

# GLOBAL RECYCLING DAY

A day for the future of our planet



An initiative of the  
Bureau of International Recycling





A coastal landscape featuring large, moss-covered rocks in the foreground, leading to a rocky shoreline with small pools of water. In the background, a prominent cliff face is visible under a clear sky. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent yellow-green gradient on the right side, where the text is located.

# RECYCLING

**SAVES ENERGY,  
REDUCES CO<sub>2</sub>  
EMISSIONS AS  
WELL AS AIR AND  
WATER POLLUTION  
AND CONSERVES  
NATURAL RESOURCES.**



# CLIMATE CHANGE

IS THE MAJOR,  
OVERRIDING  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
ISSUE OF OUR  
TIME, AND THE  
SINGLE GREATEST  
CHALLENGE FACING  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
REGULATORS.



It is a growing crisis with economic, health and safety, food production, security, and other dimensions.

Therefore it is imperative to promote a sustainable solution which will turn this challenge into an opportunity.

## THE SOLUTION

**Recycling is the obvious answer.** It has been scientifically proven that through recycling, more CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are saved than what is generated by aviation worldwide. Yet this is not adequately recognised in all parts of the world. At the Bureau of International Recycling (BIR), we believe that it is absolutely necessary to dedicate one day per year to the important concept of recycling.

**The introduction of a Global Recycling Day would serve to promote action and awareness around the huge benefits and potential of recycling.**

The cost of failure to raise awareness around recycling would be high for our planet with detrimental effects not only to the environment but also to our health and the global economy.

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**RECYCLING  
IS SIMPLY TOO VITAL  
A PART OF THE WAR  
ON CLIMATE CHANGE  
NOT TO RECEIVE  
THE OFFICIAL  
RECOGNITION THAT A  
GLOBAL RECYCLING  
DAY WOULD PROVIDE.**

## **GOING GLOBAL**

Some regions, particularly Europe, are taking the lead by setting **ambitious recycling targets** and putting the right framework in place to make recycling an indispensable part of their societies and economies. However, in other parts of the world, namely Africa and Asia, recycling is less entrenched in everyday life, and **much work remains to be done**, particularly in terms of education and boosting free and fair trade. Otherwise, the very real danger is that CO<sub>2</sub> emissions will increase together with the population of these areas. This time bomb is bigger than one or two continents can defuse alone: a global approach is required.

## **BENEFITS OF RECYCLING**

**Recycling saves energy, reduces air and water pollution, and conserves natural resources.**

Equally, those serious about tackling climate change simply must start recognising the huge untapped potential of recycling as a green partner.

The reduction of carbon emissions is of paramount importance in the fight against climate change.





PROMOTES  
RECYCLING AND  
FACILITATES FREE  
AND FAIR TRADE OF  
RECYCLABLES, IN A  
SUSTAINABLE AND  
COMPETITIVE WORLD  
ECONOMY.

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## OUR ROLE

The Bureau of International Recycling has long held a global remit.

Founded in 1948, it was the first federation to promote recycling worldwide. With over 750 member companies from the private sector and 35 national recycling associations in 70 countries, BIR is the largest international recycling federation. *One of its key objectives is to promote recycling across the globe among other industrial sectors, policy-makers and the wider community.*

To help achieve this goal of greater international recognition of the benefits of recycling, BIR strongly believes it has a responsibility to seek to establish a **Global Recycling Day**.

Setting a day each year to mark the vital role that recycling plays in the fight against climate change would be an effective way of focusing attention worldwide on the concrete steps urgently needed to help safeguard our planet.



Currently there are various regional initiatives around the recycling theme, but there is no consolidated action at an international level.

BIR is taking up the challenge of making the **Global Recycling Day** a reality.

As an international trade association, BIR has at its disposal a network of national recycling associations and member companies that can help spread this action across the globe.

BIR is calling upon supranational organisations such as the United Nations, more in particular UNESCO and the United Nations Environment Programme, to include the **Global Recycling Day** in the official calendar of internationally celebrated days.



