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## Religious Pluralism and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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### Abstract

Religious pluralism implies a diverse variety and multiplicity of faiths found to exist simultaneously in a given society. The beauty of these religions in their respective distinctiveness, even as they uphold and teach variegated divine sparks of the incomprehensible Supreme Being (God), is seen when they inclusively work together in one purposeful and concerted effort to unfold (de-envelope) the naturalness which humanity must conquer in order to be termed: developed. The platforms and bridges of religious inclusivism, ecumenism and tolerance lead naturally to greater freedoms, self-actualization, civilization and peace which are critical components of sustainable development. Religious pluralism has inherent integrative powers to transform the society positively. However, historical experiences reveal that societies which tie political battle for supremacy, socio-economic dominance and cultural superiority complex to their religions breed developmental crises. One example of such a specimen is Nigeria. The interactions between the three dominant religions in Nigeria, namely: Christianity, African Traditional Religion and Islam have been largely governed by divisiveness, hatred, bigotry and violence. The consequence is developmental deficits. This paper strove to discuss the integrative value of religious pluralism which brings sustainable development. It also examined exclusivity as a common possible weakness of religious pluralism which destroys the integral growth of peoples and nations. The methodology employed in this work is historic-descriptive which means that the relationship patterns of the three religions in Nigeria and their impacts on sustainable development were studied over time guided by the progressive value of religion. Finally, the paper recommended the need to eschew religious absolutism or

totalitarianism, and secularity of constitutions to be upheld among others to promote the harnessing of the gains of religious diversity.

**Key Words:** Religious pluralism, Exclusivity, Inclusivity, Sustainable development, Nigeria.

### Introduction

In contemporary scholarship, the relevance of religion in the integral development of the human person and its role in the overall sustenance of the society has gained some brilliant discourse. Within the contexts of multi-faceted socio-cultural backgrounds of ethnicity, secularized orientations and de-secularization, empirical scientific influences, atheistic bents and humanism, divergent political affiliations, philanthropy and economic visions, one finds religion shaping the history of humanity. In some circles, religion is viewed as laudable, positive and commendable yet on the other side of the debate, it is adjudged laughable, negative and condemnable. The ability and capacity for partnerships which religions have with the public sector for development outcomes at the local, national and international levels give credence to the strengths of religion even in its diverse persuasions. However, its plurality can become an ugly weakness which functions the sundry vices of absolutism, intolerance, violence, bigotry to mention but these which reveal the destructive, divisive and dark sides of religion. The supporters of this standpoint see religion as a cog in the wheel of integral human development and societal sustenance. They based their arguments on the grave harm and havoc which religions have inflicted on the human person and his environment over the years. Their submissions do not come from the nature of religion *per se* but rather from the historical evidences which reveal the effects of its manipulation. Here "...the problem appears to be linked to the changing interpretation of the religious message since the historic-religious perspective has been created by human beings, and hence is subject to political manipulation of various kinds" (Marco, 2010, p.1). The manipulations of religions for odious and obnoxious reasons go beyond the political battle for supremacy to include economic dominance and cultural superiority complex. Recently, in the face of deadly insurgency of Boko Haram in North-eastern Nigeria, the soldiers dismantling their camps gave shockers to the nation and beyond when they revealed that they usually found condoms, hard drugs and sex enhancing pills in camps re-captured from Boko Haram insurgents. They could not see even a single copy of the noble Koran nor any Islamic books in the camps. According to the spokesperson for the army, Colonel Sani Usman, "the findings underlined the military's belief that most Boko Haram militants were not grounded in Islam and were not driven by Islamic ideology... a lot of insurgents so far arrested could not even recite the Quran, the Holy Book of Muslims ...yet they claimed they wanted to establish an Islamic state". (*Premium Times* Newspaper, September, 8, 2015).

It is factual that a great number of harmful and retrogressive ideologies, structures and systems are robed in religious garments to the detriment and exploitation of the docile or gullible members of the society. Without these deceitful religious externalities, the manipulators' evil intentions cannot fly an inch into the human hearts and neither can their woeful visions propel human actions.

