WORLD AGRICULTURE FORUM

Q3 IMPACT REPORT

July – September 2026



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Foreword



The work of this quarter points in a useful direction. WAF's reports and dialogues on soil health, the blue economy, biodiversity, food waste and climate preparedness arrive at a similar conclusion. In most of these areas, the knowledge and many of the solutions already exist. What holds progress back is the way agriculture, environment, finance and policy are organised: in separate institutions, with separate budgets and separate measures of success. A platform like WAF cannot remove these barriers on its own, but it can bring the relevant actors into one conversation and keep that conversation tied to decisions.

The agreements signed this quarter, with the Government of Rwanda and with American University, give that work a more formal footing. Other developments, including the discussions in Brazil and Kenya, are at an earlier stage and should be reported as such. I see this as a sign of an organisation that is learning to separate what has been agreed from what has been discussed, which will matter more as the network grows.

As Chairman of the Supervisory Board, I also welcome the steps taken on governance, including the new two-tier structure and the first meeting of the Management Board. Credibility with governments, research institutions and funders rests on accountability as much as on ideas. These arrangements need to keep developing alongside the programme, particularly in financial reporting and in clear responsibilities between the global team and the Country Councils.

Convening, publishing and partnering are means, not ends. The test of this work will be whether policy frameworks improve, whether investment reaches smallholders and small agribusinesses, and whether those who are often left out of decisions, including Indigenous communities, women and young people, have a real voice. The evidence for that is still limited, and the coming quarters should be used to build it.

I thank the World Agriculture Secretariat, the Country Directors, Country Council members, Global Council members, the contributors to our reports and dialogues, and our partners for their work this quarter. I encourage readers to take this report as a record of where WAF stands today and to hold the organisation to what it has committed to do next.

***Prof. Rudy Rabbinge**, Board Chairman, World Agriculture Forum*

Q3 2026 at a Glance

July, August and September 2026 included engagements across Asia, Africa, Latin America, Europe and North America, alongside new institutional agreements and knowledge outputs

6
Knowledge Products Published

3
Global Policy Dialogues Convened

2
Memoranda of Understanding Signed (Rwanda Government; American University)

6
Countries Engaged Through High-Level Meetings (Brazil, China, India, Argentina, Rwanda, Kenya)

2
New Country Directors Appointed (Afghanistan, Ireland)

30,000
LinkedIn Followers

Executive Summary



In the third quarter of 2026, WAF continued to work on the interconnected challenges of food security, climate resilience, soil degradation, biodiversity loss and rural development. Its activities fell into four main strands: knowledge production, global policy dialogue, institutional partnerships, and the development of regional and country networks.

On knowledge, WAF published three reports, on soil health and carbon-positive food systems, the blue economy and aquaculture, and the integration of biodiversity into agri-food systems.

WAF also convened Global Policy dialogues on first, El Niño, climate extremes and anticipatory action. The second examined agribusiness and food systems development. The third, on managing food wastes, looked at prevention, recovery, circularity and the conditions needed to move solutions from pilot to scale.

On partnerships, WAF signed an MoU with the Government of Rwanda, its first with a national government, and a five-year MoU with American University, Washington D.C. Discussions were held with CABI South Asia, the Africa Food Systems Forum and the World Bank Kenya Office. In Brazil, WAF and senior government officials agreed in principle on a Latin America Headquarters in Brasília, the Global Soil Health Summit in March 2027, and Brazilian Government support for the Africa Agriculture Partnership Program.

On country networks, the Kenya Country Council reviewed its work plan ahead of the WAF Kenya Agriculture Summit in November 2026, stakeholders in Brazil decided to launch a 100-member Brazil Country Council in October 2026, and scoping meetings were held in Argentina.

Looking ahead, WAF's priorities for the remainder of 2026 are to sustain its global policy dialogues, advance its policy agenda, deepen engagement with key stakeholders, and expand its global presence through Country Councils and farmer support programmes. From 2027, WAF plans to roll out thematic global councils and convening regional and global conferences across continents on priority issues, including soil health, sustainability, agricultural innovation and agribusiness. WAF also plans to publish a series of in-depth research reports in partnership with leading institutions, strengthening its contribution to evidence-based policymaking and international agricultural cooperation.

> ***"The foundation has been laid and the network is growing. The next phase is about accelerating action, delivery and lasting impact"***
>
> ***Dr. MJ Khan, Executive Director, World Agriculture Forum***

1. Advancing Thought Leadership and Knowledge Production

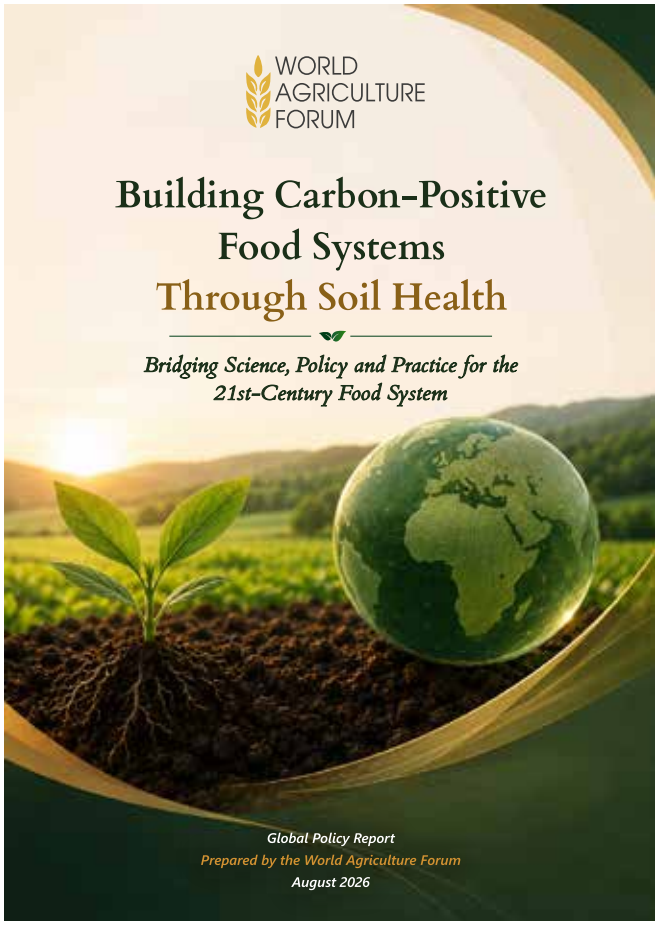
During Q3 2026 WAF published three global policy reports, a policy brief and an organisation-al review. Together they examined soil degradation, ocean-based food security, biodiversity loss, regional trade and WAF's own development.

1.1 Global Policy Reports

AUGUST 2026 · GLOBAL POLICY REPORT

Building Carbon-Positive Food Systems Through Soil Health

The report makes the case for placing soil health at the centre of the global agriculture and climate agenda. It addresses the role of healthy soils in food security, climate resilience, biodiversity and sustainable agriculture, and sets out how soil restoration can contribute to carbon-positive food systems.



The report supports WAF's work towards launching the Global Soil Health Coalition (GSHC), which is intended to bring together governments, scientists, farmers, industry, development agencies and financial institutions to bridge science, policy, finance and practice.

KEY INSIGHT

Soil health must move to the centre of the global agriculture and climate agenda. Restoring soil is a climate, environmental and economic priority as well as an agricultural one.

OUTCOME

The report provides the knowledge base for the Global Soil Health Coalition and informs WAF's discussions with the Brazilian Government on the Global Soil Health Summit planned for March 2027.

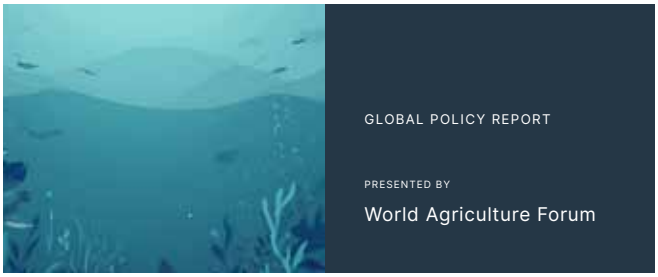
SEPTEMBER 2026 · GLOBAL POLICY REPORT

Blue Economy Rising: Oceans, Aquaculture, and the Future of Food Security



Blue Economy Rising

Oceans, Aquaculture, and the Future of Food Security



Drawing on contributions from the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and practitioners across Africa and

Europe, this report examines the contribution of oceans, aquaculture and circular water-based production to food security. It finds that commercially viable solutions already exist for circular aquaculture, agricultural integration and stronger national production.

