

WUSME

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises

In Special Consultative Status with the United Nations ECOSOC since 2013
In Special Consultative Status with UNIDO since 2020
Observer Organization Admitted by UNFCCC to the COP since 2018

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

WUSME, the WORLD UNION OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES
in Consultative Status with UN ECOSOC since 2013 and UNIDO since 2020
International Headquarters: Strada Borrana, n. 35, 47899 - Serravalle – Republic of San Marino
website: www.wusme.org e-mail: info@wusme.org



PREFACE

The future of MSMEs and Crafts through a new entrepreneurial culture

From written statements and reports submitted or published in 2024

The World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises pursues the purpose of representing and advocating the interests of SMEs and Crafts with a particular focus on countries with less developed economies and women entrepreneurship.

The relevance and role that SMEs play in terms of total employment is well known. They are and will continue to be the largest economic sector, nationally and globally, the lifeblood of the world economy and the main instrument for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals defined by the United Nations.

Although their role concerns all 17 Development Goals, there are some that have more direct connections with SMEs: No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, Reduction of Inequalities, Responsible Consumption and Production.

The world needs more and better entrepreneurs and SME managers to have more and better businesses that can generate more value for the economy, more dignified jobs for communities and thus contribute to solving the problems related to poverty: health, hunger, education, inequality, etc.

Entrepreneurial culture requires different actions that could be classified into three groups: education, government and business.

In the educational sector, for example, it would be desirable to provide for the development and implementation of entrepreneurial education, at all levels of the educational system, creating research units, programs and academic material specific to the needs that each country has in the implementation of business activities.

In the government sector, it would be useful to implement or strengthen a national program to develop entrepreneurship, with support units that can provide advice, mentoring, coaching and assistance to entrepreneurs in all stages of business development.

In the business sector, initiatives such as educational campaigns, practices and programmes should be implemented to show the community the positive role of entrepreneurs and businesses and develop an entrepreneurial culture, promote relationships between experienced and successful entrepreneurs and new entrepreneurs and the sharing of knowledge and experiences.

These actions should be implemented especially in support of small and medium-sized enterprises led by young people and women.



Recently, women entrepreneurship has increased in various parts of the world. Through small business and women-led businesses, economic development can be achieved that could also ensure social justice. To this end, an enabling environment for small business and its development must be created.

Economic and social crises, such as pandemics, wars and financial upheavals, have consistently wreaked havoc, disproportionately burdening women.

In all countries, the challenges, women face, have been vividly portrayed. These challenges include securing financing for businesses, access to technology and resources, and juggling family responsibilities during crises.

At the international level, the importance of recognizing the value of women, especially in the business community and in the market, has been highlighted.

Achieving gender equality is a collective effort that depends on everyone's commitment.

The World Union of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises stands ready to support these efforts and collaborate with partners around the world to advance gender equality and empower women in the small and medium-sized enterprises sector by promoting leadership training programs for women.

In conclusion, the current global scenario calls for a joint collaborative effort to accelerate the full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals envisaged in the 2030 Agenda also through the contribution of businesses, improving their access to finance and sharing available best practices to develop an inclusive and enabling environment.

WUSME stands ready to work with all partners to meet the aspirations of communities around the world.

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MESSAGE BY THE WUSME PRESIDENT, BARBARA TEREZI

Year 2024 witnessed the Association further strengthening its collaboration and expanding its contacts with different International, Regional and National Organizations engaged in various capacities in supporting SMEs and Crafts, intensifying its presence at the events in program and the opportunities for meeting and collaboration.

This year too, the Association actively contributed to the work of the International Organizations by which it is officially recognized, such as UN-ECOSOC (United Nations Economic and Social Council),



UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) and UNFCCC – COP (United Nations Conference on Climate Change), with the participation of its delegates in various Conferences and the submission of written statements, paying particular attention to the issues of environmental sustainability, sustainable development goals – AGENDA2030 and promotion of entrepreneurship as a tool for women’s empowerment and a driver of employment for young people.

Among the various activities carried out during the year, we would like to highlight, in particular, WUSME's participation in the UNIDO DAY 2024, held during the 10th China International Technology Fair (Shanghai) on June 13, as a Partner Organization, at the invitation of UNIDO ITPO Shanghai, as well as participation in COP29 (United Nations Conference on Climate Change) in Baku (Azerbaijan) in December, where the Association held a Side event and Exhibit.

Within the sphere of Organizations belonging to the United Nations system, the Association had the opportunity to start relations with FAO (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) by virtue of meetings held by the WUSME President with the FAO Director General in San Marino and Rome, in which the organization was presented and opportunities for collaboration in areas of common interest preliminarily discussed, with the prospect to identify a project related to the fields of agriculture, nutrition and food security.

During 2024, the Association carried out its usual associative activities, starting with the organization of various institutional moments, in hybrid or virtual mode, including the General Meeting of the Members, the meetings of the Board of Directors and the meetings of the Permanent Commissions.

