

Remarks made by H.E. Mr. ESTIFANOS Afeworki, Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC) in Tokyo on the Occasion of Africa Day Reception May 25, 2016:

- Honorable Ichiro AISAWA, President of the Japan-AU Parliamentary Friendship League
- Honorable Manabu SAKAI, State Minister of Finance
- Honorable Seiji KIHARA, State Minister for Foreign Affairs, MOFA
- Honorable Tsuyoshi HOSHINO, Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, METI
- Honorable Hitoshi KIKAWADA, Parliamentary Vice Minister of MOFA
- Ambassador Norio MARUYAMA, Director
- General African Affairs Department MOFA
- Mr. Takio YAMADA, Director-General, International Cooperation Bureau, MOFA
- Dr. David M. MALONE Rector of the United Nations University, Tokyo and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations,
- Honorable Guests, Excellencies and Dear Colleagues

- Mina Sama Kombanwa

Allow me to thank and express our deep felt gratitude to all our guests present, on behalf of all the heads of the African diplomatic missions here in Tokyo and myself, for taking time from your busy schedules, in honor of our invitation to attend the Africa Day Reception.

As you all know, Africa Day is the annual commemoration of the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We celebrate this day and remember the vision of the fathers and leaders of the first thirty of the thirty two free and independent states who signed the founding charter of OAU in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, before fifty three years today, on May 25,1963. The rise to independence in the 60th in Africa was after a long process that began with resistance and struggle waged against European colonialism by the heroic peoples of Africa for centuries. It was because of this history that those 30 courageous fathers of Africa enshrined in the OAU charter the inalienable right of all Africans to control: own destiny, freedom, equality, justice and dignity as an essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of their countries and peoples.

It is these wise men of Africa, through their vision, attested by their signature to the OAU charter that committed Africa to harness the natural and human resources of the continent for the total advancement of the peoples of Africa in all spheres of human endeavors.

Some African countries were granted independence on a silver platter because Europe was so devastated after World War II that it simply could not pay the bills of its colonial enterprises any longer. But many African countries had to wage war of liberations spearheaded by the Algerian revolution to get their independence. Their populations have to pay for their freedom dearly with their best sons and daughters' blood, sweat and tears. This is a special day for me also. One of these nations was my country Eritrea. It won its independence before 25 years, celebrated yesterday, after 30 years of armed struggle against all odds created by the super powers. It was also today 25 years ago that a dedicated wave of compassion and demonstration for truth by people in the Horn of Africa, which included visionaries of every sex, race and creed, both from Eritrea and Ethiopia, that liberated Addis Ababa (the capital of Ethiopia) from the tyrannical rule of Mengistu and hegemony of USSR. 25 years has passed since Mandela release from prison and South Africa freedom day were celebrated.

Hence, on the outset of our Africa Day Reception, I would kindly ask all to observe a moment of silence now – to observe in memory of those heroic leaders, victims of colonialism and neo-colonialism, fallen freedom fighters, as well as terror and genocide victims in the continent of Africa.

On this historic day, I would also like to express my gratitude and reiterate to all the friends in Japan that we, the current generation, should continue to listen to and serve those courageous fathers, sons and daughters of Africa because they represent destiny, freedom, equality, justice and dignity.

Thank you and Arigato