UN environment programme | finance initiative

#GRT 2026 | Global Roundtable

UNEP FI Global Roundtable 2026
Event Highlights

From Risk to Resilience: Financing the Future

23–25 JUNE 2026 | LONDON & ONLINE

UNEP FI's flagship event for sustainable finance

The 19th UNEP FI Global Roundtable (GRT2026) brought together leaders from finance, policy, science and sustainability at a pivotal moment for sustainable finance. Under the theme *From risk to resilience: Financing the future*, the GRT2026 explored how the financial sector can move beyond ambition to deliver practical solutions that strengthen resilience, accelerate the transition to a low-carbon and nature-positive economy, and unlock investment at the scale required.

Across three days of high-level plenaries, keynotes, panel discussions, engagement forums and leadership dialogues, participants examined the evolving nature of climate, nature and social risks, the growing importance of resilience in financial decision-making, and the opportunities created by innovation, collaboration and effective policy. Discussions reflected the increasing recognition that sustainability is no longer a parallel agenda, but an integral part of long-term financial performance and economic stability.

Why this year's discussions mattered

A decade after the Paris Agreement, the challenge is no longer setting ambitions, but delivering on them. While global frameworks, standards and commitments have advanced significantly, the priority now is translating them into real-economy outcomes. Throughout the Roundtable, speakers emphasized the need to scale investable transition solutions, strengthen collaboration between public and private finance, improve the availability and consistency of sustainability data, and integrate climate and nature-related risks into core business and investment decisions.

Discussions also highlighted that resilience extends beyond climate mitigation. Nature, biodiversity, water, pollution and social equity are increasingly recognized as interconnected drivers of both financial risk and long-term value creation. Building resilient financial systems will therefore require coordinated action across sectors, geographies and institutions to mobilize capital where it can have the greatest impact.

The conversations throughout this year's Global Roundtable demonstrated that finance is continuing to shift—from setting ambitions to delivering implementation. Across our community of banks, insurers and investors, as well as policymakers and partners, there was a shared determination to keep up the pace, and to work together to strengthen resilience in an increasingly complex world.

One of the most valuable aspects of the Roundtable was the opportunity to bring the wider finance community together. As sustainability discussions continue to evolve across regions and sectors, face-to-face dialogue remains essential for building trust, exchanging ideas and developing practical solutions. The strength of the UNEP FI community was evident throughout the Roundtable, demonstrating what can be achieved through collaboration.

My sincere thanks go to our speakers, sponsors, partners, members and participants for making this year's Global Roundtable such a success. Your expertise, engagement and willingness to share knowledge made these discussions insightful and action-oriented.

As we look ahead, UNEP FI will continue working with the financial sector in scaling implementation, strengthening resilience and accelerating the transition to a more sustainable global economy. I look forward to carrying on with these conversations at our Regional Roundtables in 2027.

Eric Usher

Head, UNEP Finance Initiative

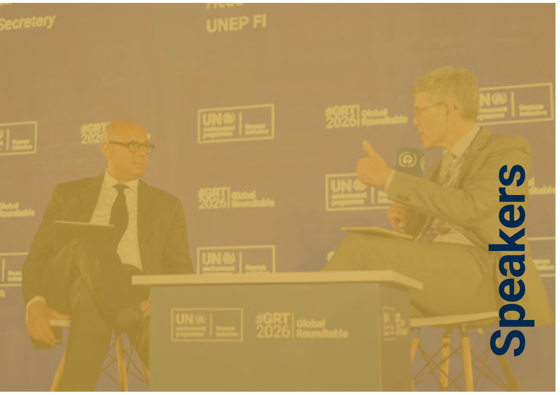
Attendees & registration

3700+
Registrations

1000+
Daily livestream viewers

800+
In-person attendees

Speakers

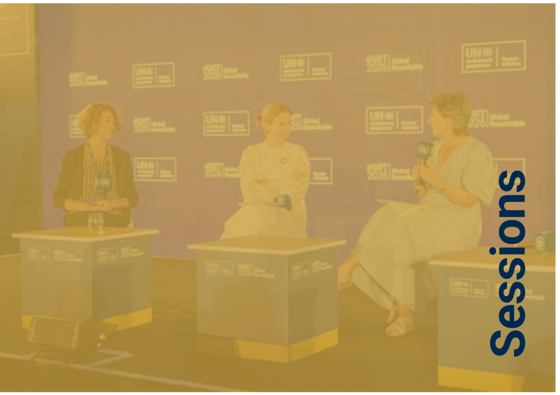


75
Speakers from 25+ countries

43%
Female speakers

64%
C-suite speakers

Sessions



30+
Sessions over 3 days including:
plenaries, engagement forums, technical sessions, and networking opportunities

Reach

100,000+
Social media impressions

21,000+
Website visits

5,700+
Social media engagements

6,000+
Newsletter reach

Key takeaways

Watch event recording **here**

From ambition to implementation

The overarching message from GRT2026 was clear: the frameworks and commitments are largely in place, but delivery must now become the priority. Success will depend on developing credible transition plans, building pipelines of investable projects and translating ambition into measurable real-economy outcomes.

