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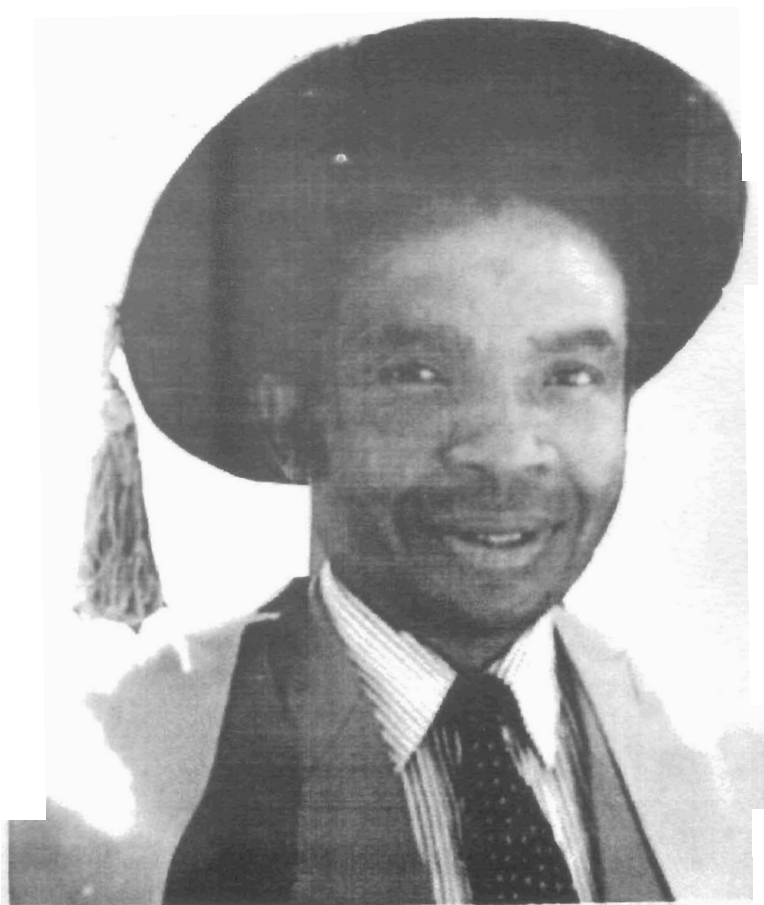
**ELECTORAL LITERACY
EMPOWERMENT AND
ATTAINMENT OF SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT: QUO VADIS
NIGERIA?**

By

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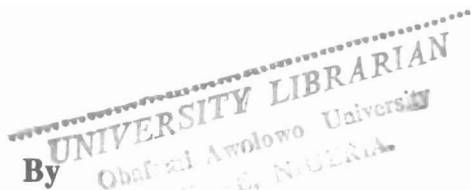
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ELECTORAL LITERACY EMPOWERMENT AND ATTAINMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: QUO VADIS NIGERIA?

Preamble

At the dawn of 1st October 1960, the Union Jack was lowered and in its place, the Nigerian flag was hoisted for the first time in Nigeria. Similarly the anthem of the United Kingdom was played for the last time in Nigeria. It was replaced with our anthem. Mr Vice-Chancellor Sir, this swapping of national flags and anthems marked the beginning of our country as an independent nation. Anyone who cared to take a cursory look at our nation at that time would have been convinced without any doubt that the human and material resources in the land were abundant, enormous, diverse and beyond compare. As a matter of fact our rich, robust and diverse flora and fauna signalled enormous hope to our people.

The 1886 Berlin conference gave 'legal' backing to 'European colonialists and predators' on African land to their partition of Africa and its people without recourse feelings and needs. With their overwhelming military might the colonial master dominated our people, exploited our resources, desecrated our religions, bastardized our commerce, defiled our culture and degraded our education. That colonial might seemed to have crumbled with our becoming an independent state in 1960. The zeal, vigour and determination with which the modern Nigerian founding fathers tackled the colonial master and compelled it to grant independence to us signalled great hopes and promises that a glorious dawn had come upon Nigeria, Africa and the black race. It was assumed that if the development, management and renewal of the abundant resources in our land were pursued in the similar way the colonial master was compelled to grant independence to us, it would then be a matter of just a few decades when our country would become the Cinderella of thriving, developing and sustainable economies.

The belief then was that Nigeria would out-do and out-pace what the Asian Tigers are doing today.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, it is unfortunate that the above expectations were allowed by our leaders to fritter away. In 1966, the elected governments in Nigeria were overthrown by the Nigerian military. The military thereafter took over the governance of the country. This was precipitated by the insecurity in the land as a result of the uprising and restiveness of people in the then Middle Belt of Nigeria and parts of the then Western Nigeria. The restiveness and uprising were predicated by the peoples' loss of faith in the jaundiced electoral process put in place by the colonial master in the 1959 general elections.

The intervention of the Nigerian military in the governance of the land had three devastating effects on the national polity. First, the military changed the tone of governance in the land. Second, it allowed the Nigerian education system to rot to the point that it almost completely collapsed (Adeyemo 1994, Onukaogu, 1989, Tinuoye 1991). Third, it stalled development in the land.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, I humbly postulate that the bane of our development as a nation is the intervention of our military in governance. Every aspect of our national life is in decay as a result of the intervention which eclipsed the emerging electoral process in Nigeria and which for a period of forty-four years (1966–2010) kept the electoral process in comatose and prostrate. I shall in the rest of this lecture do four things. First, I shall argue that the period 1960 to 1966 marked the golden age of Nigeria's development. Second, I shall argue that the intervention of the Nigerian military stalled development in our country and the near total collapse of the Nigerian formal education system. Third, I shall contend that the provision of electoral literacy empowerment to the generality of our people and the adoption of electoral literacy as a way of life will have some positive snowballing effects, on our land. Finally, I

shall suggest what we can do as a people to enable the generality of us have electoral literacy empowerment.

1960 – 1966 (Nigeria's Golden Age of Development)

When we obtained our independence in 1960, there were marked development indices in the land. Between then and 1966, the momentum to develop was terrific and great. For want of space and time, I shall refer to four key areas where development in the land peaked. First, in the area of agriculture, development was very spectacular. Nigeria's production of palm oil and kernel, cotton, rubber, shea butter, cocoa, ginger, hides and skin and groundnuts etc, was enormous. Produce Marketing Boards in the then four regions of the country were set up to export them. The Produce Marketing Boards were so successful that they were able to fund the establishment of Universities in the regions – Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria (Northern Region), University of Nigeria Nsukka (Eastern Region) and University of Ife – now Obafemi Awolowo University – (Western Region). Besides, it was the Produce Marketing Boards that helped their regional governments to fund free education in their regions. Apart from the promotion of cash crops for exports, all the regional governments set up farm settlements where young school leavers were given mouth-watering incentives to settle in rural communities. There, they set up modern farms where they produced both food and cash crops. Thus, by 1966 Nigeria was not only sufficient in food production; it was on the path of becoming the food basket of Africa.

Second, agriculture served as an impetus in the development of industries in the country. For instance, it provided the raw materials that led to the establishment of oil mills, textile mills, cocoa and rubber processing industries, including shoe industries and sugar cane processing mills to mention a few. Apart from preventing the flight of foreign exchange, boosting our exports and meeting our local demands, the industries provided employment opportunities in the country. There were other significant industries such as the petroleum refinery complex in Port Harcourt

and the Kanji hydro electric dam. Third, there was sound prospecting of mineral resources in the country. At a point in time, Nigeria was the leading producer of Columbite and Tin in the world. Lead, Zinc, Coal and, of course, the black gold – Crude Oil – were amongst the many minerals that were prospected, processed for local use and exported to boost our foreign exchange earnings. Finally, the transport sector was also sound. It was adequately developed to meet national needs. The Nigerian National Shipping Line played a crucial role in enhancing Nigerian mercantile capabilities. The Nigerian Railway Corporation played a critical role in human and bulk transportation in the country. The Nigerian Airways Corporation made Nigeria proud as its national carrier. In terms of road network, except perhaps for South Africa, Nigeria had the densest network of macadamised roads in Africa.

