

Global Centre for Pluralism: Backgrounder

Global Centre for Pluralism

Mission: The Global Centre for Pluralism serves as a global platform for comparative analysis, education and dialogue about the choices and actions that advance and sustain pluralism.

Vision: The Centre's vision is a world where human differences are valued and diverse societies thrive.

The Global Centre for Pluralism is an independent, charitable organization created to advance positive responses to the challenge of living peacefully and productively together in diverse societies.

Why Canada

Founded in Ottawa by His Highness the Aga Khan in partnership with the Government of Canada, the Centre takes inspiration from Canada's experience. Respect for diversity has developed into a defining characteristic of Canada and a core element of the country's identity. Although still a work in progress, Canada is a global leader in the way it has valued and managed its diverse multi-ethnic, multicultural fabric. The Centre's headquarters will be a platform for analysing and sharing Canada's ongoing pluralism journey with the world.

His Highness the Aga Khan

His Highness the Aga Khan is the 49th hereditary Imam (Spiritual Leader) of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims. For His Highness the Aga Khan, one manifestation of his hereditary responsibilities has been a deep engagement with development for almost 60 years.

Ties with Canada:

His Highness has long been interested in Canada's experience of pluralism. His close ties with Canada go back almost four decades to the 1970s when many thousands of Asian refugees expelled from Uganda, including many Ismailis, were welcomed into Canadian society.

These ties with Canada have become stronger over the years. Other institutions in Canada exemplify this long-standing cooperation:

- **Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN)** partners with several Canadian institutions;
- the **Aga Khan Foundation Canada**, a registered charity that addresses social, economic and cultural dimensions of development and is headquartered in Ottawa at the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam;
- the **Aga Khan Museum** in Toronto, which opened in 2014, is the first museum in North America dedicated to the arts of Muslim civilizations;

- the revitalization of urban spaces with the **Aga Khan Park** in Toronto and the **Aga Khan Garden** at the University of Alberta, set to open in 2018.

His Highness the Aga Khan was conferred honorary citizenship by Prime Minister Stephen Harper in 2010. At the time, he was the fifth person in Canadian history to receive this honour. In 2014, His Highness became the first faith leader to address a joint session of the Canadian Parliament.

Equal partners and multi-partisan support for the GCP

Both founding partners, His Highness the Aga Khan and the Government of Canada, have made substantial investments in the Centre to form an endowment fund and to revitalize the Centre's landmark headquarters in Ottawa at 330 Sussex Drive.

There is deep multi-partisan enthusiasm for the Centre. When His Highness first broached the idea of founding this organisation with Canada's leaders, he was met with support. Initial discussions took place with Prime Minister Chrétien, followed by Prime Minister Martin. Under Prime Minister Harper, the partnership was concluded and the agreement signed.

Our Work

In the beautifully restored heritage building at 330 Sussex Drive, formerly the Public Archives of Canada (1905-1967) and the Canadian War Museum (1967-2005), the Centre continues to expand its work as a global platform for comparative analysis, learning and dialogue about the importance of valuing diversity both in Canada and around the world.

The Centre's program includes:

- research examining how countries from all continents have changed their approaches to diversity, this includes publications on:
 - Bolivia, Brazil, India, Germany, Malaysia, Singapore and Spain [available here](#); and forthcoming publications on Colombia, France, Cote d'Ivoire, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Ghana, Lebanon and Myanmar.
 - And, thematic analyses on group inequalities, the "hardware" and "software" of pluralism, the institutions that are central to pluralism and secularism.
- seminars with global experts and practitioners to deepen understanding of pluralism and its applications on themes including:
 - prospects for pluralism post-Arab Spring and the Tunisian experience featuring former Prime Minister of Tunisia Mehdi Jomaa;
 - a comparative look at pathways to inclusive citizenship in India and Canada featuring Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor;
 - how pluralism can support conflict mediation and peacebuilding processes with mediators from the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue.
- educational tools to help teach the values underpinning pluralism;
- the Annual Pluralism Lecture, which features international leaders who have dedicated their lives to advancing respect for diversity, past lecturers have included

- 2016 - freedom fighter and South African jurist Albie Sachs who drafted the post-apartheid South African Constitution and Bill of Rights. His lecture dealt with the compromises that were required to draft the Constitution, one that is still greatly admired around the world.
- 2015 – Canada’s Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin delivered a lecture calling for diverse, multicultural societies to choose tolerance over intolerance, while also pointing out that tolerance must have limits.
- 2014 – former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and current UN Secretary General, António Guterres delivered a timely lecture on the global refugee crisis, calling on Canada and the global community at large to resettle a larger number of Syrian refugees.
- 2013 – Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations and member of the GCP’s Board, delivered a lecture discussing the key challenges facing pluralism in the 21st century.
- 2012 – Roza Otunbayeva – former President of the Kyrgyz Republic delivered a lecture on the prospects for democracy and pluralism in Central Asia, drawing on the lessons from the Kyrgyz Republic.
- the Global Pluralism Award, a bi-annual award that celebrates extraordinary examples of pluralism in action around the world with three \$50,000 awards.

