

# **From Farm to Table: African Agribusinesses Driving a Sustainable and Resilient Food Ecosystem**

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Agriculture plays a critical role in the African economy, providing the much-needed food supply for more than 1.4 billion people and creating employment opportunities. According to the World Bank, the sector is the primary source of income and food for most Africans, employing about 70% of the population and accounting for up to 25% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Sub-Saharan Africa. The United Nations (UN) recognizes the sector as an essential pathway to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with food and agriculture leading global efforts toward ending hunger, malnutrition, and poverty, mitigating the effects of climate change and conserving our natural resources<sup>1</sup>.

Over the last decade, the African agribusiness sector has grown alongside the booming urban food markets, increasing population, adoption of innovation and technology, and expanding regional and intercontinental trade. The African Development Bank Group (AfDB) projected the sector to morph into a trillion-dollar business by 2030<sup>2</sup>.

Young, dynamic agrifood entrepreneurs are increasingly engaging in transforming the agriculture and food ecosystem. From farm to table, Africa has seen a surge of new technologies and innovative business models reshaping how we produce, process, distribute and consume food. Our work at the African Food Changers puts us in the center of this transformation with entrepreneurs nourishing our people and changing global narratives about the African agrifood sector. Despite the many successes, we have also seen how external shocks impede the work of these agribusinesses. Multiple climate crises such as extreme temperatures, floods and persistent droughts, and pests like fall armyworms (FAW) and locusts have ravaged entire farms. The COVID-19 pandemic caused dire supply chain disruptions for many agribusinesses. The Russian-Ukraine war and other geopolitical crises have exacerbated shortages and price inflation of fertilizer and other critical agricultural inputs. These trends require Africa's agribusiness sector to innovate and build resilience against existing and future shocks.

This Quarterly takes a farm-to-table approach to explore the ongoing work, impact, gaps, and opportunities for Africa's agribusiness sector, particularly in input provision, supply chain efficiency, use of technology, and market access. In this publication, we explored the need and rewards for joint efforts by private and public sector players to support agripreneurs, particularly SMEs, to overcome the challenges of affordability, accessibility, capacity, and sustainability in the sector.

We hope that this 31st Edition of the Sahel Quarterly informs, educates, and serves as a call to action to stakeholders to engage, support, and empower agribusinesses to amplify impact, propel new growth, and build resilience in Africa's agriculture sector.

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1. FAO (2017). The Future of Food and Agriculture - Trends and Challenges. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. <https://www.fao.org/3/i6583e/i6583e.pdf>

2. (2018). Africa agribusiness, a US\$1 trillion business by 2030. African Development Bank. <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/africa-agribusiness-a-us-1-trillion-business-by-2030-18678>

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African Food Changemakers Holds Hybrid Workshop on Building Resilience Against Climate and Environmental (BRACE) Shocks for Agribusinesses

Sahel Consulting Speaks

Sahel Capital Speaks

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# ENHANCING PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH QUALITY INPUT

BY BUSHIRAH ABDULRAHAMAN

All production cycles typically begin with the application of inputs to produce desired outputs. The word "agricultural inputs" is commonly used for various production resources to enhance agricultural productivity. Agricultural inputs range from improved seeds, fertilizers and crop protection chemicals to machinery for mechanization activities and irrigation<sup>3</sup>.

In recent times, the use agricultural input rose to a significant level in some regions within some countries in Africa, especially in the case of inorganic fertilizer and agrochemical

use. About 40% of cultivating households in Nigeria, 50% in Ethiopia, and over 75% in Malawi use inorganic fertilizer, which may be more widespread than common assumptions. Significant proportions of farmers also use agro-chemicals, with over 30% of households in Ethiopia and Nigeria using some on their plots<sup>4</sup>. This adoption of improved production inputs by small-scale producers in Africa has been largely driven by agri-businesses, including seed companies, fertilizer manufacturers and importers, large-scale input distributors, community-based agricultural input dealers and extension

## Agrochemicals

African's food demand is expected to more than double by 2050. Faced with the increasing pressure to produce more food on one hand and the devastating impacts of pests and diseases on the other hand, research institutes and organizations across the world have continued to find new ways to provide a range of crops and livestock protection products. concerns about the environment has also been at the front burner of this development and small and medium agribusinesses are on the rise exploring new ways to provide environment-friendly alternatives to farmers.

## Fertilizer

Fertilizer use is also growing in Africa as local fertilizer suppliers began to offer new, locally formulated blends of nutrients marketed to give better results than standardized formulations. While average fertilizer use in countries like Nigeria is still only 12kg of nutrients per hectare compared to the global average of 98 kg/ha, the number of countries consuming more than 20 kg/ha of fertilizer nutrients has increased. In recent years, there have been a rise in waste recycling innovations to produce organic fertilizers by converting agricultural wastes into useful and more environmentally friendly compost manure.

## Improved Seeds

Small and medium-sized, private seed companies have emerged across Africa, serving as conduits between the research institutes and farmers to provide higher yielding seeds in response to farmers' demand for improved yields and incomes.

