

AFRICAN UNION

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**READING MATERIALS IN AFRICAN LANGUAGES
IN THE PROCESS OF LIFE-LONG ACQUISITION OF CRITICAL SKILLS**

ADEA Conference on Book Development in Africa

Nairobi, Kenya

October 3-5, 2011

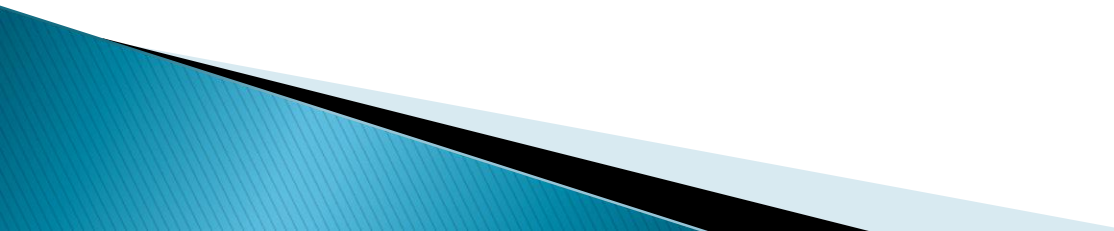
Professor Sozinho Francisco Matsinhe, PhD

Executive Secretary

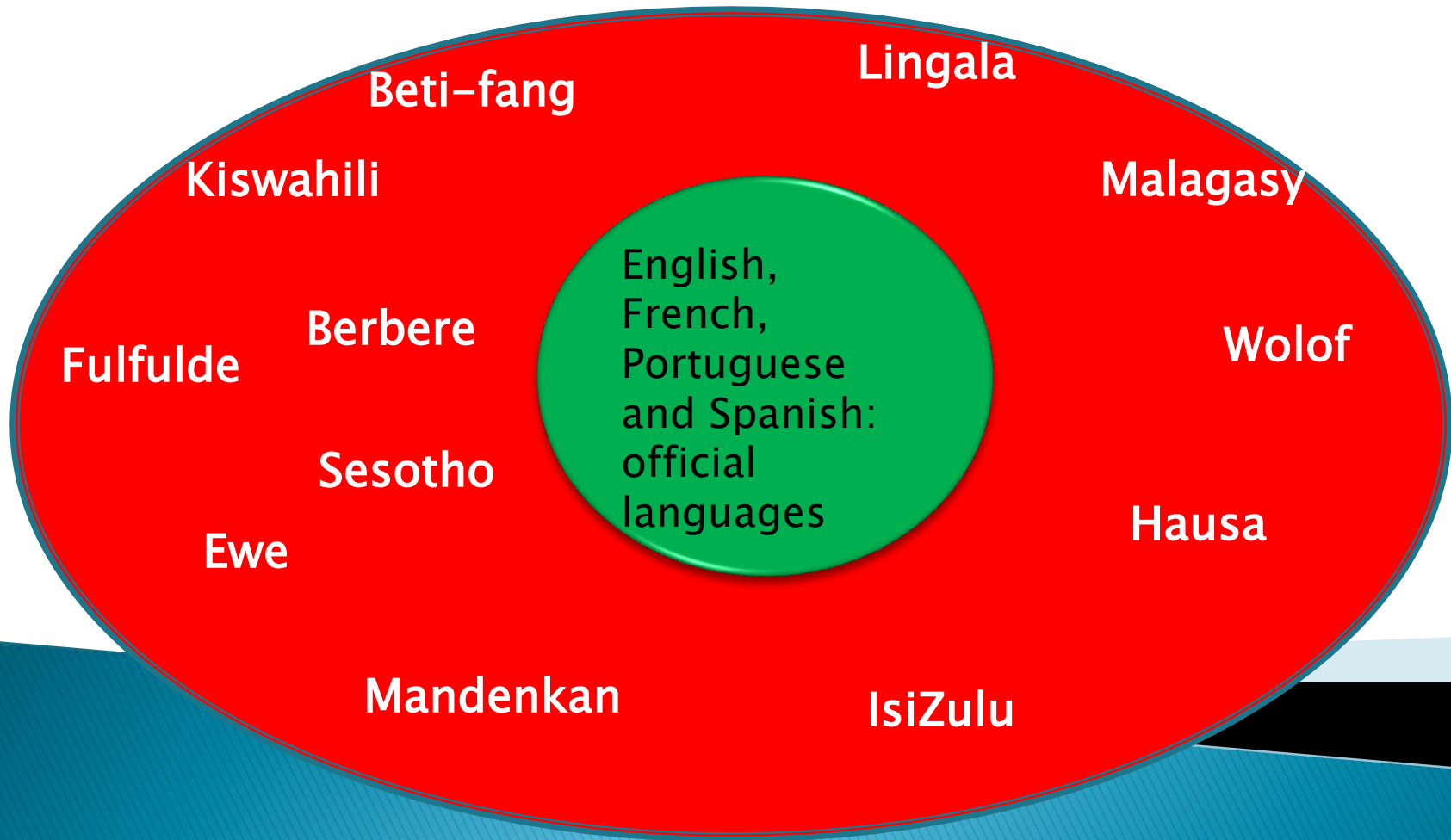
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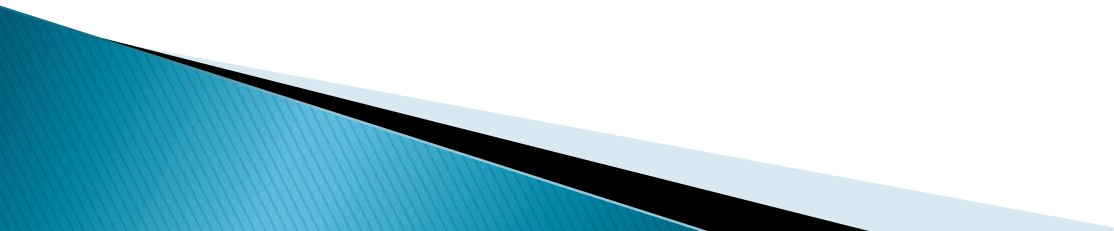
STRUCTURE OF THE PRESENTATION

