

BIR meets in Singapore

# 'Another *jewel* in the BIR crown'

Singapore's icon, the Merlion, overlooking Marina Bay.

Healthy crowds gathered in the main meeting room and extensive exhibition area - as well as in the Shangri-La Hotel lobby - as the BIR world recycling body staged its latest Spring Convention in Singapore. And for those delegates attending most of the sessions, the message was loud and clear: Asia has arrived in force on the world recycling stage and is here to stay.

**F**or the second time in recent years, the BIR world recycling organisation reaped the rewards of staging its flagship Spring Convention in a leading Asian destination.

Back in 2009, some 950 delegates and 350 accompanying persons had defied the aftermath of the global financial and economic crash by converging on the Grand Hyatt in Dubai. In late May this year, and with the economic outlook looking decidedly brighter for recyclers and other industrial sectors alike, even larger numbers made their way from all four corners of the earth to the Shangri-La Hotel in Singapore for the 2011 Spring Convention.

In the final reckoning, delegate numbers were put at around 1250 and accompanying persons at more than 300, making it among the most successful BIR Conventions ever in terms of attendance. Furthermore, it was also the most international BIR Convention of all time, with 65 different countries represented. 'Yet another jewel in the crown of BIR's successful events,' was the enthusiastic response of the world body's outgoing President, Dominique Maguin of France.

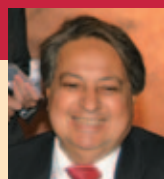
### Objectives achieved

Reflecting on his four years as President, Mr Maguin was able to tick off the key objectives that had been achieved during his time in office, including the setting-up of a Statistical Observatory 'to quantify our achievements to the economic and political worlds'; measurement of the recycling industry's carbon footprint via a study undertaken by Imperial College London, and creation of the BIR International Trade Council to help the world body to deliver on its key mission - safeguarding the free movement of recyclables around the world. And only last year, he added, the BIR had scored another notable success with the completion of a revamp of its statutes and by-laws. 'Over the past four years, and despite several notable collapses in the financial and banking

sectors, BIR has succeeded in consolidating and growing its assets and financial positions, allowing the organisation to look fearlessly to the future,' said Mr Maguin. The world body already embraces 40 national recycling federations and around 800 member companies, and it would continue to attract new recruits, he added, by constantly improving the quality of

## Ikbal Nathani's BIR joke

### Cold comfort



Two good friends die shortly after each other and meet in Heaven. 'Hello Wanda,' exclaims the first woman. 'Hi Sylvia,' says Wanda. 'How did you die?' 'Well, I froze to death,' Sylvia admits. 'How terrible, dear!' says Wanda with a look of horror on her face. 'Actually, it wasn't that bad,' Sylvia tells her. 'After I quit shaking from the cold, I began to get warm and sleepy, and finally died a peaceful death. But tell me, how did you meet your end?' 'Believe it or not, I died of a massive heart attack,' Wanda replies. 'I suspected my husband was cheating on me, so I came home early to catch him in the act. But instead, I found him all by himself in the living room watching TV.' 'So what happened?' Sylvia asks. 'Well, I was so sure there was another woman somewhere in the place that I started running all over the house looking for her,' Wanda explains. 'I ran up into the attic and then searched down in the basement. Then I went through every closet and checked under all the beds. I kept this up until I had looked everywhere, but I had become so exhausted that I just keeled over with a heart attack and died.' 'Well,' says Sylvia with a wry smile. 'Too bad you didn't look in the freezer otherwise we would both still be alive.'

its services, by remaining attuned to the changing needs of its members, by monitoring and analysing potential new legislation, and by remaining alert to economic developments and to international relations.

In Singapore, Mr Maguin was succeeded as World President by Sweden's Björn Grufman; a long-standing member of the BIR, his election was approved by the General Assembly for an initial two-year mandate which can be extended once. He expressed his profound honour at leading an organisation representing 'the future leading raw material suppliers'.

Mr Grufman is the Managing Director and main owner of M.V. Metallvärden AB, a Sweden-based scrap trading and processing company. He joined BIR in 1989 and has subsequently held several senior positions, including Vice-President of the Non-Ferrous Metals Division and, most recently, BIR Treasurer. His role as Treasurer has been taken over by Paper Division President Ranjit Baxi on an interim basis.

### 'Welcome' news at the IEC

Although the spotlight at the Spring Convention was directed mainly - and entirely appropriately - on Asia, perhaps the most important development discussed during the three-day event related to Europe. Only a matter of weeks before the gathering in Singapore, it was confirmed that, after more than three decades of debate, a legal distinction between recyclables and 'waste' had finally begun to emerge.

