

COMUNICATO STAMPA

YOUTH4CLIMATE: CONNECTING SOLUTIONS 2026

Climate: MASE and UNDP Award Youth Projects in Rome

The tour concludes in the Capital: five Italians among the winners from over 40 countries

Rome, October 23, 2026 – The 2026 national tour of **Youth4Climate: Connecting Solutions**, a global initiative co-led by the **Italian Ministry of Environment and Energy Security (MASE)** and the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**, has concluded in Rome. After traveling across Italy – stopping in Milan, Venice, Bologna, and Naples – around 60 young innovators from over 40 countries gathered in the capital for the closing institutional event: a dialogue with policymakers, international bodies, and major investors, culminating in the announcement of the 2026 awarded solutions.

The Rome stop highlights the central role of cooperation between the Italian Government and the United Nations, reflecting the continued expansion of **UNDP in Italy**. Through the **UNDP Rome Centre for Climate Action and Energy Transition**, the UN agency serves as a global catalyst connecting Italian expertise, technologies, and capital with emerging economies.

The Institutional Summit: Politics, Finance, and the United Nations Toward COP31

The sessions at the UNDP Rome Centre were opened by the Minister of Environment and Energy Security, **Gilberto Pichetto Fratin**, followed by a keynote address from **Maurizio Martina**, Deputy Director-General of the FAO, focusing on the link between innovation, agrifood systems transformation, and climate security.

The morning saw high-level talks on impact finance and industrial partnerships with senior executives from **Generali** (Sabrina Di Giorgio), **Angelini Industries** (Isabella Falautano), **ACEA** (Caterina Dentoni Litta), and **Cassa Depositi e Prestiti** (Enrico Petrocelli). This was followed by a panel on climate leadership in Small Island Developing States (SIDS), featuring representatives from Italy-AOSIS Fellowship Programme, UNDP Fiji, and delegates from Tonga, Jamaica, and the Maldives.

“Through Youth4Climate, the Italian Ministry of the Environment and Energy Security, together with UNDP, has established a pathway that enables young people to develop and implement climate solutions. Institutions have a responsibility to sustain this investment by building partnerships that help the most promising projects mobilize resources, grow and be replicated in other communities. The Youth4Climate Study Tour has advanced this goal by connecting young innovators with Italian universities, research institutions and businesses, while the Italian Challenge has laid the groundwork for broader participation by young Italians in the international Youth4Climate community,” said **Gilberto Pichetto Fratin**, Italy’s Minister of the Environment and Energy Security.

“One of the most important aspects of this week has been seeing young innovators engage directly between them and with some of Italy’s leading institutions, universities, research centres and businesses, each bringing different expertise and experience. It is precisely through these exchanges that new opportunities can emerge. Our goal now is to ensure that these relationships do not end with

this event, but continue and grow stronger over time. Real and lasting change comes from collaboration: across generations, across sectors, and among people who bring different knowledge, experience and creativity to the same table,” said **Agostino Inguscio, Coordinator of the UNDP Rome Centre for Climate Action and Energy Transition.**

The Youth4Climate Awards 2026

The focal point of the day was the presentation of the Youth4Climate Awards 2026 to high-impact projects led by young changemakers across more than 40 countries. The winning solutions span key strategic areas of global climate action:

- **Sustainable energy and resilient agriculture:** from the rollout of decentralized solar mini-grids and smart storage systems (from India to South Sudan) to agritech solutions for food security and arid land restoration (from Tonga and Kenya to Brazil);
- **Oceans, fashion, and architecture for adaptation:** from coral reef restoration and microplastic filtration (Maldives, Jamaica, Indonesia) to novel textile biomaterials made from agricultural waste (Kenya, Colombia, Philippines), as well as amphibious and biostabilized architecture engineered to withstand extreme weather events (Bangladesh, Tanzania, Mozambique);
- **Climate, peace, and security:** AI-driven predictive platforms and on-the-ground mediation initiatives designed to defuse social tensions triggered by drought and resource scarcity (from Nigeria to Yemen and Colombia).

The 5 Italian Talents of the Youth4Climate Italian Challenge

Alongside the global winners, MASE and UNDP awarded 5 projects from the national call dedicated to innovators under 30 who translate research, creativity, and local heritage into actionable solutions:

- *TART-ARTE - il mare in una tela:* transforms food-grade plastic waste into works of art and educational initiatives to protect sea turtles and Sardinia's marine environment;
- *Ecobuddy e il Polo olivettiano di Roccavaldina:* regenerates an abandoned craft district by converting beer and coffee waste into innovative compostable biomaterials;
- *Bridge2Impact:* an AI-powered digital platform that verifies and bankability-checks climate project proposals, streamlining access to funds and investors;
- *LINFA - Lotta Integrata alla Xylella Fastidiosa:* supports the replanting of Xylella-resistant olive groves in Puglia, funded through certified, traceable carbon credits that businesses can purchase to offset emissions with tangible ecological and social impacts;
- *24 Indicators for Urban Sustainability and Climate Adaptation:* an integrated scientific framework to help cities and local governments evaluate risk and execute resilient urban planning.

For more information on Youth4Climate: Connecting Solutions 2026: <https://www.y4c2026.com/>

Discover Youth4Climate: <https://www.undp.org/romecentre/our-programmes/youth4climate>

Press Contacts::

UNDP Rome Centre



Malak Chabar +393273048689
Malak.chabar@undp.org

Press Office c/o Verdesi and Partners
Marco Verdesi +39 346 4182418
Sara Cappelletti +39 340 4229343
ufficiostampa@verdesiandpartners.it