Resilience as a financial imperative

Resilience emerged as a central theme throughout the Roundtable. Climate change, biodiversity loss, water scarcity and pollution are increasingly interconnected sources of financial risk that affect economies, markets and communities. Integrating these risks into governance, strategy and investment decisions is becoming essential for long-term financial stability.

Public and private finance working together

Participants emphasized that neither governments nor financial institutions can deliver the transition alone. Public finance plays a critical role in de-risking investments and enabling private capital, particularly through blended finance, guarantees and concessional instruments.

A consistent theme was the need to strengthen the flow of capital to emerging and developing economies, where the cost of capital remains higher and investment risks are often perceived as greater. Bridging this gap between capital availability and real-economy needs is essential to ensuring a globally inclusive and effective transition, with stronger collaboration between public development banks, governments and private investors required to scale investment into adaptation, resilience and hard-to-abate sectors.

Harmonizing standards, policy and data

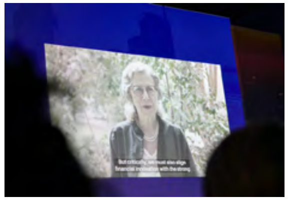
Consistent standards, reliable data and coherent policy frameworks are essential to scaling sustainable finance. Greater alignment between reporting requirements and regulatory approaches can reduce fragmentation, improve comparability and increase confidence among financial institutions to deploy capital at scale. Progress on convergence was welcomed, but speakers highlighted that further coordination is needed to support effective decision-making across markets and jurisdictions.

Nature, circularity and equity as investment priorities

The Roundtable reinforced that financing the future requires looking beyond carbon alone. Nature, forests, water, circular economy solutions and pollution prevention all represent growing areas of financial risk and opportunity. At the same time, speakers highlighted that a resilient transition must also be equitable, ensuring that finance supports communities, emerging markets and future generations while addressing the interconnected environmental and social challenges facing the global economy.

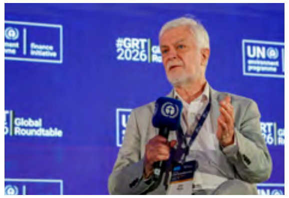
UNEP FI was proud to welcome 75 speakers from 25 countries in London including:

To view the full speakers list, visit unepfi.org/grt2026



Inger Andersen
Executive Director
UN Environment Programme

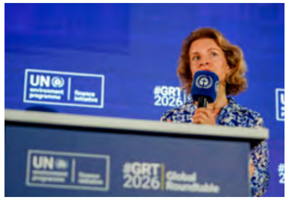
Simon Stiell
Executive Secretary
The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)



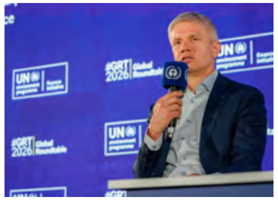
Jim Skea
Chair
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Rachel Kyte
UK Special Representative for Climate

Frank Elderson
Member of the Executive Board and Vice-Chair of the Supervisory Board
European Central Bank (ECB)



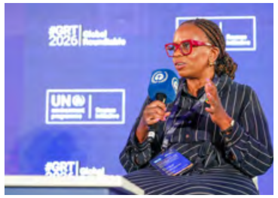
Sabine Mauderer
First Deputy Governor
Deutsche Bundesbank & Chair Network for Greening the Financial System (NGFS)



Günther Thallinger
Board Member
Allianz SE

Sim Tshabalala
Chief Executive Officer
Standard Bank Group

Mary Schapiro
Vice Chair
Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero



Sanda Ojiambo
Assistant Secretary-General and Chief Executive Officer
United Nations Global Compact

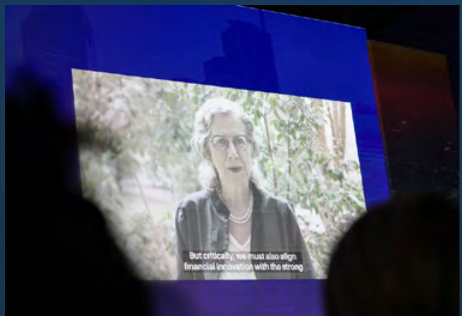
Ambroise Fayolle
Vice President
European Investment Bank

