

Statement by H.E. Mr. ESTIFANOS Afeworki, Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo on the reception hosted by H. E. Mr. Yoshifumi Okamura, Director General, African Affairs Department, MOFA in honor of the participants of TICAD Co-organizers Joint Secretariat Meeting: Tokyo March 8, 2014:

Mr. Jacob Nyoyo, Senior Policy Officer, PMCD, Bureau of Chairperson, AUC

Mr. Gavi Tata, Director, Private Sector Development, Africa Region, World Bank

Mr. Pedro Conceicao, Deputy Regional Director a.i. Chief Economist, Head of the Strategic and Advisory Unit, Regional Bureau for Africa UNDP

Mr. Raul Cabral, Chief of the Coordination, Advocacy, Policy and Programme Development Branch of UNOSAA

Mr. Tuji Moriya, Deputy Director General for Planning and TICAD Process, Africa 1 and 2, African Department

H.E. Mr. Belmiro Jose Malate, Ambassador of the Republic of Mozambique to Japan and Deputy Chair of the TICAD committee in ADC in Tokyo

(Honorable Delegation heads and members)

Your Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen

It is a great honor and privilege for me to extend on behalf of myself and the African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo, to Ambassador Okamura, Director General and Special Advisor to PM of Japan on African Affairs, our profound gratitude and appreciation for the kind reception hosted to honor the heads and delegation members of the TICAD V Co- Organizers Joint Secretariat Meeting Tokyo March 8, 2014.

Allow me to share short remarks on three points seizing this opportune moment:

1) Concerning mutual visits: In the past twenty-one years, since the TICAD process was launched, Japan African countries bilateral ties have grown steadily despite the barriers of geography.

Many mutual missions have traveled to/from Japan and Africa and have exchanged ideas and opinions with heads of states, political leaders, parliamentarians, business leaders, academia, youth, civic, clubs, athletes, cultural exchanges, media leaders and most of all government bodies and bureaucrats during this period. These mutual efforts and continued dialogue have definitely contributed significantly in deepening and strengthening the mutual understanding between Japan and Africa and African countries.

Japan's constructive engagement through the past five TICADs and assistance and support provided across the continent to the development efforts of our countries, in various sectors, was of great significant to this process too.

The recent successful visit of PM Abe to Africa from January 9 – 15, 2014, especially to Mozambique, Ivory Coast and Ethiopia, accompanied by business leaders of Japan, is a fruit of these continued mutual endeavors and a clear demonstration of the successes of TICAD process heading towards a robust future of Japan – Africa partnership.

The input of the co-organizers of the TICAD process namely AUC, World Bank, UNDP, UNOSAA in supporting and facilitating the successful coordination of many successful tie-ups of ODA programs implemented in African countries has also contributed significantly to this process.

Needless to say, these continued **mutual visits** from all sectors to and from Africa are key to the successful implementation of partnership between Japan and Africa and African countries. Hence, it is imperative that the co-organizers of TICAD must encourage and support the enhancement of such activities with a time line in 2014 – 2018.

I am saying this because of the clarity and substance of the working papers of TICAD V so far developed: Yokohama Action Plan, Implementation Matrix and Monitoring Mechanisms clearly testify the road of cooperation between Japan and Africa is on the right direction.

2) Concerning TICAD continued dialogue with AUC, SADC, IGAD, ECOWAS, CEMAC, COMESA and NEPAD:

Africa offers Japan many strategic opportunities. I will not dwell on the details of these in this reception, but I have the honor to briefly state that African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo has been promoting in its collective diplomacy and recognizes the cardinal role that Japan's investment can play in the national development imperatives of our countries and Africa by utilizing and concretely supporting Africa's strategic location, rich resources and fostering the transfer of technologies, know how and SME's development to expand our exports capabilities. Because, Japan's experience is seen by many of us in the continent of Africa, if not all, as a successful example, if not the best example of development, after the 2nd World War, for our countries to emulate.

The presence of the African Union Commission in the 5th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), as a co-organizers of this important process of building friendship and solidarity, has highlighted and underlined, once more, the importance of ownership in the continued dialogue of cooperation between Japan and Africa and African countries.

We can clearly see and say, at this juncture, that the participation of African Union Commission in the current preparation of the implementation matrix has introduced fresh life and input by putting forward and injecting successfully the framework of the needs and requirements of Africa in the TICAD V process

(2013 – 2017).

The African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo applauds African Union Commission for its current achievements in TICAD V and looks forward, to work together, in close coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, here in Tokyo, for further enhancement and development of this strategic relation between Africa and Japan.

The African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo are of a strong opinion that African Union Commission must encourage African countries, the regional organizations in Africa, to take a more proactive dialogue of cooperation with Japan because most of **the programs in TICAD V have regional dimensions and implications**. Please be kindly be informed also our group will make all the necessary effort to coordinate its activities with regional organizations such as SADC, IGAD, ECOWAS, CEMAC and AMU.

I would like to express our gratitude, on behalf of myself and on behalf of the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC) here in Tokyo, for the continued efforts and supports extended through TICAD by all the co-organizers, to **the nation building efforts of our African countries**.

3) Concerning TICAD and public diplomacy: Last but not least, I would seize this opportunity to request and recommend Japan to create and achieve a strong bondage with Africa on sports and culture prior to Tokyo Olympics 2020. Public Diplomacy must be given enough attention – lets shake hands where the heartbeat of Africa and Japan is - sports and culture.

In conclusion, let me thank you all for coming to Tokyo to further support the enhancement of the bilateral relations between Japan and Africa and African countries and for the successful outcome and conclusion of TICAD Co-organizers Joint Secretariat Meeting Tokyo March 14, 2014.

H.E. Mr. Belmiro Jose Malate, Ambassador of the Republic of Mozambique to Japan and Deputy Chair of the TICAD committee in ADC in Tokyo is also here and will take up any query and information exchange you might have during the reception with our group.

Thank you,