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IWBI Sustainable Finance Leader Profile

UN Global Compact Network USA

INTERNATIONAL WELL BUILDING INSTITUTE™

Mobilizing Business for Global Goals

The United Nations Global Compact is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative, with more than 26,000 participants across 160 countries. Its U.S. chapter, UN Global Compact Network USA, connects American businesses to the wider UN system and mobilizes them to align strategies with the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In doing so, Network USA helps companies put universal principles into practice and advance their sustainability journeys in ways that address critical global challenges.

Sustainable finance has become one of the most powerful tools for tackling these challenges. By integrating environmental, social, and governance considerations into financial decision-making, businesses and investors can strengthen their competitiveness and resilience while creating long-term value. Yet despite growing momentum, investment still falls far short of what's needed. The UN estimates an annual $4 trillion financing gap to achieve the SDGs — a shortfall that underscores the urgency of mobilizing capital at scale[1].

Against this backdrop, the U.S. private sector is uniquely positioned. The private sector within the United States, the home to the world's largest financial markets and a hub for innovation, has the capacity to play a catalytic role in closing this gap. For businesses, sustainable finance has shifted from corporate responsibility to a strategic imperative—helping firms mitigate risk, attract investors, and seize growth opportunities in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

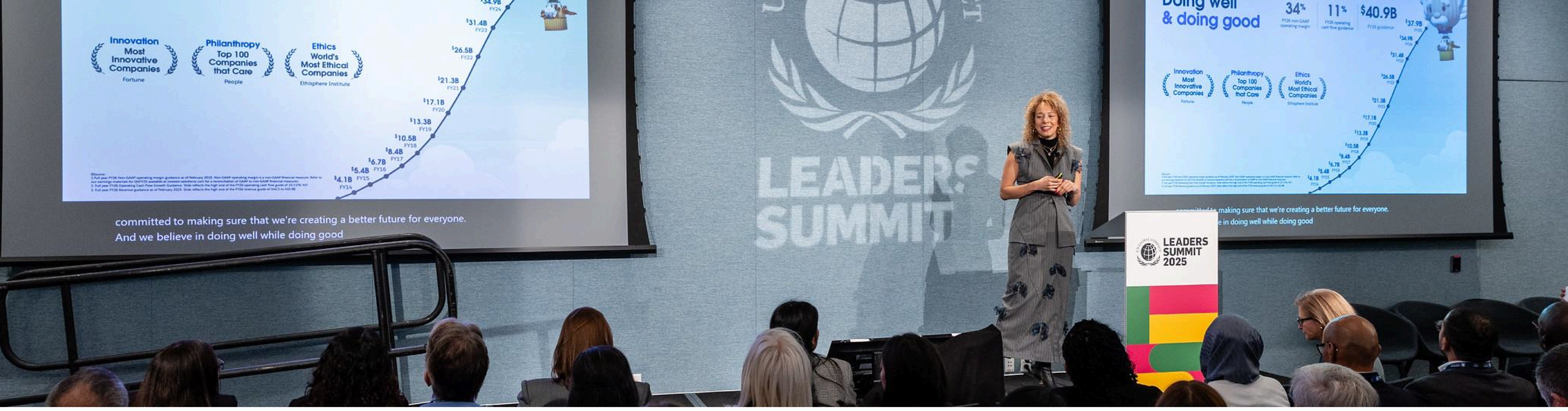
Frameworks Shaping Corporate Action

At the core of Network USA's work are the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact, spanning human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption[2]. These Principles provide a universal foundation for responsible business conduct and are intentionally broad and non-prescriptive, designed to be adaptable across industries and geographies.

Complementing this, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights articulate the "Protect, Respect and Remedy" framework. The UN Guiding Principles have informed regulations such as the European Union's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), which requires companies operating in the EU to identify, prevent, and address adverse human rights and environmental impacts[3]. The CSDDD signals a shift from voluntary codes to regulatory and investor mandates, embedding the "S" in ESG more firmly into corporate accountability.

These UN frameworks are central, but companies also operate within a broader normative landscape that includes instruments such as the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the ILO Core Conventions on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. Increasingly, these frameworks influence regulation and investor expectations, reinforcing the global baseline for responsible business.

For U.S. companies, these frameworks can provide not only guidance for responsible behavior but also tools for competitiveness. Integrating human rights, labor practices, equity, and environmental stewardship into financial strategies helps organizations anticipate regulation, protect reputational value, and attract long-term investors.



