GLOBAL FLAGSHIP INITIATIVE FOR FOOD SECURITY

The Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security Newsletter

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Dear colleagues and partners,

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. Over the past months, the Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security has made important progress in bringing together partners to translate scientific innovation, international cooperation and investment into measurable improvements in food security. Following our first Annual Members Meeting in New York, our engagements during the IMF–World Bank Group Annual Meetings in Bangkok provided further momentum for this ambition.

A particular highlight was our leaders' roundtable, "Food Security: From Dialogue to Investment," organised with Future Food Hub and TASTEBUD LAB. The discussions highlighted opportunities to connect Thailand's food innovation capabilities and regional investment ecosystem with food security priorities in Africa and the Middle East. Promising initiatives include the proposed Thailand Food Systems Living Lab and the exploration of a dedicated Food Security Fund, focusing on reducing food losses, improving access to affordable nutrition and mobilising private investment.

We are also advancing our partnership with the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) to develop a pipeline of country-led, technically sound investments with greater scale and impact, alongside progress on our envisaged programmes in Syria, Somalia and Mongolia. Our engagements in Bangkok reinforced that achieving food security at scale requires not only additional financing but also more catalytic use of development resources, greater private capital mobilisation, innovation and stronger implementation capacities. This is where the Flagship can add value by connecting partners, aligning investments with country priorities and bringing solutions to communities.

I am grateful to our members and partners for their continued trust and commitment. Our discussions in New York and Bangkok have demonstrated what international institutions, governments, science and the private sector can achieve together. Our priority now is to turn this momentum into concrete partnerships, mobilise investment and deliver measurable results where they matter most.

Dr. Conrad Rein

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If you have feedback, want to be featured in our upcoming newsletters, or want to stop receiving the newsletter, please contact:

info@flagshipinitiative.org

Bangkok Opens New Opportunities for Food Security Investment Across Asia, Africa and the Middle East



The Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security advanced its investment and implementation agenda during the IMF–World Bank Group Annual Meetings in Bangkok, Thailand. Building on the momentum of its first Annual Members Meeting in New York, the Flagship engaged with development institutions, financial partners, governments and private-sector innovators to explore how international cooperation can translate into concrete investments and measurable food security outcomes.

Connecting Global Partnerships with Thai Innovation

A central highlight was the leaders' roundtable "Food Security: From Dialogue to Investment – Connecting Global Partnerships, Regional Capital & Thai Innovation", held on 15 October in collaboration with Future Food Hub and TASTEBUD LAB as an affiliated programme of the Annual Meetings.

The roundtable brought together representatives of the Asian Development Bank, UNIDO, UNCDF, Bayer, Thai government institutions, including the Agricultural Research Development Agency and Eastern Economic Corridor, alongside financial institutions, investors, industry associations and foodtech innovators.

In his keynote address, Dr. Conrad Rein highlighted the need to move beyond coalition-building towards investment and implementation. He emphasised the importance of mobilising private capital alongside public and development finance, strengthening science-based innovation and creating investment opportunities that respond to country-led food security priorities.

Thailand offers a promising platform for this cooperation. Its advanced food processing capabilities, agricultural research, innovation ecosystem and growing investment community provide opportunities to connect Asian expertise and capital with food security challenges in Africa and the Middle East.

Two Emerging Partnerships for Practical Impact

Discussions identified two priority initiatives for further development by Future Food Hub and TASTEBUD LAB, working with the Flagship and interested partners.

The Asia–Africa Food Loss to Value Partnership would explore how agricultural side-streams, including cassava pulp, rice bran and fruit residues, can be transformed into valuable food ingredients and alternative proteins. The aim is to reduce food losses, create new income opportunities for producers and processors, and facilitate the exchange of proven technologies and business models between Thailand and African partners.

The Affordable Nutrition Partnership for Asia, Africa and the Middle East would bring together food innovators, SMEs, producers and buyers to develop affordable, nutritious products using locally available ingredients. Technical validation, practitioner exchanges and market-oriented cooperation would help translate innovation into accessible food solutions.

Both partnerships could be developed and tested through a proposed Thailand Food Systems Living Lab, connecting research, technical expertise, enterprises and investors. The Living Lab would focus on practical demonstrations, product and process validation, SME capacity development and measurable benefits for producers and communities.

A central objective would be to bridge the gap between scientific innovation and investable solutions, ensuring that promising technologies and business models can be validated, adapted to local conditions and scaled through sustainable financing partnerships.