The thriving Nigerian economy had a positive spin off on the Nigerian school system. In 1956, Western Nigeria introduced compulsory free primary education for all school going children. Eastern Nigeria followed suit in 1958. In Northern Nigeria, education was not only free at all levels, mouth watering incentives were also provided to motivate pupils/students to embrace formal education. The federal and regional governments provided secondary and tertiary school scholarships to the point that the generality of Nigerian children could complete formal education at all levels almost for free. From the simple picture I have sketched above, it is clear that the Nigerian economy boomed even without the impact of crude oil. The result of the boom was felt in a number of ways. For instance, unemployment in Nigeria even for secondary school leavers was at the zero level. Since the generality of Nigerians were gainfully employed, the violent crimes that today make us sleep with only one eye closed were not there. The morale of public and private servants, and members of the Nigerian armed and uniformed forces was very high. The Nigerian economy was so buoyant that Nigeria prosecuted a vicious and very costly fratricidal civil war for 30 months and embarked on an

extensive and intensive post war reconciliation, reconstruction and rehabilitation programme without borrowing money. As a matter of fact, the economy was so buoyant that a Nigerian Head of State boasted that Nigeria's problem was not the lack of fund, but how to spend it. There is no doubt that between 1960 and 1966 Nigerian economy was very buoyant. This buoyancy which the Nigerian military inherited was wasted, for by the early 1980s, our economy had started to collapse.

Entrenchment of Bad Governance in Nigeria (1966 to 2010):

The period 1966 to 2010 can be regarded as the dark age of governance in Nigeria. That was the period when the Nigerian military overtly and covertly mismanaged the country. For instance, from 1966 to 1979, Nigerians had no voice regarding the choice of those who ruled them. Although the military handed over power to civilians in 1979, the electoral process was jaundiced, because the military tailored it to install military apologists who would protect its interests. The military returned to power in 1983 and held on to it till 1999. Although there were elections in 1991 and 1992, the electoral process was compromised because it was again teleguided by the military to produce military surrogates as governors and legislatures at both the national, state and local government levels. The June 12, 1993 election was cancelled by the military when it was clear that Moshood Abiola, the supposed winner, and the popular choice of the people was not going to allow himself to be a military surrogate. From 1999 to 2003, General Olusegun Obasanjo was installed by the military to protect its interest. Although General Olusegun Obasanjo wore a civilian toga when he was the President, his governance from 2003 to 2007 was more or less a pseudo military government. The 2007 to 2010 governance of Musa Yaradua was civilian. However there were considerable unanswered questions regarding the electoral process that brought him to power. President Yaradua himself faulted the electoral process that put him to power. In order to correct the aberrations in the electoral process, he set up a judicial panel to probe and make suggestions regarding how to reform it. Arising

from the findings and recommendations of the panel, the Electoral Act was amended in 2010. The 2010 amendment of the Electoral Act led to the overhaul of the electoral process. It was this overhauled electoral process that led to the success of 2011 general elections.

I can say without any equivocation that from the period 1966 to 2010, the Nigerian people have not had any meaningful and purposeful say regarding who should govern them (Mohammed and Bashir, 2010; Azeez, 2009; Ogundiya, 2010). The implementation of the electoral process between 1966 and 2010 was programmed in such a way that votes of the people generally were not counted. In many cases the counted votes were not taken into consideration regarding who eventually won an election. Before I conclude my evaluation on military governance, let me explain what governance is and establish a yardstick for evaluating it. As Azeez rightly points out:

If governance is generally referred to as the means for achieving directions, control and coordination of wholly or partially autonomous individuals or organizations on behalf of interests to which they jointly contribute (Lynn et al. 2000) then, good governance in the words of Healey and Robinson (1994), implies “a high level of organization effectiveness in relation to policy formulation and the policies actually pursued, especially in the conduct of economic policy and welfare”. More explicitly, it is “the means by which power is exercised in the management of a development” (World Bank 1992, Quoted in Azeez, 2009:218).

For the purpose of this lecture I want to use, as a working definition, UNESCAP’s position that “governance is the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented; an analysis of governance focuses on the formal and

informal actors involved in decision-making and implementing the decisions made and the formal and informal structures that have been set in place to arrive at and implement the decision” (2012:1).

Thus governance can be said to be good if it has the objective of achieving the good and the welfare of the generality of the people (Ogundiya 2010; Madhav, 2007). The World Bank (1992) and UNESCAP (2012) stress that a basic and fundamental feature of good governance is its apt development of the human and natural resources of a country. Where governance is imposed on a people then it cannot be good. That is why the Novartis Foundation has rightly observed that:

It is impossible for an economy to flourish where the “might of the sword” rather than free and fair elections decided who shall rule. A government that shoulders responsibilities for sustainable development and ensures its people have security, solidarity, order and continuity, creates an environment on which its citizens can exercise their productive, political and cultural abilities (Novartis Foundation, 2012: 3).

As a matter of fact the Novartis Foundation points out that “good governance puts people in the centre of development. Where people grow, profits grow; this well tried business rule is applicable to development as well” (Novartis Foundation, 2012: 3). As Ogundiya has rightly observed:

Good governance means accountability in all its ramifications. It also means the rule of law and an unfettered judiciary; that is freedom of expression and choice of political association. Good governance means transparency, equity and honesty in public office. In the Nigerian context, good governance calls for constitutional rule and a true

federal system. These are the basic pedestals on which development rests (Ogundiya, 2010: 204).

I will now use UNESCAP's (2012) eight minimum criteria for good governance to evaluate the period 1966 to 2010, when the Nigerian military held sway over governance in our country.

Participation. According to UNESCAP, in good governance, all segments, of the society, men, women and the most vulnerable of the society "would be taken into consideration in decision making". Of course from 1966 to 2010, it was only the Nigerian military and their surrogates that decided how the country was governed.

Rule of Law. According also to UNESCAP, "central to good governance is the rule of law where legal frameworks are enforced impartially and where human rights including gender and minority rights are respected and protected". During the period under review, the sanctity of the human life was not respected. Minority rights were abused. The corruption of the Police and the incapacitation of the Judiciary ridiculed the rule of law. The Judiciary was cowed through the starvation of funds and through the possible removal of judges without due process.

Transparency. UNESCAP contends that in good governance "decision-taking and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations". Besides, "information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and enforcement." Information hoarding was a hall mark of the military during the period. Electronic and mass media were under strict surveillance. Information had to be published to suit the whims and caprices of the military or the media would be sanctioned.

- **Responsiveness.** Although UNESCAP takes the position that "good governance requires that institutions and process

try to serve all stakeholders within a time frame”, governance during the period was not responsive to anyone. Those in the corridors of authority were not elected by the people. Besides, there were no legislative assemblies to ensure that other stakeholders were served within any given time frame.

Consensus. As UNESCAP rightly points out, “good governance requires mediation of the different interests in society to reach a broad consensus in the society in what is in the best interest of the whole community and how it can be anchored”. During the period 1966 to 2010, the people were rarely consulted in decisions that affected them. Even if they were consulted, their positions or views were usually ignored. For instance, in 1966, the military in Decree 34, abolished the federal set up of governance in the land and imposed a unitary form of governance. Although there were protests against the decision which led to the loss of lives in the North and eventually a civil war, the unitary form of government is still very much on ground. We only operate a federal system in name. The absence of a fiscal federation shows that the unitary system of governance is still much with us. Besides, in 1986, against the wishes of almost all Nigerians, the military took the IMF loan and imposed on us its Structural Adjustment Programme which crippled education and growth in the land.

- **Equity and Inclusiveness.** Given the bastardization of education which led to the near total collapse of the education system, it was impossible on the one hand for the average Nigerian child to develop the knowledge, skills and attitude for survival in the society. On the other hand the Nigerian military and their surrogates sent their children or wards to first-rate private institutions which were definitely beyond the reach of the generality of our people.

Effectiveness and Efficiency. If we accept UNESCAP’s position that good governance includes the “sustainable use

of natural resources and the protection of environment”, then 1966 to 2010 represents one of the saddest periods in our history. The flaring of gas in the Niger Delta continued unabated. It was during this period that an Italian firm dumped radioactive toxic wastes in Koko Port in the same Niger Delta. The period in question witnessed the massive depleting of our forest resources, through indiscriminate and uncontrolled logging. Our coal industry and coal-fired turbines for electricity generation were allowed to die cascading, unemployment, power outage and revenue loss.

