



2025 BREAKFAST MEETING REPORT

**THE SHIFTING DEVELOPMENT LANDSCAPE –
CREATING MEASURABLE IMPACT AMID
HEADWINDS**



INTRODUCTION

The 2nd Annual Breakfast Meeting, hosted by Sahel Consulting Agriculture and Nutrition Limited, brought together key stakeholders from the diplomatic community, development partners, and private sector organizations focused on Nigeria's food and nutrition landscape. The purpose was to discuss collaborative approaches and sustainable solutions to address the country's pressing food security challenges. The gathering aimed to promote high-level participation and foster meaningful partnerships to drive sector transformation.

The breakfast meeting was held on February 27, 2024, at the Sahel Consulting office in Asokoro, Abuja. A total of 18 participants attended, committed to transforming Nigeria's agricultural sector.





BRIDGING DIVIDES: THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

The meeting served as a platform to underscore the criticality of collaborative funding and strategic partnerships among key stakeholders in an era of shifting donor priorities. The gathering highlighted the importance of sustainable approaches to development assistance, with facilitators emphasizing the need for innovative solutions that engage both public and private sectors. The discussions acknowledged that making substantial progress requires adapting to changing global dynamics while maintaining focus on transformative impact in Nigeria's food systems.

The breakfast meeting commenced with introductions, followed by a welcome address, presentation from Sahel Partner, Chinedu Agbara and interactive discussions.

CHARTING THE COURSE: OPENING PERSPECTIVES

Mr. Temitope Adegrooye, Managing Partner at Sahel Consulting, commenced the breakfast meeting by emphasizing the need for a strategic platform where key stakeholders can propose solutions to major disruptions in Nigeria's food sector.

He highlighted challenges ranging from the lingering effects of COVID-19 to the growing uncertainty surrounding donor funding due to shifting priorities in donor countries. In his remarks, Mr. Temitope Adegrooye emphasized that driving meaningful change within the agricultural landscape requires innovation, strategy, and collaborative action. He highlighted how previous breakfast meeting conversations have led to solid, actionable transformation steps, such as the implementation of a Project Management Office situated at the office of the Senior Special Assistant to the Vice President on Agriculture.

Following an overview of Sahel's work and impact through partnerships with various organizations, Mr Temitope Adegrooye, concluded his opening remarks with a powerful quote by Dr. Adesina:

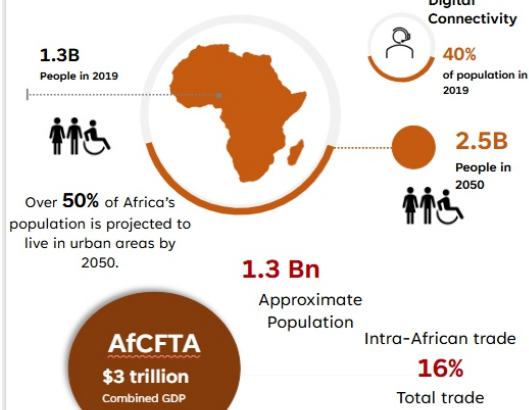
"No single individual or institution can solve Africa's challenges alone; collaboration is the key to transformation."



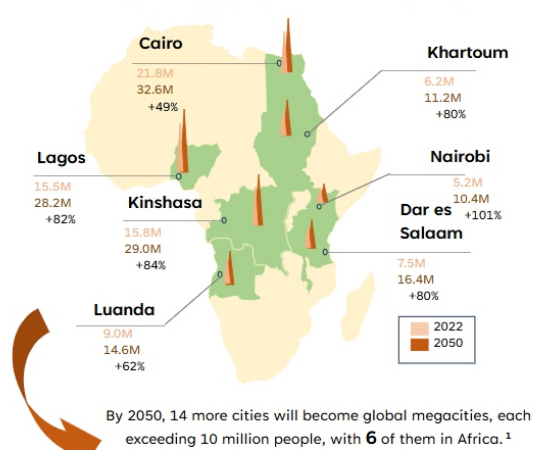
Africa is Changing: The Last Frontier Driven by Demographic Dividends

With the youngest population globally, Africa's burgeoning technology ecosystem is driving adoption, fostering entrepreneurship, and sparking innovation across the continent. [Its](#) also the fastest growing population, with rising urbanization leading to megacities of the future.

