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18th June,2007

Honourable Mr Abe,

We have been following the developments achieved by Japanese government in tobacco control, with great admiration. The appointment of a Japanese citizen as the director to Tobacco Free Initiative in World Health Organization was a great encouragement to all of us in Turkey.

Japan and Turkey have shared similar social and political dilemmas in tobacco trade and tobacco control. Having a strong tobacco monopoly and being aware of the health hazards of the same product and feeling the need to control it have always been difficult issue for the governments.

However, health has always dominated trade both in humanitarian and economical considerations. Both Turkish and Japanese governments had ratified the Framework Convention on Tobacco and Health and therefore are dedicated to the implementation of the articles in the convention. One of these articles is on tobacco advertising. It has been scientifically proven that tobacco advertising increases the consumption of this deadly product and banning advertising significantly reduces the consumption.

Turkish government banned all direct and indirect advertising of tobacco products in 1996 by 4207 numbered law. That law stopped the increase in the rate of smoking in Turkey. We had news about British Royal Philharmonic Orchestra giving a concert at the Ephesus historical theatre on 22nd June in Izmir, Turkey. Unfortunately this event is being sponsored by Japan Tobacco International (JTI).

We would like to request your help to stop this sponsorship, which will have a very negative effect on the health community in Turkey and also will set a confusing image internationally on your government's efforts to implement Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

Thank you for your kind consideration and help.
Yours Sincerely,

President ...Prof Elif Dagli,MD
National Committee on Tobacco and Health Turkey