Accountable. UNESCAP says accountability “is a key requirement in good governance”. Since the Nigerian military was not elected by the people, it felt that it owed them no obligation of accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency. It was during the period that the public sector at the connivance of the military crippled the institutions that were set up to monitor their activities and insist on their being accountable. Thus accountability was the least concern of governance at the time.

From my brief evaluation of governance from 1966 to 2010, I can contend that it was actually not good. For instance, the bloody fratricidal civil war in which over 2 million Nigerian children died of hunger and starvation, the wanton destruction of life and property reminiscent of any war and the general insecurity that has bedevilled our land during that period show clearly that there was no good governance in the land. Novartis Foundation’s (2012) contention that “poor governance generates a social environment detrimental to development” is true of the governance in that period. Given the painful exposition in 2004 by the **National Pilot** that:

What is observed is an economy that is bedevilled by incessant bastardization; the political arena that is too volatile giving room to political killings, clashes of all cadres and injustice. This also had

made the judiciary a toothless bulldog that cannot even bark aloud. The social life of the citizenry is nil, unemployment leading to hunger and deprivation, diseases and insecurity, as a result of which poverty has become the norm, and when you per chance take a cursory look at the nation's social activities, except of course for the ruling class who care less about the governed who are going through what many have referred to as a hell of hard time, it is shame (**The National Pilot** cited by Azeez, A 2009: 222)

and the contention by many that:

Nigerian youths are wasting away like unpreserved commodities. Some of them resort to criminal acts as alternative to being idle. We must not forget even as the adage says, that an energetic young man or woman who does not have a job and therefore, cannot welcome tomorrow with a smile, is a convert that is just waiting to be moved by the appropriate crime thereby inflicting wounds on efforts at a stable and democratic society (Azeez, 2009: 223),

show clearly that such governance was not good. Besides, since about 70.8% of Nigerians lived below the poverty line of \$1 a day and up to 92.4% lived below \$2 a day in 2003 (UNICEF 2003; World Bank 2006), I cannot say that our people enjoyed good governance then. In addition, the gross poverty in the land was compounded by acute youth unemployment at 20% to 50%, with 50% to 75% of Nigerian graduates being unemployed. If governance was good, the above unfortunate statistics would not have been with us.

The Near Total Collapse of Our School System.

Elsewhere, I have discussed the importance of our traditional education (Parry and Onukaogu, 2005; Onukaogu, 2008). When

the colonial master replaced our traditional education with Western education, our forefathers embraced it fully. Although western education was tailored to make us disrespect our culture and civilization, the founding fathers of modern Nigerian saw it as a magic wand for unlocking the science and technology of Western Europe which they felt were needed to develop our land. They accordingly invested in Western education. Our founding fathers gave our people scholarships and other incentives to enable them to acquire the knowledge, attitude and skills for mathematics, science and technology education. Unfortunately, no such incentives were given for the study of language. More importantly, is the fact that Reading and Writing, the fulcrum of formal, education were not taught. The wrong impression our founding fathers had was that, anyone who could speak English and who had passed through our school system could teach Reading and Writing. Besides, emphasis on the medium of education was English Language and not the Nigerian mother tongues.

Thus in spite of the zeal with which formal education was embraced by our founding fathers and in spite of the enormous investments they put into it, formal education at independence had a wobbling foundation. Little or no attention was paid to the teaching of Reading and Writing, the pivot of formal education. This situation was compounded by the Nigerian military that condoned the crippling of formal education in the country and the decay of its school system. It was in the interest of the military for our school system to collapse. An effective and efficient school system would have produced men and women who would have critically and creatively analyzed the activities of the military and initiated steps to force them out of power.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, I regret to say that our education system is today in shambles. Of the about one million five hundred thousand students who qualified for placement in Nigerian Universities, only five hundred thousand students would get the placement to study there. Our Polytechnics, Monotechnics,

Colleges of Education and similar tertiary institutions are so crippled that the products of our secondary schools do not want to attend them. The shame and mimicry in our school system has been captured by Nnanna who contends that:

Schools all over Nigeria had depreciated to sub-human levels, but in Jigawa, even animals would be ashamed to attend what went in the names of schools. The situation was simply indescribable. Students wore rags, with flies for constant companionship. Teachers spoke little or no English. Classrooms had no chairs and no roofs. When it rained, boarding students went outside to shelter under trees, even at night. Toads bred everywhere. How the students withstood their endless ear splitting noises was evident of how low a standard the young teenagers had adjusted to. These are leaders of tomorrow. What manner of leaders would they evolve into? The current situation of education at the federal level is no less shameful and chaotic than it was in Jigawa in 2007. The nation is still reeling from the mass failure of the National Examination Council (NECO) and other school leaving certificate examinations that we have witnessed in recent times (Nnanna, O., Vanguard, p 50, Monday, April 12, 2010).

The situation at the federal level is not palatable at all. As a matter of fact:

The public education sector is finished. Nigerian Universities are more of a breeding ground for prostitutes and cultists than citadels of learning and academic excellence. We are among the worst even in Africa; let us not talk about the world at large. Our graduates are unemployable. The labour unions

in our school system have only recently returned to work after years of ceaseless strikes (Nnanna, O; Vanguard p50, Monday, April 12, 2010).

Nnanna's indictment of our school system is further echoed by Nwachukwu of *The Punch* who also contends that:

The education sector has not fared any better. Although the mass entry of the private sector into the industry has mopped up excess demand, investment in public schools continues to fall short of required standards. Once upon a time, Nigeria had six universities that were centres of excellence. Now we have over 100 higher institutions, the majority of them empty shells, with no facilities or libraries worthy of the status of a university or research centre. We have schools or universities churning their handouts to poor students for gain; and all of this compounded by incessant teachers' strikes. Is it any surprise that a good number of our educational institutes are churning out half baked graduates in their thousands with little or no prospects of gainful employment? (Nwachukwu, *The Punch*, p 6, Thursday April 15, 2010).

Mr Vice-Chancellor, Sir, the question to ask is how can we as a nation reposition the train of development that characterized our early years of independence so that we can live meaningfully as well as not jeopardize the future of our children? I will like to proffer a two-fold answer to this question. First, we must reposition our education in such a way that it will take cognisance of our tradition and culture as well as incorporate those unique and outstanding features that characterize formal education which are print-based and which today have dominated our entire educational system. Second, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, we must revisit the electoral

process in the country. We must strive to understand what it entails. We must bring it to what it was before 1966 when the military discarded it. We must eliminate the viruses deliberately put in by politicians in the 1959 electoral process when the Electoral Commission of Nigeria (ECN) was put in charge to oversee the electoral process in our country. We need to eliminate the viruses in order to enable whatever body that is charged to oversee the electoral process to function properly. When we do this we will be able to restore good governance without which sustainable development will continue to elude us. But before I expatiate on the answer above, let me explain what sustainable development is so that I can show its relationship with formal (print-based) education and good governance.

Sustainable Development

Most scholars see sustainable development (SD) as “improving the quality of life while living with the carrying capacity of the supporting ecosystem” (Caring for the Earth, 1991). Some, however, see it as “the reduction of hunger and poverty in environmentally sound ways. It includes the meeting of basic needs, expanding opportunities, protecting and improving democratic participation” (Development Education / Glossary, 2008). Some contend that SD is finding solutions to one’s problems such as extreme poverty. This is done by tackling other related challenges such as environmental degradation and, lack of access to good health and education (The Earth Institute. 2008). Kates, Parris, and Leisorohitz, (2005) see SD as “the ability to make development sustainable – to ensure that it meets their own needs”. In a more highly classified definition, the US National Research Council (2009) identifies **nature** (earth, biodiversity, and environment), **life support** (ecosystem services, resources and environment) and **culture** (groups and people) as three important elements that must be sustained. It also identifies **people** (child survival, life expectancy, equity and equal opportunities), **economy** (wealth, production sectors and consumption and

society) and **institutions** (social capital, status and regions) as three critical elements that must be developed . No matter what position a scholar takes, there is no doubt that SD, which in recent times has been used as the index for measuring national growth, is a process in which “the exploitation of the resources, the duration of technological developments and institutional changes are made consistent with the future and present needs”. (World Commission and Environment Development, 1987).

Elsewhere, (Onukaogu, 1998, 2008, 2011) I identified six ways by which SD can be attained. They are:

Catalyzing growth while reducing poverty.

Facilitating the provision and efficient utilization of sanitation and health services in order to improve living standards.

