

## High Commission of India Lusaka

### Press Release

#### **Celebration of International Women's Day (21<sup>st</sup> March 2022)**

As part of the ongoing celebrations of "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav", High Commission of India, Lusaka in collaboration with Lusaka Indian Ladies Association (LILA) celebrated International Women's Day on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2022. The theme of the event was " Women Empowerment and Gender Equality for a Sustainable Tomorrow".



2. Ms. Rashmi Sharma, CEO, Jewel of Africa (Zambia) was Keynote Speaker for the event.
3. High Commissioner Mr. Ashok Kumar in his opening remarks stated that the theme of this year's celebration is very appropriate in the contemporary context as the world is facing various challenges and women need to play a very prominent role. He mentioned that women are the most affected section of the society from various global challenges, including climate change and therefore, there is an urgent need to make policies keeping women at centre stage for a better and sustainable tomorrow. He noted that our social reformers and leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Savitribai Phule, Justice Mahadev Govind Ranade, Ahilayabai Holkar, Tarabai Shinde, Fatima Sheikh, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar and many others have continued to constantly remind us that the progress of a nation depends upon the progress of women in the society.



Considering the Women Empowerment a central issue, High Commissioner mentioned that the Government of India under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji has implemented various policies like Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, Ujjawala Yojna, Mahila Shakti Kendra, Mahila e-Haat and Trade Related Entrepreneurship Assistance and Development (TREAD) Schemes to promote empowerment of women and supporting them to venture into entrepreneurship and overcoming financial and social barriers to help their integration into mainstream society that is required for sustainable economic development and building of a just society. He also referred to the remarks by President of Zambia H. E. Mr. Hakainde Hichilema during the celebration of the International Women's Day wherein he called upon everyone to spread the message of love to put an end to gender violence.



4. Dr. Raji K. P., Chairlady of Lusaka Indian Ladies Association (LILA) mentioned that women have covered a long journey and there are many success stories and accomplishment, but there are several miles to go to

achieve gender equality and empowerment. She highlighted that women are generally under-represented in most of the socio-economic activities and political space across the world and called for concerted efforts to bring them into the mainstream. She noted with happiness that the Government of India is taking several proactive policy measures in this direction. She recalled the history of Lusaka Indian Ladies Association (LILA) since its inception in 1979 and its journey to serve as a platform for social, cultural and charitable interactions. She highlighted that over the 43 years, LILA members have raised funds through various events and reached out to the vulnerable and indigenous communities in Zambian society through several charitable projects. On the social front, LILA showcased rich Indian art and cultural heritage through many successful and well-appreciated social events such as Brides of India, Saree Sutra, Grand India Mela, Folk dances of India, Holi Mela, Aaj Ki Shaam App Ke Naam, Season of Festivals, sports events such as Golf Tournaments.



5. Ms. Rashmi Sharma, CEO, Jewel of Africa (Zambia) in her keynote address highlighted International Women's Day as a time to reflect on the progress made to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women. She also spoke about her journey, experience and different challenges faced by her. While referring to women's significant contribution in world GDP, she mentioned that gender parity will soon become a reality as more and more women support each other by providing easier access to finances, education and political representation. She also mentioned that both genders need to be responsible towards our Land and Soils, the environment, its population and collectively work towards eradicating poverty. Concluding her keynote



speech, she expressed hope that Jewel of Africa would play significant role in this direction in the next couple of years.



6. Members of Lusaka Indian Ladies Association (LILA) presented a colourful cultural programme projecting the costumes of Indian States and highlighted India's rich cultural heritage and diversity.

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