Growing Urban, mobile population



Top Emerging Mega Cities in Africa (2050)



Source: 1. Institute for Economics and Peace, 2022

NAVIGATING THE NEW FUNDING REALITY

Mr Chinedu Agbara, Partner at Sahel outlined a notable shift towards national interests among global powers, beginning gradually in 2017 and accelerating in recent times. This trend is driven by economic pressures in donor countries, including rising costs of living, increasing debt-to-GDP ratios, and income constraints that have caused donor countries to tighten their financial commitments to international development.

Despite these funding challenges, Africa remains a critical economic frontier with significant potential due to its young population, emerging urban centers, and wealth of natural resources.

In his Presentation, Mr Chinedu highlighted that, Specific sector opportunities exist that can attract private investment:

- The horticulture sector offers potential to address seasonal scarcity of vegetable crops that contributes to food inflation, particularly in the southwest region, with emphasis on the establishment of more protected farms to grow this crop.
- In the dairy sector, opportunities exist for private intervention in clean milk aggregation as processing companies only want to focus on processing.
- Climate adaptation services, particularly weather data collection and distribution to farmers

- Community-based seed distribution channels to drive adoption of improved varieties

He further emphasized that development approaches must evolve beyond business as usual in the current climate. Impact assessment should move beyond numbers to include tangible benefits to communities and economy-wide transformations. Furthermore, strategic interventions should account for gender dynamics to ensure women are not displaced from improving economic activities when these become more profitable.



VOICES FROM THE FRONTLINES: INSIGHTS & EXPERIENCES



REIMAGINING AID: ADAPTING TO A CHANGING WORLD

Dr. Audu Grema from the Gates Foundation, discussed the evolving landscape of bilateral aid, highlighting both challenges and opportunities for innovation. He noted that aid criminalization narratives, such as allegations against Action Aid in certain states, have impacted local implementation. Despite this, cross-country stabilization remains vital for post-conflict regions, focusing on nutrition, resilience, and production frameworks.

He stressed the importance of strategic vendor selection and systematic implementation for effective programs.

Dr. Audu urged stakeholders to prioritize transformation over politics in tackling hunger and food security



CATALYSTS NOT CONTROLLERS: REDEFINING DONOR ROLES

Florian Winkler from the German Development Cooperation linked current aid trends to global economic shifts shaping societal attitudes toward development cooperation. He noted that funding constraints are likely to persist, requiring development partners to adapt.

However, he emphasized that fewer resources don't mean fewer opportunities if efforts focus on strategic collaboration and leveraging aid's catalytic role.



He advocated for extending project timelines from 1-2 years to 8-10 years to address root causes rather than symptoms, enabling deeper engagement with key actors. He also urged donor organizations to act as catalysts rather than implementers, citing their work in coordinating major rice donors in ECOWAS as a model for maximizing impact.



CATALYSTS NOT CONTROLLERS: REDEFINING DONOR ROLES

During his session, Dominique Koffy from the FAO emphasized the need to evolve beyond traditional aid models after 50+ years. He highlighted the importance of creating functional mechanisms and enabling environments to attract private sector investment in Nigeria's agricultural sector.

FAO's approach, he explained, involves global forums to gauge investment interest and country-level discussions to scale production. He outlined three key actions for tackling food insecurity in Nigeria:

- Designing targeted interventions for priority value chains.
- Supporting private sector growth through knowledge and human capital development.
- Addressing de-risking and insurance challenges to attract investment.

He stressed the need for robust data systems to inform decision-making and drive meaningful change.

