

special health-care fees of 0.4, 0.6, and 0.8, yuan per day are awarded to workers at different posts.

These measures do not, however, provide any incentives to the general public to patronize the authorized redemption stations and recovery companies. The main way to achieve this would be to increase the purchase prices of recovered products, or to offer some attractive bonuses to customers. One example of the latter is the retail discount coupons that can be earned by returning recyclables to redemption stations. These are offered by some of the recovery outlets in Beijing. Another approach is to make some scarce recovered goods available through the companies, such as building materials for house-repair and renovation.

For the moment, the Beijing Government is in a quandary about policy towards informal recovery. It recognizes that restrictions upon these activities would result in even more recyclables being dumped, but the uncontrolled and often illegal nature of these enterprises represents a defiance of law and order. Besides the vigilance needed to prevent picking from street containers, the unauthorized buyers are discouraged by not being eligible for health care or economic aid. The activities of waste recovery represent a special case of the dilemmas that China faces in seeking a compromise between state management and private enterprise.

In general, the Beijing government supports China's long tradition in the utilization and recovery of recyclable

resources, and aims to help the well-organized, widely-distributed local recovery networks to achieve their full potential.

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## NOTES, NEWS & COMMENTS

### Business Charter for Sustainable Development: Principles for Environmental\* Management

#### Foreword

There is widespread recognition today that environmental protection must be among the highest priorities of every business. In its milestone report, '*Our Common Future*', published in 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) emphasized the importance of environmental protection in the pursuit of sustainable development.

To help business around the world improve its environmental performance, the International Chamber of Commerce established a task-force of business representatives to create this *Business Charter for Sustainable Development*. It comprises sixteen principles for environmental management which, for business, is a vitally important aspect of sustainable development.

This Charter will assist enterprises in fulfilling their commitment to environmental stewardship in a comprehensive fashion. It was formally launched in April 1991 at the Second World Industry Conference on Environmental Management.

#### Introduction

Sustainable development involves meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Economic growth provides the conditions in which protection of the environment can best be achieved, and environmental protection, in balance with other human goals, is necessary to achieve growth that is sustainable.

In turn, versatile, and dynamic, responsive and profitable, businesses are required as the driving force for sustainable economic development and for providing managerial, technical, and financial, resources to contribute to

the resolution of environmental challenges. Market economies, characterized by entrepreneurial initiatives, are essential to achieving this.

Business thus shares the view that there should be a common goal, not a conflict, between economic development and environmental protection, both now and for future generations. Making market forces work in this way to protect and improve the quality of the environment — with the help of performance-based standards and judicious use of economic instruments in a harmonious, regulatory framework — is one of the greatest challenges that the world faces in the coming decade.

The above-cited 1987 report, '*Our Common Future*', expresses the same challenge and calls on the cooperation of business in tackling it. To this end, business leaders have launched actions in their individual enterprises as well as through sectoral and cross-sectoral associations.

In order that more and more businesses join this effort, and that their environmental performance continues to improve, the International Chamber of Commerce hereby calls upon enterprises and their associations to use the following *Principles* as a basis for pursuing such improvement and to express publicly their support for them.

Individual programmes developed to implement these Principles will reflect the wide diversity among enterprises in size and function. The overall objectives are to have the widest possible range of enterprises commit themselves to improving their environmental performance in accordance

\* Adjectival form of the term *environment* which, as used in this document, also refers to environmentally-related aspects of health, safety, and product, stewardship. The Business Charter is also published in more than 20 other languages, including all the official languages of the United Nations.

with these Principles, to have in place management practices to effect such improvement, to measure their progress, and to report this progress as appropriate both internally and externally.

### *Principles*

**1. Corporate Priority:**— To recognize environmental management as among the highest corporate priorities and as a key determinant to sustainable development; to establish policies, programmes, and practices, for conducting operations in an environmentally sound manner.

**2. Integrated management:**— To integrate these policies, programmes, and practices, fully into each business as an essential element of management in all its functions.

**3. Process of improvement:**— To continue to improve corporate policies, programmes, and environmental performance, taking into account technical developments, scientific understanding, consumer needs, and community expectations, with legal regulations as a starting-point; and to apply the same environmental criteria internationally.

**4. Employee education:**— To educate, train, and motivate, employees to conduct their activities in an environmentally responsible manner.

**5. Prior assessment:**— To assess environmental impacts before starting a new activity or project, and before decommissioning a facility or leaving a site.

**6. Products and services:**— To develop and provide products or services that have no undue environmental impact and are safe in their intended use, that are efficient in their consumption of energy and natural resources, and that can be recycled, reused, or disposed of safely.

**7. Customer advice:**— To advise, and where relevant educate, customers, distributors, and the public, in the safe use, transportation, storage, and disposal, of products provided; and to apply similar considerations to the provision of services.

**8. Facilities and operations:**— To develop, design, and operate, facilities, and conduct activities, taking into consideration the efficient use of energy and materials, the sustainable use of renewable resources, the minimization of adverse environmental impact and waste generation, and the safe and responsible disposal of residual wastes.

**9. Research:**— To conduct or support research on the environmental impacts of raw materials, products, processes, emissions, and wastes, associated with the enterprise, and on the means of minimizing any adverse impacts.

**10. Precautionary approach:**— To modify the manufacture, marketing, or use, of products or services or the conduct of activities, consistent with scientific and technical understanding, to prevent serious or irreversible environmental degradation.

**11. Contractors and suppliers:**— To promote the adoption of these principles by contractors acting on behalf of the enterprise, encouraging and, where appropriate, requiring improvements in their practices to make them consistent with those of the enterprise; and to encourage the widest possible adoption of these principles by suppliers.

**12. Emergency preparedness:**— To develop and maintain, where significant hazards exist, emergency preparedness plans in conjunction with the emergency services, relevant authorities, and the local community, recognizing potential transboundary impacts.

**13. Transfer of technology:**— To contribute to the transfer of environmentally sound technology and management methods throughout the industrial and public sectors.

**14. Contributing to the common effort:**— To contribute to the development of public policy and to business, governmental, and intergovernmental programmes and educational initiatives that will enhance environmental awareness and protection.

**15. Openness to concerns:**— To foster openness and dialogue with employees and the public, anticipating and responding to their concerns about the potential hazards and impacts of operations, products, wastes, or services, including those of transboundary or global significance.

**16. Compliance and reporting:**— To measure environmental performance; to conduct regular environmental audits and assessments of compliance with company requirements, legal requirements, and these principles; and periodically to provide appropriate information to the Board of Directors, shareholders, employees, the authorities, and the public.

### *Support for the Charter*

The ICC is undertaking an extensive campaign to encourage member companies and others to express their support for the Charter. It has also invited certain international organizations to provide supportive messages.

A list of these companies, and the messages received from international organizations, are given in separate leaflets which are normally circulated together with the Charter. They may also be obtained from ICC Headquarters or ICC National Committees in nearly 60 countries.

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## **International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Code on Environmental Advertising**

### *Introduction*

The ICC International Code of Advertising Practice is widely accepted as the basis for promoting high standards of ethics in advertising, by self-regulation against a background of national and international law. The Code recognizes social responsibilities towards the consumer and the community, and is designed primarily as an instrument for self-discipline.

Because of the growing importance of environmental issues and the complexity of judging and verifying environmental claims, the ICC has decided to produce an Environmental Advertising Code, in order to extend the area of self-discipline and to help business to make responsible use of environmental advertising. National rules and guidelines, where applicable, have been taken into account, as well as the ICC's Business Charter for Sustainable Development, together with the ICC position paper on Environmental Labelling Schemes.