Similarly, in 2025 the Association plans to maintain its active presence in the international context, interacting with International Institutions and SMEs Organizations, participating in the initiatives in calendar and implementing the usual communication activities, in order to further extend its network of collaborative relationships.

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President Terenzi Barbara thanks all the office bearers who supported and made possible all the activities carried out during the year 2024, as below: Honorary President, Headquarters, Board of Directors, Senators, Permanent Commission for Economic and Financial Issues, Permanent Commission for Social Issues and Female Entrepreneurship, Commission for the Development of MPMEs, Special Representatives, Ambassadors.

PERIOD UNDER REPORT

According to the Articles of Association the fiscal year of WUSME ends with the 31st December of each year the WUSME ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2024 shall comprise the Period of Report from 01/01/2024 and end on 31/12/2024.

MEETINGS OF THE ASSOCIATION'S BODIES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS

23rd April 2024

The WUSME General Meeting of the Members was held on 23 April 2024, in presence in San Marino and via videoconference, to examine and approve the Annual Report and financial statements for the year 2023.

MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

MEETING OF THE BOARD

6th February 2024

The Board of Directors of the WUSME Association held a meeting on Wednesday 6th of February 2024, in the San Marino registered office and operational headquarters and by videoconference, to review the WUSME participation in COP28 and discuss the WUSME activities in calendar for the first quarter of 2024.

MEETING OF THE BOARD

21st March 2024

The Board of Directors of the WUSME Association met on the 21st of March 2024, at the registered and operational headquarters in San Marino and by videoconference, to examine and approve the Annual Report and draft budget for the year 2023 in anticipation of the General Meeting of the



Members to be convened shortly and consider the proposals by the President and Board Members for the year 2024.

MEETING OF THE BOARD

27th June 2024

The Board of Directors of the WUSME Association met on the 27th of June 2024, at the registered and operational headquarters in San Marino and by videoconference, to report the participation of WUSME in the UNIDO Day 2024 in Shanghai and start of preparatory work for COP29.

MEETING OF THE BOARD

1st August 2024

The Board of Directors of the WUSME Association met on the 1st of August 2024, at the San Marino headquarters and via videoconference, to update on activities in progress and planned for last quarter of 2024 and appoint new WUSME Ambassadors.

MEETING OF THE BOARD

25th September 2024

The Board of Directors of the WUSME Association met on the 25th of September 2024, at the San Marino headquarters and via videoconference, to discuss activities in progress and planned for last quarter of 2024.

MEETING OF THE BOARD

8th November 2024

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the WUSME Association was held on the 8th of September 2024, at the San Marino headquarters and via videoconference, to discuss the participation of WUSME in COP29.

MEETING OF THE BOARD

11th December 2024

A meeting of the Board of Directors of the WUSME Association was held on the 11th of December 2024, at the San Marino headquarters and via videoconference, to examine the proposal and appointment of new Representatives.

PERMANENT COMMISSIONS

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MEETINGS OF THE PERMANENT COMMISSION ON ECONOMIC-FINANCIAL ISSUES

29th April 2024

The Permanent Committee on Economic and Financial Matters of the WUSME Association held a meeting on the 29th of April 2024 to discuss the contents of the written statement to be submitted for the ECOSOC High Level Segment 2024 on the theme "*Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions*". The HLS includes the general debate, convened under the auspices of the Council, on the theme "*From the SDG Summit to the Summit of the Future*".

4th September 2024

The Permanent Commission on Economic and Financial Issues of the WUSME Association held a meeting on the 4th of September 2024 to contribute to the preparatory activities for COP29 and collect input for written statements to be submitted to the CSocD63 (63rd session of the UN Commission on Social Development) and the CSW69 / Beijing+30 (2025) (69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women).

MEETINGS OF THE PERMANENT COMMISSION ON SOCIAL ISSUES AND WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP

29th April 2024

The Permanent Commission on Social Issues and Women's Entrepreneurship of the WUSME Association held a meeting on the 29th of April 2024 to discuss the contents of the written statement to be submitted for the ECOSOC High Level Segment 2024 on the theme "*Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions*". The HLS includes the general debate, convened under the auspices of the Council, on the theme "*From the SDG Summit to the Summit of the Future*".

5th September 2024

The Permanent Committee on Social Issues and Women's Entrepreneurship of the WUSME Association held a meeting on the 5th of September 2024 to contribute to the preparatory activities for COP29 and collect input for written statements to be submitted to the CSocD63 (63rd session of the UN Commission on Social Development) and the CSW69 / Beijing+30 (2025) (69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women).

MEETINGS OF THE PERMANENT COMMISSION ON SMEs DEVELOPMENT

30th April 2024

The Permanent Commission on SMEs Development of the WUSME Association held a meeting on the 30th of April 2024 to discuss the contents of the written statement to be submitted for the ECOSOC High Level Segment 2024 on the theme "*Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises: the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions*". The HLS includes the general debate, convened under the auspices of the Council, on the theme

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"From the SDG Summit to the Summit of the Future".