- Empowering the masses and involving them in vital decisions that affect their destiny and civilization.
- Encouraging programs which discourage population explosion in order to reduce the pressure on the resource base.
- Enhancing science and technology advancement especially for increasing productivity in environmentally friendly ways, and
- Enabling the generality of the people to acquire competences for the effective and efficient management of resources (Onukaogu 1998, 1999).

I have also argued that SD can be best realized when a people are actively involved in the:

- Management and renewal; of their natural and human resource base,
Sustenance of the art of good governance, especially democratic governance.

- Enhancement of information dissemination so that every member of government and community is actively involved in giving and receiving information.
- Promotion of the market/economic policies of government (Onukaogu, 1998, 1999).

I therefore see SD as having bottom-top and top-bottom approaches. In the bottom-top approach, the generality of the people especially the masses must be actively involved in making policies/decisions. They must partner and collaborate with government regarding how best their needs and aspirations can be met. In a top-bottom approach, government itself must link up with the people, share with them its policy blueprints and partner with them in taking measures and actions that can optimally and maximally enhance SD in the land.

If we take a critical look at the above-mentioned ways in which people see SD, we can identify four critical features in SD. First, SD entails the apt and sound exploitation of natural resources. Second, SD entails meeting the basic immediate and target needs of the people. Third, SD identifies nature, people, and culture as three vital elements that must be sustained. Finally, SD singles out people, economy and institutions as critical human elements that must be developed.

Repositioning Education to Catalyze and Sustain Development.

If formal education is to have the desired effect we want it to have, then language instruction in our schools and colleges must be revisited. Language is the pivot of instruction in our print-based education – formal education. Print-based education is anchored on the written text. Without the written text, there will be no print-based education. For print-based education to be profitable and useful to one, one must know how to read and write. The word that makes up the printed text has no meaning if one cannot read. Besides, one cannot use the printed text to communicate and share information if one cannot write. The ability to read is an essential

key to success in print-based education. There is no doubt at all that:

Reading is so interrelated with the total educational process that educational success requires successful reading. Experience has taught us that those who fail in school have failed first in reading. Giordano Bruno pointed out that if the first button of a man's coat is wrongly buttoned, all the rest are certain to be crooked. Reading is the first button in the garment of education (Dechant, 1977:1).

There is also no doubt that:

As our culture becomes more and more complex, reading plays an increasingly greater role in satisfying personal needs and in promoting social awareness and growth. Through reading we acquire many of our standards of behaviour or morality; we may broaden our interests, our taste and our understanding of others. As Aldous Huxley pointed out "every man who knows how to read has it in his power to magnify himself, to multiply the ways in which he exists, to make his life full, significant and interesting". But, above all, in the modern school, effective reading is the most effective avenue to effective learning. (Dechant, 1977:1).

As a matter of fact:

Tierney and Pearson (1983) have proposed that reading and writing are both acts of composing. These researchers make a case for reading not as a sequential series of stages but as a set of simultaneous processes parallel to what experienced writers do when they compose: processes that include planning, drafting, aligning, revising and

monitoring. Especially compelling is Tierney and Pearson's notion that readers create "draft" of reading, refinements of meaning that evolve as the person continues reading or rereads, in much the same way as writers produce a first and second draft of a text (Olson, 2007:4).

Stressing further the reading/writing connection, Murray maintains that:

When writers read something very good they want to write. It is a curious reaction. When we read something that is far better than we could do, we should be discouraged. Instead, we are usually inspired. It is not a matter for competition. It's a matter of getting into the game, participating in the writing process (Murray 2004:87).

Writing, like reading, is central and basic to success in print-based education. While one may never write what one reads, the same is not true of writing. Successful and effective writing demands reading. In other words, on the one hand, one is bound to read what one has written. On the other hand, one is not bound to write what one has read. This presupposes that in print-based education, writing incorporates reading while reading may not necessarily incorporate writing. There is no doubt that: "Writing is a product of interactions of the global and the particular. We use a word to catch a vague idea and it becomes less vague, and so we work back and forth from whole to part and part to whole, each influencing the other, each strand helping the writer to weave a pattern of meaning" (Murray, 2004:5). Our inescapable conclusion is that both reading and writing are vital competencies that are required for appropriating the gain in print-based education.

Education and the Attainment of SD

Our analysis of SD shows that it cannot be fully achieved if the totality of the people in our country are not educated regarding what it is. The education must be such that will elicit action in ensuring that every one of us is empowered to contribute to the attainment of SD. If that is the case, we must first as a people address those limitations in our implementation of formal education which had made the learners in our school system unable to benefit optimally and maximally from it. We must, in addition, elicit the merits in our traditional education, and blend them with our revitalized model of formal education. First, let us take a critical look at formal education, which unlike our traditional education, is print-based.

Print-based education from our analysis above has four main features. First, it uses a written text to transmit information or knowledge to a learner who must read the text to obtain its message. This information or subject matter can be a school subject like Chemistry, Social Studies, human relationship or on any facet of human life. The purpose of the message is to impact on the reader in one way or the other. In order to attain SD, the contents of the printed texts made available in our school system should be designed to promote SD in one way or the other. We as a people must prescribe through our school curriculum what areas we want to be sustained and developed through the text we present to learners. Second, the reader must process the text in order to comprehend, internalize and utilize its message. The processing of the message which is done through reading should be a determined and a purposeful effort of the learner. We also as a people must enable the learner to acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills that will enable the reader or learner to literarily, interpretively, critically and creatively comprehend the text. In this way, the learner will not just be a slave to the message of the text. The learner would thus be in a position to reject, accept or modify the message of the text. If this type of reading empowerment is provided by us to a learner, then the learner can utilize the message

to promote SD. Third, the learner must respond or react to the text by writing or talking about it. The response to the text can either be written or oral. Here again we must empower the learner with effective and efficient writing and speaking skills, so that the learner can react to the text efficiently and effectively through writing and speaking. The text or message is transmitted through a code. If the learner is not familiar with the code, the learner cannot comprehend it. Finally, as a result of our history, our print-based education utilizes English as the main medium of information transmission. That is why the bulk of the written texts in our schools and colleges is in English. We must therefore empower our pupils/students so that they can effectively and efficiently receive and give information in English.

If we are to attain SD, learners in our school system must be able to process (read) the avalanche of information in English that abound in our society. This way they will be able to know what to adopt, adapt or reject in order to promote the attainment of SD in our land. If we are also to attain SD, we must also not ignore our cultural setting, our heritage and the diversity of our flora and fauna which is best captured and reflected through our mother tongues. That is to say we should also empower learners in our school system with the ability to process and respond to written communication via our mother tongues. In other words the teaching of English in our school system must not be our excuses for deemphasizing the teaching and use of our mother tongues. This is now the time for us to revitalize the use of our mother tongues, in our school system at a level comparable to what we do in English. If we fail to do so, our attainment of SD will never be optimal and maximal.

Our traditional education has similar features like print-based education. We can discern three outstanding features in it that are very close to what obtains in print-based education. First, there is also a text which conveys a message. This message can be on any aspects of our civilization, culture or technology which an

individual wants to transmit (Onukaogu, 2008, 2010). The content of the message can equally be routine communication to impart information or designed to impart life skills. Thus the content of our traditional education is as vital and as relevant as the content of print-based education. Second, our traditional education makes extensive use of speaking and listening. Thus one important feature of our traditional education is that it is dialogic. In a sense, the use of dialogues through modelling and role playing is very central to knowledge, attitudes and skills impartation in our traditional education. We must therefore begin to empower learners in all levels of our school system to use dialogues so that they can effectively and efficiently receive and give information. We must incorporate the effective and efficient use of dialogues in our literacy lessons so that learners in our schools and colleges can receive and give information as they interact with written communication. Finally, the message is communicated through a code. That code is our mother tongue. We must encourage the teaching of how to effectively and efficiently use our mother tongues to receive and give information.

If we are to have an education model that can empower our people to contribute to the attainment of SD, we must blend our print-based education with our traditional education. In blending both our traditional education with print-based education we must integrate the use of dialogue in our use of literacy. We must therefore go beyond the autonomous model of literacy which stresses basic and functional literacy (Scribner and Cole, 1981, Street, 1995, Rassol, 1999), and incorporate critical literacy which can enable learners in our school system to process messages literally, interpretively, critically and creatively. Our model must be a meeting point of listening, speaking, reading and writing in the light of ICT impact in modern communication.

