

# ‘Recycling is a chain, it’s teamwork’

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– **Martijn Reintjes** – June 5, 2019

**Certain public media have targeted the recycling industry with unfounded criticism, according to Michael Lion of China-based Everwell Resources Ltd. ‘We have a problem with identity and image,’ he told the latest BIR convention in Singapore.**

The question is, how to turn the tide? The world recycling organisation’s director general Arnaud Brunet and Tom Bird of Hong Kong-based Chiho Environmental Group both identified awareness campaigns as the appropriate response. ‘We need to educate people that we are the solution,’ said the latter. According to Adina Renee Adler, vice president International Relations at the US Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI), the recycling sector needs to tell the media ‘the story of what we do, who we are and the contribution we make’.

## ‘We are the recyclers’

The recycling industry is also facing the problem of certain consumers ‘trying to steal our clothes by claiming they are the recyclers’, noted Lion. This observation drew an impassioned response from Murat Bayram of European Metal Recycling Ltd who insisted: ‘Recycling is a chain; it’s teamwork.’

On the issue of teamwork, ISRI chair Brian Shine called for a push to work more closely with product manufacturers to promote design for recycling. Global plastics consumption is continuing on a strong growth curve and so co-operation over such issues as design for recycling is essential, agreed new BIR Plastics committee chairman Henk Alssema of Vita Plastics in the Netherlands.

## Is there life after ‘China’?

The Singapore conference also addressed the impact of China’s import policy shift on overseas suppliers of recyclables. According to Tom Bird, China will remain a major market and so clarity in its regulations would be widely welcomed.

Murat Bayram spoke of ‘life after China’ as material flows have been redirected to other countries. ‘Quality is the key for success in the future; scrap will be needed today, tomorrow and the day after, he said.

A large proportion of the materials now heading to new destinations will still end up in China – ‘and so China is not out of the equation’, added David Chiao of Uni-All Group Ltd in the USA.