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HBI PRODUCTION TOPS 10 MILLION TONNES IN 2009

MATTHEWS, NC (March 12, 2010) – More than 10 million metric tons (tonnes) of hot briquetted iron (HBI) were produced worldwide in 2009, of which approximately 6 million tonnes were shipped according to figures compiled by the HBI Association. The production and shipment figures are based on all direct reduction plants capable of HBI production (i.e., dedicated HBI plants and combination hot/cold discharge plants with HBI capability).

HBI Association members in Russia and Venezuela accounted for almost 4.8 million tonnes of the production total and about 5 million tonnes of shipments (domestic and international). Essar Steel of India was the largest producer of HBI with 4.2 million tonnes; however, all of its production was used in the company's steel operations.

Steelmakers in Asia (including India) received the largest percentage of HBI shipments for the first time in 2009. Almost 2.7 million tonnes of HBI, representing 45 percent of total shipments went to Asia/India.

Europe (including Russia and CIS countries) was the destination for slightly more than 1.6 million tonnes of HBI (27 percent of total shipments). South America accounted for 866,748 tonnes (14 percent), primarily as domestic shipments within Venezuela. The Middle East and North Africa received 502,429 tonnes (8 percent). North America, for many years the leading importer of HBI, dropped to only 364,668 tonnes in 2009 (6 percent).

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HBI Association, Ltd. (HBIA) is a not-for-profit, international corporation whose purpose is to promote HBI as steel's most versatile source of metallics, to inform ship owners/operators, charters, and terminal operators of the handling shipping, and storage benefits of HBI, and to assist the global iron and steel industry in the effective use of HBI. HBIA members include major producers and exporters of HBI; suppliers of process technologies, equipment, materials, and services to the HBI Industry; traders and brokers involved in buying and selling HBI; and individuals who have made notable contributions to the fields of direct reduction technology and HBI production and use.

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