

Opening Remarks by His Excellency AKAZAWA Ryosei, State Minister of  
Cabinet Office for Financial Services

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Hello, everyone. I am Rio Akazawa, State Minister of Cabinet Office for Financial Services. It is our pleasure to hold the FIN/SUM 2021 FSA Symposium today. I would like to provide some opening remarks as the organizer.

COVID-19 has caused irreversible changes in our behavioral patterns. We are now right in the middle of digital transformation, such as spreading telework and non-face-to-face services. The accelerating digitalization is bringing about major changes in economic, social and industrial structures. This transition to a "new normal" should be seen as an opportunity to make our lives more productive and convenient. Japan has positioned digitalization as an issue with the highest priority.

In the financial sector, digitalization has been progressing ahead of this trend. In the midst of this development, our financial services have been changing since the first FIN/SUM five years ago. Collaboration through information between financial institutions and FinTech companies has advanced. An increasing number of non-financial institutions are offering one-stop services that incorporate financial functions. As we notice, a new environment is being ready. In that environment, everyone has access to a wide variety of daily-basis financial services via smartphone applications. Such financial services include, for example, fund settlement, asset management, and insurance.

In this "new normal", FinTech will play an increasingly important role. As you know, FinTech is a financial service that utilizes innovative technology. At the same time, FinTech aims to solve various social issues by providing financial services to a wide range of people.

In this context, it is important for the financial authorities to create a good environment for those businesses which newly enter the financial sector.

Specifically, it is necessary to ensure that start-up companies and businesses with innovative technologies and ideas are able to enter the financial sector without anxiety. The FSA has set up a dedicated contact point to provide consultation services to start-up companies and other businesses. The FSA has also been working to support new Proof of Concept by corporates, including financial institutions. I am also aware that the countries participating in today's symposium have taken various measures to support start-ups.

We, the financial authorities, need to continue to engage in dialogue with various stakeholders. We need to solve social issues and meet the expectations of people with truly innovative technologies and ideas. Financial service users are seeking far more affluent daily lives than now. In order to continue to meet the expectations of such users through financial services, what kind of efforts are required from financial institutions and FinTech companies?

This question is relevant to the theme of today's FSA symposium, "New Paradigm of Trust in Financial Services". People's behavioral patterns are changing drastically, and digitalization is advancing rapidly. In such situation, in order to create a bright future of financial services, I believe it is essential to reexamine the premise "trust" now.

I hope that the following sessions today would greatly help you think about "trust".

Today, due to the COVID-19 situation, we have no choice but to have a number of active experts in various fields to speak online. Once again, I would like to thank all the speakers for accepting our invitation. I would also thank Nikkei, Inc. for their efforts in organizing this global conference as the co-organizer.

To conclude, I sincerely hope that we have fruitful discussions today. Thanks for your attention.

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