

## **Opening Remarks by Chair Kazuyuki Furuya**

### **The 18<sup>th</sup> East Asia Top Level Officials' meeting on Competition Policy July 25, 2023**

I am delighted to be attending this conference and to meet in person with the heads of competition authorities in the East Asia region.

It is my great pleasure to open “The 18<sup>th</sup> East Asia Top Level Officials' Meeting on Competition Policy” in Bangkok today.

The EATOP Meeting has been established since 2005 as a forum for top officials of competition authorities in East Asia region to meet in person and frankly exchange information and views on recent activities and future challenges.

With the active participation of the EATOP members, the meeting has been held once a year and has made significant contributions to build cooperative relationships among competition authorities in East Asia and to promote understanding competition policy in the region.

It is a great pleasure to be able to hold this year's meeting in a face-to-face manner, after the previous meeting in Manila. I hope that we can take advantage of this in-person style and that the discussion in each session will be more interactive and fruitful.

Today, we will discuss and exchange views on some globally important issues, including “Sustainability” and “Digital Economy”.

Regarding Digital Economy issues, which is the theme of the second session, needless to say, various innovative products and services have been produced in the digital fields. “Generative AI” has recently emerged.

In response to the realities of such a rapidly developing digital sector, competition authorities around the world are now making great effort to expand their capabilities with regard to competition law enforcement, competition policy and law making in the digital field.

In Japan, based on the JFTC's fact-finding report on mobile OS published in February this year, the Government of Japan has been working on competition assessment of the mobile ecosystem. As the Final report was compiled last month, legal framework for introducing ex-ante regulation will be discussed in Japan to ensure a fair and competitive environment of the mobile ecosystem with a view to promoting app store competition.

In addition, in the digital sector, we are conducting a fact-finding study on the competitive issues related to media and digital platforms, such as news content distribution and connected TV.

Regarding generative AI, which is rapidly spreading, the JFTC will keep a close eye on the trends of innovation, such as what business models will be developed, in what business areas in the future, with a keen interest of whether there are any competition issues that need to be addressed.

Regarding sustainability issues, which is the theme of the first session, there are currently active discussions in every country and region around the world.

The JFTC published the Green Guidelines in this March. The Guidelines was made as a comprehensive one to explain our views that cover all types of conducts including not only joint activities but also vertical restrains and mergers, with 76 hypothetical examples. The Guidelines aims at further improving predictability and transparency of the application of competition law to business activities, and preventing anti-competitive conduct that stifles innovation such as the creation of new technologies, thereby supporting business activities for the realization of a green society.

In addition, the JFTC conducted a fact-finding study on electric vehicle (EV) charging services on expressways and published its report on 13 July. I believe that under the Government's goal, "to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050", it is extremely important to realize a green society under the fair and free competition through promotion of new entrants and innovation.

As such, there is an urgent need to address the digitalization of the economy and

sustainability issues. In addition, there will be discussion on issues such as addressing cross-border competition cases at session 3, and on the use of new technologies such as data screening tools by competition authorities at session 4. I believe that today's EATOP has great significance for sharing the knowledge and insights of each country on new challenges that need to be addressed by competition authorities, and for building best practice for cooperation among competition authorities.

Lastly, I hope that we can share our views and knowledge and continue to further develop the good relationship among the competition authorities in East Asia region through this meeting.

Thank you for your kind attention.