PFM Philanthropic Foundations Mechanism

PFM Statement - ITEM II Regional Panel. Jane Maland Cady.

Question: Given the scale of the challenge highlighted by SOFI 2026, philanthropic resources alone cannot bridge the gap. Where can philanthropy have the greatest impact—whether through innovation, evidence generation, convening or scaling successful solutions—and how can it best complement public and private action?

- Thank you. It's a privilege to be here representing the Philanthropic Foundations Mechanism.
- SOFI 2026 gives us reason for both **hope and urgency**.
- Global hunger has declined for the third consecutive year. But **645 million people still faced hunger in 2025**, and about **2.7 billion people were unable to afford a healthy diet.** For the first time, the largest number of people facing hunger are in Africa—an estimated 309 million.
- And those global numbers mask very different realities across regions.
- SOFI points us beyond the headline numbers to the forces beneath them: structural inequality, conflict, climate shocks, economic instability, and the persistently high cost of a healthy diet. And as we have just heard from my colleagues on this panel, these pressures are experienced differently across regions, so our responses must be rooted in regional realities and shaped by the people living them.
- **Moderator, you mentioned in your question that philanthropic foundations cannot fill the gap left by states. This is absolutely true.**
- Philanthropy **cannot and should not replace public responsibility**. **So where can philanthropy make the greatest difference?**
- **First, we need to be clear about our unique roles.**
- States have a longstanding responsibility—enshrined in international agreements, national protocols, and constitutions—to progressively realize the **Right to Food** and ensure access to adequate, nutritious diets. That responsibility does not recede with geopolitical shifts, shrinking aid budgets, or constrained public finance.
  Our role is different—and catalytic.

- Rather than backfilling gaps, philanthropy can strengthen inclusive policy processes—and bring in people too often left out. By elevating civil society voices, globally and nationally, we can help states remain accountable to their citizens and to commitments like the Right to Food.
- **Second, we can help connect evidence to action.**
- Participation also strengthens evidence. Philanthropy can help communities and institutions bring scientific knowledge and lived experience together—so public decisions are grounded in both. Evidence is more credible and useful when it is produced **with the people most affected—not simply about them**.
- The principle is simple:
- **People closest to food-system challenges need to help produce the knowledge and shape the solutions.**
- Philanthropy can help carry that knowledge into policy and public investment—while strengthening communities' power to shape decisions and hold institutions accountable.
- **Third, philanthropy can help successful ideas travel.**
- We often talk about **scaling solutions**.
- But scaling doesn't always mean taking one intervention and reproducing it everywhere. Philanthropy can fund pilots, take risks, and test new approaches—building the evidence needed to make the case for national investment or policy change. Used well, these tools can mobilize other actors and redirect much larger flows of public and private resources.
- The Global Alliance for the Future of Food's RAFT - Regenerative & Agroecological Food Systems Transitions. approach shows this catalytic role in practice. Across six countries, initial philanthropic investment resources civil society organizations, demonstrates the benefits of regenerative agroecological food systems, and supports governments to develop national agroecology transition strategies. Those strategies are strengthened by real-world examples, evidence of direct benefits, and clear data on the support farmers need. RAFT investments can also help agroecological farmers access existing public policies and programs—including

credit and extension services—through financial and market integration and technical assistance.

- RAFT makes the larger point clear: philanthropy is most effective when it works in complementarity with each other and also with public programs to catalyze larger shifts—not when it builds parallel systems. Lasting food-security solutions depend on active community participation and an informed, empowered citizenry able to co-create and sustain them.
- **And finally, CFS gives philanthropy a valuable common foundation.**
- One risk for philanthropy is that each of us develops **another framework**.
- CFS gives us internationally agreed policy guidance that we can actually use.
- The PFM has developed guidance for philanthropies to use the policies of the CFS as a shared framework. The guidance document identifies three practical pathways:
    - **One:** use CFS policy products to inform philanthropic **strategy**.
    - **Two:** bring CFS recommendations into **program and project design** with partners.
    - **Three:** use CFS policy products to strengthen **advocacy and accountability**.
- These pathways give philanthropy a practical way to work coherently with civil society, governments, and responsible private actors—rather than duplicating their work or introducing competing frameworks. RAFT, for example, applies the 13 principles of agroecology reflected in CFS policy recommendations and advanced by the Agroecology Coalition. This is the value of CFS uptake: our strategies, grants, evidence, and convening can reinforce shared commitments and contribute distinct pieces to the same transformation.
- The PFM guidance document is available on the PFM website, and we will discuss these pathways further in Wednesday's Plenary session on uptake.
- **So I would leave us with this:**
- SOFI reminds us of the enormous scale of the challenge. **Philanthropy alone cannot meet it.**

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- But we have assets that matter: **flexibility, patient capital, relationships, convening power, and the ability to take risks.**
- We can use those assets deliberately: to help states fulfill their responsibilities; to resource civil society participation and voice; to generate and move evidence into policy; to prove and scale locally led approaches; and to align our investments with the shared frameworks CFS has already created.
- **CFS gives us a shared policy foundation.**
- **Our opportunity—and our commitment as philanthropy—is to connect that foundation with locally grounded knowledge, agency, and solutions; to work with civil society and implementing partners; and to help turn global agreement into lasting change in people's lives.**
- **Thank you.**