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3. Sheahan, M., & Barret, C. B. (2014). Understanding the Agricultural Input Landscape in Sub-Saharan Africa: Recent Plot, Household, and Community-Level Evidence. World Bank Group. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/20346/WPS7014.pdf?sequence=1>

4. Gerstenmier, A., AGRA, & Choho, T. (2015). Agricultural Input Supply. Feeding Africa. [https://doi.org/https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Events/DakAgri2015/Agricultural\\_Input\\_Supply.pdf](https://doi.org/https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Events/DakAgri2015/Agricultural_Input_Supply.pdf)

The use of improved seeds and fertilizer has also been spurred on by national input subsidy programs implemented by many governments over the past decade. These subsidy programs typically involve partnerships with the private sector in the procurement and distribution of inputs to farmers, especially in rural centres, thus leading to the proliferation of small and medium-sized agro-dealer shops in rural areas.

Despite the increasing awareness and use of improved agricultural inputs, year-round availability and affordability is low due to factors such as high credit costs, devalued currencies, poor infrastructure including port facilities and road networks, and prohibitive logistics costs. This is further exacerbated by other external shocks such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukraine war, given that Russia and Ukraine supply high volumes of fertilizers to the world, and Africa imports a significant portion of it; both countries accounted for 37% of potassium, 17% of nitrogen and 14% of phosphorus Africa's imports respectively in 2019<sup>5</sup>.

With the ongoing war between the two countries, fertilizer prices rose in response, reflecting the impact of economic sanctions and disruptions in trading routes.

#### **Local agri-businesses are rising to the challenge**

Agribusinesses play a key role in providing quality inputs to food producers. From farm machinery to seeds, agrichemicals, biofuels, animal feeds, and other related products, Agribusinesses are providing innovative solutions to make agricultural inputs available to and accessible by farmers in a timely manner and at affordable prices. Below are few examples of how agribusinesses are playing a critical role in providing quality agricultural inputs across several aspects of agriculture.

#### **Hello Tractor– the Uber for Farmers**

Smallholder farmers in rural areas often face labour and equipment shortages, leading to under-cultivation, delayed seeding and lost income. Hello Tractor is an ag-tech social enterprise founded by Jehiel Oliver in 2014 that connects tractor owners and small farmers through farm equipment sharing app. Hello Tractor's easy-to-use software allows farmers in Kenya and Nigeria to request affordable tractor service, providing tractor owners greater peace of mind with remote asset tracking and virtual monitoring. A farmer connected to a tractor can plant rice 40 times faster, thereby increasing production capacity and efficiency and household income.

#### **Victoria Seeds – Delivering Quality Seeds to Smallholder Farmers**

Victoria Seeds Limited is an award-winning full-line seed company founded by Josephine Okot in 2004 to distribute improved quality seeds to smallholder farmers in Uganda. Farmers are able to achieve higher yields and generate more income by buying directly from local agribusinesses as against reliance on imports. Victoria Seeds has a processing capacity of 10,000 metric tons of seed per annum and a range of crop protection products that have been supplied to small, medium and large scale farmers across Uganda.

#### **Bioloop – Producing Inputs through Organic Waste**

Bioloop is an agricultural technology company founded by Bomi Fagbemi in 2019. The company is building a sustainable, closed system for producing essential agricultural inputs through the bioconversion of organic waste that enables food production in areas with high densities and demanding access to water. Bioloop's facility adds value to organic waste by using black soldier fly larvae (BSFL) to produce animal feed and fertilizer for small farmers. The result is lower production costs for farmers, prevention of pollution, soil productivity and food security.

Another example of an ongoing effort to improve local input ecosystem is the Collaborative Seed Programme (CSP), a four-year programme that contributes to improving the sustainable income, food, and nutrition security of rural households in Nigeria. The programme – implemented by Sahel Consulting Agriculture and Nutrition Limited (SCANL), Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation (WCDI), National Agricultural Seeds Council (NASC), Plantum, and Naktuinbouw aims to achieve these objectives by improving farmer's access to and use of quality seeds of improved varieties. Funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, represented by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (EKN) in Abuja, the CSP contributes to the vision of the National Seed Road Map (NSRM) which is to develop a seed sector that is competitive, resilient, profitable, innovative, and adaptive, sustainable, inclusive, resistant, and transparent.

#### **The roles of stakeholders in increasing the availability and accessibility of quality inputs**

Although the usage of improved seeds and fertilizers has increased in several African countries in the last decade,

5. Arica Policy Research Institute 2022: <https://afripoli.org/the-impact-of-fertilizer-prices-on-africa#:~:text=in%20February%202022>

there is a need to expand the input market and increase the range of solutions available to food producers. Existing indigenous African companies need support to scale operations and new companies need to emerge. This will increase competitiveness, drive down costs, ensure affordability, and enhance productivity in the sector. Stakeholders in the public and private sectors must work together to provide sustainable solutions.

**Private Sector:** The private sector are critical actors to accelerate the reach and depth of use of improved farm inputs.

a. Financial institutions have a role to play in providing innovative farmer-friendly financial tools and products such as input financing to aid farmers' ability to afford quality inputs when needed.

b. Private consulting firms who are implementing development projects on the continent also have a responsibility to prioritize accessibility to quality inputs towards improving the entire food value chain. The example set forth by the Collaborative Seed Programme (CSP) shows what is possible in the seed systems if stakeholders collaborate with the private sector.

c. Local agrodealers and seed companies must improve the availability and accessibility of inputs in rural areas by expanding their reach and accessible to farmers by increasing the number of access points, especially in rural areas. They must continue to innovate and increase mass awareness of the benefits of using improved seed and fertilizer through on-farm demonstrations, farmer-to-farmer engagement, and creative media.

