

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Shiekh Nahyan Bin Mubarak, Al Nahyan, And his H.E Haneef Hassan

As- Salam-wale-kum

Before I begin my statement about IIMSAM and Autism I would like to mention that my experience in the last few days in visiting the magnificent infrastructure that you have build here at the Emirates, for the support of people with special needs and people that are being afflicted by Autism specifically the children.

Centers like Dubai Autism Center, Emirates Autism Center and Sharjah city for humanitarian services, can be indeed a shining example for the rest of the world to emulate. Having myself being afflicted by Polio at an early age I can sympathize with all of the beautiful people and children that I have thus far met.

That vindicates the work that I have done so far in the fight and the struggle to promote the empowerment and the rights of all people's that are physically and mentally challenged. There are over 650 million of us on this planet and I can see now the light at the end of the tunnel for I have seen with my own eyes the magnificent work that can be accomplished when a government such as the Emirates is will to invest and empower this forgotten sector of society.

When I leave this beautiful country I will make sure that through the works of IIMSAM I will tell the world what has been done here at the emirates and to take a closer look what could be accomplished when the collective efforts of a great nations, a caring nation and a compassionate one, there are indeed no limits to what could be done.

It is indeed overwhelming to address a subject like autism that inflicts our Children in a drastic way. Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life and affects a person's ability to communicate and interact with others.

Autism is defined by a certain set of behaviors and is a "spectrum disorder" that affects individuals differently and to varying degrees. In the year 2007, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in the US concluded in its ADDM autism prevalence report that the prevalence of autism had risen to

1 in every 150 American children, and almost 1 in 94 boys.
Over 1.5 million Americans live with the effects of autism spectrum disorder. The trend is not only confined to the US but affects the humankind across the world.

The biggest challenge that faces us is to consider how to serve these families facing a lifetime of supports for their children? The challenge we face is a not a small one but a herculean task; and there is an imperative need for a collective and joint effort to overcome it.

The United States is facing almost over \$90 billion annually in costs for autism and this figure includes research, insurance costs and non-covered expenses, Medicaid waivers for autism, educational spending, housing, transportation, employment, in addition to related therapeutic services and caregiver costs.

The amount is phenomenal when you shall consider it at a global level. International community has a mixed record to address the issue. But besides raising monetary resources there is an urgent need to recognize, realize, and empathize with the imperative need to address the crucial issue on a priority basis; and more importantly to take concrete actions especially in the context of the Developing and the Least Developed Countries.

There are many people who for years have contributed significantly in the field of Autism, selflessly serving the humankind without any care for fame or recognition. In the journey of my life, I met many people like and Ms. Felicity Ngungu from the Republic of Kenya is one of them.

Ms. Felicity is the Programme Director of the Autism Society of Kenya who studied Autism for years. She recorded and developed a scientific body of knowledge that should be utilized in our approaches to deal with the problem of autism especially amongst children.

From the perspective of IIMSAM, we firmly believe that there is an imperative need to provide holistic nutrition to mothers and children through Spirulina. Unless the issue of maternal health is addressed timely, various pathologies that might also lead to infant mortality shall continue to occur. Poor and the marginalized especially in the developing and the least develop countries shall bear the brunt of it. Alas ! their cries are in so distant in a land that nobody shall notice.

No, it shall not be the case anymore. I am confident that people gathered here shall help IIMSAM deliver nutritional benefits of Spirulina to the mothers and children of the world. A little Spirulina when consumed on a daily basis fulfills the daily nutritional requirements of a human body; and counters various pathologies associated with malnutrition. Our Spirulina Nutritional Initiatives across the world aspire to eradicate malnutrition, achieve food security and bridge the health divide.

Therefore, with your support we shall go forward with faith and determination, relying upon the collective wisdom of us all to achieve Solutions or the beginning of such solutions to address the issue of Autism in a holistic way, which we can render possible in the context in which we help to shape events, so that, as Dante said, "***On this little plot of earth belonging to man, life may pass in freedom and with peace.***"

I am also grateful to our Goodwill Ambassador Dr. Sulaiman Al-Fahim who made our interaction possible.

Thank you