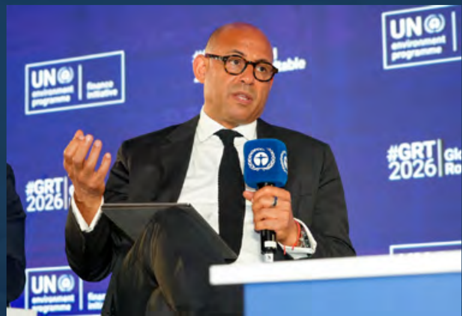
Ana Toni
Chief Executive Officer
COP30

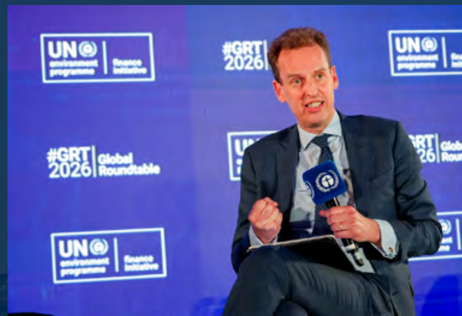
Photography: Mariana Castaño Cano / 10 Billion Solutions for UNEP FI

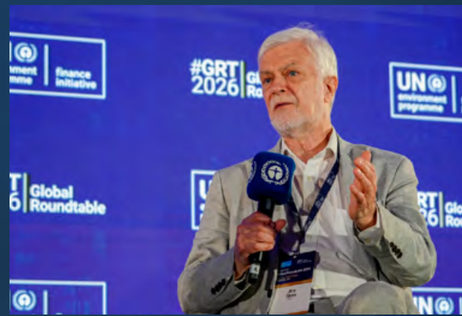
Voices from the Roundtable

Watch event recording **here**









Inger Andersen
Executive Director
UN Environment Programme

"Public and private actors must move forward together at a time when uncertainty can easily encourage fragmentation. Multilateral cooperation has never been more essential."

Simon Stiell
Executive Secretary
The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

"Linking those financing frameworks with the climate plans that countries have come forward with, and ensuring finance is delivered against those priorities of countries, is going to be what gets us on track to 1.5°C—or not. And we are at that critical stage right now."

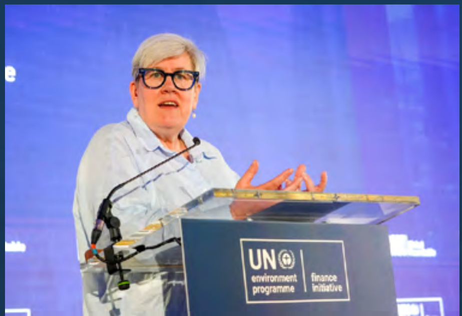
Frank Elderson
Member of the Executive Board and Vice-Chair of the Supervisory Board
European Central Bank (ECB)

"We can make this transition. We are making the transition. It's not going fast enough. We need to speed up." (On the need for financial institutions to remain focused on the realities of climate change and nature degradation).

Jim Skea
Chair
Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

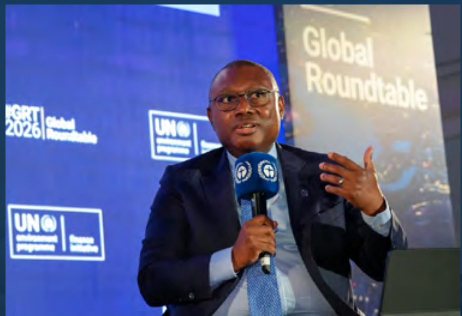
"Current policies will result in about 2.8°C of warming by the end of this century. If all nationally determined contributions are implemented, maybe 2.3–2.5°C. The very best scenario, if all net-zero targets are implemented, is that warming might peak at around 1.8–1.9°C during the 21st century."

Watch event recording **here**



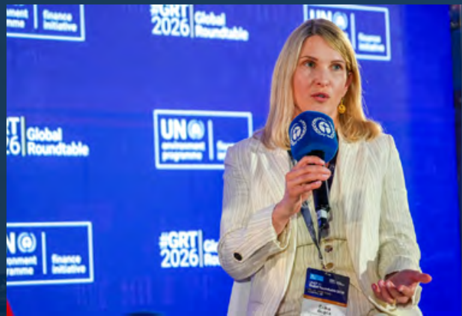
Rachel Kyte
UK Special Representative for Climate

"No one should die from extreme heat. We've got to put a stop to this. This is going to require a reset to our concept of risk and resilience. We are increasingly facing the risk of 'irresilience'—more uninsured assets, more people exposed, and growing pressure that ultimately falls back on the public purse."



