



2026 SDG Global Business Forum

Tuesday, 14 July 2026

8:00 a.m.- 09:30 a.m. (EDT), Virtual

“Business and the Real Economy:
Delivering Sustainable Development in a Changing Global Context”

Why This Forum Matters

Sustainable development becomes real not in conference rooms but in the everyday turning points of people’s lives: when a factory runs because electricity is reliable, when a small business grows because roads and connectivity improve, or when a family’s prospects change because work becomes more stable and services more accessible. These moments remind us that business can be part of implementing concrete solutions, but that contribution depends on real conditions, real choices and real accountability. Those are the grounded, practical questions at the heart of the 2026 SDG Global Business Forum.

Co-convened by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) and the International Organisation of Employers (IOE), with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) joining as co-organizer for the 2026 Forum, the SDG Global Business Forum is the United Nations’ principal platform for focused exchange on the role of business in sustainable development.

Held as a high-level special event alongside the [2026 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development \(HLPF\)](#), the United Nations’ central platform for follow-up and review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Forum will provide space for a more in-depth discussion on what business is actually contributing in accelerating SDG implementation, where it is making a difference, and where important gaps and unresolved questions remain. In alignment with the [Compromiso de Sevilla](#) of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4), the Forum will also examine how public policy, institutional frameworks and accountability shape the quality and credibility of business engagement in sustainable development, as a key contribution to advancing the [Pact for the Future](#) and ensuring that private sector is are effectively mobilized to advance the 2030 Agenda.

This year's discussions will be situated within the broader context of the Goals under in-depth review at the 2026 HLPF: Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), Goal 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) and Goal 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Within that broader frame, and given that SDG 9 has been referred to as the 'production engine' of the 2030 Agenda, the 2026 Forum will place particular focus on SDGs 9 and 17 and on current discussions related to the contribution and accountability of business in advancing sustainable development in the context of implementing the Pact for the Future^[1].

Building on the outcomes from key recent intergovernmental processes^[2], the 2026 SDG Global Business Forum will carry these discussions into upcoming intergovernmental forums, including the 2026 Private Sector Forum and the [2026 United Nations Water Conference](#), to sharpen where business can help close persistent implementation gaps.

Who should engage

The 2026 SDG Global Business Forum is designed for business leaders and engaged representatives from governments, civil society and all other stakeholders. Participants will gain valuable insights through open policy discussions and real-world business examples of scalable impact. The Forum also offers a unique opportunity to connect with a global network of innovators, industry experts and changemakers who are actively shaping practical solutions and accelerating measurable progress on the SDGs across sectors and regions.

Format

The Forum will be held in fully virtual format. The meeting will be livestreamed on the Zoom platform and broadcast publicly via [UN web TV](#). Register [here](#).

Draft Programme

8:00-8:12 a.m.	Opening Remarks: • Ms. Sanda Ojiambo, Assistant Secretary-General, CEO and Executive Director of the United Nations Global Compact. • Keynote addresses - Mr. Samaila Zubairu, President & Chief Executive Officer, Africa Finance Corporation (AFC). - Ms. Umut Shayakhmetova,  of Halyk Bank, Kazakhstan. Moderator: Ms. Rachel Dumba, CEO, Steadman Global Consulting
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8:12-8:47 a.m.

Session 1: Substantive Discussion on Advancing SDG 9

What is the role of business in tackling some of the major transformations that are reshaping the future of industrialization, particularly the return of industrial policy, digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, the green transition and the reordering of global supply chains?

Context: The private sector plays a critical role in the major transformations that underpin SDG 9 and in shaping the future of industrialization. This is especially so at a time when shifts in global supply chains, rapid advancements in digital technologies and artificial intelligence, and mounting climate pressures are accelerating the return of industrial policy and increasing the need for collaborative approaches to address these trends. In addition, leveraging private sector investments through innovative financing mechanisms, such as blended finance, has become even more essential to help bridge the SDG financing gap amid shrinking development finance.

