

# Mexican president's visit

## Mexico-Japan friendship spans 400 years

Felipe Calderon Hinojosa  
PRESIDENT OF MEXICO

My visit to this great country has the purpose of encouraging the construction of an alliance for economic recovery as well as the strengthening of the strategic association between Mexico and Japan. It is equally significant as both countries commemorate relevant events such as the 400th anniversary of the first contacts between the two nations. In addition, this year Mexico celebrates the bicentennial of its independence and the centenary of the Mexican revolution, episodes that established the values and ideals of our nation.

Our ties with Japan go beyond our existence as an independent nation. The first contacts between Mexicans and Japanese date back four centuries ago, to 1609, with the shipwreck of the galleon San Francisco on the shores of Onjuku, Chiba Prefecture, while attempting to make the trip back from Manila, Philippines, to Acapulco, then the main Pacific Ocean port of Mexico (New Spain). During these four centuries the two countries have systematically strengthened their economic, political and cultural ties while forging a solid friend-



President Felipe Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico

ship based on mutual understanding and cooperation. In this regard, I am pleased to act as honorary president of the celebrations of the 400th anniversary of friendship between Mexico and Japan, a distinction also granted to His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince Naruhito.

It is precisely because of the

traditional and close ties with Japan that I want to address the political and economic situation in my country. We have a solid democracy that has been achieved through dialogue and cooperation with the legislative and judicial branches of power, political parties, the state governments, civil society organiza-

tions and other relevant political actors.

The security issue has been a matter of attention. I would like to reaffirm the commitment of my government against criminal organizations. Thanks to the coordinated effort of diverse governmental agencies, we have severely struck criminality. The strategy of my government goes in the right direction and the rule of law has been strengthened.

The global economic recession had a great impact on our economy. However, there are encouraging signs. We are promoting investment in infrastructure, an effort which is being translated into strategic projects that are changing the face of Mexico. We have maintained macroeconomic stability by procuring healthy public finances. This way, the competitiveness of our economy remains solid.

Mexico is a reliable partner for Japan. Since 2005 we have an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) that has increased the two-way trade exchanges. In these years, market access has improved, the supply of goods and services for consumers in the two countries has been diversified, and scale economies have been strengthened. It is noticeable that in 2008 the EPA allowed the two countries to reach trade flows of more than \$20 billion, to the benefit of companies in both countries.

The more than 300 Japanese companies established in Mexico witness the vast potential in traditional sectors such as automotive, electronics and auto parts, as well as in new sectors such as infrastructure, the aerospace industry and clean energy, among others.

Last year, our bilateral economic exchanges decreased due to the contraction of global economic activity and other factors, a trend that indicates

the urgent need to encourage an alliance for economic recovery by expanding trade and investment flows.

Mexico and Japan have a strategic alliance with a global dimension. Both countries have a strong commitment to international peace, security and cooperation. They also have compatible interests in global agenda topics, such as the search for shared solutions to climate change, international economic and financial recovery, disarmament and non-proliferation, among others.

The two countries are members of influential forums such as the G-20, the dialogue between the G-8 and the G-5, the U.N. Security Council (as non-permanent members), the OECD and APEC. We celebrate that Japan will host the 18th APEC Leaders Summit and Mexico will host the 16th Convention of the Parties of the United Nations on Climate Change (COP16). This is an example of the commitment of both countries in finding solutions to regional and global challenges.

During my visit to Japan, I will have the high honor of meeting His Majesty the Emperor Akihito. I will also meet with His Excellency the Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and the members of his Cabinet, with whom I will hold a dialogue on political, economic and cultural topics of mutual interest.

This is the beginning of a new era for the relations between Mexico and Japan. I am sure that dialogue, cooperation and the exchanges between the two countries will be strengthened as a result of this visit. Only through close and sustained work will we be able to overcome the current global challenges and recover the dynamism of our economies for a brighter future for our people.



Port of call: The Mexican Navy training ship Cuauhtemoc called at Onjuku, Chiba Prefecture, in June to celebrate four centuries of friendly ties, which began with the town's fishermen rescuing passengers from a shipwrecked Mexican galleon in 1609. EMBASSY OF MEXICO

## History of Mexico-Japan relations

The first friendly contact between Mexicans and Japanese was due to a shipwreck on the shores of Onjuku, Chiba Prefecture, in 1609. The galleon San Francisco was attempting to make the voyage back from Manila, Philippines, to Acapulco, which was at the time the main Pacific Ocean port of Mexico (then known as New Spain).

Three hundred seventeen survivors, among them Rodrigo de Vivero, former governor of the Philippines, were rescued by the native population, which offered them shelter, hospitality and trust. The ruler of Japan at the time, Tokugawa Ieyasu, provided the survivors with the San Buenaventura ship to return to New Spain one year later, in October 1610. The economic negotiations between Rodrigo de Vivero and Tokugawa Ieyasu were the first attempt to build economic and diplomatic ties between the two nations.

