

MULTILINGUALISM IN AFRICAN NATION STATES: STEPPING STONES OR STUMBLING BLOCKS FOR DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

It is estimated that of the over 6,912 spoken languages in the world today about 2,092 of these languages are spoken in major language families in Africa alone. Sub-Saharan Africa is considered to be the hotbed of linguistic diversities in the continent with over 1,500 languages. In a linguistically diversified continent where the need for development is increasingly becoming the major concern of African governments, this paper argues against the back drop of success in making headway for development that, language is a key missing link for Africa. The paper debunks the inexpediency of nationalizing/continentalizing one language (at the expense of others) as the language of communication on the issues attendant to development and argues that, through the use of trained translators, every ethnic African language should be used as part of Africa's diversified natural resources towards sustainable development.

Keywords: Linguistic diversities, Multilingualism, Sustainable Development, Language Distribution, income and illiteracy.

INTRODUCTION

Since the commencement of African self-rule, development has increasingly become the desired object of the masses of African citizenry. Little wonder why the need for development has become the most articulated existential rationale of African governments today. Some fifty years have gone by since the commencement of post colonial administration yet every ostensive desire and supposed endeavor towards development has only produced trifling results to meet the developmental issues which impede African nation states. The lack of success in making headway in this regard has in recent times given room for fashionable theories such as the World Bank and IMF Structural Adjustment solutions of the 1970s and 80s, the UN inspired Human Development index towards self development, etc. yet none of these theories have provided a workable theoretical basis for the desired development in Africa. However, with the clarion call for intellectual leadership development for Africa's advancement by key Pan-Africanists like Thabo Mbeki, there seem to be an optimistic trend towards development.

But as a researcher in the development problematique in Africa, I argue that the lack of indigenous language usage (considerably) is also a key missing link in African's development because language has always been the matrix within which any development process is socio-culturally negotiated and implemented. "The social character of language and its function as the key transactional instrument for the communication of human groups makes it both the supreme divider and, at the same time invisible instrument for uniting people." Says Prah (2004:5-6). Hence this paper seeks to establish the intrinsic relationship between multilingualism in Africa and economic development by exploring the relevant contextual linguistic realities in contemporary Africa with the aim of addressing the extent to which they affect the issues

attendant to sustainable development. According to Mavesera’s (2011:2), sustainable development refers to “a globally endorsed positive change that encourages ecological and socio cultural, political and economic dimensions but with context-bound implementation strategies .Sustainable development depends on a shared vision communicated in different languages ultimately leading to the creation of a liveable environment for the present and future generations across the globe.” The paper has the following structure: in section 2.0 a general overview of multilingualism in the continent and Africa in particular is given, with special concerns on its definitive concepts. Section 3.0 discusses how these diversities pose a serious challenge to sustainable development in African nation states. Section 4.0 discusses how governments can use professional translators to turn these apparent challenges posed by multilingualism into stepping stones for sustainable development in Africa.

MULTILINGUALISM IN AFRICA

Multilingualism in the world in general and Africa in particular is an issue of growing social importance. Edwards (1995:33) defines linguistic diversity or multilingualism as “...the ability to speak, at some level, more than one language.” But in his *A dictionary of language planning terms*, Cluver (1993:55) gives a rather political definition of multilingualism to mean “the result of members of different speech communities brought together into one political unit” The Ethnologue (www.ethnologue.com) considers that there are 6,912 languages in the world today. The table below shows the distribution of languages according to continents:

Continent	Number of languages	World percentage
Asia	2,269	32.8
Africa	2,092	30.3
Pacific	1,310	19.0
Americas	1,002	14.5
Europe	239	3.5
Total	6,912	100.0

Table 1. The Distribution of languages according to continents

This table shows that Africa and Asia have a larger number of languages than any other continent in the world. Africa alone has 2,092 languages of the 6,912 languages in the world. These 2,092 languages are spoken in several major language families in Africa. Namely; Afro-Asiatic which spreads throughout the Middle East, North Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel. There is also the Nilo-Saharan language family which is spoken in Sudan and Chad. The Niger-Congo language family covers West Africa, Central Africa and Southeast Africa. Another major language family called Khoe is spoken mainly in the deserts of Namibia and Botswana and Indo-European spoken mainly in the Southern tips of the continent.