When print-based education was introduced in our country, print then was primarily unilinear. Given the ubiquity of the computer today, learners in our school system, if they are to be part of the

world that progresses through ICT, must be empowered “to develop reading skills that can enable them to navigate texts with multiple formats, levels of expression and argumentation style” (Stromquist, 2009:1). We must of necessity incorporate the teaching of multiple and multimodal literacies which learners are bound to meet in today’s world.

What is Literacy?

As a many meaning thing (Rassol, 1999), “definitions of literacy also change over time as societies undergo transmission from one socio-historical or ideological or technological milieu to another, creating meaning within the pedagogical frame work in which they are grounded and the specific value principles that are attached to them” (Rassol, 1999:12). As a matter of fact “literacy practices are patterned by social interactions and power relationships and some literacies become more dominant, visible and influential than others” (Barton and Hamilton, 1998:1, cited in Rassol, 1999:13).

Scribner and Cole see literacy as a set of:

socially organized practice which makes use of a symbol system and a technology for producing and disseminating it. Literacy is not simply knowing how to read and write a particular script but applying this knowledge for specific purposes in specific contexts of use. The nature of these practices including of course their technological outputs will determine the kind of skill (Uniqueness) associated with literacy (Scribner and Cole, 1981:236).

To Stibbe and Luna:

Literacy refers to far more than the binary category “can/cannot” read and write. Instead it refers to a wide range of practices people are empowered with to participate in through having skills on use of language in peculiar ways. For example, living

influential and successful in the commercial world requires the ability to read and write business plans, reports and formal letters. Literacy, then, is a collection of skills that allow for effective participation and influence in diverse areas of social life. As people gain sustainability literacy skills, they become empowered to read the society critically discovering insight into the unsuitable trajectory that society is on and the social structures that underpin it. More importantly, they become empowered to engage with those social structures and contribute to the rewriting of self and society along more sustainable lines (2011:11).

Literacy can also be seen “as an act of knowing, as a means of doing, and as a necessary part of the process of self-identification and cultural transformation” (Rassol, 1999: 241). Literacy is thus a set of “cognitive skills that a person needs in order to make meaning from print communication”. These skills are developed in particular social contexts and practices (Cope and Kalantzis, 2000 as cited in Stromquist, 2009) but they can also be applied independent of time and space (OECD and Statistics Canada 1995 as cited in Stromquist, 2009), and used not only for efficient functioning in one’s environment but also for individual and social transformation (Stromquist, 2009:1).

Merits of Literacy

The United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) takes the unassailable position that:

Literacy is a fundamental right for all girls and boys, women and men and very central to the quest for poverty reduction and sustainable development, which are essential for building democratic, peaceful and stable societies. Literacy enhances the capacity for the participation of all people in economic, social, political and cultural activities in

a rapidly changing world. As a versatile tool, literacy can contribute to a wide range of areas, including conflict resolution, nutrition, health care, employment and livelihood, cultural expression and improved quality of life. It is also an instrument of social justice, especially for promoting gender equality and for liberating people from discrimination and exclusion. Truly, literacy is an imperative for the attainment of Education For All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) (UNGEI 2005:1).

Kofi Annan, the immediate past Secretary-General of the UN, contends that "literacy is the prerequisite for a healthy, prosperous and just world" (UNGEI, 2005:1). In our country where our women are marginalized, literacy can be used to enhance their status. According to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, "literate women are more likely to send their children, especially their girls to school. By acquiring literacy, women become more economically self-reliant and more actively engaged in their country's social, political and cultural life. All evidence shows that investment in literacy for women yields high development dividends (UN News Center, 2010:1). Ban Ki-Moon has indeed rightly said, "Every literate woman marks a victory over poverty". Ban Ki-Moon pleads for "increasing funding and sustainable advocacy for quality literacy programs that empower women and ensures that girls and boys at primary and secondary levels do not become a new generation of illiterates" (UN News Centre, 2010). Bakova the Director General of UNESCO contends that "literacy improves livelihood, leads to better child and maternal health, and favours girls' access to education. In short, newly literate women have a positive ripple effect on all development indicators. (UN News Center, 2010:1). There is therefore no doubt that:

The abstraction process involved in learning to read itself enables the individual to develop a "critical

consciousness" with which to review the world and one's place in it. The written word provides us with the opportunity to learn and act upon others' idea – to reflect, argue, reject and to develop new ideas. Literacy gives access to information and about those aspects of life that affect us and through this and the reflective process, the means to implement change (Daniel, 2002:1) (Freire, 1972).

In spite of the very obvious merits of literacy, literacy is not "a set of self contained skills that individuals acquire; literacy is not a static capacity but instead functions as a social practice, which means that literacy development is linked to one's personal, social, cultural and economic life" (Stromquist, 2009:7).

The Electoral Process

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, I am convinced that in spite of the unfortunate retardation of development in our country, we can reposition on track our derailed train of development to the position it was in 1966. I have pointed out earlier in this lecture that the derailment started with the desecration and the discarding of our electoral process. We must as a matter of urgency reposition our electoral process to the position it was at 1966. It has to be the only logical tool for electing those who will superintend governance in our country. We must retool it by making it amenable to current and proven trends in electoral process. We need to borrow a leaf from other parts of the world where the electoral process has led to the emergence of proven leadership dedicated to good governance. We must then proceed to educate everyone in our country about our electoral process so that everyone in the country can contribute to making our electoral process promote good governance and by implication enhance our attainment of sustainable development.

The electoral process itself consists of all the variables that lead to the free, transparent and credible election of men and women who

can in our various legislatures – federal, state and local government – take and oversee decisions regarding governance in our land. For the purpose of this lecture, I will identify ten variables that minimally constitute the electoral process in our country. These are Government, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Legislature, the Judiciary, Civil Society, Political Parties, Electorates, the Registration of Voters, Elections and the Electoral Act.

Government provides the funds and resources for implementing two key elements of the electoral process. These are the registration of voters and the conducting of elections through which rulers emerge. The registration of voters and election are costly. If enough funds are not provided for materials, logistics and the payment of INEC permanent and ad hoc staff during the registration of voters and elections, politicians can exploit the financial inadequacy, subvert the registration of voters and elections and make a mockery of the electoral process. The 2011 election in this country was successful because the federal government provided enough funds for the registration of voters and conduct of elections. For instance, in Anambra State where I serve as the Resident Electoral Commissioner, I had enough funds for both exercises. I therefore did not at all ask for help from the state government in conducting the elections. That was why I was able to provide a level playing ground for all the contestants to legislative positions. Before the 2011 elections, the practice was to starve the commission of funds and ask it to look inwards. In the process of looking inwards to state governments, political parties and politicians, the commission was forced to favour those who augment its funds. This way it was very easy then to compromise elections.

Apart from funding, government must provide enough security to ensure that the registration of voters and the elections are meticulously implemented in accordance with the electoral law. Where security is lapse, inadequate and non committed,

unscrupulous politicians would want to hijack the voter registration and elections through thugs and their agents in order to write results that favour them but which do not reflect the voices of voters. Before the 2011 elections, it was the Police that was charged with providing security during the registration of voters and elections. This has often been the bane of elections in our country for two reasons. First, we do not at all have enough Police personnel in the country to take care of security. Given the fact that we have desperate politicians who would want to hijack the process and subvert it, there is no way that our Police force alone can adequately provide the security needed for the effective and efficient implementation of the voter registration and conduct of elections. Second, given the endemic corruption of our Police, and their very low morale, the Police would respond to the highest bidder – receiving financial inducements – in order to compromise the registration of voters and the election itself.

In the 2011 elections, INEC set up the Inter Agency Consultative Committee on Election Security (IACCES) to oversee security issues regarding the registration of voters and elections. IACCES is chaired by the state Commissioner of Police (the Inspector General of Police at the federal level). Membership is drawn from the Military, the Prisons, Customs, Immigration, Federal Road Safety Committee, the Nigerian Drug Protection Agency, the Nigerian Civil Defence Commission, the National Orientation Agency, National Population Commission, the State Security Service and the Resident Electoral Commissioner. IACCES was empowered to oversee all aspects of pre-election and post-election security. Enough operational funds were made available to IACCES. It was the effectiveness and efficiency of IACCES that provided the sound security which made the 2011 registration of voters and elections the monumental success they were.