# SCIENTIFIC CO<sub>2</sub> STUDY PROVES WITH FACTS AND FIGURES HUGE EMISSION SAVINGS THANKS TO RECYCLING

Countless experts have been urging the recycling industry not to hide its achievements but rather to continuously stress its important environmental contribution.

In 2008, BIR initiated a study that changed the face of the carbon emissions debate: while a whole host of industries was coming forward with environmental reports outlining their attempts to reduce their greenhouse gas impacts, BIR commissioned experts at Imperial College London to assess the carbon dioxide equivalent emissions saved as a result of using secondary raw materials, or scrap, rather than primary raw materials. The final, stunning conclusion was that, every year, the

recycling of just seven metals and recovered paper achieved CO<sub>2</sub> emission savings of 501 million tonnes - a figure on a par with the carbon dioxide impact of the global aviation industry at that time.

In 2015, it was decided to repeat this valuable exercise and compile an up-to-date report using a refined, innovative methodology while incorporating real data from industry rather than relying solely on desk-based

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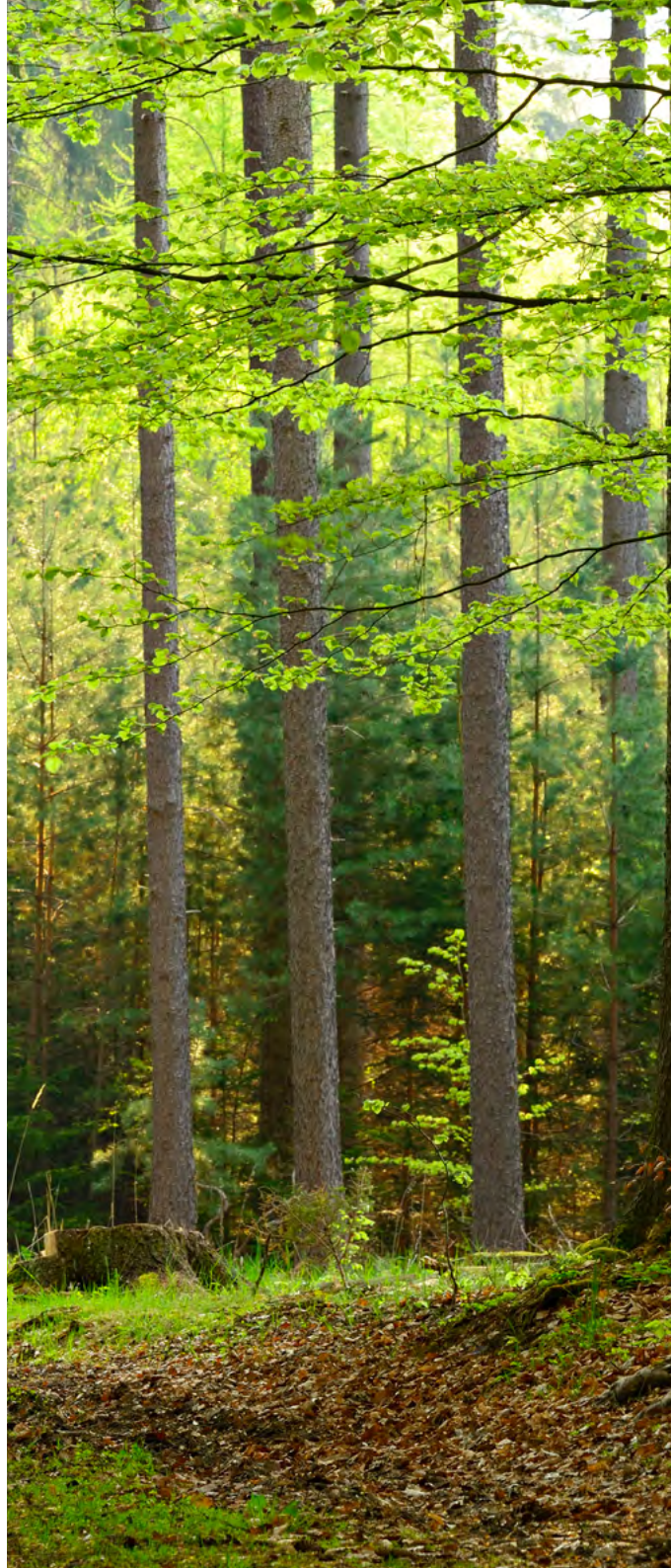
Material	Energy Savings (achieved by industry against Primary Benchmark) (TJ/100,000t)	Annual Worldwide Secondary Production <sup>*</sup> (Mt)	Estimated Savings in Annual CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions (Mt)
Aluminium	4,434	18	63.3
Copper	1,033	6	4.8
Ferrous	206	580	503.9
Total Estimated Savings in Annual CO <sub>2</sub> Emissions for the Production of the Secondary Metals Studied [Current Study]			<b>572.0</b>

