

Remarks by H.E. Mr. ESTIFANOS Afeworki, Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC) in Tokyo in the Opening Ceremony of the 7th African Festival Yokohama 2014 April 4th 2014:

Mr. Edwin Matey Cofie
Chairman of the African Festival Yokohama 2014,
Your Excellencies and Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express our deep felt gratitude and appreciation, on behalf of the African Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo and myself, for your kind invitation extended to our countries, to participate in this annual event of the 7th African Festival Yokohama 2014. On this occasion of the opening, I would also like to congratulate the organizers, as well as the participants, for their success in making this event happen, for the seventh time this year, in the city of Yokohama.

Yokohama, the second populated and biggest city in Japan, is not only one of the most important historical gateways of trade and investment of Japan to and from the rest of the world, it is city that has played a significant role by hosting Africa Japan head of states summit meetings two times in 2008 and 2013.

These historic events called Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) have contributed significantly to the enhancement and deepening of the bilateral and multilateral relations between Japan and Africa and African countries since 1993. The local government, city administration, the honorable mayor, businesses, academia, students and the public of Yokohama were instrumental in forging and in the incubation of the Africa - Japan partnership that is slowly but surely on the rise and preparing to fly. Prime Minister Abe's recent successful visit to Africa accompanied by business leaders and policy makers clearly shows the outcome of the ongoing continued Yokohama city efforts as well as the Government of Japan to build a friendship bridge between Africa and Japan.

Therefore, let me take this opportunity to reiterate to the organizers and participants of this event, that the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC) in Tokyo encourages and looks forward to an increased Japan's public and private investment participation in the economic development programs of our countries, and especially Yokohama city's, through the utilization of our strategic importance by: helping expanding exports, fostering transfer of technologies and SMEs to serve the mutual interest of our countries in the present globalized world.

African countries and businesses are participating in the 7th African Festival Yokohama 2014 to show case some of their products and create a business tie up. It is our expectation and wish that these efforts will further enhance and deepen the

solidarity and friendship between African countries and Japan.

I again wish all the best to the positive efforts of public diplomacy being exerted by the residents and Mayor of Yokohama as well as the organizers of this event.

Thank you