

**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 the Opening of Japan-African Parliamentarians' Dialogue for TICAD VI on 4 - 5 February 2016 Tokyo, Japan:**

**Honorable Yasuao Fukuda,**

Former Prime Minister of Japan, Chair, Asian Population Development Association (APDA) and Honorary Chair, Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JPPF)

**Distinguished participants,**

**Excellencies and Dear Colleagues,**

First of all, I would like to extend my gratitude and thanks to the organizers of the Japan - African Parliamentarians' Dialogue for TICAD VI - for their invitation to participate in this important meeting.

As we are all aware, the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) was established in 1993 as a declaration of Japan's proactive position on development assistance to African nations. So far, the conferences have been held every five years, with the attendance of a wide array of African countries and development partners, including donor countries, international organisations, and civil society organisations. And as it is well known also, Japan - Africa Parliamentary Friendship League was the main engine of all the activities so far accomplished in our continent.

TICAD VI will be held for the very first time in Africa. TICAD VI will take place in Nairobi, Kenya on 27-28 August 2016. It is obvious that the conference will be an extension of the process and agenda of the past five TICADs. More than 6000 people are expected to participate from all walks of life in this conference.

The African context has changed since TICAD was first launched in 1993, likewise Japan's approach to development assistance. These changes have been reflected in the last five conference's content and outcome both directly and indirectly.

Africa is representing the world's highest economic growth arena today. Africa has now entered into an age of investment as opposed to just traditional aid. There is an increasing move towards leveraging aid for greater trade and investment and to supporting small and medium sized enterprises, which are the backbone of African economies. Owing to Africa's strategic location, vast natural resources and market imperatives, and its young population, the continent has attracted growing investments from the BRICs over the past decade. The Forum of China-Africa Cooperation, which replicated TICAD, is now an important event. The TICAD process has successfully worked within the concept of African ownership and international partnership, to collaborate and facilitate dialogue with civil-society organisations, both in African and non-African countries.

Therefore, It is our strong believe as African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo that:

TICAD VI needs to focus on concrete deliverables more than any time now such as promoting the principles of African ownership for the processes contained in the African Union Agenda 2063, aimed to provide decent and productive jobs for the African people by:

1. Promoting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), improving the business environment and supporting economic growth in the continent through trade and investment.
2. It is time for all relevant stakeholders, through the TICAD VI, to clarify Japan's core policy attitudes and agendas towards a peaceful, prosperous & integrated Africa.
3. TICAD, as it stands today, remains a key component of Japan's African policy, hence it must transform and evolve to reflect current priorities of Africa and become more operationally faster in its outcomes both in short and long term.

It is within this context that we the African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo are proposing the consideration of concrete "Implementation Strategy, Modalities and Roadmap" as an outcome document of the TICAD VI; **alongside** the usual Nairobi Declaration, Action Plan; Implementation Matrix, and TICAD Follow-up Mechanism.

### **Distinguished participants,**

The foreign policy speech delivered by Foreign Minister Kishida to the 190th Session of the Diet last week - on January 22, 2016 - has stated clearly that "the public and private sectors will work together to further strengthen Japan's partnership with Africa through TICAD VI, i.e. the first TICAD to be held in Africa."

Your current proactive support to this process is highly appreciated by the African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo and we look forward to your continued active enagment for a successful TICAD VI in Nairobi. This meeting is a testimony and definitely is one of the means, to improve and enhance the engagement and understanding between Japan and Africa/African countries.

The African Diplomatic Corps believe that this dialogue of Japan – African parliamentarians shall definitely serve as one of the important stimulus, to conserve and continuously improve Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD).

Thank you