6th September 2024

The Permanent Commission on Economic and Financial Affairs of the WUSME Association held a meeting on the 6th of September 2024 to contribute to the preparatory activities for COP29 and collect input for written statements to be submitted to the CSocD63 (63rd session of the UN Commission on Social Development) and the CSW69 / Beijing+30 (2025) (69th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women).

INFORMATION, PUBLIC RELATIONS AND SERVICES

Below is a summary of the communication activity:

1. In 2024, 16 newsletters were distributed to the network;
2. The website (www.wusme.org), has been constantly updated with WUSME news and news on small and medium-sized businesses and crafts around the world;
3. WUSME is present on various social channels: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn page.

WRITTEN STATEMENTS SUBMITTED IN 2024

During 2024, the following statements have been submitted:

- WUSME Written Statement for the 62nd Session of the United Nations Commission on Social Development (CSocD62)
- WUSME Written Statement for the 68th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW68)



WUSME's ACTIVITIES IN YEAR 2024

WUSME at the MSME Conclave – 10th Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2024

12th January 2024

Given the clarion call of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India of Viksit Bharat @ 2047 (Developed India @ 2047) and the importance the MSMEs hold in shaping and propelling the economy, the Government of Gujarat decided to hold a dedicated event on MSME, termed as *MSME Conclave*, on 12th January 2024 at Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The event witnessed the participation of several reputed national and global industry players, government officials as well as other relevant stakeholders to deliberate, envision and charter the role of MSMEs for Viksit Bharat @ 2047. As International Organization actively present in India to support MSMEs and entrepreneurship development, the World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises was invited to take part in the event and contributed with the participation and presentation by WUSME Director Dr. Joginder Singh Juneja who addressed MSMEs in India & Gujarat and Innovation as Key to Success for Enterprises. In his speech, Dr. Joginder Singh Juneja highlighted how *"the ability of firms to deal with the heterogeneous and uncertain impacts of climate change is mainly influenced by innovation capacity. In a relevant study, pointed out that innovation may arise when an external threat or opportunity occurs. It is expected that SMEs are more likely to be innovative if they face threats and opportunities caused by climate change. SMEs need to be encouraged to innovate and for which awareness and financial incentives are required. Innovation is the strongest tool for an entrepreneur to succeed in the business. Innovation is often also viewed as the application of better solutions that meet new requirements, unarticulated needs, or existing market needs. An innovation backed by entrepreneurial spirit is the ultimate Mantra for success of an enterprise, even if it means need for continuous innovation in an ongoing enterprise"*.

WUSME's Written Statement for the 62nd Session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development (CSocD62)

18th January 2024

The Written Statement submitted by WUSME for the 62nd Session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development (CSocD62) has been officially approved and published on the Official Document System of the United Nations, at the following link (to be added). The CSocD62,

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which took place from 5 to 14 February 2024 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, focused on "*Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication.*"

The CSocD62 addressed the emerging issue of "*The Influence of Digital Transformation on Inclusive Growth and Development: A Path to Achieving Social Justice.*" The Commission also commemorated the thirtieth anniversary of the International Year of the Family.

The WUSME Statement, drafted by the Permanent Commission for the Development of SMEs, under the guidance of the President Barbara Terenzi, Board of Directors and WUSME HQ, reaffirms the commitment of WUSME to work, with all the Development Partners, to meet the aspirations of the communities across the globe and looks forward to the results of the deliberations of this 62nd United Nations Commission for Social Development.

Final Report on WUSME's participation in COP28: conclusions of the SIDE EVENT

12th February 2024

A final report on the WUSME's participation in COP28 and, in particular, of the official Side Event held on December 3 on the theme "*MSMEs facing the energy transition: innovative solutions in finance and technology for value chains*", has been issued, following the final review and approval by the Board of Directors, as background information for preliminary discussion on the activity which may concern year 2024, in view of COP29.

Conducted by WUSME in collaboration with the *Association Française des Entreprises pour l'Environnement (EpE)* and the *Regional Center for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RCREEE)*, the panel gathered Speakers from various regions and fields. The final report combines the presentations and inputs expressed by the different Speakers, including information on best practices and innovative initiatives useful to support MSMEs in their climate transition, drawing the following final conclusions: as regards all financial issues for SMEs, so that they can access new energy, a plurality of solutions is present and is being sought, adaptable depending on the country. It is possible to put forward some points, which are very important for the coming years regarding SMEs' access to new energies and especially access to financing for those new energies. One point concerns the regulatory framework that must be established in each country: it is necessary so that investors can turn to the country for investments. The second point concerns the combination between public and private investments. There is now a repertoire of best practices in this field and the ability to duplicate what is going well, especially so that the private sector can have confidence in developing operations with governments. The role of development financial institutions is also very important, because they are able to take on some risks and are able to invest in operations, where the private sector is not able to intervene immediately. In this regard, there has also been a good evolution over the last 20 years. All these institutions are also working with international public institutions and with the programs developed at COP28. We see that, COP after COP, new ideas are being put on the table. The funds, even if not immediately, will arrive gradually to allow SMEs to access new energy. Wusme, with its media, will give voice, in all areas to which it has access, to the new initiatives that will lead to an expansion of the measures currently in force. The various speakers indicated, with specific examples, that significant sums are being committed to facilitate access to new energies for businesses and in

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particular for SMEs. On behalf of the WUSME President Barbara Terenzi and her Board of Directors, the Union of Small and Medium Enterprises expresses heartfelt thanks to all the guests and Partner Organizations, RCREEE and EPE and associated companies, for having carefully prepared this Side Event and for having brought together so many personalities to discuss this important topic, in the framework of COP 28.

