

Statement by Yasuchika Hasegawa, Chairman of Keizai Doyukai
“Opinion on Agricultural Reform”
Presented by Agriculture Working Group, Council for Regulatory Reform

1. “Opinion on Agricultural Reform” was presented at today’s meeting of Agriculture Working Group, Council for Regulatory Reform. We highly appreciate the Opinion as it presents a comprehensive and drastic agricultural reform plan that leads to an outstanding enhancement of the industrial competitiveness and the managerial power in the agricultural business, overcoming challenges that include the weakening of the nation’s agricultural infrastructure and issues related to measures to be taken against the trade liberalization such as TPP agreement.

2. We particularly look at its proposal to realize the following three points altogether:
 - (1) Reassessment of the Agricultural Committee so that it will further contribute to the farmland consolidation and the elimination of the cultivated land abandonment.
 - (2) Reassessment of the requirements for farming corporations so that it will ease private company participation and promote productivity increase and innovation.
 - (3) Agricultural cooperatives reform that aims at a drastic shift from the current centralized structure to the one respecting independency and uniqueness of each agricultural cooperative.We strongly hope that the industrial competitiveness in the agricultural business will be realized reflecting uniqueness in local areas by ensuring the implementation of the plan as well as various parties involved bring diverse knowledge and technologies.

3. Major challenges facing Japanese agriculture such as the increase of the cultivated land abandonment and the ageing of the workforce in the business have been left without significant improvements until today despite repeated mentioning. The importance going forward is to ensure the swift implementation of the proposal presented by the Council for Regulatory Reform, while preventing postponement of problems and keeping planned intentions from being undermined during the course of designing the system and the legislative discussions.

4. Now is the time to transform Japan’s agriculture to a growth industry by breaking the existing bedrock-like regulations. We strongly hope for the Abe administration to deal with the drastic agricultural reform with an all-out effort going forward on the basis of a concrete plan toward the realization of Japan’s agriculture with the industrial competitiveness and attractiveness under the leadership of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and ministers concerned.