

**SPEECH BY H.E. BENSON H.O. OGUTU, AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA ON
THE 49TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF JAMHURI DAY-DECEMBER 12, 2012**

Ambassador Yoshifumi Okamura, Director General for African Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs;

Excellencies;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you all very sincerely for joining us to celebrate this auspicious occasion, marking the 49th Independence Anniversary of our country, Kenya.

As we celebrate this event here in Tokyo, I wish to reflect on our relationship with Japan which has continued on an upward trend, transcending the confines of ODA, to more strategic partnerships. This is evidenced by the recent high level exchange of visits and heightened Japanese involvement in support of the key projects critical to the attainment of our development blueprint; Vision 2030. Some of these commendable undertakings include; the ongoing constructions of major transport infrastructure and partnerships in energy development. One of the leading corporations, Toyota Tsusho has concluded a Memorandum of Understanding with Kenya Vision 2030 Delivery Board on comprehensive collaboration in key priority areas of the Development Blue Print.

Interest by Japan has also been shown in other critical infrastructural projects such as the Lamu Port Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) that aims to transform the export capacity of the entire sub-region.

Also noteworthy is the fact that, this year alone three more major Japanese corporations have opened regional branch offices in Kenya raising the total number of Japanese entities with regional offices in Nairobi to almost forty.

With Regard to Human Resource Development; the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), a model of Japanese Development and cooperation with Sub-Saharan Africa has now been designated the Eastern Africa Center of excellence in Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation under the Pan-African University framework.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The afore-highlighted developments notwithstanding, the scope for improved collaboration between our two countries remains wide in key priority areas. The balance of trade is still skewed in favour of Japan in a stark ratio of 1:15 and therefore the need for a more exponential growth in our trade volumes. Over and above, the Japanese Private Sector Investment in Kenya is still wanting. We therefore call upon prospective Japanese investors to take advantage of the conducive environment for direct investment and joint partnerships. We further want to partner more with Japan in areas

of Research, Science and Technology as this is critical to the attainment of our development goals. It is also our desire to see the establishment of direct flights between Kenya and Japan to facilitate more trade and travel.

Like all African countries, Kenya welcomes Japan's continued commitment to the TICAD Process. We are optimistic that the forthcoming TICAD V scheduled for June, 2013 in Yokohama, will provide a forum to reinvigorate our collective efforts towards achieving more inclusive and sustainable growth on the continent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You may be aware that we will be holding the next General elections in March 2013. I wish to assure you that there are wide range of reforms and measures that have been put in place courtesy of the new constitution to facilitate peaceful and credible electoral process and outcome.

Lastly, I salute all Kenyans resident in Japan for their patriotism and for the positive portrayal of the image of Kenya here in Japan. I urge them to keep flying high, the flag of our motherland.

With those few remarks, I now call upon Ambassador Yoshifumi Okamura, Director General for African Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; to deliver his message.

Thank you