

**Remarks by H.E. Mr. ESTIFANOS Afeworki, Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps in Tokyo on the Sayonara Luncheon hosted by the African Diplomatic Corps on the Departure of Her Excellency Mrs. Salome T. SIJAONA Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Republic of Tanzania on April 24, 2015**

Good afternoon, Excellencies and Dear Colleagues,

Today, brothers and sisters, we are all here gathered in this Sayonara Luncheon to express our sincere appreciation and gratitude to Her Excellency Mrs. Salome T. SIJAONA Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United Republic of Tanzania not only for her great contribution to our collective diplomatic efforts, here in Tokyo, but also for being always a supporting and lovely personal sister, to all of us here, in the last five years since 13<sup>th</sup> April 2010.

Tanzania is an example among the African countries, which has successfully used tourism stimulus to conserve and enhance the natural environment and cultural heritage of Africa and Your Excellency's leadership have demonstrated that to all of us.

Her Excellency's effort to gang up public and private sector efforts to help create Africa, as one of the important destinations for Japan tourism, targeted the travel market and industry. It was a challenging task that the African Diplomatic Corps entrusted to Her Excellency, besides the bilateral needs and requirements between Tanzania and Japan, and other personal challenges she skillfully and patiently managed here in Tokyo during the last five years.

Hawaii, USA/Canada, Europe, Oceania, Micronesia, China, Asia/South Korea are respectively the major destinations of Japanese tourism industry. The number of Japanese departure of tourists to these destinations reaches 1.8 million per month. Travel market trend to Africa is insignificantly small when compared to these global destinations. It is only a few thousands departures from Japan to Africa.

As a chair of the Tourism Committee of the ADC, the task to influence this trend, the so not good performance of African tourism from Japan, in a positive manner was not easy. Therefore, the task given to Her Excellency by the African Diplomatic Corps (ADC) was without any doubt daunting. But Her Excellency's effort to use tourism as an important stimulus to increase the visibility of our continent in Japanese tourism events such as JATA exhibitions and other forums conducted in Tokyo was a success.

Dear sister, on behalf of ADC and myself, let me assure you that we shall continue Your Excellency's valuable efforts, to use tourism as vehicle for exposing the potential of African countries to Japanese investors, because Africa deserves to become one of the biggest tourist destinations of the world in general and Japan in particular. ADC welcomes the inauguration of Ethiopian Airlines and looks

forward to the restart of Egypt Air operations to and from Africa soon. ADC will continue to encourage also Japan Airlines to fly to destinations on Africa. Her Excellency's carrier, in the past, has been marked with many footprints of ground works on developmental issues and economic challenges of Tanzania such as on construction of schools, roads, agriculture, villagization, social work, animal husbandry, cooperatives, community development, planning, land management and many more, including but not excluding: as a Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Land, Housing and Human Settlement, Permanent Secretary of Regional Administration and Local Government, Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlement. Her Excellency's major achievement, among the many during these period, is a survey made of 20,000 plots in Dar es Salaam, aimed at solving the problem of corruption. This project is now used as a model in other towns of Tanzania. We love you Salome for leading that project too.

As we all know, Tanzania is one of the first African independent countries, which paid a heavy sacrifice for the cause of Pan Africanism and the dignity of the black race. Tanzania was a key and one of the Frontline States, which hastened the end of the white rule in South Africa and Rhodesia by pressing for sanctions and assisting the exiled ANC and ZANU. It trained more ANC and ZANU fighters than any other African state during the 27 years that anti-apartheid icon Nelson Mandela was in prison and when Ian Smith took power and announced a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in Rhodesia. Dear Sister, allow me, to say a few words, on my personal history, during this luncheon, on this important issue of Tanzania being the heart beat of Africa. I personally came to know and started following Tanzania's leaders when I read, Life Magazine issue on Tanganyika in 1964, when I was a young boy. Mr. Karume, quoted in this article, saying "for Africa to be truly free the two leaders in Africa: Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia and Prime Minister John Vorster of South Africa must be hanged from the highest tower in Johannesburg." Ten years later, in 1973, I was in prison, standing in the High Court of Ethiopia accused of plotting to overthrow the Emperor. I have to confess to my sister today, the strong message from Tanzania was always ringing in my mind in those ten years. It still is.

Today, Tanzania's governance, agriculture, industry, construction, mining, tourism, banking, transport and social services are successfully growing. Its demographic, linguistic distribution and strategic location are also gaining fast their importance in relation to the neighboring countries peace, stability, prosperity, regional cooperation i.e. Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique as well as the Indian Ocean countries and the rest of the world. ADC and myself wish Tanzania and Your Excellency a very successful voyage on this long odyssey of building a strong nation worthy of its history.

Dear Sister, let me leave the floor because I am sure Excellencies and Dear Colleagues present in this Sayonara Luncheon, would like to hear from you on how you tackled the promotion of the strategic importance of Tanzania and Japan during the last five years too.

Last but not least, let me extend also, on behalf of ADC and myself, To Your Excellency Dear Sister, your best half Mr. Samuel Rashid SIJAONA and the family our best wishes.

Thank you