The report identifies the missing element as the governance, investment and institutional architecture needed to scale these solutions, while ensuring that smallholders, women, youth and coastal communities are included. It calls for long-term research investment, circular production systems, energy and cold-chain infrastructure, inclusive value chains and locally owned solutions.

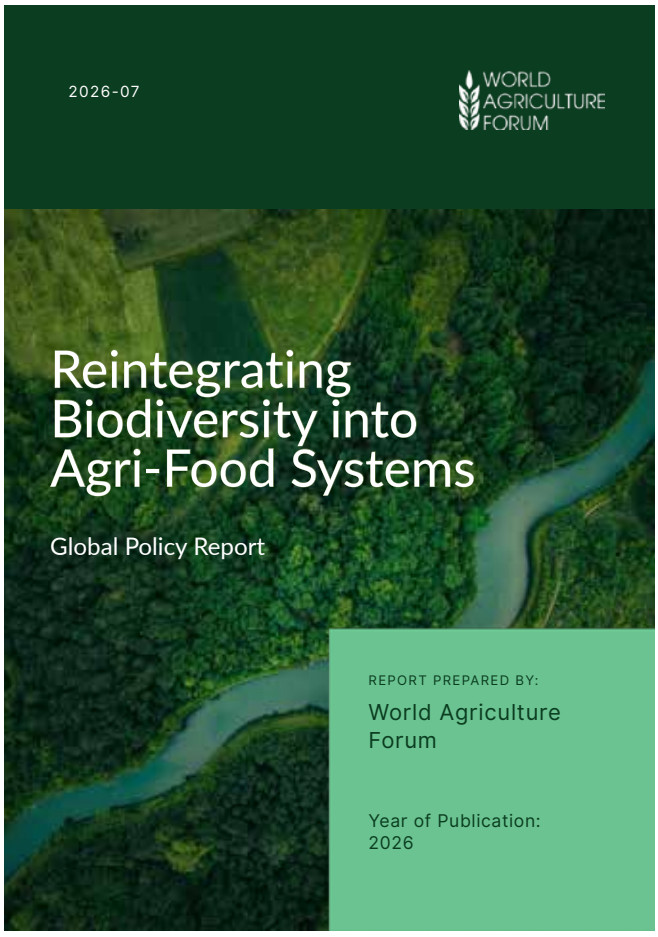
KEY INSIGHT

The next breakthrough in aquaculture does not need to be invented; it needs to be scaled.

SEPTEMBER 2026 · GLOBAL POLICY REPORT

Reintegrating Biodiversity into Agri-Food Systems

This report begins from the observation that biodiversity and agri-food systems are often treated as separate agendas, pursued by different institutions, funded through different budgets and measured against different indicators. It draws on dialogue with scientists, farmer representatives, policymakers, business leaders and financiers, including Lauren Baker, Dennis Garrity, Wuletawu Abera, Lucie Smith, Matthew Aghai, Nahuel Schenone, Neville Ash and Sara Scherr.



The report argues that the main barrier is not a lack of evidence or workable solutions, but the separation of agriculture, environment and finance into distinct domains, each with its own vocabulary, metrics and institutions. It calls for unifying concepts, approaches and leadership so that biodiversity becomes a central part of agri-food systems.

KEY INSIGHT

The barrier to biodiversity-positive agriculture is pillar thinking rather than evidence. What is needed is integration across agriculture, environment and finance.

1.2 Issue Briefs

9 August 2026 · Issue Brief

Indigenous Population and the Future of Food Systems: Protecting Rights, Advancing Traditional Knowledge and Strengthening Global Food Security

Published to mark the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, this brief examines the gap between the role Indigenous peoples play in stewarding land and the legal and financial support they receive. It reports that Indigenous peoples steward over half the world's land under customary tenure but hold secure legal title to barely a tenth of it. This gap costs formal protection and climate finance, and also costs lives: 146 land and environmental defenders were killed or disappeared in 2024, most of them Indigenous.

The brief notes that Indigenous-managed forests store more carbon, lose less to deforestation and hold more biodiversity than comparable land under other management. Financing has not followed this evidence. Under 10 percent of the COP26 Forest Tenure Pledge has reached Indigenous-led organisations. The 2024 WIPO treaty on

Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge (GRATK) introduced disclosure requirements but lacks effective enforcement mechanisms.

KEY INSIGHT

The case for securing Indigenous land rights, protecting traditional knowledge and directing finance to Indigenous-led institutions is well established. What remains is to turn existing commitments into measurable action.

28 August 2026 · Issue Brief

Agribusiness and Food Systems Development: Innovation, Infrastructure, and Investments

This brief reports that global agrifoodtech funding held near $16.2 billion in 2025, almost flat year on year, but that its composition shifted. Upstream farm and biological technology drew $9 billion, up 7 percent, while consumer-facing platforms retreated. The brief argues that this capital still bypasses the constraints that limit food systems. Postharvest losses consume nearly 14 percent of global food production before it reaches retail, smallholder farmers face an estimated $170 billion annual credit gap, and global agrifood systems face an estimated $1.1 trillion annual investment shortfall to become climate-resilient and low-emissions.

The brief highlights that innovation and infrastructure are being financed as separate problems when they are one. New technology reaches farmers only where roads, storage, cold chains and financial access exist, and capital flows to agribusiness only where de-risked, bankable pipelines exist.

KEY INSIGHT

Innovation and infrastructure must be financed and designed together, so that technology and capital reach the farmers and enterprises that need them.

OUTCOME

The brief gives a written evidence base for WAF's agribusiness dialogue and its planning for the Africa Agribusiness, Innovation and Investment Dialogue in Kigali in May 2027.

1.3 Expert Analysis and Commentary

22 July 2026 · Article

Powering the Global Food and Nutrition Agenda: Leveraging the Frameworks of South-South (SSC) and South-South Triangular Cooperation (SSTC)

Dr. MJ Khan, Executive Director, argues that food and nutrition security can no longer be left to individual nations and requires stronger cooperation among developing countries. He describes South-South Cooperation as an exchange of practical experience based on mutual respect rather than a donor-recipient model, and Triangular Cooperation as adding the funding and technical capacity of multilateral institutions. He also highlights the growing role of Gulf Cooperation Council countries as investors in food security, and calls for the private sector and global convening platforms to turn dialogue into results for farmers and consumers.

KEY INSIGHT

Future food security depends not only on producing more but on building resilient partnerships that promote innovation, sustainability and shared prosperity.

2. Convening Global Policy Dialogues

WAF convened three global policy dialogues in Q3 2026. They addressed the preparedness of agri-food systems for climate extremes, the development of small and mid-sized agribusinesses, and the prevention and valorisation of food waste. Each brought together scientists, policymakers, practitioners and representatives of international organsations.

23 JULY 2026 · GLOBAL POLICY DIALOGUE

El Niño, Climate Extremes and Agri-Food System Resilience

Strengthening Policy Frameworks for Early Warning, Preparedness and Action. WAF convened this under the message that resilient food systems are built before the next climate shock arrives and responded to the continuing impact of recurring El Niño events and other climate extremes on agri-food systems.

The session was moderated by Dr. Suresh Babu, Research Fellow Emeritus at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and Mehnaz Wani, Sr Manager Policy Research and Knowledge management who also served as Systems Integration Lead. The panellists were Céline Jauffret, Director of the Division of Meteorological and Sectoral Services, World Meteorological Organization (WMO); Prof. Mark Howden, Director of the ANU Institute for Climate, Energy & Disaster Solutions, Australian National University; Dr. Julian Ramirez-Villegas, Principal Scientist on Climate Action at the Alliance of Bioversity International & CIAT and Lead for Digital Advisories and Climate Risk Management at CGIAR; Dr. Anbumozhi Venkatachalam, Director of Research Strategy and Innovation at the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA); Dr. Sreejith O.P., Lead of the Climate Research Services Division, India Meteorological Department (IMD), Pune; and Jan Duchoslav, Research Fellow in the Development Strategy and Governance Unit, IFPRI.

KEY INSIGHT

Resilient food systems are built before the next climate shock arrives. Long-term resilience is as much an institutional and financing challenge as a technical one.