- (1) Introduction: the African Linguistic Mosaic and the Development of Reading Materials in African Languages**
 - (2) Challenges**
 - (3) A Call for a Paradigm Shift**
 - (4) Conclusion**
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THE AFRICAN LINGUISTIC MOSAIC



Book Development and the African Linguistic Mosaic

- The development of relevant reading materials, including books in African languages has been high on the agenda of various stakeholders concerned with education in Africa at various levels.
 - However, there are still serious challenges facing the production of relevant reading materials in African languages that would allow the Africans to unlock their potential and acquire relevant skills that are critically required for their participation in the process of bringing about sustainable development that would change their life for the better.
 - Most Africans still remain functionally illiterate.
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WHY ?

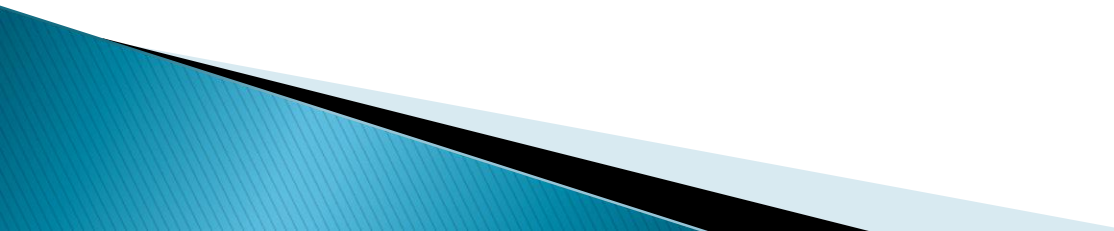
THE LOST GOAT

If you lose a goat, you search for it everywhere, even on top of trees, though you know goats never climb trees.

