-diverse community. They live, as minorities, in more than twenty-five countries, primarily in the developing world, but also in Europe, including Portugal, and North America. This Ismaili multi-cultural experience is reflected in the approach of the is Aga Khan Development Network — working with a wide array of

partners to help the disadvantaged, regardless of their origin. We are pleased, for example, that our work in Portugal has recently been formalised in cooperative agreements with both the Portuguese Government and the Patriarchate of Lisbon.

In discussing cultural diversity, let me also mention our recent partnership with the Government of Canada to create a new Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. This Centre will draw on both Ismaili experience and the experience of **Canada itself, where a pluralist society thrives and where, in contrast to much of world opinion, 80 per cent of the public welcomes immigration as a positive development**

In honouring me today, you honour the tradition which I represent, and, in doing so, you are renewing an inspiring story of intercultural affection and intercultural respect, of mutual dependence and mutual reinforcement.

*This brings me to my central question. What is it we can now do to nurture healthy and competent democracies, in old settings where democracy has grown weary and in new settings where it is freshly planted?*

**This brings me to my central question. What is it we can now do to nurture healthy and competent democracies, in old settings where democracy has grown weary and in new settings where it is freshly planted? I would make three suggestions — each of which is reflected in the experience of this university.**

## 1. STRENGTHENED CIVIL INSTITUTIONS

**First, we must strengthen our civil institutions. This means realising that a democratic society requires much more than democratic politics. Governments alone do not make democracy work. Private initiative is also essential, including a vital role for those institutions which are collectively described as "civil society."** By civil society I

mean an array of institutions which operate on a private, voluntary basis, but which are driven by public motivations. They include institutions dedicated to education, to culture, to science and research. They include commercial, labour, professional and ethnic associations, as well as entities devoted to maintaining health, protecting the environment, and curing disease. Religious institutions are central to civil society — and so are institutions of the media.

**Sometimes, in our preoccupation with government and politics, we neglect the importance of civil institutions. I am not suggesting we ignore politics, but I am suggesting that we think beyond our political preoccupations. A thriving civil sector is essential in renewing the promise of democracy**.

## 2. RIGOROUS, RESPONSIBLE AND RELEVANT EDUCATION

The second democratic pillar **I would mention is education: rigorous, responsible and relevant education. We must do a better job of training leaders and shaping institutions to meet more demanding tests of competence and higher standards of excellence.** This means moving beyond the notion that better education simply means broader schooling — wider access to formal learning. We must accompany our concern for quantity with a heightened concern for quality. **Are the curricula we teach relevant to the knotty problems of the future? Or are we still providing a twentieth century education for twenty-first century leaders?**

Our system of The Aga Khan Universities and The Aga Khan Academies are addressing such questions **as they work to advance the concept of meritocracy in the developing world and to maintain world class standards which will stretch our students rather than patronising them.**

*For too long some of our schools have taught too many subjects as subsets of dogmatic commitments. Economic insights, for example, were treated as ideological choices rather than as exercises in scientific problem solving.*

For too long some of our schools have taught too many subjects as subsets of dogmatic commitments. **Economic insights, for example, were treated as ideological choices rather than as exercises in scientific problem solving.** Too often, education made our students less flexible — confident to the point of arrogance that they now had all the answers — rather than more flexible, humble in their life-long openness to new questions and new responses. An important goal of quality education is to equip each generation to participate effectively in what has been called "the great conversation" of our times. **This means, on one hand, being unafraid of controversy. But it also means being sensitive to the values and outlooks of others.**

This brings me back to the current headlines. For I must believe that it is ignorance which explains the publishing of those caricatures which have brought such pain to Islamic peoples. I note that the Danish journal where the controversy originated acknowledged, in a recent letter of apology, that it had never realised the sensitivities involved. **In this light, perhaps, the controversy can be described less as a clash of civilisations and more as a clash of ignorance. The alternative explanation would be that the offence was intended — in which case we would be confronted with evil of a different sort. But even to attribute the problem to ignorance is in no way to minimise its importance. In a pluralistic world, the consequences of ignorance can be profoundly damaging.**

*Perhaps, too, it is ignorance which has allowed so many participants in this discussion to confuse liberty with license — implying that the sheer absence of restraint on human impulse can constitute a sufficient moral framework….*

*Ignorance, arrogance, insensitivity: these attitudes rank high among the great public enemies of our time. And the educational enterprise, at its best, can be an effective antidote to all of them.*

Perhaps, too, it is ignorance which has allowed so many participants in this discussion to confuse liberty with license — implying that the sheer absence of restraint on human impulse can constitute a sufficient moral framework. This is not to say that governments should censor offensive speech. Nor does the answer lie in violent words or violent actions. **But I am suggesting that freedom of expression is an incomplete value unless it is used honourably, and that the obligations of citizenship in any society should include a commitment to informed and responsible expression.**

If we can commit ourselves, on all sides, to that objective, then the current crisis could become an educational opportunity — an occasion for enhanced awareness and broadened perspectives. **Ignorance, arrogance, insensitivity: these attitudes rank high among the great public enemies of our time. And the educational enterprise, at its best, can be an effective antidote to all of them.**

## 3. RENEWAL OF ETHICAL COMMITMENT

**Let me move, then, to my third suggestion for strengthening democracy in a pluralistic world: the renewal of ethical commitment.**

*How, in an increasingly cynical time, can we inspire people to a new set of aspirations — reaching beyond rampant materialism, the new relativism, self-serving individualism, and resurgent tribalism. The search for justice and security, the struggle for equality of opportunity, the quest for tolerance and harmony, the pursuit of human dignity: these*

*are moral imperatives which we must work and think about on a daily basis.*

**Democratic processes are presumably about the sharing of power, broadening the number who help shape social decisions**. But that sharing, in and of itself, means little apart from the **purposes for which power is finally used**. **To speak of end purposes, in turn, is to enter the realm of ethics**. **What are our ultimate goals? Whose interests do we seek to serve? How, in an increasingly cynical time, can we inspire people to a new set of aspirations — reaching beyond rampant materialism, the new relativism, self-serving individualism, and resurgent tribalism. The search for justice and security, the struggle for equality of opportunity, the quest for tolerance and harmony, the pursuit of human dignity: these are moral imperatives which we must work and think about on a daily basis.**