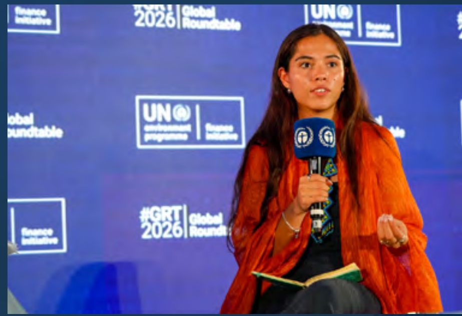
Sim Tshabalala
Chief Executive Officer
Standard Bank Group

Sim Tshabalala highlighted the need for globally and regionally coherent standards, together with better-quality data, to enable financial institutions to manage climate-related risks consistently across markets. "We need frameworks applicable globally and, in particular, continentally, and secondly, common standards on data."



Erika Gupta
Global Head of Sustainability
Siemens Financial Services

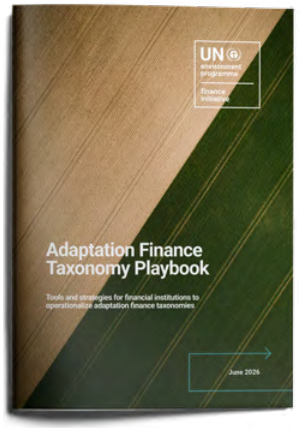
Erika Gupta highlighted the role of energy efficiency in strengthening resilience while reducing emissions, arguing that adaptation and mitigation should be pursued together. "The cleanest electron is the one you do not use. That focus on efficiency enables resilience as well as mitigation."



Xiye Bastida
Climate Justice Activist

"What I see over and over again is that there's an acceptance that things cannot change. But we built them, and we can change them [...] Indigenous peoples and frontline communities should not need to become economists to have their land and livelihoods valued."

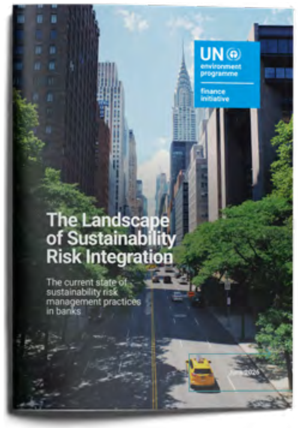
Highlight reports



Adaptation Finance Taxonomy Playbook

Climate adaptation enables businesses and economies to shift from risk to resilience by protecting people, assets and infrastructure from the growing impacts of climate change. It also represents a significant investment opportunity for the finance sector. This playbook provides practical guidance to help financial institutions identify, assess and scale adaptation finance across markets and jurisdictions.

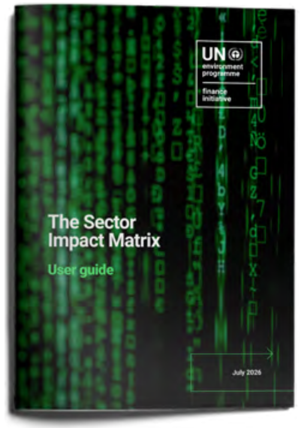
Download here



The Landscape of Sustainability Risk Integration

Sustainability risks, including climate, nature, pollution and social pressures, have become a mainstream prudential concern for the banking industry. Launched during the opening plenary of the Global Roundtable, this report examines how banks are integrating sustainability risks into risk management across the global banking sector.

Download here



Sector Impact Matrix

Understanding and managing sustainability impacts is essential for effective risk management and informed decision-making. Developed by UNEP FI with support from peers from the Impact Management Platform, the open-source Sector Impact Matrix identifies the most likely positive and negative sustainability impacts across economic sectors and activities.

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First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB)

Turning untapped sustainability needs into financing opportunities

Industry: Banking and financial services

Region: UAE, Middle East and North Africa

Climate focus: Transition finance, low-carbon energy, water security and climate resilience

Key themes: Hard-to-abate sectors, energy transition, water stewardship, sustainable bonds innovation, resource efficiency

First Abu Dhabi Bank (FAB) is the UAE's global bank and one of the world's largest and safest financial institutions. With a presence in more than 20 markets across five continents, FAB connects capital with opportunity across the UAE, the wider MENA region and international markets. Guided by the UAE's long-term economic vision, the Bank supports sustainable finance, infrastructure development, economic diversification and the transition to a lower-carbon economy.

Pioneering a new asset class for transition finance

In September 2025, FAB issued the world's first low-carbon energy bond, raising US$ 750 million through a five-year issuance. Proceeds were dedicated to reliable low-carbon energy projects, including nuclear power, broadening sustainable finance beyond conventional renewable energy. The transaction attracted an order book exceeding US$ 1.8 billion, nearly 2.5 times the issuance value, with international investors outside the GCC receiving more than 90% of the allocation. This response reflected growing demand for credible transition finance solutions and reinforced the role of capital markets in supporting hard-to-abate sectors.