Religion by its very nature is cohesive and constructive, unitive and integrative especially as its core fundamental is an idea of a Supreme Being perceived across cultures and continents as "otherness" with sublime virtues and benevolent superlative attributes. This *Prima Causa* is also believed to be the origin and source of all existents and he himself, *a metaphysical necessity*

*who cannot NOT be.* This perception shows the common familyhood of humanity, approves the ethical and transcendental aspirations of human actions and helps, by that means, the sustainability of moral and cultural values in the person and in the society.

Religious pluralism is a piece of beauty. There is beauty in variety. Variety is the spice of life. Variety is diversity. Diversity protects freedom to choose from possible alternatives. The ability to make choice is a blessing which the rational human person enjoys from his/her faculty of volition. Religious pluralism is a blessing in diversity (and not a burden) but only when religious leaders and adherents work together in a collective path and co-responsibility in order to unfold the vast potentials innate in the human person and tap into his natural given, the enormous resources found in his environment. This achievable and actionable project for the survival of the human beings and their common home, the planet has other critical features of space and time.

Nigeria, which is the local context of this work, has three dominant religions; namely: Christianity, African Traditional Religion and Islam. Nigeria as a country did not adopt any religion as a state religion. Hence, she is understood as a secular nation as entrenched in her constitution. There is freedom of religious affiliation on the platform of religious pluralism protected under her laws. Without prejudice to the secularity of the nation, Nigeria is under both constructive and destructive influences of religions. Human progress attained through religions speaks for the former, while the evidences of the latter arise from unhealthy interactions between the aforesaid religions that breed developmental deficits. The thesis of this paper is that there is a correlation between the integrative value of religious pluralism and sustainable development.

### **The Conceptualization of Key Words**

In this section, some keywords found in the topic are described, explained or defined for better appreciation of their meanings in the work. Some of the key words are religion, religious pluralism and sustainable development.

#### **Religion**

Religion defies one single, universally accepted definition. Religion means different things to different people and has therefore been explained variously. The difficulty in the explication of the term “religion” arises from the different understandings of its origins and nature (theogenic, anthropogenic, sociogenic psychogenic, Marxist, etc.), the various perspectives of its definition (phenomenological, valuative, sociological, interpretative, naturalistic, descriptive or stipulative etc.), the variegated vehicles of the communication of its experience (the analogy of seven blind men describing an elephant) among others.

Again, religion viewed from within (an adherent’s experiences) and from outside (a non-member’s/ observer’s finding) cannot be exactly the same. These collective but divergent ideas of religion make the definition of religion interesting but difficult. Be that as it may, scholars have been able to reach some objectivity like through “a family resemblance theory” (Etim F, 2001, p. 8), in their quest to conceptualize religion. Yinger (1970 p.10) presented the views of Joachim Wach that “all religions, despite their wide variations are characterized by three universal expressions: the theoretical, a system of belief; the practical, a system of worship; and the sociological, a system of social relationships. Until all these are found, one may have religious tendencies, religious elements, but not a full religion”. The above criteria delist

Marxism, for instance, as religion. This shows yet another hurdle in the definition of religion – the inclusive and exclusive categories. The inclusive sees religion as a pervasive force in the society and includes all the “isms” like communism, Marxism, fascism, humanism, secularism, nationalism, and equates them with Christianity, Judaism and Islam. However, the exclusive makes the term “religion” a strict reserve for the activities intentionally oriented towards the divine, supernatural and the “wholly other” (Fallding, 1974, p. 3). According to Omoregbe, (2006, p. 3): etymologically, the concept “religion” is got from three Latin words; namely: “ligare” (meaning to bind), “religare” (meaning to unite, to link together), and “religio” (which means relationship). The analysis of the above etymology shows that religion is essentially a relationship between two persons: God or gods and man.

In the words of Ejizu (2012, p.1) religion is “man’s experience of the holy and ultimate reality, as well as the expression of that awareness in concrete life”. Religion, according to Herbert Spencer, “is the recognition that all things are manifestations of a power which transcends our knowledge”. Put more succinctly, religion is “humanity’s response to the divine” (Hick, 1994 p. 2). The response of man to the existence of a being beyond him takes on multi-faceted dimensions such as personal, psychological, social, cultural, economic, and ecological, among others (Ele, 2017 Pp. 67-68). The responses of humanity to the supernatural reality beyond the visible realm have multiple exercises and plural experiences, hence the idea of religious pluralism.