**Public Sector:** The public sector have immense contributions to increasing the efficiency and productivity of the local input ecosystem

a. National governments must strengthen the capabilities and capacities of national research systems to develop suitable, high-yielding seeds varieties and work with the private sector to disseminate widely to farmers and drive adoption

b. Ministries of agriculture and local extension agents must intensify efforts to train farmers and agribusinesses on good agricultural practices, input application and mechanization adaptable to various agroecological and agricultural systems.

c. Governments should also increase public-private partnerships by holding regular national and regional agribusiness forums along key value chains. The forum should

bring together the public, private, farmer and development communities to engage in dialogue, exhibitions and promote local agrodealership.

d. Finally, policymakers must benchmark global best practices and promulgate relevant policies and programs that incentivize and support the proliferation of local input producers and distributors across the rural and urban centres in African countries.



# ON THE FARM: SECURING SUPPLY CHAINS THROUGH LOCAL FARMERS ENGAGEMENT

BY OLADUNMADE OTITOOLA

With the unprecedented disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and many other external shocks, African agribusinesses have had to take a closer look at how they manage the networks of individuals, businesses, resources, and activities involved in creating and selling their products. A greater focus has been placed on efficiency and sustainability, and agribusinesses, especially agro-processors, have increasingly adopted out-grower models for their business operations.

Out-grower model is an input sourcing strategy of agribusinesses which relies on smallholder farmers as a source of production and supply of agricultural raw materials under agreed conditions. While this portends a viable and socially responsible raw material sourcing option, outgrower engagements also presents its unique challenges. Through conversations with three agribusiness entrepreneurs in the African Food Changemakers network, we sought to learn more about how agribusiness owners engage farmers' networks in producing regions as well as other local actors to manage their supply chains effectively.



Claudia Castellanos,  
Black Mamba Foods,  
Eswatini

Black Mamba is an ethical brand from Eswatini (Southern Africa) that manufactures specialty foods that are good for people, the planet, and the rural communities of Eswatini. The range of products includes chili sauces, pestos, chutneys, and jams, made with organically grown ingredients and no additives.

## The roles of the smallholder farmers in the Black Mamba model

Working with smallholders comes with its challenges, such as farmers being located in remote, difficult-to-access areas, and possible lapses in communication which are vital for quality control, arranging harvest times and dates, and collecting fresh produce. However, they remain the main foundation and reason for the existence of Black Mamba.

Their role is critical; without them, Black Mamba wouldn't be making any substantial or positive improvement in the agricultural environment or the rural communities. Also, our business model would not have worked without Guba as an intermediary and logistics partner. Guba is a local NGO whose mission is to create resilient communities, and they do this via permaculture methods. Guba is responsible for training the farmers in regenerative agriculture and liaising with them on quantities and collections while Black Mamba is the direct market access for the produce of the Guba-trained farmers.

## Associated risks and mitigating strategies



Managing agricultural practices among our farmers can be a potential risk touchpoint. To work with us, farmers have to grow following established permaculture principles, which means that they cannot use any artificial methods or inputs (the fresh produce we receive from the farmers are 100% organic, free of any chemicals or pesticides). Climate change has also affected seasonality, with droughts and floods severely affecting crops. To mitigate these effects, we consistently check yields with Guba to grow more seedlings than our standard yearly needs. Storage is also critical to guaranteeing the quality of the produce supplied by the farmers. During chilli season, for instance, we harvest for our yearly needs, and we mince and freeze the chillies we need to use off-season. We also have to constantly check that the cooling systems in our storage are working well,

and that the ingredients in the cold chain are organized following a First In, First Out (FIFO) method, paying attention to best-before dates. There is enormous food wastage worldwide, with developed countries being responsible for the waste on the consumption side. In contrast, developing countries, including many African countries, are responsible for this waste in production and storage. Hence, this aspect becomes critical to us as Black Mamba to contribute to reducing food waste worldwide.

### Effectiveness of the outgrower model and opportunities for improvement



The outgrower model has been largely effective for us. At Black Mamba, generating a sustainable impact on rural communities while caring for the environment is of topmost concern to us. Our core mission is to prove that businesses based on sustainability can succeed and become a successful model replicated across agribusinesses in Africa and beyond.



We are also constantly seeking ways to improve to support our expansion. That is why we are currently working on infusing technology into our inventory control and planning processes, introducing mechanized systems and streamlining our procurement to generate efficiencies. Very soon, we will add in our first production line for bottling and labelling.



Goshen Farm Exporters Ltd is a Kenyan-based contractual grower, food processor and exporter focused on creating a sustainable solution for Kenyan

horticultural produce. Goshen Farm Exporters Ltd has worked with smallholder farmers since its inception.



Alex Mutua Muli,  
Goshen Farm  
Exporters Ltd, Kenya

According to Alex Mutua, the Founder and CEO, "there are challenges, but we have remained resilient. An out-grower model requires an efficient service delivery model, which we continuously work to improve as we scale. Yes, we have had risks like poor quality yield. However, we have managed this by coming up with a robust service delivery model that is championed by our team, where farmers are exposed to training and various technologies to help them optimize their yield".

