

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Estifanos Afeworki Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps at the Meeting with African Development Bank Group Asia External Representation Office Tokyo April 15, 2021**

- Mr. Takashi HANAJIRI Head Asia External Representation Office, African Development Bank Group
- H.E. Mr. Mohammed Rachad BOUHLAL Chair of Trade and Investment Committee of the African Diplomatic Corp (ADC) Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco
- Excellencies and Dear Colleagues

Good afternoon,

First and foremost, let me express, on behalf of the African Diplomatic Corps and in my capacity as the Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan, our deep-felt appreciation to Mr. Hanajiri, his staff and Ambassador Bouhlal for organizing this kick-off meeting to coordinate and organize the Third Japan Africa Business Forum expected to be held on 29th and 30th of June, 1st, 6th, 7th, and 8th of July this year.

As we all know, raising up efforts of the mutual economic tie-up between African countries and Japan has been targeted in TICAD VII YOKOHAMA held in August 2019. A total pledge of 20 billion USD which was made in this summit by Japan is expected to be realized and implemented into tangible projects in our continent of Africa from 2019 to 2022. Progress and successes of this pledge

shall definitely be gauged by the participation of Japanese companies through loan, equity and shares in investment opportunities availed by our African countries i.e., east, west, central, south and north countries. ODA can be a lubricant but not a replacement to the positive contribution of the banks in the wide investment opportunities that can be undertaken in the different economic sectors that include but not exclude research, extraction, processing, packaging, transportation and market access of the continental wealth of resources both natural and human.

Investing in the African countries is a strategic option for Japan and other developing economies. Allowing Japanese know-how, technology and capital to access the growing market of the African countries is a strategic option for the African countries too. Financial institutions have a great role to build up this partnership into a secured win-win business relationship in a sustainable manner.

Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to assure the African Development Bank the African Diplomatic Corps' commitment and readiness to work hand-in-hand towards a successful holding of the Third Japan Africa Business Forum no matter what COVID-19 challenges might avail for us this year. We look forward to work closely with you,

Thank you