

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. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana, and his spouse, Mrs. Lordina Dramani Mahama, First Lady of the Republic of Ghana Official Working Visit to Japan (May 17 to 20, 2016) on May 19, 2016:

- H.E. Mr. John Dramani Mahama, President of the Republic of Ghana
- Honorable members of the President's delegation
- H.E. Mr. S.J.K. Parker-Allotey Ambassador of the Republic of Ghana to Japan
- Excellencies and Dear Colleagues of the African Diplomatic Corps present

My name is Estifanos Afeworki. I am the Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC).

Mr. President, Allow me first to welcome Your Excellency and Honorable members of the delegation, on behalf of the African Diplomatic Corps present and myself, and wish success to Your Excellency's official four-day working visit to Japan from May 17 to May 20, 2016.

Thank you so much for making time to meet our African Diplomatic Corps this morning in-spite of Your Excellency's four-day busy and tight official visit schedules.

There are 38 African Embassies here in Tokyo. As Your Excellency know, the group has been engaged in the Tokyo International Cooperation for African Development (TICAD) process - in a collective diplomacy - since its inception.

Our group has traditionally been proactively involved in TICAD and on the preparation of the instruments, which were introduced to improve the process in general, and on the preparation of the Declaration, Action Plan, Implementation Matrix and Follow-up Mechanisms of the past Summits in particular. It has submitted to the Joint Monitoring Group the current evaluation of the Declaration, Yokohama Action Plan, and Implementation Matrix (2013-2017) in 2015.

ADC has also made a call and submitted a proposal in a draft for an implementation strategy, modalities and roadmap to be considered as an additional outcome document, besides those mentioned, to help reflect more clearly the priorities of Africa and to make them more faster operationally. It gives me a great pleasure to express to Your Excellency, the satisfaction of our group in the continued positive and constructive contribution, to this collective efforts of brothers and sisters, by the Republic of Ghana mission here in Tokyo in general and in particular our dear brother and colleague H.E. Mr. S.J.K. Parker- Allotey the Ambassador of the Republic of Ghana to Japan.

In the past two decades, 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 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. I am confident Your Excellency's current official visit shall greatly contribute to these continued process of mutual friendship and cooperation between the Republic of Ghana and Japan.

Mr. President,

The African Diplomatic Group are currently in a continues engagements with all the stakeholders 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 in a more focused manner the industrialization, health, water, sanitation developments and social stability of our countries.

Needless to say, these continued mutual visits and dialogue of our leaders on issues of pivotal interest of development, peace, and security with their counterparts in Japan are key to the successful implementation of partnership between Japan and our African countries. Ghana's growing economic prosperity and historical political system, since the great African leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, has made it more strategic in Africa. Ghana as a member of the Non Aligned States, a founder of the African Union, the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS) and the Group of 24 (G24) has much to offer in the TICAD process.

With this note, let me leave the floor because sisters and brothers would like to listen to Your Excellency's perspective and wisdom on the continued promotion of the strategic importance of Africa - Japan relations. And before that, let me ask brothers and sisters present in this breakfast meeting to introduce themselves one by one and very briefly to Your Excellency.

Thank you,