Indian Diaspora Council International
Shared heritage, aspirations and interests
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PRESS STATEMENT

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HONORING the LIFE & LEGACY of Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING Jr.

The Indian Diaspora Council International (**IDC**) and its global affiliates join with other organizations, officials, individuals and institutions worldwide in honoring the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and in commemorating the 94th year of his birth.

The guiding principles, teachings and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. have become vital and more relevant with the continuing struggles in 2023, as advocacy for voting rights, social justice and racial equality in the USA have become more prominent in recent years.

While there are many more racial barriers to overcome, the recent election of Congr. Hakeem Jeffries as Minority Leader in US House of Representatives and more people of color and minorities elected at federal, state and municipal levels, are outstanding examples of recent racial progress.

"We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now".

We pay special homage and grateful recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's preeminent leadership of the modern American Civil Rights Movement, from 1955 to 1968, during which time African Americans achieved more genuine progress toward racial equality in America than the previous three centuries had produced. He championed equal rights which led to the 1965 US Civil Rights Act legally barring discrimination and segregation in all segments of American society.

US President Joseph Biden's proclamation on Martin Luther King's Jr Day 2023 remarked that, *"Today, we honor the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., by continuing his unfinished work to redeem the soul of America. It meant looking beyond external differences to see the union of all humankind. It also meant finding a way to deal with our grievances without animosity, in a way that recognized the interconnectedness of all humanity and allowed us to move forward together. From the pulpit to the podium to the streets, Dr. King devoted his life to the quest for this Beloved Community in our Nation. His activism and moral authority helped usher in the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He gave a voice to the restless spirit of millions yearning for change. He gave us a roadmap to unify, to heal, and to sustain the blessings of the Nation to all of its people".*

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was an American Baptist minister and activist who became the most visible spokesperson and leader in the civil rights movement. He was born on January 15, 1929 and assassinated on April 4, 1968. Martin Luther King Jr. believed that peaceful refusal to obey unjust law was the best way to bring about social change. His adherence of Gandhian non-violence teachings for peacful protests to achieve freedom and social justice have inspired many to protest in peaceful ways against oppression, colonial rule, subjugation and violent discrimination in many countries.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. lived an extraordinary life. At age 33, he was pressing the case of civil rights with President John Kennedy. At age 34, he galvanized the nation with his famous *"I Have a Dream"* speech. At age 35, he won the Nobel Peace Prize. At age 39, he was assassinated, but he left a legacy of hope and inspiration that continues today to confront the ugly vestiges of racial discrimination especially during turbulent and alarming times.

The life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. provide inspiration, challenges and reminders of the possibilities for good, as well as the role and responsibility of everyone to be supportive of advancing social justice in even small ways. We owe Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. a debt of gratitude.

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Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC), established in 1997, is an international non-profit organization with global affiliates and membership in 21 countries with the objective to embrace, engage, and enhance the shared heritage, aspirations, and interests of persons of Indian origin with optimum inclusivity.