Our Headquarters

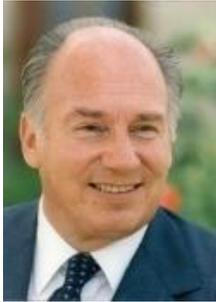
A Historic Canadian Site: As the first permanent home of Canada’s national archives, 330 Sussex Drive is designated a National Historic Site of Canada. Completed in 1906, the building reflected Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier's desire to transform Ottawa from a lumber town to an important capital city. After the Archives moved to a new facility in 1967, the building served as the Canadian War Museum over the next 38 years.

Investing in Revitalization: Vacant since 2005, this landmark heritage building required extensive rehabilitation. A \$35 million investment by His Highness the Aga Khan has brought the building back to life. The award-winning Canadian firm KPMB Architects have led the transformation, working closely with the National Capital Commission and the Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office to ensure the renovation respected and protected the heritage of the building. It is our hope that it will serve as a catalyst for the revitalization of the entire area.

Featuring Canadian Art: The Centre is thrilled to be showcasing Canadian artists throughout the building to celebrate Canada’s 150th anniversary. The art pieces have been leased from the Canada Council Art Bank. The art illustrates pluralism in different ways, through the artists’ own stories and identities and with depictions of Canada’s cultural diversity. Artists include Ukrainian-Canadian artist William Kurelek, First Nations artist George Littlechild and Inuit artist Shuvinai Ashoona.

Board of Directors

HIS HIGHNESS THE AGA KHAN | Chairman



His Highness the Aga Khan is the 49th hereditary spiritual leader (Imam) of the Ismaili Muslims, and founder and Chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). Over the past 40 years the AKDN has grown to encompass development agencies, institutions and programs with mandates ranging from health and education to economic development and the revitalization of cultural heritage. All AKDN programmes are conducted without regard to the faith, origin or gender of the people they serve. The Aga Khan has emphasized the view of Islam as a thinking spiritual faith, one that teaches compassion and tolerance and that is inherently pluralistic.

PRINCESS ZAHRA AGA KHAN | France



Princess Zahra, the eldest child of His Highness the Aga Khan, heads the Social Welfare Department (SWD) located within the French Delegation of the Aga Khan Development Network. She has policy and management responsibility for the health, education, and planning and building services companies of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). She also plays a key role in policy and strategy matters relating to the other social development institutions of the Network. She is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Aga Khan University and works with institutions supported by the Ismaili Muslim community in the areas of social welfare, women's activities and youth programs.

KOFI ANNAN | Ghana



Kofi A. Annan served as the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations from 1997 to 2006. In 2001, Kofi Annan and the United Nations were jointly awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace with the citation praising his leadership for "bringing new life to the organization." As Secretary-General, Kofi Annan led a comprehensive program of reform aimed at revitalizing the UN and making the international system more effective. He was a constant advocate for human rights, the rule of law, the Millennium Development Goals and Africa, and sought to bring the organization closer to the global public by forging ties with civil society, the private sector and other partners. At his initiative, UN peacekeeping was strengthened in ways that enabled the UN to cope with a rapid rise in the number of operations and personnel. He played a central role in the creation of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the adoption of the UN's first-ever counter-terrorism strategy, and the acceptance by Member States of the "responsibility to protect" people from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Since leaving the UN, Mr. Annan has continued to press for better policies to meet the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable, particularly in Africa, and he has continued to use his experience to mediate and resolve conflict. Mr. Annan is the Chairman of the Kofi Annan Foundation.

IAIN BENSON | Canada



Iain T. Benson is a lawyer, writer, lecturer and consultant who publishes widely and consults internationally on constitutional law and human rights. He is Professor Extraordinary in the Department of Constitutional Law and Philosophy of Law, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa, and a fellow of several institutes in Canada, South Africa and the United States and was a visiting professor at the University of Western Ontario. His writing on the nature of the "secular" and "secularism" has been cited with approval by the Supreme Court of Canada and the Constitutional Court of South Africa. For several years he has been one of eight members of a Continuation Committee to create the South African Charter of Religious Rights and Freedoms. He holds degrees from Queen's, Cambridge and Windsor and a doctorate (law) from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

THE RT. HON. ADRIENNE CLARKSON | Canada



The Rt. Hon. Adrienne Clarkson, PC, CC, CMM, COM, CD, was Canada's 26th Governor General from 1999-2005. She was the first person not born in Canada to be named to this post. In 1942 she and her family came to Canada from Hong Kong as refugees of the Second World War. She has had an impressive career in the arts as a journalist, novelist, publisher, public servant and television personality, and has received numerous honorary degrees. Her interest in Canada's North framed much of her tenure as Governor General as she attempted to forge stronger ties between Canada and northern aboriginal people. Since her time in office she has published an autobiography, *Heart Matters*, and co-founded the Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC) with her husband, the author and scholar John Ralston Saul.