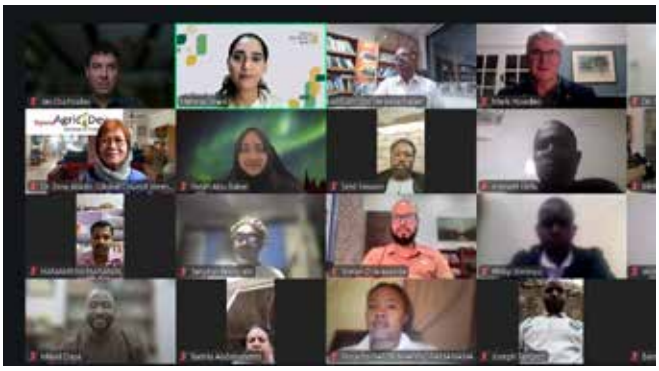
OUTCOME

The dialogue examined the implications of El Niño and other climate extremes for agriculture and food security; strengthened understanding of climate science and early warning for agricultural decision-making; explored the policy frameworks that enable preparedness and anticipatory action; shared regional experience from ASEAN and India; identified opportunities for stronger collaboration between governments, meteorological agencies, research institutions, development partners and international organisations; and advanced practical recommendations for long-term agri-food system resilience. The session followed the sequence of climate science, forecasting, early warning, preparedness, policy, regional action and resilient food systems.

28 AUGUST 2026 · GLOBAL POLICY DIALOGUE

Agribusiness and Food Systems Development

WAF convened a global policy dialogue on what it takes to help small and mid-sized agribusinesses grow, from better access to finance to making AI and digital technologies work for farmers and businesses. The central question was how to better connect capital, innovation and markets across the value chain.



The discussion concluded that agribusiness cannot be developed in isolation. Scaling successful enterprises requires an ecosystem that links science and innovation with finance, logistics, markets, technology and strong institutions. A full recording of the dialogue was made available online.



KEY INSIGHT

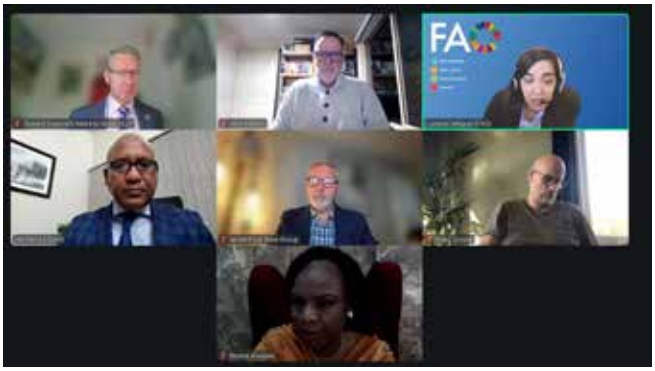
Building stronger agribusiness means connecting every link in the food system, so that capital, innovation, markets and institutions work together rather than in parallel.

OUTCOME

The dialogue provides a basis for WAF's engagement with the agribusiness investment agenda, including the Africa Agribusiness, Innovation and Investment Dialogue planned for Kigali in May 2027.

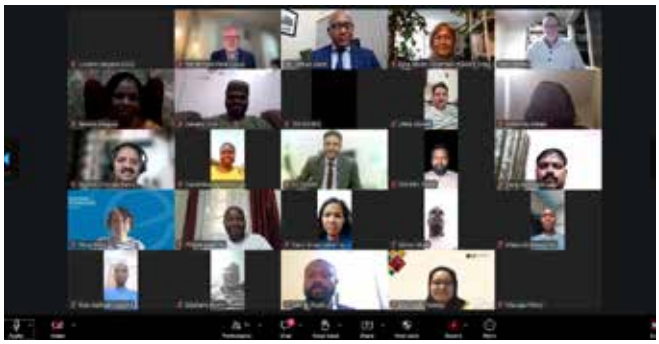
29 SEPTEMBER 2026 · GLOBAL POLICY DIALOGUE

Managing Food Wastes: Challenges and Opportunities



WAF convened this dialogue to examine how food loss and waste can be prevented, recovered and turned into value across food systems. It was moderated by Farhad Zamil, Executive Director of the Sustainable Agriculture Foundation Bangladesh (SAF Bangladesh) and WAF Country Director for Bangladesh.

The panellists were Richard Lackey, CEO and Chairman of the World Food Bank and Board Member of the Bureau for International Food and Agriculture Development; Luciana Delgado, Technical Adviser, FAO; John McKew, National Executive Officer of the Australian Organics Recycling Association Limited (AORA); Asgar Ali, Director of the Centre of Excellence for Postharvest Biotechnology (CEPB) and Co-director of Future Food Malaysia; Dr. Serpil Guran, Professor of Professional Practice and Director of the Rutgers EcoComplex Clean Technology Innovation Center; Rieks Smook, CEO of Grassa; Dr. Richard Swannell FRSA, Principal Partner at Intent to Impact LLP; and Dr. Ifeoma Quinette Anugwa, Senior Lecturer in Agricultural Extension and Research Fellow at the Resource and Environmental Policy Research Centre (REPRC), University of Nigeria.



Discussion

The dialogue followed a flow from prevention to recovery, redistribution, circularity, innovation, adoption and scale, organised around five themes.

Preventing food loss across the value chain : *Participants looked at where food is lost between production, postharvest handling, storage, processing and markets, and at interventions that prevent avoidable losses before food becomes waste. The discussion covered postharvest handling, storage and preservation, infrastructure and supply-chain inefficiencies, farmer and producer-level solutions, food safety and quality, and technology and knowledge gaps.*

Recovering surplus and retaining food value : *The panel discussed how surplus food can be kept within the food system and directed to human consumption, particularly where food insecurity and surplus coexist. Topics included food recovery and redistribution, storage and logistics, food banking and partnerships, connecting surplus with food-insecure communities, and the policy and institutional mechanisms for recovery.*



From waste to resource: circularity and valorisation : *Panellists examined how unavoidable food and agricultural residues can become productive resources and higher-value products, including organic recycling and resource recovery, upcycling and valorisation, new products and value streams, circular business models, and markets for recovered resources.*

Innovation, adoption and commercial scale : *The discussion addressed why promising technologies often struggle to move from pilot to scale. It covered research-to-market pathways, commercial viability, investment and enabling infrastructure, and adoption by farmers, businesses and consumers.*

Policy, behaviour and systemic change : *The final theme considered the policy, institutional, economic and behavioural conditions that determine whether food-waste reduction achieves lasting impact: policy coherence and incentives, measurement and accountability, market and regulatory conditions, extension and behavioural change, and public–private partnerships.*

KEY INSIGHT

Food waste is a systems problem. Preventing it, recovering surplus and valorising residues require policy, investment, infrastructure and partnership conditions that work together across the whole chain

OUTCOME

The dialogue built a shared understanding of the scale, drivers and forms of food loss and waste; examined practical approaches to prevention; explored mechanisms for recovering and redistributing surplus food; highlighted opportunities for circularity, recycling, upcycling and valorisation; examined why interventions fail to scale; identified the policy, investment, infrastructure and partnership conditions needed for adoption and commercial viability; and strengthened connections between policymakers, researchers, businesses, practitioners and innovators in the food-waste field.

3. Expanding Regional Presence and Country Networks

In Q3 2026 WAF continued to build country-level structures that connect global priorities with national agendas. Country Council work advanced in Kenya, Brazil and Argentina, a partnership was formalised in Rwanda, and the discussion of regional headquarters moved forward.

3.1 Country Council Developments

Kenya Country Council: Planning and Review Meeting, Nairobi

The Kenya Country Council, chaired by Dr. Wilson Songa, held a Planning and Review Meeting at The Heron Hotel, Nairobi, chaired by Executive Director Dr. MJ Khan. Those attending were Dr. Oscar Magenya, Country Director for Kenya; Nixon Gecheo, Chair of Innovation, Technology and Digital Bio-Convergence; Dr. Timothy Njagi, Chair of Policy Advocacy, Governance and Strategic Partnerships; Sanjaykumar Vasoya, Chair of Agribusiness and Trade; and Magdaline Alukhava, Chair of Farmer Organisations, Cooperatives and Inclusive Development.



The meeting reviewed WAF Kenya's growth strategy and annual work plan, including preparations for the WAF Kenya Agriculture Summit on 24–25 November 2026 in Nairobi, where the Kenya Agriculture Outlook Report will be released. The meeting also reviewed ongoing discussions with the Government of Kenya on establishing WAF's Africa Headquarters in Nairobi.

OUTCOME

All five Kenya thematic committees are operational, the Summit and Outlook Report are in preparation, and discussions on an Africa Headquarters in Nairobi are continuing.

