

## PRESS RELEASE

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### *Recent BIR World Recycling Convention & Exhibition in Barcelona (27 - 30 May 2018)*

#### ***Annual General Assembly and Keynote Session:***

#### **“Now is your time,” keynote speaker tells recycling industry**

**Brussels, 1 June 2018**

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Celebrating its 70th anniversary in 2018, the BIR has “accomplished a great journey during the last 70 years, growing from a handful of visionary recyclers to a global organisation with members in 70 countries across the globe”. So said BIR World President Ranjit Singh Baxi in his address to the world federation’s Annual General Assembly, staged in Barcelona on May 29.

Defending the interests of the recycling industry worldwide continues to constitute “the main duty” of BIR, according to Mr Baxi. In this context, he said any moves to restrict free trade in recyclables “must be resisted”, not only for economic reasons but also for “the greater goal of protecting the environment”.

Regarding the tougher quality demands now placed on recyclers, Mr Baxi insisted the industry was willing to meet this challenge but added: “It is time for the governments and local authorities to stand up and take ownership of the problem by extending special tax benefits to allow the industry the much-needed investment support to override the quality challenges imposed upon us.”

Having emphasised the importance of building on the momentum of Global Recycling Day, Mr Baxi remarked: “2018 will hopefully forever be remembered as the year in which, through working together, we were planting new seeds to promote and strengthen the concept of recycling, the recycling industry worldwide and our global recycling body BIR so that it can continue to deliver our story to the wider world.”

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**BIR – REPRESENTING THE FUTURE LEADING RAW MATERIAL SUPPLIERS**

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Re-elected as BIR Treasurer at the Annual General Assembly, Tom Bird of Chiho Environmental Group in China reported that the world federation's financial situation was "very sound" - aided by the success of the Barcelona Convention which attracted around 1100 delegates from 63 countries.

The Keynote Session speaker at the Convention was introduced as "The Reluctant Futurist". In the ensuing highly-entertaining and thought-provoking 45 minutes, Mark Stevenson explained his misgivings not only about the "futurist" tag but also about many companies' commitment to true innovation.

The word "futurist" implied prediction whereas Mr Stevenson's focus was on "the future and what we can do about it" and on making clients "literate about the questions the future will ask", he told delegates in Barcelona. With change coming "at an extraordinary rate", some companies were failing because they have adopted a cosmetic approach to innovation rather than looking to change the culture of the organisation, he said.

Mr Stevenson had both praise and advice for the recycling industry which, he said, should "congratulate itself for every tonne of carbon emission it saves". In particular, he welcomed BIR's launch of Global Recycling Day by saying the industry has "found a way to tell your story" that, in years to come, might make the very notion of waste sound "barbaric" to younger generations. At the same time, he urged the industry to be "constantly innovating".

"Companies which take the planet seriously constantly outperform the market," he pointed out. "That's what you do. Now is your time."

He closed his presentation with the following words of encouragement: "Not all superheroes wear capes. Some of them are recyclers."

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