

Reelected Tokyo Governor Koike Must Prioritize Control of Coronavirus Infections

Yuriko Koike, 67, garnering high marks from voters, won a second four-year term as governor of Tokyo in the election held Sunday, July 5. Her reelection comes amid a turbulent period which saw the novel coronavirus shake the lives of the people of Tokyo and trigger the postponement of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Ms. Koike, however, has no room for basking in the glow of her electoral victory. In Tokyo, infections have been rebounding since late June, with more than 100 new cases a day for several days in succession, making the resurgence of the pandemic a real threat.

Will Tokyo residents again be subject to self-restraint in their social and economic activities? Will there be requests for temporary suspension of certain business activities? Many Tokyoites have become uneasy about the “new normal” in their daily lives and uncertainty about the future. Governor Koike should promptly work out a concrete, reassuring package of strategies for preventing the spread of infection to dispel the anxieties.

To ensure a successful Olympic Games, it is first necessary to overcome the coronavirus crisis in the host venue, Tokyo. The highly infectious COVID-19 has also brought in focus the vulnerability of overcrowded cities. Koike is urged to take the lessons to heart and enhance the capital city’s disaster prevention capability.

What must be remembered is the singular importance of properly responding to the crisis at hand.

This brings us to the question of how Koike should fulfill her election pledges. In the campaign, she placed at the top of her list of public commitments fighting COVID-19 through a “Tokyo Great Reform 2.0.” The centerpiece of her plan is the founding of a Tokyo Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It is imperative for the governor to come out first with more specifics about the concept, and then deepen the discussion with the national government on the division of roles.

Her campaign promises also included measures such as strengthening the PCR (polymerase chain reaction) testing system, improving medical services for both severe and mild-symptom cases, and boosting support for hospitals and medical staff. She also promised to reinforce epidemiological surveys and border controls in cooperation with the national government, as well as to beef up Tokyo’s safety net functions with a focus on living expenses and accommodations for the needy. These policies have merit, but the important thing is whether they can be brought to fruition.

On the gubernatorial campaign trail in 2016, Koike held up the goal of “7 zeros,” a shortlist addressing socioeconomic issues, including children wait-listed for admission to day care facilities and employees who must leave their jobs to serve as caregivers at home. Most have not been achieved, however. She should take note that she will not be allowed to repeat the same failures.

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There will be a need again for a collaborative relationship between Tokyo and the national government. Whether there is a national declaration of emergency in the face of a new spike in COVID-19 infections will certainly be a focus of discussion.

How should the Tokyo Metropolitan Government respond in the event of such a development? At the time of the declaration of emergency in April, there were some conflicts between Tokyo and the national government over concerns about the economic impacts of the declaration. Repetition of such a conflict would be to the detriment of Tokyo residents.

The Tokyo governor has an important role to play in reinvigorating the socio-economic activities of the whole nation. Governor Koike should bear this in mind as she gives full play to her abilities in redeveloping Tokyo's urban environment and making the capital a more attractive city.

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小池都知事が再選 感染防止が最優先課題だ

東京都知事選で、現職の小池百合子氏が再選された。新型コロナウイルスが都民の暮らしを揺るがし、東京五輪・パラリンピックが延期される激動期の選挙を制した。

小池氏が勝利の余韻に浸っている時間はない。都内では1日当たりの感染者が連日100人を超え、感染再拡大が現実の脅威となりつつある。

再び都民の社会経済活動に自粛が求められるのか。休業要請はどうなるのか。多くの都民が先行きの見えない新しい日常に不安を覚えている。小池氏には、これを払拭する感染防止の具体的な戦略を早急に示してもらいたい。

東京五輪を成功に導くには、まず開催地の東京でコロナ禍を克服する必要がある。また、感染症は過密都市の脆弱（ぜいじゃく）性を浮き彫りにした。これを踏まえて首都の防災機能も高めなくてはならない。

すべては足元の危機に適切に対応することが大前提であることを忘れてはならない。

問われているのは公約の実現である。小池氏は「東京大改革2・0」として、感染症対策を最優先課題に掲げた。その目玉が東京版CDC（疾病対策予防センター）創設だが、まずは構想の詳細を示し、国との役割分担を含めて議論を深める必要がある。

PCR検査体制の強化や重症・軽症者の医療体制の整備、病院・医療従事者へのサポート強化なども訴えた。疫学的調査の強化や国との連携による水際対策、生活資金、住まい確保などのセーフティネット機能強化も掲げた。いずれも大事な政策だが、重要なのは着実に実現できるかどうかだ。

小池氏は前回知事選で待機児童ゼロや介護離職ゼロといった「7つのゼロ」を掲げたが、そのほとんどは達成できていない。同じ轍（てつ）を踏むことは許されない。

国との協調姿勢も改めて問われよう。再び本格的に感染が広がる事態となれば、国が緊急事態宣言を再発令するかが現実的な検討課題となる。そのとき都はどう対応するか。4月の発令時には経済への影響を懸念する政府との軋轢（あつれき）もあった。こうしたことを繰り返せば影響を受けるのは都民だ。

首都東京の知事には、日本全体の社会経済活動を復活させる牽引（けんいん）役としての役割も期待される。小池氏はそのことを銘記し、魅力ある東京の街づくりに全力で取り組んでもらいたい。

出典：【主張】小池都知事が再選 感染防止が最優先課題だ

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