WUSME at the 62nd session of the UN COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CSocD62)

5th February 2024

On February 5, 2024 Dr. Annie Borello Fiorilla di Santa Croce, Permanent Representative of WUSME to the UN HQ in New York City, attended the 62st Session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD62). The first day of the Conference was dedicated to the Opening of the session and a High-level panel discussion on the priority theme: "*Fostering social development and social justice through social policies to accelerate progress on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to achieve the overarching goal of poverty eradication*". The World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises (WUSME) issued a written statement (document E/CN.5/2024/NGO/31) reaffirming its commitment to work, with all the Development Partners, to meet the aspirations of the communities across the globe. The conclusions from the relations of all member states, organizations and entities involved, is that in order to foster development and improve social justice, particularly if a sustainable development, as opposed to occasional and ephemeral positive effects, is to be achieved, all incentives and measures need to interact organically so to increase the effect of each single measure adopted and programs enacted and extend them through all levels of civil society. Statistically fostering the work condition and professional opportunities and conditions for women, particularly, tends to produce a positive exponential effect. As Dr. Borello noted, such conclusions are perfectly in line with the recommendations often made by WUSME, and reiterated in the written statement issued in occasion of the Sixty-second Session of the United Nations Commission for Social Development that has taken place during the course of this month.

WUSME celebrates the International Women's Day 2024 taking part in the 9th edition of Shakti International Women Entrepreneurs Summit 2024

1st March 2024

On International Women's Day, WUSME joined the UN Women call for the world to "*Invest in Women, Accelerate Progress*", promoting Women Entrepreneurship as the best way to accelerate economic growth and build more prosperous, sustainable and equitable societies. As part of its commitment to support Women's SMEs, WUSME has been pleased to collaborate at the "*9th edition of Shakti International Women Entrepreneurs Summit 2024*" held on March 1 in New Delhi as International Partner, bringing a message of support. The Shakti International Women Entrepreneurs Summit 2024 has been organized by the India SME Forum in association with the Ministry for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises of the Government of India. The event is an annual Conference organized on the occasion of International Women's Day with the purpose of inspiring and promoting the idea of entrepreneurship among women. The conference endeavors to support both existing and aspiring Indian Women Entrepreneurs, through providing a platform wherein the most successful women entrepreneurs share their knowledge, experiences and entrepreneurial journeys of with other

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women; and also the international experts discuss the best practices of doing business as well as innovation in entrepreneurship. On the occasion, WUSME President Barbara Terenzi conveyed a message in support of the initiative, at the conclusion of a panel discussion focused on *"Integrating Women in International Business and Global Value Chains."* In her statement, WUSME President recalled the support of the Union of Small and Medium Enterprises to Women's Entrepreneurship and the work of its Permanent Commission specifically dedicated to support this domain by collecting information on the status of Women engaged in enterprises in different regions worldwide and issuing papers such as the Written Statement presented on the occasion of the 68th Conference of the United Nations on the Status of Women scheduled from 11 to 22 March 2024 in New York City, which WUSME will participate in. At the conclusion of her speech, Ms. Barbara Terenzi also highlighted how *"women's contribution to economies around the world is undeniable and significantly increasing GDP in all countries, however, to fully develop this potential and recognize women as valuable investments for growth, we must support a paradigm shift."* WUSME will continue partnering with its Stakeholders to promote a sustainable and women-empowering ecosystem.

WUSME at the 13th AIMA MSMEs Convention

15th - 16th March 2024

Upon invitation of WUSME Director Dr. J.S. Juneja, also Chairman of the MSMEs Commission and Past President of AIMA, WUSME took part in the *13th National MSMEs Convention of the All India Management Association (AIMA)* as International SME Partner.

