

Mexico independence day

Continuing to move Mexico-Japan relations forward

Claude Heller
AMBASSADOR OF MEXICO

It is a special honor to address the readers of The Japan Times on the occasion of the 203rd anniversary of the independence of Mexico and to convey sincere greetings, on behalf of the government and people of Mexico, to His Imperial Majesty Emperor Akihito, the Imperial family, and the government and people of Japan.

At the time of this new anniversary of its independence, Mexico is implementing the necessary policies to assure its dynamic transformation. In his inaugural address, on Dec. 1, 2012, President Enrique Peña Nieto pledged to lead the country to achieve concrete results that will benefit all Mexicans and to move Mexico forward.

Since President Peña Nieto took office, the country has un-

dergone a series of structural reforms. Through the agreements reached under the Pact for Mexico by the main political forces represented in Congress and the scope of this transformative effort, global expectations for Mexico are running high. The current reform drive includes key sectors such as telecoms, labor and public education, energy and tax system. These reforms, together with the consolidation of democratic institutions, are reinforcing Mexico as a relevant and dynamic player in the world economy.

Mexico is one of the most competitive countries for productive investment due to its macroeconomic and political stability, low inflation and public debt, size and strength of its domestic market, economic growth rate and capacity to produce advanced manufacturing (high-tech products).

Annually, Mexico trades \$700 billion in goods and services, and is Latin America's leading exporter, accounting for 35 per-

cent of the region's total trade. It is an open economy that guarantees access to international markets through a network of free trade agreements, which grants preferential access to 45 countries (almost 1.2 billion people). The country boasts a strategic geographic location and competitive costs to service global markets. It also has an important pool of young and highly skilled human capital. Mexico is also a good place to invest, since it provides a safe and trustworthy environment for foreign capitals. The commitment of the government of Mexico to promote reforms that foster the country's economic outlook certainly offers countless opportunities.

Mexico is also building a modern and world-class infrastructure to enhance its competitiveness. During 2013-2018, \$100 billion will be invested by the Mexican government in this field. This important investment is outlined in the Transport and Communications Infrastructure

Investment Program 2013-2018 that was announced last July. Forty-five percent of this investment will be used to modernize and upgrade transport infrastructure, while 55 percent will be used for telecommunications.

We are determined to strengthen Mexico's presence in the international scene by enhancing our international cooperation and promoting Mexico's value as a responsible global actor. As a member of the G20 Troika, Mexico has contributed to the dialogue on the economic and financial challenges that the world still faces. In June, Mexico was also invited to participate in a dialogue during the G8 Summit that took place in Great Britain. Mexico also has a pacifist tradition that has been reflected both in our regional policy and at international forums, and shares the aims and principles of the UN. It has belonged to all the mechanisms that have been created at the UN to promote disarmament,

particularly nuclear disarmament. Among other initiatives, Mexico launched the so-called Tlatelolco Treaty that established the first nuclear-free zone in the world. In February 2014, Mexico will organize a follow-up conference to further broaden and deepen the understanding on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, and the resolve of the international community to address this issue.

Mexico will continue to work to ensure the dynamism and competitiveness of North America. At the same time, we are aware that the Asia-Pacific region is now a global engine of growth. During the last months Mexico has consolidated its participation in the Pacific Alliance with Chile, Colombia and Peru, a space of integration in Latin America that wants to strengthen economic links and cooperation between its members and other countries in the Asia-Pacific, and joined the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations.

Mexico believes Japan is a key partner in the Asia-Pacific region. In April President Peña Nieto met Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. It was his first official visit to an Asian country since the inauguration of Mexico's new government. This fact highlighted the importance that both countries attach to their exchanges. It was also an opportunity for them to showcase their political will to deepen an already strong and diversified relation, and take it to a new level of engagement and



Strengthening ties: Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto shakes hands with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on April 8 in Tokyo during his official visit to Japan. PRESIDENCY OF MEXICO

Japanese businesses keen to deepen, expand bilateral economic relations

Itaru Koeda
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-MEXICO ECONOMIC
COMMITTEE, KEIDANREN

On behalf of the Japan-Mexico Economic Committee of Keidanren (Japan Business Federation), I would like to congratulate Mexico on the occasion of the anniversary of its independence and express

my best wishes for the health and prosperity of the people of the United Mexican States.

President Enrique Peña Nieto made his first-ever visit to Japan in April this year. At that time, Keidanren was honored to be able to contribute to the deepening of ties between our two nations by jointly holding the 30th Japan-Mexico

Businessmen's Joint Committee Meeting with the Mexican Business Council for Foreign Trade, Investment and Technology (COMCE) and by hosting a luncheon to welcome the Mexican president. During a summit meeting with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe held the day before the luncheon with Keidanren, President Peña Nieto readily expressed his support for Japan's participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations. The Japanese business community deeply appreciates the president's statement, which has given a significant boost to Japan's participation in the negotiations thereafter.

Following the entry into force of the Japan-Mexico Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) in 2005, our economic ties have seen tremendous success as trade between our two countries has increased dramatically and Japanese

companies have entered the Mexican market one after another. The Japanese business community will continue to endeavor to deepen and expand bilateral economic relations by actively utilizing the EPA. Above and beyond bilateral relations, Japan and Mexico should further bolster their collaboration serving as the bonds that link Asia and Latin America, as President Peña Nieto said in his message at the luncheon. I believe the two countries should work together for the stabilization of the global economy and the enhancement of its growth, by the prompt conclusion of the TPP and other efforts.