Brazil Country Council: Consultation, São Paulo

A high-level stakeholder consultation on launching the WAF Brazil Country Council took place at Hotel Renaissance, São Paulo. It was chaired by Dr. MJ Khan, co-chaired by Luiza Bruscato, WAF Regional Director for Latin America, and moderated by João P., Country Director for Brazil. The group decided to launch a 100-member Brazil Country Council in October 2026



OUTCOME

A 100-member Brazil Country Council is scheduled for launch in October 2026, forming the institutional basis for the planned Brasília Headquarters and the Global Soil Health Summit in March 2027

Argentina: Country Council Scoping, Buenos Aires
Meetings in Buenos Aires examined the proposed constitution and launch of the WAF Argentina Country Council, including its structure, priorities and programme of work

3.2 Regional Headquarters

Two regional headquarters were under discussion. Brasília was agreed in principle with the Brazilian Government as the Latin America Headquarters, and discussions with the Government of Kenya on a Nairobi Africa Headquarters are continuing. WAF's partnership with American University gives it an institutional base in Washington D.C.

4. High-Level Stakeholder Consultations

WAF's Executive Director and delegations held a series of high-level missions and stakeholder consultations across Asia, Latin America and Africa during the quarter.

Brazil | São Paulo and Brasília

Dr. MJ Khan spoke at the Brazil–Arab Economic Forum in São Paulo, then held meetings in Brasília on WAF's strategic engagement with Brazil. He met the Vice Minister of Agriculture, Cleber Oliveira Soares; the Secretary of Agricultural Policy, Guilherme Camboim; the Secretary of Science and Innovation, Germana Pires; the Secretary of Economic and Financial Affairs, Ambassador Philip Fox Gough; the Deputy Secretaries of Agriculture, Rafael Guimaraes Requiao and Wilson Araujo; and other senior officials.



The two sides agreed in principle on three points: establishing Brasília as WAF's Latin America Headquarters; hosting the Global Soil Health Summit in Brasília in March 2027; and Brazilian Government support for the Africa Agriculture Partnership Program.



He also visited Brazil's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and met H.E. Dinesh Bhatia, Ambassador of India to Brazil, on agro trade and economic cooperation.



OUTCOME

Three in-principle agreements with the Brazilian Government. No signed instrument has been recorded, so they remain to be formalised.

China | Beijing

During a visit focused on agricultural research, technology and global trade, Dr. Khan met CAPIAC President Jia Guangdong at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences to discuss technical cooperation. At China Agricultural University, Dean Dr. Xiangqui He presented the university's research and innovations in agricultural drones. Dr. Khan also met Weihong (Alison) Tian, Secretary General of the Chinese Seed Trade Association, on global seed trade and industry partnerships, and held a courtesy meeting with H.E. Vikram Doraiswami, Ambassador of India to China, on India–China agricultural cooperation.



OUTCOME

Direct contact established with three Chinese agricultural research and industry bodies, opening discussion of research cooperation, seed trade and agricultural technology.

India | Hyderabad and New Delhi

Meeting with the Governor of Telangana

A WAF delegation led by Dr. MJ Khan called on H.E. Shiv Pratap Shukla, Governor of Telangana, at Raj Bhavan, Hyderabad. The delegation comprised Mrs. Neelima Dwivedi (Founder, Dwiveda Consulting LLP, and former Director, MSD), Dr. Ajay Garg (WAF Global Council Member), Dr. Markandeya Gorantla (CMD, ATG Biotech Co., Ltd.) and Dr. Samresh Dwivedi (former Chief Scientist, ITC Limited).

The Governor discussed the future of Indian agriculture



with emphasis on raising farmers' incomes, ensuring safer food systems and agricultural sustainability. He asked for suggestions on policy interventions to accelerate agricultural growth and improve the competitiveness of Indian farmers, and encouraged WAF to continue helping India act as a global partner in sustainable agriculture, food security and agricultural innovation. Dana Kishore, Additional Chief Secretary to the Governor, also joined.

Meeting with Livestock, Dairy and Fisheries Sector | New Delhi

Dr. MJ Khan met N. P. Gangwar, Secretary of Animal Hus-



bandry and Dairying, Government of India, and Dr. Varsha Joshi, Additional Secretary. The discussions covered international partnerships in animal health, technology cooperation, trade, investment and collaborative projects for India's livestock, dairy and poultry sectors. He then met Dr. Abhilaksh Likhi, Secretary, Department of Fisheries, to explore international cooperation, technology partnerships and ways to increase exports from India's fisheries and aquaculture sector. He was joined by Jeff Peet, Director of International Relations, WAF, and Sanjay Sethi, CEO, Agriculture Chamber.

OUTCOME

Discussions opened with two Government of India departments on cooperation in livestock, dairy, poultry and fisheries.

2nd India–Africa Seed Summit 2026

Dr. Khan addressed the inaugural session in Hyderabad and called for a shift in India–Africa engagement in the seed sector from a transactional relationship to a transformational partnership, including joint research and breeding, local seed production, capacity building, regulatory cooperation and investment. Drawing on his engagements in Kigali, he noted that quality seeds and stronger seed systems will be critical to Africa's agricultural transformation. The publication Seeds Without Borders, on trade, climate resilience, genetic diversity, technology and a shared roadmap for Africa, was released at the session.

Other participants in the inaugural session were Surendra



Mohan, Secretary of Agriculture; Dr. Himanshu Pathak, Director General of ICRISAT; Dr. Tarun Shridhar, Director General of ICFA; Paresh Verma, Director General of the Federation of Seed Industry of India; and Dr. Yacouba Diallo, Secretary General of the African Seed Trade Association.

OUTCOME

WAF's participation reinforced its role as a connector between South Asian agricultural innovation and African seed system needs, in support of its South–South cooperation agenda.

Argentina | Buenos Aires

Dr. Khan met stakeholders to discuss Argentina's agriculture, government policies, agri-food markets, AgTech innovation and the situation of farmers. He held individual and group meetings with several business chief executives and visited Sociedad Rural Argentina and CONINAGRO, the national organisation of agricultural cooperatives. He also met WAF Board Member Carlos Magariños on WAF's



plans and opportunities in Argentina. The main focus was the proposed WAF Argentina Country Council, including its structure, priorities and programme of work.

Kenya | World Bank Kenya Office, Nairobi

Dr. Wilson Songa, Chairman of the WAF Kenya Country Council, and Dr. Oscar Magenya, Country Director for Kenya, visited the World Bank Kenya Office. They held practical discussions with James Musinga, Senior Agriculture Economist, and Beryl Agengo, Digital Agriculture Specialist, on how to raise agricultural productivity in



Three areas for cooperation were identified: digital tools and data systems that can reach smallholder farmers at scale; joint technical work on investment approaches that improve yields and climate resilience; and stronger links between research, policy and private-sector delivery. Both sides agreed on practical next steps to develop the relationship.

OUTCOME

Three areas of cooperation identified with the World Bank Kenya team, with next steps agreed.

5. Strategic Partnerships and Institutional Engagements

Four partnership engagements were formalised or advanced during the quarter, across government, academia, applied research and Africa's food systems community. Two were signed, and two remain under discussion.

5.1 Government of Rwanda: Memorandum of Understanding

In September 2026, Dr. MJ Khan, Executive Director, signed an MoU with Hon. Dr. Telesphore Ndabamenye, Minister of Agriculture and Animal Resources of the Government of Rwanda. It is WAF's first MoU with a national government. The agreement was coordinated by Dr. Mark Bagabe, WAF Country Director for Rwanda and a former Agriculture Minister.

The partnership will advance agribusiness, agricultural innovation and investment, value-chain development and WAF's Farmer Support Programme. Kigali will also host the Africa Agribusiness, Innovation and Investment Dialogue in May 2027 in partnership with WAF.



OUTCOME

A formal framework for government-level cooperation in Rwanda, and a confirmed host city and date for the May 2027 Dialogue. The MoU may serve as a model for further government agreements.

5.2 American University, Washington D.C.: Five-Year Partnership

WAF signed a five-year MoU with American University (AU) on 22 September 2026. It was signed by Patrick Hayden, WAF Country Director for the United States, and Jason Holcomb, Vice Provost for Academic Administration at American University.

The partnership provides a framework for cooperation on agriculture and food systems, academic and policy dialogue, research and knowledge exchange, innovation and technology, sustainability, capacity building, and the engagement of faculty, students and global experts. AU's location in Washington D.C. is expected to strengthen WAF's engagement with the United States policy, academic, research and development community.

OUTCOME

A five-year institutional base in Washington D.C., building on the WAF USA Country Council and WAF's engagement with the USDA earlier in 2026.