The Convention, held on 15th and 16th of March 2024 in Bangalore in collaboration with the *Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association (KASSIA)*, focused on the theme *"Innovation and Digital Transformation for MSMEs—Opportunities and Challenges"*. On the occasion, WUSME President Barbara Terenzi conveyed a message in support of the initiative, which was conveyed during the Inaugural Session. In her statement, referring to the theme of the Convention Madam President Terenzi recalled that: *"By virtue of its recognition as Observer Organization at the UNFCCC, WUSME took part in COP28, held in Dubai from 30 November to 12 December 2023, conducting an official Side Event on the theme: "MSMEs facing energy transition: innovative solutions in finance & technology for value chains ". Among the results of this round table, I would like to recall the importance of technology, digitalization and innovation for businesses in addressing climate adaptation and energy transition, also within the value chains which they belong to. It is essential that large corporate groups collaborate together with small enterprises, as strategic partners in their decarbonisation journey, cooperating alongside public institutions in targeted initiatives and in a logic of mutual partnership."* She concluded by congratulating the AIMA on the full success of the MSMEs Convention, looking forward to a fruitful collaboration between the two Organizations for the benefit of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

WUSME at the 68^o Session of the UN COMMISSION on the STATUS of WOMEN (CSW68)

11th – 22nd March 2024

WUSME Permanent Representative to the United Nations HQ, Dr. Annie Borello Fiorilla di Santa Croce, attended the 68th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

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(CSW68) held from 11 to 22 of March, 2024 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York City. Dr. Annie Borello Fiorilla di Santa Croce, who attended the opening of the session, reports that the UN Secretary General Antonio Gutierrez pointed out at the nature of the Commission as the pivotal forum dedicated to promoting and safeguarding the rights of women and girls Worldwide. She also refers that he echoed the words of Ms. Bahous, UN Women Executive Director, stressing the disproportionate impact of wars on women: *"In conflict zones around the globe, women and girls are suffering most from wars waged by men"* he said, *urging immediate ceasefires and humanitarian aid.*" The CSW68 proceedings and its parallel events went on focusing on such neuralgic issues. Ideas were shared as were success stories geared towards strengthening financial resources made available to women, eradicate poverty and drive progress towards gender equality so to accelerate change favoring women worldwide. WUSME actively contributed to the event also with the presentation of a Written Statement officially published on the Conference website containing remarks and recommendations in line with what expressed during the Conference by the different Stakeholders. On the occasion, Dr. Annie Borello had also the opportunity to meet Ms. Margit Batthyany-Schmidt, President of the Union of Hungarian Women (UHW), with which WUSME is defining the terms of a fruitful collaboration in support of women empowerment. The World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises stands committed to championing gender equity, collaborating with partners worldwide and encouraging female entrepreneurship.

WUSME as Partner of the 3rd Terme Selce International Congress in Brussels to address Corporate Wellbeing

13th May 2024

WUSME took part, as International Partner, in the 3rd TERME SELCE International Congress on Corporate Wellbeing held on 13 of May 2024 in Brussels and hosted by the European Committee of the Regions. The Congress was also one of the events at hashtag #europeanpublichealthweek. This year's edition was on the theme *"Life Quality and Joy of Work"*. Holding the event in the EU capital allowed to involve relevant institutions and upgrade the dialogue as well as facilitate new perspective for employers and employees. The Congress was divided into 3 panels respectively on the topics of mental wellbeing, physical wellbeing and healthy nutrition). This congress not only motivated to further discussion on these extremely important topics but also showed to be again amazing hotspot to facilitate new collaboration, meeting point of old and new supporters and friends, and also inspiration for creativity. For the occasion, President Barbara Terenzi conveyed the following message of support on behalf of the World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises and looks forward to the continuation and advance of this profitable collaboration.

WUSME participated in the AIM Congress 2024 and remembers Gian Franco Terenzi

7th – 9th May 2024

On the occasion of participation in the AIM Congress 2024, WUSME remembered that May 20th marked the fourth anniversary of the demise of GIAN FRANCO TEREZI, Founder and historic Promoter of the WUSME Association which continues to carry out activities in support of MSMEs in the world. WUSME participated in the ANNUAL INVESTMENT MEETING Congress 2024 (AIM Congress 2024), held in Abu Dhabi from 7th to 9th May 2024, as International Partner, actively contributing to the discussions focused on topics of interest and current issues for SMEs.

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Mr. Dogad Dogoui, WUSME Special Representative and WUSME Ambassador in Tunisia, attended the Congress as Delegate and Speaker of the Organization addressing the topic “*Customer-based challenges: Innovate to Captivate – The power of AI in customer’s loyalty and retention*”. In his speech he focused on the change in customer services offered by SMEs, highlighting how AI tools for customer services (such as CHAT GPT for enterprises) have emerged as essential solutions to deliver efficient support through support tools such as software on NLP (Natural Language Processing), machine learning and generative artificial intelligence. Artificial intelligence tools can help businesses predict customer needs or problems. As an organization of SMEs with global reach, WUSME has the opportunity to gain international view on how customer service teams in enterprises uses or will use AI in the future. WUSME looks forward to continue contributing to AIM Congress in its upcoming 2025 edition and collaborate with the AIM Foundation in exploring cooperation opportunities to support SMEs.