Sustainable Finance in Action

To help companies operationalize these frameworks, the UN Global Compact published the 2024 report Accelerating Innovation in Sustainable Finance and continues to provide platforms that make sustainable finance more accessible and measurable[4]. Two flagship initiatives are central to this work:

- **The CFO Coalition for the SDGs**: A global network of financial leaders committed to aligning corporate finance and investment strategies with the SDGs[5]. By adopting CFO Principles, members link capital allocation with long-term sustainability, embedding ESG into financial decision-making.
- **Forward Faster**: A campaign launched in 2023 calling on companies to set bold, measurable targets in five areas where the private sector is likely to have the greatest impact on the 2030 Agenda: gender equality, climate action, living wage, water resilience, and finance and investment[6]. Companies committing to the finance and investment pillar pledge to align corporate financing strategies with SDG-aligned investments, set measurable targets, and transparently report progress.

To complement the UN Global Compact platforms, in 2025 Network USA released Driving Progress: Sustainable Finance for the Advancement of the SDGs, a flagship report showcasing U.S. companies leading the way[7]. The report profiled Citi, International Motors, and the International WELL Building Institute (IWBI).

- **Citi** has committed $1 trillion to sustainable finance by 2030. Its social finance bonds are channeling billions into affordable housing, essential services, and inclusive development. For instance, Citi's affordable housing bond asset portfolio has supported 608 projects across the U.S., including projects for seniors, veterans, individuals with special needs and the formerly homeless. Globally, its social finance bond supported 5.7 million households, 2.3 million being women.
- **International Motors** is advancing the electrification of school buses, helping decarbonize one of the largest transportation fleets in the United States. School buses carry 26 million children daily, and replacing diesel fleets with electric models delivers immediate health and climate benefits. Their Moreno Valley deployment of 42 electric buses alone is expected to potentially reduce more than 5 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions and air pollutants per year over the next 10 years.

- **IWBI** demonstrates that social sustainability is measurable. Through the WELL Building Standard, IWBI provides milestones that can serve as third-party verified KPIs for health, equity, and well-being —areas long underrepresented in finance. Despite the rapid growth of sustainable finance, only about 23% of sustainability-linked instruments since 2017 have included social KPIs[8]. WELL helps address this imbalance by providing investors and issuers with credible, people-first performance indicators.

By featuring case studies from Citi, International Motors, and the International WELL Building Institute, the report highlighted that sustainable finance cannot be viewed through the lens of financial institutions or green finance alone. True progress requires a holistic, cross-sector approach, where banks, manufacturers, standard setters, and organizations across industries each play their part. From mobilizing capital to reimagining transportation and embedding health and equity into the built environment, these examples illustrate that sustainable finance is a shared movement — one that depends on collaboration among all stakeholders to accelerate impact.

> **"Sustainable finance isn't just for financial institutions — it's for every company that wants to turn its impact ambitions into action. Through the UN Global Compact, businesses are learning that when capital meets purpose, progress follows."**
>
> **Claudia Herbert Colfer**
> Head of Programming, UN Global Compact Network USA

Convening, Education, and Collaboration

Network USA complements these initiatives with education, peer learning, and convening. Through the UN Global Compact Academy, employees from all participating companies can access e-learning courses on sustainable finance, disclosure regulations, and broader sustainability topics — democratizing knowledge across organizations of all sizes[9].

For companies seeking deeper engagement, programs such as the Sustainability Integration Program, the SDG Innovation Accelerator, the Climate Ambition Accelerator, and the Business and Human Rights Accelerator provide intensive 3–8 month pathways to embed sustainability into core operations and strategies — strengthening the governance, transparency, and accountability systems that also underpin sustainable finance.

At the peer-to-peer level, Peer Learning Groups (PLGs) bring together smaller, solution-oriented cohorts. The Human Rights PLG enables companies to exchange approaches to upholding human rights, while the Corporate Sustainability PLG facilitates cross-functional integration of sustainability. Together, these programs help companies anticipate regulatory and investor expectations and reinforce the business case: organizations with robust practices see higher employee engagement, brand loyalty, and investor confidence[10].