Of all the major parts in Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the world’s hotbeds of linguistic diversities. Indeed, the Niger-Congo language family, spoken in the largest part of Sub-Saharan Africa, is the largest language family by the number of languages, with over 1,500 languages. According to the Ethnologue, 13 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding the southern portion of the continent, where Niger-Congo languages coexist side by side with Khoisan languages) are listed with 50 or more living languages. This list includes the following countries:

Sub-Saharan Countries	Number of Living Languages
Nigeria	514
Cameroon	278
Congo DRC	215
Chad	131
Tanzania	128
Ghana	79
Côte d'Ivoire	78
Central African Republic	71
Kenya	69
Burkina Faso	68
Congo Brazzaville	62
Mali	57
Benin	54

Table 2. Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with 50 or more living languages

There is another measure which shows how highly multilingual these countries are. This measure is the average number of speakers per language (i.e., the total population of a state divided by the number of living languages listed). When this figure is calculated, many smaller African countries emerge as highly multilingual, alongside such multilingual countries as Cameroon (278 languages), Congo (62 languages), Central African Republic (71 languages) and Benin (54 languages). Research reveals that, 12 Sub-Saharan African countries (with the exclusion of the southern portion of the continent) have the figures of 1 language per less than 200,000 people. They include the following:

Countries	Number of Persons per Language
Gabon	30,738 (42 languages)
Equatorial Guinea	34,571 (14 languages)
Congo	58,225 (62 languages)
Central African Republic	59,028 (71 languages)
Botswana	63,310 (29 languages)
Cameroon	64,010 (278 languages)
Guinea-Bissau	76,047 (21 languages)
Chad	77,450 (131 languages)
Liberia	114,733 (30 languages)
Benin	157,222 (54 languages)
Togo	159,974 (39 languages)
Gambia	161,700 (10 languages)

Table 3. Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with 1 language per less than 200,000 people

This indicates that smaller countries in Sub-Saharan Africa such as Equatorial Guinea or the Gambia, while they boast of fewer languages (14 and 10 respectively) are in some way no less multilingual than bigger countries like Nigeria with its over 140 million people to be the leader in linguistic diversity by the sheer number of languages. Thus, confirming the linguistic diversity in Africa. [Languages of the World: assessed 02/2012]

MULTILINGUALISM AS A CHALLENGE TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

The diversity of languages in Africa, ranging from the indigenous cultural languages to colonial languages has seriously retarded sustainable development in many African nation states. Let's consider a practical example in this context; Mola Ngonja, an illiterate local farmer in the rural areas of Buea, Cameroon who labors in raising goats and pigs and sells them in the local markets around as his main source of sustainable income. He hears of the scientific innovations and possibility to expand his career into modern meat farming and the prospects that, this will not only result to enormous output but it will yield greater life transforming profit for him.

He gets excited and is keen to know more about such growth but he lives in a linguistically diversified society where Bakweri is spoken as the indigenous language as well as colonial languages such as English and French which are actually the main official languages of communication. Being an illiterate, his biggest challenge is that all the documents that explain modern meat farming are written in French or English. This obviously poses a great problem to mola Ngonja. In his article, "African Science Must Tackle Local Language Barriers" Charles Dhewa (2010) clearly articulates such problems arguing that, indigenous African knowledge has much to offer science, but only if the science can be translated into African languages and such knowledge is embedded in local language and culture.

Well, if Mola Ngonja cannot read any of the relevant literatures on meat farming, then he will seek verbal assistance because he really wants to develop his career. So he goes to the relevant quarters for verbal explanation on how this works but unfortunately, all those who can help can only explain either in their own indigenous language different from Bakweri or English and/or French. Thus, Language, as Webb (1983:229-238) pointed, remains unequivocally the instrument for communication; it is a tool to enable meaningful interaction between social beings.

Therefore, a sociolinguistic approach to language should be based on a fundamental principle that language is primarily such an instrument for communication. But because of his language problem in a society with a problematic approach to multilingualism, wherever Mola Ngonja goes he is confronted by a language barrier that limits his chances to further develop as a meat farmer, thus marring his chances of becoming a successful entrepreneur. He gets frustrated and demotivated towards personal development. He feels under minded and inadequate because despite his competence in Bakweri as his mother tongue, he still cannot speak a foreign language to develop in his own father's land.

