

## **JOINT PRESS STATEMENT**

### **The Agreement between Japan and the United Mexican States for the Strengthening of the Economic Partnership**

The Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, and the President of the United Mexican States, Mr. Vicente Fox Quesada held a meeting in Los Cabos, Mexico, on October 27, 2002, and shared the view that the two Governments should start negotiations for a bilateral agreement to strengthen economic partnership (EPA between Japan and Mexico) in November 2002, and that they should make maximum efforts to finish the negotiations in substance as soon as possible with a target of approximately one-year period, in order that the two countries would benefit, without delay, from the strengthening of the bilateral economic partnership.

On the basis of this view, seven rounds of Heads Level Negotiation and fourteen rounds of negotiation at the working level, co-chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry on the Japanese side, and the Ministry of the Economy on the Mexican side, were held in Japan and Mexico alternately and through these meetings serious and substantial negotiations were conducted.

On 12<sup>th</sup> March 2004, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Yoshiyuki Kamei and Minister for Economy, Trade and Industry, Shoichi Nakagawa, for the Japanese side, and Minister for the Economy, Fernando Canales and Minister for Agriculture, Rural Development, Fisheries and Food, Javier Usabiaga, for the Mexican side have conducted a televideo conference and confirmed that both sides reached agreements in substance on major elements of the Agreement between Japan and the United Mexican States for the Strengthening of the Economic Partnership.

The purposes of the Agreement are to promote a freer trans-border flow of goods, persons, services and capital between Japan and Mexico. The Agreement also aims to promote a comprehensive economic partnership, which includes competition, improvement of business environment and bilateral cooperation in such fields as vocational education and training and support for small and medium size enterprises. The Agreement contributes to make the most of the complementary relations between

Japan and Mexico and thus to strengthen even more the existing bilateral economic relations.

Based on the achievement made so far, both sides are determined to finalize the Agreement as soon as possible.