

## REMARKS BY H.E. THE AMBASSADOR DURING THE JAPAN TEA ASSOCIATION SEMINAR ON 29<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER, 2012

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- **Organizers of the Seminar: (JETRO, Japan Tea Association, Tea Instructors Society of Japan), and Tea Instructors Society of Japan;**
- **Representatives from Malawi and Rwanda Embassies;**
- **Distinguished guests and participants;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. Let me from the onset register my sincere appreciations to JETRO and the Japan Tea Association and Tea Instructors Society of Japan for their relentless efforts in facilitating these kind of Seminars on promoting tea consumption in Japan. I feel greatly honored to be associated with this event and its related programmes.
2. Indeed Kenya attaches significant importance to this nature of events, not least because tea is now Kenya's largest export commodity and leading foreigner exchange earner while an estimated 10% of Kenyans derive their livelihood directly and indirectly from the sector. The sector posted ksh. 109 Billion in foreign exchange in 2011 with Japan contributing 0.7 %. The country is a leading producer and exporter of black tea commanding 21% of all tea exported to the world and ten percent of the global tea production.
3. Over and above, Kenya prides herself as the producer of the best black tea in the world due to the good agronomical and manufacturing practices coupled with the ideal tea growing conditions. The unrivaled distinct high quality is achieved through meticulous leaf collection of top two leaves and the bud. This is followed by skillful manufacture using the Cut, Tear and Curl (CTC) processing. The procedure results into tea that has more infusion giving surfaces, and brews stronger, thicker, brighter, and brisk tea, which ensures maximum cuppage per unit weight. This high quality lends it well to blending and flavouring.

### 4. Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Kenya tea Industry has over the years successfully annulled the commonly believed notion that tea is a plantation crop and cannot be grown and marketed on small scale. On the contrary, a significant estimated 60% of the total tea production in the country is done by small-scale farmers under the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA) Agency. The KTDA agency has achieved the reputation as the most successful small-scale holder tea organization in the world. KTDA teas are currently used as a benchmark for quality tea throughout the industry globally.

5. The farmers in Kenya have taken advantage of their distinct location and Geography combining unique altitudes, climates and soil types in the higlands to produce tea under the most hygienic conditions, free from any chemicals. Kenya strives to maintain these standards at all times to consistently reward our buyers and consumers with high quality tea that goes beyond the required international standards.
6. In this connection, I am encouraged that Kenyan tea exports to Japan continue to witness a steady growth. Japan remains among the top twenty importers of Kenyan tea with an import value of 405 Million Yen in 2011. However, more still needs to be done – hence our commitment to closely collaborate with JETRO and JTA on enlightening the public about Kenyan tea.
7. We commend JTA for having organized and sent two missions to Kenya in 2009 to visit major tea industries and production centers. The mission's information sharing on Kenya's high quality tea has been very instrumental in assisting Kenya tea gain market access in Japan. A development worth noting is that some members of JTA started importing tea directly from Kenya after the mission.
8. I also wish to encourage Japanese prospective investors to take advantage of the attractiveness of Kenya as an investment location and invest in the tea sub-sector. Some of the investment opportunities include: tea plantations and processing particularly in areas of large scale production.
9. Investors are also welcome to explore available opportunities in value addition such as packaging tea into tea bags using environmentally friendly packing material. Flavorings of tea using natural mixtures of spices, herbs and extracts in liquid or granule form is also a key area since there is increasing demand for the product in most of the market segments of specialty teas.

Development of infrastructure in tea growing areas on a public private partnership framework is highly encouraged in order to improve accessibility of these areas.

10. **Lastly, Ladies and Gentlemen,** I wish to assure you that we will continue to sensitize the Japanese population and potential investors on Kenyan quality tea through tea promotion seminars, which we host on regular basis at the Embassy. The events are also a good opportunity for Japanese and other nationals to learn more about the Kenyan culture as we often use the same platform to promote Kenyan culture.
11. It is my believe that we will all endeavour to make Kenyan tea a beverage of choice.

**Thank You**