His self confidence and pride as a son of the soil is shaken while foreigners and non indigenes who can speak English and/or French will feel at home and benefit from this opportunity. Mosibudi Mangena (2010:6) says it all; "there is nothing as disempowering as not understanding what is going on." Simply because of the linguistically diversified nature of Mola Ngonja's society that limits him from the modern opportunities for economic advancement, he remains backward and underdeveloped. The views of Kwesi Kwaa Prah (2011:1) At the March 2011 Annual Conference of the American Applied Linguistics, succinctly summarizes such a frustration as follows:

There is no greater mark of superiority and inferiority in the contemporary African scene than the inability or ability to speak a colonial language. The implications of this ability or disability is best exemplified in those places in Africa where membership of parliament is acceptable or not acceptable depending on whether the person is able to speak in the elite colonial language. For as long as Africa remains trapped and bound in the consequences of colonial language usage there is little chance of advancement either at the scientific and technological levels or the socio-cultural level.

The nature of linguistic diversities in Africa comprises of the diverse ethnic languages and the colonial languages. In most African nation states, the main official languages are the colonial languages such as English, French and Portuguese. Apart from Swahili which is relatively more influential, no other African language has risen up to the status of the colonial languages in the continent. Being the main language in many African nation states, colonial languages are the main languages that articulate, the scope, nature, and outcome of sustainable development in Africa. Those who are linguistically rich in other languages other than the colonial language are considered to be illiterate and so will not understand or benefit from the opportunities to sustainable development.

The facts about literacy gathered from the International Literacy Day in Washington, DC on September 7, 2001 is stunning:

According to UNESCO, in the world today there are about 1 billion non-literate adults.

- This 1 billion is approximately 26 percent of the world's adult population.
- Women make up two-thirds of all non-literates.
- 98 percent of all non-literates live in developing countries.
- In the least developed countries, the overall illiteracy rate is 49 percent.
- 52 percent of all non-literates live in India and China.
- Africa as a continent has a literacy rate of less than 60 percent.
- In Sub-Saharan Africa since 1980, primary school enrolment has declined, going from 58 percent to 50 percent.
- In all developing countries, the percentage of children aged 6-11 not attending school is 15 percent. In the least developed countries, it is 45 percent.(UNESCO 1998)

In the world today, the number of people speaking lesser-known languages is 1.25 billion; that is 20 percent of the world's population.

- The average adult literacy rate among that population is an estimated 31 percent.
- The average adult literacy rate in their mother tongue among speakers of lesser-known languages is an estimated 12 percent.
- 26 countries have more than 90 percent of the total national population speaking lesser-known languages. The average literacy rate in these countries is 63 percent.
- 21 countries have less than 1 percent of the total national population speaking lesser-known languages. The average literacy rate in these countries is 93 percent.

- Of the world's non-literate population, an estimated 476 million are speakers of lesser-known languages. In other words, approximately 50 percent of all non-literates are minority language speakers.

There is a correlation between income and illiteracy.

- Per capita income in countries with a literacy rate less than 55 percent averages about \$600
- Per capita income in countries with a literacy rate between 55 and 84 percent is \$2,400
- Per capita income in countries with a literacy rate between 85 and 95 percent is \$3,700
- Per capita income in countries with a literacy rate above 96 percent is \$12,600

These facts about literacy especially as pertaining to Africa reveal that, the level of literacy in a nation greatly contributes toward its sustainable development. The socio-economic advantage of literacy as a societal quality can be hardly doubted. Graff and Duffy (2007: 47) wrote;

The assumed link between literacy and economic success is one of the cornerstones of Western modernization theories On a collective scale, literacy is thought to be a necessary precondition of modernization, a cause and correlate of economic growth, productivity, industrialization, per capita wealth, gross national product, and technological advances, among other advances.

A literate person by definition is simply someone who is able to read and write coherently and think critically about the written word. But in Africa, this definition is somewhat biased to mean someone who is able to read and write any of the official (colonial) languages. Hence, if for example an individual in the SW region of Cameroon can read and write Bakweri but cannot read and write English or French, s/he is considered to be illiterate. Such a consideration is contrary to what serious educationists would hold as Prah (2011: 4) confirms “most educationists would agree that the literate-use of the mother-tongue or home language is the most effective way of processing education.” This opposite perspective of literacy in Africa poses a serious challenge to sustainable development where the majority can at least speak an indigenous language but not the colonial language.