**In the ethical realm, as in the educational realm, one of the great stumbling blocks is arrogance. Even the resurgence of religious feeling — which should be such a positive force — can become a negative influence when it turns into self-righteousness. All of the world's great religions warn against this excess, yet in the name of those same religions too many are tempted to play God themselves rather than recognising their humility before the Divine.**

A central element in a truly religious outlook, it seems to me, is the quality of personal humility — a recognition that strive as we might, we will still fall short of our ideals, that climb as we might, there will still be unexplored and mysterious peaks above us. **It means recognising our own creaturehood, and thus our human limitations. In that recognition, it seems to me, lies our best protection against false prophecies and divisive dogmatism.**

A deepening sense of **spiritual commitment, and the ethical framework that goes** with it, will be a central requirement if we are to find our way through the minefields and the quick

sands of modern life. **A strengthening of religious institutions should be a vital part of this process. To be sure, freedom of religion is a critical value in a pluralistic society. But if freedom of religion deteriorates into freedom from religion, then societies will find themselves lost in a bleak and unpromising landscape with no compass, no roadmap and no sense of ultimate direction.**

What I am calling for, in sum, is an ethical sensibility which can be shared across denominational lines and which can foster a universal moral outlook.

**In conclusion, then, I would ask you think with me about these three requirements: a new emphasis on civil institutions, a more rigorous concern for educational excellence, and a renewed commitment to ethical standards. For these are all ways in which we can encourage a climate of positive pluralism in our world and thus help meet the current crisis of democracy. For only in such a climate will we come to see our differences as sources of enrichment rather than sources of division. And only in such a climate can we come to see "the other" not as a curse or a threat, but as an opportunity and a blessing, whether "the other" lives across the street or across the world.**

**His Highness the Aga Khan IV**
http://www.akdn.org/Content/228/Evora-University-Symposium

## 29. ACCEPTANCE ADDRESS – INVESTITURE AS A FOREIGN MEMBER, CLASS OF HUMANITIES, ACADEMY OF SCIENCES OF LISBON (LISBON, PORTUGAL)

**8 MAY 2009**

During the Golden Jubilee of my Imamat I visited numerous countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and I came into contact with men

and women who were intelligent, mature, responsible and who were seeking to build nation states … but these builders were seeking to build on the basis of an enormous knowledge deficit….

[The] question is a deficit of what knowledge? What knowledge is necessary in these environments, so that in the decades ahead we can look towards stable nation states around the world?

My conclusion was that the deficit of knowledge is in many areas which are not being offered in education, which are not being taught. Because what have been inherited are **curricula** of the past, reflections of the past, attitudes of the past, rather than looking forwards, asking what do future generations need to know. And that is the central question which needs to be asked, and on which an academy such as this can have such a massive impact….

Professor Oliveira,

Minister of National Defence, Mr. Nuno Severiano Teixeira,

Minister of Culture, Mr. Pinto Ribeiro,

Apostolic Nuncio, Rino Passagata,

Excellencies,

Members of the Academy,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is an immense honour for me to be here today and to have been admitted to the Academy of Sciences of Lisbon. It reminds me of the day on which I was given an honorary doctorate from the University of Evora. And I do not want to let this occasion pass, without recollecting that very, very special day.
You here in the Academy are guardians of old knowledge and developers of new knowledge. And I thought I would share with you today, very

briefly, some of the reflections that have occurred to me since I have completed my journeys in the developing world during my Golden Jubilee. I visited numerous countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and I came into contact with men and women who were intelligent, mature, responsible and who were seeking to build nation states — nation states which would be autonomous, which would be well governed, whose economies would be competent, but these builders were seeking to build on the basis of an enormous knowledge deficit. These men and women in public office simply did not have access to the demography of men and women who are sufficiently educated to be able to man the institutions of state.

And I have come away with another question stemming from my point that there is a deficit of knowledge. The key question is a deficit of what knowledge? What knowledge is necessary in these environments, so that in the decades ahead we can look towards stable nation states around the world?

My conclusion was that the deficit of knowledge is in many areas which are not being offered in education, which are not being taught. Because what have been inherited are curricula of the past, reflections of the past, attitudes of the past, rather than looking forwards, asking what do future generations need to know. And that is the central question which needs to be asked, and on which an academy such as this can have such a massive impact.

*People are not born valuing pluralism. Therefore, pluralism is the sort of subject which needs to be part of education, from the youngest age onwards…. Another aspect is ethics…. The third example is constitutionality.*

Let me mention three areas. First of all, there is the nature of society in these countries. One of the characteristics of all these countries is that they have pluralist societies. And if pluralism is not part of the educational curriculum, the leaders and the peoples of these societies will always be

at risk of conflict, because they are not accustomed to pluralism and they do not value it.

People are not born valuing pluralism. Therefore, pluralism is the sort of subject which needs to be part of education, from the youngest age onwards.

Another aspect is ethics. But not ethics born of dogma, but ethics in civil society. Because when governments fail in these parts of the world, it is civil society which steps in to sustain development. And when ethics are not part of education, teaching, examinations; when they are not part of medicine, the quality of care; when they are not part of financial services, then civil society is undermined. Ethics in civil society is another aspect which is absolutely critical.

The third example is constitutionality. So many countries which I have visited have stumbled into, run into difficulties in governance, because the national constitutions were not designed and conceived to serve the profiles of those countries. And therefore, teaching in areas such as comparative government is another area which is absolutely critical.

*If these are the subjects which are necessary today, what are the subjects which will be necessary tomorrow? Is the developing world going to continue in this deficit of knowledge? Or are we going to enable it to move forwards in to new areas of knowledge?*

If these are the subjects which are necessary today, what are the subjects which will be necessary tomorrow? Is the developing world going to continue in this deficit of knowledge? Or are we going to enable it to move forwards in to new areas of knowledge?

My conviction is that we have to help these countries move into new areas of knowledge. And therefore, I think of areas such as the space sciences, such as the neurosciences. There are so many new areas of inquiry which, unless we make an effort to share globally, we will continue

to have vast populations around the world who will continue in this knowledge deficit.

Portugal has an extraordinary history. It has been influencing the world for centuries. Your influence today is not limited to Europe. Your influence is massive through your presence in South America. A country like Brazil is a case study for many countries around the world. Brazil is dealing with new areas of knowledge in air transport — that is a new area of knowledge — competing with the best in the world in areas such as agriculture, the development of cash crops, and sugar at new levels of technology.