### **Religious Pluralism**

Pluralism implies a diverse variety and multiplicity of faiths found to exist simultaneously in a given society. For Onah (2014, p.2) it connotes “the existence of many religions in a particular society”. *The Harper Collins Dictionary of Religion* defines “religious pluralism” as “the problem and opportunity of the simultaneous presence of different religious traditions within a single society”. There are some synonyms which can help one understand the meanings of religious pluralism. These include: “religious diversity”, “religious inclusivism”, “religious tolerance” and religious ecumenism”. Eck throws more light thus: “...Pluralism is not the sheer fact of plurality alone, but is active engagement with plurality. Pluralism and plurality are sometimes used as if they are synonymous. But plurality is just diversity, plain and simple... splendid, colourful, maybe even threatening. Such diversity does not, however, have to affect me. I can observe diversity as the cliché goes. But I have to participate in pluralism... pluralism requires the cultivation of public space where we all encounter one another” (Robinson (2004, p. 2).

Fazel (1995 p.1) held that “Philosophically, religious pluralism is the theory that the great world religions constitute varying conceptions of, and responses to, the one ultimate, mysterious divine reality”. In other words, it is “...an affirmation of a set of values beyond (one’s) traditional allegiances” (Williams, 2007). Religious pluralism exists on the need for harmonious co-existence between different faiths and the promotion of some level of unity, understanding, love and mutual respect between different religious bodies and their adherents. McLennan (2011, p. 5) agreed with Patel (2007) thus:

Religious pluralists hold that people believing in different creeds and belonging to different communities need to learn to live together. Religious pluralism is neither mere coexistence nor forced consensus. It is a form of proactive cooperation that affirms the identity of the constituent communities while emphasizing that the wellbeing of each

and all depends on the health of the whole. It is the belief that the common good is best served when each community has a chance to make its unique contribution.

The world needs these contributions made through inter-faith harmony and cooperation on the platform of plural-religious-partnership for sustainable development.

### **Sustainable Development**

“Development” is a noun taken simply from its components “de” (not) and “envelope” (to fold) hence “de-envelope” means “not to fold”, “to uncover”. Its verb “to develop” means “(cause to) grow larger, fuller or more mature, organized; (cause to) unfold (Hornby, 1974, p.747). As Agalamanyi (2004, p. 229) wrote, “The word “development” means different things to different people. Some people take it to mean change, while others see it as advancement, improvement and progress. Some scholars described the term “development” as modernization or westernization. Many others argue that for the concept to be properly understood, it has to be pinned down to specific areas of life such as economic, social, technological, political, educational development, and so on”. The problem scholars have is to view development from a unidimensional perspective which excludes the comprehensive ontological expressions of man. Development is all about man and his environment (Ele, 2006, p.18). Therefore, development is not a project which can be achieved by science alone, or by technology alone or by economics alone and not even by religion alone; it has to incorporate the multidimensional aspirations of the human person in their plural variety: personal, economic, social, religious, political, psychological, cultural, spiritual, ecological, chronological (present time and in the future) etc.

The contemporary conceptualized alternative model, namely: “sustainable development” is a necessity borne out of the deficiencies of previous development approaches which disconnected the present from the future, the economy from the ecology, the person from his environment and made one-sided process absolute over a multi-faceted process. Sustainable development is “development that meets the needs of the present without comprising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p.43). The main objective of sustainable development is the improvement of the “quality of life for all members of a community and, indeed, for all citizens of a nation and the world-while ensuring the integrity of all life support systems upon which all life, human and non-human, depends” (UNESCO, *Teaching and Learning for a Sustainable Future*/model, p. 2). Sustainable development has the dimensions of society (politics and culture), environment (ecology) and economy hence “the triple bottom line” - 3E’s of Equity (social sustainability); Economy (economic sustainability) and Ecology (ecological sustainability) (*World Summit on Sustainable Development*, Johannesburg, 2002).

The International Institute for Sustainable Development (2003) wrote:

All definitions of sustainable development require that we see the world as a system – a system that connects space, and a system that connects time. When you think of the world as a system over space, you grow to understand that air pollution from North America affects air quality in Asia, and that pesticides sprayed in Argentina could have fish stocks off the coast of Australia. And when you think of the world as a system over time, you start to realize that the decisions our grandparents made about how to farm

the land continue to affect agricultural practice today, and the economic policies we endorse today will have an impact on urban poverty when our children are adults.