Participation of WUSME in the UNIDO DAY 2024 at the SHANGHAI Fair

13th June 2024

WUSME, the World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises, took part in the UNIDO DAY 2024 held during the 10th China (Shanghai) International Technology Fair on June 13, as Partner Organization. The partnership proposal came from UNIDO ITPO Shanghai, the UNIDO Investment and Technology Promotion Office, following the fruitful collaboration achieved at the SIDE EVENT held by WUSME at COP28, the United Nations Conference on Change Climate, on December 3, 2023 in Dubai. The Forum co-organized by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the Shanghai Jiao Tong University, the South-South Cooperation Finance Center and the World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises (WUSME), was successfully held at the Shanghai World Expo Exhibition and Convention Center. The event brought together more than 300 guests from enterprises, universities, associations and research institutions from more than a dozen countries and regions including Germany, Canada, Spain, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Argentina, South Africa, Kenya, the Republic of Mali, San Marino, etc. The WUSME delegation attending the UNIDO DAY was composed by Madam President Mrs. Barbara Terenzi, WUSME Director Ms. Rongyong Yang and Mrs. M. Valeria Pasquini, Representative from the WUSME San Marino HQ. President Barbara Terenzi took the floor in the morning session to deliver an opening speech, greeting all participants and introducing the WUSME Organization. In the afternoon session on the theme “*New opportunities for International Cooperation on the Green Silk Road*”, she also stressed how: “*An important aspect SMEs must pay attention to is progress by innovation, a necessary path to ensure a long lifespan and rapid adaptation to the changes required, to remain competitive in the market and sustainable in their development. It’s required to focus on how technology and innovation can help SMEs accelerate their green transformation and achieve sustainable industrial growth. It is necessary to create the tools, with the help of all Parties, to encourage innovation among SMEs and achieve the sustainable development goals set out in the 2030 agenda.*” Madam President stated that “*WUSME is eager to explore, together with UNIDO and its Partners, the development of new international collaboration opportunities useful to make global value chains more integrated, sustainable and efficient through paths promoting electronic commerce, public-private dialogue and international connection between supply and demand.*” During the event, on the proposal of UNIDO ITPO Shanghai, HEMA China and WUSME signed a cooperation

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agreement to promote the development of sustainable supply chain.

WUSME celebrates the International MSME Day

27th June 2024

2024 year's theme was "*MSMEs and the SDGs. Leveraging the Power and Resilience of Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) to Accelerate Sustainable Development and Eradicate Poverty in Times of Multiple Crises*". The anniversary offered the opportunity to remind the significant contribution MSMEs can make to sustainable development, but also to recognize the great challenges they face along their path. On this day, it was also important to recall the support of Organizations such as WUSME, in their efforts to give voice to their requests and to find solutions path in various areas, such as access to financing. In preparation for COP29, attention was renewed to the underlying forces affecting enterprises in their green transition and climate adaptation in sectors strategic for the different economies of the world.

Meeting between WUSME President with FAO Director-General in Rome

20th August 2024

On August 20th, President Barbara Terenzi had the opportunity to meet FAO Director-General QU Dongyu at the FAO Headquarters in Rome. On the occasion, Ms. Terenzi briefly introduced the two Organizations she chairs, the San Marino-China Friendship Association and the WUSME, World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises. During the meeting, discussions touched on global challenges such as adaptation to climate change, global food security and agri-food systems transformation, and the contribution of the private sector, in particular SMEs, in addressing these challenges and agreed on the need to leverage their potential, especially in developing countries, to improve nutrition and food security.

WUSME to promote SME Resilience and Sustainability at the Climate Week NYC

26th September 2024

WUSME took part in the 2024 edition of the *New York Climate Week (Climate Week NYC)*, on the sidelines of UNGA79 (79th session of the United Nations General Assembly), contributing to an event organized on September 26th by the Permanent Representation of Italy to the UN and Generali Group, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), entitled "*Sustainability Champions: Strengthening SMEs for a Climate-resilient Tomorrow*." The event was opened by the Permanent Representative of Italy to the UN Amb. Maurizio Massari, in the presence, among others, of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea Osman Saleh Mohammed and the Minister of the Environment of Burkina Faso Roger Baro. Also present at the round table financial institutions, SME organizations such as WUSME and several companies members of the UN Global Compact. The event brought together the perspectives of experts, industry leaders and policy makers in a collaborative forum to highlight innovative and practical strategies to foster resilience and concrete solutions crucial for global supply chains and SMEs worldwide in the context of increasing climate risks. The focus was on the intersection of sustainability, entrepreneurship and resilience through knowledge exchange, discussing concrete initiatives for a resilient future that allows