### Key stakeholders required for a successful out-grower scheme

Here in Kenya, we have understood the necessity of involving all stakeholders, ranging from input suppliers and government officials in the Ministry of Agriculture who are responsible for policy, to regulatory authorities such as the National Plant Protection Organization of KENYA (NPPO). Even buyers and consumers understanding the dynamics of how out-grower schemes function can improve the success rates with us as an agribusiness.

### Impact of external shocks such as climate change and COVID-19 on the out-grower model

Climate change is a very thorny issue. Virtually all businesses suffer from the adverse effects of climate change, especially in the food sector. Challenges include rising temperatures which lead to crop stress and reduced yield, and erratic rainfall that makes it difficult to undertake accurate production projections and may result in shortfalls experienced during the actual harvest period. It is therefore important for us to invest in training farmers on climate-smart agriculture practices to build their resilience.

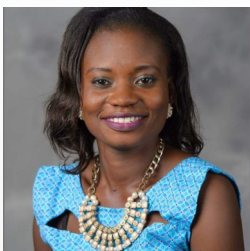
The COVID-19 pandemic has also impacted how we operate. While our company is primarily export focused, disruption in supply chains have had us focus on online B2C platforms to reduce the time it takes for products to reach our consumers. We had to launch a domestic brand focused on building traction in domestic sales, and include retail chains like local supermarkets and convenience stores into our sales strategy. We also incorporated by-sea shipment logistics to mitigate against any international flight disruptions.





**Effectiveness of the outgrower model and opportunities for improvement**

Our business model is all-inclusive, which means we source 100% of our raw material from out-growers. It has been a very effective way for us to operate. We also ensure that our farmers are well-trained and that they change their mindset to see themselves as valuable partners in the value chain. We are currently seeking to run some trials to show the use cases and results of emerging technologies in areas of sustainable agriculture and yield optimization through our work with these farmers.



**Atinuke Lebile,**  
Cato Foods,  
Nigeria

Cato Foods is an indigenous food company established to address malnutrition and hidden hunger across all age groups in Nigeria through biofortification of staple crops with essential micronutrients like vitamin A in a cost-effective way. Cato Foods works directly with smallholder farmers through an out-grower scheme to rapidly multiply biofortified cassava stems and produce biofortified cassava roots, thereby developing a sustainable end-to-end supply chain for cassava roots. Through this work, Cato Foods drives access to essential micronutrients for bottom-of-the-pyramid consumers, especially the vulnerable whose major staple food is cassava and its products.

**The role of the smallholder farmers on the Cato Foods model**

In agro-processing, one of the ingredients to building a successful enterprise is access to inexpensive raw materials all year round. For this, working with smallholder farmers is key. However, smallholder farmers are not usually organized in a structured manner, and this can be problematic for an agri-enterprise. One of the things we did at Cato Foods was to develop a model that helps smallholder farmers increase their yield through good agronomic practices. With these benefits, it was easier for us to form these smallholder farmers into cooperative groups and help them to develop a structure. This approach has helped us maintain steady planning around our monthly production bearing in mind the minimum raw materials that the farmers in our network will produce. Smallholder farmers are very critical to the success of our business. We have developed a network of about 1200 farmers to grow biofortified crops for us with support from organizations like 2SCALE. More smallholder farmers are willing to join the network, having seen the benefits of the producer organizations we formed for them; we are now set to increase our farmers network strength to 3000. With our smallholder farmers network, we are also able to reduce our overhead costs.



**Associated risks and mitigation strategies**

There are several risks in working with smallholder farmers. Side-selling, diversion of farm inputs, diversion of credits, non-adherence to best practices and improper use of inputs are some of these risks which may eventually affect the enterprise's operations. One of the measures we have in place is to set up an in-house extension department that works with a business support service system to coordinate the activities of the smallholder farmers through a farmers' cluster model. With the in-house extension unit, we are able to guarantee the quality of raw materials. We have also established trust and a good relationship with the farmers. We understand that the success of the farmer is also our success. For this reason, we offer technical support to the farmers, and efficient monitoring of the farmers' activities to ensure a win-win situation.

**Key stakeholders for a successful outgrower scheme**

Credit and finance providers are critical and need to be constantly engaged, especially as many do not understand the dynamics of the sector. Community leaders are also

crucial to the success of the out-grower scheme and need to be engaged to understand the scheme from the development point of view. Transport (logistics) and storage enterprises along the value chain must also constantly be engaged. The role of the government in creating a feedback system that can help them understand the challenges in the field is also critical; they should strongly consider the need to revive the extension system and the marketing board to strengthen outgrower schemes.

### Success of the outgrower scheme as a sustainable approach to securing the supply chain

The out-grower model has benefited Cato Foods, and there is room to further strengthen this model with the right resources. To make the overall supply chain more efficient, we are looking at strengthening our backward integration in seed and stem multiplication to ensure our smallholder farmers within and outside our network can access affordable planting materials that are high-yielding and drought and disease-resistant.