Complementing these initiatives, participants also explored the feasibility of a Thailand-based Food Security Fund to mobilise regional capital and support scalable food security investments. Its potential structure, governance and financing arrangements will require further assessment.

Mobilising Investment and Strengthening Global Partnerships

Beyond the roundtable, the Flagship participated in several strategic engagements during the Annual Meetings, reinforcing the importance of innovative financing and international cooperation.

Discussions during the Annual Meetings reinforced the need for a more catalytic approach to development finance. Mobilising private capital at scale will require multilateral development banks and development finance institutions to make more strategic use of concessional resources, risk-sharing instruments and guarantees, while supporting market development and creating the conditions for commercially sustainable investment.

The Flagship also advanced dialogue with CRDB Bank, a founding member, on potential agricultural investment initiatives in Africa, and explored closer cooperation with the World Bank's AgriConnect initiative and Bayer, including opportunities related to the Biological Nitrogen Moonshot Initiative.

Additional exchanges addressed sustainable and climate-resilient rice production, country-led investment opportunities, and cooperation with a range of Flagship members and partners.

These engagements reinforced the Flagship's role as a global partnership platform connecting scientific innovation, development finance, private investment and country-led implementation.

From Dialogue to Delivery

The Bangkok roundtable generated strong interest in taking the proposed initiatives forward. Future Food Hub and TASTEBUD LAB will coordinate the next phase of discussions with the Flagship and interested partners, including opportunities for technical cooperation with UNIDO, catalytic enterprise finance with UNCDF and philanthropic partners, and regional scaling with ADB.



The initiative also attracted attention in the Thai business media, with Krungthep Turakij (Bangkok Business) highlighting Thailand's potential to become an Asia-Pacific hub for food security investment.

The next phase will focus on translating the interest generated in Bangkok into defined partnerships, practical demonstration projects and viable investment opportunities.

Together with Future Food Hub, TASTEBUD LAB and interested international partners, the Flagship aims to develop initiatives that connect Asian innovation and investment capabilities with country-led food security priorities in Africa and the Middle East.

The Flagship welcomes interested members, development institutions, corporates and investors to contribute to this emerging cooperation between Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

For further information and partnership opportunities, please contact Mr. Santi Abakaz, founder of Future Food Hub and CEO and co-founder of TASTEBUD LAB, at santi.biobuddy@gmail.com, or visit the TASTEBUD LAB website: https://www.tastebudlab.com/future-food-hub-1

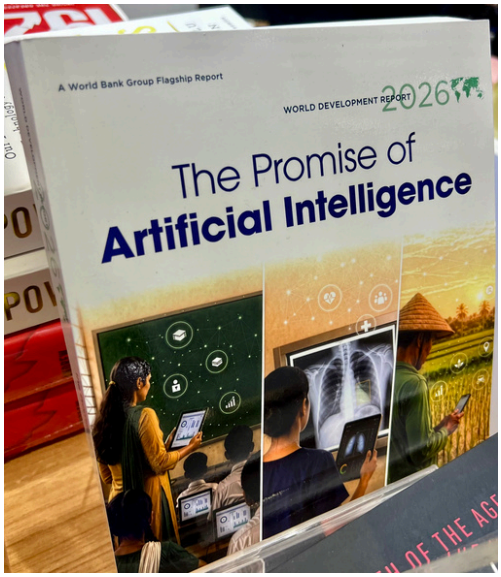


Impressions from Bangkok:











From Projects to Transformation: AU-IBAR Sets the Future of Africa's Animal-Based Agrifood Systems

Article by Dr. Huyam Salih, Director, African Union – Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR)

Africa's Animal Wealth and the Gap to Close

Africa's animal resources - livestock, fish and wildlife - are central to the continent's food and nutrition security, jobs, trade and ability to withstand shocks. Livestock alone contributes an estimated USD 210 billion to Africa's gross domestic product (GDP). It also supports about 800 million people, including farmers, pastoralists, traders, processors and service providers. Africa is home to roughly 73 per cent of the world's camels, 45 per cent of its goats and sheep, and 34 per cent of its cattle, as well as vast and largely untapped fish and aquatic resources. Yet the continent still imports more animal-source foods than it produces for its own markets. The challenge is not a lack of resources. Weak links between systems, institutions, markets, and investment keep this wealth from translating into shared prosperity.

