

UN Food Systems Summit +4 Stocktake

SIDE EVENT REPORT

Public-private collaboration for seed system transformation

29 July 2025 | 13.00 – 14.15

Organizers and partners:

- Organisers: Government of the Netherlands and the Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research (EIAR), in collaboration with SeedNL
- Partners: International Seed Federation (member of Seeds for Food Coalition); Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), EU delegation to Ethiopia; CGIAR; East-West Seed Knowledge Transfer; Crop Trust; SNV

Side event overview (50-100 words):

This event focused on the power of public-private partnerships to drive seed system transformation. The session spotlighted several approaches on a country (Netherlands, Ethiopia) and global (Seeds for Food Coalition) level that enhance the availability, accessibility, and quality of seeds — an essential foundation for resilient and inclusive food systems. Although multi-stakeholder partnerships are widely recognised as being key for system transformation, they do come with their challenges and different approaches. There is no one-size fits all when it comes to partnerships. Reflecting on these approaches and what works in which context was therefore crucial to discuss together.

List of speakers and key messages

NAME AND TITLE OF SPEAKER	KEY MESSAGES OR/AND RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS
1. Ms. Wampie Libon, Director Inclusive Green Growth, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Netherlands	The Netherlands' seed sector is a global reference, built on what is widely known as the "Dutch Diamond Model", a framework for structured collaboration among government, private sector, research institutions, and civil society.

	<p>It was shared how this model has fostered trust, alignment, and market expansion while ensuring quality, biodiversity, and farmer-centred outcomes. Africa can adapt this approach, tailored to its context, through platforms that institutionalize collaboration, not improvise it, and invest in long-term, depoliticized partnerships.</p>
<p>2. Prof. Nigussie Dechassa, Director General, Ethiopian Institute of Agricultural Research</p>	<p>Through coordinated public-private collaboration and strategic breeding investments, the country transitioned from importing malt barley to releasing three high-yielding, high-quality local varieties.</p> <p>Similarly, the release of BH 6241 hybrid maize, developed in partnership with local and international actors, allowed Ethiopia to end maize seed imports by June 2025. This is the kind of progress FARA supports, locally adapted, demand-led, and system-anchored.</p>
<p>3. Mr. Abdulrazak Ibrahim, Cluster Leader Institutional Capacity & Future Scenarios, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)</p>	<p>FARA delivers on this mandate by coordinating and hosting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Secretariat of the African Seed and Biotechnology Partnership Platform (ASBPP) was established under AU Decision EX.CL/Dec.153 (V) to enhance governance, alignment, and strategic coordination in the seed sector; • The TAAT Capacity Development and Technology Outreach (CDTO) is a mechanism scaling proven agricultural technologies through multi-stakeholder innovation platforms. • The Africa Foresight Academy (AFA) institutionalizes climate foresight and strategic planning, with support from the EU, FAO, IDRC, and GIZ. <p>They operate as part of a broader coalition, working with CGIAR centers, SROs, Seed for Food partners, national seed systems, and global initiatives like SeedNL, whose leadership has demonstrated the power of public-private-academic partnerships to build resilient, inclusive seed ecosystems.</p>
<p>4. Mr. Michael Keller, Secretary General International Seed Federation</p>	<p>“There are no good crops without good seeds: seeds are the foundation of agri-food systems.”</p> <p>The Seeds for Food Coalition was one of the great outcomes of the UNFSS in New York. Seed sector innovation is in our DNA as private seed sector, but we need time; therefore a transformative agenda must plan ahead, foster innovation and strengthen seed resilience now.</p>

	<p>Diversity of crops, solutions and stakeholders are needed for seed systems. Companies, public sectors, civil-society and research are all needed, including their diverse and unique perspectives. This is why public-private partnerships are essential. We need a safe space to collaborate. that’s why today’s dialogue matters, as a unique opportunity to move forward together, learn from each other, avoid duplication and fill the gaps that remain.</p> <p>When seeds are resilient, food systems are too.</p>
<p>5. Mr. Adrian Cano Guerrero, Lead Private Sector Development and Trade, EU Delegation to Ethiopia</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · EU’s role in seed system transformation – Through the Ethiopian Seed Partnership with the Netherlands, the EU has enabled over 1 million smallholders to access quality seeds, while initiatives like DeSIRA LIFT, “Soil Matters” and ILSA integrate soil health, agrobiodiversity, and policy reform to deliver inclusive, resilient, and sustainable seed systems across Africa. · The EU will continue to invest in trust-based, locally owned public-private partnerships that are accountable, equitable, and impactful, through its support to strong seed systems and policies that protect farmer-led systems, respect agrobiodiversity, and harmonise laws without marginalising informal networks.
<p>6. Ms. Dina Kebede, Food systems youth leader, Ethiopia</p>	<p>Transformation is only real when it reaches those at the base of the pyramid. At the Seed Sector Development Meeting, Dina Gebe, a young Ethiopian entrepreneur, shared her journey of transforming indigenous knowledge into an antioxidant-rich green tea product.</p> <p>Her voice highlighted a core truth: youth and women are not just beneficiaries but innovators, investors, and catalysts. FARA’s platforms support this shift, equipping a new generation of bio-entrepreneurs, seed champions, and system stewards.</p>
<p>7. Mr. Elijah Mwashayenyi, Head Africa, East West Seed Knowledge Transfer Foundation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quality seeds are the foundation of any meaningful crop production. ● However, quality seeds need to be accompanied by other inputs and with knowledge transfer to impart good agricultural practices. ● PPPs are critical for holistic support to smallholder farmers and for scalability and sustainability.

8. Mr. Moti Jaleta Debello	The CGIAR Research Initiative Seed Equal aims to support the delivery of seed of improved, climate-resilient, market-preferred and nutritious varieties of priority crops, embodying a high rate of genetic gain to farmers, ensuring equitable access for women and other disadvantaged groups. We organize a participatory varietal evaluation to capture the preferences of men and women farmers. Findings of this evaluation help in providing information to actors in the seed business on varietal preferences of different farmer groups and strategize their seed business in addressing diverse interests.
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Overall session summary, conclusions and recommended actions (max 300 words)

The seed sector is the quiet engine behind Africa's agricultural transformation. It powers productivity, resilience, and inclusive growth. Yet, for too long, fragmented systems, weak institutional linkages, and polarized policy spaces have held progress back.

1. We all underline the importance of seed sector development for food systems transformation
2. We need everyone, including youth, for bringing seed systems change. It requires an integrated seed sector development approach, with the goal of providing freedom of choice for seeds to farmers. This includes having the right financial models in place for farmers to become entrepreneurs
3. Public-private partnerships do work and are needed for seed systems change, including G2G collaboration (like we see between Ethiopia, the Netherlands and the European Union). It requires cross-pollination, shared learning and innovation to improve the effectiveness of partnerships and to bring them to scale
4. Partnerships are essential for dialogue, co-creation and shared commitment and accountability, and they have proven to be more resilient to pressing global challenges. The Seeds for Food Coalition is one of the offsprings of UNFSS 2021 and is a good example of how to hold dialogues with the aim to depolarise
5. The importance of the conservation and sustainable use of Plant Genetic Resources through public-private collaboration. We can only achieve the scale and equity that Africa's seed sector requires through integration and collaboration.