### Highlights from Black Mamba, Goshen Farms and Cato Foods

Despite operating in different regions of the African continent, Claudia from Eswatini, Alex from Kenya and Atinuke from Nigeria emphasized one thing - the 'new normal' in the agribusiness environment requires new ways of doing business. To be profitable, resilient and sustainable, agribusinesses must carefully manage their supply chains and respond quickly to changes in the landscape. When properly coordinated, out-grower schemes represent opportunities for agripreneurs to build inclusive agribusinesses that scale. A key success factor shared by all three entrepreneurs is the critical need to engage other actors in the landscape including service providers, such as extension, financial and advisory service providers, research and academic institutions, development partners and thought leaders at the community level. These actors form a local agribusiness network that supports entrepreneurs to strengthen their supply chains and increase operations efficiency.



# FROM FARMGATE TO MARKET: HOW AGRIBUSINESSES ARE CREATING NEW ROUTES TO MARKET

BY ODUNAYO OMOTOSHO

**S**ustainable and efficient farm-to-market strategies are essential in achieving food security. Farmgate to market describes the processes involved in the movement of food from the point of production, the farms, to the point of access, the markets. This chain includes activities related to transportation, storage, value addition, marketing, and packaging of farm produce. Value chain actors, entrepreneurs in the Agriculture and food landscape, have been addressing this issue through cooperative activities, leveraging on digital platforms for visibility and sales, and direct referrals for market linkages.

This article focuses on two market-focused activities that are chartering new pathways to markets for agriSMEs, including farmers, processors and food retailers.

## 1. Youth in Agri-Food Export Development Program

One such Program is the *Youth in Agri-food Export Development Program (YAEDP)*, a capacity-building program implemented by African Food Changemakers (formerly Nourishing Africa) and funded by the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC). Launched in January 2021, the YAEDP was designed to engage young Nigerian agriculture and food entrepreneurs aged 25 – 40 years and develop the capacity of the agriSMEs to formally participate in export. The Program's priority value chains include cocoa, cashew, cassava, soybean, sesame, spices, shea, rubber and ginger, in line with the NEPC's strategic non-oil export plan for Nigeria.

The Program focused on building the capacity of the agri-food entrepreneur participants to access new markets through training, mentoring, handholding, workshops and market linkages. More than 1,700 agripreneurs have been successfully trained under the Program, receiving intensive training and learning materials on business efficiency, financial management, value addition, market entry, export financing, product development, and market development, critical to helping the enterprises launch and scale successful export businesses. Now in its final month, the YAEDP is working with 100 export-ready agribusinesses to provide market linkage support through technical workshops which held in Lagos and

Kano in October 2022, mentoring sessions with seasoned exporters, and linkages to international markets.



The YAEDP has recorded an increase in participants' engagement in the formal sector from 30% at the start of the program to 65% in October 2022. Through emphasis and active promotion of local value addition to enable diversification and improve local competitiveness, the program recorded a 15% increase in participants adding value to their commodities. Diversification and value addition has helped the agribusinesses to expand their operations, increase sales locally, and create new jobs in their local communities. The YAEDP has also seen the collaboration of local producers and aggregators on the program to form cooperatives for improved access to market opportunities. The Program will close with the launch of an export resource hub to provide reference information, data and knowledge of local value chains and

*"Thank you so much Nourishing Africa and NEPC. This is one of the best trainings I've ever received on export so far, it was as if the instructors hand held us, they really poured out from their wealth of knowledge, in fact I have connected with some of them on LinkedIn because I couldn't just contain my joy. Honestly, the training was really worth it. It helped me answer some burning questions I've had all the while and within the 6 weeks period there was clarity and was able to fine tune some of our products and even got an idea for a new product. Thank you so much."*

- Adeola Ayeni

The success of the YAEDP model is replicable in other countries toward facilitating local and international market access for agrifood products and commodities, and serves as a call-to-action for other African governments and development actors in the sector to scale existing high-impact programs and introduce new initiatives.



## 2. AFEX

In an exclusive interview with Hemense Okafor, VP of Corporate Service, AFEX Nigeria, we highlight the ongoing initiatives of AFEX in charting the agricultural commodity path from farm to market and the challenges and opportunities that exist in the space.

### Q. Describe the AFEX' farm to market' model

**R:** It is a popular saying that "market access is the best fertilizer for farmers" and that is what AFEX is known for; bringing market access to smallholder farmers. This is achieved through a network of over 150 warehouses established across the country. It serves as a market to which the farmers can bring their produce/commodities and receive fair value, encouraging them to sell. We give them loans for farming activities and teach them best agronomic practices through our extensive network of field agents. At the end of the season, they pay back the loans in the form of grains that are then sold on the exchange, and they can also sell any excess product they have on the exchange. We aggregate the goods and sell to different industry buyers. That is how the entire ecosystem works, and as the farmers receive fair value for their goods, it encourages them to go back, farm some more, use better practices, increase outputs and incomes, and the circle repeats.

### Q. Tell us more about AFEX reach; number of farmers engaged the key value chains?

**R:** We currently operate around eight different value chains which include maize, paddy rice, soybean, and sorghum locally and for export, we do ginger, cocoa, cashew, and

sesame. The first form of farmers' engagement is AFEX's field engagement officer, who registers a farmer to the field. At registration, we get their names, other information, farm location, and GPS coordinates, and they are ready to trade with us. We currently have over 350,000 farmers in our database and interact with about 100,000 farmers that sell on our platforms or receive a loan from AFEX.

