

**H.E. THE AMBASSADOR'S SPEECH DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 7TH
MIFA FESTIVAL -4th February, 2012**

Your worship the Mayor Mr. Eiji Aoki

The Chief Director of MIFA Ms. Reiko Kato

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen

At the onset, I wish to take this opportunity to convey warm greeting to you all. It is indeed a great honour to say a few words on behalf of all other Diplomatic Missions resident in Meguro city.

Kenya like the rest of the Embassies represented here today is proud to be hosted and associated with Meguro City. We thank the Mayor and his administration for making us feel at home in this beautiful city.

We greatly appreciate the continued cooperation we receive from the office of the Mayor and citizens of Meguro. It is this warm collaboration that endears us to want to explore Japan even further. The manner with which Meguro city has managed to integrate the Diplomatic and Foreign Community in their activities and planning is commendable. In this regard, I wish to salute all the arms of the Meguro city government: The security (police), health, environment, social and welfare divisions to name but a few all play important roles and make life in Meguro most comfortable and enjoyable.

In addition, the “Meguro monthly” magazine keeps us updated on living in Meguro. The regular activities organized by MIFA continue to enhance friendship among us. This is a true reflection of the warm relations we enjoy with our host, Japan.

As we continue to condole with the victims of the great Tohoku disaster and wish for a quick and full recovery of Japan, let me appreciate the regular disaster preparedness drills regularly organized by the Meguro ward. These drills and information shared by the mayor's office have been most educative and informative.

The MIFA festival, an international event intended to enhance friendship among

people from different countries/areas has become a permanent feature in the calendars of the Diplomatic Missions resident in Meguro-ku, Kenya included. The festival helps bring understanding and admiration of our cultural diversity which is essential in our today's multicultural world.

Cultural diversity makes a country and region more interesting to live in. It brings spice and excitement to an otherwise monotonous daily routine. Cultural diversity also makes a country stronger and better able to compete in the new global economy. People from diverse cultures bring language skills, new ways of thinking, and creative solutions to difficult problems and negotiating skills.

In Kenya we have identified culture as a major pillar in our foreign policy orientation. This is intended to ensure that culture contributes to science and technology, and socio-economic development as well as position Kenya as a cultural capital. It is through culture that we are able to reach out to people of all walks of life; young people, to non-elites, to broad audiences with a much reduced language barrier.

As I conclude my remarks, I wish to once again reiterate my confidence on the Meguro city administration. As we sample the cultural diversity of Meguro city, we rededicate our commitment to enhance further our relationships for the mutual benefits of our countries.

THANK YOU.