5.3 CABI South Asia: Joint Programmes for Crop Health and Farmer Empowerment

WAF met the CABI South Asia team, led by Regional Director Dr. Vinod Pandit, in New Delhi. The WAF delegation was led by Dr. MJ Khan and Jeff Peet, Director of International Relations and Partnerships. The discussions covered joint programmes in crop health and on-ground projects for farmers across South Asia and Africa. Both sides agreed to advance a shared policy agenda and capacity-building programmes to empower farmers and discussed crop protection stewardship initiatives with industry and institutional partners that connect practical support on the ground with wider policy action.



OUTCOME

Agreement on a shared policy agenda and capacity-building programmes.

5.4 Africa Food Systems Forum: Partnership in Development

During the 2026 Forum in Kigali, a high-level meeting between WAF and AFS Forum leadership was arranged to explore a strategic partnership. The intended outcome is an MoU setting out a framework for long-term collaboration on sustainable agriculture and food systems across Africa. Signing has not been recorded, so this item is reported as under discussion and carried into the Q4 commitments.

6. Strengthening Institutional Leadership and Capacity

WAF continued to develop its governance and leadership structures as its network expanded.

6.1 Management Board

The newly constituted Management Board held a meeting during the quarter. It was joined by Prof. Rudy Rabbinge, Chairman of the WAF Supervisory Board; Nikolet Zwart; Erna Abedin; and Dr. MJ Khan, Executive Director. Ms. Zwart briefed members on statutory compliance, the proposed two-tier governance structure and the opening of a WAF bank account with ING Bank. Dr. Khan reported on engagements in Latin America and Africa, including meetings with members, governments and industry leaders, the signing of the Rwanda MoU and the proposed Summit in Kigali in May 2027. The Board reviewed these developments in the context of WAF's global institutional presence, governance and partnerships.



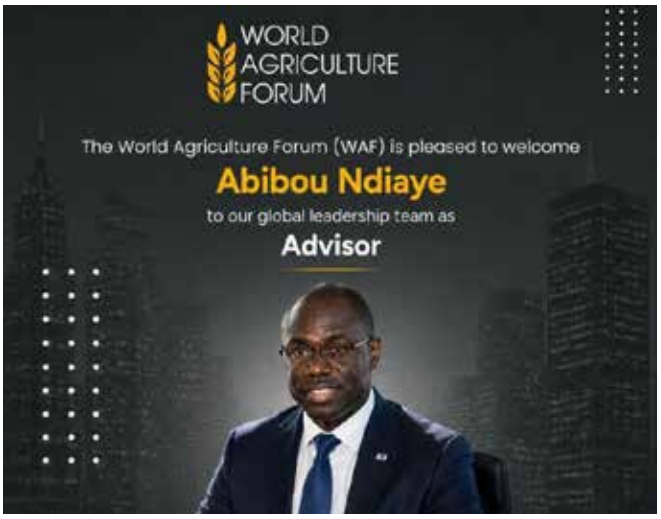
6.2 Two Years of WAF

September 2026 marked two years since WAF's formal launch. In that time WAF has built a network of Country Councils and Country Directors across five continents, published policy research and convened policy dialogues. The anniversary was marked with the publication of the two-year review described in Section 1.2.

6.3 New Leadership Appointments

1. ***Country Director, Afghanistan:*** *Hamdullah Hamdard, extending WAF's presence into Central and South Asia.*
2. ***Country Director, Ireland:*** *David Moore, strengthening WAF's European network.*
3. ***Advisor, Global Leadership Team:*** *Abibou Ndiaye, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Makhtoum Group, Morocco.*
4. ***Global Council Members:*** *a new cohort of global leaders, researchers, policymakers, agribusiness professionals and development experts from North America, South America, Europe, Africa and Asia, with experience in agriculture, food systems, research, sustainability, trade, innovation and rural development. The new members are Peter McPherson, Dennis O. Carter, Jorge Werthein, Teck Wah Koh, Kabir Shagaya, Kesang Tshomo, George Smith, Patricia Tello Reategui, Ma. Cristina B. Sison, Onyaole Koku, Caroline Agonzibwa, Arun Baral, Matthew Hudson, Chiedozie Egesi, Jennifer Dine, Dr. Minshad Ali Ansari, Chijioke Okoli, Stefan Schmitz, Marcia Hooper and Keshavulu Kunusoth.*









7. Event Participation and Community

7.1 Africa Food Systems Forum 2026, Kigali

A 15-member WAF delegation led by Dr. MJ Khan attended the Africa Food Systems Forum 2026. Dr. Khan addressed the Forum on the theme Linking Small to Large Businesses, and WAF hosted a side event to promote international collaboration, innovation, trade and investment in agriculture. A meeting with

Forum leadership was arranged to explore a partnership (Section 5.4)



7.2 World Agrifood Innovation (WAFI) Conference, Beijing

Executive Director Dr. MJ Khan addressed the Agri-Food Systems Session at the World AgriFood Innovation (WAFI) Conference in Beijing and took part in a panel discussion on One Health. He called for stronger global cooperation, collaborative research, investment, data sharing and focused policy action to address the interconnected challenges facing humanity.



Dr. Khan said that One Health must move beyond being a philosophy or slogan and become a framework for coordinated global action, pursued with the same seriousness and urgency as the climate change agenda. He noted that nearly 70% of emerging infectious diseases originate in animals, including major threats such as SARS, Ebola and H1N1. He also highlighted the importance of stronger food-safety systems, harmonised global standards, and greater innovation, investment and policy support to advance nutrition security.



KEY INSIGHT

Human, animal and environmental health are inseparable, and the response must be equally integrated, collaborative and global.



OUTCOME

WAF contributed to the One Health discussion in China's agri-food innovation community, linking it to its planned co-convening of the Global Animal Health Summit with WOAH at ILRI, Nairobi, on 27–29 October 2026.

8. Strategic Insights Shaping the Future of Agri-Food Systems

The dialogues, publications, partnerships and engagements undertaken during Q3 2026 point to a number of broader shifts in the global agriculture and food systems landscape. While diverse in focus, these developments highlight emerging realities that will increasingly influence policy, investment, innovation and international cooperation in the years ahead.

1. The Challenge Is Now Implementation, Not Evidence

Across soil, oceans, biodiversity, land rights and food systems, the evidence and the workable solutions largely exist. What is missing is the governance, institutional alignment and financing needed to put them into practice at scale. Progress will depend less on producing further analysis and more on clarifying who acts, with what authority and with what resources.

2. Innovation and Infrastructure Must Be Treated as One Problem

New technologies and investment reach farmers and enterprises only where the enabling conditions exist: roads, storage, cold chains, finance and reliable markets. Capital that is directed at technology but bypasses these constraints leaves the underlying gaps in place. Blended, de-risked finance and infrastructure-first design are becoming essential to making innovation useful to smallholders and small agribusinesses.

3. Preparedness and Prevention Are More Effective Than Response

Whether the risk is climate extremes, food loss or the spread of disease, acting before a shock is more effective and less costly than responding after it. Early warning, anticipatory action and prevention depend on policy frameworks, financing and last-mile delivery that connect science to decisions. Resilience is as much an institutional and financing challenge as a technical one.

4. South–South Cooperation Is Becoming a Practical Instrument

Developing and middle-income countries increasingly share common agricultural conditions and look to one another for practical, affordable and scalable solutions. Cooperation among these countries, supported by multilateral institutions, development partners and new investors, is moving from principle to practice. The private sector and convening platforms will play a growing part in turning this cooperation into measurable results.

5. Regional Presence Strengthens Global Convening

Global platforms are most effective when they are anchored in the regions they serve. Physical presence, local relationships and country-level platforms give global priorities the credibility and relevance needed to influence national agendas. Institutions that combine global reach with regional depth are better placed to build lasting partnerships.

6. Inclusion Determines Whether Solutions Work

Solutions that exclude smallholders, women, youth, Indigenous peoples and coastal communities are less likely to be adopted, sustained or trusted. Secure rights, access to finance, knowledge and markets, and a real voice in decisions are conditions of success rather than add-ons. The value of any technology or policy will depend on who is able to use, shape and benefit from it.

9. Looking Ahead: Strategic Priorities and Q4 Commitments

In the fourth quarter WAF plans to convert in-principle agreements into formal commitments, launch Country Councils constituted in Q3, deepen partnerships and deliver its scheduled summits and dialogues.

