

**Key Note Speech of His Excellency Ambassador Markos Tekle Rike**

**At “Coffee Hour With Ambassador of Ethiopia”**

**Organized by TICAD V NGO Contact Group TICAD V Student**

**Project and the World Bank Tokyo Office**

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Tokyo, Japan

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Today, I am so honored and privileged to attend this event with you as keynote speaker with the title, “Coffee Hour with Ambassador of Ethiopia”. After reading the invitation and the title, one important fact come to my mind: that is Coffee Hour. The name Coffee came from its Ethiopian name called KAFFA. Kaffa is an Ethiopian region where the natural coffee forest was found. Currently, those forest coffee trees are protected for the ecology reason and well managed to harvest wild coffee which is absolutely organic, tasty and available in markets in Japan. Coffee is Ethiopia’s gift to the world!

Ethiopia is a country situated in the North Eastern part of Africa commonly known as the Horn of Africa. It is a country with long history of statehood and ancient civilization which had managed to maintain its independence amid colonial partition of Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The historic victory of Adwa against the invading colonial forces in 1896 had immensely contributed for the spread of black consciousness and pan-African movement across the continent. Due to this fact, Ethiopia is favored by African States to host the then Organization for African Unity and the current African Union. The presence of African Union in Addis Ababa add the grace for our capital city Addis Ababa which is know regarded as the Diplomatic Capital of Africa.

Ethiopia had the Imperial Family which had maintained its root for the millennia which lost its position in the 1970s revolution and which, was eventually hijacked by the Military Junta. After that point, Ethiopia had been locked by the dictatorial military regime for couple of decades stricken with drought, poverty and isolation. However, after the demise of dictatorial military regime in 1991, Ethiopia has become one of stable and peaceful country in Africa with a progressive democratic government devoted for rapid economic development and social transformation registering around 10% average annual GDP growth for the last nine consecutive years. Ethiopia has registered remarkable success in its last two term five years Plans for Accelerated and sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP I and PASDEPII) which resulted in dropping the percentage of poverty per head count from 42%(2005) to 29%(2011) just in the seven years time. Since 2010 the country has launched another five year Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP).

GTP has been prepared on the basis of the experiences gained from PASDEP with clear objectives and targets through wide public participation. GTP is sought to achieve socio-economic transformation and eradicate poverty. Although the agricultural sector will still remain to be the main engine driving economic growth in Ethiopia, the industrial sector is envisaged to grow very fast in the next five years and eventually take a leading role in the economy by the end of the plan period. The Ethiopian government also aims to massively invest in infrastructure to drive fast economic growth and development. It is expanding the telecommunication and road networks and it is worthy to mention in this regard the plan to build more than 5000km railways lines across different parts of the country.

GTP and consecutive development plans are sought to bring back the country's past glory: renaissance. The political and socio-economic progress achieved so far has laid a solid foundation for the realization of Ethiopia's renaissance. The plan has also created a lot of vigor and enthusiasm among the Ethiopian people and with the concerted efforts of the government, the private sector and the public at large, Ethiopia's renaissance will be realized.

Climate change has become the greatest challenge in which African countries are more prone to its adverse consequences. Ethiopia plays a key role in adopting common positions for Africa in international climate change negotiations. Ethiopia's Climate Resilient Green Economy(CRGE) strategy to build a green economy by 2025 is the indicator of Ethiopia's commitment to contribute towards sustainable development and stable global environment. Harnessing more reliable, environmental friendly and clean energy sources such as hydro, geothermal and wind is one of CRGE targets. Launching of the construction of Renaissance Dam on the Nile River which would generate 6000MW is sought to play a key role in transforming Ethiopian industrialization process and integrating the country with its neighbors.

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Since the establishment of our first diplomatic relations in 1933, Ethiopia and Japan have maintained cordial relations which have been both bilateral at the government level and people-to-people relations. And we want this partnership to continue and expand. This important step is an expression of the old relations between the Ethiopian people and the people of Japan. Currently, our relations scaled up with more commercial and economic ties. Besides, Japan is one of the most reliable development partners of Ethiopia in supporting our development endeavor in line with our policy priorities. Currently, KAIZEN and JICA's grass root development activities are impacting millions of people in Ethiopia.

The Ethiopian Association of Japan, Ex-JOVC members, the Mocha Dance group, the Nilo-Ethiopian Association and numerous friends of Ethiopia have been instrumental in promoting people to people relations between the two countries and building Ethiopia's image in Japan. The Ethiopian night, which has become an annual event in which cultural exchanges between the two countries take center stage, was held at the beginning of November last year.

Ethiopia has also benefited from TICAD process, the mutual cooperation between Africa and Japan. Inclusion of Trade and Investment in TICAD IV process is the most promising initiative to promote business ties between Japan and Africa. Japan is the pioneer in initiating the most organized ways of partnerships with Africa through TICAD which encourages mutual engagement and true partnerships. TICAD V is set to be launched in June 2013 and preparation has been under way. We hope that TICAD would yield more successful and fruitful partnerships between Africa and Japan. Ethiopia is preparing itself to successfully host TICAD V Ministerial Preparatory meeting in the beautiful city of Addis Ababa next Month.

TICAD V is a forum for high-level policy dialogue between African leaders and development partners on the three themes, namely "Robust and Sustainable Economy", "Inclusive and Resilient Society" and Peace and Stability". As the proposed pillars of TICAD V witnesses that TICAD V is the real partnership forum with ample inputs from the beneficiary's side. African Ambassadors in Tokyo has contributed in improving the aforementioned thematic areas. Such partnerships contribute for economic growth and development through encouraging more trade and investments. Currently, the continent of Africa is considered as the continent of hope and bright future with more than 5% average economic growth which contradicts the assertion of

western media as hopeless continent just a decade ago. Currently, the leaders of Africa are pushing for more global partnerships appealing for more trade; not for more aid.

However, the aforementioned achievement and progress is not without challenge. Today, poverty and unemployment are posing the challenge on Africa's development and its political stability. And yet Africans firmly believe that more trade and more investment creates more jobs and reduce poverty and eventually contribute for political stability and good governance in Africa.

Amid promising achievements, Ethiopia also faces similar challenges. However, Ethiopia's path to development is not only focusing on Economic growth but also in social transformation. Accordingly, Ethiopia has made significant inroads towards achieving the millennium development goals and it has been singled out as one of the countries in Africa likely to meet those goals. Providing access to health and education for rapidly growing population wasn't easy tasks but we have managed to mobilize domestic and foreign sources to provide sustainable access to health services and education. Currently in Ethiopia, child and mother's mortality rate is declining in a surprising rate.

Finally, dramatic progress in economic development and the aforementioned business environment is currently attracting a large number of foreign investors from around the globe. Ethiopia, which had been known little with its appalling image in the past, is vibrantly changing and transforming. Since 1992, Ethiopia has made considerable progress in economic and social development. This is due to its political and social stability, Macro Economic stability and rapidly growing economy, Excellent climate and fertile soils, pro-investment government, abundant and trainable labor force, strategic location at the cross roads between Africa, the middle east and Asia, lowest crime rates in Africa, simple and transparent investment approval procedures, competitive incentive packages, access to a wide market, its richest histories and traditions on the African continent and its NINE UNESCO's registered world heritage sites. Ethiopia is now becoming an ideal place for trade, investment and tourism. Today, Ethiopia is open for business and opportunities. I invite all interested to do business, to invest and to visit Ethiopia.

I Thank you for your attention!