

Joint Statement on a Strategic Partnership between Japan and the Republic of Finland as Gateways in Asia and Europe

Tokyo, March 10, 2016

1. On the occasion of his visit to Japan of Mr. Sauli Niinistö, President of the Republic of Finland from March 8 to 11, 2016, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan and President Sauli Niinistö of Finland held a Summit meeting on March 10. The two leaders shared a vision of a Strategic Partnership which aims to further strengthen the cooperative relationship and natural partnership, based on shared values and interests, including those stemming from the geopolitical situation that Japan and Finland are located across the Arctic region and mutual respect, which have been nurtured between the two countries for almost a century.
2. During the meeting, Prime Minister Abe reiterated his heartfelt gratitude to President Niinistö for the encouragement and support extended by the government and people of Finland in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake which happened just five years ago, on March 11, 2011.

I Political and Security Issues

3. The two leaders reconfirmed that they would strengthen dialogue and cooperation to ensure peace and stability of the international community while upholding the international system based on the rule of law, through bilateral channels as well as regional and multilateral fora such as the United Nations, ASEM, EU-Japan cooperation, Arctic Council and also Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB8) plus Japan.
4. Prime Minister Abe explained Japan's willingness to play an even more proactive role through the policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on the principle of international cooperation and "Legislation for Peace and Security" as its concrete practice of the policy. President Niinistö welcomed and supported Japan's such efforts under "Proactive Contribution to Peace," including coordinated collaboration at the scene of the peace building and keeping.
5. They confirmed that both countries would strengthen their security and defense cooperation through consultations, and high level and working-level visits which had been invigorated after the visit by "Kashima," the flagship training squadron of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, to Helsinki in July, 2013.

II Economy, Science and Technology, Education and Equality

6. The two leaders confirmed the importance of advancing mutually beneficial cooperation in the areas of economy, and science and technology. In this context, they shared the view that it was important to stimulate mutual trade and investment based on cooperative relationship between governmental organizations such as JETRO for Japan, non-governmental organizations, and companies and entrepreneurs, and that both countries could serve as base camps for respective companies to operate regionally and globally, taking into account that Japan and Finland, which are connected by frequent direct flights, are functioning as gateways for each other in Asia and Europe.
7. The two leaders recognized the importance of co-operation in the energy sector, especially in the nuclear energy where there has been active visitor exchange. Also, they recognized the importance of nuclear safety in form of cooperation of safety authorities between the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK) and the Nuclear Regulation Authority (NRA).
8. The two leaders reaffirmed the importance of a highly ambitious and comprehensive Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) / Free Trade Agreement (FTA) in boosting growth and employment, and reiterated support for its early conclusion. They also confirmed the importance of completing the negotiations as rapidly as possible on the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), which will provide a legally binding foundation for the coming decades.
9. The two leaders expressed their hope that bilateral collaboration in science and technology would be further strengthened in focus areas such as Arctic research, bioeconomy, clean technology/energy, digitalization, and health including aging society, based on their respective cutting-edge technologies, as confirmed at the Joint Committee meeting under the Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology on March 9.
10. The two leaders recognized the importance of improving conditions for Japanese and Finnish companies to start and operate businesses in their respective markets, and, as a part of this effort, underlined the importance of concluding the intergovernmental negotiations on a Social Security Agreement at the earliest possible time.
11. The two leaders emphasized the importance of promoting people-to-people exchanges including movement of people, cultural cooperation, and youth exchanges, which constitute the foundation of all kinds of cooperation between the two countries. Against this backdrop, the two leaders directed officials to accelerate the work to introduce a working holiday program. They also pointed

out that, in terms of further improving the education systems of the both countries which have already achieved excellent results internationally, it was important for the higher education institutions of Japan and Finland to advance their cooperation in the areas of exchanges among students and researchers, including internship programs.

12. The two leaders expressed their determination to promote cooperation to enhance gender equality and encourage women to play active roles in a wide range of areas in society, providing, among other things, key stimulants to economic growth and innovation. President Niinistö commended Japan's domestic and international efforts for "creating a society where all women shine," including convening the World Assembly for Women (WAW!) in Tokyo.

III The Arctic

13. The two leaders shared the view that the changing environment in the Arctic presents new opportunities and challenges to the international community, and that any actions in this region should be taken based on the rule of law. They also reaffirmed the importance of environmental protection, sustainable use of natural resources including energy, mineral, forest, and fishing resources, and protection of rights of indigenous peoples in the Arctic region. In this context, President Niinistö welcomed Japan's first comprehensive Arctic policy adopted last October which provides foundation for Japan's strategic actions on the Arctic issues with cross-sectional perspectives, and Prime Minister Abe valued Finland's Arctic Strategy established in 2013. The two leaders noted Finland's upcoming chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2017-2019 and also shared the determination to enhance cooperation on various Arctic issues within the Arctic Council and other fora.
14. The two leaders confirmed their commitment to advance dialogue and cooperation in their shared interests in the Arctic including further utilization of the Northern Sea Route, economic development of the Barents Region, and enhanced cooperation in the region by mobilizing political will, commercial opportunities, and academic resources, bearing in mind that Japan and Finland are situated at the east and west ends of the Northern Sea Route respectively and both have advanced technologies related to the Arctic.
15. The two leaders concurred to cooperate to strengthen networks and promote collaboration in the area of the Arctic among government institutions, research institutions, and business communities of both countries.

IV International Cooperation

16. The two leaders reiterated the importance of the rule of law including the

freedom of navigation on and overflight over the high seas. They expressed their concern over any unilateral action that could change the status quo and increase tensions in the East and South China Seas. They reaffirmed the importance of peaceful settlement of maritime disputes in the South China Sea in accordance with international law, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). They reiterated their support to the rapid conclusion of the negotiations to establish an effective code of conduct in the South China Sea.

17. The two leaders reiterated their unwavering commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, called for a peaceful settlement through the full implementation of the Minsk Agreements, and reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Ukraine's efforts toward political stability and comprehensive structural reforms. They reiterated their strong condemnation of the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation and reaffirmed their policy of its non-recognition.
18. The two leaders condemned in the strongest terms the nuclear test conducted by North Korea on January 6 and its launches of ballistic missiles on February 7 and March 10. They urged North Korea to refrain from any further provocation and to comply with all relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions, including Resolution 2270, and the 2005 Six-Party Talks Joint Statement. The two leaders urged North Korea to end its human rights violations and resolve the abductions issue immediately.
19. The two leaders strongly condemned terrorism in all forms and manifestations, and expressed their commitment to work together to reduce the risk of terrorism, and to tackle drivers of instability in the Middle East, Northern Africa, and the Sahel.
20. The two leaders also emphasized the urgent need to reform the UNSC to address today's security challenges and the importance of achieving concrete outcomes during the 70th session of the UN General Assembly, in particular through expanding the membership in order to make it more representative, effective, and democratic. In this regard, President Niinistö reiterated his support for the G4 countries', including Japan's, permanent membership in the UNSC. Prime Minister Abe expressed his gratitude for the valuable support.
21. The two leaders reconfirmed the importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and confirmed their continued efforts to strengthen the NPT regime to achieve peace and security of a world free of nuclear weapons.