In 1854, the decision of Japan to end its isolationism — a policy that lasted more than 200 years — was received with

interest in Mexico. The same year, Rodrigo de Vivero's memories about his trip to Japan two centuries before were published for the first time in Mexico.

The first official contacts took place in 1874, when a Mexican Commission of astronomers headed by Francisco Diaz Covarrubias visited Japan to observe the transit of the planet Venus with the objective of determining the dimensions of the solar system. The visit would eventually lead to the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1888 with the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Trade and Navigation, which was the first treaty that Japan subscribed with another nation on equal terms. The treaty was a key support for Japan in the renegotiation of unequal treaties held with Western powers. For Mexico, it was the first diplomatic instrument with an Asian country by which it renewed its old bonds with that continent. In the following years, both countries initiated the design of great maritime

communications projects and the expansion of bilateral trade.

After World War II, diplomatic relations were restored in 1952. Then, the priority of both countries was to strengthen their economic exchanges. The trade and financial transactions as well as investment flows between the countries grew significantly in those years while both enjoyed the virtues of economic growth. The bilateral relation registered a qualitative jump in the 1970s, when Mexico became an important oil exporter to Japan.

Although the essence of the bilateral relation was the economic ties, in those years several cultural and academic initiatives were consolidated. Among these, the Cultural Agreement between Mexico and Japan of 1954 and the Agreement on Student Exchange Mexico-Japan of 1971 were the first instruments of their type that Japan signed with a foreign country and the establishment in Mexico City

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

### Overview of Mexican President Calderon's official visit

Mexican President Felipe Calderon and his wife, Margarita Zavala, will pay an official working visit to Japan from Jan. 31 to Feb. 2 to cement Mexico's relations with Japan.

The couple's visit comes at a time when Japan and Mexico are celebrating the 400th anniversary of exchanges between the two countries.

The leaders of Japan and Mexico agreed at the Japan-Mexico summit meeting in 2008 to designate the years 2009 and 2010 as the 400th anniversary of exchange between the two nations.

President Calderon assumes the role of honorary president of the 400th Anniversary of Exchange project on the Mexican side; his Japanese counterpart is Crown Prince Naruhito.

During their stay in Japan, the Mexican president and his wife will make a state call on Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, who will host a court luncheon in honor of the Mexican couple. Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama will also hold a meeting with President Calderon.

#### Provisional Itinerary

Jan. 31 (Sun.) — Arrival at Haneda Airport (Tokyo International Airport)

Feb. 1 (Mon.) — Morning state call on the Emperor and the Empress and afternoon court luncheon at the Imperial Palace; meeting with Prime Minister Hatoyama

Feb. 2 (Tue.) — Departure from Haneda Airport (Tokyo International Airport)

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President of the United Mexican States,

on the Occasion of

His State Visit to Japan

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# Mexican president's visit/world

## Strategic economic ties benefit Pacific partners

President of Mexico Felipe Calderon Hinojosa is in Japan on an official visit, with the aim of strengthening the bilateral relations in the diplomatic, economic, educational and cultural areas.

In recent years, Mexico and Japan have been strengthening their ties in trade and investment thanks to the complementarity of both economies. Without a doubt, one of the most important initiatives has been the implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement in 2005. The Mexico-Japan EPA became the first trade agreement between Japan and a nation from the Americas and it has been a great instrument in opening markets and in the expansion of investments between our countries.

Japan has become Mexico's third-largest trade partner globally and Mexico has consolidated its place as Japan's second-largest trade partner in Latin America. In 2008, trade between our countries reached \$18 billion. Even though last year there was a decline in trade, 2010 represents an opportunity to retake and even surpass our previous trade levels.

Furthermore, Japanese investments in Mexico have tripled in important sectors such as automobiles, electronics, energy, transportation and infrastructure and water treatment systems. These investments, represented by more

### Brief history of bilateral relations

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

of the Liceo Mexicano-Japonés in 1977 for Mexican and Japanese children was an excellent example of cultural exchange promotion since the early ages.

In recent years, the economic relations have increased even more. In September 2004, Mexico and Japan signed the Economic Partnership Agreement and since its entry into force in April 2005, the two-way trade has expanded rapidly, to the degree that today Mexico is one of the main commercial partners of Japan in Latin America and the main market for its exports to this region.

During these years, the leaders of the two countries have exchanged visits. Various members of the Imperial Family as well as prime ministers of Japan have visited Mexico and since 1962 eight Mexican presidents have visited Japan. The bilateral political relations are solid and prosper-



Friendly counterparts: Mexican President Felipe Calderon Hinojosa and Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama meet Nov. 14 before their talks on the sidelines of a summit in Singapore. KYODO

ous. The two governments have consolidated a strategic association to address diverse global challenges.

