

August 16, 2024

## Inaugural Address

IMASAKI Yukihiro  
Chief Justice  
Supreme Court

I have been appointed as the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. I am keenly aware of the grave responsibility of this position.

The basic role of courts is to solve each case properly and promptly. Through the accumulation of such efforts, the rights of the people will be protected, the legal order, which is the foundation of society, will be maintained, and eventually the rule of law will reach every corner of society. I believe that achieving this is the mission of the judiciary.

The judiciary deals with disputes that arise in society. In recent years, there have been changes in the socioeconomic structure of Japan, including the declining birthrate, aging of the population, and concentration of the population in big cities. Furthermore, people's attitude and behavioral patterns have been diversifying at an accelerating pace. Conflicts of interest have become more severe in various aspects of society, and differences of positions and opinions over values have become more apparent. These social movements are reflected in the nature of disputes, and seem to have led to an increase in the number of serious and difficult-to-solve cases in court proceedings.

In such situation, courts have been working to link the results of the justice system reform to practices and to address subsequent changes. However, society is moving at an even faster pace, and further efforts are required so as not to be left behind. Digitalization in the judicial field is one of the efforts for this purpose, but there are more challenges to address. All courts will work to respond appropriately to the needs of the times, while taking into account the essence of the judiciary.

I mentioned the mission of the judiciary at the beginning. Needless to say, this mission cannot be accomplished by the Supreme Court alone, but can be realized only when the

judges and court officials of each and every court in Japan are aware of the responsibilities entrusted to them and carry out these responsibilities appropriately. I would like to do my best, even though my contribution may be small, to fulfill the mission of the judiciary together with them.

I would be grateful for the public's further understanding of and cooperation with the judiciary.