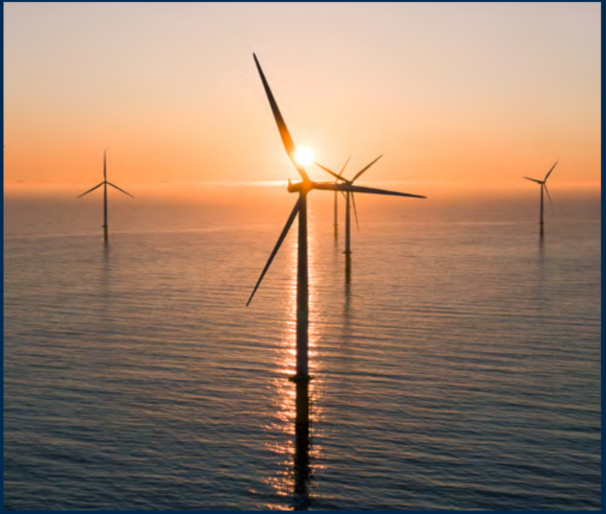
Proceeds were allocated to a nuclear power generation asset in the UAE, which generated 2,106 GWh of low-carbon electricity in 2025. This was equivalent to approximately 2.5% of Abu Dhabi's annual electricity demand and avoided 851,700 tCO_2e compared with higher-emitting forms of power generation. FAB's financing accounted for 281 MW of the project's 5,600 MW low-carbon generation capacity, showing how transition-labelled finance can support firm low-carbon power in markets where electricity demand is rising and system reliability remains essential.

FAB's transition finance activities also address resource-efficiency challenges in hard-to-abate sectors. In 2025, FAB financed a water-efficiency project for an oil and gas client that is expected to conserve approximately 34.5 million m^3 of groundwater each year, equivalent to the yearly water needs of 189,091 people in the UAE.

The transaction demonstrates that the value of transition finance can extend beyond reducing carbon emissions. By encouraging more efficient use of natural resources, sustainable finance can help high-impact sectors improve operational resilience, reduce exposure to water-related risks and lower pressure on scarce freshwater resources.

These projects also delivered measurable socio-economic value. FAB's share of the financing supported an estimated 18,894 jobs, contributed approximately AED 5.6 billion to UAE GDP and delivered an estimated AED 1.4 billion in avoided social cost from reduced GHG emissions.

Scaling water security through innovative finance



In 2025, FAB became the first financial institution in the GCC to issue a blue bond. An inaugural US$ 50 million issuance in August was followed by a further US$ 20 million issuance in October, bringing the total to US$ 70 million. Proceeds were allocated to sustainable water and wastewater management projects in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, supporting climate adaptation and long-term water resilience. The financed portfolio combined wastewater treatment infrastructure in the UAE with a renewable-energy-powered desalination facility in Saudi Arabia, demonstrating how blue finance can support circular water systems and alternative freshwater supply in water-stressed markets.

The UAE project treats 16.6 million m³ of wastewater each year, while the Saudi Arabia project supplies 3.1 million m³ of freshwater through renewable-powered desalination. Together, these projects strengthen circular water management, reduce pressure on freshwater resources and enhance climate resilience across the region.

Beyond their environmental impact, the investments are expected to create wider social and economic value. The UAE wastewater-treatment project alone is estimated to support 517 jobs and contribute approximately AED 153 million to UAE GDP.

Challenges, enablers and lessons in mobilizing capital for transition and water resilience

FAB's experience shows that the challenge for banks is not only identifying sustainability needs, but turning them into credible, investable opportunities. In hard-to-abate sectors, this means financing projects where emissions reductions, resource efficiency and system reliability can advance together. In water-stressed markets, it means treating water security as both a climate resilience priority and an infrastructure investment opportunity.

Three factors have been critical to this approach: clearly defined uses of proceeds, labelled instruments that give investors transparency, and impact assessment that connects financing activity with attributed environmental and socio-economic indicators. Together, these elements help demonstrate value beyond transaction volume.

The core lesson is that transition and blue finance are most effective when grounded in real-economy needs rather than broad sustainability themes. Scaling these markets requires instruments that recognise sector constraints, meet investor expectations and direct capital towards assets, technologies and infrastructure capable of delivering measurable progress.

Note: The impact figures presented in this case study reflect FAB's financed share of eligible projects, where applicable, and are based on the Bank's sustainable finance impact assessment approach. Avoided emissions, water-related benefits, jobs supported, GDP contribution and avoided social cost estimates should be read as attributed impact indicators rather than full project-level outcomes.

