



AGA KHAN FOUNDATION
An agency of the Aga Khan Development Network

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**AGA KHAN FOUNDATION BUILDS ON EFFORTS IN WEST AFRICA
TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO WATER AND ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE**

WASHINGTON, DC, DECEMBER 7, 2015. The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) entered a partnership in Côte d'Ivoire to increase sustainable access to safe water and improve quality of life. The three-year project will help communities in three districts tackle the most pressing challenges for safe water, sanitation and food security, and strengthen local capacity to respond to environmental shocks in a region of West Africa where communities are on the front lines of climate change.

In a country where over 40 percent of the population earns less than \$1 a day, climate change is making food security harder than ever to achieve. Changing rainfall patterns have already hurt harvests, and further declines in rainfall combined with rising temperature are expected by 2050. These complex changes will likely have the greatest impact on rural women, who play a decisive role in household water supply, food security, dietary diversity and health.

In the past decade, Côte d'Ivoire has suffered several crises, weakening the country's social and economic fabric, and raising the poverty rate to over 50 percent in 2011. The challenges of safe water and sanitation have become more acute. This project's long-term investment in water infrastructure – which has declined in northern Côte d'Ivoire, leaving one-third of the rural population without access to clean drinking water – represents the kind of long-term, locally-driven solution that is one of AKF's goals.

This project, called Multiple Use Water Services for Northern Côte d'Ivoire, seeks to address a variety of the challenges related to limited access to water resources in the Boundiali, Mbengue and Dianra districts of the northern Savanes Region. Residents face serious health risks, insufficient income due to reliance on rain-fed crops in the face of climate change, and insufficient organizational capacity to sustain infrastructure and prepare for disasters. AKF will address these by strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations and providing opportunities for communities to support their own economic development. For example, AKF will work to provide potable water supply infrastructure for up to 30,000 people in the three districts. It will also aim to provide up to 33 farmer groups with training on market standards and improved agricultural techniques, using the same Farmer Field School approach it has employed successfully in West Africa.

The project will build upon efforts of the Ivoirian government and the United Nations, with water and agricultural activities closely aligned with the government's National Plan for Agricultural Investment and the U.N.'s Africa Regional Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction.

This initiative is made possible in part by a grant from Margaret A. Cargill Foundation (MACF), which provides meaningful support through long-term relationships with strategic grantee partners to identify and implement sustainable solutions to persistent problems. MACF supports community-level initiatives, within its defined program areas, that help people, animals and the environments in which they live.

... OVER/

Aga Khan Foundation cultivates deep partnerships with local businesses, nonprofits, governments and community leaders to harness the best from people of all walks of life. Working with its partners, the Foundation makes long-term commitments to innovative programs that improve the quality of life, from early childhood education to green space preservation. Visit our blog to learn more about what we do, at www.akfusa.org.

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) is a private, not-for-profit international development organization committed to breaking the cycle of poverty in some of the poorest regions of the world. The Foundation helps communities around the world to build better futures by creating institutions like hospitals, making long-term investments to the most innovative programs, and cultivating strong local leadership. AKF is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

AKF is a member of the Aga Khan Development Network (www.akdn.org), one of the world's leading poverty solutions networks, established by His Highness the Aga Khan. The Network empowers communities and individuals, often in disadvantaged circumstances, improve living conditions and grow opportunities. The Network's agencies work for the common good of all citizens, regardless of their gender, origin or religion. Its underlying impulse is the ethic of compassion for the vulnerable in society.

For further information, please contact:

Ms. Martha Sipple,
Communications & Public Affairs Manager
Aga Khan Foundation USA
phone: 202-293-2537 cell: 202-203-0838
email: Martha.Sipple@akdn.org

#