Q4 2026 Commitments

- ***Country Council launches:*** *formally launch the Brazil and Argentina Country Councils.*
- ***Government partnerships:*** *advance and formalise additional government agreements.*
- ***Africa Food Systems Forum:*** *finalise and sign an MoU.*
- ***Africa Headquarters:*** *advance a formal agreement with the Government of Kenya, with a decision targeted for December 2026.*
- ***Latin America Headquarters:*** *progress the Brasília framework with the Brazilian Government.*
- ***World Bank Kenya Office:*** *follow up on the agreed next steps for cooperation.*
- ***Global Soil Health Coalition:*** *continue preparations for launch.*

Upcoming Events and Milestones

- ***WAF Kenya Agriculture Summit:*** *24–25 November 2026, Nairobi, with release of the Kenya Agriculture Outlook Report.*
- ***WAF Argentina Country Council launch:*** *Q4 2026.*
- ***Global Soil Health Summit:*** *March 2027, Brasília, Brazil.*
- ***Africa Agribusiness, Innovation and Investment Dialogue:*** *May 2027, Kigali, Rwanda.*
- ***Policy Dialogue on Health in Rangelands and Pastoral Systems- A One Health Approach to Strengthening Resilience, Livelihoods and Food Security***
- ***Policy Dialogue on AI and Agriculture:*** *Managing the Risks and Opportunities*

10. WAF Global Footprint

As of 30 September 2026, WAF reports an institutional presence across five continents through Country Councils, Country Directors, thematic coalitions and strategic partnerships. Afghanistan and Ireland were added during Q3, and council work continued in Latin America.

- ***Africa:*** *Nigeria, Kenya, Morocco, Ghana, Ethiopia, Egypt, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Rwanda, Angola, Zambia, Côte d'Ivoire, Lesotho.*
- ***Asia and Pacific:*** *India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Philippines, UAE, Afghanistan.*
- ***Europe:*** *Ireland, Italy, Poland, Spain, Kosovo, Malta (engaged).*
- ***Americas:*** *United States, Chile, Brazil, Argentina (in development), Colombia (in development).*
- ***Global coalitions:*** *Global Soil Health Coalition (in preparation); WAF Global Council.*
- ***Regional headquarters (agreed or in development):*** *Nairobi (Africa), Brasília (Latin America), Washington D.C. (North America)*



Network scope as at 30 September 2026. Additional country engagements are in development. Contact info@worldagriculturefforum.org for partnership and council enquiries.

11. Milestone: Two Years of WAF

September 2026 marked two years since WAF's formal launch. In that time WAF has built a network of Country Councils and Country Directors across five continents, published policy research and convened policy dialogues. The anniversary was marked with the publication of the two-year review described below:



TWO YEARS OF THE WORLD AGRICULTURE FORUM

From an Idea to an Expanding Global Movement

Dear Members and Friends of WAF,

As the World Agriculture Forum completes two years since its formal launch on 18 September 2024, I look back with gratitude and pride at a journey that began much earlier with a shared conviction that global agriculture needed an independent and neutral platform capable of shaping policies, promoting trade and development, providing thought leadership, and positively impacting farmers and global food security.

The first serious dialogue on creating such a platform began in 2018. It was followed by extensive consultations during 2019, including visits to more than ten European countries to assess possible locations for its headquarters. After thoughtful deliberations with Prof. Rudy Rabbinge and other distinguished leaders, Amsterdam was selected as the institutional home of the proposed Forum.

Just as we prepared to translate the idea into concrete action, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the process and fundamentally altered global priorities. However, the vision remained alive. Discussions resumed with renewed purpose in 2024, leading to the establishment of the World Agriculture Forum in Amsterdam in May 2024, and its formal launch on 18 September 2024 in Mumbai before an extraordinary gathering of over 1,400 delegates from 34 countries.

In the months that followed, the WAF team undertook stakeholder consultations across Bangkok, Singapore, Manila, Dubai, Nairobi, Cairo, Rome, Brussels, Amsterdam and Washington, D.C., among other global centres. Partnerships were established with institutions including CIRDA, ILRI, AAAID, AARDO, the Global Food Security Flagship Program, IFDC and ICBA, among others.

WAF simultaneously initiated policy dialogues on critical agricultural and food-system issues and released more than ten policy and knowledge reports within the following twelve months. Over these two years, the Forum has steadily expanded its institutional footprint:

- More than 500 eminent professionals nominated to the WAF Global Council
- 34 Country Directors appointed
- Ten Country Councils established, including in the United States, UAE, Singapore, Morocco, Kenya and Nigeria
- Multiple global working groups constituted across key thematic and commodity sectors
- Three Senior Directors, five Global Directors and several other senior professionals inducted into the leadership team

WAF has extensively engaged with governments in Malaysia, Kenya, India, Singapore, Peru, Spain, the United States, Brazil and other countries. A landmark MoU was signed with the Government of Rwanda through its Minister of Agriculture, the Forum's first formal partnership with a national government. WAF plans to hold Africa Agribusiness and Investment Summit in Kigali in May 2027.

WAF AT A GLANCE

500+
Eminent professionals nominated to the WAF Global Council

34
Country Directors appointed

10
Country Councils established, including in the US, UAE, Singapore, Morocco, Kenya and Nigeria

Multiple
Global working groups across key thematic and commodity sectors

3
Senior Directors, 5 Global Directors and several other senior professionals in the leadership team



GLOBAL DIALOGUE
REAL IMPACT
STRONGER FOOD SYSTEMS



Institutional engagements have also advanced with FAO, the EU, Committee on Food Security, the World Organisation for Animal Health, the World Bank, the African Union Development Agency, American University, CIP, CIMMYT, ICRISAT, and corporate such as Bayer, BASF, Godrej, Syngenta, OCP, Yara, IFFCO, ITC, and several other international organisations.

Alongside its organisational development, WAF has continued to participate in and contribute to important regional and global events; review the work of its Country Directors, and working groups; and introduce new initiatives such as FarmerPlus and the Africa AgTech Startup Program in partnership with ILF. We also plan to host Global Soil Health Summit in Sao Paulo, and Animal Health in Nairobi.

The journey was not without challenges. Internal differences over some important issues affected the organisation's functioning for a considerable part of this period. I am pleased to share that these matters have now been resolved. WAF is moving forward with renewed unity, institutional clarity and confidence under the overall leadership of Prof. Rudy Rabbinge.

The next phase will be one of accelerated action and delivery.

WAF will deepen its engagement with governments, businesses, research institutions, development organisations, farmers and civil society. We will expand policy dialogues and research, strengthen our fundraising and donor outreach, and establish Country Councils across 60 priority countries that together account for nearly 95 percent of global agricultural GDP.

We also plan to launch global stakeholder platforms on soil health, animal health, crop health, digital agriculture, food and nutrition security, supported by flagship summits, research reports and international campaigns. Our ambition is to connect global thought leadership with national priorities and measurable impact on the ground through these initiatives and the working of the Country Councils.

Agriculture today stands at a defining moment. Climate change, declining soil and water resources, nutritional insecurity, market disruptions and geopolitical uncertainites are placing unprecedented pressure on global food systems. At the same time, advances in science, digital technologies, biologicals, data systems and entrepreneurship are opening remarkable new possibilities.

WAF seeks to serve as the neutral global platform that brings these diverse forces together, linking policy with practice, knowledge with investment, innovation with inclusion, and global ambition with farmers' realities.

As we enter our third year, I seek the wholehearted support of all WAF members and of every stakeholder across national, regional and global agri-food systems. Together, we can empower farmers, strengthen agricultural economies and contribute meaningfully to global food and nutrition security while confronting the urgent challenges of climate change and sustainability.

The foundation has been laid. The global network is growing. The time has now come to translate our collective vision into action, delivery and lasting impact.

With gratitude and renewed commitment,

Dr. M.J. Khan
Executive Director
World Agriculture Forum
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OUR FOCUS AHEAD

- Deepen engagement with governments
- Strengthen partnerships with businesses, research institutions and civil society
- Expand policy dialogues and research
- Enhance fundraising and donor outreach
- Establish Country Councils in 60 priority countries (≈ 95% of global agricultural GDP)

FLAGSHIP GLOBAL PLATFORMS

Soil Health | Animal Health | Crop Health | Digital Agriculture

Food & Nutrition Security

Flagship summits
Research reports
International campaigns

> *"Together, we can empower farmers, strengthen agricultural economies and build a more food secure, sustainable world.*



12. Featured Articles

HOW WORRIED SHOULD WE BE ABOUT OUR FOOD AND OUR FUTURE?



Reflections on World Food Day by
Dr. MJ Khan, Executive Director, World Agriculture Forum

For the past three years, I have been participating in the World Food Forum at FAO headquarters in Rome. Over the last one year, I have travelled to almost 30 countries, holding extensive consultations with key stakeholders in each. Wherever I go, I hear growing concerns about the future of food. But I also meet hundreds of people determined to build a better future. That combination of concern and determination should guide us this World Food Day.