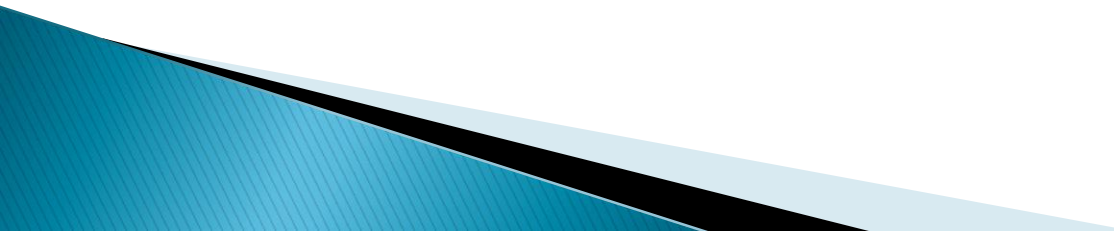
African Proverb



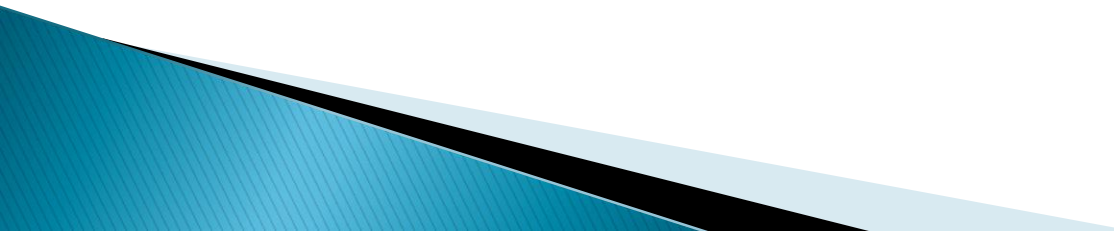
THE SEARCH FOR THE LOST GOAT

- The linguistic richness/wealth of Africa is very often perceived as a liability not an asset.
 - The development of books in African languages is neither informed nor inspired by the socio-cultural reality suggested by the African Linguistic Mosaic. It is rather inspired by business interests.
 - There is a lack of clear policies on the promotion of developing books in African languages.
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THE SEARCH FOR THE LOST GOAT

- The content of the reading materials produced in African languages has little bearing on the life experience of the African people.
 - There is a paucity of trained writers for developing books in African languages, particularly for children.
 - It is therefore difficult to instil the culture of reading into the children.
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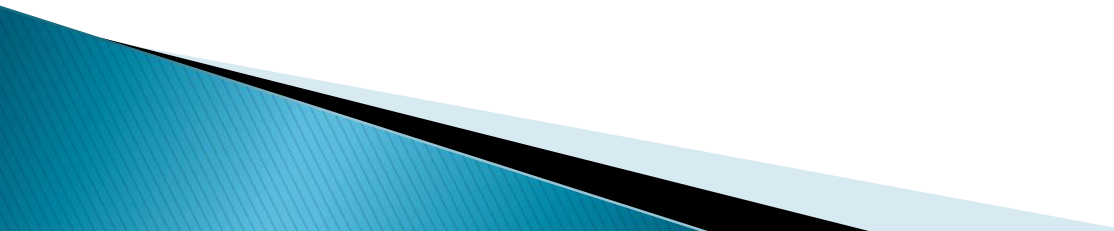
THE SEARCH FOR THE LOST GOAT

- **Instrumentalization of African Languages:** bilingual/mother tongue education is inspired by the desire to address pedagogical problems.
 - This keeps African languages on the periphery of the socio-economic mainstream – Africa languages are not part and parcel of the research of viable strategies to bring about sustainable development that would change the lives of Africans for the better.
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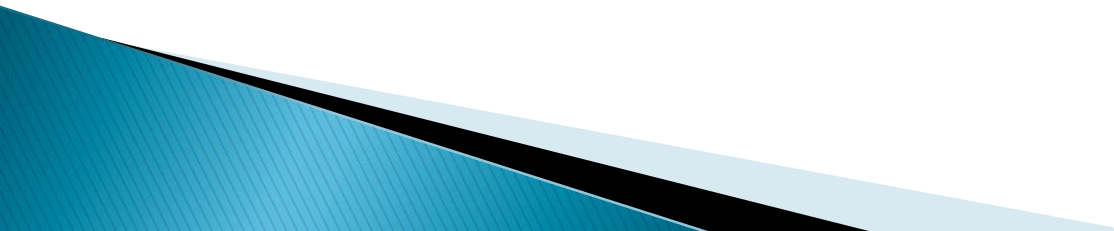
**FOOD COOKED IN BORROWED POTS
NEVER KILLS HUNGER**

THE SEARCH FOR THE LOST GOAT

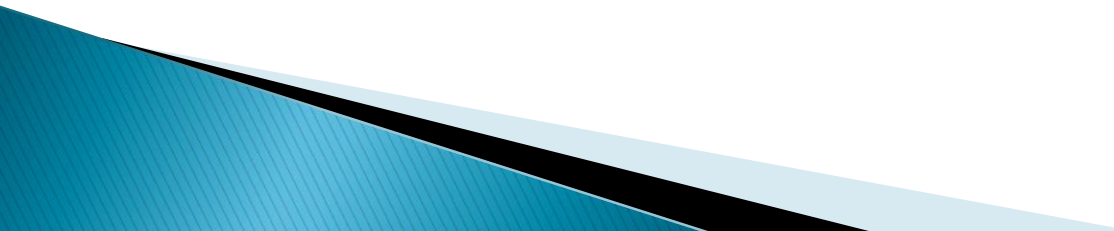
“Development is not simply an economic process, but a complex whole that has to emerge endogenously from deep down inside each society. It must be endogenous, thought out by people themselves, springing from the soil on which they live and attuned to their inspirations, the conditions of their natural environment, the resources at their disposal and particular genius of their culture. The role of education in such a context would be to promote such an endogenous development.” Sifuna (2009)

