

**AMBASSADOR'S SPEECH DURING THE MAGICAL KENYA ROAD SHOW, 14TH APRIL, 2014 AT
THE IMPERIAL HOTEL, TOKYO**

☐ **Distinguished Travel Agents and Tour Operators;**

☐ **The Kenya Tourist Board delegation and Tour Operators from Kenya**

☐ **Ladies and gentlemen,**

1. Let me from the onset take this opportunity to welcome you all to the Magical Kenya Road Show here in Tokyo. It is indeed an honor for the Kenya Embassy in collaboration with the Kenya Tourist Board to host this seminar at such a time just before the commencement of the summer bookings. I also take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support and cooperation in promoting Kenya's tourism in Japan. Indeed your support has greatly augmented the Embassy's and the Board's efforts in engaging with the Japanese market.
2. The tourism sector is Kenya's 2nd largest source of foreign exchange after tea, and therefore a major component of the country's economic well being. The Japanese market is considered as one of the key source markets with the potential to boost Kenya's total tourist arrivals to the envisaged 3 million pax by 2017. I note with appreciation that the Japanese visitor numbers to Kenya has gradually recovered over the last four years with a commendable increase of 22.5% of arrivals from over 10, 000 in 2010 to 14, 000 in 2012. This increase notwithstanding, the Japanese market is still relatively small compared to other Asian markets, such as China and India which recorded 66,000 and 38,000 arrivals respectively in 2012. I therefore encourage us to continue cooperating in increasing Kenya's visibility and market share within the Japanese market.
3. The KTB officials will shortly be sharing with you some of the measures being undertaken to stimulate customer demands in Japan. We are also closely working together with the Board in addressing other pertinent issues that are of particular concern to the Japanese travelers such as tourist facilities, infrastructure, and insecurity.
4. With regard to facilities, the Government has several projects lined up such as development of resort cities in Diani, Kilifi and Isiolo besides improving hotels & accommodation facilities, airstrips and road networks in order to effectively enhance tourists' comfort and experience while in Kenya. Similarly, language barrier is another concern that the board is also closely liaising with the Kenyan tour operators in addressing.

5. Security is a major issue that most of you continue to grapple with. Let me assure you that the Government of Kenya has given the matter due attention to ensure safety and security of all tourists within the country. Mechanisms have been put in place to address any cases of insecurity in the tourist circuits across the country with the help of a dedicated team of a special tourist police force.
6. That notwithstanding, I wish to emphasize that incidences of insecurity are usually isolated cases that could happen anywhere in the world. This should therefore not be a reference to refrain tourists from enjoying their holidays in Kenya which ordinarily is a safe and peaceful country.
7. Kenya at large continue to enjoy peace and tranquility, with most of the tourism activities going on unaffected. Indeed, in the recent past, Kenya has successfully hosted a number of high profile tourist events such as: The Africa Hotel Investment Forum (AHIF); Ecotourism & Sustainable Tourism Conference (ESTC 2013); World Travel Awards Africa ceremony; and the Magical Kenya Travel Expo (MKTE) during which Japan was represented by eight tour operators from Tokyo.
8. The country was also selected to host the 2015 Skal International Congress in the city of Mombasa where over 1,200 delegates are expected to attend. This is indeed a strong message by the international tourist community that Kenya is as secure destination as are New York, London, Mumbai, Bali, or any other places in the world where terrorism has reared its ugly head.
9. At a regional level, three member countries of the East African Community i.e Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda have jointly introduced the East Africa tourist visa to ease travel across the three countries. The visa which is already in effect enables tourist to travel around the three participating countries for 90 days without necessarily seeking any other travel document. We encourage you to take advantage of Kenya's strategic location as the most ideal entry point to all the three destinations.
10. With those few remarks, I wish to reiterate that we value your continued support, we are proud to be associated with you, and we indeed consider you our goodwill tourism ambassadors in Japan. The Government of Kenya will continue to cooperate with you in offering high-end, diverse and distinctive visitors' experience that few of Kenya's competitors can offer.

THANK YOU AND KARIBUNI KENYA (Kenya ni Yokoso!)