My recent participation at the Africa Food Systems Forum in Kigali, the Committee on World Food Security in Rome, the Brazil-Arab Economic Forum in São Paulo, and the WAFI Conference in Beijing has reinforced the urgency of action. Climate change is already manifesting itself through droughts, floods, extreme heat and unpredictable growing seasons. Conflicts disrupt supplies of food, fertilisers and energy, with consequences extending far beyond the countries directly involved.

Degrading soils threaten the very foundation of future harvests. The scale of the challenge is sobering. UN estimates indicate that hundreds of millions of people continue to face hunger, while billions cannot afford a healthy diet. Producing more food matters, but equally important is ensuring that nutritious food reaches families at prices they can afford, even when climate shocks or conflicts disrupt supplies.

How should nations respond? Every country needs stronger domestic capacity to feed its people. Agricultural trade remains essential, especially where land and water are limited. But nations must also invest in local and regional production, storage, processing and diversified sources of supply. Relying heavily on imports from a few distant markets leaves populations vulnerable when those markets are disrupted.

The challenge is especially pressing for the Arab world, with its land and water constraints, and for African countries striving to transform their vast agricultural potential into dependable food supplies, jobs and incomes. Each region has different strengths and needs, but both require investment, technology, stronger markets and partnerships aligned with national priorities. The growing urgency among Arab countries to strengthen food security through domestic production, overseas agricultural investments and long-term supply arrangements is particularly noteworthy



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We must also recognise soil health as a fundamental food security priority. Farmers cannot be expected to adapt to changing weather while the land on which they depend continues to degrade. Restoring soil health, managing water wisely and developing climate-resilient crops require sustained support. Food and agriculture deserve a stronger place in global climate negotiations, with COP commitments translated into finance, technology and practical support for farmers.

Recent international declarations, including those emerging from BRICS deliberations, have also recognised the importance of agricultural resilience, food security and smallholder livelihoods.

Yet there are compelling reasons for hope. Startups, driven by passion, determination and entrepreneurial spirit, are writing new chapters in agriculture. Through technology, innovation and new business models, they are addressing longstanding challenges in farming, water management, storage, finance and market access. Equally inspiring are farmers themselves, experimenting with innovative practices and delivering remarkable results, often with modest resources and limited institutional support.

These innovations should not remain confined to one farm, district or country. We need to identify promising ideas, help test and strengthen them, and bring them onto global platforms so that others can benefit. FAO, IFAD, the World Bank, IFC, CGIAR and the World Agriculture Forum have different but complementary strengths. Working in cohesion, alongside governments, businesses, research institutions and farmer organisations, we can connect local solutions with research, investment and opportunities for wider adoption.

At WAF, we are planning a Global Soil Health Coalition and a Global Agro Trade and Food Security Council to advance this cooperation. We are also moving towards a Global Soil Health Summit in Brazil, an Arab Agriculture and Food Systems Summit in Abu Dhabi, and an Africa Agribusiness and Investment Summit in Kigali. These platforms must ultimately be judged not by the number of participants or declarations, but by the partnerships they build and the tangible results they deliver.

Alongside these initiatives, WAF is working to establish national platforms in 60 agriculturally important countries. By engaging governments and aligning with national priorities, we aim to strengthen cooperation on policy, agricultural trade, technology and investment. Through FarmerPlus, we seek to make farmers more visible, better connected and better equipped to access knowledge, services, markets and finance. Global and regional partnerships must ultimately translate into meaningful support and opportunities at the farm level.

So, how worried should we be about our food and our future? Worried enough to act urgently, invest wisely and work together with greater purpose and determination. The challenges are formidable, but so are the ideas, technologies, innovations and human capabilities available to address them.

On this World Food Day, the message from my travels, consultations and interactions across continents is clear: no country, institution or sector can address these challenges alone. We need to act, and act urgently, in tandem and in unison, with a renewed spirit of cooperation and partnership.

Our food future is not predetermined. It will be shaped by the choices we make, the partnerships we build and the actions we take today.

AFRICA • AGRICULTURE • INVESTMENT

Seeds, Capital and Technology for Africa's Agricultural Potential

By Dr. MJ Khan, Executive Director, World Agriculture Forum

I recently spent four days at the Africa Food Systems Forum 2026 in Kigali, and those four days in Kigali can leave you with many impressions. Mine was a growing sense that Africa's agricultural story is entering an important new chapter. With conversations surrounded by governments, businesses, financial institutions, development agencies, research organisations, innovators and farmer leaders covering every dimension of Africa's agricultural future: production, investment, value-chain development, markets, financing, institutional partnerships, linking farmers and SMEs with larger business ecosystems, and scaling innovations. Yet beneath the diversity of these conversations was a common question: how does Africa move from enormous agricultural potential to agricultural prosperity?

This experience reinforced my long term conviction that Africa represents one of the greatest agricultural transformation opportunities of our time. Africa has many of the fundamentals required for an extraordinary agricultural transformation: abundant agricultural resources, diverse agro-ecological systems, a young and growing population, rising food demand, and substantial untapped productive capacity. But the opportunity is not simply to produce more or cultivating more land, it is about improving the productivity, profitability, sustainability and resilience of African agriculture while building strong value chains around farmers. And at the centre of this transformation lies something very small: the seed.

One of the most encouraging aspects of the Kigali discussions was the strong emphasis on quality seeds and improved genetics. We often begin conversations about agricultural transformation with irrigation, mechanisation, digital agriculture, finance, processing or markets. All of these matter. But their effectiveness is shaped, to a considerable degree, by what happens at the very beginning of the production cycle.

The right seed can have potential for higher productivity, greater resilience to drought, heat and disease, improved nutritional quality and stronger market outcomes. In many farming systems, access to quality seed is therefore not a marginal intervention. It is foundational infrastructure for productivity.

But Africa's long-term answer cannot simply be greater dependence on imported seeds. Africa needs stronger seed ecosystems of its own. That means investing across the entire chain: research and breeding, genetic improvement, local adaptation, multiplication, testing, certification, production, distribution and farmer access. It also means recognising the enormous diversity of African farming systems. A seed that performs exceptionally well in one agro-ecological zone may be poorly suited to another. The objective, therefore, should





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not merely be more seed. It should be more locally adapted, high-quality seed, produced at scale and made accessible to farmers at the right price and at the right time. That distinction is important.

There is also a deeper dimension to this conversation. Seed systems are not only about productivity; they are increasingly about resilience and strategic capacity. As climate conditions become less predictable, countries need the ability to identify, develop and scale varieties suited to their own agro-ecological realities. This makes investment in local breeding capacity, seed research and national seed systems not simply an agricultural priority, but part of building long-term resilience in food systems.

The real challenge, therefore, is not simply closing the seed-access gap, but closing what might be called the seed-to-yield gap: the distance between the potential of improved genetics and the results farmers are actually able to achieve. That gap is shaped by soil health, water, agronomic knowledge, finance, infrastructure and markets. Closing it requires us to think of seed not as an isolated input, but as the entry point into a broader productivity system.

India and Africa partnership with long-term potential

These discussions are particularly relevant in the context of the 2nd India-Africa Seed Summit being held in Hyderabad from 15 to 17 September 2026.

I had conceptualised this initiative while serving as Chairman of the Indian Chamber of Food and Agriculture (ICFA). The vision was never limited to increasing seed trade between India and Africa. The larger objective has been to create enduring partnerships that can ultimately enable large-scale production of quality seeds within Africa itself.

India brings considerable strengths to such a partnership. It has developed a large and diversified seed industry backed by decades of public research, private entrepreneurship, breeding expertise and extensive seed-production networks. Indian companies have demonstrated the ability to produce quality seeds at competitive costs and develop varieties suitable for diverse farming environments.

India itself is a country of extraordinary agricultural diversity. Its farmers operate across very different soils, climates, cropping systems and production conditions. That experience of developing and scaling agricultural technologies across diverse environments offers useful lessons for Africa, even though African farming systems have their own distinct requirements and solutions.

The opportunity is therefore not to transplant an exact Indian model into Africa. It is to build a strong partnership. Africa brings its agricultural potential, ecological diversity, local knowledge and entrepreneurial energy. India brings experience in research, breeding, seed production, technology, entrepreneurship and scaling. These capabilities can help develop stronger, locally rooted seed industries across African countries.

However, for this partnership to be truly transformative, African leadership must remain at its centre. The objective should not be to replicate one country's agricultural model in another, but to co-create solutions around African priorities, institutions and farming systems. Partnerships are most valuable when they build local capabilities: African breeders and researchers, African seed enterprises, African production networks and African entrepreneurs who can sustain and expand these systems over time.

