

**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 Official Working Visit to Japan of H.E. Mr. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Dr. Grace Mugabe, First Lady of the Republic of Zimbabwe from March 27 to March 31, 2016**

- H.E. Mr. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, President of the Republic of Zimbabwe
- Dr. Grace Mugabe, First Lady of the Republic of Zimbabwe
- Honorable Members of the Delegation
- Excellencies and Dear Colleagues

Allow me first to welcome Your Excellency, First Lady and Honorable members of the delegation, on behalf of the African Diplomatic Corps present and myself, and wish a continued success in what has been achieved by Your official working visit to Japan from 27<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016.

I think there are three big reasons for making Your Excellency's visit to Japan during this period very significant to Zimbabwe as well as to our continent Africa.

The first is the much celebrated sakura (cherry blossom) season, during which virtually everyone takes time out in parks and along riverbanks to indulge in a spot of hanami (flower viewing). We all here sincerely hope that Mr. President, First Lady and all the members of the delegation had a chance to take time from your busy schedule to experience this beautiful spring season in Japan.

The second is, as a great leader of our beloved Africa for half a century, given the current global situation, this is an appropriate timing for joint efforts to be made to promote peace and stability and ensure prosperity in the planet in general and in Africa in particular, especially on the timely necessity to exchange ideas and opinions on the imminent need to reform the United Nations, particularly the UN Security Council by both permanent and non-permanent categories.

The third is, of course, this is an opportune time for both sides to discuss and express their commitments to further cooperate in the political, economic, scientific, technological, cultural and humanitarian spheres to strengthen and enhance the relations and exchanges between the Japan and the Republic of Zimbabwe.

On September 1968, when the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) was given full legal recognition in Rhodesia, we young university students from different countries of Africa, under the leadership of a great son of Ethiopia, Mr. Tilahun Gizaw, held a demonstration against this illegal move by the white minority government of Mr. Ian Smith. During this time we revolted and deplored the core thinking of the colonialists in the Head Quarters of the Organization of African Unity, the Embassy of Great Britain and on the streets of Addis Abeba. There was a serious confrontation with armed forces and our great leader Tilahun was gunned down and assassinated after few months by the Special Branch of the security forces of Ethiopia of that time - which was mainly

controlled by outside forces. Mr. President, please allow me to take this opportunity to remember this great African youth who stood with Rhodesia and its people in their struggle to regain the status of a genuinely independent Zimbabwe - a Zimbabwe that is not a protectorate but a genuine independent nation. That cry for liberty and genuine sovereignty still resonates in the ears of our African youth population until today.

Mr. President, Your Excellency, have proved and demonstrated to the international community i.e. an international community including but not excluding Africa, in the last half a century, that:

- (1) African lopsided relationship (security, diplomatic, political, economic and social) with the superpowers is not sustainable,
- (2) Africa's representation in the decision making of peace and war is imperative for its growth and in its struggle to abolish poverty.
- (3) Subservient role to the big powers can't apply to the reality of the African continent in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- (4) Inclusive security of Africa means a better future to mankind.
- (5) Slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism are outdated and obsolete.
- (6) Many African countries used to export food during the 1960s. The average GDP per capita of African countries was higher than the Asian countries from the 1960s to the mid 1970s. Many African countries are importing food; and GDP per capita of countries in Africa is far lower than in Asia in 2015.
- (7) The current need for the paradigm change in this relationship with rich nations is very obvious.

Mr. President,

38 African countries have diplomatic representation in Tokyo. We are working in a collective diplomacy together to promote the strategic interest of Africa and African countries here in Japan. We are currently in a continues engagements with the co-organizers of TICAD VI to help in structuring the outcome of the coming Nairobi summit to reflect the common Africa position of Agenda 2063, (the first ten-year implementation plan), in order to address and support industrialization, health, water, sanitation and social stability of our continent.

H.E. Air Vice Marshal Titus Mehlisawa Jonatahan ABU BASUTU Ambassador of the Republic of Zimbabwe to Japan proactive and continued support to this endeavor is recognized and highly appreciated by our Group.

Last but not least, let me take this opportunity to ask all members of the African Diplomatic Corps present to briefly greet Mr. President and introduce themselves ....starting from the right side. And to conclude my remark, Mr. President, let me wish Your Excellency and the First Lady long life and good health,

Thank you

March 30, 2016