So, the influence of Portugal and the capacity of Portugal to influence what is happening around the world is immense. And it is in this context that I want to thank you for electing me a member of the Academy and for the opportunity you have given me to encourage you to use your global influence, through your history, through your knowledge, through your contacts with the developing world, to bring to the rest of the world what is best in your knowledge.
Thank you.

## 30. MEDIA PLURALISM

a. https://gfmd.info/report-on-media-pluralism-and-media-freedom-in-the-eu-htm/

b. https://cmpf.eui.eu/media-pluralism-monitor/

c. https://cmpf.eui.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/questionnaire-MPM2017-for-publication.pdf

d. https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/document.cfm?doc_id=673
52

e. https://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/60773/CMPF_Polic
yReport2017.pdf?sequence=4

f. (https://cmpf.eui.eu/mpm2020-executive-summary/)


## 31. ISMAILI CONSTITUTION
a. www.Ismaili.net
b. http://www.ismaili.net/html/modules.php?op=modload&name=p
hpBB2&file=viewtopic&p=68400#68400


## 32. FARMANS TO SHARE THEM and  DAIS – Ambassadors

a. Dai http://ismaili.net/timeline/2018/101-proofs-chatur.pdf
b. www.ismaili.net


## 33. LETTER TO GCP 15 OCT 2020

**From:** M@chatur.co.uk <m@chatur.co.uk>
**Sent:** 15 October 2020 14:41
**To:** 'info@pluralism.ca' <info@pluralism.ca>
**Subject:** my article on pluralism and research

Att. Meredith P McGghie,

I have not heard from your team/You. I am in the final draft stages
of my paper. I would like to say that GCP responded and responds
to requests from the Public and especially Canadians or Members

of the Ismaili community. I asked for a list of the GCP agreed Pluralism drivers, and any clarification on the current definition of Pluralism used on the website, FB and Twitter.

Can you also please confirm or clarify the following four core programs, and 6 critical priorities of GCP.

**The 4 core main programs of the Centre for 2020 and 2021 under the GCP 10-year plan are**

1    Proactively Promote and communicate Pluralism (Implement 2020 plan)
2    A Global Pluralism Index (in progress – date of completion not known)
3    Biennial Pluralism Awards (next in 2021),
4    Education - Educators pilot course on pluralism (planned for 2021) – (can I have the curriculum if ready or when ready).

**The following are 6 critical priorities or success factors to achieve the goal of Pluralism, and the 10-year GCP Plan.**

1. All the Team top down embrace, and practice, pluralism all the time in everything they do
2. Leverage opportunities and access through the Government of Canada, and Aga Khan community
3. Activate the continuum of teaching and learnings of pluralism, collaboratively, including the starting and escalating the educational course and on Pluralism
4. Implement the 4 core programs and plans (As above)
5. Secure additional funding vital for the 10-year plan (Has this been secured? If not is there a Plan B) - Assuming there are no other leveraging options based on multilateral collaboration and cooperation.
6. Inclusive Leadership & best practices by the GCP management team

Kind regards

Mahebub Chatur

"In 2020, securing funding and partners to support the growth and impact of core programs will be vital" (GCP)

The key to future progress will lie less in traditional top-down systems of command and control -- and more in a broad, bottom-up spirit of coordination and cooperation" *(Aga Khan)*


## 34. LA FONTAYNE BALDWIN LECTURE 15 OCT 2010

Bismillah ir-Rahman ir-Rahim.
The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson,
Mr. John Ralston Saul,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Mesdames et Messieurs:

Lorsque j'ai été invité à donner la conférence de ce symposium LaFontaine-Baldwin, ce fut pour moi un grand honneur et j'ai éprouvé beaucoup d'émotion. C'est également un grand plaisir de se retrouver parmi de si nombreux amis tant anciens que nouveaux, ici à Toronto – et je suis particulièrement heureux d'avoir été présenté si chaleureusement ce soir par mes bons amis John Ralston Saul et Adrienne Clarkson. Je me sens profondément reconnaissant de cette très aimable invitation et de votre généreux accueil.

[Google translation] When I was invited to the conference this LaFontaine-Baldwin, it was a great honour for me and I felt very emotional. It is also a great pleasure to be among so many friends both old and new, here in Toronto – and I am particularly pleased to have been presented so warmly this evening by my good

friends John Ralston Saul and Adrienne Clarkson. I feel deeply grateful for this very kind invitation and for your generous hospitality.

When I first received this invitation, I was deeply honoured. But I was also, perhaps, a bit intimidated. I was impressed by the Lecture's prestigious history, the contributions of nine former Lecturers, and the Lecture's focus on Canada's civic culture.

As you may know, my close ties with Canada go back almost four decades, to the time when many thousands of Asian refugees from Uganda, including many Ismailis, were welcomed so generously in this society. These ties have continued through the cooperation of our Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) with several Canadian Institutions, including the establishment, four years ago, of the Global Centre for Pluralism in Ottawa. I had the opportunity last week to chair a highly productive meeting there of the Centre's Board of Directors.

Earlier this year, we also celebrated here in Toronto the Foundation Ceremony for the Aga Khan Museum and a new Ismaili Centre. So, there are powerful chords of memory from four decades ago, four years ago, and even four months ago, that tie me closely to Canada.

I was also deeply moved by Canada's extraordinary gift to me of honorary citizenship. I always have felt at home when I come to Canada but never more so than in the wake of this honour. And if I ever felt any trepidation about accepting this evening's invitation, it has been significantly reduced by the fact that I can now claim, however modestly, to be a Canadian!

My thanks go to all of you who are attending this Lecture or are watching and listening from elsewhere. It is a busy autumn night, I know. For one thing, I believe the undefeated Maple Leaf's are playing on television at this very hour!

My Canadian friends like to tell about a time when the Stanley Cup playoffs were in full swing, and a gentleman took his seat in the

front row of the stadium, leaving a seat open next to him. His neighbour asked why such an excellent seat for such an important event was unclaimed, and the man explained that his wife normally sat there but that she had passed away. The neighbour expressed his sympathies, but asked whether a member of the family, or another relative or friend might have been able to use the ticket. "No," the man replied, "they're all at the funeral."