The goal should be an Africa increasingly capable of producing its own high-quality seeds at scale; locally adapted, affordable and accessible to millions of farmers, supported by African institutions and enterprises.

Seed + Capital + Technology

Seeds alone, however, cannot transform agriculture. The conversations in Kigali repeatedly demonstrated the importance of connecting the entire agricultural ecosystem. Better seeds must be accompanied by agronomic knowledge, soil-health solutions, irrigation, mechanisation, finance, insurance, aggregation, storage, processing and assured



markets. Africa's agricultural transformation can therefore be accelerated around three powerful drivers: Seed, Capital and Technology. Around these must be built infrastructure, institutions, entrepreneurship and market linkages.

Capital without technology can remain inefficient. Technology without capital cannot scale. And neither can deliver their full potential if farmers lack access to quality seed and functioning markets. This is why agricultural finance also needs to evolve. The question is not simply how much capital reaches agriculture, but whether capital is structured around the realities of agricultural production and connected to viable value-chain opportunities.

The same applies to technology. Africa does not need technology for technology's sake. It needs solutions that solve real constraints for farmers and businesses, that are commercially viable, locally relevant and capable of scaling.

There is also a fundamental question of risk. Agriculture is exposed to weather, biological, price and market uncertainties, and these risks can make otherwise attractive opportunities difficult to finance. The task, therefore, is not simply to put more money into agriculture, but to make agricultural systems more investable. Better data, aggregation, insurance, blended finance, credit guarantees, stronger market arrangements and predictable policy frameworks can help convert fragmented agricultural activity into investment opportunities that are visible, bankable and scalable.

Equally important is changing the way we view Africa's smallholder farmers and agri-SMEs. They should not merely be beneficiaries of development programmes. They must become business partners and integral participants in modern food value chains. They are producers, entrepreneurs, employers, suppliers and potential business partners. Their integration into modern food systems is essential to building agricultural economies that are both commercially viable and socially inclusive.

As I emphasised during my intervention in Kigali, the missing link is often not production, but integration. How do we connect fragmented farmers and SMEs to finance, technology, aggregation, processing, logistics and markets? How do we help them move from participating in value chains to capturing greater value within them? And how do we build systems in which private investment can work alongside public institutions and development finance to create sustainable commercial pathways? These are the questions that will determine whether Africa's agricultural potential becomes agricultural prosperity.

This also requires us to rethink how we measure agricultural transformation. We should ask how much income the farmer retains, how much value is created locally, how resilient the production system is to climate shocks, how much food reaches consumers, and whether agricultural growth is improving nutrition and creating productive employment. The ultimate measure of transformation is not simply more production, but greater value, resilience and opportunity across the food system.

A global responsibility and opportunity

Africa does not lack agricultural strategies, ideas or successful initiatives. What it needs increasingly is the ability to connect these efforts and translate them into scalable, investable systems. That requires a different kind of collaboration. Research cannot remain disconnected from industry. Seed companies need stronger links with local production systems. Farmers need meaningful access to finance, technology and markets. Innovations need pathways to move beyond pilots. And private investment needs an enabling environment in which agricultural opportunities can be understood, de-risked and scaled.

The opportunity is to move from a project-based approach to a systems approach. A successful pilot can demonstrate what is possible; a functioning system determines whether that possibility can reach millions of farmers. This is where institutions have an important role to play. Institutions such as the World Agriculture Forum (WAF), FAO, CGIAR, International Seed Federation, African Union, AUDA-NEPAD and national agricultural research systems (NARS), together with governments, financial institutions, seed companies and farmer organisations, have an important responsibility and they also bring different capabilities to the agricultural ecosystem. The challenge is not to create more parallel initiatives, but to connect these capabilities around clear, country-level priorities and outcomes.

Regional integration will also be critical. Africa's agricultural opportunity cannot be fully realised within fragmented national markets. Stronger regional value chains can create larger markets, support economies of scale, encourage investment in processing and logistics, and allow agricultural enterprises to grow beyond domestic boundaries. But this will require complementary investments in infrastructure, standards, storage, trade facilitation and predictable regulatory systems.

In my present role at WAF, I remain equally committed to pushing forward seed partnerships as part of the larger agenda of transforming African agriculture. What Africa

needs now are scalable country-level programmes connecting research with industry, seed companies with local production systems, farmers with finance and technology, and production with markets.

Ultimately, the measure of these partnerships should not be the number of programmes launched or agreements signed. It should be whether they build lasting capacity: stronger institutions, competitive enterprises, resilient farmers, functioning markets and agricultural systems capable of generating value long after an individual project has ended. That is the scale of the opportunity before Africa, and it is also a shared responsibility for all of us who have a role in shaping the future of food and agriculture.

Africa's food future is also an economic opportunity

Africa's rapidly growing population will make food and nutrition security one of the greatest challenges of the coming decades. But I increasingly see this not only as a challenge but also one of the continent's greatest economic opportunities. Rising food demand can support investment in agriculture, agro-processing, logistics, storage, technology, research and rural enterprises. Stronger domestic and regional value chains can create jobs, deepen markets and reduce vulnerabilities created by excessive dependence on external supply.

With the right enabling environment, Africa can become not only more food secure, but a major centre of agricultural production, agribusiness, innovation and value creation. Getting there will require patience, investment and a willingness to think beyond individual projects. It will require us to connect the pieces. Better seeds with better science. Capital with viable enterprises. Technology with farmers. Farmers with markets. And innovation with institutions capable of taking it to scale.

Perhaps the greatest shift required now is from projects to systems. Africa has demonstrated that successful agricultural innovations can emerge at the local level. The challenge is taking what works and embedding it within institutions, markets and financing structures that allow it to endure and scale. A successful pilot can demonstrate possibility; a functioning system creates lasting impact. The next generation of agricultural partnerships should therefore be judged not only by the number of farmers reached, projects launched or technologies deployed, but by whether they leave behind stronger institutions, enterprises and markets capable of continuing the transformation.

Ultimately, Africa's agricultural transformation will not be delivered by any one technology, institution or investment. It will come from how effectively we connect them, and whether we place the farmer at the centre of that system. After four days in Kigali, I came away with an even stronger conviction that Africa's agricultural future is not a question of whether the potential exists. It does. The question is whether we can build the partnerships, systems and investments capable of unlocking it. And perhaps the most powerful place to begin is also the smallest: A seed.

Conclusion

The third quarter of 2026 marks an important phase in the World Agriculture Forum's evolution from a global convening platform towards a more connected, partnership-driven institution. Across knowledge production, policy dialogue, government engagement and regional network development, WAF has continued to build the relationships, institutional foundations and shared understanding needed to advance more resilient, inclusive and sustainable agri-food systems.

A consistent message emerges from the quarter's work: the central challenge is no longer simply identifying solutions, but creating the conditions for their implementation at scale. Soil health, biodiversity, climate resilience, aquaculture, agribusiness development and food waste are interconnected priorities that cannot be addressed through isolated interventions. Progress requires stronger coordination between policy and science, public and private investment, technology and infrastructure, and global ambition and local realities. It also requires ensuring that smallholder farmers, women, young people, Indigenous communities and small agribusinesses are not merely recipients of change, but active participants in shaping and benefiting from it.

The agreements with the Government of Rwanda and American University provide important institutional foundations for this next phase, while WAF's engagements across Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America have opened further avenues for cooperation. The development of Country Councils, regional partnerships and thematic initiatives reflects a growing ambition to connect global expertise with national priorities. However, discussions and agreements in principle must now progress towards formal commitments, defined responsibilities, funded programmes and demonstrable outcomes.

The priority for the coming quarters is therefore to translate institutional reach into institutional effectiveness, and partnerships into practical results. This means advancing the commitments already made, establishing clear measures of progress, strengthening accountability and demonstrating how WAF's work contributes to better policy, more effective investment, stronger agricultural value chains and improved outcomes for farmers and rural communities. Its credibility will depend not only on the breadth of its network or the quality of its convenings, but on its ability to sustain collaboration and show what that collaboration achieves.

As WAF enters the final quarter of 2026, the task is to build on the foundations established so far with greater focus, delivery and measurable impact. The ambition is clear: to connect the people, institutions, knowledge and resources required to move from fragmented responses to coordinated action, and from shared commitments to lasting improvements in global agri-food systems. The measure of WAF's progress will ultimately be the change it helps make possible; on the ground, in policy and across the partnerships that shape the future of agriculture.



Let's Cultivate a Sustainable Tomorrow !

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