

Your Majesties,

The Queen and I are deeply grateful for your kind invitation to undertake this State Visit to Japan, and for the warm welcome you have given us. We both have unforgettable memories from our visit to your beloved country as Prince and Princess of Asturias in 2005.

These trips, which were graciously reciprocated by Your Imperial Majesties and His Imperial Highness the Crown Prince of Japan, are a reflection of ancient and profound ties between our two countries; ties which we reaffirm today and which we set out for the future.

Our peoples met **468 years ago**, when the Spanish missionary, **Francisco Javier**, arrived in Japan; later, at the beginning of the **17th century, the Keichō Embassy** travelled to Europe, with Spain's support, to establish relations with our country. History brought us back together in the 19th century, and **1868 saw the establishment of diplomatic relations** between our countries. All of these past encounters have borne great fruit — above all our mutual admiration, respect and goodwill.

In the modern world, Spain and Japan are two nations that share aspirations and viewpoints on the defence of international peace and order, and on our commitment to progress, justice, human rights and sustainable development.

Next year will mark the **150th anniversary** of diplomatic relations between our countries. This is an opportunity to further strengthen our fruitful bilateral relations and enhance Hispano-Japanese coordination at the multilateral level.

We will be building on a very solid foundation. In 2013, in the Dual Year, our governments signed the Declaration creating the “**Partnership for Peace, Growth and Innovation**”, three words that embody the most pressing aspirations of our two countries.

Peace, because Japan and Spain both wholeheartedly defend the international order and a global co-existence that is based on respect for the principles and values of the Charter of the United Nations.

Growth, because Japan and Spain are committed to prosperity and progress for their citizens and have a sound framework of cooperation in business.

Innovation, because we are both investing in the future, to build a world with more opportunities for everyone, a world that is more environmentally friendly and more sustainable. Innovation is undoubtedly a prerequisite for productivity and growth, but it also makes a decisive contribution to people's wellbeing.

Furthermore, a crucial part of our relations go beyond the policies implemented by our respective governments; I am referring to the coming together and understanding between our civil societies, who feel a clear appreciation and affection for each other.

However, I would like to take this particularly special opportunity to express our **own personal affection and admiration for Your Majesties**. You are an unwavering example of service to your people and a personification of the esteem in which your country is held around the world.

On this note, **I raise my glass** to ever greater understanding, to the age-old friendship between Japan and Spain, to the prosperity and the wellbeing of the Japanese people, and to the health of Your Imperial Majesties.