



## **University of Central Asia Receives Long-term OPIC Support to Complete its Second Campus in Khorog, Tajikistan**

**Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, 29 October 2015** – The University of Central Asia (UCA) is rapidly progressing to complete the construction of its second campus in Tajikistan, scheduled to be ready by 2017, at a total capital layout of \$94.4 million.

Alongside a \$64.4 million commitment from the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), including \$7.5 million from the Aga Khan Foundation, Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), the United States Government's development finance institution has extended \$30 million to complete Phase I construction of its Khorog campus. This support marks OPIC's second partnership with AKDN, following financing to expand the Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi, Pakistan.

*"While OPIC's contribution is financially significant, it is even more noteworthy as a demonstration of confidence in UCA's objectives and the quality of its facilities and academic programmes. This will no doubt encourage potential partners of the University. We are building three campuses of the same stature, facility and standards to ensure equity in development across UCA's founding states. We will be a key intellectual driver and serve as a role model to encourage others to raise standards in the region,"* said Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, Executive Chairman of UCA's Board Executive Committee and AKDN Diplomatic Representative to the Kyrgyz Republic.

When fully operational, UCA will have campuses in Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan. The investment by OPIC builds upon the progress of UCA's Naryn campus in the Kyrgyz Republic, scheduled to be the first to open in September 2016 and funded by AKDN. The Khorog campus will open in September 2017, followed by a third campus in Tekeli, Kazakhstan currently anticipated in 2019.

Recruitment for UCA's first cohort of undergraduate students has already begun. The first four academic specialisations will be Bachelors degrees in Earth and Environmental Sciences and Economics in Khorog; Computer Sciences, and Communications and Media in Naryn; followed by Engineering Sciences and Business and Management in Tekeli.

*"Top quality, locally-available university education is an important foundation for Central Asia's growing middle class. The University of Central Asia's work throughout the region will help equip a diverse range of talented students with the training they need to tap into a dynamic and changing job market. OPIC is proud to support this latest effort of UCA, which promises to have a lasting positive impact,"* said Elizabeth Littlefield, OPIC's President and CEO.

Construction is already underway in Khorog on a site located over 2,200 metres above sea level. Modern welfare facilities for construction workers including food and health services were completed last June. Following extensive site preparation, Phase I includes a 15,000 square metre facility comprised of a three-storey academic building (housing a library, classrooms, a computer lab, student common spaces, dining hall, administrative offices and faculty reception, offices and residences), student dormitories, a laboratory, student life building and international standard sports facilities.

*“The University’s campuses are strategically located in secondary cities to act as nodes of development for underserved mountain communities, providing high quality tertiary education; fostering innovation through interactions with national businesses; and connecting these underserved locations to regional economic growth centres,”* said Rahim Somani, UCA’s Chief Financial Officer. *“Khorog’s Phase I campus anticipates an economic impact of \$275 million over 25 years in Tajikistan, including the creation of 300 national construction jobs and approximately 100 permanent jobs in university operations.”*

In 2006, UCA’s first operational unit, the University’s School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) was established. It has since reached 80,000 learners in the region, half of them in Tajikistan. In Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, the University has a SPCE Learning Centre which offers certificate courses and training to youth and adult learners and university faculty.

UCA’s Aga Khan Humanities Project (AKHP), which offers innovative humanities curricula and faculty training programmes, is also located in Dushanbe. AKHP courses are now being offered at a total of 74 institutions across Central Asia, taught by approximately 600 instructors, reaching over 13,000 students.

Among other academic initiatives at UCA are its three research institutes. The Mountain Societies Research Institute is dedicated to addressing challenges and opportunities within Central Asian mountain communities. The Institute of Public Policy and Administration fosters stimulating, innovative and rigorous inquiry into public policy related to socio-economic development. The Central Asian Cultural Heritage and Humanities Unit supports research to address a critical part of the UCA mission to help the peoples of the region to preserve, promote and draw upon their rich cultural traditions and heritage as assets for the future.

UCA is part of the AKDN, which has been actively working towards the vision of an economically dynamic, politically stable, intellectually vibrant and culturally tolerant Central Asia since 1992.

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### ***The University of Central Asia***

*The University of Central Asia (UCA) was founded in 2000. The Presidents of Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Kazakhstan and His Highness the Aga Khan signed the International Treaty and Charter establishing this secular and private University, which was ratified by the respective parliaments and registered with the United Nations. UCA was established to offer an internationally recognised standard of higher education in Central Asia and prepare graduates to contribute leadership, ideas and innovation to the economies and communities of the region. UCA brings with it the commitment and partnership of the Aga Khan Development Network. For more information on UCA, please visit: [www.ucentralasia.org](http://www.ucentralasia.org).*

### ***Aga Khan Development Network***

*The Aga Khan Development Network is a group of private, non-denominational development agencies working to empower communities and individuals to improve living conditions and opportunities, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, Central and South Asia, and the Middle East. AKDN agencies focus on social, cultural and economic development for all citizens, and conduct their programmes without regard to faith, origin or gender. The AKDN's underlying ethic is compassion for the vulnerable in society. For more information on AKDN, please visit: [www.akdn.org](http://www.akdn.org)*

### ***Aga Khan Foundation, USA***

*The Aga Khan Foundation USA (AKF USA) 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 partners with communities, nonprofits, businesses, governments and local leaders to make long-term investments, build permanent institutions and cultivate an active civil society in order to improve the quality of life for people across Africa and Asia. Driven by the belief in our shared humanity, the Foundation helps communities to build better futures, regardless of gender, origin or religion. AKF USA is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. For more information on AKF, USA, please visit: [www.akfusa.org](http://www.akfusa.org)*

### ***Overseas Private Investment Corporation***

*OPIC is the U.S. Government's development finance institution. It mobilizes private capital to help address critical development challenges and in doing so, advances U.S. foreign policy and national security priorities. Because OPIC works with the U.S. private sector, it helps U.S. businesses gain footholds in emerging markets, catalyzing revenues, jobs and growth opportunities both at home and abroad. OPIC achieves its mission by providing investors with financing, political risk insurance, and support for private equity investment funds, when commercial funding cannot be obtained elsewhere. Established as an agency of the U.S. Government in 1971, OPIC operates on a self-sustaining basis at no net cost to American taxpayers.*

*All OPIC projects adhere to high environmental and social standards and respect human rights, including worker's rights. By mandating high standards, OPIC helps raise the industry and regional standards of the countries in which its projects operate. OPIC services are available for new and expanding business enterprises in more than 160 countries worldwide. For more information, please visit: <https://www.opic.gov/>*