



Special Meeting of ECOSOC on
Agrifood systems transformations for leaving no one behind
16 February 2026 - 3:00 pm – 6:00 pm - ECOSOC Chamber

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Draft programme

3:00 – 3:20 p.m.	<p>Opening</p> <p>Welcome remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa, President of the Economic and Social Council • Ms. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations (<i>video address</i>) <p>Keynote address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Ibrahim Mayaki, African Union Special Envoy for Food Systems; former Prime Minister of Niger (<i>video address</i>) <p>Setting the scene:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Maximo Torero, Chief Economist, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
3:20- 4:30 p.m.	<p>Scaling up finance to transform agrifood systems: accelerating opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship</p> <p>Increased investments are key to modernizing and enhancing productivity, resilience and sustainability of agrifood systems. Such investments can create gainful employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for youth in the agriculture sector, providing an enabling environment for agribusiness to thrive.</p> <p>Youth testimonial video: Morgan Mwamuye, Founder of Bahari Haven</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderator: Ms. Bjørg Sandkjær, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) <p>Panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Pieterneel Boogaard, Managing Director for Technical Delivery, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) • Mr. Rotimi Morohunfola, Chief Executive Officer, United Bank for Africa (UBA) America

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act. Jesús Alan Elizondo Flores, Director General, Fideicomisos Instituidos en Relación con la Agricultura (FIRA) (<i>virtual</i>) • Ms. Miraal Kabir, Co-founder & CEO, SAFI <p>Lead discussant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Marianne Grosclaude, Global Practice Manager and at the time of the event Acting WBG Director for Farming and Agribusiness, The World Bank Group <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can public and private investment be aligned to drive transformation of agrifood systems while ensuring inclusive job creation? • How can governments and financial institutions de-risk investments in sustainable agrifood systems, especially for small and medium agribusinesses to drive rural employment? • What are the most critical global or regional shifts needed to mobilize financing at scale for climate-resilient, productive, and equitable agrifood systems? <p>Interactive discussion (Interventions should be limited to 2-3 minutes)</p>
4:30 – 5:45 p.m.	<p>Exploring how innovation—including digital solutions and emerging technologies—can advance more inclusive agrifood systems</p> <p>Agrifood system transformations must be bolstered by data and technology to advance scalable solutions. Strategic investments are needed to build digital infrastructure and literacy, which are prerequisites for technology adoption and absorption, while effective policies and proactive governance must help ensure these tools are accessible and equitable.</p> <p>Video spotlight: FarmerChat by Digital Green</p> <p>Feature innovators the World Food Forum Youth Food Lab North America at Penn State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Auja Bywater, Innovator, Bywater Biosolutions • Ms. Paige Price, Innovation Scholar, Sampada • Mr. Jashvinu Yeshwanth, Innovator, WrkFarm <p>Moderator: Ms. Bjørg Sandkjær, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)</p>

	<p>Panel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Yamuna Ghale, Senior Research Fellow and Policy Lead, Food and Nutrition Security, Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IIDS), Nepal (<i>virtual</i>) • Ms. Ruohan Liu, Senior Director, Global Agriculture Operations Innovation, PepsiCo • Mr. Vladimir Crnojević, Founder and Director of BioSense Institute; Professor in Computer Science, University of Novi Sad (<i>virtual</i>) <p>Lead discussant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Roland Mollerus, Director, Office for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS) • Ms. Eugenia Boateng, Major Group of Children and Youth <p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your context, what innovative approaches and digital technologies have the greatest potential to accelerate food systems transformation? (<i>This invites country-specific or sector-specific examples</i>) • What risks or unintended consequences could emerge from these approaches, and what strategies can help mitigate them? (<i>Focus on governance, ethics, and sustainability</i>) • How can innovation and technology be better deployed to ensure they are inclusive and accessible to the most vulnerable populations? (<i>Address design principles, affordability, and equity</i>) • How do we build the digital skills and literacy of farmers, especially women and youth, to ensure they are not just users but beneficiaries and shapers of technology? <p>Interactive discussion (Interventions should be limited to 2-3 minutes)</p>
5:45 – 6:00 p.m.	<p>Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Mr. Lok Bahadur Thapa, President of the Economic and Social Council