



Permanent Mission of Italy  
UN - New York

# GENERALI – ITALIAN GOVERNMENT – UNDP

## SUSTAINABILITY CHAMPIONS: STRENGTHENING SMES FOR A CLIMATE-RESILIENT TOMORROW

26<sup>th</sup> September, New York

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# 1. EVENT DETAILS

## 1.1 The event at a glance

**When:** During the NY Climate Week and the United Nations General Assembly High Level Week – 26<sup>th</sup> September 2024, 2.00 – 3.30 PM followed by a networking cocktail

**Where:** New York – Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations - 885 Second Avenue (One Dag Hammarskjold Plaza), 49<sup>th</sup> Fl. New York, NY 10017

**Hosted by:** The Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations and Generali, in partnership with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP)

**Format:** The Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations and Generali, together with UNDP, unite to host a transformative event focused on building the resilience of global supply chains, and the Small and Medium Enterprises that enable them, against the impacts of climate change and other natural hazards. Through a dynamic format blending panel discussions and keynote speeches, the event aims to spotlight innovative strategies, resilient practices, and concrete solutions crucial for supporting global supply chains and the SMEs across the world to in a world of rising climate risks. Esteemed experts, industry leaders, and policymakers converge to explore the intersection of sustainability, entrepreneurship, and resilience, forging partnerships that pave the way for a resilient, climate-smart future for all.

**Language:** The event will be conducted in English

**Live streaming:** The event will be live streamed on the Italian Mission to the UN YouTube channel

**Stakeholders:** Generali, Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), Ambassadors and Government Representatives from Member States, including G7 and G20 Representatives, SMEs and SME Associations, Media and Journalists

## 1.2 High-level agenda – 2.00 – 3.30 PM

**Registration and Welcome Coffee – 30 min (1.30 – 2.00 PM)**

**Opening remarks – 15 min (2.00 – 2.15 PM):**

- **H.E. Maurizio Massari**, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations
- **Lucia Silva**, Generali Group Chief Sustainability Officer
- **Marcos Neto**, UN Assistant Secretary General & Director of UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Program Support

**Countries' Perspectives – 10 min (2.15 – 2.25 PM):**

- **H.E. Patrice Gumbs Jr.**, Deputy Prime Minister of Sint Maarten
- **H.E. Roger Baro**, Burkina Faso's Minister of the Environment, Water, and Sanitation



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### **Moderated Roundtable on Sustainability and Resilience – 60 min (2.25 – 3.25 PM):**

- Moderated by **Jan Kellett**, Global and Corporate Lead on Insurance and Risk Finance (IRFF) at UNDP
- **Annie Borello Fiorilla di Santa Croce**, United Nations Permanent Representative of WUSME (World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises) and Partner of Fox Horan & Camerini LLP
- **Paolo Lombardo**, Director of International Development Cooperation at Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (CDP)
- **Carlo Batori**, Head of the Financing for Development, Digital and Environmental Affairs at the DG for Development Cooperation, Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- **Following interventions from the floor**

### **Closing Remarks – 5 min (3.25 – 3.30 PM):**

- **H.E. Maurizio Massari**, Permanent Representative of Italy to the United Nations

## **2. Concept Note**

### **2.1 Small Giants, Global Impact: Strengthening SME resilience to fortify the global economy**

Addressing the challenges faced by SMEs and bolstering their resilience against climate change is paramount for several reasons. SMEs represent a vast majority of businesses worldwide, comprising over 90% of all businesses and employing more than 50% of the global workforce. Their significance is further underscored by their contribution to economic output, with SMEs accounting for approximately 50% of GDP in developed countries and up to 40% in emerging economies. Beyond their economic impact, SMEs serve as engines of innovation and entrepreneurship, driving productivity gains and fostering sustainable development. Moreover, SMEs play a crucial role in the interconnected global economy, deeply integrated into global value chains that span continents. They serve as suppliers, manufacturers, and service providers, linking businesses across borders and contributing to the resilience and efficiency of the global marketplace. In today's interconnected world, disruptions in one part of the globe can have far-reaching consequences, highlighting the importance of strengthening SME resilience against climate change impacts, while also exploring ways that they can reduce their emissions and enhance their sustainability.

Furthermore, SMEs in both developed and emerging economies face unique challenges when confronting climate change. While SMEs in developed nations may have access to more resources and technology, they are not immune to the disruptive effects of extreme weather events, shifting market demands, and regulatory changes. On the other hand, SMEs in emerging economies often grapple with limited access to finance, infrastructure deficits, and capacity-building constraints, exacerbating their vulnerability to climate-related risks.



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By supporting SMEs to understand and navigate climate risks, we not only ensure their sustainability and growth but also fortify the resilience of the broader global economy against the impacts of climate change. Initiatives aimed at enhancing SME resilience, such as providing access to finance, fostering innovation, and promoting sustainable practices, are essential for building a more resilient and inclusive economy that can withstand the challenges of a changing climate.

## 2.2 About Generali – UNDP Partnership to support SMEs’ and global value chain resilience

Generali and UNDP share a unified vision regarding the imperative of raising awareness and facilitating tangible solutions to boost the journey of SMEs towards sustainability and climate resilience. Recognizing the pivotal role SMEs play in the global economy and their vulnerability to climate-related risks, both organizations are committed to spearheading efforts to support SMEs in this crucial transition. [Earlier this year](#), Generali and UNDP launched an SME Loss Prevention Framework focused on helping small business improve their resilience to flooding, an SME insurance innovation challenge to develop innovative insurance solutions for SMEs, and the report [“Building MSME Resilience in Southeast Asia”](#), focusing on Thailand and Malaysia, which proposes a new approach to identifying MSME risks and specific needs by segmenting priority value chains such as natural rubber, food and accommodation, wholesale, retail, electrical and electronics. From this, the report details holistic solutions that consider both risk transfer and risk mitigation tools, and which include bundling insurance with new technologies or digital platforms.

To amplify this mission, Generali and UNDP, in collaboration with the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations, intend to co-host a landmark convening policymaker, SME associations, institutional representatives, and industry leaders. This collaborative platform will ignite meaningful conversations, foster knowledge exchange, and inspire actionable initiatives to safeguard the future of SMEs and global value chains amidst the challenges posed by climate change. By uniting diverse stakeholders and advocating for urgent action, this event aims to galvanize collective efforts to protect and empower SMEs in building a resilient and sustainable future.

Moreover, by fostering dialogue and collaboration between SMEs and other stakeholders, Generali and UNDP aim to bridge the gap between policy and practice, ensuring that policies are not only tailored to the needs of SMEs but also implemented in a way that maximizes their impact. By bringing together diverse perspectives and expertise, Generali and UNDP strive to create an enabling environment where SMEs can thrive, driving economic growth, creating jobs, and contributing to sustainable development.