RUDYARD GRIFFITHS | Canada



Rudyard Griffiths is a social entrepreneur, author and television broadcaster. He has edited 13 collections of essays on Canadian and international political and historical themes and is the author of *Who Are We: A Citizen's Manifesto* (2009). He has been a columnist with the *National Post* and the *Toronto Star* and television anchor with CTV News Channel and the Business News Network. Rudyard Griffiths is also the moderator and organizer of the semi-annual Munk Debates. Recent Munk Debates participants include Tony Blair, Henry Kissinger, Christopher Hitchens, Fareed Zakaria, Paul Krugman and Lawrence Summers. Rudyard Griffiths is the President of the Peter and Melanie Munk Charitable Foundation and its sister public policy foundation, Aurea. In 2006, Rudyard Griffiths was recognized by the *Globe and Mail* as one of Canada's Top 40 under 40.

HUGUETTE LABELLE | Canada



Huguette Labelle holds a Doctor of Philosophy, Education. She is a Companion of the Order of Canada, and has been awarded honorary degrees from 12 Canadian universities and the University of Notre Dame, as well as several additional honours. She served for a period of 19 years as Deputy Minister of various Government of Canada departments, including the Secretary of State, Transport Canada, the Public Service Commission, and the Canadian International Development Agency. She was Chancellor of the University of Ottawa from 1994 to 2011 and serves on many Boards. Huguette Labelle is currently Chair of the Board of Transparency International, a member of the Board of the UN Global Compact, a member of the Group of External Advisors on the World Bank Governance and Anti-Corruption Strategy, a member of the Advisory Group to the Asian Development Bank on Climate Change and Sustainable Development, a member of the Executive Board of the Africa Capacity Building Foundation, a member of the Board of the Global Centre for Pluralism, a member of the Advisory Council of the Order of Ontario, and Vice-Chair of the Senior Advisory Board of the International Anti-corruption Academy. She also serves on additional national and international boards. She provides advisory services to national and international organizations.

MARWAN MUASHER | Jordan



Marwan Muasher is vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Most recently, he was senior vice president of external affairs at the World Bank from 2007 to 2010. Previous to that, Muasher served as foreign minister (2002–2004) and deputy prime minister (2004–2005) of Jordan. In 1995, Muasher opened Jordan's first embassy in Israel, and in 1996 became minister of information and the government spokesperson. From 1997 to 2002, he served in Washington again as ambassador, negotiating the first free trade agreement between the United States and an Arab nation. He has authored two books, *The Second Arab Awakening*, published by Yale University Press in January 2014 and *The Arab Center: The Promise of Moderation*, also published by Yale University Press, June 2008.

AZIM NANJI | Canada



Azim Nanji is currently Special Advisor to the Provost, Aga Khan University. He has served most recently as Senior Associate Director of the Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies at Stanford University, where he also lectured in the Department of Religious Studies. Previously he was Professor and Chair, Department of Religion, University of Florida (1989-1998), and Director of the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London (1998-2008). Born in Kenya, he is a graduate of Makerere University and obtained his Ph.D. from McGill University. He is the recipient of awards from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Canada Council, and the National Endowment for Humanities. Dr. Nanji has authored, co-authored and edited several books, including *The Penguin Historical Dictionary of Islam* (2008).

MARGARET OGILVIE | Canada



Margaret Ogilvie is Professor of Law and Chancellor's Professor at Carleton University, Ottawa, and a member of the Bars of Ontario and Nova Scotia. She is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada (1993) and a recipient of the David W. Mundell Medal (1996) for legal scholarship, the Law Society Medal (2001) from the Law Society of Upper Canada, and holds two honorary doctorates in recognition of her contributions to the legal profession, both in Canada and abroad. She has been a visiting scholar at the Universities of Edinburgh, Emory, Oxford and Toronto, and twice at the Princeton Theological Seminary. She is the author of 14 books and over

200 law review articles on religious institutions law, banking law and contract law primarily. She has served on several boards in the not-for-profit sector in Canada. In 2008 she was invested into the Order of Ontario in recognition of her lifelong achievements as an educator and legal scholar. She was awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012.

KHALIL SHARIFF | Canada



Khalil Shariff is Chief Executive Officer of Aga Khan Foundation Canada (AKFC). Prior to joining AKFC in 2005, Mr. Shariff was a consultant with McKinsey & Company, where he advised governments, financial institutions, and health care providers on strategy, organization, and operational improvement. He served on AKFC's National Committee for five years. He is a graduate, J.D. magna cum laude, of the Harvard Law School, where he cultivated his interest in international development and conflict resolution issues as Deputy Editor-in-Chief, Harvard Negotiation Law Review, and Policy Coordinator and Research Associate, Harvard

Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research.

EDUARDO STEIN | Guatemala



Eduardo Stein is former Vice President (2004-2008) and Foreign Minister (1996-2000) of the Republic of Guatemala. He has worked with various international organizations in development programs in Central America, as well as the Esquipulas peace process and in the San José Dialogue for Central American Peace negotiations. He headed the OAS Electoral Observation Mission in Peru in 2000 for Mr. Fujimori's try for a third term, which resulted in the disqualification of the elections for serious irregularities. He presided over the Honduras Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2010-2011. Dr. Stein is an independent consultant,

coordinates a Central American network of think tanks, la RED, and is a member of the Board of the Inter-American Dialogue and of the Global Leadership Foundation.