### Q. In your experience, what are the significant challenges faced by farmers post-production, and how is AFEX addressing these in a bid to effectively get the produce to markets?

**R:** The biggest problem a farmer can run into is spending a lot of money producing and having nowhere to sell their goods. That's where AFEX comes in. We have built up demand and equity through various processors and other industrial groups that ensure that if the farmer has good quality grains or legumes, they will have a market they can sell into. We are also starting to do exciting things like forward contracts in which farmers will know their cost of production before they even harvest, they can come to AFEX and decide to sell their goods for x amount, and we can give them credit to sell. Another issue is receiving a fair price for the farmers' produce. We hear of stories of farmers taking their commodity to the open market where a bag is a bag, whether that bag is 98kg or 110kg or extra clean and therefore should deserve a premium. None of that is accounted for in the open market. When dealing with AFEX, a bag brought into the warehouse is analyzed for its quality, weighed, scaled, and the farmer receives its actual price. If it is above the standard, they will receive a premium, and if it is below, they receive a discount. This is an option available through organizations like AFEX to ensure that the farmer receives true and fair value.

### Q. Logistics have always posed a significant challenge in moving agricultural produce from farm to markets; in what ways is AFEX innovating around this space to ensure that only the highest quality, safe, healthy food produce gets to the end consumers?

**R:** With logistics, you must take a comprehensive approach. We need to ensure that we are doing proper screening, and any food that comes into our warehouse is of better quality and can last. The second is on managing the goods, we ensure that the warehouse managers are using best practices when it comes to fumigation, maintaining quality, and moisture, and ensuring that only good produce are in our warehouse and if there is any attention that needs to be paid is address right away at that level. We also have a network of third-party service providers that we partner with, which ensures that we

can move a large amount of goods expediently across the country at any given moment. Most of them now have/are beginning to have GPS trackers that facilitate and ensure appropriate movement, especially for export commodities. We use the best practice of fumigation and closed containers whenever we move our commodities and ensure efficient tracking systems. We have also created a logistic app internally. Right now, a waybill is still very much hand-written to the truck driver who takes it to their destination and very rarely is it returned (i.e., goods received note). AFEX is working on how we can make a digital waybill so we can transmit goods appropriately and properly receive it, which will then make negotiation easy on the backend.

**Q. What role is AFEX playing in providing up-to-date market information on commodities exchange in the sector?**

**R:** We leverage data, and I will argue that AFEX has one of the best data-gathering mechanisms in the country. We have positioned enumerators across Nigeria markets and even overseas that give real-time market prices. We aggregate the data and come up with an informed opinion on what the price should be, and based on that information, set the price at the warehouse to receive grain from farmers and traders on the exchange. The decision is not arbitrary, its data based. At any given moment, we know that prices in the market change, so AFEX can react if there is a price change and give farmers/traders a better price. The impact this has is price transparency, and that is what AFEX and the exchange are built for.

**Q. Tell us about AFEX activities in the international markets. What are the major successes and roadblocks?**

**R:** We export quite a bit of commodity. When we started many years ago, we ran into many challenges around export policies, commodity quality in the European Union, and the dynamics of those markets. Those issues are endemic to the system. Now, when we look at regulations in different countries that we are trying to expand to, we try to ensure that our organizations align. We have surmounted these challenges, and we are now looking to grow our export portfolio. We launched a successful pilot program in Kenya last season, and are hoping to expand and enter more international markets.

**Q. What global trends would you say are shaping the availability and accessibility of food?**

**R:** There are many challenges, but there is also an opportunity behind every challenge. I will start with Covid and how that shows us the importance of localized supply chains.

International trade and markets got disrupted, and many African countries were left vulnerable. Along the same line, the Russian-Ukraine war limited the ability to import wheat and showed the need to produce locally. This season, we have seen an enormous spike in fertilizer prices exceeding 300%. Another is climate change. We know a lot of formally arable lands are now facing desertification. How do we focus on producing more while maintaining the soil health quality by regenerating and resupplying the soil with nutrients? AFEX has systems that provide that initiative to the market, but we need to carry everybody along as we go, as this is not something a single actor can do alone.

**Q. What practical recommendations, key actions, and policies do you have for stakeholders toward creating an efficient and sustainable farm-to-market chain approach?**

**R:** We need to unite because we have so many players in this space working in silos, but we could achieve so much more for the greater good if we all come together. Rather than focus on our slice of the pie, let's create a bigger pie and increase the share of prosperity and value across the chain. Another is stable policies, especially around aggregation, borders, and FX rates. I think there is a huge opportunity that we can sell more and export more. Lastly, I will say standardization (i.e., policies, grades, etc.) across the board. Grade 1 for AFEX should be grade 1 for every other business in maintaining commodities. Everybody needs to align so that we avoid running into issues and disagreements.

It is obvious from the AFEX model that effective and efficient farm-to-market processes are important for food sustainability and security. Stakeholders in the agrifood industry need to work together as partners in food solutions to create stable environments, programs around foreign exchange, trade, aggregation, and standardization of commodity grading at both country and regional levels across Africa. In addition, private and public agricultural development actors, organisations, and players must keep innovating to devise new strategies, programs and policies that ensures improved efficiency, availability and accessibility of nutritious foods through an effective, wholistic farm-to-market activity.