Apart from providing funds and adequate security, government's neutrality and non partnership in the election must be assured. For instance, during the 2011 registration of voters and elections, my

actions as a Resident Electoral Commissioner were dictated by the provision of the 2011 Electoral Law (Amended). I had a free hand. No one dictated to me what should be done. I had a team of legal officers by me who counselled me on all aspects of the Electoral Law. What I did in Anambra State was what my fellow Resident Electoral Commissioners (RECs) did in the various states they were in charge of. Since INEC had a free hand in the implementation of the 2011 voter registration and elections, the result was the free, credible and fair elections of 2011.

INEC is the body permitted by our constitution to oversee all aspects of our electoral process. It consists of a 13-member National Commission with the Chairman as the chief executive. The National Commission is made up of two national commissioners drawn from each of the six geopolitical zones in the country. It is the national commission that formulates policies and guidelines for the day to day operation in INEC. There are 37 Resident Electoral Commissioners, one for each state and for the federal capital territory. Each commissioner implements the commission's directives and policies at the state level. At the local government level, there is an Electoral Officer who oversees INEC's policies and directives. There are one hundred and nine (109) Senatorial Districts, three hundred and sixty (360) Federal Constituencies, nine hundred and ninety (990) State Constituencies, nine thousand five hundred and seventy two (9572) Registration Areas, one hundred and twenty thousand (120,000) Polling Units and seventy three million, five hundred and twenty eight thousand, and forty (73,528,040) Registered Voters in the country. Apart from the registration of voters and conduct of elections, INEC collaborates with the legislature and judiciary to ensure that appropriate legislations that would enhance the electoral process are put in place and enforced. INEC also partners, with civil societies, political parties and the electorates in ensuring that people understand the requirements of the electoral process so that all hands can be on deck to effectively and efficiently promote it.

The legislature ensures that appropriate Laws or Acts that can enhance the electoral process are enacted while the Judiciary ensures that the electoral laws are enforced. The civil societies serve as watch dogs regarding various aspects of the electoral process. Through workshops, seminars etc, civil society partners with INEC in ensuring that people are informed regarding how elections affect them and why they must collaborate with INEC in ensuring the success of the voter registration and elections. The electorates are the ones who must cast their votes regarding the candidate of their choice. They need to be adequately informed about elections; otherwise their apathy to elections can cripple the elections. Politicians and political parties are also very crucial in the electoral process. Their understanding of the electoral process and their cooperation in ensuring that electoral laws are duly implemented are needed if credible leaders are to emerge from our elections.

The registration of voters is a very important aspect of the electoral process. It enables us to have a register of qualified electorates who can vote in any election. Unfortunately for us, in any election before 2011 there were no credible voter registers. In some cases, politicians hijacked the Direct Data Capturing Machine (DDCM) and undertook the voter registration in their homes. In some other cases some unscrupulous politicians in connivance with some of INEC staff padded the voter register with fictitious names. For instance, such names as Mike Tyson, Desmond Tutu, Jimmi Cather etc. were found in our voter registers before 2011. Such registers definitely could not lead to credible and fair elections. The 2010 voter register was carefully and meticulously done in such a way that all the anomalies and aberrations found in our former voter registers, are not found in it. Thus for the first time in our history we now have an authentic and reliable voter register that has captured biometric details of each voter and cannot be manipulated by politicians and even INEC staff. It was the reliability and authenticity of our voter register in 2011 that made the 2011 elections free, fair and reliable.

The 2011 election was implemented by INEC based strictly on the requirements of the electoral law. Besides, given generous funding for the election by government and non interference of government in the conduct of election, given also an effective voter education undertaken by INEC which made the electorates and politicians have the right mind set towards elections as well as the effectiveness of IACCES in providing security during the 2011 elections, it was relatively easy and absolutely possible for INEC to conduct a free, fair and credible elections in 2011. If this momentum is maintained in the years ahead, election rigging in our country will be a thing of the past and free, fair and credible election will come to stay in the land.

The Electoral Law provided guidelines for all aspects of pre-election and post-election activities. It was meticulously and ardently followed by INEC in 2011 registration of voters and elections. I can say with a sense of humility and forthrightness that our conduct of 2011 election was premised on the rule of law.

Electoral Literacy Empowerment (ELE)

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, I have in a nutshell identified the key variables that make up our electoral process. From what I have stated above, it is clear that our electoral process is a complex maze and labyrinth which needs complex navigational skills if one is to comprehend and make any meaningful sense of it. It is therefore mandatory for us to provide sound education that will enable our people comprehend, internalize and respond to written and oral communication regarding our electoral process. It is unfortunate to observe that many of our legislators, INEC ad hoc staff, politicians and electorates who are part of the electoral process can only barely read and write. They cannot interpretively, critically and creatively respond to written communication. Besides, the generality of our adult population especially our rural population cannot respond to written communication. Since the avalanche of information that relates to the electoral process are transmitted through written communication and since written

communication in our society today comes in diverse ways, we need Electoral Literacy Empowerment (ELE) that can enable our people to comprehend the information which such diverse written communication conveys. Besides, since our traditional education uses non written communication in conveying information and since I have earlier in this lecture argued that we must incorporate the use of dialogue in our blending of our traditional education with print-based education, I take the position that extensive use of dialogues must feature in any education initiative we put in place to enable people to acquire ELE. Electoral Literacy Empowerment recognises the fact that the electoral process can be communicated through ubiquitous computer-centred devices that inform written communication today. For instance, apart from book-based communication, written communication can be through electronic posters, cell phones, ipads, iphone, videos etc.

In advocating for ELE, I am making a synthesis of the autonomous model and the ideological model of literacies. In this synthesis, I take the position that ELE should cater for basic, functional, multiple and multimodal literacies. Anyone who has acquired ELE would not be easily taken aback by a written communication or be enslaved by it. Such a person would be in a position not only to read between the lines but also to take note of the why's, the how's, the what's, the when's and the where's of written and oral communication. The fellow will also not be restricted in receiving and responding to the communication. Rather she/he would be able to effectively and efficiently use dialogue alone or dialogue in conjunction with written communication in responding to a given communication. Therefore ELE must equip our people with the skills, attitudes and knowledge that will enable them to actively and dynamically participate in all spheres of our electoral process especially in effectively and efficiently giving and receiving information.

The ELE I propose should do four things. First, it should empower our people with the knowledge of our electoral process as well as

the knowledge of its functions and how each and every one of us can make the electoral process function properly. Second, it should enable us to develop the economic ability to survive in the society so that we will not be financially induced to subvert or compromise the electoral process. Thus whatever ELE education we give, ELE must empower the recipients especially our adult rural dwellers to have life skills that that can help them to develop as entrepreneurs i.e. able to generate self employment and able to employ others. Third, ELE must have a political content so that our people can participate in policy formulation and be able to contribute to the modification of policies that can not serve us well or on the alternative develop policies that can enhance good governance in the land. Finally, ELE must have a psychological dimension. It should enable us to have the self esteem and confidence for taking actions on behalf of others – actions that can enhance the general good of all. (cf Stromquist, 2009).

How to Acquire Electoral Literacy Empowerment

Mr Vice-Chancellor, Sir, I have drawn attention to the fact that ELE is indispensable to an electoral process if that process is to catalyze good governance and generate sustainable development. As a matter of fact, Naz Rassol's (a renowned scholar who has worked extensively on the symbiotic relationship between literacy and sustainable development) contention:

What powers do we have in shaping and influencing technological, ecological and social development goals? What are the skills, knowledge and awareness needed to participate actively in the democratic process within the information society – and within the global cultural economy? ... In order to do so, we need to have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding as well as opportunities to participate in the discussion about

the nature of the society in which we will live in the future. (Rassol, 1999:226),

is precisely what the ELE education I am advocating for our country can actualize. Besides, Held's conclusion that:

The idea of democracy derives its power and significance from the idea of self-determination; that is, from the notion that members of a political community – citizens – should be able to choose freely the conditions of their own association, and that their choices should constitute the ultimate legitimation of the form and direction of their polity. A 'fair framework' for the regulation of a community is one that is freely chosen. (Held D, 1995:145)

as well as Rassol's position that:

In itself, knowledge is not value-free. Making sense of the 'knowledges' made available within and through these defining sites requires the ability to be discerning of what is 'knowledge', 'fact' or 'opinion', or what is ideology. This is particularly pertinent in a world where corporate interests and the media often define the sites, nature and parameters of struggle and debate. For example, making a substantive case or argument to counter decisions made by large corporate firms or powerful political interests requires the ability to debate, analyse and engage in rational discussion. It also requires adequate levels of subject or 'expert knowledges', understanding and knowledge of power frameworks, knowledge of citizens, workers,

consumers and human rights, the legal process and organisational cultures (Rassol, 1999:233),

corroborate my stand that ELE should be made available to every Nigerian, if each and every one of us Nigerians are to contribute to the actualization of the electoral process that can catalyze good governance and generate sustainable development in our country. In advocating for ELE I am contending that whatever the education package we put in place must not be restricted to the knowledge, attitudes and skills which our formal education only emphasises. Such education must be underpinned by the electoral literacy ideology I have postulated in this lecture. I want to mention two ways through which we can enable our society to acquire ELE. One is by non-formal education and the other is by formal education.

