



Japan Society for Tobacco Control

日本禁煙学会

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Statement from the Japan Society for Tobacco Control

Regarding the "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Management Survey" from

Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Inc.

-Japan Tobacco (JT) should be removed from the company list-

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Chairperson, Manabu Sakuta, Japan Society for Tobacco Control, General Incorporated

On 17 November 2021, Nihon Keizai Shimbun, in a widely published article entitled "267 Companies announce zero emissions", reported the "SDGs management survey", a ranking that summarizes initiatives toward the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This survey is conducted at least once every year, and latest survey is the third one this year.

As for the goals of the SDGs, the Nikkei newspaper wrote that "earnest efforts have begun to solve issues confronting the international community, like poverty and environmental pollution.··· A new era has begun in which consumers, investors, and

local communities evaluate companies through SDGs"

Then, "SDGs have a strong interest in financial markets, by those who encourage investment in responsible practices for the environment, society, and corporate governance (ESG). Those who provide support expect that companies with excellent ESG will continue to create value added over the long term...Likewise, " Sanpou yoshi" refers to a mentality that aims to satisfy sellers, buyers, and the rest of society adopted by many Japanese companies. SDGs do not sacrifice future generations. Considering global effects, it can be said that the time axis and horizon axis of Sanpou yoshi are expanded" (sic). Kirin Holdings, Konica Minolta, Ricoh, Shiseido, Sony, Suntory, Kao, Fujifilm and others are among the top companies listed in the management survey. However, I was surprised to find the name of a company that was completely contrary to the SDGs. The name of the company is "Japan Tobacco" (JT).

Goal 3 of the SDGs established by WHO specifies the promotion of the WHO's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). That is, one of the goals of the SDGs is not to engage in activities with the tobacco industry.

The SDGs efforts of the Japanese government in Japanese are not well publicized, but Japan is not allowed to take an arbitrary approach to the tobacco industry.

The "seller" JT may be satisfied, but "buyers" who are smokers become addicted to the drug nicotine by smoking. According to numerous polls, more than 70% of smokers truly want to quit smoking while nonetheless continuing the habit. At the same time, society is not at all "satisfied", and the tobacco industry is often labelled as a "pollution enterprise", "criminal enterprise" and "merchant of death" at international conferences like the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). The business reality is that the tobacco industry continues to pursue activities in direct conflict with the SDGs.

Shouldn't the Nihon Keizai Shimbun immediately remove JT from the company list of "SDGs management survey"?

■ Accelerate efforts to reduce CO₂

Nihon Keizai Shimbun, Inc. and Nikkei Advertising Research Institute have compiled a "business image survey." According to this survey, when business people were asked about the images of 672 companies operating in Japan from various angles, Toyota Motor Co., Ltd. had the top overall rating for 19 consecutive years. More generally, construction, food, real estate and other industries had ratings that have risen recently. In addition, companies associated with large sporting events were also noted as top companies. By the way, there is a category for "accelerating efforts to reduce CO₂" in this survey, and Asahi Group Holdings, Seiko Epson and Ricoh are listed as top

companies in this regard. But among the top 50 companies, I was surprised to find the name "Japan Tobacco, Inc."

Tobacco uses many pesticides for its cultivation, which cause harm to the human body. Drying tobacco leaves consumes a large amount of wood.

After becoming a finished product, tobacco obviously causes many diseases, and the death toll from active smoking and passive smoking reaches 200,000 people each year in Japan.

During the "World No Tobacco Day" this year, the WHO proposed "100 reasons to quit smoking" and emphasized environmental issues like by stating: "The amount of carbon dioxide generated from tobacco is equivalent to 3 million transatlantic flights".

Also, smokers litter cigarette butts the city and countryside, pollute the air for pedestrians, pollute waterways with butts and ashes, poison animals (ex., birds) that ingest butts and generally reduce the aesthetics and cleanliness of the environment. Yet, tobacco companies are still listed among the top 50 "SDGs" companies.

■ JT's new strategy that counteract SDGs

JT is also aiming to expand consumption of new tobacco and nicotine products, which directly counteracts the aim of "SDGs" like the consumption of traditional tobacco. Why are pollution enterprises that are trying to increase the number of nicotine addicts and that are polluting cities, rural areas and waterways with butts at the top of the SDGs company list? Nihon Keizai Shimbun should immediately remove JT from the company list of the "SDGs management survey".