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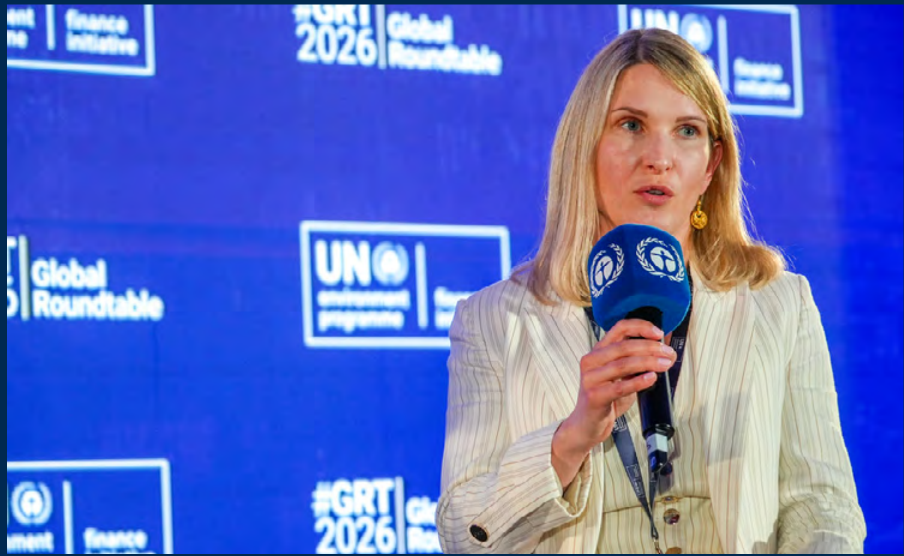
Siemens Financial Services

Erika Gupta, Head of Sustainability at Siemens Financial Services, highlighted in both her panel discussion and thought leadership article why resilience is becoming one of the defining business imperatives of our time.

Against a backdrop of climate change, resource constraints, supply chain disruption, cybersecurity threats and economic volatility, she argues that resilience is not merely about managing risk—it is about creating long-term competitive advantage.

Drawing on Siemens' technology expertise and SFS's financing know-how, Erika explores how organizations can strengthen climate adaptation, operational continuity, and profitability while accelerating the transition. From energy efficiency to battery energy storage systems and resilient infrastructure, she demonstrates that resilience, sustainability and profitability are mutually reinforcing.

Read her full article here.



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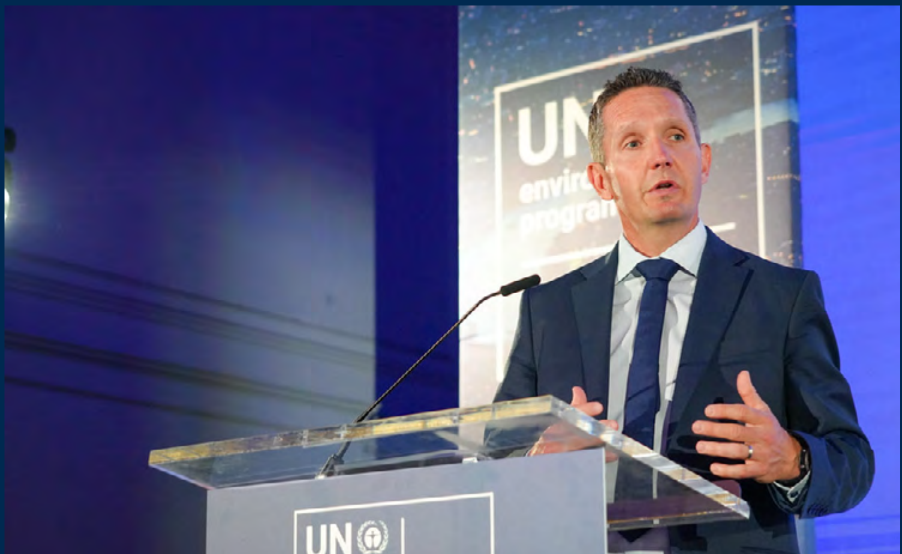
EY

Transition finance: turning ambition into investable action



Shaun Carazzo, EY Global Financial Services Sustainability Leader

The transition to net zero is no longer simply a climate commitment or reporting exercise. For financial institutions, it is increasingly a question of resilience, energy security, value creation and growth. The key challenge lies in capital deployment at the pace, scale and depth required to finance the next phase of the transition. Addressing this has never been more urgent, and the financial sector has a critical role to play.

Progress is evident. Global energy transition investment is rising, reaching a record US$ 2.3 trillion in 2025, up 8% from the previous year. Yet much of this capital continues to flow into mature technologies such as renewables, electrified transport and established infrastructure. By contrast, harder-to-finance areas including hydrogen, carbon capture and clean industry remain comparatively underfunded, despite their critical role in decarbonising emissions-intensive sectors and supporting long-term economic transformation.

