

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 Reception to Meet Japanese Ambassadors to African Countries on July 29, 2015.

Mr. Koichoro Matsuura President of the African Society
Mr. Testuro Yano President of the Association of African Economy and Development (AFRECO)
Mr. Norio Maruyama, Director General African Affairs Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mr. Akihiko Tanaka President of Japan International cooperation Agency

Let me first thank you all for giving me this opportunity to make a few remarks on behalf of the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC) and myself on this occasion of the Ambassadorial Annual Conference Reception 2015 hosted by ASJ, AFRECO, MOFA, and JICA.

Excellencies and Dear Colleagues,

The African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo has not much to tell Ambassadors of Japan in African countries except to express our usual deep appreciation and gratitude for the efforts that Your Excellencies are making to enhance and develop the friendly relationships with each of our countries in Africa.

The strength and resilience of the bridge being built to connect Africa with Japan in this important period of the newly unfolding global geo-politics is definitely dependent on the contributions of each of Your Excellencies as well as on the African Ambassadors here in Tokyo.

Having said that let me touch upon on few issues of mutual interest in this meeting.

1. **On Peace and Security:** Japan has not been a military threat to Africa and has no past record of hostilities in our continent's history. How Japan behaves in confronting Africa's potential or emerging weakness is an issue that is of at most importance to us as Africans. As it is well known - the promised land of Africa, as a promising economic market, cannot be built if there is no peace in the continent.

Would the world benefit if Africa and Japan become permanent members of the UNSC? The answer is defiantly, yes of course. Therefore I call upon Japan's diplomats in Africa to work hand in hand with African Union Commission and each of our countries towards this well deserved noble end.

2. **On TICAD VI:** We just had Tokyo African Club (TAC) meeting between MoFA and the African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo before few days. In this meeting we had agreed to enhance our continued engagement towards the successful holding of TICAD VI in Africa (in Nairobi Kenya) for the first time.

This is a new experience in the TICAD process after almost three decades now. Therefore the ADC and myself would like to take this opportunity to call upon all Your Excellencies, Ambassadors of Japan working in our African continent to increase their engagement on the ground to make Africa and African countries one of the many economic, social, cultural and tourism destinations of Japan in the world.

We as African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo believe this this TICAD being held in the African continent is one of the unique opportunities and means, availed to improve and enhance the understanding between Japan and Africa and African countries.

We believe it can be exploited by all diplomatic mission of Japan in Africa as one of the important stimulus to conserve and continuously improve Tokyo International Conference on African Development process and plan of action.

This event can be used as one of the vehicles, for exposing the potential of Africa and African countries to Japanese and international investors, and as one of the venues, to provide opportunities for Japanese and Africans from different walks of life: i.e. businesses, academics, government leaders, bureaucrats, politicians, artists, media and local folks to conduct mutual and beneficial dialogues.

Therefore it is with this in view that we the members of the African Diplomatic Corps here seek Your Excellencies' continued support to spread the benefits of TICAD among all the society members of Japan and Africa and African countries through a sustainable and viable movement of public private partnerships both in Japan and Africa and African countries. We believe it is a good occasion to initiate new ideas to maintain good quality level of activities: i.e. political, economic and cultural exchange program of events between Japan and Africa and African countries.

We are all convinced that Africa and Japan are the land of mutual opportunities in the 21st Century – a mutual opportunity and responsibility that must not be missed.

Thank you,