

Opening 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 Third Japan Africa Business Forum 2021 Meeting Tokyo June 29, 2021

- Mr. Toshimitsu FUNAHASHI Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Finance Ministry of Finance of Japan
- Mr. Jun KARUBE Chair of Committee on Sub-Saharan Africa, Keidanren; Chairman of the Board, Toyota Tsusho Corporation, Co-Chair of Japan Business Council for Africa
- Mr. Mutsuo IWAI Chairman, Africa Project Team, Keizai Doyukai; Deputy Chairman of the Board, Japan Tobacco Inc., Co-Chair of Japan Business Council for Africa
- Ms. Bajabulile “SAWAZI” Tshabalala Acting Senior Vice President of the African Development Bank
- Mr. Koji YONETANI Director-General, Ambassador, African Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan
- Excellencies and Dear Colleagues
- Business leaders of Japan
- Ladies and Gentlemen

First and foremost, let me express our deepfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Asia External Representative Office of the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the African Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo for successfully organizing this Third Japan Africa Business Forum 2021.

On behalf of the Africa Diplomatic Corps and in my capacity as Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to

Japan, let me also take this opportunity to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Japan and all the business community participating from Africa, Japan and other Asian countries in this forum for giving their support to this important program aimed at building up a new Africa-Japan economic diplomacy.

Currently Japan ranks seventh in trade, fifth in Overseas Development Assistance and 10th in Foreign Direct Investment in the African continent. The importance of revitalization, enhancement and increasing the participation of Japan in Africa in the area of ODA, equity and shares is obvious and clear to all of us at this period of our common history.

Hence, it is imperative for African countries and Japan to look for ways and means to change these local realities and work together to address the mutual strategic needs and requirements.

I strongly believe that this important forum can be used as a catalyst to facilitate and encourage Japanese companies to extend their business activities in our continent and in each of our countries. A continent endowed with abundant human and natural resources, with its ideal location facing the continents of Europe, Asia and the Americas with a huge future business potential as well as opportunities. Despite progress and success in the past we need to give more substance to the growth strategy that the TICAD process has already embarked on.

Without much ado, let me wish success to this forum and all the participants, especially Colluli Mining Share

Company which is participating in this forum for the first time. This company is the operator of the Colluli Potash Project located in the Danakil region of Eritrea straddling on the coastlands of the Red Sea - which is one of the main trade corridors of the world. It is a re-birth of the same export business to Japan, France and Italy which worked successfully before World War II. The Joint Venture concession consists of a 1.3 billion-ton of resources with a mine-life of 200 years. Investing in food security of Africa, Asia and the rest of the world is key in the continent-wide Japanese investments and to achieve both the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN and Agenda 2063 Goals of the African Union.

COVID-19 threats can be only defeated by a constructive economic diplomacy in all fronts,

Good luck and thank you,