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everyone to better manage the effects of climate change. The World Union of SMEs was represented by Ms. Annie Borello Fiorilla di Santa Croce, WUSME Permanent Representative to the United Nations UNHQ in New York, who shared perspectives and considerations also resulting from the findings gathered in activities carried out at the latest COP editions. During her speech, the WUSME Representative highlighted, among other things, how *"Small and Medium Enterprises constitute approximately 90% of all businesses (that numbers 400million) and more than 50% of the employment force worldwide. They account for approximately 64% of the new jobs created every year, and it can be said that they affect directly and indirectly nearly the entire population of the planet. SMEs are flexible, creative, react quickly and innovative, but lack access to funding and resources to expand their models and implement sustainability solutions. They operate with very slim margins and they are particularly vulnerable to economic downturns and unforeseen events. Their budget constraints compel them to prioritize cash flow for monthly survival over the allocation of funds for sustainability in the medium and long term, even though they feel pressure from the government, investors, customers and employees in this regard. Large corporations, instead, have access to funding, skills and network of resources, which they could share and use to help SMEs, starting with those that are part of their global value chains. Access to the network and resources of large companies could work as a multiplier for the success of SMEs, and, on the other hand, the creativity and agility of adaptation of SMEs could offer large companies new solutions to increase their competitiveness. Collaboration between large conglomerates and SMEs can be key to resolve the sustainability dilemma, with the help of tailored governmental programs and flexible regulations. Because SMEs are an essential component of the economic ecosystem comprised also of large corporations, their failure or success will eventually translate into the failure or success of the economic model. Only through concerted plans involving the collaboration of large corporations, SMEs and governmental and not for profit organizations, we can create a healthy, dynamic and creative ecosystem, sustainable for the future of human society."*

WUSME Partner of the 14th European Congress of Small & Medium Enterprises (ECSME) 29th – 30th October 2024

On October 29th-30th, Silesian Regional Chamber of Commerce (RIG) organized the *14th European Congress of Small & Medium Enterprises (ECSME)*. As part of the collaborative relationship born following the agreement signed in 2020 between WUSME and RIG, WUSME was glad to welcome the invitation by RIG of actively supporting the Congress as Honorary Patron and was represented, on the occasion, by the WUSME Ambassador in Poland Mr. Jarek. A. Pacek, who intervened as Speaker in the *"Innovations and Start-ups in water management"* area panel and voiced WUSME's mission of supporting, representing and protecting SMEs worldwide. In all the discussions, the WUSME Ambassador highlighted and advocated start-ups/SMEs needs in contacts with both state customer and other bigger organizations, as well as private investor funds also present in the meeting. The WUSME intervention was appreciated. A need for support by various accelerators and platforms organized by bigger market players was also heard there. Discussions in other Start-up panels, like Agro-Start ups were voicing similar concerns. The discussions proved the polish SMEs are very aware of main success factors in the early phases of SME's lifecycle. The voice for cooperation platforms was much louder than even for pure financial support for SMEs. Both regulations simplification and access to testing opportunities/customers was mentioned. It's important to note that this voice was

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heard also by the EU programmes representatives, who either already run support platforms in some areas (like EIT) or advise to search for opportunities at EU Funding & Tenders Portal.

WUSME joins the Shanghai International Friendship City Chamber of Commerce Network (SIFCCN) 28th October 2024

Cherishing the consolidated bilateral friendship and by virtue of the cooperation agreement signed in 2015, WUSME has been invited by Shanghai Federation of Industry and Commerce (General Chamber of Commerce) (SFIC) to join the new initiative “*Shanghai International Friendship City Chamber of Commerce Network (SIFCCN)*” as Co-Founding Member.

The initiative is aimed at further promoting practical cooperation, building an interactive platform for investment, economy, and trade under the cooperation framework of Shanghai International Friendship Cities. The invitation was reserved and extended to Chambers of Commerce and SMEs Organization worldwide linked to SFIC by virtue of past or ongoing collaborating relations and agreements. Within the framework of the friendly cooperative relationship and in view of its further development, WUSME was glad to confirm its support and to be represented by Ms. Rongyong Yang, WUSME Board Member and referent person for the WUSME Representative Office in Shanghai. On October 28, Ms. Yang took active part in the launch ceremony organized for SIFCCN together with the other Representatives from other Co-Founding Organizations during the event “*Dialogue between Consular Officials and Private Entrepreneurs*” in Shanghai.

WUSME at the WORLD WITHOUT HUNGER Conference

5th – 7th November 2024

WUSME attended the World Without Hunger Conference held from 5 to 7 November in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The three-day long event consisting of solution-oriented technical sessions, an investment forum, and a high-level political forum was co-organized by the *United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)*, the *African Union Commission (AUC)*, and the *Government of Ethiopia*, with technical assistance of the *Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)*. On the occasion, Mr. Michele Orzan, WUSME Ambassador in Austria, attended the Conference on the invitation of UNIDO ITPO Shanghai as Member of the relating delegation, by virtue of the fruitful collaborative relationship developed over time. As a result, on 6 November, Mr. Orzan attended the Side Event on “*Bridging technology and investment: The ITP network’s approach*” aimed at showcasing the pivotal role of UNIDO’s ITP Network in advancing a world without hunger by fostering technological innovation through global investment. The panel featured presentations by Heads of various UNIDO Investment and Technology Promotion Offices (ITPOs), highlighting specific strategies and successful initiatives that have led to collaboration across continents—particularly in industries that align with the objectives of the World Without Hunger Conference. Participants were left with a set of actionable recommendations for engaging global investors, governments, and local stakeholders to drive investment into projects that bolster food security and sustainable development goals (SDGs). These solutions will focus on accelerating sustainable agricultural technologies, improving infrastructure, and fostering collaboration that will help ensure food security in vulnerable regions. During his participation, Mr. Orzan remarked: “*The private sector is the ultimate responsible for the third P of the known PPP acronym indicating People/Planet/Prosperity. The prosperity needed for world without hunger depends on a fair compact and an ethical collaborative partnership between SMEs and big businesses.*”

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With both players ensuring a fair distribution of duties and benefits, the whole society can enjoy a dynamic, flourishing and peaceful future."

