

Remarks made by H.E. ESTIFANOS Afeworki, Ambassador of the State of Eritrea and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC) in Tokyo on the Occasion of the Sayonara Luncheon held in Honor of Her Excellency Ms. Beryl Rose SISULU Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of South Africa to Japan on February 14, 2017.

Your Excellency, Ms. Beryl Rose SISULU Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of South Africa to Japan

Your Excellencies and Dear Colleagues,

First of all let me express our gratitude and thanks, on behalf of the African Diplomatic Corps and myself, to our dear sister Ambassador MUTUTI of Zambia for organizing this luncheon at a very short notice,

As you all know, we are here, gathered in this sayonara luncheon today, to honor and bid farewell, our dear sister and colleague, H.E. Ms. Beryl Rose SISULU Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of South Africa to Japan. In diplomacy and related practical livelihood there is time to come and time to go. We are always happy to see in life the birth but sad when it ends. But in diplomacy a departure from a post of a sister or a brother is only momentary. The friendship that we have mutually built together stays where ever we might be assigned next. This is a consolation that diplomats have in their life.

Therefore, today's Sayonara Luncheon organized by the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC), before Your Excellency's departure, and in a very short notice, is just to express and to seize the occasion to thank and express our gratitude for the support Your Excellency gave to our collective diplomacy and friendship shared with all of us here in Tokyo, since April 4, 2017.

We, the African Diplomatic Corps members here in Japan, promise Your Excellency that the vision and aspirations of the founding fathers of free Africa - like Your Excellency's, dear father, SISULU and Mandela - for peace, stability, prosperity, cooperation and unity of the people of Africa shall remain the main pillar of engagements with Japan in our collective diplomacy through the TICAD process.

One of our favorite readings, which shaped the mindset of our generation in Africa, is "Cry, the Beloved Country", a novel written by Alan Paton. Let me take this occasion of the departure of our dear sister SISULU, to remember and read a verse from this book, which I think is still relevant to our beloved continent of Africa in the fast changing global situation:

"Cry, the beloved country, for the unborn child that is the inheritor of our fear. Let him not love the earth too deeply. Let him not laugh too gladly when the water runs through his fingers, nor stand too silent when the setting sun makes red the veld with fire. Let him not be too moved when the birds of his land are singing, nor give too much of his heart to a mountain or valley. For fear will rob him of all if he gives too much."

With this short statement, I would like to call brothers and sisters to raise their glass with me to join for a toast - for the good health - best wishes to South Africa, Ambassador SISULU and Her Excellency's family members.

In conclusion, I would like to ask Ambassador SISULU to kindly come forward and make her farewell remarks and receive ADC's memorabilia.

Kampai!!