The subject of tonight's Lecture, Pluralism, may not have quite the emotional hold of the Stanley Cup, but, for me, it has been a matter of immense importance. One reason, no doubt, is that the Ismaili people have long shared in the experience of smaller **groups everywhere — living in larger societies. In addition, my life-long interest in development has focused my attention on the challenge of social diversity. My interest in launching the Global Centre for Pluralism reflected my sense that there was yet no institution dedicated to the question of diversity in our world**, and that Canada's national experience made it a natural home for this venture.

The Centre plans, of course, to engage expert researchers to help in its work. Those plans remind me of a "think-tank" executive who found himself floating aimlessly across the sky one day in a hot air balloon (I suspect he was the chairman!). As he hovered above, he called down to a man below, "Can you tell me where I am?" The man shouted back, giving him his longitude, latitude and altitude. "Thanks," said the chairman, "that's interesting, but you must be a professor!" "Why do you say that?" asked the man below. "Well," the chairman responded, "you have given me a lot of precise information, which I'm sure is technically correct, but which is not of the faintest use to me."

The man below replied, "And you must be an executive. "How did you know?" asked the balloonist. "Well," said the man, "you don't know where you are, or where you're going. You have risen to where you are on a lot of hot air. And you expect people beneath you to solve your problems!"

I trust that this story will **not** characterise the work of the Centre. [Emphasis original]

I would like to talk with you this evening about three things:

- first, the long history of pluralism in our world,
- secondly, the acute intensification of that challenge in our time, and
- third, the path ahead, how can we best respond to that challenge.


## I. THE PAST: PLURALISM IN HISTORY

### *EARLY HISTORY*

**Let me begin by observing that the challenge of pluralism is as old as human civilisation. History is filled with instructive models of success and failure in coping with human diversity.**

In looking at this history, I am going to do an unexpected thing for a graduate of Harvard University and that is to quote from a professor at that "other" New England school, a place called Yale. You may remember how President Kennedy, when he received an honorary degree from Yale, observed that he now had the best of both worlds a Yale degree and a Harvard education! Perhaps I am trying to reap something of the same advantage tonight — mentioning my Harvard education, but quoting a Yale professor.

*Amy Chua, of the Yale Law School, recently published a persuasive warning about the decline and fall of history's dominant empires. Their downward spiral, she says, stemmed from their embrace of intolerant and exclusionist attitudes.*

Amy Chua, of the Yale Law School, recently published a persuasive warning about the decline and fall of history's dominant empires. Their downward spiral, she says, stemmed from their embrace of intolerant and exclusionist attitudes. The earlier success of these so-called "hyper powers" reflected their pragmatic, inclusive policies, drawing on the talents of a wide array of peoples. She cites seven examples, from Ancient Persia to the modern United States, from Ancient Rome and the Tang Empire in China, to the Spanish,

Dutch and British Empires. In each case, pluralism was a critical variable.

You may know how, in ancient times, the common view was that nature had separated humankind into distinctive peoples. Aristotle was among the first to reject such arbitrary distinctions, and to conceptualise the human race as a single whole. It is interesting to note that his young pupil, on whom he impressed this notion, turned out to be Alexander the Great — whose international empire was animated by this new intellectual outlook. And, similarly, the Roman empire thrived initially by extending the concept of Roman citizenship to distant, highly disparate peoples.

But even as Europe fragmented after the Fall of Rome, another success story emerged in Egypt. I have a special interest in this story; it concerns my ancestors, the Fatimid Caliphs, who founded the city of Cairo 1,000 years ago. They were themselves Shia in an overwhelmingly dominant Sunni culture, and for nearly two centuries they led a strong pluralistic society, welcoming a variety of Islamic interpretations as well as people of Christian, Jewish and other backgrounds.

Similarly, on the Iberian Peninsula between the 8th and 16th Centuries, Muslim, Christian and Jewish cultures interacted creatively in what was known as Al-Andalus. Remarkably, it lasted for most of seven centuries — a longer period than the time that has since passed.

*The fading of Al-Andalus came as a new spirit of nationalism rose in Europe … Where local and tribal loyalties once dominated, national identifications came to flourish. As we know, these nationalist rivalries eventually exploded into world war.*

The fading of Al-Andalus came as a new spirit of nationalism rose in Europe propelled by what scholars have called a sense of "imagined community." Where local and tribal loyalties once dominated, national identifications came to flourish. As we know, these nationalist rivalries eventually exploded into world war. The post-war emergence of the European Union has been a response to that history, much as regional groupings from South East Asia, to Central

Asia, from Latin America to Eastern Africa, have been testing the potential for pan-national cooperation.


### CANADA AND PLURALISM

This brings me to the story of Canada, shaped so fundamentally by two European cultures. This dual inheritance was an apparent weakness at one point, but it was transformed into an enormous strength thanks to leaders like LaFontaine and Baldwin, as well as those who shaped the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, and so many others who contributed to a long, incremental process.

That process has been extended over time to include a broader array of peoples, the First Peoples, and the Inuit's, and a host of new immigrant groups. I am impressed by the fact that some 44 percent of Canadians today are of **neither** French nor British descent. I am told, in fact, that a typical Canadian citizenship ceremony might now include people from two dozen different countries. [Emphasis original]

To be sure, the vision I am describing is sometimes questioned and still incomplete, as I know Canadians insist on acknowledging. But it is nonetheless an asset of enormous global value.


### THE DEVELOPING WORLD

Let me turn now to the Less Developed World, where the challenge of diversity is often the most difficult problem our Development Network faces.

*Meanwhile, in Africa and elsewhere, Europe's colonial policies often worked to accentuate division both through the use of divide-and-rule strategies, and through the imposition of arbitrary national boundaries, often ignoring tribal realities.*

This legacy was partly shaped by European influences. In the 19th century, for example, European economic competition was sometimes projected onto Middle Eastern divisions, including the Maronite alliance with France and the Druze alliance with Britain.

Meanwhile, in Africa and elsewhere, Europe's colonial policies often worked to accentuate division both through the use of divide-and-rule strategies, and through the imposition of arbitrary national boundaries, often ignoring tribal realities.

In my view, the West continues at times to misread such complexities, including the immense diversity within the Muslim world. Often, too, the West's development assistance programs assume that diversity is primarily an urban phenomenon discounting the vast size and complexity of rural areas. Yet, it is in the countryside that ethnic divides can be most conflictual — as Rwanda and Afghanistan have demonstrated — and where effective development could help pre-empt explosion.

