

## Japan – Panama Joint Press Statement

March 3, 2014

1. H.E. Mr. Álvarez De Soto, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama visited Japan from March 2 to 4, 2014, at the invitation of the Government of Japan. Minister Álvarez De Soto held a meeting with H.E. Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan on March 3.
2. Recalling the Memorandum on Political Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama signed in October 2012, the meeting was held as a bilateral political consultation in which both sides promoted bilateral relations and discussed a wide range of issues, including regional and international issues of mutual interest.
3. Recalling that the year 2014 commemorates the 110th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Panama and the 100th anniversary of the opening of the Panama Canal, the two Ministers confirmed the significance of holding a bilateral Foreign Ministers' meeting on this memorial occasion. Both sides also expressed satisfaction over the continued high-level visits, following President Martinelli's visit to Japan in October 2012 and Foreign Minister Kishida's visit to Panama in May 2013.
4. The Ministers shared the understanding that adherence to universally acknowledged principles of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, is indispensable for the peace and prosperity of the international community. Acknowledging the active cooperation in maritime affairs, both sides affirmed their will to further develop their cooperative relationship, including through the International Maritime Organization. The two Ministers shared the view that Japan and Panama will continue active discussions on the issues of toll structure and on the progress of the Panama Canal expansion project, which are of great interest for Japanese industries.
5. Minister Kishida praised Panama's stable economic development in recent years and its energetic endeavors to enhance its business environment. Minister Kishida expressed hope that measures conducive to further attract Japanese firms into Panama will be strengthened. Minister Álvarez De Soto emphasized that the World Economic Forum on Latin America will be held in Panama City from April 1 to 3, the first of this kind to be held in

Panama, and hopes active participation from Japan. Minister Kishida welcomed such initiative and wished for the success of the Forum.

6. Minister Álvarez De Soto shared Panama's international trade integration agenda over the last 5 years and emphasized Panama's interest to increase its trade ties with the Asian region. Minister Kishida recognized Panama's achievements in matters of international trade and current regional integration progress through SICA and the Pacific Alliance. The two Ministers shared the view that there is ample space for their governments to work for fostering bilateral trade.
7. With regards to the "Panama City Urban Transportation Line-3 Project", Minister Álvarez De Soto expressed that the Government of Panama considers that a monorail system together with a bridge that passes over the Panama Canal, such as an arch-type bridge suggested by the Japanese Government in the feasibility study as the optimal option, are necessary for the Line-3 project, with the understanding that the two governments will have further discussions over the bridge type in order to make a final decision at the earliest possible time. In this regard, Minister Álvarez De Soto expressed Government of Panama's desire that the above-mentioned project be financed by a yen loan (Japanese ODA Loan). Minister Kishida responded that the Government of Japan is willing to give a positive consideration to provide a yen loan for the project.
8. Minister Álvarez De Soto expressed his congratulations for the 60th Anniversary of the Official Development Assistance Program of Japan from which Panama also has benefited, and appreciated Japan's continued efforts in supporting development worldwide.
9. The two Ministers welcomed the fact that the "Framework on the Exchange of Financial Information on Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing" is expected to be signed shortly between the relevant authorities of both countries.
10. The two Ministers expressed their grave concern over North Korea's continued development of its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs. Minister Kishida highly commended the Government of Panama's firm action with regards to the seizure of military materials from a North Korean- flagged vessel in July 2013, and expressed his expectations for Panama to continue steadily implementing the UN Security Council resolutions. Both sides also decided to cooperate towards the resolution of the abductions issue, which is a humanitarian concern of the international community.

11. Minister Álvarez De Soto expressed hope that Japan will waive visas for diplomatic and official passport holders of Panama. Minister Kishida asked that Panama provide additional necessary information in order to consider Panama's request.
12. Affirming that the two countries share such values as democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and free and open markets, both ministers expressed their determination to strengthen their cooperation in addressing global issues through strengthened cooperation in the international arena.
13. Recognizing the role and importance of the United Nations in maintaining peace and security, the two ministers stressed the necessity to reform the Security Council and improve its effectiveness, transparency and representativeness. Stressing the need to intensify efforts to achieve concrete outcomes by 2015 at the latest, the two ministers expressed their will to cooperate and enhance dialogue to achieve reform of the UN Security Council.
14. Minister Kishida explained Japan's security policy and its recent efforts to further contribute to the peace and stability of the region and the world as a "Proactive Contributor to Peace". Minister Álvarez De Soto expressed support for Japan's actions to contribute to the peace and stability of the region and the world, and praised Japan's actions and determination as a widely renowned nation of peace.
15. Both Ministers affirmed the will to deepen cooperation through frameworks such as the Pacific Alliance and the Japan-Central America Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation. Both sides also discussed the regional situation in East Asia, regarding which Minister Álvarez De Soto showed understanding of Japan's position.
16. The Foreign Ministers meeting took place in an environment of friendship and trust, contributing to the further development of bilateral relations between Japan and Panama.
17. Minister Álvarez De Soto expressed his appreciation for the hospitality of Minister Kishida and the Government of Japan, and extended an invitation to the Prime Minister of Japan to visit Panama in the near future. Minister Kishida appreciated this cordial offer, and reiterated his gratitude for Minister Álvarez De Soto's visit in this special year.