

#GRT  
2024 | Global  
Roundtable

UN   
environment  
programme

finance  
initiative

---

# A Summary of the UNEP FI Global Roundtable 2024

10–11 December

GENEVA & ONLINE

## UNEP FI's flagship event for sustainable finance

The 18<sup>th</sup> UNEP FI Global Roundtable, held in Geneva and broadcast online, marked a pivotal moment in advancing the global dialogue on sustainable finance. This year's event brought together finance professionals from around the world, setting the stage for actionable outcomes to align financial flows with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement.

As the premier sustainable finance event, UNEP FI's Global Roundtables have been cornerstone gatherings since 1992, fostering leadership and driving ambition in the field. These biennial events offer thousands of finance professionals the opportunity to exchange knowledge and advance systemic change.

**Return to Geneva.**  
This year's edition marked the Global Roundtable's return to Geneva for the first time in 30 years.



## **Eric Usher** Head, UNEP Finance Initiative

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our community for the collaboration, support and attendance that made the UNEP FI Global Roundtable 2024 a huge success. The depth of our discussions underscored the importance of the role of the finance industry in bringing real world change through leadership, whilst driving ambition and helping solve complex sustainability challenges.

The initiatives we champion are a testament to the groundwork laid by our community of banks, insurers and investors. While these efforts may not single-handedly resolve all our challenges, they provide a strong foundation for a resilient future, whilst contributing to climate action, biodiversity protection and broader sustainability issues.

As we look to 2025, it is encouraging to see significant progress in many areas. We are witnessing a steady decline in emissions, along with meaningful advancements in both the energy and transportation sectors. The rapid transformations reinforce the urgency and potential of UNEP FI initiatives, showcasing how positive change can manifest in diverse contexts.

Thank you for your ongoing dedication, and we look forward to seeing you in 2025 at the UNEP FI Regional Roundtables.

**Eric**

---

# UNEP FI and Building Bridges joined forces

## Four days of action on sustainable finance



UNEP FI partnered with Building Bridges—Switzerland’s principal sustainable finance event—to create a unified platform for advancing global sustainability goals. Held from 9–12 December 2024, the fifth edition of Building Bridges, and the UNEP FI Global Roundtable worked in synergy to deliver a diverse array of sessions, activities, and cross-sector collaborations, bringing together thousands of finance professionals and hosting over 75 sessions.

On the morning of 10 December, UNEP FI and Building Bridges hosted a joint session.



**"Though referred to as 'boomers' or problem creators, we're now receiving respect for our persistence and activism."**

**Elisabeth Stern, Board Member, KlimaSeniorinnen**

## **Wisdom from the Elders: A right to a resilient future**

Mary Robinson and Elisabeth Stern discussed the intersection of human rights and climate justice, focusing on Elisabeth's legal battle with KlimaSeniorinnen. This Swiss senior women's group achieved a landmark ruling recognizing protection from climate change as a fundamental human right under the European Convention on Human Rights, despite initial national court rejections. Elisabeth emphasized the activism required for such victories and the challenges of enforcement, while Mary underscored the growing link between climate justice and human rights, calling for collective leadership to address global injustices.

 Watch the recording [here](#)




**"It's vital to focus on the opportunities present in the transition to renewable energy and decarbonizing industries. Exclusions can be counterproductive; instead, we need to highlight the investment opportunities emerging as sectors adapt to sustainability."**

**Thomas Brauchle, Head of Sustainability, Siemens Financial Services**

## **Panel: How finance drives the sustainability agenda forward**

Chief Sustainability Officers and Heads of Sustainability across various sectors came together to discuss the critical role of the private sector in achieving Sustainable Development Goals and the need for innovation to drive meaningful change. They emphasized the importance of collaboration across industries and the development of supportive policies to facilitate the transition to sustainable practices and finance.

 Watch the recording [here](#)



# Event highlights



A photograph showing several people in business attire looking at a registration board. The board has text like "REGISTRAT" and "PARTICIPA".

**Attendees &  
registration**

**2500+**  
Registrations

**1600+**  
Daily livestream viewers

**450+**  
In-person attendees

A photograph of two women sitting at a table with a microphone, likely speakers at a panel discussion. A sign in the background says "#GRTI 2024".

**Speakers**

**100+**  
Speakers from  
20+ countries

**60%**  
Female speakers

**33%**  
C-suite speakers

A photograph of a man speaking into a microphone on a stage.

**Sessions**

**30+**  
Sessions including:  
workshops, technical sessions, networking opportunities, and plenaries

▶ To access the recordings from both days—click [here](#).