I remember a visit I made almost half a century ago, in 1973, to Mindanao, the one part of the Philippine Islands that was never ruled by Spain. It is home to a significant Islamic minority, and I was struck even then by how religious distinctions were mirrored in economic disparities. Since that time, in predictable ways, economic injustice and cultural suspicion have fuelled one another in Mindanao. The quandary is how to break the cycle, although the Philippine Government is now addressing the situation. But when history allows such situations to fester, they become increasingly difficult to cure.

The co-dependent nature of economic deprivation and ethnic diversity is evident throughout most of Asia and Africa. And most of these countries are ill-prepared for such challenges. The legitimacy of pluralist values, which is part of the social psyche in countries like Canada, or in Portugal, where so many Ismailis now live, is often absent in the Developing World.

*The lesson: economic advantage can sometimes ease social tensions, but social and cultural cleavage can undermine economic promise.*

I think particularly, now, of Africa. The largest country there, Nigeria, comprises some 250 ethnic groups, often in conflict. In this case, vast oil reserves — once a reason for hope — have become a source of division. One wonders what might happen in other such

places, in Afghanistan, for example, if its immense subsoil wealth should become an economic driver.

The lesson: economic advantage can sometimes ease social tensions, but social and cultural cleavage can undermine economic promise.


### *CENTRAL ASIA*

Central Asia also deserves our attention tonight. Our Network's activity there includes the University of Central Asia, founded ten years ago, with campuses now in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.

You will recall the outbreak of inter-ethnic violence in Kyrgyzstan last June — thousands died; hundreds of thousands were made homeless. And yet, this high mountain region had traditionally been a place of lively cultural interchange going back to the time of the Silk Route, one of history's first global connecting links. The violence that raged between the Kyrgyz and Uzbek communities had tangled roots. The Kyrgyz, traditionally nomads, were forced in the last century to settle on Soviet collective farms, joined by new Russian settlers. Tensions mounted, especially with the more settled Uzbeks, and a harsh economy compounded the distress.

Kyrgyzstan, along with Tajikistan, is one of the two poorest countries to emerge from the former Soviet Union. But economics alone do not account for its tragedies. Observers had long noted the absence of cross-cultural contact in Kyrgyzstan, the weakness of institutional life — both at the government level and in the realm of civil society — and a failing educational system.

Another element in the equation was international indifference — indeed, almost total international ignorance about Central Asia.

The result was a society ready to explode at the touch of a tiny spark. How that spark was first struck has been much debated. But the fundamental questions concern the perilous preconditions for violence, and whether they might better have been identified and addressed. Meanwhile, a spirit of hope persists, even in this

troubled setting. Shortly after the violence, a public referendum approved constitutional reforms which could open a new era of progress.


### *OTHER DEVELOPING WORLD EXAMPLES*

The referendum in Kyrgyzstan this summer was followed one month later by a similar referendum in Kenya. I spent a part of my childhood in Kenya and our Network is very active there. So, we watched with great sadness as Kenya descended into tribal warfare following the disputed election of 2007. In Kenya's case, the institutions of civil society took a lead role in addressing the crisis. One result was the public endorsement this past August of a new constitution — by a two-to-one ratio. Like the reforms in Kyrgyzstan, it includes a dramatic dispersion of national and presidential power.

We are reminded in such moments that hope can sometimes grow out of desolation. I think of other places in Africa, like Mozambique, which also found a path to greater stability after a long period of warfare.

I think, too, of Indonesia, which emerged from its colonial experience as a radically fragmented state, both ethnically and geographically. Its response included a nationally oriented educational system teaching a shared national language. But we must be careful in drawing conclusions. Other attempts to foster a single language as a unifying resource — Urdu for example, or Swahili, or Bangla — have sometimes worked to separate peoples from the main currents of global progress.

*One of the prime lessons of history, ancient and recent, is that one size does not fit all.*

The question of language is very sensitive, as Canadians well know. And one of the central truths about pluralism is that what works in one setting may work differently in others. Afghanistan is a case in point. In contrast with places where inflexible nationalism can be a

problem, Afghanistan suffers from the opposite condition: an inability to imagine, let alone create, a broad sense of nationhood. One of the prime lessons of history, ancient and recent, is that one size does not fit all.

## II. THE PRESENT: INTENSIFICATION AND URGENCY

**Let me move now to my second major topic, the present intensification of the pluralism challenge and the sense of urgency that comes with it.**

**Clearly, the challenges posed by diversity are mounting. New techn**ologies mean that people mix and mingle more than ever before. Massive human migrations are part of the story. Two-thirds of recent population growth in the 30 largest OECD countries has resulted from highly diverse migrations. Meanwhile, communications technology means that even those who live on the other side of the world are as near to us as those who live on the other side of the street.

The variety of the world is not only more available, it is nearly inescapable. Human difference is more proximate and more intense. What was once beyond our view is now at our side and indeed, to use the popular expression, "in our face." Almost everything now seems to "flow" globally: people and images, money and credit, goods and services, microbes and viruses, pollution and armaments, crime and terror. But let us remember, too, that constructive impulses can also flow more readily, as they do when international organisations join hands across dividing lines.

The challenge of diversity is now a global challenge and how we address it will have global consequences.

Economic stress and new environmental fragilities have further intensified the difficulties, and so has the fading of the bi-polar political order. It was once said that the end of the Cold War meant "the end of history." In fact, just the reverse was true. History resumed in earnest in the 1990's as old tribal passions resurfaced.

Meanwhile, the way we communicate with one another has been revolutionised. But more communication has not meant more cooperation. More information has also meant more **mis**information: more superficial snapshots, more shards of stray information taken out of context. And it has also meant more wilful **dis**information, not only differences of opinion, but distortions of fact. A wide-open Internet allows divisive information to travel as far and as fast as reliable information. There are virtually no barriers to entry and anyone, responsible or irresponsible, can play the game. New digital technologies mean more access, but less accountability. [Emphasis original]

*Technologies, after all, are merely instruments — they can be used for good or ill. How we use them will depend, in every age and in every culture, not on what sits on our desktops, but on what is in our heads and in our hearts.*

The advent of the Internet and the omnipresence of mobile telephony seem to promise so much! But so, once, did television and radio and the telegraph before that and, even earlier, the invention of the printing press. Yet each of these breakthroughs, while connecting so many, was also used to widen cultural gulfs. Technologies, after all, are merely instruments — they can be used for good or ill. How we use them will depend, in every age and in every culture, not on what sits on our desktops, but on what is in our heads and in our hearts.