Seventy-five Years of Continental Results

The African Union – Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) was founded in 1951 as the Inter-African Bureau for Epizootic Diseases, which dealt with large outbreaks of animal disease. It has since grown into the African Union's continental authority on animal resources, working with the African Union's 55 Member States and eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs). AU-IBAR led the effort to eradicate rinderpest, a deadly cattle disease, from Africa, averting estimated annual economic losses of USD 2.5 billion for livestock producers. Building on that success, it launched the Pan-African Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR) Eradication Programme in 2025, funded by the European Union. PPR is a highly contagious disease of sheep and goats. AU-IBAR has also established continental data systems for animal resources and developed policies for livestock, fisheries, and aquaculture. It has strengthened food safety and animal health systems to support trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and helped Africa speak with one voice in global standard-setting bodies.



H.E. Josefa Sacko, then African Union Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, and H.E. Dr. Girma Amente, then Minister of Agriculture, Ethiopia, at the launch of the PPR Programme, Addis Ababa, February 2025. Credit: AU-IBAR, 2025.

From Projects to a Long-Term Transformation Agenda

AU-IBAR's Transformation Strategic Framework marks a shift from short-term projects to a long-term agenda that the institution owns and measures beyond any single funding cycle. It aligns with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) Strategy and Action Plan 2026–2035. Two flagship programmes drive it. The Integrated Regional Livestock Value Chains programme aims to increase formal trade along selected regional routes by 10–15 per cent by 2029, supported by animal health, feed, and breeding services. The Sustainable Fisheries and Resilient Aquaculture Value Chains Transformation programme aims to keep fish stocks healthy, support small-scale fishers and fish farmers, and reduce post-harvest losses. Member States and RECs lead the work on the ground, while AU-IBAR convenes partners and tracks progress.



Deboning operations at the Meat Corporation of Namibia (Meatco) export abattoir, adding value along the livestock value chain from farm to market while meeting food safety standards for trade. Credit: AU-IBAR, 2025.

Africa has animal resources, growing demand, and an expanding continental market. By moving from projects to programmes, AU-IBAR is laying the foundations for animal resources that feed the continent, create decent jobs and retain value in Africa.

For more information, please visit the AU-IBAR website at https://www.au-ibar.org/ or contact Dr. Huyam Salih at ibar.office@au-ibar.org.

Partner Contributions

Cameroon Youth Chapter at the World Food Forum 2026

Article by Ndukong Clinton Koyoh, Food Security Focal Point – World Food Forum Cameroon Youth Chapter



Representatives of the World Food Forum Cameroon Youth Chapter in front of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) flags at FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, during the World Food Forum Event, October 2026. Credit: World Food Forum Cameroon Youth Chapter.

The World Food Forum (WFF) Cameroon Youth Chapter took part in the 2026 World Food Forum, held from 8 to 16 October at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Rome, Italy, and online. The event drew more than 90,000 participants, with 32,000 in person.

The Chapter joined national chapter workshops, exchanged ideas with youth leaders, governments, development partners, investors, and researchers from many countries and presented its work at the Youth Exhibition Booth for Africa. Visitors learned about the CultivatED School Programme, which has reached more than 2,500 students in six schools, and Sustainable Gastronomy Week in Yaoundé.

Cameroon also had reason to celebrate. CornHouse, a youth-led start-up that lets smallholder farmers use stored maize to secure small loans, won the Empowering Women in Agriculture award. During a panel on youth and financing, Chapter representative Ndukong Clinton Koyoh spoke about the need for flexible finance that also supports youth-led organisations.

The Chapter returned home with new partnerships and fresh ideas to strengthen youth action for food security in Cameroon.

For more information, please visit the World Food Forum Youth website at https://youth.world-food-forum.org/home/en or contact Ndukong Clinton Koyoh – clintonkoyohndukong@gmail.com

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Looking Ahead

Our Upcoming Engagements

- UNFCCC COP31: 9–20 November 2026, Antalya, Türkiye
- UN Water Conference: 8–10 December 2026, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

Get Involved

Call to Action

Help turn dialogue into delivery

Interested in contributing expertise, investment or technology to the proposed Asia–Africa food security partnerships discussed in Bangkok?

Get in touch to join the next phase.

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Welcome to Our Newest Members

MEDICAL IMPACT
IMPACTING LIVES, PRESCRIBING HOPE

Medical IMPACT (Mexico)

Medical IMPACT is a non-governmental organisation dedicated to providing high-quality healthcare and humanitarian relief to vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities, with permanent operations in Mexico, Sierra Leone, and Colombia. Through medical brigades, health education, and advocacy, the organisation works to strengthen local healthcare systems and advance universal health coverage. By joining the initiative, Medical IMPACT aims to address health equity and food security as intertwined drivers for sustainable community well-being.

Website: https://medical-impact.org