Concluding, he underscored Nigeria's pivotal role in West Africa's agricultural transformation, noting that its success would spur regional progress



SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF BUSINESS: RETHINKING DEVELOPMENT TO ATTRACT PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT

We need to change our development vocabulary to effectively bring in the private sector. The development jargon and narrative can act as a barrier to private sector entry, making it essential to adapt the way we report on impact to align with what businesses prioritize—profit.

Private sector involvement hinges on profit-driven business cases, requiring us to structure interventions that demonstrate clear financial returns. Additionally, we must invest in proof-of-concepts and pilot projects for proposed innovations or business models. This approach de-risks investments, allowing the private sector to see tangible outcomes and gain confidence in scaling solutions.

"Speak profit, show returns—business follows impact that drives growth."





CONFRONTING REALITIES: THE TRANSFORMATION IMPERATIVE

The interactive discussion highlighted several critical impediments to Nigeria's food system transformation. Despite significant donor investments over the years, results have often fallen short of expectations. Participants emphasized that the current global shift in donor priorities requires more efficient, collaborative, and sustainable approaches to development assistance in the agricultural sector.

Key challenges identified included political influences on program beneficiary selection, siloed program implementation by various development partners, inadequate metrics for measuring true impact beyond reach numbers, and insufficient government coordination of development efforts across the country. The discussion underscored the need for strengthened institutional capacity at government levels, more effective policy advocacy, and more strategic private sector engagement from the early stages of program design to ensure practical implementation strategies.

The dialogue, facilitated by senior representatives from the development community, emphasized the importance of prioritizing investments in local partners, establishing unified data systems for food security initiatives, and enhancing government capacity to ensure accountability and efficient resource utilization. Participants acknowledged that making a lasting impact would require improved coordination among development partners and more proactive engagement with government leadership to gain support for implementing presidential mandates in the agricultural sector.





KEY POINTS FROM STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES

- Agricultural intelligence centers are being established to inform investment decisions, with potential for replication across states
- Political considerations influence beneficiary selection, requiring practical strategies to maintain program integrity
- Development community needs to strategically use aid funding to influence government resource allocation
- Focus should shift from counting people reached to assessing meaningful ecosystem improvements
- Private sector should be engaged during program design phases, not just implementation
- Policy advocacy requires investment in strengthening institutions for lasting governance capacity
- Reduced development funding requires adaptation as global economic shifts influence traditional donor countries
- Programs must prioritize sustainability beyond donor funding periods
- Private sector needs clearer expectations for participation in development initiatives



NEXT STEPS

- Establish collaborative mechanisms to engage private sector partners through industry associations and business groups
- Leverage international partners' convening power to champion transparent engagement of public stakeholders
- Extend program planning and implementation timeframes to ensure thorough contextual understanding and sustainable impact
- Co-create and co-fund initiatives that enable each partner to contribute their distinct strengths and expertise
- Develop robust data systems that provide actionable intelligence to decision-makers at all levels
- Invest in government capacity strengthening for improved policy development, budgeting, and program coordination
- Adapt impact measurement approaches to focus on ecosystem transformation rather than reach numbers alone
- Create opportunities for private sector input during early program design stages
- Establish de-risking mechanisms to encourage private investment in priority value chains
- Develop communication strategies that effectively convey the impact of development investments to all stakeholders
- Invest in proof-of-concept pilots for innovative business models before scaling



SUSTAINING THE MOMENTUM: FROM DIALOGUE TO ACTION

Collaboration is essential for driving meaningful change, and today's discussions highlighted four key takeaways. Data is a powerful catalyst, as accurate and accessible information drives informed decision-making, impact measurement, and credibility. Policy shaping must involve the private sector from the ideation stage to ensure practical and scalable solutions. Strategic partnerships are crucial, requiring well-structured alliances across donors, businesses, and government to create sustainable change. Finally, impactful communication is vital—we must move beyond numbers to convey meaningful, ecosystem-wide improvements that drive systemic transformation.



