TOP TEN TAKEAWAYS

Just Transition in Practice: *The Role of Business and Finance Roundtable*

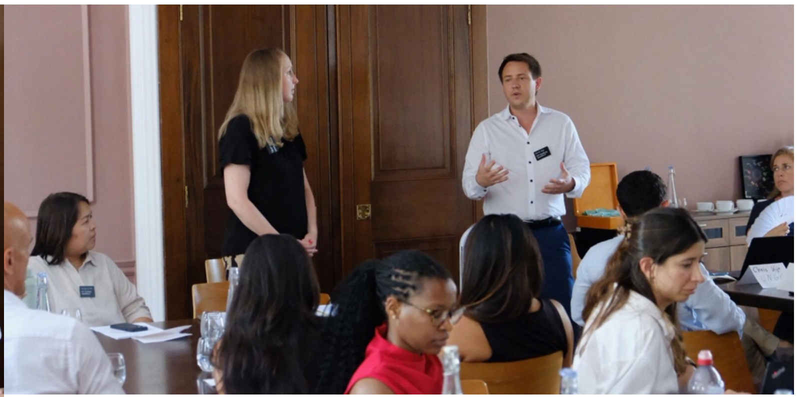
On 25 June 2026, the *UN Global Compact and Human Level, supported by PRI, UNEP FI and the OECD*, hosted a roundtable session, bringing together close to fifty representatives of businesses, financial actors and philanthropic organisations for a focused and practical exchange on just transition in practice.

A *just transition* is the process of shifting towards a green, net-zero economy in a way that is fair, inclusive and rights-respecting for all stakeholders, particularly the most vulnerable.

This roundtable was held under Chatham House Rule. The following captures the top ten takeaways from this roundtable.

1 Awareness has grown, but implementation *is not keeping pace*

Participants were asked to score progress on delivering a just transition on a scale of 1 to 10. Not a single person scored it above 5, highlighting a shared view that, while awareness and momentum have grown significantly, implementation is still falling short. The discussion reflected a clear sense that the conversation on just transition has moved forward, but meaningful action has not yet kept pace. There is still a long road ahead to translate ambition into practice.



2 The business case for a just transition *needs to be better articulated*

A recurring theme was that the business case for a just transition needs to be articulated more clearly. Many organisations still struggle to see the short-term commercial rationale, making implementation harder to prioritise. Stronger evidence, practical examples and clearer proof of value can help shift the narrative from trade-offs to opportunities. Where market incentives remain insufficient, policy and regulation have an important role to play in creating the conditions for the business behaviours needed to deliver a just transition. Participants also expressed the need for more data and proof points on the cost of inaction.

3 Advancing just transition requires integration *of climate, social and business considerations*

Participants agreed that advancing a just transition requires moving beyond siloed approaches. The climate, human rights and business functions, governance structures, incentives, KPIs and stakeholder engagement all need to be better connected to support just transition-aligned decision-making. A just transition can act as the connective tissue that brings these different elements together. While awareness and discussion have grown, the priority now is to translate that understanding into tangible, integrated solutions. Here, outcome-focused indicators, such as living wages and living incomes, provide useful metrics to assess whether the climate transition is delivering for people.

4 Long-term supply chain planning is *essential and largely absent*

As climate change reshapes global sourcing landscapes, companies face significant uncertainty about where and how they will source materials, particularly raw commodities, in the next few decades. This has profound human rights implications, yet most companies currently lack visibility over long-term sourcing scenarios. Developing this foresight cannot be long-term assessments and align around the challenges and opportunities ahead. In this context, a people-centred approach to sourcing decisions is not only a human rights imperative but also a business risk and long-term viability issue.

5 Due diligence is necessary, *but not sufficient*

Participants saw due diligence as an important entry point for advancing a just transition. However, they also recognised that due diligence alone is not enough. Delivering a just transition requires moving beyond identifying and mitigating risks to collaborating with governments, peers, civil society, trade unions, education institutions and others to develop systemic responses for people and communities most affected by the transition. For example, where companies disengage from suppliers or regions, a just transition approach may extend beyond responsible disengagement to supporting broader efforts that help workers, suppliers and communities adapt to change. It also means placing greater emphasis on creating positive social outcomes and seizing opportunities, alongside mitigating adverse impacts.

6 Bringing nuance to *"leave no one behind"*

While "leave no one behind" is an important aspiration, it can mistakenly be understood to mean that the transition will have no negative impacts. In reality, every transition creates disruption and trade-offs. The focus should be on anticipating and mitigating the most severe impacts, particularly for the most vulnerable people and communities, while ensuring they have meaningful opportunities to benefit from the transition. A just transition is not about avoiding all impacts – it is about making the transition as fair and inclusive as possible.

7 Investor and other financial institutions' engagement on *just transition is growing but remains uneven*

Participants noted that engagement of investors and financial institutions on just transition is becoming more substantive. For instance, some investors are moving beyond generic questionnaires and integrating just transition into stewardship discussions with more tailored questions and engagement. Applying a just transition lens to climate transition plans was seen as a particularly practical way to make the concept more tangible for companies and build on existing climate work. However, engagement remains inconsistent, with many investors and financial institutions still asking few questions about human rights and just transition. Strengthening financial actors' capability, expectations and access to practical tools and data will be key to accelerating progress.

8 Clearer government signals are needed to *accelerate a just transition*

Participants agreed that stronger policy and regulatory signals are needed to create a level playing field, particularly where the business case remains weak or where responsible companies risk being undercut by competitors. Clearer expectations and supportive policy frameworks will help drive more consistent action across sectors. At the same time, there was broad recognition that making the case to governments will require stronger evidence of the economic and financial benefits of a just transition, alongside its social and environmental value.

9 A 'coalition of the willing' can help *shape the enabling environment*

Participants highlighted the value of a 'coalition of the willing' to significantly accelerate progress on just transition. While individual company action remains important, coordinated engagement by businesses, investors and financial institutions is essential to help shape the policy, regulatory and financial conditions needed to reshape incentives for businesses and enable action at scale. By speaking with a more unified voice and engaging governments collectively such coalitions can help build the enabling environment needed to make a just transition happen. They are also essential to drive scale and reshape incentives for businesses, increasing the commercial cost of inaction over time.

10 Multi-stakeholder collaboration is necessary, *even if hard to operationalise*

Participants agreed that no single organisation can deliver a just transition alone. Collaboration across businesses, governments, investors, trade unions, workers, civil society, communities and Indigenous Peoples is essential, but turning this into practical action remains challenging, particularly given the diversity of sectors and contexts. Many saw policy engagement, shared learning and the development of common approaches as the most practical starting points. Meaningful worker voice, trade union engagement and civil society participation were consistently identified as fundamental to building credible just transition processes.

Feel free to reach out if you're interested in being part of these practitioner discussions moving forward.

Chris Kip, Head, Social Sustainability, UN Global Compact
chris.kip[at]unglobalcompact.org

Anna Triponel, CEO and Founder, Human Level
anna[at]wearehumanlevel.com