<sup>\*</sup> Annual worldwide secondary production (Mt) as quoted in 2014 for Aluminium and in 2013 for Copper and Ferrous

calculations, thereby lending the results even greater validity.

The calculations in the 2008 report were based on the recycling of paper, ferrous metals, aluminium, copper, lead, zinc, nickel and tin whereas the 2015 update had tightened its focus to just aluminium, copper and ferrous metals, as well as paper. And for the three metals alone, it emerged that the carbon emission savings tally was substantially higher than previously thought, exceeding that for the 2008 analysis of eight commodities. **In effect, the total estimated savings in annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions arising from the secondary production of aluminium, copper and ferrous metals when compared to primary production are 572 million tonnes.**

The study, which was published at the beginning of 2016, is an important tool for the recycling industry in its mission to convince policy-makers and legislators that it dovetails perfectly with the push to create a circular economy, highlighting its unparalleled contribution to protecting our planet's resources and also its climate.



## CELEBRATING A GLOBAL RECYCLING DAY WOULD HAVE SEVERAL PURPOSES



### **AWARENESS**

Increase awareness of the necessity of recycling amongst the wider public



### **EDUCATE**

Create the opportunity to educate and explain the functioning of recycling as a concept and as an industry



### **NEW IDEAS**

Foster new ideas and technological innovation with regards to recycling



### **TOGETHER**

Bring together all stakeholders involved in and concerned by recycling



### **DEBATE**

Open the debate on how to improve framework conditions for a better and more efficient recycling system





## YOUR ROLE

The **Global Recycling Day** will bring people together to raise awareness and increase knowledge about the importance of recycling in a global sustainable society.

But BIR alone cannot make the Global Recycling Day happen.

**We need your support to make this important initiative a success** and to get other important stakeholders on board.

In giving us your support you will be part of this dynamic project, giving you and/or your organization an active and visible role in the **Global Recycling Day**. Your name will encourage others to join the initiative.

**Help us spread the word and make the Global Recycling Day happen!**

Simply sign the **statement of support** on [www.bir.org](http://www.bir.org)

# MOREOVER, RECYCLING PROJECTS ACROSS THE GLOBE HELP FULFILL A NUMBER OF THE UN'S MILLENNIUM GOALS INCLUDING:



## ACHIEVE DECENT EMPLOYMENT

In the EU alone recycling has generated 300,000 local jobs; there is big potential in other parts of the world.



## SUPPORT UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

Local economies can invest part of the profits of a successful recycling system in education.



## COMBAT DISEASES

Creating recycling hubs and limiting/managing better waste can improve sanitation conditions in local communities (especially in emerging economies).



## ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Recycling helps reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by at least 700 million tonnes per year.



When I became President of the world recycling federation BIR, I made it my mission to draw the world's attention to the benefits of recycling.

The precursor of climate change is the reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. And recycling does exactly that. Since the year 2000, our industry has single-handedly helped save some 10 billion tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – a staggering achievement. Therefore I strongly believe that the contribution of recycling should be recognised in the framework of the climate change discussions.

The **Global Recycling Day** aims at increasing the overall awareness regarding the importance of recycling. In our communities, regions, countries and continents we should take one day to reflect on what we can do on a daily basis to take better care of our environment. We can all certainly spare one day, can't we?

One day for the future of our planet.



Ranjit S. Baxi



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

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