3RD CONFERENCE OF THE ASSOCIATION OF WEST AFRICA UNIVERSITIES (AWAU)

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TURBULENCE IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

"ROLES OF UNIVERSITIES IN THE PROMOTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN WEST AFRICA"

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PREAMBLE : APPRECIATION TO THE ORGANISERS WHO MUST HAVE BEEN INSPIRED TO GIVE ME THE PRIVILEGE OF MUCH APPRECIATED HONOUR TO SHARE MY VIEWS ON THE SUBJECT OF "ROLES OF UNIVERSITIES IN THE PROMOTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN WEST AFRICA"

COMMENDATIONS TO AWAU AND THE ORGANISERS OF THE CONFERENCE. WEST AFRICA WAS INTRODUCED TO MODERN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM SINCE THE UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THE SENATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF DURHAM ON 16 MAY 1876 WHICH ESTABLISHED FOURAH BAY COLLEGE IN FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE, AS AN AFFILIATE OF THE UNIVERSITY. THE FIRST UNIVERSITY IN SOUTH AFRICA WAS FOUNDED IN 1877 BUT HAD A CHARTER AS FULL UNIVERSITY FROM THE VERY FOUNDATION. FOR WEST AFRICA THERE HAS BEEN A REGULAR INTERACTION THROUGH TRADE, COMMERCE, INTER-MARRIAGE AND LANGUAGE DIFFERENCE WAS NOT A PROBLEM. UNFORTUNATELY EARLIER **UNIONS WERE FREQUENTLY** DISSOLVED AS THE AIRWAYS,

CURRENCIES CEASED. THAT IS WHY AWAU MUST BE COMMENDED AND ENCOURAGED TO SURVIVE THOSE WHO BEGAN THE EXPERIMENT.

THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN AFRICA

BEFORE THE COMING OF THE MODERN UNIVERSITY, THE INDIGENOUS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM HAD ALREADY MADE PROVISION FOR THE PROMOTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE EXCELLENT ARRANGEMENT FOR CONSULTATION, LEARNING BY DOING, DIALOGUE AND NEGOTIATION. THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM, THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND OTHER COMPONENTS OF THE INDIGENOUS SYSTEM WERE PART OF THE PROCESS OF LEARNING THE ART OF GOOD GOVERNANCE AT EVERY LEVEL. ENTIRE POPULATION WAS INVOLVED AND THERE WAS NO EXCLUSION. MENTORSHIP WAS BUILT INTO THE SYSTEM. THERE WAS NO COMPARTMENTALIZATION OR **GRADUATION BUT A CONTINUING** TREND AND LIFELONG. CERTAINLY THERE MUST BE SOME LESSONS TAUGHT BY THIS EXPERIENCE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE. NEGOTIATION, TRUTHFULNESS, SENSITIVITY SHOULD BE LEARNT. WE SHOULDLEARN TO WAIT OUR TURN FORSUCCESSION INSTEAD OF MANIPULATING THE SYSTEM AND INVOKING THE WRATH OF GOD.

LATER DEVELOPMENTS IN AFRICA BROUGHT MODERN EDUCATION IN WHICH AFRICA CONTINUED TO EXCEL. AS C.J.POTTER, PUBLIC ORATOR AT THE INAUGURATION OF THE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE, AND ACTING HEAD OF ITS DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, DECLARED AT IBADAN ON 17 NOVEMBER 1948:

"THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA HAS A GREAT AND LONG TRADITION OF LEARNING....THE LIBRARY LF ALEXANDRIA WAS AMONG THE WONDERS OF THE ANCIENT WORLD. AT THE TIME WHEN THE IMPERIUM OF ROME EXTENDED TO THIS CONTINENT, ITS NORTHERN SHORES WERE THE HOME OF MANY LEARNED MEN. WHEN THE GLORY THAT WAS GREECE HAD BECOME MEMORIES IN EUROPE, THE TRADITION OF LEARNING WAS STILL ALIVE ON THE BANKS OF THE NIGER"

THE MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY IS MORE THAN JUST BEING A FACTORY PRODUCING PRODUCTS FOR THE WORLD OF WORK, IMPORTANT AS THAT ASPECT OF THE PRE-OCCUPATION OF THE UNIVERSITY IS.

THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IS ALSO TO TRANSFORM THE INDIVIDUAL, EQUIP THE TEACHER THROUGH RESEARCH, AND THE STUDENT THROUGH TEACHING FOR SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY.