**Inger Andersen**  
Executive Director, UN Environment Programme

### Opening dialogue

Inger Anderson stressed the urgent need for increased ambition to tackle climate change, environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and plastic pollution while highlighting existing solutions, and encouraging political will and collaboration among nations as essential for effective implementation.

▶ Watch the recording [here](#)



**Christiana Figueres**  
Founder, Global Optimism

Christiana Figueres, former Executive Secretary of the UNFCCC, urged financial leaders to maintain their momentum and highlighted their vital role in meeting the 1.5°C target. She emphasized the need to reverse deforestation and increase investments in climate solutions, particularly in developing regions. Notably, it was in this very plenary room during the 2017 UNEP FI Regional Roundtable in Geneva, where she challenged the banking industry to embrace sustainability.

▶ Watch the recording [here](#)






Pictured (from left to right): Liesel van Ast, Deputy Head, UNEP FI; Jean-François Chalifoux, President and CEO, Beneva; Ralph Opara, Group Head, Commercial Banking Division, Access Bank; Patrick Odier, Chairman of the Supervisory Board, Lombard Odier Group and Chair, Building Bridges; and Patty Karuaihe-Martin, Managing Director, NamibRe.

## Plenary panel: Driving change through responsible banking and sustainable insurance

Insurance and banking leaders addressed the crucial role they play in financing sustainable development amid climate change, social inequality, and biodiversity loss challenges. They reiterated the importance of ambitious action in creating an inclusive, innovative, and resilient economic future.


 Watch the recording [here](#)



Pictured (from left to right): Marc Kahn, Chief Strategy & Sustainability Officer, Investec Group; Maria Simonson, Acting Head of Client Relationship Management, Head of Sustainability, Swedish Export Credit Corporation (SEK); Masaaki Iwabuchi, General Manager, Finance & Investment Planning Department, Nippon Life Insurance Company; Sue Reid, Climate Finance Advisor to Christiana Figueres, Global Optimism; Remco Fischer, Climate Lead, UNEP FI.

## Plenary panel: Driving 1.5 ambition through finance

Panelists emphasized the necessity of urgent action across all industries to achieve the 1.5°C climate goal, focusing on reducing emissions to net zero by 2050. They discussed the urgent need to bridge the significant financing gap for developing countries, estimated at USD 1.3 trillion annually through 2035, while highlighting opportunities for sustainable development and the importance of robust carbon pricing mechanisms. The session concluded with the recognition that achieving net zero emissions requires collaboration across sectors and innovative financial solutions.

 Watch the recording [here](#)



"As we look toward the future, we must continue to engage in dialogues with global stakeholders, promoting knowledge sharing and joint initiatives that can facilitate the smooth implementation of sustainable policies."

**Geetu Joshi, Advisor,  
Department of Economic  
Affairs, Ministry  
of Finance of the  
Government of India**




"Without adequate supplies of energy transition minerals, the transition to low-carbon energy sources simply will not take place."

**Professor Paul Ekins**


## Plenary panel: Supporting global sustainability ambition through policy and regulation

Panelists addressed the intersection of sustainability and financial regulation. The discussion focused on the need for effective policy frameworks that support sustainable finance and the role of central banks in addressing climate-related financial risks. The speakers highlighted initiatives like India's climate taxonomy and Europe's sustainable finance framework while acknowledging challenges such as regulatory fatigue. Overall, the session emphasized the importance of collaboration across sectors to build resilient and sustainable finance systems.

 Watch the recording [here](#)

## Keynote address

Professor Paul Ekins, a leading expert in Resources and Environmental Policy at the UCL Institute for Sustainable Resources and a member of the International Resources Panel, delivered the opening keynote on Day 2. He highlighted the essential role of energy transition minerals in advancing the shift to low-carbon energy sources and underscored the importance of responsible mining practices, the necessity for substantial investment in the sector, and the integration of environmental, social, and governance considerations to achieve sustainable development in mining.

 Watch the recording [here](#)



Pictured (from left to right): Laura Diaz, Financial Health & Inclusion Lead, Banking, UNEP FI, Alexandra Lockyer, Senior Sustainable Finance Analyst, UN Women, Verónica Gavilanes Véjar, Deputy General Manager, BancoSol, Wendy Teleki, Head of the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative (WE-FI), World Bank, and Dawn Bailey, Head of Financial Wellbeing, Bank of Ireland.

