

**Statement by Yoshimitsu Kobayashi, Chairman of Keizai Doyukai
On Start of 24th Upper House Official Election Campaign**

1. The upcoming Upper House election provides the voters with an opportunity to assess ruling parties' policies for their interim results. Policy debates are expected to focus on how to realize a sustainable economy and society during the campaign period of this important election.
2. Prime Minister Abe shows his intention to appeal to public judgment on another postponement of the consumption tax hike. In this regard, each party must present its renewed plan, as policy options, to ensure the financing of the forth-coming social security burden and the sustainable systems. Furthermore, their agendas must sincerely and actively address structural reforms to review employment/labor legislations and those that restrict the expense, leading to the achievement of both economic growth and fiscal consolidation.
3. The Upper House election will be conducted for the first time under The Amendment Act of Public Offices Election. The Act is expected to increase the young voters and to improve the voting value equality by lowering the voting age to eighteen years or older and through the electoral district system reforms such as "electoral district integration." Each voter must fulfill his or her responsibility for a sovereign right with a recognition that each vote will determine a value and the future of the nation.

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