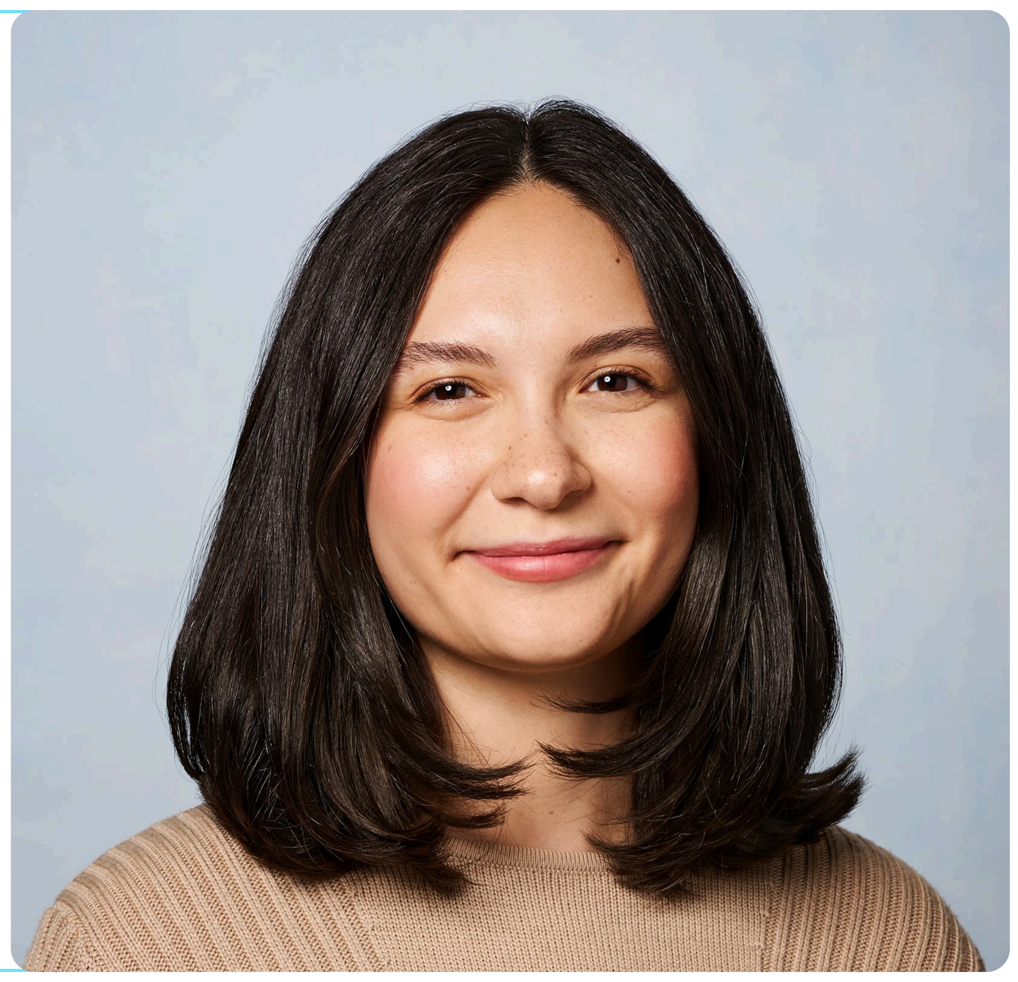
Collaboration also happens at scale. Over the past four years, Network USA has convened its flagship event, the UN Global Compact Network USA Annual Summit during the UN General Assembly, gathering more than 200 leaders from finance, industry, government, civil society, and academia[11]. In 2024, a dedicated dialogue on sustainable finance explored how financial flows can accelerate progress, with participation from partners including IWBI, Citi, and leaders from the chemicals sector.

