

PRESS RELEASE

Recent BIR World Recycling Convention (Round-Table Sessions) in London (5-7 October 2018)

Plastics Committee:

Chairman signs off with rallying call to plastics recyclers

Brussels, 10 October 2018

In his final Chairman's address to the BIR Plastics Committee after 12 years at its helm, Surendra Borad Patawari of Gemini Corporation NV in Belgium enthused: "There cannot be a better proposition than the business of plastics recycling."

In addition to the "enormous" availability of scrap as input and of "green" funds for investment, there has been rising governmental and public awareness around the world of the need to tackle plastics scrap. With commitment and "bold steps" from entrepreneurs, he stated, "each of us can profit immensely by engaging in plastics recycling" while at the same time "making the world a better place to live".

Nevertheless, the immediate future for plastics scrap remains more clouded, as evidenced by market reports from experts addressing the Plastics Committee meeting, which was held in London on October 6. As Mr Patawari Borad himself acknowledged: "First it was China which placed restrictions on imports of plastics scrap. It was followed by restrictions in Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and Taiwan. Now it is India to where you cannot export the goods, primarily because import licences have not been extended."

Steve Wong, Executive President of the China Scrap Plastics Association, spoke of a "buyer's market" in China and of the need to "raise recycling rates and not just collection". Recycling operations have shifted to other South East Asian countries which do not have the infrastructure to cope with imports of millions of tonnes of plastics scrap, he said.

BIR – REPRESENTING THE FUTURE LEADING RAW MATERIAL SUPPLIERS

Sally Houghton of the Plastic Recycling Corporation of California declared that the US plastics scrap market is “holding steady” despite China’s import ban while Mahmoud Al Sharif of UAE-based Sharif Metals International said the accumulation of plastics scrap in the Middle East is prompting wider consideration of technology investments.

According to Renaud Pfund of Veolia Propreté, Norway’s proposal to the Basel Convention to place plastics waste on the “orange” list for transboundary movements would reduce flows and yet would have no impact on the key issue of the moment, namely the environmental impact of plastics entering the world’s seas and oceans. Keith Freegard, Vice-Chair of the British Plastics Federation’s Recyclers Group and Associate Consultant at Axion Polymers, pointed to research showing that 88-95% of land-to-sea plastics debris emanated from just 10 rivers - eight in Asia and two in Africa.

In his guest presentation to the Plastics Committee meeting, Mr Freegard also spoke about Axion’s shredder waste advanced process plant in north-west England before summarising the UK’s plastics recycling performance with the words: “Could do better.” In particular, he identified a lack of consistency in collection as well as public confusion surrounding what can be recycled. He underlined the need to increase demand for recycled plastics and to improve product design for recyclability.

At the end of the meeting, BIR World President Ranjit Singh Baxi described Mr Borad Patawari’s contribution to the Plastics Committee as “phenomenal”, hailing the outgoing Chairman as a plastics industry “legend”.

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