21.01.21 Z Holdings Corporation

## Z Holdings Corporation Holds Inaugural Meeting of "Expert Panel on Democracy in the Digital Era"

Panel discusses various issues such as the role digital platform operators should play with regards to fake news

Z Holdings Corporation (hereinafter "ZHD") announces that on January 20, 2021 it held the inaugural meeting of the "Expert Panel on Democracy in the Digital Era" (hereinafter "Expert Panel"), a panel that was established to examine the roles and code of conduct expected of digital platform operators in the context of democracy in the digital era.

The Expert Panel, scheduled to be held once a month, will discuss issues including fake news and democracy in the digital era and consider how democracy should be upheld in an internet society. It plans to announce its policy and code of conduct recommendations by this summer.

In the wake of last year's U.S. presidential election and other developments, various media outlets around the world have reported the significant impact that digital platform services, particularly social networking services, have on modern democracy. For instance, the role of digital platforms emerged as a prominent social issue in Japan in 2016 when fake news about an escaped lion during the Kumamoto Earthquake spread widely on social media\*1.

Although discussions on countermeasures against fake news in Japan have progressed mainly from a social approach, including responses to disinformation in times of disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, there has not been sufficient discussion regarding the roles that digital platform operators play from a political perspective due to concerns about the impact on democracy this may have and the accelerating social divide.

However, there are concerns that in the near future the operation of digital platforms, including their response to fake news, will become a political issue in Japan, potentially affecting democracy in the digital era.

Therefore, ZHD believes that it is necessary to take into account the opinions of external experts in various fields to seriously study the issue in order to be able to appropriately deal with digital platforms going forward, and for us to play the role we that is expected of us as a digital platform operator.

## 1. Name of Panel

Expert Panel on Democracy in the Digital Era

## 2. Agenda

- Impact of fake news on democracy and countermeasures
- Roles that digital platform operators should play as operators of a social infrastructure, and response policies, etc.
- 3. Members (names listed without honorifics)

Chairman

Tatsuhiko Yamamoto Professor, Keio University Law School

Members

Hajime Ogawa Advisor, The Mainichi Newspapers Group Holdings Co. Ltd.

Yuko Kawai Attorney-at-Law, Nishimura & Asahi Manabu Shintani Corporate Officer, Bungei Shunju Ltd.

Tateshi Higuchi Former Superintendent General of the Metropolitan Police

Department,

Previous Japanese ambassador to Myanmar

Shuichiro Hoshi Professor, Dean of the Faculty of Law, Tokyo Metropolitan

University

Shinichi Yamaguchi Associate Professor, Center for Global Communications,

International University of Japan

## \*1 <u>Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, Japan, Information and Communications in Japan White Paper 2019</u>

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