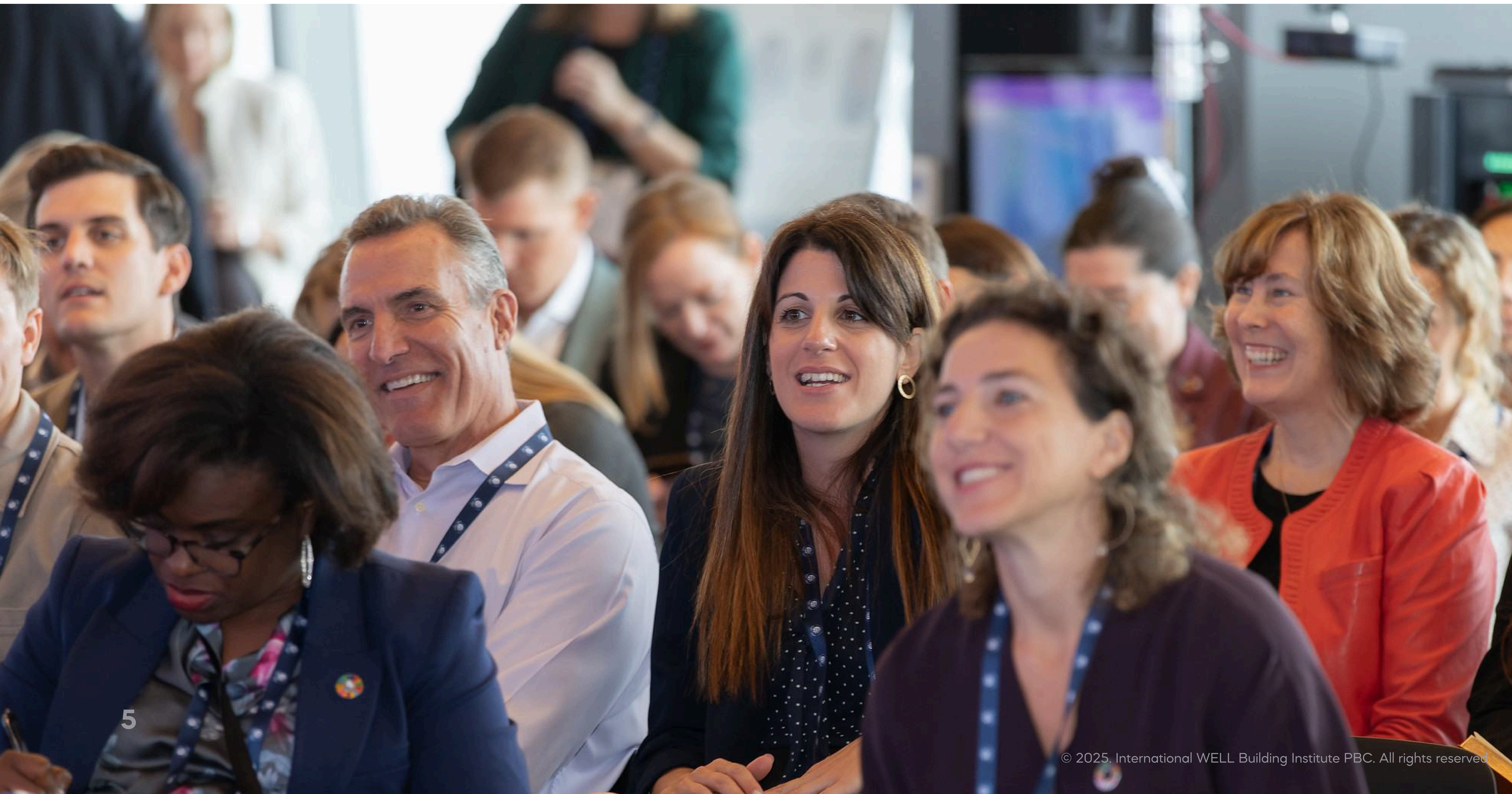
Later that year at COP29 in Baku, Network USA brought together senior leaders from the UN and the U.S. private sector to discuss how sustainable finance can drive both climate action and social outcomes such as job creation, poverty reduction, and access to healthcare.