In his paper; “A strategy for the promotion of Swahili in Africa and its relevance for the linguistic decolonisation and African cultural renaissance projects” Samba Buri Mboup argued that, indigenous African languages must articulate the prospects of sustainable development to African indigenes. Since Swahili is one of the most influential languages in Africa, Mboup (2010) believes it should rather be promoted as the African language to articulate the nature and benefit of development in Africa. His paper’s thesis premises on the following revealing facts about Swahili:

Swahili is taught as a subject at many universities in Africa and other parts of the world, especially at the universities of Ile-ife (Nigeria) and Makerere (Uganda). It is also taught as a subject in East African tertiary institutions and, more recently, in Tripoli (Libya). It forms part of curricula in Europe, for example at London’s SOAS (School of African Studies) and Paris’ INALCO (National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations), at Nordic countries’ universities. In the USA, it is taught in various universities (such as Columbia, Pennsylvania, UCLA and Texas) in addition to being considered for staff training in the foreign service.

In Tanzania, the Swahili Journal (which is published twice a year by the Institute of Swahili Research of the University of Dar-Es-Salaam and is entirely devoted to fostering Swahili studies) includes articles in the areas of history, linguistics and literature in addition to lexicology (coinage of lists of new words) and book reviews. As a consequence of this and other initiatives, Swahili has the advantage of having a particularly thriving and of high quality written scientific and literary corpus (dating from the 18th century and even earlier) and excellent educational materials: what will likely make learning easier. Finally, it is important to stress that although it is without any defined status in the framework of the UN despite some laudable individual initiatives particularly in the area of media and broadcasting, Swahili was adopted as an official language by the AU following a resolution that was introduced by Senegal at the Durban (2002) and Maputo (July 2003) summits.

For all the above mentioned reasons, in addition to the fact that it is the most widely spoken African language on the African continent, Swahili has the potential to become a language of unity and integration at sub-regional and continental level since it is a language of science and education, diplomacy and politics. In the medium term, it might also become a language of communication with the African Diaspora.

Mboup's suggestion seems to have some merits as Ethnologue confirms the following facts about Swahili:

Swahili is spoken in the following African countries:

1. Burundi
2. Comoros DR Congo
3. Kenya
4. Mayotte
5. Mozambique
6. Oman
7. Rwanda
8. Somalia
9. South Sudan
10. Tanzania
11. Uganda

According to the 16th edition of Ethnologue 2009, it was believed that the total number of those who speak Swahili in Africa exceeds 40 million. However, recent research has proven that the total of Swahili speakers exceeds 60 Million. See Abiola and Jeyifo (2010). And also the following resources for more on Swahili language; Whiteley (1969). Brock-Utne (2001:115-134). Prins (1961). The map below shows the total areas in Africa where Swahili is spoken either as an indigenous, official, trade or national language:



With further evidence from authors like Hinnebusch (1992: 99-106), Dalby (2000: 733-735) and Wald (1994: 289-364), It can well be admitted that Swahili is the most widely spoken African language in the continent and that if an African language were to be chosen as the language of Africa in government; in the management of public services and of towns, cities, municipalities; in education, scientific research, social communication, intellectual and literary life and production, etc, Swahili would be the undisputed choice. But of the over 1.0 billion people in Africa (according to World Population Prospects 2012), only about 40-60 million speak Swahili either as an indigenous, official or trade language.

With these in mind, making Swahili the language that articulates the issues of development in Africa (including the regions where the language is not understood) would mean engaging only 40 to 60 million Africans of the over 1.0 billion in the issues of development. This implies that, if Swahili becomes the language of Africa, the way forward for development lies in the fact that the over 900 million Africans who do not speak Swahili would have to learn the language or be exempt in the process while only about 60 million take active role. This ofcourse cannot possibly be the solution for a continent which ought to have a liberal democracy, one where all linguistic entities have equal rights of participation in the issues of development. Prah (2011:3) makes the point even clearer; “If cultural pluralism and multilingualism are to be advanced to support democracy, tolerance and the peaceful coexistence of different cultural groups then fuller linguistic and cultural empowerment of all groups in equality and even-handedness is required.” Hilda Israel (2010) in her paper ; “I am an African, I speak the African Language” advocates for a compromise that takes into account not only the colonial languages or Swahili as Mboup proposes but one which takes into account all the African languages towards sustainable development in the continent. Thus she states “A compromise is needed, one where the value of the African language and that of English is recognized; where the different roles they play do not lead to one language being undermined by the other”.

