

REMARKS BY H.E. MR. ESTIFANOS AFEWORKI AMBASSADOR OF THE STATE OF ERITREA TO JAPAN AT 2ND IMA NO AFRICA OPENING CERemony MAY 25, 2019

Her Imperial Highness Princess Takamado
Honorable Taro Aso Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Finance
Honorable Ichiro Aisawa Chairman of Japan – AU Parliamentary League
Honorable Ms. Fumiko Hayashi Mayor of Yokohama City
Excellences and Dear Colleagues
CEO of Japanese Companies present
Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you so much for coming today, in spite of your busy schedules, to the City of Yokohama which is celebrating its history of 160 years and by your presence as guests of honor to grace the Opening Ceremony of the **2nd Ima No Africa Event** (May 25 – May 26, 2019).

We are deeply honored to have among us today a member of the Japanese Imperial family by the sympathetic presence of Princess Takamado. The presence of Her Highness in today's event clearly signals the new era of REIWA is not for Japan only but also for the unfolding bright future of today's Africa.

The 38 African missions here in Tokyo decided to start up this movement of grass root dialogue by holding **Ima No Africa** Event and this year it was decided by the same group for this event to be held prior to TICAD7. As you all know TICAD7 will be held in Yokohama City three months later in August.

The mission of this event is to make African countries one of the many successful economic, social, and cultural destinations of Japan i.e. both public and private sector of Japan.

The African Diplomatic Corps took this initiative and decision basically because we believed that:

1. **Ima No Africa** can serve as one of the means to improve and enhance the understanding between Japan and African countries,
2. **Ima No Africa** can serve as one of the important stimulus to conserve and continuously improve TICAD process and activities by public participation,
3. **Ima No Africa** can serve as one of the vehicles for exposing the potential of African countries to Japanese and international investors, and
4. **Ima No Africa** can provide an opportunity to Japanese and Africans from different walks of life: businesses, academia, government leaders, bureaucrats, politicians, artists, media and local folks to conduct one-to-one constructive dialogue of mutual interest.

This idea has definitely got overwhelming support and attraction from both the public and private sector of Japan. The opening of this event today is a true

testimony to the cumulative effect of the goodwill and support that was put to its success by many stakeholders.

Therefore, allow me to cease this opportunity to extend, from the African Diplomatic Corps and myself, to the leadership of Ambassador Maina of Kenya, all the participants, who worked very hard, our deep-felt gratitude and appreciation for steering our collective idea to the point reached today i.e. a successful holding of the 2nd Ima No Africa Event 2019.

In conclusion, let me also take this opportunity to inform and reiterate to the audience present here that the Horn of Africa is building in-house peace by a constructive and active diplomacy of engagement of its leaders and the public towards peace, security, stability, prosperity, and regional cooperation. Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan are on the same page today. I believe that this is a new page that every peace loving nation and people must give their support. It is in the mutual interest to all civilizations. Ima No Africa means Today's Africa, where it is also an event where peace in Africa must be celebrated and championed.

Arigato