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Upon Celebrating Constitution Memorial Day

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After the enactment of the Constitution of Japan, Japan's courts have been working hard to resolve each and every case by scrutinizing it based on the facts and in accordance with the law. As Japan's economy and society have changed significantly since that enactment, the cases brought before the courts have also undergone numerous transformations, both in terms of nature and volume. In recent years, Japan's socioeconomic structure has changed and the values of its people have diversified due to globalization and the country's declining birthrate and aging population. As a result, vested interests among the populace have grown more intricate and conflicting, and existing societal divisions have become even more noticeable. It appears that these factors have made dispute resolution more challenging.

Furthermore, the unceasing advancement of technologies, such as the widely discussed generative AI, and the rapid expansion of new realms of information brought about by the increased use of social media are likely to further accelerate the ongoing societal changes. There is no doubt that this situation will have an impact on the judiciary. Even under these circumstances, the transparent dispute resolution process, which is central to judicial action, remains unchanged, and by applying this process in practice, the courts are required to protect people's rights, maintain social order, and rigorously uphold the rule of law. By consistently giving and accumulating fair and compelling judgments for every case, we should and we shall continue to earn the public's trust and confidence.

Concerning the digitalization of court proceedings, which is currently being undertaken across all courts, civil proceedings are due to be fully digitalized by May next year, and preparation work is now reaching a critical stage. The phased digitalization of other various proceedings will follow this process. The digitalization of court proceedings will

cause a wide range of areas to change. This will include not only the conduct of court proceedings themselves, but also the daily work practices of those involved in court proceedings. As such, we expect to face various challenges to achieve the goal. However, this initiative plays a critical role in enhancing public access to justice and improving the courts' dispute resolution function through streamlining court proceedings and making them more efficient. We hope that the three elements of the legal profession(i.e., judges, public prosecutors and lawyers) will work together to accomplish this mission.

As our country observes Constitution Memorial Day, I am keenly aware of the vital mission entrusted to the court by the people under the Constitution of Japan. I remain committed to making every effort for the court to fulfill its role to the best of my ability, and I respectfully seek the continued understanding of the people.