Birgit Brock-Utne (2006 [2000]: 115-134) has asked; “in our colonial languages or the languages of the masses? Can development ever proceed successfully?” In response, this paper argues that, no colonial language not even the influential African languages like Swahili should be used as the main medium to communicate the issues attendant to sustainable development in Africa. It advocates that, all languages in Africa should be seen as a resource for development and be considered in this process. Swahili: in the areas where Swahili is spoken, Yoruba, Hausa, Zulu, etc in their respective areas as well, but with a similar thesis on development that represents the vision of Africa.

In a public lecture at the University of South Africa, a student asked the visiting lecturer, Professor Wole Soyinka “sir” he said “Africa is by all means diversified in terms of her cultures and linguistics; how can Africans pursue a unity in diversity towards building a unified literary structure that can best represent and identify Africans as a people to the wider world?”

In his response, Prof. Soyinka said, attempting to make one African culture or language the representative culture or language of Africans in general is simply an unconscious attempt to begin a civil war. Mavesera (2011:78) also believes that “Short changing African languages is not only a matter of linguistic exclusion; it is bad socio-economic practice and therefore unsustainable.”

Thus the idea of majoring on only one African language to foster development in Africa might not be an appropriate methodology towards sustainable development. Social equality necessitates that all African languages be given equal treatment. If Africans must take their destinies in their own hands and fight for their own development, this move must not minimize on any aspect of Africa’s linguistic diversity if the principles of democracy are still something to go by. Democratic principles advocate for the participation of every citizen or atleast the majority of them. And this participation can only be enhanced if the people are linguistically empowered so that they can effectively engage in the production process towards sustainable development.

This linguistic empowerment should be directly linked to the mother tongue of the masses. Mavesera (2011:78) confirms; “The crucial step towards sustainable development is to ensure participation by all people for the benefit of all and participation is encouraged by all inclusive language policies that unlock the stronghold of ideas and wisdom imbedded in every language group.” How then can the linguistic diversities in Africa be used as a stepping stone to sustainable development and not a stumbling block? Unity in diversity is advocated i.e even though diversified in terms of linguistics, Africans should be united in terms of goals and purpose towards development in the continent. The subsequent section of this paper has elaborated this in greater details.

LINGUISTIC DIVERSITIES AS STEPPING STONES TO DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Noticeably, Africans today are overwhelmingly multilingual and should be able to see it as an advantage towards sustainable development. The ability for Africans to communicate to others in their language of competence makes for good intercourse and profitable for the society as a whole. Therefore, Africa’s linguistic diversities should be seen as a stepping stone and not a stumbling block to development as it is an important tool for social integration. “Living and sharing each other’s world provides scope for greater and easier inter-group understanding. It also provides reach for the greater sharing of literature. On economies of scale, multilingualism on a literate social base enhances the viability of production for large constituencies and readerships.” (Prah 2011:5)

One of the key virtues necessary for sustainable development in Africa is self confidence on the part of the masses. The use of colonial languages as the main mode of communicating the issues of sustainable development in Africa has caused many Africans to lose self confidence in interacting with their own environment to foster sustainable development. I am convinced that if the linguistic diversities in Africa can be seen as a priceless ingredient to enable Africans to effectively

interact with their environment to promote development, this diversity would not be a stumbling block but a stepping stone for Africa's development. Uju (2008:22-23) seriously consents to this view as he corroborated that, there is a correlation between languages that people are able to communicate in and poverty eradication. This is because; they enhance personal as well as national sustainable development. Madhubuti (1984:123) takes the argument further by showing the indispensability of indigenous languages for sustainable development as he states "...without language, one cannot express the indigenous self and therefore, there is nothing to express other than the selves of others in their own languages." When indigenous African languages are used to articulate the issues of development, it will empower nationals with the ability to express their indigenous selves thus increasing their efficiency to participate in the struggle for sustainable development.

