



Japan Society for Tobacco Control

日本禁煙学会

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Concerning donations from Japan Tobacco Inc. (JT)

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Recently, with the spread of the “novel coronavirus infection” throughout the nation, there are reports that local governments have received donations from Japan Tobacco Inc. (JT) with the pretext of “support for families with children suffering from coronavirus” and “medical support”.

It was also reported that JT will donate 1 million yen to Ashikaga, Tochigi for a forest fire that was thought to be caused from carelessness with cigarette butts.

The donation from Japan Tobacco Inc. for the forest fire within Nishinomiya-cho, Ashikaga

<https://www.pref.tochigi.lg.jp/f01/houdou/houdou/20210330jtkihukinn.html>

The act of local governments receiving donations from the tobacco industry as part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities under any name violates Articles 5.3 and 13 of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) that Japan ratified in 2005.

This situation also became a problem during the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. At that time, the Japanese Red Cross Society and the Nippon Foundation received large donations from the tobacco industry, but the money was quickly returned after it became internationally known that the donations violated the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. Philip Morris and others also made a donation to the Red Cross Museum, but the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies returned the donations after they were reported by Reuters and others.

During recent events, the fire in Tochigi burned a large tract of 72 hectares, which was extinguished through the strenuous efforts of the Self-Defense Forces, municipal fire departments, police departments and others over two weeks. The cause of the fire was suspected to be carelessness with combusted cigarettes. For the efforts of firefighters, Japan Tobacco Inc. donated 1 million yen as compensation, but the company nor the governor who accepted the donation can not fully comprehend all of the sacrifices of the firefighters and the residents, who risked their lives and lost property.

Representatives of local governments, please be careful not to accept donations from JT, which would contravene international treaties.

Conclusion

References

"Tobacco Control Framework Convention" (FCTC)

Article 5.3

"4.10 Parties shall not allow government or quasi-government officials or employees to receive monetary or in-kind compensation, gifts or services from the tobacco industry."

Article 13 "26. Such donations should be prohibited as part of a comprehensive ban because of the purpose, effect or potential for directly or indirectly promoting and encouraging tobacco products and the use of tobacco."

(FCTC Article 5.3 Guidelines)

6.4 Parties must not allow any sector in government or public political affairs, society, economics, education, or inter-regional affairs to receive contributions from those working to promote the tobacco industry or the interests of the tobacco industry.

https://www.mhlw.go.jp/topics/tobacco/dl/fctc_5-3_guideline_120506.pdf

(FCTC Article 13 Guidelines)

26. Some tobacco companies provide financial and in-kind assistance to communities to promote health, welfare, environmental protection and other affairs, either directly or indirectly. Such donations fall under Article 1g of this Convention as sponsorship by the tobacco industry. Therefore, such donations should be banned as part of a comprehensive ban because of the

purpose, effect or potential for directly or indirectly promoting and encouraging tobacco products and the use of tobacco.

27. Tobacco companies seem to try to “fulfill corporate social responsibilities” through activities such as good labor relations and environmental protection, but they are not willing to contribute to other areas. Advertising to the general public that they are doing “good” activities, with the purpose of directly and indirectly encouraging tobacco products and the use of tobacco, must be prohibited because it would be done with the intent or expectation of such effects.

Source: World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (Ministry of Foreign Affairs website)

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/who/fctc.html>