With the next wave of transition finance likely to be even more complex, this gap in funding for emerging climate solutions can't be ignored. Capital is required to support these newer technologies, and projects with longer time horizons, less certain demand profiles present more challenging risk-return dynamics. For banks, insurers, asset managers and private capital providers, this is both a financing challenge and a commercial opportunity.

Financing the next phase of the energy transition

As the energy transition gathers pace, debt markets will be central to mobilising the capital required at scale. Meeting this demand will require innovative financing approaches, creating significant opportunities for financial institutions across lending, project finance and private credit. While renewables and electric vehicles are likely to drive the largest volumes, emerging sectors may offer some of the greatest opportunities for value creation, given their need for complex financing structures, risk-sharing arrangements and specialist expertise.

Scale creates the market, but complexity creates the premium

The question then becomes how to make that complexity investable? One answer lies in blended finance and innovative market design. For example, EY supported the design of an Energy Transition Fund in Germany focused on assets such as local grids, district heating networks and hydrogen infrastructure. The objective was to combine public anchor capital with private-market discipline to aggregate fragmented projects into investable portfolios. By creating scale, improving diversification and aligning with investor requirements, such models can unlock capital for critical transition infrastructure while delivering attractive risk-adjusted returns.

Bridging the supply chain financing gap

The same challenge is visible across complex value chains. In fashion retail, for example, much of the decarbonisation challenge is linked to brands working with suppliers such as mills, dye houses and processing units, who also require capital for practical upgrades including energy efficiency, renewable energy and electrification. As explored in 'Accelerating fashion decarbonisation: An efficient approach to unlocking corporate value and financing the supply chain transition' from EY, H&M Group, HSBC, and the Apparel Impact Institute, these projects can be difficult to finance because they are often fragmented, smaller in scale, have longer payback periods and face limited access to affordable capital. It also highlights the growing role of banks in structuring collaborative, relationship-based solutions, including sustainable supply chain finance and blended finance, to share risk, improve access to capital and turn higher-risk projects into investable opportunities.

For financial institutions, transition finance is increasingly being viewed as a core growth agenda. Stronger assessment of transition plan credibility is a priority with initiatives such as the UNEP FI Risk Centre providing practical resources, research and insights on emerging approaches, regulatory developments and best practices across banks and insurers navigating sustainability risks. EY is also supporting the UNEP FI Risk Centre by helping firms evaluate their corporate transition plans through proven frameworks and processes. By embedding these insights into risk management processes firms can make faster, more informed financing decisions. This in turn strengthens accountability, helping to direct capital towards credible, impactful real-economy transition outcomes.

The transition is already underway. The task now is to make it investable at scale. By financing, integrating and scaling the transition through practical solutions that channel capital to where it is needed most and accelerate progress across the economy.

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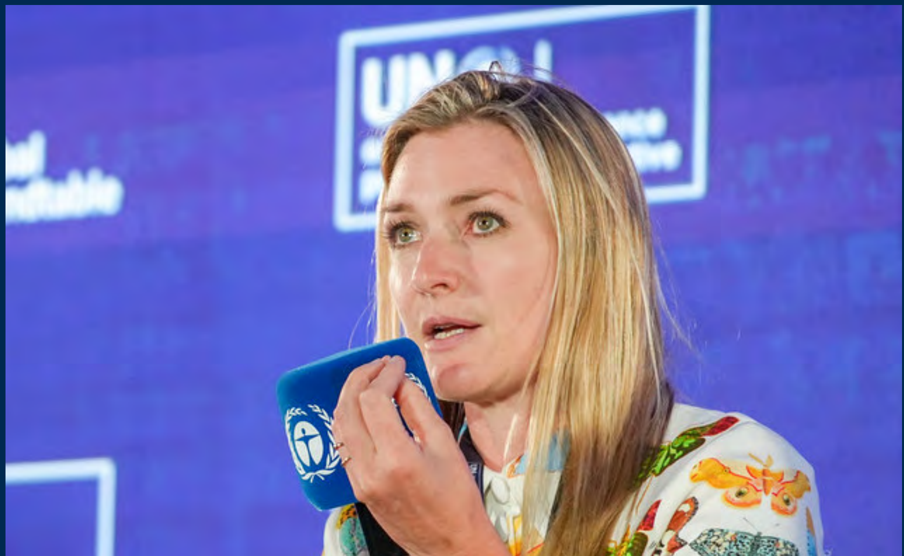

Laurent Smart, Global Head of Sustainable Finance at Bloomberg

This year’s London Climate Action Week took place amid record-breaking heatwaves across Europe and rising global challenges, from the energy security, sustainability and affordability trilemma to the AI-sustainability nexus.

