

PRESS RELEASE

Recent BIR World Recycling Convention & Exhibition in Singapore (19 - 22 May 2019)

General Assembly and Keynote Session:

Tom Bird carries “great optimism” into his role as BIR’s latest World President

Brussels, 24 May 2019

With recycling representing “a major solution” to the problems of the environment, the recycling industry must strive to show the important role it is playing in safeguarding the future of the planet. So said the BIR’s new World President Tom Bird, Chief Operating Officer of Hong Kong-based Chiho Environmental Group. His initial two-year term was approved at the organisation’s 2019 General Assembly in Singapore on May 21.

It was also agreed that Andy Wahl, President of TAV Holdings Inc. in the USA, would succeed Mr Bird as BIR’s Treasurer on an interim basis.

Expressing “great optimism” for BIR going forward, Mr Bird insisted that the world organisation needs to “be the voice of the whole recycling industry” and also “listen to members and their needs”. He also underlined the importance of supporting the industry’s “stars of the future” so that they “are more active in our association”.

In taking up the presidency, Mr Bird praised the “unflinching dedication in the face of many obstacles” of his immediate predecessor Ranjit Singh Baxi of UK-based J&H Sales International. Mr Baxi earlier praised the wide-ranging support he had received during his term in office and drew an ovation from the audience in saying: “It’s for you to judge but I think I have done my best.” Mr

BIR – REPRESENTING THE FUTURE LEADING RAW MATERIAL SUPPLIERS

Baxi expressed particular pride and satisfaction in two developments during his tenure: the launch of Global Recycling Day; and the first-ever BIR Convention in India.

“Diversity is our strength and we need to build on this to strengthen our global footprint,” Mr Baxi contended. In this context, the BIR General Assembly in Singapore saw the formal ratification of 74 new member companies and national associations which have joined the world recycling organisation since its Barcelona Convention in May 2018.

Mr Baxi closed with the following plea: “It’s time to stop paying lip-service to the ever-increasing problem of how we treat end-of-life products. Unless and until there is co-ordination between producers and recyclers, we will not master these challenges. It’s time for action.”

Immediately following the General Assembly, the BIR Convention’s keynote speaker Dr Gabrielle Walker insisted in her thought-provoking presentation that climate change is no longer the preserve of “tree-hugging” environmentalists but instead has become “something which hard-headed businessmen need to be thinking about, and are thinking about” - not least because of the associated “risks to financial stability”.

An expert strategist who assists businesses in their response to global challenges such as sustainability and the Circular Economy, and who has been described as “a beacon of clarity” by former US Vice President Al Gore, Dr Walker said the last 18 months have brought “a seismic shift” in the attention paid by the business community to the many risks associated with climate change. And with experts agreeing that more recycling can deliver huge cuts in carbon emissions, she declared: “This is going to put the recycling industry right in the spotlight.”

“I couldn’t wish you more well,” she added, “in not only continuing what you do but in exploding it.”

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