

Remarks Made by H. E. Mr. ESTIFANOS Afeworki, Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC) On the Reception of the 2nd Japan Africa Business Forum Tokyo July 25, 2017:

Honorable Yoshirō Mori Former Prime Minister of Japan
Honorable ministers and distinguished guests present
Honorable Ichiro Aisawa President, Japan-AU Parliamentary Friendship League
Honorable Hisatake Sugi Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Finance, Japan
Mr. Charles Owusu Boamah Senior Vice President of the African Development Bank Group (AfDB)
Mr. Yasuhiko Yokoi Chairman of the Africa-Japan Relations Committee, Keizai Doyukai Executive Vice President, Toyota Tsusho Corporation
Distinguished participants
Colleagues from the diplomatic corps
Ladies and gentlemen

Good evening,

After the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD - VI) held in Nairobi in 2016 Japan and the African Development Bank (AfDB) have agreed to start up a project called Japan-Africa Energy Initiative with an amount of US\$6 billion. This Initiative will definitely contribute towards African countries critically needed energy demands. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has also signed a JPY34.41 billion (about US\$ 300 million) loan agreement with the African Development Bank under the Enhanced Private Sector Assistance (EPSA) initiative, which is a component of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa. This a clear sign that the pledge made in Nairobi by PM ABE on Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to Africa i.e. US\$ 30 billion pledge and its components are getting fast trucked into the TICAD implementation process of 2016 – 2019. This is indeed a good signal to the strategic business interest of African countries and Japan. It is also a very significant qualitative and quantitative progress from the 1st Japan Africa Business Forum of 2014 to the current 2nd Japan Africa Business of 2017.

These and other initiatives that are being taken bilaterally and multilaterally with African countries by Japan will definitely give additional energy and power to the forum.

Words are good to hear but it is always good to remember: it is only action taken by the private and public sector that will enhance trade and investment and drive infrastructural development, which is key component to the continued efforts of industrial development in our African countries as well as in Japan.

Therefore in my capacity as Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC) and Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan, it is prudent to congratulate and welcome these constructive steps being undertaken by Japan and the AfDB this evening. Announcements made this morning in the opening statement of Honorable Hisatake Sugi Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Finance of Japan have also further confirmed this fact to the forum.

Currently there are 38 African missions in Tokyo. We are ready to serve as a communications bridge. Please use as.

I am happy to see former Prime Minister Mori among us today. He is a great friend of Africa. Thank you Mr. Prime Minister for coming and blessing this important forum with your presence.

Last but not least let me welcome you all to this forum and wish success to the continued deliberation and as the Japanese say:

Yokoso!