Nevertheless, the discussions and innovative approaches presented throughout the week and at the UNEP FI Global Roundtable leave me optimistic about the road ahead.

Financial firms have shifted from stating ambitions to actively seeking to manage climate risks and capture opportunities in the low-carbon transition. More capital is flowing into the energy transition than ever before, with BloombergNEF reporting that global investment increased by 8% in 2025.

While transition risks and opportunities are highly uneven across industries and regions, we’re seeing investors move beyond carbon analytics to assess how businesses are impacted by varying technology and policy shifts.

In addition, the financial industry now has access to more tools and resources, such as Bloomberg’s AI-powered ASKB, to connect fragmented and inconsistent information from a multitude of different datasets, research reports and news articles, to uncover next generation climate intelligence.

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Emirates NBD

Building resilience through collective action at the UNEP FI Global Roundtable 2026

As climate change, nature loss and broader sustainability challenges continue to reshape the global financial landscape, collaboration across the public and private sectors has never been more important. Against this backdrop, the UNEP FI Global Roundtable 2026, held during London Climate Action Week from 23 to 25 June, brought together financial institutions, policymakers, regulators and sustainability leaders to explore how the financial sector can accelerate the transition from risk to resilience.

As one of the sponsors, Emirates NBD played an active role in the discussions, contributing a Middle Eastern perspective to global conversations on sustainable finance and climate resilience. The Roundtable centred on the theme "From Risk to Resilience: Financing the Future", emphasising the need for financial institutions to move beyond identifying environmental and social risks towards building resilient economies, businesses and communities.

Representing Emirates NBD, Vijay Bains, Chief Sustainability Officer and Group Head of ESG, participated as a speaker in one of the Roundtable sessions, where he shared insights on the evolving role of financial institutions in supporting the transition to a more resilient and sustainable future. The discussion highlighted the importance of integrating sustainability into strategic decision-making, strengthening collaboration across sectors, and developing practical solutions that deliver long-term value while addressing climate-and nature-related risks.

Throughout the event, participants explored how financial institutions can embed resilience across financing strategies, investment decisions and client engagement. Discussions also examined the growing importance of nature-related risks, adaptation finance, innovative financial products and partnerships that enable the real economy to transition while supporting sustainable growth.

The Roundtable reinforced that resilience is no longer solely an environmental ambition but a strategic business imperative. As climate-related risks become increasingly interconnected with economic and financial stability, the role of financial institutions extends beyond financing the transition to actively enabling resilient outcomes through governance, innovation and collaboration.

Emirates NBD's participation reflects the Group's continued commitment to advancing sustainable finance and contributing to international dialogue on the future of the financial sector. By engaging with global leaders, policymakers and industry peers, the Group continues to strengthen its approach to addressing emerging sustainability challenges while supporting the development of practical, scalable solutions that create lasting value for clients, communities and the wider economy.

Join UNEP FI for the 2027 Regional Roundtables on Sustainable Finance

#RRT 2027 Africa & Middle East

Nairobi, Kenya
Early May (TBC)

#RRT 2027 Asia Pacific

Jakarta or Bali, Indonesia
Late June (TBC)

#RRT 2027 Europe

Amsterdam, the Netherlands
Q4 (TBC)

#RRT 2027 Latin America & Caribbean

Mexico City, Mexico
August (TBC)

#RRT 2027 North America

Montreal, Canada
Late May/Early June (TBC)

Interested in sponsoring a future Roundtable? Contact us

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Co-Head, Communications
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UNEP Finance Initiative brings together a large network of banks, insurers and investors that catalyzes action across the financial system to deliver more sustainable global economies.

For more than 30 years the Initiative has been connecting the UN with financial institutions from around the world to shape the sustainable finance agenda. We've established the world's foremost sustainability frameworks, helping the finance industry achieve sustainability goals, address sustainability risks and identify the business opportunities in taking a responsible approach to banking and insurance.

Convened by a Geneva, Switzerland-based secretariat, more than 550 banks and insurers are individually implementing UNEP FI's Principles for Responsible Banking and Principles for Sustainable Insurance. Financial institutions work with UNEP FI on a voluntary basis to apply these industry frameworks and develop practical guidance and tools that drive institutional change, shaping the future of sustainable finance and positioning their businesses for the transition to a sustainable and inclusive economy. In parallel, UNEP FI also drives systems change and fosters enabling conditions in service of the broader mission to mobilize and align private finance to help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Founded in 1992, UNEP FI was the first organization to engage the finance sector on sustainability and incubated the Principles for Responsible Investment, now the world's leading proponent of responsible investment.

Today, we cultivate leadership and advance sustainable market practice while supporting the implementation of global programmes at a regional level across Africa & the Middle East, Asia Pacific, Europe, Latin America & the Caribbean, and North America.

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