

Theme: Globalisation

Source: Extract from a speech to The Royal Society (London) by Prince Charles (2001)

www.princeofwales.gov.uk/speeches/environment_15032001.html

..... I just want to end on a somewhat controversial note.

I have long subscribed to the catastrophe theory that humanity only wakes up to what it is doing to the environment when confronted by global tragedies. For example, you need only look at the way in which we have managed our fish stocks. Cod stocks off Newfoundland
5 collapsed through intense over-fishing, and have still not recovered after eight years. Yet even now, we are doing the same to fish stocks off South Africa, in the North Sea, and elsewhere, as if what happened in Newfoundland was somehow not a matter of public record.

So I am afraid I end up believing that we will inevitably see more catastrophe, and only then will people realise what they have been doing to upset that critical ecological and social
10 balance on which we all depend.

And that is what I fear about the whole concept of "globalisation". I simply do not believe the assurances of those who tell us that the forces it unleashes can all be constrained within a framework of proper regulation. Globalisation brings enormous problems for the developing - and indeed, developed - countries, whatever the commercial opportunities, and in many cases
15 the lack of attention to sustainability will threaten the stability and long term prospects of fragile communities and countries.

Unless we can find ways of achieving a much wider acceptance that responsible corporate behaviour includes the need to address these issues comprehensively, in partnerships with Governments and civil society, then I fear that the whole concept of globalisation may
20 ultimately prove to be so deeply flawed as to be unsustainable.

In this, as in all other matters, we need wisdom to understand the importance of balance. If you go beyond that point where things are still in balance, you will inevitably create an equal and opposite reaction. It is an unpleasant truth, but a truth all the same. It seems to me that there is a desperate risk that the forces of globalisation are already dangerously out of balance,
25 and I'll lay you a bet that in twenty years I'll be proved right!

Annotations

12 constrain – regulate, keep down

Assignments

- 1) Point out facts and developments that are related to the process of globalisation according to Prince Charles.
- 2) Analyse the rhetorical means that Prince Charles uses to make an impact on his listeners. Take the play on words "the ... concept of globalisation may prove unsustainable" as a starting point of your analysis.
- 3) Do you share Prince Charles' views on globalization? Give reasons in your answer.