

**Transcript of Remarks by Amb Sibi George at the Indian Doctors' Forum
event: Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign, Oct 26, 2020**

President of IDF Dr. Amir Ahmed, Office bearers of the Forum, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I begin my remarks today expressing my heartfelt condolences on the sad demise of His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. We are now in the middle of a mourning period when a grateful nation mourns the demise of its beloved leader. During these difficult times we Indians in Kuwait also mourn with our Kuwaiti brothers and sisters.

I also begin by thanking His Highness Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the new Amir and His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the new Crown Prince for hosting the large Indian community in Kuwait and for their leadership in strengthening the bilateral relations between our two friendly countries.

These are difficult times for all. The Covid 19 crisis which began as a health challenge, has evolved into an economic disruption, a geopolitical shock and a social challenge. Today it has emerged as a global challenge of a magnitude that humanity has not experienced in recent memory. It is throwing up new challenges to every country, every society and every family including in India and here in Kuwait.

I thank the millions of doctors, nurses and other medical personnel all over the world who work day in and day out to save lives, in our fight against this pandemic. On behalf of Government of India and the people of India I express my sincere gratitude to our doctors, nurses and other medical professionals here in Kuwait who are working to save the lives of our brothers and sisters. I thank the thousands of great women and men, business people and professionals, associations and volunteers, who contributed in our efforts to support the community in distress. It is not over. It is still a work in progress. We continue to face many challenges. The most important point is that we are all in it together. Together we will fight this pandemic and we will support each and every one of our brothers and sisters who need support. Let me

reiterate, the victims of this pandemic are not liabilities, they are our priorities.

I would like to share with you a conversation that I had today with Assistant Foreign Minister on Covid situation. He advised me to tell everyone not to panic. Many people fear that death is round the corner. We should spread the message not to panic and remain calm and confident. Governments all over the world are doing everything they can do to address the challenge of Covid 19. The responsibility is more on us who hold important positions to address every one and to avoid a situation of panic. In this regard, I urge the our medical community, especially a Forum like IDF to continue to offer voluntary counselling services, particularly to the psychologically vulnerable segments of our diaspora, and help them deal with the mental stress resulting from the ongoing pandemic. The situation has improved considerably, we understand the virus more than a few months back. The number of deaths have reduced, the number of recoveries have increased many fold. Let's work towards conveying the message that the situation is gradually getting under control. We need to stay careful, take all precautions and stay safe.

I am so happy to note that Kuwaiti leadership appreciates and welcomes the services of our doctors and other medical professionals. I recall that last week during my call on His Excellency Dr. Basel Hamoud Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Hon'ble Minister of Health, he spoke so high about the services of Indian medical professionals, which makes every Indian in Kuwait proud.

I am also happy to see a convergence in my thinking with that of IDF on what I perceive as the approach to outreach to the Indian community and to the Kuwaiti society at all levels. We need to reach out more. There is a huge section of society both in Indian community and in Kuwaiti leadership at all levels that we have not engaged with. This is true with business, this is true with culture and this is true with so many other sectors like professionals, scientists and scholars, both women and men. We should not limit our engagement to a small group. I am happy that groups like IDF is coming up with programs and campaigns that have the potential to reach out to those important sections of Kuwaiti society and Indian community that we have not reached out in the past. We need to expand our horizon. Two hundred or four

hundred of our contacts and friends alone do not make the society. It is much bigger and wider.

Indian diaspora in Kuwait, has produced so many successful entrepreneurs, beloved educationists, highly talented and experienced professionals, both women and men, stars in every field and absolutely law abiding associates for their Kuwaiti partners, whom we need to reach out to, to spread the message of a transformed India all across Kuwait and beyond. We have made a small beginning in the form of ICN (Indian Cultural Network) to highlight our cultural diversity and art forms and to recognize and promote the artistic skills within our diaspora; IPN (Indian Professionals Network) to learn from the expertise and experiences of our distinguished professionals here and imbibe the best practices and IBN (Indian Business Network) to showcase India's economic and scientific transformation and to highlight the billion opportunities that India offers for business partnership. I urge all members of IDF also to join hands in our endeavor to reach out to all friends to realize the full potential of India's engagement with Kuwait and this region. Together, we need to explore and expand.

I see this Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign as a major step in generating awareness at the same time to reach out to many Indians and Kuwaitis on the good work that Indians in Kuwait do and also on the significant progress that India has made in medical and pharmaceutical sectors. I am happy that despite being in the middle of these difficult times due to Covid, IDF members have taken this important initiative.

I thank the IDF leadership and its members for their humanitarian efforts and wish the breast cancer awareness campaign all the success.

Thank you.