

March 24, 2015

Dear Mayor and Members of the Executive Committee,

On September 12, 2014, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and His Highness the Aga Khan officially inaugurated the Ismaili Centre Toronto and Aga Khan Museum, both of which are situated within a 6.8 hectare landscaped park along Wynford Drive in Toronto's Don Mills neighbourhood. Construction of the \$300 million development represents a significant addition in the landscape of Toronto's cultural institutions.

Along with five other Ismaili Centres located in Vancouver, London, Lisbon, Dubai and Dushanbe, the Ismaili Centre Toronto continues a tradition of hosting programs that stimulate the intellect, encourage dialogue, and celebrate cultural diversity. The Ismaili Centre Toronto is an 80,000 square foot, two-story building housing a prayer hall, social hall, library, exhibition areas, and meeting rooms. Through a variety of programs including lectures, seminars, exhibitions, cultural and social events, the Centre creates an understanding of the values, ethics, culture and heritage of Ismaili Muslims.

The Aga Khan Museum is dedicated to the preservation of Muslim arts and culture. A central feature of the new Museum is a state-of-the-art auditorium. Its mission is to foster a greater understanding and appreciation of the contribution that Muslim civilizations have made to world heritage. Through education, research, and collaboration, the Museum will foster dialogue and promote tolerance and mutual understanding among people. In the brief time since its opening it has already received critical acclaim as a major cultural draw to the city of Toronto

The Province of Ontario has in the past exempted certain cultural properties, such as museums and cultural centres, from assessment and taxation by way of special legislation. Additionally, the City of Toronto provides property tax rebates for qualifying ethno-cultural centres.

Recognizing the charitable status of the Ismaili Centre and its focus on social, educational and cultural contributions to the community, I respectfully ask the Treasurer to report back for the September meeting of the Executive Committee on the feasibility, options, and financial and other implications of providing an exemption from property taxation for the Ismaili Centre Toronto, the Aga Khan Museum and surrounding park.

Sincerely,



Deputy Mayor Denzil Minnan-Wong
Ward 34, Don Valley East

