

The importance of recycling

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7 times the total emissions from Sweden are saved each year by the recycling industry. It reduces CO2 emissions and saves the environment. In fact it annually reduces global CO2 emissions by 500 million tons, which is more than what is being emitted by the world wide aviation industry. Recycling of iron and steel saves 74% energy and reduces water and air pollution by respectively 76% and 86%, compared to primary production. It provides new raw materials and contributes to save energy. There's no sense in producing goods in a permanent material like plastics, that's supposed to be used only once. It's a huge waste of resources.

Today the recycling industry provides half of the world's raw materials and this figure is set to increase. It's about environmentally sound management of resources. It's about plain common sense.

There has to be a political willingness to facilitate recycling in every way. And from a corporate perspective social responsibility is becoming an increasingly important competitive edge. This is also a communication issue, it has to be a fact that is well known to the market when a company is doing valuable environmental work. We also need a well functioning global market with easy to understand regulations to facilitate global trade. The global demand for recycled materials should influence their collection and use.

Fraud and theft has also to be kept at bay which calls for a close collaboration between organizations such as The International Chamber of Commerce, The International Trade Council and the International Maritime Bureau of the commercial crime services.

Increasing recycling is the only way to go if we want to minimize our effect on the environment. We have to remember that recycling is essential for the environment. An increase would be a tremendous help to reduce the green house effect. Increasing recycling is not rocket science. We know how to do it, we just have to decide to go through with it.

Environmental issues and their potential solutions are often presented in a very complex way. But the benefits from recycling are very clear, with more recycling we stand to gain economic and environmental benefits that's easy to measure.