So, sustainable development is all about steps to ensure that the quality of human life is guaranteed as it unfolds comprehensively and in its interconnectedness both locally and globally; and these positive impacts on man and his environment which are in their best shapes and grades are enjoyed now, in the near and far future.

In line with the above, Ele (2006) wrote that: “The sustainable development process is a multifarious, continuous process and it is essentially a human and an ecology centred model. It seeks to guarantee the welfare of every citizen and the well-being of the yet unborn, future generations in its total dimension” (p. 19). The question is: in which ways can religion contribute to human progress and environmental preservation both now and in the future? In other words, is religion a credible stakeholder in the project of sustainable development? The next section answers these questions.

### **Religion and Sustainable Development**

One, guided by history, can positively affirm that the trends of de-secularization swooping across the world in the present era give much premium to the vital roles of religion in the society and in the lives of individual persons. It is sincerely clear that humanism, secularism and the atheists’ world organized without God could not take the human person to the mirage paradise they promised humanity. In like manner, the philosophy of consumerism which wanted to *thingify* the human person also failed because man is more than a *thing*. Man is more than mere matter; he transcends “feelings” which atheistic psychologists summarize him to be. Man is a person created in the image of God (*imago Dei*); he is a religious being. The true unfolding of the human being and his environment must go the way of religion. Therefore, religion can bring about sustainable development in many ways.

First, religion has great multitude of adherents whose lives are shaped or directed by her tenets and teaching. Sustainable development is all about people, planet and prosperity. With the large populations that subscribe to religion for sound ethical living, religions can, with effortless ease, impact positively on the world’s clamour for sustainability. The large numbers that constitute memberships of different religions are already living agents that can transform human persons and the planet through the needed obedience to their leaders and doctrines. Recent examples are the synergy between religious leaders and the civil governance especially the health sector in the recent outbreak of Ebola in Nigeria. The adoption of hygienic principles against Ebola virus by the Catholic Church for instance, helped in a great measure to save lives. In the North, the imams’ teaching on the need for children’s immunization against polio was understood more readily than the clarion call by the political class.

Second, in her various ethnic nationalities, conflicts and wars have been avoided through instruments of conflict resolution in traditional societies such as oath-taking and covenant making. Peace is fundamental to sustainable development. Both Christianity and Islam preach peace. Peace goes beyond the absence of war to include those structures and systems that support authentic human existence. Religious leaders in the three religions are seen as conflict mediators; they enjoy special confidence among their followers. Consequently, they are able to influence their visions and actions. World peace can be achieved with the co-operation of religious leaders. There can be no development without peace.



Again, one of the challenges of sustainable development in more countries than one is corruption. Corruption in its various forms and shapes are found in economy, political life, and culture and so on. When Nigerian citizens and specifically those in the political class take anti-corruption doctrines of their religious affiliations seriously, moral decay would belong only to history books. Basically, all religions inspire people towards spiritual excellence and foster the common good of all. Common good for all is a key ingredient in social stability and sustainable national development (Onah 2014, p.7). Another name for corruption is moral depravity. Morality is essentially fostered by religion. As Narayanan (2013) wrote:

Sustainable development based as it is on an overtly moral call, is most likely of all development concepts to be empirically open and responsive to collaboration with religion. Religion is undoubtedly one of the major global authorities and arbiters of morality, and dialogue with sustainable development is not only possible but necessary to enable the humanitarian and ecological work that preoccupies both equally. Sustainable development is not enough... religion must be appreciated as one of its important partners to provide the moral force that it needs (p. 133).

In addition, Religions go beyond the Church, mosque or shrine to meet the needs of human person. Auza (2015, pp. 8-9) testified to this thus: "Religions and its institutions care about the whole of the human person: striving for authentic human development, they do not compartmentalize development, but work for a well-rounded flourishing of each human person. Because human progress is an integral part of their vision and mission, besides erecting places of worship they also construct community-building centres, hospitals, schools and universities". He stressed that Religions work to protect life and to empower the weak and the oppressed. They help populations develop their natural resources responsibly and protect them from the exploitation of powerful economic and political interests. These Religions, he emphasized, are creative in lifting the poor out of poverty in all its forms, in particular in helping those who are trying to escape the ravages of hunger, poverty, endemic disease and ignorance. They are not afraid, even to the point of great sacrifices, to fight for justice and raise awareness among the powerful and the rich on the social ends of power and wealth and the universal destination of the goods of the world. He concluded that locally rooted, religious leaders and members, have first-hand knowledge of the many forms of poverty and inequalities. Universally networked, they are effective advocates of causes dear to the United Nations and to the human family as a whole, like the eradication of extreme poverty and the promotion of sustainable development respectful to the environment.