Furthermore, multilingualism in Africa becomes a serious stumbling block to development when colonial languages are allowed to intimidate and suppress indigenous languages. This is because, since many Africans will be inefficient to articulate development through these colonial languages, seeking western expertise to enhance development in Africa will become the indispensable thus limiting the chances of Africans to be actively involved in the process of their own development. Hence, multilingualism in Africa will only be a blessing if indigenous languages are allowed to articulate the issues of development. If this takes effect in Africa, then Africa will be on a firm path of recovery towards sustainable development. This will surely happen because the use of indigenous languages for development will limit western penetration in Africa and allow more Africans to be involved in the process. By mobilizing without western penetration, Africa will improve her chances of political and economic development. And subsequently the exportation of African knowledge and values through products and publications marketed and published through indigenous languages. Thus situating African languages in the global language market through economic initiatives. Also see Ngara (1982) and Nziramesanga et al (1999) for similar views.

Linguistic diversities in Africa will only be a stepping stone for sustainable development if African governments adopt a language policy that enhances economic participation by all and not just for those who are able to express themselves in the official (usually colonial) languages. Lack of language power according to Uju (2008:26) will lead to 'retardation of social development and economic marginalization.' Mavesera (2011:7) takes this further by consenting to the fact that "individuals who cannot communicate properly cannot handle opportunities that come their way." There are many opportunities for sustainable development in Africa but the complex linguistic diversities and a political system that gives no opportunity for these diverse languages to participate in development has kept Africa in a parlous state. But if governments will see these diversities as a resource and not a cause for recession by adopting a language policy that will enhance an active participation of all in their respective languages, sustainable development will be the outcome.

Another holistic approach to linguistic diversities in Africa towards sustainable development can be achieved through enacting a language policy that defines the roles and functions of each language with a lucid implementation scheme in all African states. Roy-Campbell (2006:5) writes, 'It is the interface between local knowledge and global scientific knowledge, each drawing on the other, which can effect sustainable adaptation to changing natural and socio-economic environments.' Local indigenous knowledge is pivotal to empowering communities to combat marginalisation, poverty and impoverishment. In the global village, valuable knowledge must be recorded, shared and or improved upon without the original ratifiers'

If Campbell's views were anything to go by, then such a policy will not only help liberate African communities from the dominion of colonial languages at the expense of indigenous languages, it will also help to put African languages into Writing so as to tap from all her socio-economic and cultural values towards a healthy sustenance of the continent and an equal participation of all. Mavesera (8:2011) confirms "inclusion of African languages would enhance inclusion of their speakers in socio-cultural and economic development which leads to sustainable development."

CONCLUSION

It has been established in this paper that the challenges posed by linguistic diversities in Africa can be over turned into a blessing for the continent's development. The paper argued sustainable development is possible when the masses of African citizenry are included through the use of their mother tongue in the process of articulating the issues attendant to development and its prospects for community development. The inclusion of African languages in the development discourse for Africa's advancement can only be done through the reformation of Africa's current language policy which gives an upper hand to foreign language at the expense of the indigenous ones. The use of trained translators to bridge the gap and enhance understanding between two parties is recommended as a practical approach to upholding unity in Africa's diversity. Hilda Israel (2010) puts it better;

There should be many more such persons; all of them should be adequately trained; government should invest in their education and training; careers as translators and interpreters should be consistently marketed; business should employ them to reach a wider clientele and schools should promote knowledge of African languages as a career opportunity. If one interpreter can hypothetically help five persons to move from development to achievement, then imagine what many well-trained interpreters can do for one community, one country? Imagine also what some of the hidden outcomes would be: a better economy; wider distribution of wealth and; empowerment through knowledge.

Admitted, this advocated change would definitely come along with some discomforts but sustainability is hinged on change as a constant phenomenon. The inhibited feelings of fear for such a change in the language policy of Africa is quite understandable but it remains the most recommended way forward for Africa. The views of Obama (2006:191) on change would suffice for a conclusion, '...how well we respond to globalization has ...to do with a change in spirit, a willingness to put our common interest and the interests of future generations ahead of short term expediency.'

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