



Lecture  
On African Union  
Venue: Waseda University, Tokyo  
By H.E. Mr. Estifanos Afeworki, Ambassador of the State  
of Eritrea and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps

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My name is Estifanos Afeworki. I am the Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps.

It is a great honor for me to be present among the President, staffs and students of Waseda University and distinguished guests to celebrate the Africa Day today.

As you all know, we are all gathered here to celebrate the Africa Day and commemorate the founding of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). On May 25, 1963, the founding fathers of African leaders – 32 out of the 34 independent states in our continent came together in Addis Abeba Ethiopia to sign the Charter of OAU. It was on this day that they enshrined in this OAU Charter the inalienable right of all Africans to control: own destiny, freedom, equality, justice and dignity as essential objectives of the legitimate aspirations of their countries and peoples.

These great African leaders, through their vision for the generations to come after them, have attested by their signatures and committed Africa to harness the natural and human resources of the continent for total advancement of the peoples of Africa in all spheres of human endeavors. Did Africa achieve the goals chartered by these great leaders? The answer is a simple No - because of many challenging and head winds the continent faced in the last 45 years and beyond. Currently, the OAU has given way to the African Union, which was established on May 26, 2001, in Addis Abeba, Ethiopia to further improve and better serve the charter of OAU in the given prevailing situations of the continent and our planet.

On the 18th century: Africa was a destination of the Agrarian Revolution of Europe (dark history in Africa because of slavery) – Europe and America's interest was centered in human resources (labor). More than 10 million young people were taken by force from Africa.

On the 19th Century: Africa was a destination of the Industrial Revolution of Europe and was also another dark history in Africa because of colonialism – Europe and America's interest was centered in raw materials,

On 20th Century: Africa was a destination of neo colonialism and independence (African Union has 55 member states currently) – new challenge of nation building centered on universal access emerged in Africa, and

On the 21st Century: Africa became a destination for globalization - many initiatives were introduced to facilitate the transfer of know-how, technology and foreign direct investment from Australia, Asia, America and Europe centered on the needs, requirements and ownership of African countries.

I am not going to dwell on this in detail here, because I am confident that all the people attending this seminar are more knowledgeable on such matters than me. But it is prudent to mention here that many multilateral and bilateral spheres of diplomacy are currently rolling all over our continent i.e.: G8, G20, G70 plus 1, Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) established by Japan since 1993; Africa Partnership Forum established by G8 since 2003; New Asian-African Strategic Partnership established by Non Aligned Movement since 2003; Forum on China-Africa Cooperation established by China since 2000; President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief established by President Bush since 2003; Millennium Challenge Corporation established by Bush since 2004; Africa-EU Strategic Partnership established by EU-AU since 2005; Africa-Turkey Cooperation Summit, established by Turkey since 2008; Korean Initiative for the Development of Africa established by South Korea since 2006; Africa - South America Summit established by Brazil since 2006; Comprehensive Health Care Initiative of Cuba to Africa established by Cuba since 2003; Special Technical Assistance Program for Africa of Pakistan established in 1986; India - Africa Forum, established by India in 2008; Vietnam-Africa International Forum established in 2003, COP on environment and climate change issues and related partnerships, the Djibouti Code of Conduct, NPOs, NGOs and Nuclear Watchdogs are among many phenomenal aspects of global vehicles introduced from all sides of the world to our beloved continent.

Africa offers an ideal location, resources and unlimited business opportunities that are the true vehicle for its integration and unity of purpose. It is obvious that the world community realizes and is cognizant of these as clearly shown in

their policy commitments that I just mentioned a few as example, which demonstrates the upscaled private and public interest of various stakeholders toward Africa at present.

Today, as in the past, the legitimate aspiration of all Africans is to be a partner in regional peace, prosperity, cooperation and integration. The world has accepted that reality and shall work; engage constructively with all Africans towards these ends.

Long life to African Unity and long life also the solidarity and friendship of Japan. This is my message to the youth of Japan and all the stakeholders gathered here today. Pan Africanism is the order of the founding fathers of Africa.

Thank you,