Non-Formal Education for the ELE of Nigerian Adult Illiterates

A good percentage of our adult population cannot benefit from written communication. Since, about 70% of the information in respect of our electoral process is conveyed through written communication, we must empower our illiterate adult population with basic, functional, multiple and multimodal literacies so that they can receive and give information through which written communication about the electoral process is conveyed. What therefore we need to do for our adult illiterate population is to provide them with cognitive skills that will enable them to make meaning from written communication in the context of our electoral process. Such skills should enable them to acquire life skills in order to function effectively in their environment, generate self employment, be employers of labour and contribute to the transformation of their social environment. To do this, we need to undertake a "needs analysis" of their immediate and target needs within their immediate and wider environments. From the needs analysis we should then proceed to develop learner-based curricula

that will enable them to acquire the self survival skills within their environments. Thus the goal should not only be to get the individual to read and write but also to read and write within a given social and economic context where what one reads and writes can enhance the individual's survival skills. For instance, a subsistence farmer or a fisher man should at the end of the program not only be more economically productive about farming or fishing but also able to talk intelligently and reasonably regarding farming or fishing. Such non-formal education must integrate the oral aspect of our traditional education which makes orally and in writing an extensive and intensive use of dialogues.

The second phase of the non-formal education should be ideologically based, underpinned by extensive and intensive information regarding our electoral process. Thus, by the time the individual completes the curriculum it should not only be able to receive and give information through written communication regarding the electoral process, but should also be able to dialogue orally and in writing regarding grass root democracy, values of democracy, types of governance, merits of democratic governance, electoral process, electoral personnel, electoral materials, political party logo, electoral laws, offences and penalties, electoral rights and obligations, political and public office holders, channel of communication and electoral security personnel. When for instance a written communication flashes information on *who is a counsellor? the duty of a counsellor, and duration of counsellorship* through flash cards, iphones, ipads, cell phones, videos and other electronic devices reminiscent of multiple and multimodal literacies, ELE will enable the individual to do two things. First the individual would be able to read the text and acquire the knowledge of counsellorship, duration of counsellorship and responsibilities of the counsellor. Second, ELE will enable the adult to have an ideological base of what he or she has read. This ideological base is anchored on the electoral process and so the

individual should be able to contribute socially, economically and politically regarding any dialogue on the electoral process.

This phase of the non-formal education must also blend our traditional education mode of instructions with our formal mode of instruction. Underlining these two modes as I have argued earlier in this lecture is that the dialogue mode of communication whether written or oral must be emphasized. Available research evidence shows that:

From the dialogues, students start to learn that democratic society involves a combination of individual rights and initiatives with social responsibility, collective decision-making, and shared community goals. They discover that democracy frequently entails tension between the will of the majority and the rights of minorities and that it cannot be taken for granted. It involves taking risks and is something that a community must continually work to maintain and expand. Another benefit of the dialogue process is that it affords students the opportunity to actively generate knowledge without relying on teacher-centered instructional methods ... It makes possible individual academic social growth, encourages students to view ideas critically and events from multiple perspectives, and supports the formation of a cooperative learning environment (Singer and Pezone, 2012:9)

I am happy to inform you Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, that from September 2011 – April 2012, I was able to raise a project team of ten dons from our universities and four technocrats from INEC. This team has been able to develop an ELE curriculum for our adult illiterates.

Empowering our Children and Adolescence with ELE

In order to ensure that products of our school system are enabled to acquire ELE, there is the need also for us to make the teaching of electoral process in our schools and colleges mandatory. Thus, the main ingredient of electoral process i.e. voter registration, pre-elections, elections and post-elections issues should be taught as part of civic education in our Social Studies curriculum. For instance, the core curriculum should include grassroots democracy, values of democracy, types of governance, merits of democratic governance, electoral process, electoral personnel, political parties and their logos, electoral laws, offences, penalties, electoral rights and obligations, political and public office holders, channel of communication, electoral security personnel etc.

In view of the importance of reading in written communication, there is the need for us to pay a closer attention to the teaching of reading and making the products of our school system strategic readers. The teaching of Reading should integrate Writing and Elocution.

Creating the Conditions for Teaching Reading, Writing and Elocution (RWE) in our Schools and Colleges

In teaching reading, writing and elocution, we must undertake seven crucial steps. First, we must engage learners in a RWE **immersion** program. Apart from the classroom, we must immerse the learner in an atmosphere where everything speaks RWE. Second, we must **demonstrate** or model how texts are constructed and used. For instance, a child who is read to at home and who sees its parents read and write would be more intrinsically motivated to want to read and write than a child who has no one to demonstrate or model how to read and write. Third, the learner must have some **expectations** that it would attain its objective of acquiring RWE. Apart from seeing himself/herself as a potential reader, what is being taught in the RWE program must be relevant to the needs of the learner. Fourth, the learner must take **responsibility** for learning to read and write. The learner must

make a decision regarding, when, how and what bits to learn in the RWE task. When a learner fails to take responsibility in learning to read and write, it will be disempowered. The fifth factor a teacher must take into consideration in teaching RWE is **approximation**. The learner should be free at any stage to approximate to the ideal model. That is to say errors or miscues in learning RWE must not be frowned at or penalized. A sixth factor in teaching a learner to be a successful RWE is **use**. It is not enough to tell the learner about RWE or bombard the learner with questions about RWE. The learner must be provided with time and opportunities to use, employ and practise its control of RWE. The final stage is the **response** stage. The learner would want to know if it is making any realistic progress in its learning RWE. The teacher should therefore provide enough feedback regarding the progress the individual is making in its learning. The feedback must be relevant, appropriate, timely, readily available, none threatening and with no strings attached.

Producing Strategic Readers

In order to produce an electorate that will positively impact on our electoral process, the electorate must be empowered to become strategic readers. Strategic reading is more than having reading skills. It is also more than having strategies for reading to construct meaning from the text either holistically by the entire class, between the teacher and the class and by individual efforts. A reading program that is designed to produce strategic readers must empower them with seven cognitive processing strategies when they read. First, the learners must be empowered with **activating** strategy. With this strategy, the learner is able to prime its cognitive map in order to recall relevant prior knowledge and experiences from memory in order to extract and construct meaning from the text. Second, it must empower a learner with **Inferencing** strategy. **Inferencing** is the ability to bring together what is spoken or written in the text, what is not spoken or written in the text but implied and what already is known by the learner in

order to extract and construct meaning from the text. Third, the learner should be empowered with **monitoring and clarifying** strategy. This is precisely thinking about how and what one comprehends in the text, combined with the ability to clarify and fix up any mix-ups if necessary. The fourth is **questioning**. **Questioning** is the strategy of engaging to learn to dialogue with text (authors), peers and teachers through self questioning, question generation and question answering. The fifth is **searching** a variety of sources to select appropriate information. The sixth is **summarizing** which enables the student to restate the meaning of a text in its own words – different from those used in the original text. Finally, there is the strategy of **visualizing-organizing**. This strategy enables the learner to construct a mental image or graphic organizer for the purpose of extracting and constructing meaning (McEwan, 2004).