THE UNIVERSITY IS HOWEVER A SECURE PLACE TO BREED A FUTURE GENERATION.

THE FACTOR OF AGE AND THE FREEDOM TO EXPERIMENT AND ACT INDEPENDENTLY IN THE FIRST PLACE AGE IS ON THE SIDE OF UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO ARE JUST WAITING TO BE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO LAUNCH OUT AND PROVE THEMSELVES, DEMONSTRATE THEIR SKILL, LEARN NEW APPROACHES AND SEEK TO SURPRISE ANYONE WHO BOTHERS TO ALLOW THEM TO MAKE A CONTRIBUTION.

ASSISTING THE INDIVIDUAL DEVELOP EFFECTIVE THINKING, BRINGING THE BEST OUT OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS TO BECOME CREATIVE BECAUSE THE FATE OF THE NATION DEPENDS A GREAT DEAL ON THEM AS DRIVERS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF THE NATION.

THE CHALLENGE OF THINKING: THINKING OUT THE POSSIBLE ISSUES THAT WILL CONFRONT THE PEOPLE. THE MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY INCLUDES THE PROMOTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE.

LITERATURE AND IMAGINATION. NEW PLAYS ARE WRITTEN OR BROADCAST

TO REFLECT THE PAINS OF FAILED VISION AND EXPECTATIONS.

LECTURES ARE GIVEN TO DEMONSTRATE THE GAINS OF THE PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE IN BUSINESS. THERE ARE LECTURES DRAWING ATTENTION TO THE POINT THAT EXCELLENCE HAS NO UPPER LIMIT.

EXPANDING TERRITORIES OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE ATTAINMENT OF INDEPENDENCE LED TO THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW SUBJECTS AND

TRANSFORMATION OF THE IDEAS AND THOUGHTS OF THE STUDENT, GENERATION OF AWARENESS.

INVESTMENT IN UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IS THUS KNOWN AS A WISE AND GOOD INVESTMENT IN BUILDING THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE NATION. PERHAPS THIS IS WHY LORD ASHBY CONSIDERED THEIR RECOMMENDATION ON POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AN INVESTMENT.

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IS AN INVESTMENT FOR DEVELOPMENT.

THERE HAS HOWEVER BEEN THE CONVICTION BY THE EARLY POLITICAL LEADERS OF AFRICA THAT UNIVERSITIES ARE ALLIES IN THE PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE. THIS IS WHY PRESIDENTS AND LEADERS OF GOVERNMENT HAD CONSIDERABLE EXCITEMENT IN FOUNDING UNIVERSITIES.

THESE POLITICAL LEADERS SPOKE AT DINNER PARTIES, SPOKE TO LEADERS, ENGAGED UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES IN DISCOURSE ON APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM.

A CLASSICAL EXAMPLE IS PRESIDENT KWAME NKRUMAH WHO INITIATED THE FOUNDING OF THE INSTITUTE OF AFRICAN STUDIES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA IN LEGON AND STRENGTHENED THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES.

IN OTHER PARTS OF AFRICA THERE WAS A CONTINUING EUPHORIA ABOUT FOUNDING OF UNIVERSITIES. FOR EXAMPLE IN ZAMBIA, PRESIDENT KENNETH KAUNDA, AT THE CHANCELLOR'S INSTALLATION BANQUET AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA ON 12 JULY 1966 DECLARED:

"WE IN ZAMBIA ARE IMMENSELY PROUD OF OUR UNIVERSITY. THIS PRIDE IS NOT SIMPLY THAT THIS IS OUR FIRST AND ONLY UNIVERSITY...HUMBLE FOLK IN EVERY CORNER OF OUR NATION – ILLITERATE VILLAGERS, BAREFOOTED SCHOOL CHILDREN, PRISON INMATES AND EVEN LEPERS- GAVE FREELY AND WILLINGLY EVERYTHING THEY COULD, OFTEN IN FORM OF FISH, OR MAIZE OR CHICKENS."

