



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Dignitaries attend Turquoise Mountain Foundation Opening

**KABUL, AFGHANISTAN | MAY 9, 2011** – The Turquoise Mountain Institute for Afghan Arts & Architecture celebrated the re-opening of the organization in its permanent home in Murad Khane, in the heart of Kabul's historic Old City. This event also acknowledged the partnership of the Afghan and American governments to support the work and activities of the foundation.

Kabul mayor Mohammad Yunus Nawandish said, "Despite current challenges, the Kabul municipality is committed to the reconstruction of Kabul city after three decades of war. This project revives the history and life of Murad Khane and will preserve this area as a historic memorial for future generations of Afghanistan."

"U.S. support to this project, through USAID, has helped to restore Afghanistan's traditional crafts and historic areas, and has created new jobs, skills and a renewed sense of national identity", noted the U.S. Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry at the ceremony.

Years of war and neglect have significantly damaged the city's historic Murad Khane district, a key commercial and cultural hub. After five years of dedicated work and collaboration between the international community and Afghans, the conditions in Murad Khane have drastically improved and the architecture and traditional skills of the area have been restored and preserved for future generations of Afghans.

By establishing Afghanistan's first center for Traditional Afghan Arts and Architecture, which brings great masters together with trainees, Turquoise Mountain has created a unique opportunity for future generations of Afghan artisans to acquire skills and expertise in the fields of traditional Afghan crafts. The Turquoise Mountain Institute has maintained high standards of quality education and training and, therefore, is the only centre of its kind in Central Asia to have international accreditation, through the UK-based City & Guilds.

Turquoise Mountain has been active in the Murad Khane district since 2006. It has cleared 25,000 cubic meters of garbage, restored basic infrastructure, rebuilt 65 historic buildings

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and homes, and provided literacy, health and vocational training to residents. The Murad Khane project has brought together education, training, business, urban regeneration, cultural preservation and livelihoods to rebuild a strong, vibrant community and supporting institutions. The vision foreseen five years ago for the Murad Khane area and the Turquoise Mountain Institute for Afghan Arts & Architecture came to fruition because of the vital assistance of the international community and mutual collaboration of Afghans.

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