It has never been easy for people to live together. I am not one who believes in some natural, human disposition to welcome the stranger. Wiping away superficial misunderstandings will not by itself allow a spontaneous spirit of accommodation to blossom. As Adrienne Clarkson said at this lecture in 2007, we cannot count on the power of "love" to solve our problems, as important as that quality is. A part of our challenge, as she said, is learning to live and work with people we may not particularly like! To do so will require concerted, deliberate efforts to build social institutions and cultural habits which take account of difference, which see diversity as an opportunity rather than a burden.

I have mentioned both social institutions and cultural habits — each dimension is critical. In a sense, one concerns the hardware and one concerns the software of the pluralism experience.


## III. THE FUTURE; THE PATH AHEAD

This brings me to my third and final topic this evening, the path ahead: How we might better predict and prevent breakdowns, and encourage progress.


### *INSTITUTIONAL CONCERNS*

On the institutional level, we can begin by looking at the structures of public governance.

Let me warn, first, against a naive hope that simply advancing the concept of democracy will achieve our goals. Not so. The high count of failed democracies — including some 40 percent of the member states of the United Nations — should disabuse us of this notion.

*Too often, democracy is understood to be only about elections, momentary majorities. But effective governance is much more than that…. We must go beyond the simple word "democracy" if **we are to build a framework for effective pluralism.***

**Too often, democracy is understood to be only about elections, momentary majorities. But effective governance is much more than that. What happens before and after elections? How are choices framed and explained? How is decision-making shared so that leaders of different backgrounds can interactively govern rather than small cliques who rule autocratically? We must go beyond the simple word "democracy" if we are to build a framework for effective pluralism.**

This will mean writing more effective constitutions informed by more sophisticated understandings of comparative political systems. It will mean explaining those arrangements more adequately and adjusting and amending them. It will mean separating and balancing powers, structuring multi-tiered, and

often asymmetrical, systems of federalism, and defining rights and freedoms — as Canada has learned to do. I would also point here to the experience of the largest democracy, India, which defines specific Constitutional rights for eight distinctive cultural groups, an approach which has been echoed in Malaysia. And we have seen how Kenya and Kyrgyzstan are moving now to decentralise power. All of these institutional arrangements can help resolve political deadlock, build social coherence and avoid the dangers of "winner take all." They can provide multiple levers of social influence, allowing individuals of every background to feel that they have "a stake in society" — that they can influence the forces that shape their lives.

How we define citizenship is a central factor in this story, but one that is newly in dispute. Even the well-established concept that citizenship belongs to everyone who is born on national soil has been questioned recently in parts of Europe and the United States as attitudes to immigration intensify.

Independent judicial and educational systems are also essential to effective pluralism, and so are non-governmental agents of influence: the institutions of civil society. As we have seen, Kenya presents a positive case study in this regard, while civil society in Kyrgyzstan was largely marginalised during its crisis.

Independent news media are another key element. This is why our Network has been involved for fifty years in the media of East Africa, and why the Aga Khan University is planning to create there a new Graduate School of Media and Communications. The value of independent media was summarised recently by a veteran Ghanian journalist, Kwane Karikari, who wrote of their

*…remarkable contributions to peaceful and transparent elections in Benin, Cape Verde, Ghana, Mali, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia; to post-conflict transitions … in Liberia, Mozambique and Sierra Leone; and to sustaining constitutional rule … in Guinea, Kenya and Nigeria.*

Finally, let me emphasise that healthy institutions will tap the widest possible range of energies and insights. They will optimise

each society's meritocratic potential, so that opportunity will reward competence, from whomever and wherever it may come — independent of birth or wealth or theology or physical power.


*THE PUBLIC MINDSET*

**But institutional reforms will have lasting meaning only when there is a social mindset to sustain them. There is a profound reciprocal relationship between institutional and cultural variables. How we think shapes our institutions. And then our institutions shape us. How we see the past is an important part of this mindset.**

A sense of historic identity can immensely enrich our lives. But we also know how myopic commitments to "identity" can turn poisonous when they are dominated by bad memories, steeped in grievance and resentment. The marginalisation of peoples can then become a malignant process, as people define themselves by what they are against. The question of "Who am I?" is quickly transformed into "Who is my enemy?"

Some would address this problem through a wilful act of historical amnesia but suppressing animosity can often produce future explosions. In Kenya, national history is largely missing from the public schools. And, in the absence of shared history, divided communities feed on their own fragmented memories of inter-tribal wrongs. On the other hand, the value of confronting memory lies in catharsis, an emotional healing process. As we know, the Truth and Reconciliation Process has helped South Africans address deep social divisions, as has Chile's Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago.

As societies come to think in pluralistic ways, I believe they can learn another lesson from the Canadian experience, the importance of resisting both assimilation and homogenisation — the subordination and dilution of minority cultures on the one hand, or an attempt to create some new, transcendent blend of identities, on the other.

*What the Canadian experience suggests to me is that identity itself can be pluralistic…. To cite a timely example, I believe one can live creatively and purposefully as both a devoted Muslim and a committed European.*

What the Canadian experience suggests to me is that identity itself can be pluralistic. Honouring one's own identity need not mean rejecting others. One can embrace an ethnic or religious heritage, while also sharing a sense of national or regional pride. To cite a timely example, I believe one can live creatively and purposefully as both a devoted Muslim and a committed European.

To affirm a particular identity is a fundamental human right, what some have called "the right to be heard." But the right to be heard implies an obligation to listen and, beyond that, a proactive obligation to observe and to learn. Surely, one of the most important tests of moral leadership is whether our leaders are working to widen divisions, or to bridge them.

*We might talk not just about the ideal of "harmony" — the sounding of a single chord — but also about "counterpoint." In counterpoint, each voice follows a separate musical line, but always as part of a single work of art, with a sense both of independence and belonging.*

When we talk about diversity, we often use the metaphor of achieving social "harmony." But perhaps we might also employ an additional musical comparison — a fitting image as we meet tonight in this distinguished musical setting. We might talk not just about the ideal of "harmony" — the sounding of a single chord — but also about "counterpoint." In counterpoint, each voice follows a separate musical line, but always as part of a single work of art, with a sense both of independence and belonging.

Let me add one further thought. I believe that the challenge of pluralism is never completely met. Pluralism is a process and not a product. It is a mentality, a way of looking at a diverse and changing world. A pluralistic environment is a kaleidoscope that history shakes every day.

