

AMBASSADOR'S SPEECH DURING THE KENYA TOUR SEMINAR BY TRAVEL SEKAI", 5TH NOVEMBER, 2012

Mr. Izu, Director & General Manager Travel Sekai Co. Ltd;

Ms. Yamamoto, Sales Manager, Gate of Africa;

Ms. Sudo, Mupata International;

Ms. Nagamatsu

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me from the onset take this opportunity to welcome you all to the Kenya Embassy, Tokyo. It is indeed an honor for me to host the Kenya Tour Seminar organized by Travel Sekai Co. Ltd in collaboration with other esteemed tourism stakeholders present today. We are proud to be associated with you and continue to value this relationship. For the potential clients, thank you for showing interest in our beautiful country Kenya, we welcome you to the embassy and Kenya as a whole.

As a tourism destination, Japanese tourists are a very special niche of market for Kenya by virtue of their readiness to spend on value and insights to experience and learn from travels. Today I note with appreciation that the Japanese visitor number to Kenya has gradually recovered over the years with a commendable increase of 16.4% of arrivals from 10, 866 in 2010 to 12, 645 in 2011, and the number is expected to go even higher this year. This increase notwithstanding, the Japanese market is still relatively small compared to other Asian markets, such as China and India which recorded 50,000 and 30,000 arrivals respectively in 2011. I therefore encourage us to cooperate on raising this number.

As a country, the tourism sector is the 2nd largest source of foreign exchange in Kenya after tea, and therefore a major component of the economic pillar, enshrined in our development blue print, Vision 2030. Its aim is to make Kenya a globally competitive and prosperous country with a high quality of life by the year 2030. The importance of tourism in sustaining our economy can therefore not be underestimated.

In a bid to achieve this vision several projects are lined up such as development of resort cities in Diani, Kilifi and Isiolo. Hotels, housing facilities, state of the art sporting facilities, airstrips and good road networks. This also follows into the footsteps of Mupata international; which is the single largest direct private Japanese investment in the Kenyan tourism sector. All these developments are geared towards

offering high-end, diverse and distinctive visitors' experience that few of Kenya's competitors can offer.

Under the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), tourism is one of the components in which Japan and other international actors seek to collaborate in promoting Africa's development and I am encouraged that you have chosen and continue to partner with us in this venture.

At a regional level, member countries of the East African Community have come together and formed a united platform to marketing East Africa as a single tourist destination. This one of the strategies that if implemented will significantly boost East Africa's tourism activities and investments. Additionally, the advent of growing airline connectivity with direct flight services from Japan to Kenya, some such as Qatar and Emirates with daily flights and Korean Air; three times a week, is an encouraging development that we impress upon you to capitalize on.

The security issue could be a factor some of you could be grappling with. I wish to personally assure you that Kenya is a safe destination with a dedicated team of a special police force (Tourist police) and the Government has put in place mechanisms to address any cases of insecurity in its tourist circuits across the country. Related infrastructures are also being improved in order to effectively address the challenges facing the tourist sector. Similarly, the Government is earnest in reinforcing cultural tourism which will immensely expand the tourists' experience.

With those few remarks feel welcome to the home of Safari and discover real adventure. A warm welcome from the heart awaits you from the people of Kenya. Get treated to the spectacular and splendor of the Kenyan boundless wilderness. Have your mind and body rejuvenated by the clean fresh air under blue clear skies. Indulge in the rich Kenya flavors as you get soothed by melodies of birds and waters. Nowhere else could give an experience for a discerning tourist and a deeper understanding for the balance of nature; than, Magical Kenya.

THANK YOU NA KARIBUNI KENYA