His Highness the Aga Khan explains progress depends on trusting people: delegating authority, discretion and decision making

"Trust in people. Trust in people. It's an extraordinary phenomenon of development that the most powerful force is people changing their own environment."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2005 remarks to the press at the inauguration of the Aga Khan Agency For Microfinance (Geneva, Switzerland) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7211/

"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....

"The world into which you are graduating 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. Indeed, the argument is often made that our long run enemy in such a world is not likely to be the tyranny of the few, but rather a new, global disorder -- in which the centre fails to hold and a new anarchy takes over.

"A vast decentralisation of decision-making is already occurring in many countries; it has the advantage of placing new responsibilities in the hands of local communities.... For 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."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2006 Aga Khan University Convocation Ceremony address (Karachi, Pakistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7997/

"As a result [of the rise of the Knowledge Society], enormous social influence has been transferred from the owners and workers of farms and factories, to those whom we now call 'Knowledge Workers,’ people who create and exchange information. For them, power attaches more to ideas and values than to money or physical force. Among them, power itself is widely dispersed."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2006 American University in Cairo Commencement Ceremony address (Cairo, Egypt) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7719

"The first [misconception of development] concerns what I would call the 'dominant player fallacy': a tendency to place too much reliance in national governments and other institutions which may have relatively superficial connections to life at the grassroots level."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2009 Address to the Global Philanthropy Forum (Washington D.C., USA) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9217/

"Self-reliance at the national, and local levels is a theme that is now receiving greater emphasis than at any time in the last fifty years. This is a significant departure from development thinking in the 20th century, with its emphasis on state and international organisations as 'nannies' to which citizens could look for everything.... It will be equally important for
the general public to understand and appreciate the requirements and consequences of the **shift in responsibility for social services from the government to private and community organisations as well.**"

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2000 Conference on Indigenous Philanthropy address (Islamabad, Pakistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/5811/

"I deeply believe that the developing world is entering a new phase, in which **the limits of centralised direction and control are now accepted**, and the opportunities for alliances between the public sector and non-governmental entities have never been brighter. The state must still see things ‘in the round’, overseeing the interlocking parts of the national economy and the social system. But governments and leaders of thought, both inside and outside the apparatus of national and local governments, must continue to grow in sophistication about the nature of what I have often called the 'Enabling Environment'. Governments are indispensable to the creation of this environment as 'enablers', through their judicious action -- to empower others, as well as themselves ...

"What should be the form of their community structures? What powers should they have, and what capacities must they develop if they are to be responsible and effective bodies?"

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1988 Opening Remarks, Eleventh Seminar, 'Architecture of Housing', The Aga Khan Award For Architecture (Zanzibar, Tanzania) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/3549/

"Civil society institutions are best able to take into consideration, to reflect, specific provincial or local political situations and socio-economic needs and opportunities. They are well placed to ensure that progress is both public and transparent, that good governance is observed as the norm, just as they are the best tools for ensuring better impact and for
hastening visible socio-economic development. **There is need for a sub-national governance structure that is clear, efficient and transparent.** There is no reason why planning or programming at the provincial or local level need either contradict or undermine central authority."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2010 Statement at the Kabul Conference on Afghanistan (Kabul, Afghanistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9454/

"Civil and private institutions have unique capacities for spurring social progress -- even when governments falter. For one thing, because they are intimately connected to the warp and woof of daily life, they can predict new patterns with particular sensitivity. **Private institutions also provide good laboratories for experimentation.** Because they are multiple in nature, they can try a variety of approaches, sometimes failing and sometimes succeeding, but always learning from their experiences. And because these institutions need not make short term accommodations to conventional wisdom or current fashions, **they have greater freedom to be controversial -- and creative.**"

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2007 Masters of Public Affairs Programme, Institut d’Etudes Politiques de Paris (Sciences Po), Graduation Ceremony address (Paris, France) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/8092/

"The decline of a kingdom shows itself in loss of principle; in attachment to trifles; in bad men getting the upper hand; in the meritorious being kept down."

