

**Statement Made by Ambassador ESTIFANOS Afeworki, Head of the Delegation of the State of Eritrea, in the Fourth TICAD Ministerial Follow-up Meeting in Marrakech, the Kingdom of Morocco on May 5-6, 2012**

Honorable Ministers,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The strategic importance of Africa and African countries, in terms of location, resources and future volume of businesses, is becoming pivotal to the economies of the G8, G20, BRICS and others. Currently, Africa is becoming slowly but surely a powerful partner to Japan's economy too. Hence, allow me to highlight some of my government's views and beliefs - unambiguously and in brief - in this important meeting where a continued policy dialogue of mutual interest between Japan and Africa is being conducted.

My delegation is of the opinion that the TICAD process must remain focused, engaged, based, inclined on a future perspective of economic and trade agreements between African countries and Japan because African countries including my country Eritrea have yet to claim a developed, robust and direct trading partnership with Japan.

Many African countries used to export food during the 60th. The average GDP per capita of African countries was higher than the Asian countries from 60th to mid 70th. Many are importing food, and GDP per capita of countries in Africa is far lower than in Asia in 2012.

Therefore, my delegation humbly shares with the honorable Participants of this meeting that it is imperative to discuss and note that:

1. TICAD future efforts shall be focused to create a favorable investment climate that will be mutually beneficial for promoting economic and trade relations between Japan and African countries;
2. TICAD's continued mutual intention remains aimed at exerting mutual joint efforts between Japan and Africa to maintain peace, stability, rule of law and ensuring

prosperity in Africa;

3. TICAD V commitment asserts a continued cooperation in the political, economic, educational, scientific, technological, cultural and humanitarian spheres between African countries and Japan; and

4. That Africa and Japan's mutual intention is to cooperate within the framework of the United Nations and other international organizations, to which Japan and African states belong, on the imminent need to reform the United Nations - particularly the UN Security Council - by both permanent and non-permanent categories.

With these notes, let me close my brief statement by saying that Eritrea, since it emerged as independent nation in 1991, has been focused, against-all-odds, on serious self-efforts towards the achievements of several objectives of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. 17percent economic growth was registered in 2011. These are clear testimonies to Eritrea's priorities and success story in the making.

Last but not least, my delegation calls upon all the Participants of this important Meeting to uphold the rule of law and ensure respect for the final & binding arbitral ruling of the Ethiopia-Eritrea Border Commission (EEBC). Because it still remains the most single serious impediment to peace, stability and prosperity of the Horn of Africa region for the last 10 years.

Thank you Kingdom of Morocco for the warm hospitality extended to me and my delegation.