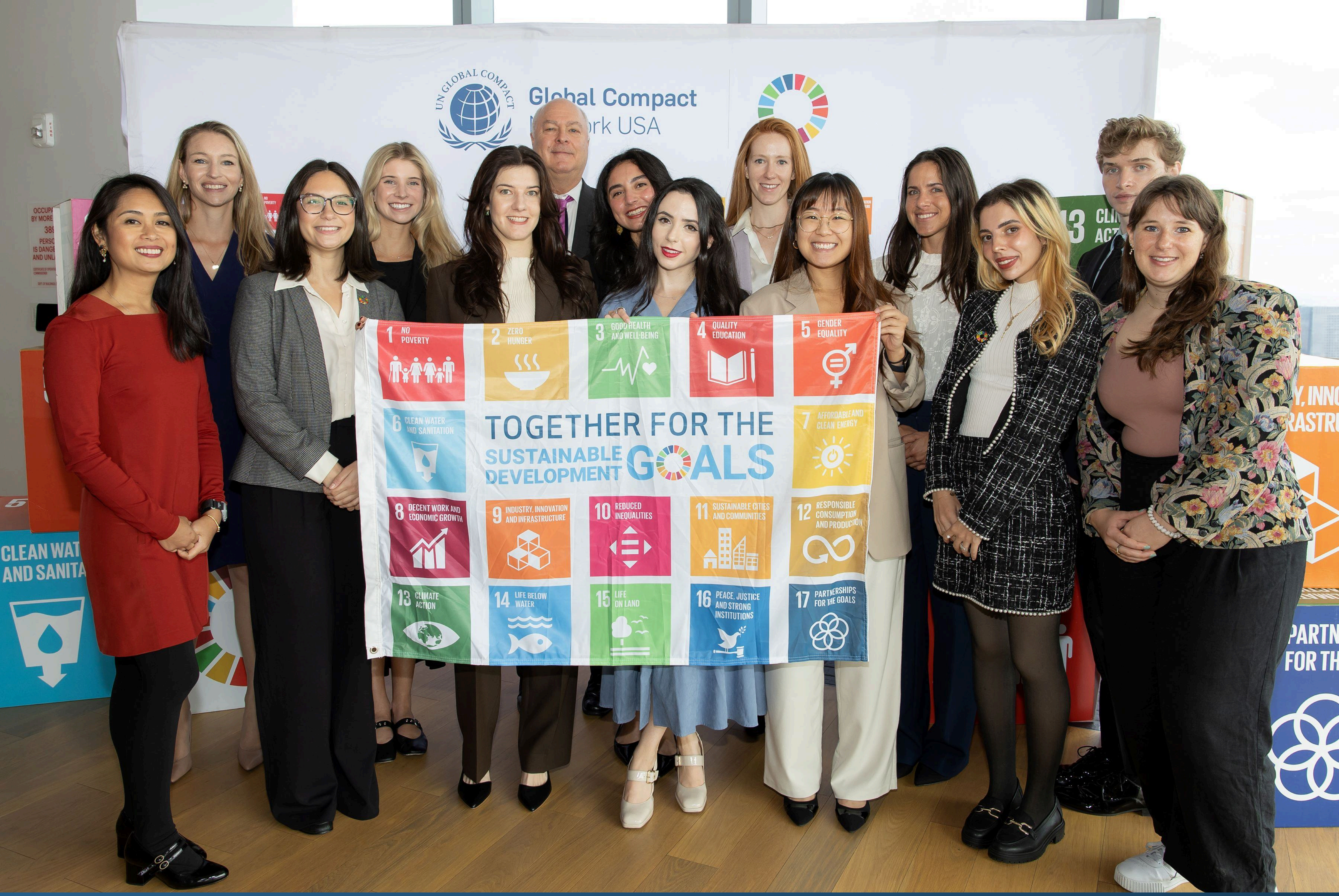
In early 2025, Network USA hosted a dialogue at GreenBiz 25, focused on the role of U.S. companies in advancing sustainable finance. This momentum carried into the Annual Summit in September 2025, where a closed-door roundtable with financial institutions examined how they are navigating today's evolving landscape and the most effective pathways for scaling sustainable finance.

"At Network USA, we believe progress happens when diverse perspectives come together. Our strength lies in convening leaders across industries to share knowledge and lessons, build partnerships, and turn commitments into meaningful impact."

Caitlin McGinnis
Sustainability Strategy Associate, UN Global Compact Network USA







Challenges, Reflections, and the Path Forward

Despite progress, sustainable finance faces barriers. First, there is still no universally agreed definition, making it difficult for companies to benchmark progress. Second, social sustainability lags climate in measurement and adoption, yet investors and regulators are increasingly recognizing its financial materiality. As illustrated by inclusion in sustainable finance instruments, workforce well-being, diversity, and community investment are now understood as drivers of business resilience, not "soft factors".

Companies must move from reactive compliance to proactive leadership. By aligning with universal principles and measurable frameworks, businesses can manage risks and unlock new opportunities. As Network USA emphasizes, social sustainability and financial performance are not in conflict but are mutually reinforcing drivers of long-term value.

The message is clear: companies that embed equity, health, and human rights into financial strategies are not only advancing global goals but also enhancing their competitiveness in a purpose-driven economy.

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