

*My Vision for My Country and Region:
I Plant thus I Am...*

The Technique used for artwork is collage (with wrappers) on a board (the board found at the back of every sketchpad). The idea behind was to make full use of the graphic colours of the wrappers on a very flashy-coloured fish. The artwork is 99 % re-used, except for the glue. The paint used in the background, are in fact rests of acrylic paint. The frame is entirely re-used as well as the hanger which is made of beer can opener. The Poem:

“They say that I am one of the most venomous species of the planet...

That my appearance is deceptive,

That my presence is disruptive,

But what about those creatures who live on the ground?

How about the tons of that ‘material’ they throw around?

How come they kill more than me,

But they fear me more?

When will they understand that I only defend?

Whereas they only selfishly offend...

When will they understand that our future is common,

Just as our planet....”

A Scorpion fish...

The above poem and artwork, which form part of the art exhibition hosted under the Waves of Change Event, depicts in a metaphoric way, my concern and commitment to contribute to a society which is conscious about the necessity to preserve and protect the environment: not only for the welfare of the latter but more importantly, because we are an integral part of it: we depend on our natural resources to live and survive; our natural resources being limited and therefore precious, there is an urgent need to protect it so that in the end, just as in an eco-system, all actors become mutually beneficent. That is why, ‘our future is common, just as our planet’.

That said, my vision for my country and region for 2050 is that sustainable livelihood become fully internalized and established on a multi-stakeholder level i.e. on the public and private sector as well on a societal level at civic/individual level. The latter should be implemented in a systemic way, taking into consideration the various aspect/parts/actors involved in the sustainable development. As part of that reasoning, I would like my country and region to have acquired a solid waste management program to reduce waste production. On a citizen level, I wish that through an effective educational framework and scheme, that there is a shift from awareness-raising to consciousness establishment in terms of day-to-day practice i.e.: organic gardening, use of shopping bags and protection of endemic plant and species by reducing importation/rearing of exotic invasive animals, use of renewable energy sources and eco-building. However, all these cannot be achieved if good governance practices and human rights are not fully enforced at state level to ensure that citizens have their basic needs as well as an inclusive framework that would encourage engagement.

In all, my vision for my country and region is that we are able to collaborate, co-create and generate authentic partnerships that would be mutually beneficial for all countries of the Indian Ocean Region, despite our linguistic, cultural and geographical differences. Just like an orchestra, we may not play the same instruments but we can play together, producing our respective sounds, under the guidance of a common maestro: Sustainable Development.

In an ending note, as an allegory to express the shift that I want for my country and region (that could be applied on a global basis) in 2050, I wish to witness a change from a mere ‘I shop, thus I am’, to ‘**I plant, thus I am**’, symbolizing a shift from blind consumerism to conscious livelihood and at the same time, summarizing all of the above.

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