In closing, I would like to express my sincere hope that, based on the friendly relations between Japan and Mexico, our two countries will enjoy further prosperity and make contributions to peace and development throughout the world.

Four centuries of friendly relations

Hirofumi Nakasone
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-MEXICO
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP
FEDERATION

On behalf of the Japan-Mexico Parliamentary Friendship Federation, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of Mexico on the 203rd anniversary of Mexico's independence.

Japan and Mexico enjoy more than 400 years of long, friendly relations. The year 2013 and 2014 mark the 400-year anniversary of the Hasekura Mission, which was sent by Date Masamune, lord of a domain centered on Sendai, to Mexico, Spain, and Rome in hopes of forging trade links. In this connection, I would like to add that it was my great honor to receive the Order of the Aztec Eagle in April in Tokyo directly from H.E. President Enrique Peña Nieto at this memorial period. With the history, I expect that the exchange and friendship between the people of our two countries will be strengthened further.

It is my pleasure to note that the relationship has become even more matured, particularly in the last decade. In 2003,

the two leaders of both countries characterized each other as strategic partner, for both countries, as major economies, had been working together on various issues of common concern. Now Mexico and Japan, also working closely within the Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation (OECD) as well as the Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy (G20), consider each other strategic global partners. In 2004, Japan and Mexico signed an economic partnership agreement (EPA), which took effect in 2005. Since then, the bilateral economic relationships are expanding at a rapid pace. The volume of bilateral trade has increased by 72 percent from 2004, and the number of Japanese companies in Mexico has reached 550, an increase of more than a hundred from 2010.

The high-level visits are also active. This April, we had the pleasure of welcoming H.E. President Peña Nieto to Japan. Prime Minister Abe and President Peña Nieto held a very fruitful summit meeting and issued a joint statement that reaffirmed the significance of their global strategic partnership.

A few weeks later, Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida visited Mexico and exchanged views with Foreign Secretary José



Long-lasting relationship: The official logo of the Japan-Mexico Friendship Year in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the Tsunenaga Hasekura Mission. EMBASSY OF MEXICO

Antonio Meade on bilateral, regional and global issues. I had the honor of meeting with the president of the Senate, the secretary of foreign affairs and the secretary of agriculture, livestock, rural development, fisheries, and food as well as the president and the members of the Asia-Pacific Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate when I visited Mexico in early April as a Japanese delegate to the fourth Forum of Speakers of the G20. The Japan-Mexico relationship has been strength-

ened in wide-ranging areas at all levels.

I would like, on this auspicious day, to renew my wish that the excellent Japan-Mexico relationship that has been enjoyed by our two peoples will be further reinforced in the years to come and that the two great nations will contribute to the peace and prosperity of the international community. I will do my utmost on my part as president of the Japan-Mexico Parliamentary Friendship Federation to this end.

Congratulations to Mexico!
Celebrating its
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Mexico independence day



Capital: Mexico City is a symbol of the country's recent, rapid economic growth. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MEXICO

Deepening our partnership

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cooperation in all the fields.

During their conversation, both leaders reaffirmed the significance of the Mexico-Japan bilateral relationship and expressed their interest in strengthening it to take advantage of its potential as there is still plenty of room for growth. They also confirmed their commitment to international peace and security, and that both countries share common values such as democracy, human rights, the rule of law, human security and development, and free and open markets.

They designated the years 2013-2014 as the Japan-Mexico Friendship Year in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the Tsunenaga Hasekura Mission. This celebration will serve as a catalyst for further strengthening of the bonds and mutual understanding at all levels and sectors of society, including in the realms of culture, academia, education, science and technology and tourism.

President Peña Nieto also extended an invitation to Prime Minister Abe to visit Mexico in order to further deepen our global strategic partnership.

Bilateral trade continues expanding notably thanks to the economic partnership agreement (EPA) that took effect eight

years ago and that has proved to be a successful tool to increase our economic exchanges. As a result, bilateral trade set a new record of \$22 billion in 2012. During the first semester of 2013, it already reached \$10.8 billion. Investment continues growing accordingly in sectors such as automotive and auto parts, electronics, metallurgical, machinery, agribusiness, food processing and high technology manufacturing. Deepening cooperation by intensifying the bilateral dialogue within the framework of the EPA and other trade mechanisms where Mexico and Japan converge is also feasible and advantageous.

In this regard, Mexico welcomed Japan's interest to join the TPP. This initiative could represent an opportunity for both countries to expand business ties and promote joint production and export processes toward our trading partners.

The recent beginning of two new administrations in Mexico and Japan has opened an opportunity to write a new chapter in our bilateral relations. Both governments are committed to moving their countries forward and are opening new opportunities to intensify their bilateral exchanges on a common ground under an excellent conjuncture for Mexico and Japan.



Natural wonder: Located in northwestern Mexico, El Pinacate and Gran Desierto de Altar Biosphere Reserve is known for its unique physical and biological characteristics through the presence of a volcano shield and is designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site this year. PRESIDENCY OF MEXICO

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