# TECHNOLOGIES REVOLUTIONIZING CONSUMERS ACCESS TO FOOD

BY EMEKA MABCHU, TAOFIK KAREEM, ROSEMARY OKORO

The rising adoption of mobile phones and internet usage across Africa is heavily influencing how entrepreneurs in the continent are re-imagining their business models and rapidly digitizing operations. The introduction of digital platforms and technologies is redefining financial inclusion across the continent, generating millions of new employments, boosting commerce – particularly in the rural areas, and directly linking consumers to retailers and service providers.

The agriculture sector is not left behind. Population growth, the need for more food, increasing agricultural production, growing urbanization, and expanding markets has led businesses in the sector to become more dependent on technology for efficient operations. Startups and internet firms that provide services to the agriculture industry are also expanding quickly. Advertising in agriculture is one area where machine learning for media promotions, email marketing, and chatbots have improved consumer targeting. New payment systems such as mobile-based payment systems, card-based payment systems, and biometrics identification have realigned the African agriculture transaction environment by emphasizing accessibility and cost reduction for agri-entrepreneurs.



## The Emergence of E-commerce in African Agriculture

The fastest expanding worldwide retail channel in recent years is the selling or purchase of products or services via online

platforms called e-commerce<sup>6</sup>. With the goal of increasing profits and reducing overhead costs, e-commerce, a technology used to conduct transactions for goods and services, has been widely accepted in the agriculture community in Africa. E-commerce has proven to be an effective method to help business owners conduct business in a simpler, more efficient, and more profitable way. Africa's e-commerce business is expected to grow from just under €7 billion in 2014 to approximately €65 billion by 2025<sup>7</sup>.

Two key factors are largely responsible for the penetration and rapidly increasing adoption of e-commerce as a route to market for food products in Africa:

a. Secured payments: There has been continuous advancement in technologies that provide multi-layer protection and data encryption for online financial transactions, thereby protecting sensitive information and building trust for the users of these platforms. Many consumers are now able to make secure payments for items purchased as an increasing number of African agribusinesses begin to leverage online platforms to expand their businesses

b. COVID-19: The COVID-19 pandemic also catalysed the adoption of e-commerce in the sector. Over the years and before the COVID-19 pandemic, the African agricultural market operated on a person-to-person model. The pandemic disrupted several aspects of conducting business, including an urgency in the digital transformation of agriculture as agrifood entrepreneurs were forced to trust and embrace technology more. E-commerce thus became a necessary alternative for businesses and consumers in the

6. (2018). New opportunities for agribusiness in e-commerce. The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation. <https://spore.cta.int/en/trends/article/new-opportunities-for-agribusiness-in-e-commerce-sid0573c5461-b118-4fc2-b6c5-17fbabe14860>

7. (2018). New opportunities for agribusiness in e-commerce. The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation. <https://spore.cta.int/en/trends/article/new-opportunities-for-agribusiness-in-e-commerce-sid0573c5461-b118-4fc2-b6c5-17fbabe14860>

primarily relies on word-of-mouth marketing. Hello Tractor, a mechanization service provider uses this model.

4. Consumer-to-business (C2B) have a mutually beneficial relationship where value is provided to organizations, which they use to carry out their business process. For example, when a consumer writes reviews or gives a useful idea for new product development, that consumer is creating value for the business if the business adopts the input. Examples of such businesses in the agri-businesses sector constantly request consumers to review their products and act on them.

### **Challenges and Emerging Solutions Operating E-commerce Services in Africa's Agri-Food Industry**

The leading challenges facing e-commerce in the agri-food space are transportation and storage. Fresh produce and frozen foods need to be adequately preserved to reach the consumer in the best conditions. However, the poor road networks, lack of cold storage, traffic gridlock in urban areas, and inefficient power are the bane of e-commerce on the Continent. On the positive side, we have seen innovative solutions emerging in the landscape to address these problems. Agribusinesses that offer e-commerce services now leverage the use of vehicles with refrigeration facilities to safely transfer produce to consumers and thereby reduce the percentage of wastage of produce<sup>8</sup>. Ecotutu, a platform set out to reduce waste in the agricultural industry and thereby maximize profit as well as facilitate efficient storage, is on a mission to curb the transportation problem in the agri-food industry by preventing the rot of produce from the point of harvest to the marketplace<sup>9</sup>. Motorcycles with small cold storage compartments are also common across many cities in Africa delivering foods to consumers, efficiently beating the challenges of urban traffic and poor road networks.

Another common challenge is the difficulty and strain managing local transport providers who are notorious for bulking up delivery services to save costs and thereby delivering agrocommodities, food and food products to customers in less than ideal conditions. Fortunately, the landscape has seen the emergence of professional and dedicated agri-food transport services such as Kobo360 in Nigeria that provides trucks for transportation of agricultural produce only and Glovo present in major African cities for delivery of food directly to consumers in less than 30 minutes.

Access to financial support is also one of the challenges faced in the agri-food industry and has hindered the growth and expansion of businesses. In particular, limited access to funding has made it difficult for agri-entrepreneurs to embrace innovative business techniques, including

incorporating e-commerce technologies to reach consumers. A key solution to this includes agribusinesses passing on the costs of transportation and other logistics to the consumer, thus making it easy for the vendors to focus on their businesses only.

