

PRESS RELEASE

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Observance of International Women's Day 2023

The **Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC)**, in collaboration with its global membership and affiliates, is pleased to join with other organizations, associations, agencies, groups and individuals in observance of the 48th anniversary of United Nations declared International Women's Day. The seeds were planted in 1908, when 15,000 women marched through New York City demanding shorter working hours, better pay and the right to vote. It became official in 1975 when the United Nations (UN) started celebrating the day and setting an annual theme.

The UN theme for International Women's Day 2023 is **"DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality"** aligned with the priority theme for the upcoming 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW-67), *"Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls"*. International Women's Day has become a date to celebrate how far women have come in society, in politics and in economics, while the political roots of the day mean strikes and protests are organized to raise awareness of continued inequality.

Let's all honor, respect, and adore all the amazing women in our life on this International Women's Day, whether they are your mother, wife, or daughter. Let's demonstrate our pride in their achievements and commitment to building a world free of all ills for women. IWD 2023 #EmbraceEquity. Equity isn't just a nice-to-have, it's a must-have. A focus on gender equity needs to be part of every society. Equity means recognizing that we do not all start from the same place and when social structures exacerbate gender-based discrimination, it is essential to find solutions to overcome these barriers. Imbalanced social systems needs to be addressed for long term equity and sustainability. *Rita Abraham, Chair of Indian Diaspora Council's Women's Forum, South Africa.*

"For women throughout the world, this is an important day when we remember the women who suffered pain, exploitation and humiliation as they struggled so that the position of women can be improved. Every neighbourhood has such women and so I will not name anyone. The struggle continues as we see the rise in gender based violence, exploitation of women and girls, poor working conditions with many hours of work per day, little leisure time, low pay and subordination both at work and in the home. Let us join the millions to bring about changes". *Ela Gandhi, Trustee, Gandhi Development Trust, South Africa.*

To women especially in the Indian Diaspora, "What is it that empowers you?" Empowerment according to our matrilineal heritage is via the success of children and spouse; hard work in the fields and adherence to traditional religious and cultural practices. How is it different for the contemporary woman whose career and independence is paramount to life satisfaction? Why is the question important? Because as changes occur due to life span transitions, your sense of female identity will alter. Your belief system and activities which contribute positively to society will differentiate you from others and provide a sense of empowerment. So on this day, I urge women to determine, "What is it that empowers me?" *Shalima Mohamed, Educator, Business Psychologist, Researcher and Co-Director of Indo-Caribbean Cultural Center.*

"Pursuing dreams, accomplishing that elusive goal requires focus, assuring ourselves that we can, we must, and we will. As a Guyanese woman, I often fought to get my voice heard. My message to women is if you believe in your idea, build a solid proposal, and deliver with conviction. Believe in yourself just as you believe in your idea. Anything is possible, but you have to believe and follow your convictions. Fight for what you believe otherwise there are sharks who will try to take that idea and sell as their own and forsaking your initial purpose". *Seeta T. Shah Roath, Ed.D., Thesis Supervisor & Lecturer, University of Guyana (UG)*

"We honor all women who struggled for their rights and equitable treatment, and persevered under very harsh conditions and obstacles to achieve respect and dignity. While significant advances have been made, there remain many hurdles to overcome and many obstacles to be removed for women to advance and achieve full potential and bring about equity at all levels. IDC's Women's Forum has taken many initiatives on women's issues. Women are encouraged to advance this agenda forward and be examples to women of the developed and developing world" - *Ashook Ramsaran, President, IDC.*

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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.