

**Statement by Takeshi Niinami, Chairperson of Keizai Doyukai  
on Start of Presidential Race of Ruling Liberal Democratic Party**

1. Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has officially announced today the start of its presidential race. The voting on September 27 is interpreted as a de facto election of the next prime minister who succeeds Prime Minister Fumio Kishida. The upcoming LDP leadership election is being contested by nine candidates, the largest number ever. This is considered favorable as it provides the party members with more options to vote for, while widely raising awareness of the public to the political scene. We hope that an individual, who has ability to make a decision and get things done in a responsible manner for Japan's future, will be elected through active policy debates.
2. We wish the new president to be clear about the inconvenient truth facing the public and address the overhaul of many institutional designs established in the postwar era. Among the mounting challenges, in particular, reforms of labor legislations and social security system are to be implemented in a swift manner, as they are obsolete in the current Reiwa era (2019–). We are also looking to tangible results in the crucial issues such as economic security in response to higher geopolitical risks, as well as stable energy supply with an eye on further digitalization. We are hoping to see thorough discussions on these issues among the candidates, who should make the most of the 15-day longest campaign period ever, so that the upcoming election will help promote understanding and build consensus on the issues among the public.
3. The premise of the steady reforms above is the restoration of confidence in politics and political parties. We request each candidate to promote vigorous debate with agenda, which is open to the public with transparency and fairness, for reforms of politics and political parties.