

Remarks by H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Hajime,  
Ambassador of Japan to the UK,  
at the Tokyo-London Financial Seminar 2024  
on 31st January 2024

Lord Mayor Mainelli,  
Alderman King,  
Distinguished Guests,

I am truly grateful for this opportunity to say a few words at today's Tokyo-London Financial Seminar 2024. May I extend my sincere appreciation to the distinguished members of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, including Governor Koike and the City of London Corporation for organising this event.

Today, Japan and the UK are increasingly important global strategic partners, as illustrated by the Japan-UK Hiroshima Accord signed by Prime Ministers Fumio Kishida and Rishi Sunak on the occasion of the G7 Hiroshima Summit last May. The Hiroshima Accord envisions increasing investment through the ever-closer economic partnership between our two countries. In this regard, financial services comprise an area in which the UK has become an indispensable partner for Japan. As of the first half of 2023, Japan's exports to and imports from the UK of financial services respectively accounted for around 30% of its total services exports and imports.

With a view to further developing these strong economic ties, the Japan-UK Financial Regulatory Forum, a framework for dialogue between the relevant ministries and regulators, was established under the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement signed in October 2020. The first meeting was held in London in June 2022 and the second one in Tokyo in November last year. The cooperative partnership in financial services between the governments of the two countries is clearly going from strength to strength.

Such cooperation is also taking root between local governments. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government and the City of London Corporation signed an MoU on cooperation in financial services in 2017, which is enhancing the collaboration between the two cities in areas such as FinTech, asset management, green finance and ESG investment. This seminar is undoubtedly emblematic of the two cities' strong partnership in the financial sector.

I believe that these strong ties will give impetus to the efforts of the Government of Japan to shift 'from savings to investment' through stable asset formation by its citizens. In order to promote Japan as a Leading Asset Management Center, the Government of Japan published its policy plans last month to remove barriers to overseas asset managers doing business in Japan. The UK, and London in particular, is known as one of the world's leading international financial centres and has a thriving asset management industry. I hope that more UK asset managers will take advantage of this initiative and expand their activities into Japan.

As many of us have realised, the Japanese economy is clearly on an upward trajectory. By way of illustration, it is on course to meet the 2% inflation target, while share prices on the Tokyo Stock Exchange have reached their highest levels since the so-called bubble burst in 1990s. Japan has much to commend it for overseas investors and I genuinely hope that financial firms in London will become increasingly active in expanding their investment there.

I am certainly optimistic about the continued growth and prosperity of our respective countries. And I am confident that the ongoing development of our highly significant partnership, which has a major impact on the financial sector, will play a crucial role in this regard.

Thank you very much indeed.