

**Opening Remarks made by H.E. ESTIFANOS Afeworki,  
Ambassador of the State of Eritrea and Dean of the African  
Diplomatic Corps (ADC) in Tokyo as a Guest Speaker at the  
Opening Ceremony of the African Festival Yokohama 2015.  
(From Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> of April to Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> of April 2015)**

Dear Mr. Edwin Matey Cofie, Chairman  
African Festival Yokohama Committee

Other members of the Committee,

Excellencies and Dear Colleagues from the Diplomatic Corps

Honorable Guests from Yokohama City

Ladies and gentlemen

My name is Estifanos Afeworki. I am the Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan and current Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps. First of all let me thank the organizers for their kind invitation to make a statement as a Guest Speaker at the opening ceremony of the African Festival Yokohama 2015 which is taking place from 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2015 to Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2015.

Despite the global economic slowdown, growth in Sub-Saharan Africa has remained strong – close to 5% in 2013 and 5.5% in 2015. There are marked activities in trade facilitation and improvement of the business climate in many of the African countries. These developments are definitely influencing the enhancement of intra Africa trade and the growing trade relations with Asian countries especially with Japan. African Festival Yokohama 2015 is a step forward and in the positive direction of fulfilling such objectives.

I am of the opinion, as it was mentioned in the Yokohama TICAD V Action Plan 2013-2017, Japan can significantly contribute into trade and investment by supporting the African countries and in particular by the provision of technical support such as in creating trade information exchange mechanisms, centers and holding of exhibitions both in Japan and Africa. I believe the TICAD process can be a good vehicle through which such efforts can be implemented.

Africa Festival Yokohama, with its eight-year experience of the past and today, can look into ways and means that can be developed into a venue where industrial knowledge of Japan can be diffused and injected into African countries.

Yokohama City and Mayor has been continuously engaged with the African Diplomatic Corps here in Japan and I would like to take this opportunity to express, on this important linkage, our group's and my appreciation and gratitude to Yokohama City of their continued endeavors on this important matter to create business tie-ups with African countries.

Japan Africa Business Forum was held from 10 to 11 June 2014 in Tokyo chaired by Her Excellency Dr. Mohau Pheko, Ambassador of the Republic of South Africa to Japan, where moderators, distinguished keynote speakers, panelists, many from the business and civic leaders of Africa participated. I believe, this forum has provided a great opportunity that has enhanced everyone's knowledge about business opportunities and possible tie-ups between Africa and Japan. African Diplomatic Corps, African Development Bank and the co-organizers: JICA, JETRO and all the supporting organizations: Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Keidanren, Kezai Doyukai, JOGMEC, JBIC, World Bank Group, Africa Society of Japan, UNIDO, UNDP, World Bank Group, Africa Society of Japan, Association of African Economy and Development Japan, Alliance Forum Foundation and Africa Business Promotion Support Network contributed in the deliberations as well as the successful outcome of this meeting.

Therefore, the African Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo believes that recommendations, which the delegates had proposed in this forum, i.e. by both African and Japanese businesses, are worthy subjects for follow up actions by governments and policy makers both in Japan and African countries.

The African Diplomatic Corps and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan are currently looking forward together to TICAD VI, which will be held in Africa, in less than two years time, to include as a main side event of this conference Japan Africa Business Forum. Therefore, we

look forward for Yokohama City to its continued support to such an endeavor and event.

In conclusion let me wish all the best and success to African Festival Yokohama 2015, which will take place from 3<sup>rd</sup> of April 2015 to Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2015 under the theme “Do You Know?”. I also hope that this Festival will contribute in the understanding and development of the bilateral relations of all the countries participating from Africa with Japan.

Thank you