



Bureau of International Recycling

BIR is the international trade association of the recycling industries. The organisation comprises over 750 member companies and 40 federations from some 70 countries which together account for around 65% of the world's population. BIR comprises four commodity divisions: iron and steel, non ferrous metals, paper and textiles, and has committees dealing with stainless steel and special alloys, plastics and rubber. BIR's primary goals are to promote recycling and recyclability, thereby conserving natural resources, protecting the environment and facilitating free trade of secondary raw materials. BIR was founded in 1948.

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## PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# Recycling still in demand

## *Market experts urge European public to carry on recycling paper*

Reports suggesting that Europe's recovered paper has become virtually unsaleable are not a true reflection of current market conditions. Many industry and local authority experts have confirmed that there is still a paramount need for the public to continue - and even to intensify - its paper recycling efforts, the global recycling federation, the Bureau of International Recycling, has insisted.

World prices for recovered paper tumbled to very low levels in October and November last year as a reflection of the early impact of the global economic downturn - but subsequently, prices have climbed steadily to more sustainable levels. Volumes of recovered paper have continued to be shipped both to domestic customers and into the export market. "At no point did the purchased volumes of recovered paper fall as sharply as prices," explained Ranjit Baxi, President of the BIR's Paper Division and Managing Director of UK-based J & H Sales International. "What happened recently in the recovered paper market was a direct consequence of the sudden global economic downturn."

With this world economic downturn leading to a reduction in the volume of paper and board products bought by the public, there is a danger of less material coming forward for collection and recycling. "It is vital that collections are maintained and that the public continues to pursue its love affair with recycling - otherwise, in the longer term, we could be facing a shortage of the recovered paper on which the world's paper and board industry has come to depend," warned Mr Baxi.

Globally, more than 200 million tonnes of recovered paper is used annually in the production of around 400 million tonnes of new paper and board. And while the economies of developed countries/regions such as the USA and the EU are expected to contract in 2009, key recovered paper consuming nations such as China and India are still expecting GDP growth to exceed 6% this year. From the global perspective, therefore,

demand for recovered paper will remain considerable - if perhaps slightly below the levels of last year. In 2008, Chinese paper mills alone imported approaching 25 million tonnes of recovered paper; continued demand from China will ensure that this figure does not fall substantially in 2009.

Some media reports have alleged that massive quantities of recovered paper are entering storage because there is no longer any market for the material. However, statistics indicate that the vast majority of local authorities are storing recyclable materials for no longer than normal. The material that has required storage is generally of a lower quality for which there is a limited demand from the world's paper and board producers.

Mr Baxi commented: "Quality is already an important issue and will become even more vital in the future. The recycling industry has made huge investments over many decades in increasingly sophisticated processing equipment so as to be capable of providing the world's paper mills with the quality of recovered paper they require to make new, higher-quality paper products that their customers now demand."

And he added: "If, as expected, global demand for recovered paper remains close to - or even exceeds - previous levels in the near future, there should be absolutely no need to put good-quality recovered paper into storage."

Continued recycling of paper and other materials makes sense not only commercially but also environmentally. Through the recycling of paper and six leading metals, emissions of the leading greenhouse gas - carbon dioxide - are reduced by a minimum of 550 million tonnes per annum, according to preliminary research conducted by Imperial College in London. This figure is equivalent to almost 2% of worldwide fossil fuel emissions - a fact which has prompted leading climate change expert Lord Nicholas Stern of Brentford to describe the recycling industry as environmental "heroes".

Further studies have suggested that, for every tonne of paper produced, recycling saves 0.85 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. This would mean that paper recycling alone cuts global CO2 emissions by some 170 million tonnes per year. Furthermore, with continued advances in recycling and in papermaking technology, the world's paper mills are able to manufacture ever-finer and lighter-weight paper without loss of quality, meaning more paper products available on the market for the same tonnage.

Public enthusiasm for recycling has been built over many years; huge numbers of people now recognise that, through recycling, they are making a valuable contribution to the conservation of natural resources and to the minimisation of greenhouse gas emissions. "The public's growing involvement in recycling has been a huge success story," said Mr Baxi. "The current economic downturn is temporary and reversible whereas discouragement of recycling would pose an irreversible threat to our planet. Recycling is the only way forward."

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***For further information please contact the BIR office.***