Indian Diaspora Council International
Shared heritage, aspirations and interests
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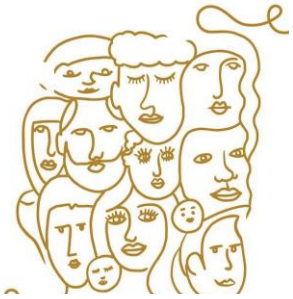
Indian Diaspora Council Observance of World Human Rights Day 2023

The **Indian Diaspora Council International** (**IDC**), in collaboration with its global membership and affiliates, is pleased to join with other organizations, associations, agencies and individuals in observance of the 75th anniversary of World Human Rights Day on December 10, 2023 stipulating universal values and a shared standard of achievement for everyone in every country.



Human Rights Day "commemorates the day the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The UDHR is one of UN's major achievements as well as the first enunciation of human rights across the world. Adopted on 10th December 1948, the Declaration stipulates universal values and a shared standard of achievement for everyone in every country".

"The Declaration of Human Rights has inspired over 60 human rights instruments making it a common standard of human rights, and is the most translated document around the globe in over 500 languages.

December 10 marks the 75th anniversary the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) — the signing of which is celebrated each year on Humans Rights Day. The theme for this year's observance is: Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for All. Article 4 of the UDHR states: "No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms." Three quarters of a decade since that declaration was adopted, slavery and forced labor have yet to be extinguished. Conservative estimates range as high as 40 million people around the globe still being held as slaves or forced laborers — many whom make the products we use and grow the food we eat. Michael Ford, Global Lead on Environment, health and safety (EHS) and Sustainability at Avetta, writes, "The impact of modern slavery being identified within your supply chain should not be underestimated." He adds, "Actions can be taken to remove this practice, but it is essential to understand what is meant by the term 'Modern Slavery.' It is often used as an umbrella term that includes bonded labor, descent-based slavery, forced labor, early and forced marriage, and human trafficking — all of which can include children as well as adults."

The Time for Human Rights is Now

For 75 years, the core ambition of the Declaration has been to infuse societies with equality, fundamental freedoms and justice. It enshrines the rights of all human beings and is a global blueprint for international, national, and local laws and policies and a bedrock of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
On Human Rights Day, 10 December 2023, we will celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Declaration, a milestone celebration called Human Rights 75 (HR 75). Human Rights Day will capture all the moments from this year's commemoration and seeks to increase knowledge on the universality and indivisibility of human rights, especially among young people, inspire people to create a movement of shared humanity while empowering them to fight for their rights and take action.

Link between humans and the environment must be preserved

The universal recognition of the right to a healthy environment is a critical first step toward addressing the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution that demonstrates the power and possibilities of empowering the environmental justice movement.
https://www.ohchr.org/en/get-involved/campaign/udhr-75

Nicole Bissessar, PhD www.linkedin.com/in/nicole-bissessar

"In today's world, where turmoil, wars, forced displacement, human rights abuses, and inequality prevail in many countries, it is crucial that we express our sentiments, suggestions, and recommendations towards addressing these pressing issues. Combined voices have the power to bring about change and create a better future for those who are suffering.

"Conflict is in fact part life in many communities such as Afghanistan, Burkina Faso & Sahel, Central African Republic, Chad and the Lake Chad Basin, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Ukraine. It's often a deciding factor when we enter a new country, and creating large humanitarian needs especially around hunger and poverty.
Expressing our sentiments allows us to show solidarity with those affected by these problems. It sends a message that we stand with them and acknowledge their struggles. By speaking out against injustice and inequality, we can raise awareness among the global community and encourage others to act as well.

"Furthermore, offering suggestions and recommendations provides an opportunity for constructive dialogue on how to address these issues effectively. It allows us to brainstorm innovative solutions that could potentially lead to positive outcomes. By engaging in discussions and sharing ideas, we can contribute to the development of policies that promote peace, justice, and equality. It is a noble effort of the IDC in preparing this comprehensive statement for the 2023 theme of "Dignity, Freedom, and Justice for All.

"Moreover, expressing our sentiments also serves as a reminder to governments and international organizations of their responsibility towards protecting human rights. It puts pressure on them to take immediate action in resolving conflicts or providing aid to displaced individuals.
In conclusion, amidst the chaos prevailing in many countries today [just look at a fact sheet spanning a little over 4 weeks for the Gaza Strip attacks), it is essential that we express our sentiments, suggestions, and recommendations towards addressing these issues. Our collective voice has the potential to make a difference by raising awareness among the global community and pressuring governments into acting. Let us not remain silent but instead use our words as powerful tools for change."