Objective: The session aims to bring a business perspective to the main policy recommendations emanating from the Expert Group Meeting on SDG 9 held in preparation for the HLPF^[3] including aligning industrial development with international trade and investment frameworks, and climate strategies, enabling infrastructure and regulatory environments, , stronger industrial ecosystems and value chains, and greater opportunities for MSMEs - and to elicit concrete proposals to operationalize them through coordinated action with Member States.

Panelists:

- H.E. Mr. Eddy Johans Ordóñez Rubí, Secretary of State for Economic Development, Honduras
- Ms. Fatou Haidara, Deputy to the Director General and Managing Director of the Directorate of Global Partnerships and External Relations, UNIDO
- Ms. Saruul Bulgan, Secretary-General, Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Ms. Hanane Mourchid, Managing Director in charge of Sustainability & Green Utilities, OCP Group (Morocco) (TBC)

Moderator: Ms. Rachel Dumba, CEO, Steadman Global Consulting

8:47-9:22 a.m.

Session 2: From Global to Local: Business Contributions to the Country-Level Implementation of Action 55 (c) of the Pact of the Future.

What defines a truly enabling environment for implementing Action 55(c) in practice, including in developing country contexts? How can Action 55(c) be realistically operationalized in support of sustainable development?

Context: Recognizing that the SDGs can only be achieved through strong global partnerships and effective cooperation, multi-stakeholder initiatives play a critical role in supporting Member States to advance a whole-of-society approach to the 2030 Agenda. This reflects the ambitions of the Pact for the Future, particularly Action 55(c), which calls for strengthening collaboration with the private sector and other stakeholders to accelerate sustainable development outcomes. This session will showcase practical examples and lessons learned from collaboration between national-level platforms and governments. It will highlight how such partnerships can support governments in mobilizing private sector engagement in support of the SDGs and national development priorities, including through processes such as Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). By sharing experiences and good practices, the session will explore how coordinated efforts can strengthen alignment between public policy and private sector action, accelerate progress toward national goals and enhance accountability and impact.

Objective: This session intends to showcase how businesses, through Global Compact Country Networks, are in the driver seat of realizing the ambition of Action 55 (c) of the Pact of the Future - “encourage the contribution of the private sector to addressing global challenges and strengthen its accountability towards the implementation of United Nations frameworks” - by showcasing best cases from around the world. The Session would also launch an Insights Brief by the Action 55 (c) Multistakeholder Task Team outlining challenges, opportunities, and recommendations for Member States on how to strengthen private sector engagement and accountability in line with the Pact for the Future’s ambitions.

Panelists:

- Ms. Marsha Macatta-Yambi, Executive Director, UN Global Compact Country Network Tanzania
- Government Official from the Ministry of Planning, Economic Affairs and Development, Tanzania (TBC)
- Ms. Daniela Bernacchi, Executive Director, UN Global Compact Country Network Italy
- Ms. Mara Cossu, Coordinator of the Sustainable Development Unit, Directorate-General for European, International Affairs and Sustainable Finance, Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, Government of Italy

Moderator: Ms. Tolulope Lewis-Tamoka, Chief of Government and UN Relations, UN Global Compact

9:22-9:30 a.m.

Closing Remarks:

- Ms. Sonya Mohamed Abdulla Janahi, CEO of House of Maya and SJ Investments and a board member of the Bahrain Chamber of Commerce and IOE

- Mr. Navid Hanif, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
Moderator: Ms. Rachel Dumba, CEO, Steadman Global Consulting

[1] Accessible from: <https://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/109/2024/09/The-Pact-for-the-Future-final.pdf>

[2] The 2025 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) (14-23 July), the Second World Summit for Social Development (4–6 November 2025); the 2026 ECOSOC Partnership Forum (27 January 2026); the 2026 ECOSOC Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up (20–24 April 2026); and the Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation for the SDGs (6-7 May 2026), among others.

[3] This Expert Group Meeting was organized by UNIDO in February 2026 in Vienna.