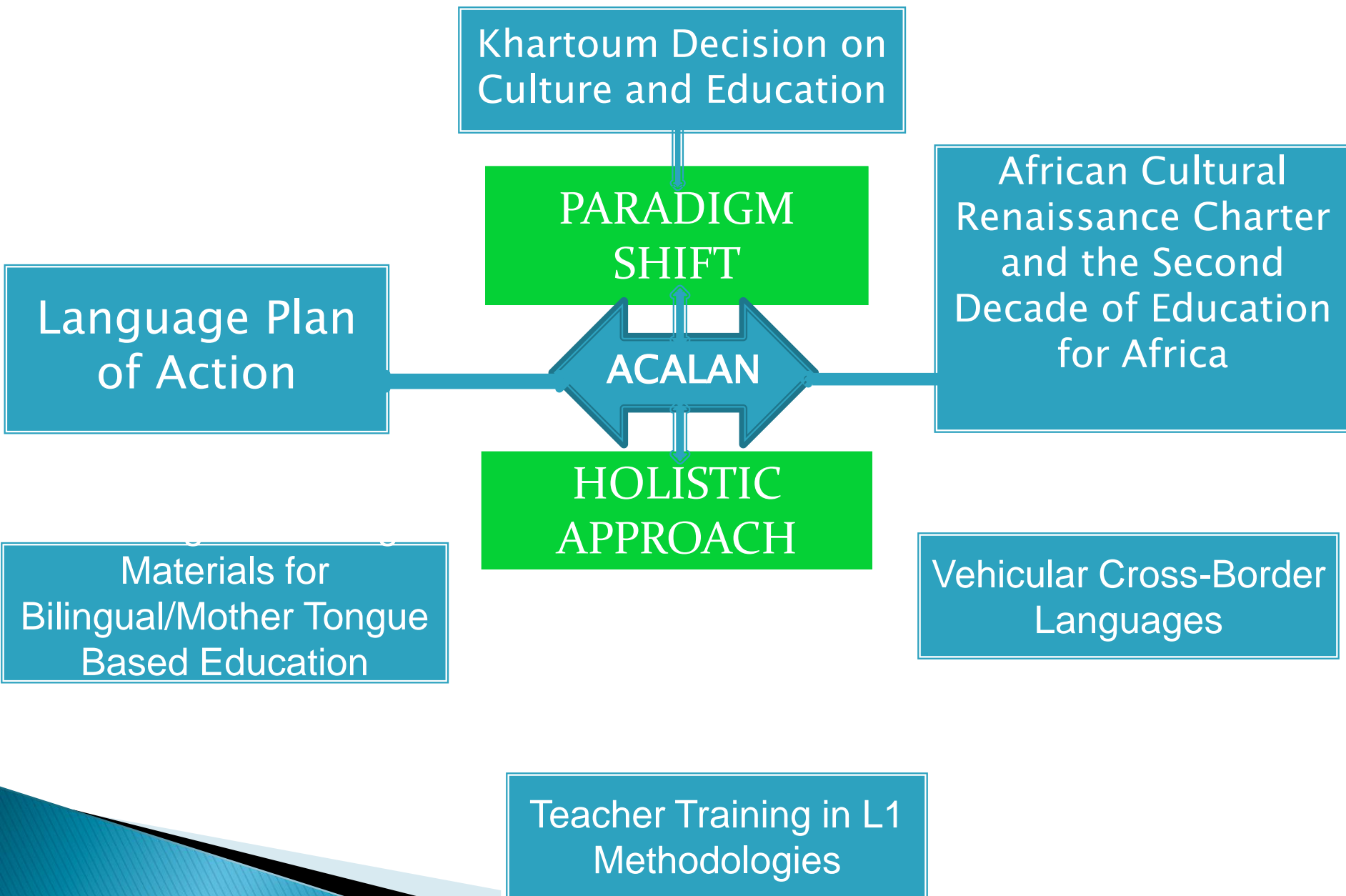


A CALL FOR A PARADIGM SHIFT

- African languages are a resource we need to harness to development reading materials with relevant content that can impart relevant skills and unlock the potential of Africans.
 - **Holistic approach:** the development of reading materials in African languages should be part and parcel of the search for viable strategies to bring about sustainable development that would change the lives of the vast majority of Africans for the better.
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PARADIGM SHIFT

- We need to create synergies.
 - Revamp the formal education systems within the context of the Second Decade of Education for Africa – 2006–2015 and the African Cultural Renaissance.
 - Establish a linkage between culture and education (the 2006 Khartoum declaration).
 - All these will contribute towards the development of relevant reading materials in African languages, the restoration of self-esteem and the self-confidence, sharing and recording of collective experiences as well as the cross-fertilization of ideas which are so critical to acquiring life-long skills and to facing any challenge!
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Shukran!

Aw ni ice

Ni wega

Natondi yo

Jerejef

Merci Beaucoup

Thank you very much!

Muito obrigado