European Council Regulation No 333/2011 of March 31 this year effectively established criteria that determine when iron/steel and aluminium scrap cease to be waste under EU law, it was explained by Ian Hetherington, Director General of the British Metals Recycling Association, to the BIR International Environment Council (IEC) meeting. 'This is clearly to be welcomed,' he said, adding that a scrap metal processor 'regains the right to be a recycler once again' and that this is 'a big change for our industry'.

### Economic advantage

Having noted that end-of-waste criteria were also pending for copper scrap and recovered paper, Mr Hetherington observed that this fundamental change in the legal standing of recyclables in Europe would lead to the elimination of some of the 'very substantial costs' associated with satisfying waste legislation, certain of which had yet to be fully quantified. In his pres-





Chairman of BIR's International Environment Committee Olivier Francois Galloo in Belgium.



Ian Hetherington, Director General of the British Metals Recycling Association.



Tony Kerr, Senior Director of Bryan Cave International Trade.



Robert Voss, Chairman of the International Trade Council.



Chairman of BIR's Nominations Committee Fadi Shahrour of Sharmetal Trading in Lebanon.



The friendly doorman at BIR's convention hotel Shangri-La.

entation, he noted: 'There will be an economic advantage in intra-EU shipments; companies have been absorbing administrative costs and fees for years and years, and so will have to search out those costs that will be saved. When shipped outside the EU, recycled metal need not be submitted to administrative burdens (sometimes bans) imposed upon wastes.'

At the same time, the recycling industry would now be able to shrug off the negative image of 'changing waste into waste' - something which has done the recycling industry 'a great disservice' over recent decades, Mr Hetherington argued.

The importance of this development was emphasised throughout the BIR Spring Convention in Singapore, arising as a key discussion topic at non-ferrous metals, plastics and textiles meetings. For all recyclables for which such criteria will ultimately be developed, the emphasis is on cleanness, compliance with maximum 'foreign' material content levels, and no overall adverse environmental or human health impacts. The recycler/customer determines when to sell or buy waste or non-waste, it was also underlined.

#### Recycling promotion plan

The IEC meeting also heard about emerging recycling initiatives in China from Ma Hongchang, Vice Secretary General of the China Nonferrous Metals Industry Association Recycling Metal Branch (CMRA). Under the Second-

ary Nonferrous Metals Industry Development Promotion Plan published earlier this year, he explained, a number of goals for the country's current Five-Year Plan are outlined, including a gross annual output target of 12 million tonnes for secondary non-ferrous metals by the year 2015. The plan also calls for the scaling-up of industrial enterprises and for 'great progress' in the technology they use, especially in the procedures of dismantling, smelting, energy saving and environmental protection. Further efforts will be made to eliminate enterprises with lower capacities, he added.

Promotion of recycling was also the theme adopted by fellow guest speaker at the IEC meeting Andrew Tan, CEO of Singapore's National Environment Agency (NEA). Last year, the city state 'recycled 58% of its total solid waste and converted another 40% into energy'. He elaborated: 'Recycling rates in 2010 were as high as 99% for construction and demolition waste and used slag; 95% for ferrous metals; (and) over 70% for wood waste, tyres and non-ferrous metals.' Some 200 recycling companies in Singapore are engaged in the annual sorting and processing of around 3.8 million tonnes of secondary raw materials, he noted.

Mr Tan also highlighted promising r&d projects funded under the NEA's Environment Technology Research Programme, including the conversion of mixed plastic waste into higher-value biodegradable polymers.

## China and India: unstoppable growth drivers

The world's leading emerging economies are 'gathering bulk' and, therefore, their impact on global affairs will only intensify in the coming decade, according to the BIR General Assembly's guest speaker Haiyan Wang, Adjunct Professor of Strategy at international graduate business school/research institution INSEAD and Managing Partner of the China India Institute. Her bold claim was that the next 10 years will bring more structural change in the world economies than in any similar period over the previous two centuries.

In 2009, her slide presentation revealed, emerging economies accounted for around 28% of world GDP but this proportion is projected to soar to 53% by 2025. She suggested that China's GDP could be equal to that of the USA by the year 2025 - and twice its size by the year 2050. In addition, she expected India's GDP to surpass that of the USA within the next four decades.

China and India - the two countries at the heart of her presentation - enjoyed the fastest-growing bilateral trade in world, Ms Wang maintained. According to her figures, the value of this business had sky-rocketed from US\$ 2.9 billion per annum at the start of the current Millennium to US\$ 60 billion last year. However, she also argued that China must engineer an emphasis shift away from exports and towards domestic consumption, saying: 'The 25% annual growth in exports of the last 10 years is unsustainable politically and economically.' At the same time, the country should look to move 'from imitation to innovation', she added.

