

Mexico national day

Expanding cooperation in beneficial relationship

Carlos Almada
AMBASSADOR OF MEXICO

United by the Pacific Ocean, Mexico and Japan share a long history of friendship and mutual trust that goes back more than four centuries. Besides trade and investment, our vibrant exchanges include active parliamentary dialogue, substantial scientific, technological and educational cooperation, as well as fluid contacts between local governments and at an individual level. At the same time, we recognize each other as strategic partners that share common interests and values, such as democracy, human rights, respect for the rule of law and the promotion of free trade.

Frequent meetings between our leaders and at all government levels have led to an unprecedented bilateral and multilateral dialogue on a

wide range of issues, including climate change, and nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation. There is also a full convergence between the administrations of the two countries – both of them sharing a reformist approach – that was highlighted by the official visit by President Enrique Peña Nieto to Japan in April 2013 and that of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Mexico in July 2014, when they discussed ways to deepen even more the cooperation between our countries and pledged to work for the construction of a mutually beneficial relationship. At the parliamentary level, the visit made this year to Japan by Sen. Miguel Barbosa Huerta, president of the Mexican Senate, is another sign of the excellent state of our political exchanges.

In the economic arena, Japan is Mexico's leading trade partner in Asia. We share an economic partnership agreement (EPA), which came into effect 10 years ago, in 2005. And

although there is a lot of potential for bilateral investment and trade growth, it is clear by now the positive impact it has had on the bilateral relationship. For instance, Japan has become the second destination for Mexico's exports of agricultural and related food products (including fish and seafood). Another example, and perhaps the best one, is the excellent complementarity developed between both nations in the industrial sector, especially in the automotive, electronics and electrical industries. The synergy generated between both countries has increasingly made Japanese companies consider Mexico as the ideal place for their plants due to its high competitiveness, which has generated a skilled workforce, job creation and economic growth.

Bilateral trade increased 71 percent between 2004 and 2014, and Mexico is now the leading exporter of manufactured products in Latin America due, in huge part, to this



Above: Mexico has become one of the best places in the world to manufacture cars. Right: Aerospace is an emerging Mexican industry, with almost 300 companies operating in the country. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MEXICO

symbiosis between Japanese technology and the Mexican workforce. Another positive impact of the EPA is the reception of foreign direct investment, which has made Japan our primary FDI source in the Asia-Pacific region. Japanese investment is welcomed by the Mexican people for its positive effects in regional development, job creation and exports.

Mexico and Japan enjoy strong cooperation in other areas as well. Just to name a few examples, we can mention the signing last year of 14 agreements of cooperation in different sectors, such as the oil industry, education, health and agriculture; the growth of the Japanese population in Mexico, especially in the Bajío region, as a result of Japanese investments in our country; the celebration of the first two Mexico-Japan Rectors Summits in 2011 and 2014, and the des-

ignation of Japan as the guest of honor of the International Cervantino Festival in 2014.

Relations between Mexico and Japan have developed a new dynamic and a strategic meaning. Both countries are closer than ever, ready to continue seizing the opportunities

and expanding the potential that our intense exchanges offer in all fields. As ambassador of Mexico to Japan, I pledge to do my best so our links grow stronger, and people from both countries continue to reap the benefits of this old and friendly relationship.



Mexico attracts tourists from around the world with its beautiful beaches, colonial old towns and archaeological sites. MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MEXICO

Working to grow cultural, economic bonds

Hirofumi Nakasone
PRESIDENT, JAPAN-MEXICO
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP
FEDERATION

On the auspicious occasion of the 205th anniversary of Mexico's independence, it gives me great pleasure to convey on behalf of the Japan-Mexico Parliamentary Friendship Federation my heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of Mexico.

Mexico is a friendly nation that has a more than four-century history of relations with Japan, and the two countries share common values, including freedom, democracy and the rule of law. We also cooperate to tackle challenges facing the international community, including disarmament, nuclear nonproliferation and climate change.

From 2013 to 2014, the two countries actively celebrated the Japan-Mexico Friendship Year to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Hasekura Mission, a delegation sent by Date Masamune,

feudal lord of the Sendai region. During the festivities, the government leaders of both nations visited each other's country, and last October, the Festival Internacional Cervantino, the largest cultural festival in Latin America, was attended by Their Imperial Highnesses Prince and Princess Akishino. I firmly believe that the mutual understanding of Japanese and Mexican peoples has deepened through this friendship year.

Also, the parliamentarians of both countries are actively conducting exchanges. I have visited Mexico numerous times since my first visit in 1975. After becoming the president of the Japan-Mexico Parliamentary Friendship Federation, I traveled there four times. During my visit in January, I met the figures of the Mexican government and political parties to deepen our cooperative relations. In July, President of the Mexican Senate Miguel Barbosa Huerta visited Japan at the invitation of the House of Councilors. It is most gratifying that the two countries maintain frequent high-level dialogue.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the Japan-Mexico

economic partnership agreement. The success of this pioneering EPA remarkably expanded trade and investment, thus developing bilateral economic relations. Especially in recent years, Japanese companies, including automotive-related firms, have been accelerating investment in Mexico. The number of Japanese companies doing business in Mexico reached 814 in 2014, more than doubling over the past five years. In the future, there will be increased demand for infrastructure such as road and port improvement with the expansion of automobile production in Mexico, and it is expected that Japanese companies with technological strength will

take part in such infrastructure projects.

In January next year, a Japanese consulate general is slated to open in Leon in Guanajuato state. I hope the new consulate general will become instrumental in promoting exchanges between the two countries in various areas, such as politics, economy, academic studies and culture.

As president of the Japan-Mexico Parliamentary Friendship Federation, I am determined to help further promote friendship between Japan and Mexico, and strengthen the bilateral relations in which we can "progresar, liderar e inspirar juntos (develop, lead and inspire each other)."

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Congratulations on the Independence Day of Mexico

Yoshikazu Morita
Yoshikazu Morita

Kyoto University of Foreign Studies
Chancellor and Chair of the Board of Governors
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