The participation of WUSME in COP29

18th – 21th November 2024

WUSME, the World Union of Small and Medium Enterprises took part in the COP29, held in Baku (Azerbaijan) from 11 to 22 November, contributing to the proceedings of the Conference with an official SIDE EVENT and EXHIBIT on MSMEs engagement in climate action. The WUSME Delegates and Speakers at COP29 were Madam President Mrs. Barbara Terenzi, WUSME Director Ms. Rongyong Yang, WUSME Senator Ms. Liliane Massala, WUSME Ambassador in Guinea (Conakry) and San Marino HQ Representative Ms. M. Valeria Pasquini. The SIDE EVENT, which was held on November 20 in the Blue Zone, delved into the theme "*SMEs & Industry: Net Zero transition, imperatives for Global South, new capacities and methodologies.*" Conducted by WUSME in collaboration with the German Emissions Trading Association (BVEK) and the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), the panel gathered Speakers from various regions and fields and discussed the situation of SMEs regarding their contributions to reducing GHG emissions as well as how to make their value chains more resilient to climate and external shocks – including technology, AI and ESG. In particular, in the Global South SMEs face a lot of challenges when developing and implementing climate action measures. Against this background the event presented and discussed capacity constraints and capacity building measures, new initiatives and methodologies as well as look into concrete cases and experiences in different parts of the world, focusing on transportation, energy, agri-food & industry. The EXHIBIT, which took place from November 18 to 21 in the Blue Zone in collaboration with the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM), focused on "*SMEs and Crafts in value chains facing global challenges: technology, AI and ESG can provide answers. SMEs must adopt resilient and innovative strategies. Guidelines to be established, providing the right tools to ensure access to finance and technology and empower SMEs achieve the green transition.*" The Exhibit allowed WUSME Representatives to actively network with international delegates, share insights and collect inputs for the development of future collaborations in climate action. On the same day, WUSME Delegates took active part in a Special Event held during the Private Sector Day of the 6th Capacity-building Hub, discussing the initial phase of a new initiative, the '*SME Climate Action Booster*' (SME CAB). The panel reflected on the gaps and needs of SMEs with a view to ramp and speed up their climate action efforts, allowed for networking opportunities and support and initiate interactions among interested stakeholders.

WUSME at the CONFARTIGIANATO IMPRESE National General Meeting

27th November 2024

At the invitation of CONFARTIGIANATO IMPRESE Rimini, WUSME took part in the National General Meeting of CONFARTIGIANATO IMPRESE held on November 27th in Rome, in the presence of the President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella. In his speech, the Head of State underlined how craftsmanship, present in Italy since the time of medieval corporations, represents a constant in the national socio-economic panorama and a fundamental driving force for development, exalting the economic and social values of artisan business. He then urged to maintain a constructive dialogue

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between institutions and social partners, underlining that current global challenges require ever greater involvement and collaboration. The President of CONFARTIGIANATO IMPRESE, Marco Granelli, opened the proceedings, extending CONFARTIGIANATO IMPRESE greetings and thanks to President Mattarella, the representatives of the Government, Parliament, economic and social authorities present at the Assembly and underlined the need for dialogue between institutions and social partners in such a complex economic and social moment. At the heart of President Granelli's report was the concern for the future of youth who need to be offered job prospects and personal fulfillment in the world of work and entrepreneurship. Granelli also made a strong appeal for the support of craftsmanship and small businesses, the cornerstones of our society. The Italian Minister of Enterprises and Made in Italy Adolfo Urso, also present, conveyed a keynote speech, highlighting Craftsmanship as an opportunity for the young generations to truly realize themselves. Present at the Assembly also Mr. Ivano Spallanzani, WUSME Senator and Former President of CONFARTIGIANATO IMPRESE for several offices, historic supporter of Crafts in Italy.

WUSME meets CONFARTIGIANATO IMPRESE (Italy) & UNAS (San Marino) to join efforts in support of CRAFTS and MSMEs

4th December 2024

A meeting between WUSME, CONFARTIGIANATO IMPRESE RIMINI (General Federation of Italian Artisans, Craftsmen and Entrepreneurs) and UNAS (National Union of Artisans of San Marino) took place on December 4th in the Republic of San Marino to discuss how to support craftsmanship and SMEs by sharing experiences and perspectives with a common vision to the future. At the end of the meeting, the three Organizations committed to identify new synergies and opportunities aimed at strengthening the business community and entrepreneurial ecosystem.

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