THE STORY OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN WEST AFRICA SHOWED THAT THE INVESTMENT YIELDED PROFITABLE DIVIDENDS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AS PRODUCTS OF FOURAH BAY COLLEGE, SIERRA LEONE, SUCH AS CHIEF MICHAEL AJASIN, CHIEF J.A.O.ODEBIYI, CHIEF ADE AKOMOLAFE, CHIEF G.K.DADA AND PRODUCTS OF THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, IBADAN PERFORMED THEIR DUTIES AS SCHOOL AND COLLEGE PRINCIPALS, CIVIL SERVANTS AND PUBLIC SERVANTS CREDITABLY, ENSURING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THEIR WORK PLACES AND PREPARING THEIR STUDENTS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY.

PREPARATION FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

THE UNIVERSITY HAS CHANNELS FOR THE PREPARATION OF THE STUDENT FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT.

THE COGNITIVE DOMAIN OR KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION

THROUGH TEACHING, THE STUDENT IS INTRODUCED TO THE ART OF ACQUIRING INFORMATION, THE KNOWLEDGE OF INDIVIDUAL SUBJECT OR A COMBINATION OF SUBJECTS. STUDENTS ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED TO

STUDY HARD, TO BE DEDICATED AND DETERMINED, CONSISTENTLY LEARN AND WORK HARD TO SUCCEED.

THERE IS FOCUS ON KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION AND STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO HAVE AN AWARENESS OF BEST PRACTICES, AND TO DEVELOP A CREATIVE MIND CAPABLE OF MAKING INDEPENDENT JUDGEMENT.

THE PRACTICAL

THROUGH DIRECT PRACTICE, THE STUDENTS ARE INTRODUCED INTO THE ART OF GOOD GOVERNANCE THROUGH THE STUDENTS UNION: THE STUDENTS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

HERE THERE ARE THE PREPARATION FOR ELECTIONS THROUGH THE CAMPAIGNS AND THE ELECTION. THERE IS ALSO A PARLIAMENT AND THE STUDENTS UNION EXECUTIVE. THE IMMEDIATE GOAL IS LEADERSHIP BUILDING AND THE BROADER GOAL IS THE ATTAINMENT OF POSITIVE CHANGE IN VALUES INVOLVING NETWORK AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING, CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATION. CHARACTER BUILDING WAS THUS AIMED AT CHECKING THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR INCLUDING CHEATING AT EXAMS, INDIVIDUALITY, SELFISHNESS AND GREED.

THIS PROCESS IS ALSO REPLICATED IN THE HALLS OF RESIDENCE. IN MY OWN DAYS, WE HAD THE EXAMPLE OF KEN TSARO WIWA, THE DYNAMIC HALL CHAIRMAN OF MELLANBY HALL AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN.

THE UNIVERSITY BROUGHT IN A SOPHISTICATION OF APPROACH TO WHAT WAS ALREADY AT SOME STAGE OF OPERATION IN THE PRE-UNIVERSITY LEVELS WHERE THE ART OF LEADERSHIP, INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER IS ENCOURAGED.

AT THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL, PREFECTS WERE CAREFULLY CHOSEN AFTER STUDYING THE BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS OF THE STUDENTS, INCLUDING THEIR DISCIPLINE, COURAGE, INDEPENDENCE OF THOUGHT AND ACTION, RELIABILITY, HONESTY, INTEGRITY, SELF-DENIAL, WILLINGNESS TO MAKE SACRIFICE AND ENCOURAGE TEAM SPIRIT, DEDICATION TO WORK, THEIR LEVEL OF COMPORTMENT, DILIGENCE AND LOYALTY. THEY WERE THEN DECORATED WITH BADGES AND GIVEN THE RESPONSIBILITY TO OVERSEE THE OTHER STUDENTS.

UNLIKE THE PRE-UNIVERSITY DAYS, UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO THINK OUT SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS WITH MINIMUM SUPERVISION

CERTIFICATION

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT UNIVERSITY DEGREES ARE AWARDED ON THE BASIS OF PERFORMANCE IN LEARNING AND CHARACTER.

THE EXPERIENCE OF NIGERIAN SCHOOLS SHOWED HOW TEACHERS

DELIBERATELY SOUGHT TO CULTIVATE THE CHARACTER. THROUGH THE AWARD OF PRIZES, STUDENTS WERE ENCOURAGED TO WORK HARD. THROUGH THE INTRODUCTION OF PUNISHMENT, SUCH AS THE IMPOSITION AND DETENTION LISTS THAT WERE READ OUT, STUDENTS WERE DISCOURAGED FROM PURSUING

WERE DISCOURAGED FROM PURSUING ANTI-SOCIAL ACTIVITIES SUCH AS TRUANCY, DISOBEDIENCE AND INSUBORDINATION, RUDENESS AND INSOLENCE, DISHONESTY AND CHEATING IN EXAMINATIONS, TELLING LIES.

