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## **Children's books focusing on pluralism and tolerance to reach all schools in Kyrgyzstan**

The Kyrgyz Republic's Ministry of Education and Science, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the **Aga Khan Foundation** signed an agreement this morning to reprint 90,500 copies of dual-language children's books aimed at promoting peace, tolerance and respect for diversity among primary school children. The books will be distributed to all 2,204 schools in the country, AKDN said.

The books, "Friendship Song of the Goose" and "Three Sad Wizards", were originally developed by the Aga Khan Foundation, working with local authors and illustrators, as a direct response to the June 2010 events and in support of the national government's initiative to promote multicultural values in the country. They are dual-language (Kyrgyz-Uzbek, Kyrgyz-Russian, Kyrgyz-Tajik, and Kyrgyz-English) books for children.

The books are being published with the support of the Ministry of Education and Science, the U.S. Agency for International Development's Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI) and the **Aga Khan Foundation, and agency of the Aga Khan Development Network.**

With further grant assistance from USAID/OTI, the Aga Khan Foundation will also develop tool-kits which will help teachers to translate the theory of conflict resolution and tolerance building in the classroom. The tool-kits will be developed in partnership with the Kyrgyz Academy of Education. A total of 4,382 kits will be distributed. The support will also enable the Aga Khan Foundation to produce four new episodes of its nationally broadcast animated children's program, "Adventure of the World of Books". The episodes will be based on the books and also focus on pluralism.

**Mrs. Nurjehan Mawani, Head of the AKDN Representation** noted: "I am proud that the Aga Khan Foundation with its partner USAID and the Ministry of Education have published books that tell stories of friendship, honesty and the power of diversity for children. The early years shape our worldview and we wish for all our children, a worldview that is inclusive, tolerant, and respectful of diversity – all of which are critical ingredients for strong nations, and peaceful, prosperous societies."

Together, these efforts are intended to help children better appreciate the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual nature of the Kyrgyz Republic and the world at large. Over the long-term, creating awareness of other ethnicities and cultures is expected to strengthen values of openness, tolerance, and pluralism among the country's future generation.