

# Ernesto Illy International Coffee Award 2024: The Future of Coffee Takes Center Stage at the United Nations.

*Top Industry Experts in New York to Tackle Coffee's Climate Crisis and Discuss Regenerative Agriculture Solutions Through Public-Private Collaboration.*

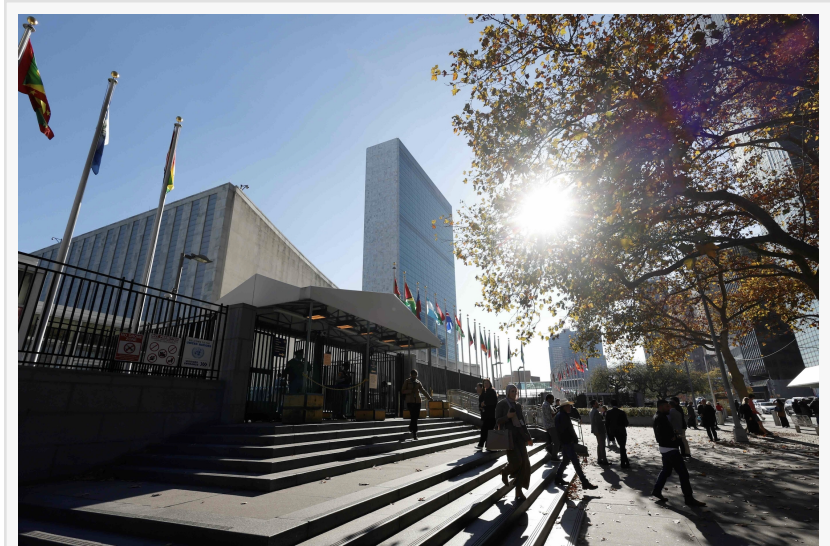
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EINPresswire.com/ -- In a world facing unprecedented climate challenges, the future of coffee is under threat. From droughts in Brazil to extreme weather in Vietnam, climate volatility jeopardizes the livelihood of over 12.5 million coffee growers, most of whom are smallholders. The Ernesto [Illy](#)

International Coffee Award 2024 convened at the United Nations Headquarters to address the critical question: How can we secure the future of coffee in light of these environmental and socio-economic threats?

The roundtable discussion, organized by illycaffè as part of this year's Ernesto Illy International Coffee Award, was moderated by Clare Reichenbach, CEO of the James Beard Foundation. The panel brought together renowned leaders and visionaries in coffee and sustainability, including Andrea Illy, Chairman of illycaffè and co-Chair of the Regenerative Society Foundation; Massimo Bottura, world-renowned chef and UN Goodwill Ambassador; Jamil Ahmad, Director of the UNEP New York Office; Andrea De Marco, Project Manager at UNIDO; Raina Lang, Senior Director of Sustainable Coffee at Conservation International; and Vanusia Nogueira, Executive Director of the International Coffee Organization.

The panel emphasized the urgent need to transition coffee cultivation to a regenerative model to enhance resilience, improve farmer livelihoods, and reduce environmental impact. A major focus was on establishing a \$10 billion public-private fund over the next decade, which will target smallholder coffee farmers in tropical regions heavily impacted by climate change.



Entrance of the UN Headquarters in New York

“Since Expo 2015, we have worked tirelessly to build a framework to protect coffee for generations to come,” said Andrea Illy, “Regenerative agriculture has shown it can produce high yields and quality while restoring natural resources. We must act quickly to scale these solutions globally through an international fund. It is essential we implement regenerative solutions now, as we see they work and deliver positive outcomes.”

Throughout the discussion, panelists underscored the importance of uniting stakeholders from governments, international organizations, and the private sector to bring impactful, lasting change to coffee-growing communities. Reichenbach highlighted that consumer awareness and participation are key drivers in the industry’s sustainability journey.

Massimo Bottura, Chef Patron Osteria Francescana and Casa Maria Luigia, Founder Food for Soul, UNEP Goodwill Ambassador, and SDG Advocate, contributed with his unique perspective “Coffee is about emotion. Coffee has the potential to embody heritage, quality, and enjoyment,” Bottura said. “We have to improve the act of drinking a cup of coffee from a routine to a conscious act of support. This shift has a direct, positive impact on the livelihoods of those who produce and cultivate it, fostering a sustainable future for coffee-growing communities.”.

“As we confront the increasing impacts of climate change, coffee-producing communities—primarily smallholder farmers in developing regions—face unprecedented challenges that threaten their livelihoods and cultural heritage,” said Vanusia Nogueira, Executive Director of the International Coffee Organization. “This fund, and the collaboration it represents, is a crucial step towards building resilience, ensuring sustainable livelihoods, and preserving coffee’s future. Together, through public-private partnerships and global commitment, we can empower these communities to adapt, thrive, and continue sharing coffee with the world.”

“As leaders in food and sustainability, we have a responsibility to champion models that can secure vital food systems like coffee,” said Clare Reichenbach, CEO of the James Beard Foundation. “It was a privilege to moderate this important discussion and hear from many thought-leaders in the sustainability arena”

The roundtable concluded with a powerful message to the global coffee community, financial institutions, and individual consumers: Coffee-producing countries require significant investment and public-private cooperation to create scalable, resilient, and environmentally-friendly agricultural practices. The envisioned fund aims to support farmers through the transition to regenerative practices, ensuring the economic sustainability of the coffee industry while meeting climate and social challenges head-on.

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illycaffè is an Italian family-owned company, founded in Trieste in 1933 which has always set

itself the mission of offering the best coffee to the world. It produces a unique 100% Arabica blend composed of 9 different ingredients. The company selects only 1% of the best Arabica beans. Every day more than 8 million cups of illy coffee are served in over 140 countries around the globe, in the cafés, restaurants and hotels, in single-brand cafés and shops, at home and in the office, in which the company is present through subsidiaries and distributors.

Since its foundation, illycaffè has oriented its strategies towards a sustainable business model, a commitment that it strengthened in 2019 by adopting the status of Benefit Company and in 2021 becoming the first Italian coffee company to obtain the international B Corp certification. Everything that is “made in illy” is about beauty and art, the founding principles of the brand, starting from its logo, designed by artist James Rosenquist, up to illy Art Collection cups, decorated by over 130 international artists, or coffee machines designed by internationally renowned designers. With the aim of spreading the culture of quality to growers, baristas and coffee lovers, the company has developed its Università del Caffè which today holds courses in 23 countries around the world. In 2023, the company had a turnover of €595,1 million. The illy single-brand network has 159 points of sale in 30 countries.

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