

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 Invitation extended by the Africa Society of Japan (ASJ) to Meet with Japanese Ambassadors to Africa during the Ambassadorial Conference hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan on March 29 2018

Ambassador Koichiro Matsuura President of the Africa Society of Japan (ASJ)
Ambassador Takeshi Osuga, Director General of the Foreign Ministry's
African Affairs Department
Ambassador Hiroshi Kato Vice-President of JICA
Ambassador Hisanobu Hasawa Ambassador of Japan to Guinea
Excellencies and Dear Colleagues
Ladies and Gentlemen

Konbanwa!

I am sure you are all exhausted after the long working days and continuous meetings. I will try to be as brief as possible in my remarks. My remark will be limited to the African continent - though Africa, Middle East and Asia (Japan) mutual cooperation --- triangular or direct - is the intertwined mutual constant factor of our friendly relationships - as known to all of us present here this evening.

As we all know, TICAD is anchored on the conviction that Africa's socio---economic transformation is central to global stability and prosperity. To reinforce and augment this process of cooperation - African leaders are taking steps to improve the working systems in the African Union in one hand and on the other hand they are also deeply engaged on a process towards the achievements of an integration of the common markets in Africa - a dream of the African citizens after the decolonization of the continent, which has not been achieved yet.

Just last week on March 21 African Governments met in Kigali Rwanda to discuss and sign three policy instruments that are envisaged to create a single African market. The three instruments establish an African Continental Free Trade Area and the right of Africans to move, work, invest and reside anywhere in the continent.

With a collective population of over 1.2 billion people and GDP of US\$2.6 trillion in Africa, these step taken by African leaderships clearly heralds a very significant future development prospective to all our partners of Africa. It is a challenging step for Africa to take when the rest of the world market is heading into balkanization and not towards integration. Challenges are there but the significant move and effort to create a common market is the only future of todays divided Africa.

It is needless to repeat the priority areas of cooperation outlined in the Nairobi TICAD VI 2016, but I think it is imperative to mention in this reception today the importance of accelerating the process of mutual cooperation between Japan and Africa at this moment of history.

The catalytic role of the African Development Bank (AfDB) to ensure efficiency and a conducive environment for business tie-up with local implementation agencies on the ground - as well as to accelerate the growth of industries, agriculture, livestock, minerals, energy, blue ocean economy etc. - throughout our African countries - is getting significant recognition, support and importance by the TICAD process and the pledges that were made by PM Abe to Africa in TICAD VI.

Hence, the African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo is of the opinion that the AfDB must be one of the co-organizers of TICAD VII in Yokohama 2019. We seek Director General Osuga, Your Excellency's support i.e. especially all the Japanese Ambassadors -who are working very hard in Africa to enhance and strengthen the friendly relationship with each of our countries - in this endeavor too.

Finally, let me be allowed to extend on behalf of colleagues of the diplomatic corps present, myself our gratitude and thanks for the kind invitation extended to us by Mr. Matsuar to attend this reception and would like to take this opportunity also to congratulate Excellencies for the successful conduct of their Annual Meeting of the Japanese Ambassadors in Africa.

Thank you

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Further mention of the Japanese Ambassadors in Africa
opportunities also to congratulate recipients for the successful conduct of their
to us by Mr. Masuyama to attend this reception and would like to take this
could be used to assist our country and thank for the kind invitation extended
Finally let me be allowed to extend on behalf of colleagues of the diplomatic

the friendly relationship with each of our countries - in this endeavor too
Ambassadors who are working very hard in Africa to advance and strengthen
process the best possible way. Your kind and warm support for our country in the international
community will be a great help to us in our efforts to develop our country and to
strengthen our friendly relations with all countries.

TICAD VI
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