In Nigeria, the successive civilian governments have failed in many respects to fulfil their electioneering campaign promises and deliver the democracy dividends to the people. The military regimes that suffocated development agenda in many ways remain the darkest chapters of Nigeria's history. Religions in Nigeria have contributed immensely to progress in various spheres of the national life. These contributions to education, justice and peace, health services, rule of law, environmental preservation, etc were not done by religions to supplant the national rulership, rather by doing so, they were fulfilling their divine mandate. As Yinger (1970) observed:

Even in the healthiest and wealthiest and most rational of societies, however, secular responses cannot eliminate the problems of suffering, evil and hostility. Realizing the gap between their hopes and the realities of their existence, men everywhere seek to

close it by a leap of faith that says: this need not, this will not, be true; sometime, some place, somehow, suffering and evil will be defeated (p. 10).

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and its vision to eradicate those conditions which rob the human person of dignity got some boost of achieving its targets with the contributions of religions and faith-based organizations. With the expiration of the MDGs in 2015, 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 and 169 associated targets were recently adopted in the meeting of the United Nations (UN) held at its headquarters in New York from 25 – 27 September, 2015 by the Heads of State and Government and High Representatives. President Mohammed Buhari of Nigeria and representatives of Religious bodies attended the meeting. The new agenda and targets will come into effect on 1 January, 2016 and will guide integrated actions for the realization of all sustainability dimensions for the next fifteen years. The agenda focus on people (to end extreme poverty), planet (to protect it from degradation), prosperity (to ensure prosperous life for all), peace (to foster just and inclusive societies free from fear and violence) and partnership (to mobilize the means necessary for the successful execution of the agenda).

Archbishop Benardito Auza the permanent observer of the Holy See to the United Nations remarked: "...Religions and faith-based organizations are partners for sustainable development, and will be potent agents for the achievement of the post-2015 sustainable development goals, as they have been for the MDGs and, indeed, in the history of humanity" (2015, p. 9). Jim Yong Kim, President World Bank Group, addressing the faith communities in a global conference in Washington, 7-9, July, 2015, emphasized the significant role religion must play in the SDGs especially in the agendum to eradicate extreme poverty. In his words: "we can't get there without all of you. We need prophetic voices to inspire us and evidence to lead the way" (2015, p. 2).

Pope Francis (2015), following the path of his apostolic predecessors, the Popes, gave his prophetic voice on the care for the environment. In his Encyclical *Laudato Si* (on the Care for our Common Home; literal meaning- "praise be to you" taken from the first line of a canticle by St. Francis of Assisi that praises God with all of his creation), wrote:

In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home. I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation that includes everyone, since the environment challenge, we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all. The earth, our home, is beginning to look more like an immense pile of filth (articles 3, 14 and 21).

The Pope as the spiritual leader of 1.2 billion Catholics the world over is engaging both his flock and all persons of goodwill to see humanity's contribution to ecological crisis as it is today. He maintains that each community can take from the bounty of the earth whatever it needs for subsistence, but it also has the duty to protect the earth and to ensure its fruitfulness for coming generations (article 67). God is the creator of the world which he gave to man and woman to keep, care for, protect, oversee and preserve (Genesis 1:26-28). Science and technology are routes to authentic integral development only when they are at the service of human persons and their environment.



Islamic religion teaches Muslims to look after the environment and not to damage it. Qur'an 30:30 says "Devote thyself single-mindedly to the faith, and thus follow the nature designed by Allah, the nature according to which He has fashioned mankind. There is no altering the creation of Allah". The Muslims believe that human being on earth is a *Khalifah*, that is a vicegerent or trustee of Allah, a steward and agent on earth which belongs to Allah who created it. Islamic scholars and jurists developed laws "to safeguard water resources, prevent over-grazing, conserve forests, limit the growth of cities, protect cultural property, and so on. Islam's environmental ethics then are not limited to metaphysical notions; they provide a practical guide as well" (Musaji, 2012, p. 5).

