

Speech by Minister NISHIMURA Yasutoshi
CPTPP E-Commerce Webinar

Thank you everyone for joining our CPTPP E-Commerce Webinar today.

The coronavirus pandemic has enhanced nationalistic tendency, but it is my firm conviction that free trade is a source of economic growth, both globally and for individual economies. Japan has been keeping the flag of free trade waving high, trying to maintain and strengthen the free and fair international economic order. The high-standard and well-balanced rules of the CPTPP, therefore, will not only play a vital role in promoting the world's economic growth but will also benefit its members.

Amongst the many issues relating to trade promotion, today's theme of digitalization is what Japan and many others have been focusing on since the coronavirus outbreak. We should promote cooperation on this challenging theme amongst the CPTPP members.

CPTPP's E-Commerce rules embody and symbolize free and fair rules for the 21st century in this region. They also serve to create a business friendly environment for companies that develop new businesses in this age of digitalization.

The fact that we have made and implemented these rules as a world's front runner is, without a doubt, an achievement that we CPTPP members should be proud of. The CPTPP is at the forefront of contributing to various international rule-making initiatives, and making a positive impact on WTO negotiations for E-Commerce rules, Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement that recently came into force, and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (RCEP Agreement) that was signed last November.

Two years have passed since the entry into force of the CPTPP, and its rules have been steadily implemented. Also this year, in February, the United Kingdom officially notified its accession request. There are also other economies that are showing interest in the Agreement. Since the CPTPP is moving into a new phase, I believe that we should go back to the basics and look closely at what impact CPTPP rules have on business activities as well as businesses' views on these rules.

In addition, we have witnessed rapid changes of E-Commerce related businesses, technologies, and other associated circumstances around the world, due to changes in behavioral patterns caused by coronavirus. It is also essential to familiarize ourselves with emerging rule-making initiatives which are happening outside of the CPTPP. Through such efforts, we may be able to see how we can develop mutual complementarity between the CPTPP and other new frameworks.

These are the underlying ideas in hosting today's Webinar. We would like to extend our gratitude to CPTPP business representatives and stakeholders as well as government officials who joined us today.

We believe that today's webinar will enable us to reaffirm the significance of steadily implementing the CPTPP E-commerce rules, and to explore together what we should do to better use them as business-friendly rules in the future. As Chair of the CPTPP Commission this year, we hope that this event will be an opportunity for CPTPP members to pursue further discussions as well as encouraging cooperation amongst the members.