

## **Welcome by Santosh Kumar**

At the FIAV lunch for Indian Origin seniors  
Preston Town Hall (25 August 2013)

On behalf of FIAV, it is my great pleasure to welcome;

- Mr Rakesh Kawra from the Indian Consulate
- Mr Chindabarum Srinivasan, VMC Commissioner
- Mr Vasan Srinivasan, President FIAF and Chairman, Confederation of Indian Associations
- FIAV Executive Committee members
- Presidents of various Indian Associations
- Presidents of Indian senior associations  
Kingston Indian Seniors Citizens
- Indian Senior Association – West
- Indian Seniors Forum and Seva International
- Indian Senior Citizens
- NRISA
- Two very special seniors: Mr Harbhajan Singh, Athlete of international repute, and Mr Bharpur Singh Ji
- Two wonderful ladies
- Mrs Krishna Arora OAM and Mrs Usha Sharma. They are the only two to have their name on the wall of FAME.
- Associated with Mrs Arora, is the name of Mr Surendra Verma, who initiated the case of Mrs Arora for OAM.
- And finally all fellow seniors, nothing happens without your support and participation :

Today I want to raise a couple of points; I hope you find them as relevant as they are to me.

I start with a quote, “We believe that the Arab world is one human body.... It prospers if all of its parts are prosperous.”

These are the words of Sheik Hamid Bin Khalifa –when he handed over Qatar monarchy to his 33 year old son after 18 year’s rule on Qatar.

In my opinion, it is a short but a very powerful message from a father to a son. I find FIAV is exactly doing the same by showing care, affection, respect and concern for all sections of its membership, including seniors of Indian origin. A large number of organizations were requested to locate seniors among their respective membership and only a few responded. They are:

- Bharat Shah from Gujarati Association
- Alan James from Goan Overseas Association and
- Rakhil Razdan from Kashmiri Pundit’s Cultural Association
- Malayalee Association and Maharashtra Mandal were a bit late but came through. I am grateful to all of them.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in showing our appreciation to all of them.

Thank you for joining this historical event. Now I request you all to join me in expressing our thanks to the President, FIAV, Mr Vasan Srinivasan for thinking about Indian seniors and including them as part of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.

For that I invite on behalf of all seniors, Mr Matta from NRISA to felicitate the FIAV President, Mr Vasan.

We also thank the sponsor Australian Unity for their support.

Now I take you back to the words. One doesn’t have to be a King to put these words into action; FIAV has implemented with regard to Indian seniors and we all can find application of these words in our own life. If we can make a difference in someone’s life, we will slowly change our world to a better world for us and for coming generations.

Second point I want to make is concerning profile of seniors in our community. I am talking about all seniors and not restricted to Indian Seniors. My basic question is: What can we contribute for welfare of community? I am changing the direction from seeking to offering back for betterment of our nation and our

people. The question is: Can senior-brain-power be put to use? Any partnership will last longer where there is honest desire for a fair 'give and take'? I feel answer is yes. More seniors are required to sell the idea and be counted for taking actions to improve quality of life in some way. The burden caused by seniors is increasing. For example, in 1970 the ratio for every person over 65 there were 7.5 working people, which is going to come down to 2.7 by 2050. In other words, 2.7 working people will be responsible for every one person over the age of 65. Clearly it is not sustainable. Alternatives have to be discovered. We have to help ourselves, we have to help our Government and may be even private sector may find a few hidden \$ by making use of seniors. I invite people to come forward and develop a pilot study and use Mr Vasan's resources to have our study a support from the Government. I am seeking help of a few who can contribute to this idea.

Finally, my third point is to appeal to all to think of meeting at some well-defined intervals say once or twice a year and form an umbrella organization like Federation of the Indian Senior Associations or call it by some other name. This organization should have clearly defined objectives and not just limited to lunch and entertainment. Responsibility rests on us to initiate, convenience, support, develop and execute those ideas.

Thank You