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## **Kao Included in the World's Most Ethical Companies® List for a Record 16th Consecutive Year**

TOKYO, March 16, 2022 — The Ethisphere Institute, a leading US think-tank, has named the Kao Corporation one of the World's Most Ethical Companies. Kao is a leading consumer goods company and the only Asian company to have made the list every year since Ethisphere began its ranking in 2007.



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The Ethisphere Institute develops and shares best practices in business ethics and corporate social responsibility. The World's Most Ethical Companies list recognizes companies which have demonstrated outstanding performance in transparency, integrity, ethics, and compliance. The Institute surveys and evaluates companies worldwide across five categories covering: ethics and compliance programs, corporate citizenship and responsibility, culture of ethics, governance, and leadership and reputation.

Commenting on the accolade, Yoshihiro Hasebe, Kao’s President and CEO, said: “We are honored to have been recognized as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies for 16 consecutive years. Our business has always been based on walking the right path—a core value of our founder. External evaluations are therefore an important indication we are indeed going in the right direction. While we continue to walk on the right path, we should never be satisfied with the status quo. With our drive towards improvement, we renewed our corporate philosophy—The Kao Way—in 2021, which includes principles such as “We act with courage.” As CEO, I am determined we continue to aim higher in this ever-changing world.”

Ethisphere’s Chief Executive Officer, Timothy Erblich, said: “We are, once again, delighted to

include Kao in our World’s Most Ethical Companies list—the only Asian company we have honored every year since the award’s inception. This is a testament to Kao’s dedication to advancing ethical and ESG management best practices. We look forward to seeing Kao’s continued leadership in setting ethical standards in the industry globally.”

Kao’s purpose is to create a Kirei life for all. The Japanese word ‘kirei’ describes something that is both clean and beautiful. For Kao, Kirei not only encapsulates appearance, but also attitude—to create beauty for oneself, other people, and for the world around us. The Kao Group will continue to integrate its ESG strategy, the Kirei Lifestyle Plan, into its management practices. It will also, through a high level of ethical awareness, develop its business, provide better products and services for consumers and society, and work toward the realization of a prosperous and harmonious world.

In July 2021, Kao renewed its corporate philosophy—The Kao Way—with the aim of realizing its aspirations and maximizing the vitality of each and every employee. In response to current social issues spreading around the world, such as pandemics and environmental concerns, the responsibilities and roles that companies are expected to fulfill are at a major turning point. For Kao, it must constantly change and evolve in order to continue being a meaningful presence in society. Consequently, Kao has strengthened its corporate philosophy—The Kao Way—to include ESG perspectives, such as the coexistence of people and the Earth, diversity and inclusion, and embracing challenges. With the renewal of its corporate philosophy, Kao has listed “walking the right path” as the first item in its fundamental values.

Additionally, Kao’s corporate code of conduct—the Kao Business Conduct Guidelines—guides its everyday business and is tailored to the special characteristics of Kao’s operations in different countries and regions.



Corporate Philosophy—the Kao Way

## About the Kirei Lifestyle Plan

Over the past 130 years, Kao has worked to improve people's lives and help them realize more sustainable lifestyles—a Kirei Lifestyle. The Japanese word 'kirei' describes something that is clean, well-ordered and beautiful, all at the same time. The Kao Group established its ESG strategy, the Kirei Lifestyle Plan in April 2019, which is designed to deliver the vision of a gentler and more sustainable way of living. By 2030, Kao aims to empower at least 1 billion people, to enjoy more beautiful lives and have 100% of its products leave a full lifecycle environmental footprint that science says our natural world can safely absorb.

For more information please, click <https://www.kao.com/global/en/sustainability/>

## About Kao

Kao creates high-value-added products that enrich the lives of consumers around the world. Through its portfolio of over 20 leading brands such as *Attack*, *Bioré*, *Goldwell*, *Jergens*, *John Frieda*, *Kanebo*, *Laurier*, *Merries*, and *Molton Brown*, Kao is part of the everyday lives of people in Asia, Oceania, North America, and Europe. Combined with its chemical division, which contributes to a wide range of industries, Kao generates about 1,420 billion yen in annual sales. Kao employs about 33,500 people worldwide and has 135 years of history in innovation. Please visit the Kao Group website for updated information.

<https://www.kao.com/global/en/>

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## <Related Information>

■ World's Most Ethical Companies® 2022

<https://worldsmoethicalcompanies.com/>

■ Kao launches new ESG Strategy “Kirei Lifestyle Plan” to support consumer lifestyle changes

<https://www.kao.com/global/en/news/sustainability/2019/20190422-001/>

■ Kao's New Challenges for the Future: Accelerating Purposeful Business Commitment with ESG

<https://www.kao.com/global/en/news/business-finance/2019/20190926-001/>

■ Kao Sustainability website

<https://www.kao.com/global/en/sustainability/>