Hazrat Ali [Emphasis added]
Maxims of Ali, pp 58
"Our experience in Afghanistan, as well as in neighbouring Tajikistan and Pakistan, is that **sustainable development is only possible when the community is engaged at the grassroots level and is given the ways and the means to take responsibility for its own future.** This means building the capacity of civil society institutions as well as tapping into the wellspring of individual initiative ... It is therefore critical that [governments create] the appropriate legal and fiscal framework, the regulatory conditions and the stable democratic institutions -- in other words, the Enabling Environment -- that encourages and supports the confidence and growth of private initiative, and also facilitates the development of public-private partnerships."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2006 Address to the Conference on Afghanistan (London, UK) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7646/

---

"Many good things might grow out of such enhanced communication [between the stakeholders in the development of Afghanistan]. Among them, I would hope, would be an unfolding array of public-private partnerships. The range of such partnerships has been expanding of late -- but there is still enormous unrealised potential. **Such partnerships will require a profound spirit of reciprocal obligation and mutual accountability -- a readiness to share the work, share the costs, share the risks, and share the credit.**"

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 2007 Address to the Enabling Environment Conference (Kabul, Afghanistan) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/8072/

---

"The key to building partnerships, whether they are among social sectors or among countries, is a profound spirit of reciprocal obligation -- a readiness to share the work, to share the costs, to share the risks, and to share the credit. **In the end, what it will require most ... is a spirit of mutual trust.**"
"It is my profound conviction that steps to strengthen institutions and the linkages between them are critical to the freedom of the individual to be creative and productive in a socially responsible manner. This is the essence of the Enabling Environment. In the textbooks, most discussion of freedom centres on the prevention of absolute power. It is about checks and balances. The time has come to evolve concepts and practices of 'positive freedom,' the links between individuals and institutions and the rules of the game that encourage mutual trust, promote co-operation, unleash human potentials and make possible a whole that is greater than the sum of the parts."

"We live in interesting times. But fortunately, we have institutions designed to address the problems of those times and with an efficiency that does not put an undue burden on the public. These institutions can join together when partnership extends their reach and can proceed alone when they follow their distinctive vision. The developing world is challenged to find within itself the talent and commitment to meet its own needs. We do well to rise to that challenge, with considerable confidence that our self-reliance will be amply rewarded."
"The basic topic of our discussions, therefore, is how to create the conditions of confidence, predictability and mutual trust that will enable people and institutions to realise their full potential....

"My third question concerns ways to improve the process of learning from the experiences of the voluntary sector. Traditionally jealous of their independence, many voluntary agencies are cautious about allowing scrutiny and promoting the replication of successful projects on a large scale. If the potential of private development agencies is to be realised and confidence in them is to grow, this must change. How can we improve the process of self-analysis, evaluation and the exchange of experiences without diminishing the autonomy and creative initiative of voluntary agencies? How can they learn from their own experiences in order to improve the management of their programmes?"

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1986 Aga Khan Development Network’s Enabling Environment Conference, Opening Session Address (Nairobi, Kenya) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/3331/

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

"What distinguishes the outstanding NGOs from the other? A key factor seems to be governance. The successful NGOs have effective boards to work with management on defining the mission, strategic directions and objectives. Management is held accountable for results. The right balance seems to have been struck between local autonomy and effective oversight. Risks are consciously evaluated, and a prudent equilibrium established between the need for social innovation and the danger of failure. The composition of the boards helps to draw in useful and supportive allies."

His Highness the Aga Khan’s 1992 Royal Society for Asian Affairs Annual Dinner address (London, United Kingdom) [Emphasis added]
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/4503/
See also: His Highness the Aga Khan on the fuel of progress: harnessing private initiative through public-private partnerships


~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~

See also: His Highness the Aga Khan on the essence of the Enabling Environment: enabling and assisting individual creativity


~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~

See also: His Highness the Aga Khan’s advices for leaders which enables sound national and community progress and development


~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~ ~~~~~~~~~~

Click here for this post in PDF format.