



2026 ECOSOC Partnership Forum Side Event

Strategic Investments for Resilient Agrifood Systems: Driving SDG Progress through Partnerships

Concept Note

Monday 26 January 2026 | 9:30-11:00 EST

Hybrid: Zoom and in-person at Columbia University, New York

Lead organizers:

- Columbia Center on Sustainable Investment (CCSI)

Other organizing partners:

- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

Abstract:

Building resilience in agriculture is non-negotiable: 2024 was the hottest year on record, with extreme heat threatening 1.2 billion livelihoods, while outdated systems impose \$12 trillion in hidden costs to society annually. Transformation at scale requires cross-sectoral action, encompassing secure water resources, affordable energy and rural infrastructure, grounded in a participatory approach. This would offer a tenfold socio-economic and environmental return, unlocking \$4.5 trillion in business opportunities per year. However, current investment models are highly fragmented, not grounded in the mandates and capabilities of each sector.

Through a multi-sectoral lens, we will explore how strategic agrifood investments can accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals 6, 7, 9, 11 and 17, as well as showcase how multi-partner platforms can sequence and align financing to better leverage increasingly scarce resources. The event will demystify the roles of each sector - public, private, and multilateral actors - in financing agrifood systems through a coordinated and field-tested process. A follow-up partnership guide will be developed, synthesizing recommendations for integrated SDG action.

Objectives:

1. Explore multistakeholder partnerships for integrating climate resilience, water/energy security, and inclusive infrastructure considerations into agrifood investment strategies
2. Examine the complementary roles of public, private, and multilateral partners in financing resilient agrifood systems, ensuring alignment with sector-specific capabilities
3. Lay the groundwork for a partnership guide to unpack coordinated investment mechanisms, enabling integrated and participatory SDG action

Additional Resources:

The event discussions will be informed by knowledge products from organizing partners, including:

- CCSI Handbook on [Prosperity for Coffee Producers through SDG Coffee Plans](#)
- GDPRD's 2025 White Paper on [Financing Agrifood Systems for People, Planet and Prosperity](#)
- Highlights from the upcoming FAO-WMO Report on [Extreme Heat and Agriculture](#)
- FAO Report on [Financing food for a better future – Financing agrifood systems transformation to increase resilience, and prevent and mitigate food crises](#)
- IFAD's Playbook on [Adaptation Finance: Building the Investment Case](#)
- AIIB [Water Sector Strategy](#) (new version to be released in 2026)

About the Partnership Forum:

The [2026 ECOSOC Partnership Forum](#) takes place on 27 January 2026 in New York under the theme *"Transformative, equitable, innovative and coordinated actions for the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs for a sustainable future for all"*. The Forum will place a special emphasis on the SDGs under in-depth review at the 2026 high-level political forum on sustainable development (HLPF), namely Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), Goal 9 (Industry Innovation and Infrastructure), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Provisional Agenda:

Time	Segment	Potential speakers
9:30 - 9:40 (10 min)	OPENING AND SCENE-SETTING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and objectives of the session • Framing of the Partnership Forum context and SDG linkages • Investment gaps and implications for SDG delivery 	Lara Fornabaio , Lead Researcher, CCSI
9:40 - 10:05 (25 min)	PANEL DISCUSSION I: Aligning public, private, and multilateral financing for agrifood system transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can cross-sectoral partnerships facilitate mandate coordination and shape financing instruments to deliver resilient agrifood systems at scale? 	Moderator Lara Fornabaio , Lead Researcher, CCSI Panelists Lauren M. Phillips , Director of the Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division, FAO Leonard Mizzi , Head of Unit, Sustainable Agri-Food Systems and Fisheries, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, European Commission (virtual) Courtney Hood , Head of Office, IFAD NY Liaison Office to the United Nations
10:05 - 10:15 (10 min)	INTERACTIVE Q&A	
10:15 - 10:35 (20 min)	PANEL DISCUSSION II: Integrating resilience and inclusivity considerations into agrifood investment strategies through partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to effectively leverage partnerships to embed climate resilience, water/energy security, and inclusive infrastructure considerations in agrifood investment strategies? 	Moderator Esther Akwii , Senior Legal Researcher, CCSI Panelists Representative of AIIB TBC (virtual) Jahan-Zeb Chowdhury , Lead Technical Specialist - Environment & Climate Cluster coordinator, IFAD (virtual) Lauren M. Phillips , Director of the Partnerships and UN Collaboration Division, FAO Representative of WMO (virtual)
10:35 - 10:45 (10 min)	INTERACTIVE Q&A	
10:45 - 10:50 (5 min)	REFLECTIONS AND CLOSING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key takeaways and next steps 	Arsen Vartanyan , Head of UN Collaboration Unit, FAO (TBC)

Focal points:

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