Establishing a National Reading Writing and Elocution Research Centre (NRWERC)

Creating the right atmosphere for teaching literacy and strategic reading cannot be done by amateur teachers. Only seasoned and veteran literacy and reading teachers who themselves are strategic readers can undertake such feats. Such teachers do not just happen or come by chance. They must be effectively and efficiently trained to not only become strategic readers but also become effective and efficient teachers of all facets of reading, writing and elocution. For instance, such moves as direct instructing and teaching, modelling, giving directions, scaffolding, coaching, attributing, constructing meaning, motivating-connecting, recapping, annotating, assessing-evaluating, facilitating, etc which the average learner must make can only be acquired after serious, dedicated and robust teaching (McEwan, 2004). Arising from the need to have vibrant, effective and dynamic reading programmes for the training of reading teachers, there is the need to develop a **National Reading, Writing and Elocution Research Centre**

(NRWERC), which should be constitutionally funded and made to perform the following functions:

Research Dissemination: The NRWERC should conduct extensive research on all aspects of reading, writing and elocution. We need to document at what levels primary and secondary school students read. We also will need to know the expected literacy levels of all shades of the school population. We need to have a clear understanding of how to promote adult literacy. The ideas we have today of how people read, learn to read and read to learn are more from research findings from Europe, Asia and the Americas. We need to conduct home-based research and find out how people in Africa learn to read. For instance, we need to know how best we can use RWE to impact on the electoral process, as well as show how reading in a mother tongue can foster reading in a second language. The inclusion of elocution is an attempt to integrate our traditional education with our formal education.

Capacity Enhancement: The NRWERC should undertake the capacity enhancement of reading, writing and elocution teachers in our country. This can be done in three distinct ways. First, there is the need to develop sound curricula for the training of such teachers so that they can acquire first degrees in Reading, Writing and Elocution. Apart from developing the curriculum for such a degree program, the NRWERC should also develop a curriculum for training middle level manpower in Reading, Writing and Elocution (RWE). Such manpower at the College of Education level should have a National Certificate of Education, (NCE) in RWE. At the Polytechnic level they should have an Ordinary National Diploma (OND) in RWE. If we offer first degree and diploma programs in RWE that command national and international respect, it will not be long when professional and academic RWE teachers will abound in the country. Another way the NRWERC can promote the capacity of reading teachers is through result-oriented and functional workshops designed to train

teachers in schools where they operate. The NRWERC can throw some light on how best to make school-based collaborative workshop meet the aspirations of RWE teachers in our country. Finally, the NRWERC should be empowered to promote Distance Learning so that as many teachers as possible can from the comfort of their homes be trained and retrained in the light of current and proven trends in RWE education.

Database on Reading: The NRWERC should be provided with the facilities for storing information, publication, research etc on RWE as they relate to our country. It should work with Pan African Reading for All Conference, UN and other related agencies to source, store and disseminate information on RWE in our country and Africa.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, I am happy to inform you that in 2010, I and some of my colleagues in the College of Humanities, Joseph Ayo Babalola University, Ikeji-Arakeji, Osun State set up the first Reading, Writing and Elocution Centre (RWEC) in the country. The RWEC has developed the first curriculum on Reading that could lead to the award of a Bachelor of Arts degree in Reading. It has also developed two curricula, one for National Certificate of Education (NCE) and the other for Ordinary National Diploma (OND) on Reading. While the NCE and OND on Reading are designed for middle level manpower, the degree program is designed for high level manpower. The time has come for us to build on the efforts of RWEC and set up a more robust, vibrant and dynamic National Reading, Writing and Elocution Centre as I have already indicated above.

Conclusion

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, the title of my lecture *Electoral Literacy Empowerment and the Attainment of Sustainable Development: Quo Vadis Nigeria?* is a question. It is time now for me to answer this question. Electoral Literacy

Empowerment is possible in this land of ours if and only if we can teach our people how to enthrone good governance in our country and if our people are allowed to take active part in choosing those who will govern them. If our people must take active part in making their choices, they must be empowered through non-formal and formal education with the cognitive, social, psychological, political and economic base that will make them active, vibrant and robust members of our electoral process. Given the well over four decades of bastardizing our electoral process and causing it to derail, the journey of putting it back on track again is a long one. That journey must begin now.

We cannot afford to wait any longer. This is because the electoral process is the dress of good governance and that dress must be put on right now. As a dress, it gives beauty to good governance. Those fully and freely elected by us will perform in such a way they will enhance the well being of our people and give them the joy and gladness which the dividends of good governance entail. Second, as a dress, the electoral process will protect good governance from falling into the hands of miscreants and military personnel and apologists. Since good governance will not give room to any form of disillusionment, there will not be any excuse whatsoever for the military to want to intervene and remove people who have been legitimately elected to govern. As a dress it will characterise the distinctiveness of governance in the land and add colour to how the land is being developed. For instance, good governance in Bauchi State may not have exactly the same features as good governance in Abia State. However whether in Abia, Bauchi or any other state of the federation for that matter, good governance will ensure that

sustainable development reminiscent of the ecology, and social milieu of the people will be achieved. As the dress of good governance, the electoral process is also the first button of the garment of good governance. If the first button is wrongly positioned, all the other aspects of the garments of good governance will fall out of shape and elude us. This, for over forty years, has been our misfortune and that is why sustainable development has continued to elude us. Let us today properly position our electoral process as the first button of good governance in our land and then we can begin the match to the attainment of sustainable development.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, I thank God for the grace of life without which this lecture would not have been possible today. To God be the glory.

My wife, Mrs Comfort Onukaogu, single-handedly sponsored my postgraduate education - my M.A. (ESL) at the University Ife and my Ph.D at the University of Ibadan. Her life support has enabled me to be what I am today. Our children, Onyedikachi, Onuchi, Ulochukwu, Chukwuemeka and Ugochukwu have been very supportive and encouraging. Their role in making the event of today a reality cannot be quantified.

My father-in-the-Lord, Professor (Pastor) A. M. A. Imevbore, my invaluable mentor since I met him in 1971, has done a lot to shape my life and give direction to me. Professor Adebisi Afolayan, my academic mentor and father, has always been there for me to provide me the much needed academic germ that has propelled me to higher grounds today for this lecture.

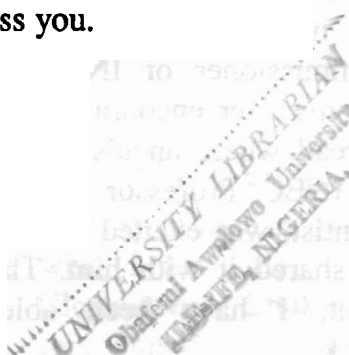
There are a number of people who assisted me in assembling my data. First, there is Professor Viv Edwards, her colleague, Professor Naz Rassol, and my daughter, Mrs Onyedikachi Abiodun-Ekus, all of the University of Reading, Reading, UK. They showed interest in the topic, provided me a space in their university to study and discussed extensively with me on all aspects of this lecture. I am indebted to them. Second, Mrs. Nkechinyere Vivian Enemoh shared her well over two decades of seasoned, veteran and technocratic experience in INEC with me. These sharing tickled in me the need to investigate the relationship between literacy and the electoral process. Thus I have been enabled to attempt a synopsis of Political Science with Applied English Linguistics in addressing a national malaise. Dame Gladys Nwafor, a National Commissioner of INEC, has been a wonderful inspiration to me. Her encouragement and motivation made me dare to tread where angels fear to tread. Of course the Chairman of INEC, Professor A. Jega, who is a renowned Political Scientist, was excited about the title of this lecture when I first shared it with him. Through his support and encouragement, I have been able to accomplish this gargantuan task.

I thank God for the founding fathers of the Obafemi Awolowo University, the pioneering academic and non academic staff who braced all odds to give the University the beautiful and sound foundations it today has - the Oluwasanmi's, the Onwumechili's, the Imevbore's, the Afolayan's who spent and were spent in order to make this University the Cinderella of African Universities. When I first came here in 1971 in search of the golden fleece, I was bitter, devastated and angry. The wounds and pangs of the civil war

caused by the blunders of the Nigerian military were still with me and had made me lose hope and faith in Nigeria.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, this University, Obafemi Awolowo University, then University of Ife, took me, refined me, gave me new hopes and expectations, empowered me to be relevant to the needs of our people and today has positioned me as an Icon of great hope, walking where angels fear to tread and bringing peace, joy, and hope to our people. This is a University. When comes such another? Never, until perhaps when we begin to have **Electoral Literacy Empowerment** for all our people.

Thank you and God bless you.



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