Sandew Hira, Secretary of the Decolonial International Network Foundation (The Netherlands)

"On December 10, 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was drafted by a committee chaired by Eleanor Roosevelt, the wife of president Franklin D. Roosevelt. The contrast between words and deeds could not have been greater. All the rights of human beings declared in the UDHR were trampled upon on a daily basis in the USA. Apartheid ruled the lives of blacks in America. Violence, racism, exploitation and the denial of human rights characterized the American society. Decades later the civil rights movement achieved some of these rights and the UNHR had nothing to do with it.

"The UNHR was based on the concept of individual rights, a central tenet of European Liberalism. It was not universal. It was European. In 1986 the Organization of African Unity, later replaced by the African Union, adopted The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR). The distinction between human and peoples' rights is quite relevant. Human rights refer to individual rights. Peoples' rights refer to the rights of the peoples of Africa. In 1990 the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI). It spoke of many rights as declared in the UNHR, but also mentions colonialism as a source of deprivation of human rights.

"In the world of today we need a declaration of human rights that is truly pluriversal, not universal, taking into account the traditions of different civilization. And more than declarations we need actions that transforms words into deeds.

"When a person or persons are prevented from exercising their responsibility not only do, they lose hope of playing any effective role they also succumb to an attitude of indifferences. The development of any democratic system becomes impossible which is violation to human dignity. Let us share love – In love the secret of respect is found in every man and every woman."

Jean Regis Ramsamy, PhD (Indian Diaspora Council, Reunion Island)

"I am thrilled to support IDC statement about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as it turns 75. But we are hard pressed to see that the world in 2023 is not a peaceful world, a wild world and peace is still to be achieved. The arms race continues. The race for profits too. The end of fossil fuels (petrol) has forced humans to look for a palliative, as natural gas, but more expensive.

"For example to wifi progress or 5G, and new discovery, we have to draw on mines near Madagascar or in African countries, destroying nature in the process. But most seriously, we are perpetuating modern slavery, child labor, child abuse, women's work. The indebtedness of farmers over several generations is still a real phenomenon.

"People do not have enough to eat and in the rich world, food waste is still rampant. Despite this, we always demand more comfort. The beginning of the 21st century should not turn into the beginning of the end of the world. To summarize, slavery continues in new forms, as indentured labor in the past. But we want to continue to be optimistic, significant progress has been made in the chapter of women's rights and gender.

"December 9 a special day for secularism (day of laicity, celebrated every year in FRANCE, it's also a tool towards Human Rights."

Sonya Rahaman, International Human Rights Lawyer (London, UK)

Ensuring Dignity, Freedom and Justice for All

"As we mark the 75th anniversary of the creation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) on 10 December 1948, we are provided with time to reflect on its achievements, the evolving nature of challenges it faces, and offer some thoughts on its future.

"Arising out of the embers of destruction and atrocities committed during the Second World War, the UDHR's 30 articles comprise socio-economic, cultural and civil and political rights, including the right to a private family life and the right to vote. Women, like Eleanor Roosevelt, Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights, were pivotal to the drafting of these articles. South Asian women, like Hansa Mehta, Begum Shaista Ikramullah and Lakshmi Menon, fought tirelessly for equal protection of *all* women under the Declaration, especially those under colonial rule.

"Thanks to the UDHR, and the human rights treaties and treaty-bodies that have followed from its inception, we can hold our governments to account for breaches of our fundamental rights. However, ensuring continued accountability and the protection and promulgation of human rights is becoming harder to defend and uphold in the context of divisive politics and populist movements. The right of people to free movement, which drove our ancestors to distant shores in search of betterment and which is being exercised because of the impacts of climate change, war and persecution, is threatened by inhumane, unempathetic 'post-truth' far right narratives.

