

Remarks by H.E. Mr. Estifanos Afeworki Haile Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps at the at the Dinner Meeting for Friends of Sustainable Use of Marine Living Resources held at Iikura House, 21st June 2022

Honorable Mr. Odawara, State Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Excellencies and Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen present,

My name is ESTIFANOS Afeworki. I am the Ambassador of the State of Eritrea and the current Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps here in Tokyo.

Thank you so much Honorable Mr. Odawara for the introduction speech and kind invitation to this traditional Japanese dinner meeting for the friends of sustainable use of marine living resources.

Coming from a coastal country of the Red Sea Coast of Africa and taking this opportunity, let me say a few words on this important subject of our meeting of friends today.

The coastal people in my country have traditional beliefs against cutting trees and the killing of wild animals. According to their belief, cutting the entire canopy of a tree would entail anger and wrath from the heavens, and the killing of wild animals in particular the grazers and browsers, is the direct cause for drought; they believe in 'God gives rain for the sake of wild animals, and if all wild animals are decimated, there will be no rain.' The inhabitants of Dahlak Island also have a cultural approach to conserve the wild endemic Soemmerring's gazelles. Young goats and sheep that are born in the absence of an owner are not marked for ownership. These unmarked goats and sheep remain the property of the community, and are used during public celebrations or in welcoming guests. The inhabitants of this island use this practice as a trade-off to save the endemic Soemmerring's gazelles until today.

Hence, it is not an option for humanity but a historical necessity to work together and cooperate on the central goals and priority areas of our African countries national economic development plans, the African Union Agenda 2063 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 Agenda for a sustainable natural resource management and biodiversity conservation.

Have a nice evening and thank you for the dinner invitation.

'God gives rain for the sake of wild animals, and if all wild animals are decimated, there will be no rain.'

Thank you so much again,