



INSIGHTS SUMMARY

HOW DO WE BUILD A FUTURE OF RESILIENCE AND SHARED PROSPERITY, TOGETHER?

BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY GLOBAL GOALS SUMMIT 2026
WELCOME / 22ND SEPTEMBER 2026

Deborah Goldfarb, Global Head Of Citizenship, **Barclays**

Melinda Bohannon, Director General, Global Issues, **UK Foreign, Commonwealth And Development Office**

Zahid Torres-Rahman, Co-Founder And CEO, **Business Fights Poverty**

Yvette Torres-Rahman, Co-Founder And CFO, **Business Fights Poverty**

THE OPENING OF THE BUSINESS FIGHTS POVERTY GLOBAL GOALS SUMMIT 2026 POSED A PRACTICAL CHALLENGE: HOW CAN ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE BUILD RESILIENCE WHILE EXPANDING OPPORTUNITY? GROWTH REMAINS ESSENTIAL TO TACKLING POVERTY, BUT ITS QUALITY AND DISTRIBUTION MATTER. JOBS, SKILLS, INVESTMENT, SUPPLY CHAINS AND ACCESS TO TECHNOLOGY ALL SHAPE WHETHER PEOPLE CAN PARTICIPATE IN ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND SHARE IN ITS BENEFITS.

THE DISCUSSION CALLED FOR CLOSER ALIGNMENT BETWEEN PUBLIC POLICY, PRIVATE CAPITAL AND CORE BUSINESS PRACTICE. IT ALSO INTRODUCED THE SUMMIT'S THREE AREAS OF FOCUS: PREPARING EARLY-CAREER TALENT FOR A CHANGING WORLD OF WORK, EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY IN BUSINESS STRATEGY, AND DESIGNING BUSINESS MODELS THAT DELIVER BETTER OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE.

INSIGHT 1: **JUDGE GROWTH BY THE OPPORTUNITIES IT CREATES**

Economic growth can help reduce poverty, but rising output does not automatically produce shared prosperity. The central test is whether growth creates productive jobs, raises incomes, strengthens local firms, and gives people the skills and agency to shape change. Women, young people, smaller firms and poorer communities can remain excluded when they lack access to capital, technology, markets and skills.

Business and government must therefore look beyond the scale of growth to its quality and distribution. Resilience and prosperity need to be pursued together, with close attention to who benefits, who carries the risk and whose capabilities are strengthened.

"Development requires sustainable growth, and that is driven by business, by investment and by entrepreneurship."

Melinda Bohannon, Director General, Global Issues, UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

INSIGHT 2: EMBED SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES IN CORE BUSINESS DECISIONS

Companies exert their greatest influence through everyday commercial choices: where they invest, which jobs they create, the wages and conditions they offer, who they procure from, and how they distribute value and risk. Supporting worthwhile projects alongside commercial activity is not enough if the core business model works against inclusive and resilient growth.

Embedding sustainability means applying it across strategy, investment, technology and supply chains. Companies should assess whether their decisions create decent work, strengthen local firms and expand women's economic participation. This approach also requires reciprocal transparency from business and government, together with a fairer allocation of risks and rewards.

"If we want prosperity to be sustainable, we need to look at how businesses move beyond treating sustainability as something separate, and embed it more deeply into strategy and decision-making."

Yvette Torres-Rahman, Co-Founder, Business Fights Poverty

INSIGHT 3: BUILD SKILLS PARTNERSHIPS THAT CONNECT PEOPLE TO CHANGING LABOUR MARKETS

Artificial intelligence is changing how work gets done, which skills employers need and how people enter careers. This creates a difficult mismatch: employers in growing industries may struggle to recruit people with suitable skills, while many jobseekers remain unable to access good work. Without deliberate investment in skills, infrastructure and institutions, technological change could deepen existing divides.

Community partners, educators and employers can help close this gap by connecting career preparation, work-based learning and professional networks to real labour-market demand. These partnerships should enable people to navigate

change with greater confidence and agency, while giving businesses access to the talent they need.

"At Barclays, we see the power of collaboration every day, bringing together community partners, educators, and employers to create pathways to opportunity."

Deborah Goldfarb, Global Head of Citizenship, Barclays

INSIGHT 4: MOBILISE SMARTER CAPITAL, NOT SIMPLY MORE CAPITAL

With official development assistance under pressure, private investment will play a larger role in supporting jobs, infrastructure and economic transformation. Yet the volume of capital mobilised is an incomplete measure of success. Its quality, additionality and impact also matter, including whether investment strengthens local capabilities, supports women's economic participation and creates better jobs.

In many markets, the constraint is not simply a lack of capital, but capital with the wrong currency, risk appetite or time horizon. Public finance and official development assistance can help build markets and share appropriate risks. Private capital should combine sustainable returns with credible development outcomes, supported by expertise and market access.

INSIGHT 5: USE COLLABORATION TO MOVE FROM SHARED AMBITION TO DELIVERY

The Summit's opening made clear that no organisation can address these challenges alone. Government can provide predictable policy, effective institutions, transparent procurement and fair competition. Business can change its core strategies, supply chains and investment decisions. Civil society can contribute practical knowledge, scrutiny and a clearer understanding of how change affects people and communities.

The immediate task is to turn broad agreement into specific commitments. Participants were invited to exchange lessons, build new relationships and identify opportunities for joint action. Staying ambitious amid crisis and constraint will require collaboration that improves lives while strengthening livelihoods and widening access to learning.

"We need to be asking how we stay ambitious in times of crisis and constraint and how we can keep driving change that improves people's lives, strengthens livelihoods and expands opportunities to learn."

Zahid Torres-Rahman, Co-Founder, Business Fights Poverty

CONCLUSION

Three shifts emerged from the opening: from growth alone to good growth; from separate sustainability initiatives to changes in core business practice; and from simply mobilising capital to structuring finance around lasting development outcomes. Skills partnerships will also be critical if artificial intelligence and other transitions are to widen opportunity rather than reinforce existing divides.

The unresolved challenge is delivery. Governments, companies and civil society need greater clarity about their respective roles, the risks each should carry and the outcomes they will measure. The next step is to translate shared ambition into practical partnerships and decisions that strengthen both economic resilience and people's agency.