THROUGH SPORTS, ACQUISITION OF KNOWLEDGE, THERE WAS THE EMPHASIS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TEAM SPIRIT, RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY, THE CULTIVATION OF UNITY, FORGING A COMMON PURPOSE, PURSUING A COMMON GOAL, IDENTIFYING WITH A COMMON PURPOSE. THE USE OF THE REWARD SYSTEM, TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE STUDENT HAS DONE WELL AND WILL BE GLAD TO DO IT AGAIN. THIS LEADS TO ASSESSMENT, GENERATING QUESTIONS

PRACTICAL DEMONSTRATION

THE FREEDOM OF THE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE IBADAN STUDENTS.

THE UNPRECEDENTED EXAMPLE OF THE NIGERIAN STUDENTS' FIERCE OPPOSITION TO THE PROPOSAL FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE ANGLO-NIGERIAN DEFENCE PACT. THE INDEPENDENCE FAVOUR, THE EUPHORIA THAT AT LAST THE COUNTRY IS RID OF COLONIAL AND EXTERNAL DOMINATION, REJECTION OF THE CONTINUITY THAT HAD BEEN THROWN OFF BY THE INSTRUMENT OF INDEPENDENCE.

THE CASE OF THE IJEBU ODE BLACKSMITH, EMMANUEL ODUKOYA AJAYI, THE FIRST NIGERIAN GRADUATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON BY EXTERNAL **EXAMINATION, WHO BEFORE HIS GRADUATION IN 1927 DID NOT THINK** MUCH OF GOVERNANCE. THE EXAMPLE OF ALVAN IKOKU, THE FIRST IGBO UNIVERSITY GRADUATE WHO HAD AN INDEPENDENT MIND AND FOUGHT ISSUES ON PRINCIPLE. ANOTHER GRADUATE, JOSIAH SOYEMI **OGUNLESI OF SAGAMU, SIMILARLY** FACED MANY CHALLENGES MAKING HIM CHANGE JOBS AS TEACHER, JOURNALIST AND EDUCATION OFFICER, PERSECUTION MAKING HIM LEAVE HIS POSITION WITH THE DAILY TIMES AS GRADUATE EDITOR TO **BECOME MASS EDUCATION OFFICER IN** WESTERN REGION OF NIGERIA IN 1947, AND REMAINING FIRM, FOCUSED AND ATTACHED TO DEMOCRATIC

PRINCIPLES OF CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATION.

LIMIT TO TRANSFORMATION

RESEARCH HAS NOT TAKEN US TO THE ELDORADO OF QUALITATIVE EDUCATION LEADING TO EXCELLENCE IN EDUCATION AND IN ALL THE AREAS OF LIFE

THE TEACHER IS EAGER TO GET THE ATTENTION OF THE LEARNER SO THAT THE LEARNER IS ABLE TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE THE THOUGHT, VALUE AND IDEA. HOWEVER, THE LEARNER HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO THINK IT OUT FOR HIMSELF/HERSELF.

CLASSROOM TEACHING CAN THEREFORE NOT NECESSARILY TRANSFORM THE LEARNER AS LEARNING GOES BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE CLASSROOM AND GOES ON BY OBSERVATION AND EXPERIENCE, AND BEYOND WHAT IS TAUGHT.

THERE IS A LIMIT TO THE CONTROL OF WHAT ENTERS THE LEARNER'S MIND IN VIEW OF SEVERAL INTERFERENCES AT HOME AND OUT OF SCHOOL. THIS IS WHY IT IS ARGUED THAT "TRANSFORMATION MAY BE A MIRAGE".

THE CHALLENGE OF THE IMPEDIMENTS OF AN EXTERNAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND INFLUENCES, THE CONTRADICTIONS, DECEIT AND MANIPULATIONS, "BEING ABLE TO MANIPULATE VARIABLES THAT ARE INTERNAL TO THE LEARNER TO RESULT IN TRANSFORMATION"

OBSERVATIONS

THERE IS A LIMIT TO WHAT THE UNIVERSITY CAN DO. THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE MADE IT IN LIFE, BUSINESS AND GOOD GOVERNANCE THAT WERE NOT PRODUCTS OF THE UNIVERSITY. A GOOD EXAMPLE IS STEVE JOBS OF THE APPLE FAME. NEARER HOME WE HAVE THE EXCELLENT EXAMPLE IN ANTHONY ENAHORO THE YOUNGEST MINISTER IN THE WEST NIGERIA REGIONAL GOVERNMENT WHO IS CREDITED TO HAVE MOVED THE MOTION FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF INDEPENDENCE OF NIGERIA.