"Addressing and responding to these challenges and those posed by social media, artificial intelligence and rising economic inequality, is difficult but not impossible. A key step is to appreciate the importance and relevance of the rights set out in the UDHR. Another is to reach out across the political divide and be willing on an inter-personal level to communicate and share knowledge. It is only with knowledge of our rights and the mechanisms to protect them, that we can challenge those who seek to limit and diminish our rights and the rights of others. "

Dr. Sudhir Parikh (Chairman & Publisher-Parikh World Wide Media, New York, USA

"Indians who have chosen to live abroad and sometimes been forced to do so, make up one of the largest diasporas in the world. And. their migration to other countries has a long and storied history – each one of the migrations taking place for different reasons and causes. For instance, the migration of Indians to the Caribbean close to 300 years ago was the product of British colonialism, while it started more than a hundred years ago, really picked up in the 1960s with the passing of the Immigration Act.

“The migration to the Caribbean was largely in the form of indentured labor to work British plantations in countries like Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, Suriname, etc., the migration to the United States was in search of a better life initially on the Western coast of Canada and US, and in the 20th Century in what is sometimes described as the ‘brain drain.’

“The human rights of Indo-Caribbeans was not at the forefront of the plan of colonizers, but eventually with the end of slavery in that region, Indians also received a measure of freedom and ultimately became farmers and industrialists with their own properties and businesses, and eventually rising to leadership positions like Cheddi Jagan, president of Guyana, followed by other Indian-origin leaders. Indians began to face the backlash of having the control of the economies of the Caribbean countries.

“The early immigrants to the US, despite their difficult circumstances, became farmers and large agriculturists. While their basic right to own property took time to become reality, they began to flourish in California. In other parts of the US, Indians came first to study and further higher education, and then graduated to becoming what they are today- excelling in almost every field of endeavor and even reaching the position of Vice President, or US Ambassador to the United Nations.

“But these two regions were not the only diaspora of Indians who left their homeland. The Western coast of India, including Gujarat was fertile field for traders and merchants who went to the far corners of the world, including Africa and the Far East, became established in those countries and then, like their Caribbean brothers and sisters, facing a backlash precisely because they did so well economically.”

Vidur Dindyal (Author, London, UK)

“Seventy five 75) years ago the year of UDHR was a time which marked a sea change in the millennia history of mankind and the end of colonisation of nearly half of the world's population. This is progress of human civilisation. We continue to progress, albeit slowly, in our relations with one another as humans. We all want to live with dignity and others want the same.

“The old colonisers, notwithstanding the unspeakable horrors, succeeded for many years treating their subjects with 'dignity’. The way was "So long as you do not challenge my right to rule, you will be treated with respect. I will uphold your dignity.

“In my young days and the time of my parents, under colonialism, I believe those who ruled, performed their role because they were born into that. Overall they did so without being too authoritarian, as in the early days of colonialism. The Estate Manager, where I was born and brought up and so my dad, who was literally like a lord, often attended events at the temple. At the entrance he would remove his shoes and belt before entering out of respect for the people in the temple. In that way their dignity was upheld.

“I trust the 30 Articles of UDHR which spell out all the "Rights" are embodied in our education and regularly published as reminder to us all and the powers that be. I believe we humans have come a long way in the millennia we have existed.”

Ashook Ramsaran (Indian Diaspora Council, New York, USA)

“Denial of human rights at any level is an outright violation of fundamental, inalienable rights and freedoms including a right to education, a decent living, health care and a right to live free from any form of discrimination among others. The devastating effects of Covid-19 on the world’s poor and resulting global restrictions on migration further aggravate denial of basic human rights which ought to be a shared burden for world health, cooperation and co-existence. The harmful inequity and impact of climate change, medical accessibility, education, religious, ethnic, gender, food production and accessibility, clean water, hygiene, protection from attacks and fundamental human rights on poor and minority communities have adverse effects on the future of planet Earth and its inhabitants.”

Equity and social justice for all humanity are noble causes for the common good and upliftment of all people.

IDC’s focus on: Human rights for children, women, gender equality, religious and political rights, ethnic origin and heritage, senior and the elderly, social equality and justice, guaranteed legal protection and rule of law, refugees and displaced populations, persons with disabilities and compliance with guaranteed rights under own constitutions and UN Charter (Human Rights), human rights for Romani people.

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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.

Fight Inequality, Fight Racism

Racism, xenophobia and related discrimination and intolerance exist in all societies, everywhere. Racism harms not just the lives of those who endure it, but also society as a whole. We all lose in a society characterized by discrimination, division, distrust, intolerance, and hate. The fight against racism is everyone's fight. We all have a part to play in building a world beyond racism.
https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day