We also have common objectives in the bilateral and multilateral agenda such as finding shared solutions to the international financial crisis and global warming, among others. Besides, we have important coincidences within the framework of influential multilateral forums such as the G-20, the dialogue between the G-8 and the G-5, the OECD, APEC and the U.N. Security Council, in which both countries actively participate as nonpermanent members.

Four centuries ago, the two nations' first encounter was by the chance of destiny. Today we have solid institutional relations and our people know each other. It is evident that the construction of ties between Mexicans and Japanese has been a permanent, successful and fruitful endeavor.

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than 300 companies doing business in Mexico have targeted the increase in domestic market consumption, one of the fastest growing in the world, as well as the North American market given that Mexico is a member of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

Mexico has comparatively large advantages for global investment, such as macroeconomic stability, a strategic geographical location, a vast network of commercial treaties and agreements, a highly qualified labor force and enormous natural wealth. The administration of President Calderon has sought to take advantage of these assets in order to increase the competitiveness of the Mexican economy and achieve a more dynamic growth.

In order to achieve these goals, important structural reforms have been promoted. For instance, reform of the judiciary system has been implemented to make it more transparent and efficient as well as to provide more certainty for investments. Furthermore, two fiscal reforms have been approved that have allowed the increase of public revenues and the upgrading of the efficiency and transparency of government spending. Together with reform of the pension system, they have given more strength to public finances. Mexico achieved reform in the oil industry to attract investment and the

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technology for drilling and exploration of new oil fields.

The launch of the National Infrastructure Program is the most ambitious program in Mexico's history. This year, total investment in infrastructure will reach \$50 billion, which represents a larger number of and more efficient ports, airports, roads and other significant works that are transforming Mexico into a key logistics center for the flow of trade between North America and the rest of the world.

It is worth mentioning that President Calderon has recently announced new reforms in key areas of the economy such as the labor market, the telecommunications industry, the energy sector and competition and economic regulation.

Without a doubt, all these transformations make Mexico one of the world's most attractive destinations for investment nowadays. This has been confirmed by Japanese companies based in Mexico and taking advantage of the great opportunities that Mexico offers.

The visit of President Calderon to Japan seeks to promote new investments in areas with great potential. Japan can find an ally in Mexico and find complementarity in the information technology sector. Japan can also increase its presence in the automobile and aerospace industries, which have been growing rapidly in the last few years and offer great advantages to investors.

Without a doubt, the visit of President Calderon to Japan and the meeting he will hold with Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama and the Japanese business and financial community will contribute to the further expansion of investment and trade opportunities on the bilateral agenda. Furthermore, Mexico and Japan are today two strategic partners looking toward the future with trust and optimism.

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## Mexico prepares great celebrations for tourists

In light of the challenges that world economies are currently facing, an increasingly large number of countries recognize the relevance of tourism and cultural promotion not only as creators of jobs, revenues and cooperation among nations but also to promote friendship and solidarity based on mutual understanding and respect.

For Mexico, tourism is an economic pillar and a source of employment and investment, receiving more than 21

million tourists every year (the 10th highest in the world). In 2008, more than 100,000 Japanese tourists visited Mexico.

To promote tourism to Mexico, from March 2010 our country will increase from two to three the weekly direct flights to Japan. Flights departing from Tokyo to Mexico City have no stopovers. Since November 2006, Mexico has enjoyed two direct flights a week to and from Japan. This new measure will increase the opportunities for our Japanese

friends to know the beauty of our beaches, the diversity of our natural areas, our great cultural and historical heritage and our world-class infrastructure.

Mexico has 29 UNESCO World Heritage sites (sixth in the world), 25 of them cultural and four natural. There are also more than 140,000 archaeological sites and historical buildings recognized by the National Institute for History and Anthropology (INAH).

Japanese visitors will also

notice that Mexico is an important cultural center for several artists from all over the world. A large range of art festivals throughout the country make Mexico an attractive destination for art lovers around the world. Particularly, this year marks the 200th anniversary of the Independence of Mexico and the 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution. We invite our Japanese friends to be part of this great celebration that will give renewed strength to our national pride.

The 400th anniversary of the friendly relations between Mexico and Japan has given the bilateral relationship a new dimension, with a great number of activities. An example of this is "A Testimony of the 400th Anniversary of Mexico-Japan Relations: The Dream of Friendship Carried by the Galleons," a historical exhibition composed of 90 artworks, documents and representative pieces of the bilateral relationship since the 17th century that is presented at the Tobacco and Salt Museum in Tokyo until Feb. 28. Without a doubt, this important exhibition will encourage many Japanese to know more about Mexico. We welcome all visitors with open arms.

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Relic of the past: El Castillo, or the pyramid of Kukulcan, built by the Maya, stands in the ancient city of Chichen-Itza, one of Mexico's 29 World Heritage sites. EMBASSY OF MEXICO

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