THERE WAS HOWEVER A SHIFT IN GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE WHICH LED TO A DISCONNECT BETWEEN THE UNVERSITIES, THE GENERALPOPULACE AND THE GOVERNMENT, AS UNIVERSITIES WERE ESTABLISHED WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH THE PEOPLE OR CONSIDERATION FOR PUBLIC OPINION AS SHOWN IN NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS, AND IN VIOLATION OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES OF CONSULTATION AND NEGOTIATION. IN SPITE OF THE VIEW HELD THAT THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES DID NOT SEEM TO DEMONSTRATE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN THE GOVERNMENT POLICY ON UNIVERSITY AND THE PROMOTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE, THERE WERE MANY PEOPLE WHO GENUINELY CARE ABOUT THE TREND IN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WHO REMAIN IN DESPAIR.

CONTRARY TO THE IMPRESSION GIVEN THAT MILITARY IGNORED THE CIVIL SOCIETY, THE TRUTH IS THAT MUCH OF THE POLICY WAS DRIVEN BY CIVILIANS WHO WERE APPOINTED BY MILITARY PERSONNEL. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE WAS THAT SUCH APPOINTED OFFICERS WERE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE MILITARY RULERS AND NOT THE POPULACE SINCE ELECTIONS AND OTHER INGREDIENTS OF DEMOCRACY STOOD SUSPENDED OR DISCARDED.

CONFRONTING ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM, PERSECUTION, AND WICKEDNESS

TOWARDS A CONCLUSION

AFRICA HAS ONLY MADE FEEBLE AND SPASMODIC EFFORTS AT UNIVERSITY BILDING AND EMPOWERMENT AND THIS WOULD EXPLAIN MUCH OF THE RETARDATION THAT IS EVIDENT IN MUCH OF THE ASPECTS OF NATION BUILDING INCLUDING THE PROMOTION OF GOOD GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT.

THIS IS THE WAY TO VIEW THE TRAGEDY OF 'ONE STEP FORWARD AND TWO STEPS BACKWARD' THAT HAS BEEN THE LOT OF MANY OF THE UNIVERSITIES IN AFRICA SINCE THE PRONOUNCEMENT ON THE FOUNDERS DAY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN ON 17 NOVEMBER 1948.

FORMER SOUTH AFRICAN PRESIDENT THABO MBEKI ONCE PLEADED:

"I WOULD SUGGEST THAT OUR ENTIRE CONTINENT REMAINS AT RISK UNTIL THE AFRICAN UNIVERSITY, IN THE CONTEXT OF A CONTINENTAL REAWAKENING, REGAINS ITS SOUL"

THE WAVE OF CHANGE ON THE CONTINENT HAPPILY AND HOPEFULLY PROVIDES ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO THE NATIONS OF AFRICA TO MOVE THE VISION AND MISSION OF UNIVERSITIES TO THE NEXT STEP. POSSIBLE WAY FORWARD SHOULD BE THE RESTORATION OF THE DIGNITY, RESPECT AND CONFIDENCE OF THE UNIVERSITY TO ACT AS CATALYST FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE; AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY IN WEST AFRICA TO PERFORM ITS TRADITIONAL FUNCTIONS WITHN THE CONTEXT OF THE EMERGING GLOBAL WORLD

THE UNIVERSITY, TOO, SHOULD EMPOWER THE COMMUNITY, LAUNCH LITERACY INITIATIBES TO OFFER THE LITERACY SKILL AND THUS EMPOWER THOSE ILLITERATES WHO ARE AT A DISADVANTAGE AND THUS CONTRIBUTE TO RESOLVING THE ISSUE OF RUMOUR- MONGERING THROUGH IGNORANCE AND LACK OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION.

UNIVERSITIES SHOULD INTENSIFY THE RESEARCH INTO INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND INCORPORATE THOSE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF EQUITY, COMMUNICATION, PEACE BUILDING AND PROMOTION OF DIALOGUE.

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