## **New guidance from UNEP FI and UN Women—Advancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment**

Insurance and banking leaders addressed the crucial role they play in financing sustainable development amid climate change, social inequality, and biodiversity loss challenges. They reiterated the importance of ambitious action in creating an inclusive, innovative, and resilient economic future.



Watch the recording [here](#)



Pictured: Kirsten Schuijt, Director General, WWF International (left) and Eric Usher, Head, UNEP FI (right).

## **New report from UNEP FI and WWF International—Navigating Nature-related Regulations for Banks: Mapping the Policy Landscape**

UNEP FI and WWF International launched a report addressing the growing global recognition of nature-related financial risks within regulatory frameworks, highlighting that at least 29 jurisdictions, managing over EUR 75 trillion in banking assets, are now considering these risks. It serves as a vital resource for banks navigating nature-related regulations and for policymakers designing coherent policies across prudential regulations, corporate disclosures, and due diligence obligations to combat biodiversity loss effectively.



Watch the recording [here](#)

# UNEP FI was proud to welcome 100+ speakers from 20+ countries in Geneva



**Kirsten Schuijt**  
Director General, WWF  
International



**Christos Megalou**  
CEO, Piraeus Bank



**Alejandra Diaz**  
Chief Sustainability Officer,  
Banco Davivienda and  
Seguros Bolívar



**Helena Viñes Fiestas**  
Co-Chair, Taskforce on  
Net-Zero Policy and; Chair,  
EU Platform on Sustainable  
Finance



**Sander Biesma**  
CEO, NN Re



**Philip Lopokoiyit**  
CEO, ICEA LION Holdings and  
ICEA LION General Insurance



**Geetu Joshi**  
Advisor, Department of  
Economic Affairs, Ministry of  
Finance of the Government  
of India



**Hacina Py**  
Group Chief Sustainability  
Officer, Société Générale



**Linda Freiner**  
Chief Sustainability Officer,  
Zurich Insurance Group



**Shargiil Bashir**  
Chief Sustainability Officer  
& Executive Vice President,  
First Abu Dhabi Bank



**Tomo Ishikawa**  
Chief Regulatory  
Engagement Officer, MUFG

To view the full  
speakers list,  
visit [unepfi.org/  
grt2024](https://unepfi.org/grt2024)

# Sponsors and supporters

Gold



Silver



Bronze



Partner



Supporters





"The UNEP FI Global Roundtable event was a remarkable experience that I am deeply grateful for. It was an honour to represent Latin America alongside such inspiring panelists. The seamless organization and significant impact of the event left a lasting impression on me. I return with a renewed commitment to transform my region, motivated by the enriching experiences we shared throughout our discussions"

**Carlos José Santos Lardé, Head of Sustainability, Banco Bolivariano**



# Join UNEP FI for the 2025 Regional Roundtables on Sustainable Finance

#RRT 2025 Latin America & Caribbean

Sao Paulo, Brazil  
1–3 April

UNEP FI members only

#RRT 2025 Africa & Middle East

Marrakech, Morocco  
6–7 May

#RRT 2025 Asia Pacific

Suzhou, China  
18–20 June

#RRT 2025 Europe

Brussels, Belgium  
8–9 September (TBC)

#RRT 2025 North America

New York City, USA  
During Climate Week  
NYC (TBC)

UNEP FI members only

Interested in sponsoring a  
future Roundtable? Contact us

## Contacts

**Melissa Angel**  
Events Manager  
[melissa.angel@un.org](mailto:melissa.angel@un.org)

**Mustafa Chaudhry**  
Co-Lead, UNEP FI Communications  
[mustafa.chaudhry@un.org](mailto:mustafa.chaudhry@un.org)

UNEP Finance Initiative (UNEP FI) brings together a large network of banks, insurers and investors that catalyses 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 establishing the world's foremost sustainability frameworks that help the finance industry address global environmental, social and governance challenges.

Convened by a Geneva, Switzerland-based secretariat, more than 500 banks and insurers with assets exceeding USD 100 trillion 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 the sustainability frameworks within their industries using practical guidance and tools to position their businesses for the transition to a sustainable and inclusive economy.

Founded in 1992, UNEP FI was the first initiative to engage the finance sector on sustainability. Today, the Initiative cultivates leadership and advances 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.

 [unepfi.org](https://unepfi.org)

 [info@unepfi.org](mailto:info@unepfi.org)

 [/UNEPFinanceInitiative](https://www.facebook.com/UNEPFinanceInitiative)

 [UN Environment Programme Finance Initiative](https://www.linkedin.com/company/unepfi)