**Responding to pluralism is an exercise in constant re-adaptation. Identities are not fixed in stone. What we imagine our communities to be must also evolve with the tides of history. As we think about pluralism, we should be open to the fact that there may be a variety of "best practices," a "diversity of diversities," and a "pluralism of pluralisms."**

In sum, what we must seek and share is what I have called "a cosmopolitan ethic," a readiness to accept the complexity of human society. It is an ethic which balances rights and duties. It is an ethic for all peoples. It will not surprise you to have me say that such an ethic can grow with enormous power out of the spiritual dimensions of our lives. In acknowledging the immensity of the Divine, we will also come to acknowledge our human limitations, the incomplete nature of human understanding.

*Even the diversity of our religious interpretations can be greeted as something to share with one another — rather than something to fear. In this spirit of humility and hospitality the stranger will be welcomed and respected, rather than subdued or ignored…. As we strive for this ideal, we will recognise that "the other" is both "present" and "different."*

In that light, the amazing diversity of Creation itself can be seen as a great gift to us — not a cause for anxiety but a source of delight. Even the diversity of our religious interpretations can be greeted as something to share with one another — rather than something to fear. In this spirit of humility and hospitality the stranger will be welcomed and respected, rather than subdued or ignored.

In the Holy Qur'an we read these words:

*O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your Lord Who created you from a single soul … [and] joined your hearts in love, so that by His grace ye became brethren.*

As we strive for this ideal, we will recognise that "the other" is both "present" and "different." And we will be able to appreciate this presence and this difference as gifts that can enrich our lives.

Let me conclude by emphasising once again the urgency of this challenge. We are at a particularly complex moment in human

history. The challenges of diversity are frightening for many people, in societies all around the world. But diversity also has the capacity to inspire.

**The mission of the Global Centre for Pluralism is to look closely at these challenges and to think hard about them. This will be demanding work. But as we go forward, we hope we can discern more predictably and pre-empt more effectively those conditions which lead to conflict among peoples. And we also hope that we can advance those institutions and those mindsets which foster constructive engagement.**

**The world we seek is not a world where difference is erased, but where difference can be a powerful force for good, helping us to fashion a new sense of co-operation and coherence in our world, and to build together a better life for all.**

Thank you very much.


**His Highness the Aga Khan IV**


*APRES LECTURE CONVERSATION WITH JOHN RALSTON SAUL*

**John Ralston Saul: Well that was really wonderful, and you know what we talked about was how difficult it is for people to understand what pluralism is, when we first started talking about this. There is a lot of mushy talk about it.**
**His Highness the Aga Khan:** Yes.


**JRS: And people getting excited, people getting frightened and what we hoped you would do was to deconstruct it and give it shape because you are one of the people who actually thinks about it, all over the world, all the time. And I thought that you did an enormous favour to Canada by laying it out in a way that no Canadian has, quite frankly. We maybe the centre of lot of this but we've never had the courage or the calm to lay it out the way you have so I personally am very grateful to you and, I think, as you saw, the audience, too.**
**AK:** (Applause) Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you.


**JRS: Did you find it — you know this is really very silly with Adrienne [Clarkson, Former Governor General of Canada] sitting over there and me asking questions, but anyway, I will do my best — I mean, when you started working on this, I guess, you had to think your way through all the experiences you had around the world and to see how they fit together and whether it could be deconstructed.**
**AK:** Well, I think what happens is that you observe, you respond to difficulties in various parts of the world, you ask what have been the causes of those difficulties. And you ask yourself, how many of those difficulties were predictable? And, if they are predictable, what are the instruments you need to understand the predictability and perhaps to pre-empt some of the problems. And, that's really

been a significant part of my life, because of the work that I do in Asia and Africa.

**JRS: One of the things that really struck me in what you said was that in spite of this astonishing, all this communication, all these methods of communication, the levels of ignorance about each other are almost higher than they used to be.**

**AK:** I think that's true and I think it's one of the major sources of the conflicts we're seeing around the world, which is that there is very great ignorance in terms of general knowledge. I think general knowledge has been seen in many parts of the world as an attribute of tertiary education. In the developing world, it has to be an attribute of secondary education and the reason is that there is such a small percentage of children that go into tertiary education. That it is at the level of secondary education that the most important areas of knowledge have to be given to young boys and young women.

**JRS: What do you think has to be done? I don't think it's any better here, quite frankly, but what do you think has to be done?**

*I am not certain that the curricula for rural children in the third world should be necessarily the same curricula as children in the urban environments …*

**AK:** Well I think we need to first of all identify what is useful for children in various parts of the world, in their societies. I am not certain that the curricula for rural children in the third world should be necessarily the same curricula as children in the urban environments because there is commonality but there's no equal use, so I think that what needs to be done is to define what is useful for the young girl or young boy's future. And, try to widen their horizons and give them knowledge which they can use during their lifetime. And today, knowledge of pluralism is I think one of the

most important things. And that will, if it's going to happen, will happen through education.

**JRS: One of the things that — I don't think anyone here is going to disagree with this and it's happening, I think, throughout the West — is that our societies are changing. We are this city where basically half the population was not born here, and yet we're still teaching in our universities, and therefore in our schools, the European cannon as if everything came from about ten thinkers in two or three countries and certainly none of them are Islamic or Buddhists or you know, from Africa.**

**AK:** Well, many, many years ago, more than half a century, I sat through a course called Humanities 1 at Harvard and I can recollect to my **amazement at the narrowness** of what we were taught in that course in relation to what I certainly felt I needed to know. And, I think that's one of the problems is that general education has remained very, very narrow in most parts of the world. [Emphasis original]

**JRS: How do you change that? I mean, I guess the tenure system, the narrow system that just keeps feeding off itself and, in a way, it gets narrower and not broader.**

*I think one of the problems that I have certainly seen is the lack of pedagogical material in these other subjects which are necessary, because these societies have not developed their own pedagogical material for their own purposes, let alone for global purposes.*

**AK:** Right. Well I think one of the problems that I have certainly seen is the lack of pedagogical material in these other subjects which are necessary, because these societies have not developed their own pedagogical material for their own purposes, let alone for global purposes. And so, it's easy to criticise Humanities 1 at Harvard but you ask yourself, well, what is the alternative for the

professors who are teaching that course? And, the alternative is to go and use material that young students will find useful. That material itself is extremely difficult to find. We are talking about civilisations, areas of the world, which have not produced that material, even for themselves.

