

REMARKS BY H.E. THE AMBASSADOR DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE KENYA TEA SEMINAR ON 22ND FEBRUARY 2012.

- **Mr. Kazunaga Minamidani, Managing Director of Japan Tea Association,**
- **Members of Japan Tea Association,**
- **The Hiraiwa Team and other resource persons**
- **Distinguished guest and participants**
- **Ladies & Gentlemen**

1. I feel greatly honoured to make a few welcoming remarks at the beginning of Kenya Tea seminar. This is an event that has now become a permanent feature in the calendar of the Embassy. Today's seminar is the 52nd in which the Embassy has been involved. As an Embassy we are proud to be associated with the event as well as all other activities of the Japan Tea Association.
2. I am especially grateful to the Japan Tea Association because of the sustained efforts it has made to introduce to the Japanese society, the taste of Kenya's high quality tea. This means that they have given all of us a chance to relax and rejuvenate on a cup of Kenya's tropical highland tea after each day's hard work.
3. Kenyan tea exports to Japan have witnessed a steady growth notwithstanding the current global economic problems. This is good news for our tea farmers back home because higher tea

exports mean that more children will go to school and more families can enjoy improved incomes and better living standards.

4. In the 20 or so years that Kenya has been collaborating with JTA, our tea volumes both Tea bags and leaf tea sales to Japan has risen from just over 500 Kgs. to more than 1.7M Kgs. in 2010, fetching a value of over ¥471M. Our share in Japanese market which was negligible 2 decades ago is currently about 1% for tea bags and almost 10% for leaf tea. These are commendable growth figures. However, more still needs to be done – hence our commitment to be closely associated and actively participating in the JTA Seminars such as this one.
5. We commend the JTA members who are importing tea directly from Kenya. This is largely as a result of the (2) missions that JTA has sent to Kenya in the recent past. Indeed, the missions have provided first hand information of the Kenya's high quality tea including the growing conditions and its processing. We would now like to invite them and others to consider starting value addition venture through joint partnerships such as tea packaging.
6. As you may be aware, Kenya is ranked third in the world in tea production and is a leading tea exporter with a record volume of 342 million Kgs. It has always been our goal to ensure that

Kenya not only produces more tea but also that our product is consistently of highest quality.

7. The people of Kenya have taken advantage of their distinct location and geography combining unique altitudes, climates and soil types in the highlands to produce tea under the most hygienic conditions - free from any chemicals. Kenyans strive to maintain these standards at all times so as to consistently reward our buyers and consumers with high quality tea that goes beyond the required international standards.
8. With those few remarks, I encourage you to strengthen our partnership by buying and drinking more tea from Kenya. Today you have the opportunity to sample and enjoy Kenya's finest tea – a symbol of our hospitality and a unique way to embrace each other as true friends and “partners in progress”.

Karibu Sana! "Any time is tea time"