

Remarks made by H.E. Mr. ESTIFANOS Afeworki, Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps on the Tokyo International Conference on “New Visions of Africa” Sophia University Tokyo May 19th 2018:

H.E. Mr. Giorgio Starace (Ambassador of Italy)
Professor Alberto Quattrucci (Comunita di Saint’Edigio)
Honorable members of the Diet present
Dear participants
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honor for me to address today, on behalf of the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC) and myself as Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan, the Tokyo International Conference on “New Vision of Africa”. Therefore, please allow me also, on the onset of my remark, to express my deep felt gratitude to the invitation extended by the organizers of this conference to share our views and opinions during this occasion.

Many African countries used to export food during the 1960th. The average GDP per capita of African countries was higher than the Asian countries from 1960th to the mid 1970th. Currently many African countries are importing food, and GDP per capita in Africa is lower than in Asia. Developing Asian, Eastern European, ex USSR states, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa have gained importance as recipients of FDI in the past three decades. Africa’s current share in global FDI still remains much lower than it used to be in 1970s and early 1980s – i.e. at less than 5%. In Africa, rising corporate profit particularly in oil, gas and minerals is helping boast FDI flow. Manufacturing activities have not featured predominately during the process.

The super power rivalries and disproportional proxy military interventions in the continent have put-off FDI from serving development strategies of Africa during the cold war. The opportunities lost in strategic partnership between African countries and developed countries are still lingering and as a result clearly not yet in a robust road of recovery and relationships.

Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD) was established by Japan to serve Africa’s long-term development strategy by mobilizing global focused attention in 1993. But shaking geo-political landscape and breakups that ensued following the end of the cold war were not at all conducive to this process. As a result, different multilayered and multipronged global initiatives have engulfed the continent of Africa from all directions. As a result, many policy challenges are currently facing the continent and clearly it is indeed a daunting period for our continent. Hence, we believe that:

1. There is a critical need to enhance the continued improvement of the ongoing co-operation with Africa by targeting integration of the continent,

common market, and the African Union within the framework of the UN and other international organizations - including but not excluding the international agenda of the **UN Reform**. Continued marginalization of Africa from the permanent seat of the UNSC is clearly not beneficial to global peace and prosperity. Africa being the last frontier of globalization, it is important for the continent to be part and parcel of all ways and means of the international efforts to maintain peace, stability and ensure prosperity. It is time to constructively engage Africa in this important endeavor of our planet. This effort shall definitely contribute for the mutual strategic partnerships to grow sustainably between Japan, Europe, Asia, the rest of the world and Africa. It is obviously very clear indeed that the only available means to reach this destination is through the rule of wisdom, science and international law.

2. **Ensuring food security** is one of the top priorities and the only cornerstone for an inclusive sustainable economic growth and poverty eradication in Africa. Improved rangeland management system and appropriate infrastructure must be rolled out on the ground to offset and improve the traditional pastoral system in the continent. Industrial and artisanal fisheries must improve their inputs. Water security must be enhanced. Mitigation programs to counter the climate change impact are a must. FDI can play a decisive role in expanding production – packing – transportation and market access possibilities – without which the infrastructural development of the African countries remains to be only a dream. Trade barriers that curtail African products to reach the developed economies must be targeted by the Tokyo International Conference “New Vision of Africa” to make a record impact in the European Union as well as in Japan. African continent must not export uranium, diamond or gold or other human or natural resources to feed its own people.
3. **FDI** flow serving mutual strategic interest of Europe, Japan based on Africa’s long term development strategy (2050) must get focused attention from international partners and must be equipped appropriately with political will and an institutional base like the African Development Bank (AfDB) and other African national and regional banks to serve the purpose of the construction of the main blood stream of the African economy: i.e. infrastructure, industries, governance, education, research and services, as core areas of cooperation, which will in turn serve the mutual trade and investment opportunities available in the continent and beyond.
4. **Due to various reasons massive displacement of population from Africa to Europe** has been witnessed in the last fifty years. This population is the natural bridge and means for establishing many mutually agreed programs with Europe and Japan. Africa is currently looking forward to learn from the experience and benefit from the Africa Business Education (ABE) Initiative of Japan. But this kind of critical mass of skilled and educated people is already there in Europe. The organizers

of this conference must be cognizant of this potential. Hence the participation of the diaspora population of Africa has a critical role to play in the process of the enhancement and implementation of the FDI flow to the bright future of different economic development zones in the continent.

Last but not least, I am confident that these important event and deliberations will help in constructing new visions and coordination to make Africa one of the economic, social, scientific, technological and cultural destinations of Europe and Japan.

Please be rest assured that the African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo will continue to engage constructively with the organizers and the outcome of this conference. Africa offers location, resources and huge business opportunity ties to Europe and Japan. The question in front of all us now is: can Europe/Italy and Japan join hands with Africa to ensure prosperity and cooperation? Can Japan and Europe/Italy public and private sector participate in the eminent economic boom of Africa through ODA, equity or loan arrangements in the coming decades?

Wishing you all, success in your deliberations.

Thank you again,