**JRS: I suppose what you see now in Western universities — and so it's not even in the secondary schools — is that when there is a breakout, say to learning about Islam, it's some sort of specialist course on the side that's optional. That does not touch the core.**

AK: No, because you end up by educating a very small number of people who are specialists in the subject, but in a democracy you ask everybody to express an opinion (grinning with a twinkle in his eye).

**JRS: Yes. What an original idea. (Laughter)**

AK: Unless, I misunderstood what democracy is about.

**JRS: You noticed the silence. It's surprising how it isn't understood that easily. I noticed that you talked about the graduate school, basically journalism graduate school, at your university in Pakistan and East Africa …**

AK: In East Africa …

**JRS: One of the difficulties with journalism schools in the West, is that they tend to teach technical stuff, and not the content of what it is to be a journalist. What is going to happen in those schools? How is it going to help?**

*Finding competent journalists to write on comparative government in the developing world is a very very big problem.*

**AK:** Well I think the basic question is how do you develop quality communication in the developing world? And one of the things that we've looked at is who has the ultimate responsibility for what is sold on the streets, what is shown on television? And I think our conclusion has been essentially that it is the owner rather than the manufacturer of the product. And, therefore what we're looking at in our school of journalism is going to be to educate **owners** about what are their responsibilities to society, what are their responsibilities to the region. Because ultimately, they have to decide what it is that they want to distribute within their own countries. Now there are other areas also. We are finding it very difficult in many countries to find, for example, journalists who have been educated in comparative government and so when you have a referendum on a constitution — and you want to illustrate to your readership what are the different forms of government that people are being asked to comment on — finding competent journalists to write on comparative government in the developing world is a very very big problem. Which means that when there's a referendum on a constitution the actual value of that referendum becomes subject to question. [Emphasis original]

**JRS: As you were talking about educating the owners, I was just staring out there at a handful of senior journalists, wondering what they were thinking about their owners being educated. Very fascinating concept actually. Has it actually started or you are about to start?**

**AK:** No, we're about to start, and we have had a lot of help from a number of important institutions. But I think that, you know, owners have different goals. Some run their operations just as a business enterprise and they don't really mind what they do to society. Others, are very, very committed to political goals, or to political parties, or to faith communities. And, what is really

important, is to try to offer to people in the developing world **competent analysis**. And it's the problem of finding **competence** which is so difficult for us. [Emphasis original]

**JRS: Would you accept owners of Canadian media to come and be educated. [Laughter] But no, I am not being critical at all. I'm thinking about it as I was sitting here. You are open to all?**
AK: Well, I'll give you a little secret. The Globe and Mail was a partner of ours in launching our East African newspapers.

**JRS: That's interesting. Very interesting.**
AK: And, they helped us put together what is today the largest media group in Eastern Africa.

**JRS: I don't think many Canadians know that.**
AK: No! [Laughter]

**JRS: Has Globe and Mail told them? I don't know. I am staring out there at some people. Maybe that would be an interesting story to be told more in this country. Perhaps it has and I was away, I don't know. It was fascinating the way you talked about — and I forget the exact quote — but that basically that "I don't believe in some natural disposition to welcome stranger, that, in essence, pluralism isn't natural it has to be learnt, it has to be taught." I think it will be interesting to talk a bit more about that. People are … we've never really engaged with that idea. We've always wanted to think in Canada, that whatever this was we were doing, that it was natural. It works but I don't think there is no proof that it's natural.**

*[Expert Canadians in Early Childhood Development] have indicated that it's from the age of birth to practically till the age of three or four, that the child is most malleable to accepting other people around. So that, if it's true and I believe it is true, means that in countries of the developing world, we have to reverse our thinking on education. It means we have to make **massive** investment in early childhood development…. [S]o that from the earliest age, difference is seen as normal, not abnormal. [Emphasis original]*

**AK:** Well I sense pluralism of opinion on that in audience. [Laughter] But I think that it is not something which is natural to the individual. Individuals are born into society, into social constructs, into faith constructs and the importance is to educate them to look wider afield. And I think it can start very, very early. You, in Canada, have some remarkable men and women in Early Childhood Development, for example. And they have indicated that it's from the age of birth to practically till the age of three or four, that the child is most malleable to accepting other people around. So that, if it's true and I believe it is true, means that in countries of the developing world, we have to reverse our thinking on education. It means we have to make **massive** investment in early childhood development. We have to take those initiatives out into the countryside. We have to harness many, many more women than have ever been thought of in the past, so that from the earliest age, difference is seen as normal, not abnormal. [Emphasis original] [Applause]

## 35. MEETING WITH, AND GUIDANCE BY AGA KHAN, ON 15$^{TH}$ OCTOBER 2010

a. The Meeting

http://ismaili.net/source/legal-documents/2019-01-10-chatur8.pdf

b.  New Books of Farmans – review
      http://www.ismaili.net/html/modules.php?op=modload&name=phpBB2&file=viewtopic&p=68925#68925
   c.  Website www.ismaili.net


## 36. AGA KHAN GUIDANCE 1992

"There is a very current expression in English which is to behave like an ostrich. So, I don't know why the English seem to think that the ostriches, when they have problems, bury their heads in the sand. I have never seen them do that but anyhow, well, this is apparently what London believes happens. In any event, this is something that perhaps in some parts of the Islamic world has occurred, is occurring may continue to occur, believing that you can return to the past. and bury today's problems under the dust of the past. That's not our belief. That's not why there is an Imam of the Time to guide the Jamal and I will certainly during My lifetime never wish that to happen, to any of our Jamal in any part of the world. Therefore, the ostrich policy is not for us and I would like to feel therefore, that in dealing with the issues that lie ahead of us, we will look at them straight in the face, we will ask the hard questions. If we cannot find immediate answers, we will go on asking the same questions until Insha'Allah, we are inspired to find the answers, but we will not give up. We will not go back to an obscurantism, to a form of intellectual retreat into something which is neither beneficial for the present and certainly not constructive for the future. (Aga Khan 1992 India)

37. The two courses - Central Asia and Aga Khan Foundation-AKDN
    a.  https://ucentralasia.org/Resources/Item/2769/EN
    b.  https://akfblendedlearning.akdn.net/course/education/creating-an-inclusive-learning-environment/

**Mahebub Chatur October 2020**