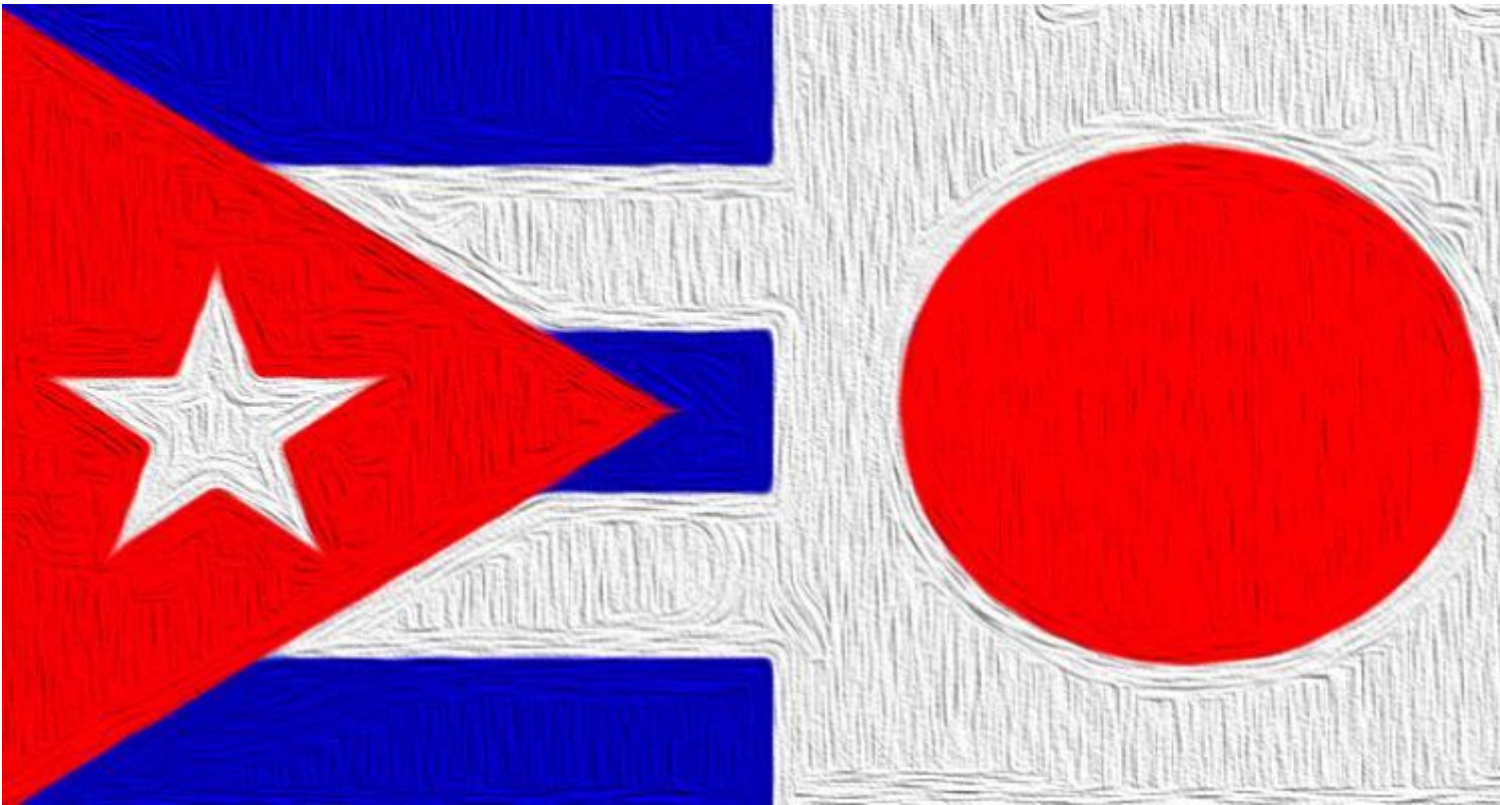


# *Cuba and Japan Advocate Strengthened Economic and Trade Ties*

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Havana, November 10 (RHC)-- Cuba and Japan have reiterated a common interest in expanding and strengthening bilateral economic and trade ties, in the framework of the 1st Joint Public-Private Committee meeting between the two countries, which held sessions Monday in Havana.

This new mechanism, which aims to explore both countries' business potential, is the result of an initiative by Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fumio Kishida, during his visit to Cuba in May.

The Cuban delegation to the important meeting was headed by Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment Ileana Núñez, while the Japanese delegation was headed by Yasushi Takase, Director General for Latin America and the Caribbean at Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The two officials agreed that the event could become a useful tool to expand and strengthen bilateral relations in the fields of the economy, trade and cooperation.

Ileana Núñez noted that the ongoing process to update Cuba's economic model provides for revitalizing commercial ties with Japan, particularly at the Special Development Zone of Mariel.

For his part, the Japanese official highlighted the growing interest of companies from his country in Cuba's new foreign investment law and the business opportunities it offers.

The Japanese delegation to Monday's meeting was made up of 44 business executives, including representatives from 18 private companies, as well as from various ministries and other economic organizations.

Japan participated in the recently concluded 33rd Havana International Trade Fair for the first time with a national pavilion.

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