In the context of African Traditional Religion, Africans see religion as a source of environmental protection and preservation. The African worldview has no clear distinction between the sacred and the secular. The human beings could live and eat with the spirits. Practically, every aspect of traditional African life is influenced by its religion and all things – the self, the community, the environment, the invisible, the past, the present and the future, the dead, the living, the unborn, the names, the feasts, the disasters, and the prosperity, etc. are explainable through religious categories. There are traditional ways of caring for the environment in a very friendly way. From dawn to dusk, activities of the average African respect the environment, examples such as morning sanitation, kitchen and compound cleaning is a daily affair, clearing or sweeping of the village paths and squares, the grazing methods and the fallow system in the agricultural fields, the thick forests for wild animals and bushes left for shrines and spirits. The legislations to preserve trees, herbs, streams and rivers are well stipulated, most times, in oral tradition yet it is observed by all.

In traditional Africa, like among the Igbo people of South-eastern Nigeria, there are seasons for hunting and times to lumber trees. Sanitation is a daily index in the homes and markets and not a monthly or a long-term affair as modern environmental agents of civil governance would make us believe and obey. African people have been taught to be ecological friendly through the belief systems of their traditional religion. One may argue that the corrosive environmental degradation, climate change and the disappearance of important wildlife and species of grass, herbs and shrubs that serve as food, medicinal and sundry values came as a result of industrialization, urbanization and westernization.

### **Recommendations**

This part entails recommendations which are proffered as positive contributions toward the realization of sustainable development as one of the potent worth of religious pluralism.

#### **1. Need to Eschew Religious Absolutism or Totalitarianism**

No person, religion or nation should be a religious totalitarian or absolutist who sees others' faith as condemnable and only good for persecution or extinction. There is need for greater tolerance among people with diverse faiths in order to ensure the promotion of religious freedom.

#### **2. Secularity of Constitutions to be Upheld**

Civil governments should uphold the secularity of their constitutions so that religious manipulations for selfish gains would be removed from the political space. Nigeria and other nations would enjoy peace and stability when inordinate ambitions such as ethnic dominance,

political triumphalism, cultural superiority complex and economic affluence are removed from the manipulative forces which make religion its victim.

### **3. Inclusive View on Partnership**

The world bodies and organizations should include religions as credible partners in the issues of sustainable development. Religions have the requisite capacity, virtues and values to make possible the goals of sustainable development.

### **4. Prophetic Voices and Exemplary Leadership**

All religions should maintain their positions in the world by their prophetic voices which condemn evil and commend the good. The world needs exemplary leadership from religions. Religious leaders enjoy confidence from their vast followership; they should maintain their integrity. May they continue with their good works in both the spiritual and social spheres.

### **5. Community Based Care for the Environment**

There should be enabling factors in various local communities to care for their environments. In traditional Africa, there are systems and structures that promote sustainability in its various forms especially the environment. This should be encouraged to continue by suitable support by the civil government. Already, the understanding is there since they understand their obligation towards nature as guiding spiritual call.

### **6. Sincerity in Implementation**

Let the SDGs 2030 be implemented with all sincerity. The UN has asked local authorities and individual nations to work out the execution strategies suitable in their respective places. May honesty and human welfare drive every stage of delivery.

## **Conclusion**

When the father of sociology, August Comte placed religion in the primitive stage of human development, little did he know that religion will resiliently survive to see the scientific stage of technology in the 21st century. When Marx described religion as the “opium of the masses”, he did not know that religion would rather be the agent of “awareness” influencing decisions and actions of a great multitude in the planet who would live after him.

Today, more than ever, religion is in dialogue with science and structures that promote human prosperity and planet’s futuristic survival. Since religion has a lot to offer human beings in their physical, social and spiritual dimensions, I think religion should be called permanently to some partnership with the public sector for sustainable development that leads man to himself, to his neighbor, to his environment and ultimately to God. This, Religious pluralism can achieve through the platforms and bridges of ecumenism tolerance and mutual respect.

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