#### India 'catching up'

India's current position equates to that of China some 13 or 14 years ago, Ms Wang went on to contend. While China has been committing 8-9% of its GDP to infrastructure development, India is

now 'catching up', she said. 'That's a lot of construction - and that's good news for your industry.' For outside parties, she added, achieving business success in either China or India would depend on the adoption of a customer-focused approach.

At the BIR Ferrous Division meeting held the previ-



Haiyan Wang, Guest speaker at the BIR General Assembly, is Managing Partner of the US-based China India Institute.

ous day, renowned financial commentator Jim Rogers had said that India's large debt and highly bureaucratic structure would make it difficult for the country to 'grow in a dynamic manner'. In contrast, Ms Wang said she did not expect such factors to slow India's progress to any major extent.

## Second edition of world ferrous statistics

The Spring Convention in Singapore provided the official launch-pad for the second edition of "World Statistics on Ferrous Scrap", compiled on behalf of the BIR Ferrous Division by Statistics Advisor and former General Delegate Rolf Willeke. Covering the period from 2006 to 2010, the publication contains 26 graphs and tables as well as other information relating to scrap use in steelmaking and, for the first time, in iron and steel foundries.



BIR Ferrous Division President Christian Rubach (left) and Rolf Willeke.

The publication reveals, for example, that scrap consumption in global steel production amounted to around 530 million tonnes in 2010 - equivalent to an increase of more than 15% over the 2009 total. Highlighted figures for individual countries include a 57.3% slump in Chinese ferrous scrap imports to just 5.9 million tonnes last year whereas Turkey's steel scrap imports leapt more than 22% to 19.2 million tonnes. South Korea's imports advanced 3.7% to 8.1 million tonnes while Taiwan's import total soared 37.1% to 5.4 million tonnes. Speaking in Singapore, Ferrous Division President Christian Rubach underlined the growing communications value of accurate trade flow statistics.



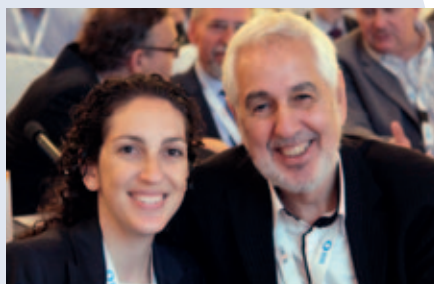
In Singapore, Björn Grufman (left) was elected as the world recycling body's new President, while Dominique Maguin of France stepped down after having served as BIR President for four years.



George Adams of SA Recycling and Gregory Schnitzer of Schnitzer Steel Industries are enjoying the BIR Welcome Reception.



Phillip Pownall of British recycling machine manufacturer JMC Recycling Systems (left) and Paul Coyte of Hayes Metals in New Zealand.



Fathers and daughters. Left: Marc and Alexandra Natan. Right: Andy and Francesca Wahl.



Jocelyn Baynes and Steve Steranka of Canada-based radiation detection equipment specialist RadComm.



Antony P. Bird of the Bird Group of Companies (left) and Fernando Duranti of Leghe & Metalli.



### High levels of enforcement

When shipping recyclables to Asia, and particularly to China, overseas suppliers should 'check and re-check' their approvals and other documentation to ensure they do not fall victim to a 'very, very high' level of import control enforcement, BIR's International Trade Council (ITC) meeting in Singapore was told by Tony Kerr, Senior Director of Bryan Cave International Trade. His company has been hired by BIR to provide intelligence on legislative and regulatory developments in China and India - a remit that will be expanded to cover the whole of Asia, the ITC's Chairman Robert Voss of UK-based Voss International told delegates in Singapore. In his review of work carried out by the ITC over the past year, Mr Voss drew particular attention to the growing debate on access to raw materials - something which the ITC would continue to monitor, he said, to help ensure the continued movement of the recycling industry's goods around the world 'without hindrance'. He also reported that the revamping of

BIR's arbitration service was now complete and was being put into a format suitable for use both by members and non-members.

### Unfairly targeted

Guest speaker Siow Loong Wong - Vice President of Asia-Europe Trade at container shipping specialist APL - was happy to list several advantages of shipping recyclables, including improved back-haul vessel utilisation and reduced empty re-positioning costs. However, he also suggested that the associated freight rate is 'sometimes so low we can't even cover the variable costs'.

Mr Wong also spoke of the potential for container damage when loading certain recyclables but acknowledged this occurred 'not very often'. Mr Voss responded by reiterating the recycling industry's concern that it often feels unfairly targeted by the repair charges levied by some shipping companies. Indeed, he added, many recyclers take photographs of containers to prove their condition and thus to protect their interests when 'cleaning' charges are imposed. □