### **Examples of local African businesses that are redefining how we engage with food through e-commerce**

**Pricepally**, launched in 2019 is a digital food cooperative platform for African cities that enables consumers to buy fresh food items in bulk or share them with other shoppers. Founded by Nigerian couple, Luther and Mosunmola Lawonyin, Pricepally's food items are sourced directly from farmers and wholesalers, ensuring that they are fresher and cheaper than regular market prices. Pricepally started with Lagos, Nigeria and has expanded to two other major cities, Abuja and Port-Harcourt. By leveraging data, technology, and partnerships, Pricepally has made getting fresh farm produce easy through its mobile app comprising a catalogue of fresh farm produce and groceries delivered to customers within a 24-hour timeline.

**Deliver Addis** is Addis' pioneer online restaurant delivery service founded in 2015 by social entrepreneur, Feleg Tsegaye. Deliver Addis' platform allows consumers to order food from their favorite restaurants in Addis and have them delivered to their homes or offices. Deliver Addis works with vendor partners in Ethiopia's food industry to deliver food to over 20,000 registered customers who use the platform.

**Bringo Fresh** was established in 2017 by Ugandan, Matsiko David Brian to address food wastage and solve market challenges for smallholder farmers in Uganda. Bringo Fresh delivers high-quality, affordable fresh produce to retailers in the East Africa region. Now operating in major cities in East Africa, Bringo has taken full control of the supply chain for retailers by sourcing, growing, preparing and transporting high-quality produce directly to them within 12 hours. Bringo Fresh uses online tracking technology to coordinate delivery to ensure that customers receive their goods on time and in excellent condition, thereby allowing full visibility for retailers across the entire supply chain.

Technology no doubt has significantly contributed to improving the agri-business ecosystem through e-commerce. Due to e-commerce, it is now easy for buyers and sellers to interact with each other over various barriers. Consumers can

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8. <https://www.sourcetrace.com/blog/transport-agriculture-marketing/>

9. <https://ecotutu.com/>

face of country lockdowns and border closures.

### What Makes E-commerce Work?

A few innovations have emerged in the landscape to strengthen the position of e-commerce as a sustainable route-to-market strategy for business owners.

#### Drop Shipping

Drop shipping is an e-commerce retailing service, where the seller accepts customers' order without retaining inventory on hand, thereby reducing the overhead cost. On receipt of an order, the seller transfers the order to the manufacturer or wholesaler who then ships the goods to the customer.

This system has allowed business owners to expand their market reach with drop shippers responsible for marketing and selling while they focus on product development and managing their business operations

#### Escrow

Escrow is a legal concept describing a financial agreement whereby an asset or money is held by a third party on behalf of two other parties that are in the process of completing a transaction until the terms of the contract are fulfilled. In the case of e-commerce, the funds are released to the seller when the buyer receives the goods in good condition. This technology promotes trust and allows both seller and consumer to conduct business safely.

#### Payment Gateway

A payment gateway is a technology used by merchants to accept debit or credit card purchases from customers. This also includes the payment processing portals found in online stores. A strategy used to enable dynamic company models is the use of multiple payment options. An e-commerce service can route transactions to the payment gateway that offers the best support for a given location by enabling support for several payment gateways. By doing this, online stores are able to gain the client's trust and increase online transactions

#### Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD)

USSD, a mobile technology that is easily accessible almost anywhere has been leveraged to target consumers across the globe through their mobile devices. From payment processing to promoting a new product, allowing consumers make enquiries about a product, and launching marketing surveys, USSD has provided an effective tool to easily reach consumers. In e-commerce in agrifood, an example of USSD application allows food delivery providers to alert the customer when their order is on the way.

#### Common E-commerce Services in Africa

The following types of e-commerce services are active on the African continent.

1. A business-to-business (B2B) service model involves the digital transaction of goods and services between one business outfit and another. This e-commerce network makes up a large part of the economy, and there are reasons to think appropriate B2B platforms are tailored specifically for the African agriculture space. Companies such as Dropstore, a South African online marketplace, make it easy for clients to find products from suppliers, while Miele Mailer, provides biodegradable packaging services for e-commerce businesses.
2. A business-to-consumer (B2C) service model involves the transaction of goods and services between business outfits and consumers through a dedicated shop page, mostly linked to the company's website. This set of companies offers services or sells their produce directly to customers, making it easy for consumers to access healthy, nutritious food products from the companies directly. This model is used by many agrifood companies that aim to expand their reach to consumers beyond their brick-and-mortar stores. Examples within the African Food Changemakers community include Foodlocker in Nigeria, Foodcare in Angola, ParknPick in Rwanda, Farm Fresh in The Gambia, and Local Village Foods in South Africa, among others.
3. A consumer-to-consumer (C2C) service model involves the transaction of goods and services between one consumer with another on a digital platform. This e-commerce network creates a trading ground between consumers and enables them to interact directly. Because there are no distributors, there are low expenses; hence, this model is popular and



now buy an unlimited amount of food items from anywhere in the globe and have them delivered quickly. This technology has made agri-business more marketable and profitable, and

with this, agrifood entrepreneurs are venturing into international markets, further promoting African foods beyond the shores of the continent.



# LOOKING FORWARD: FUTURE PROOFING AFRICAN AGRIBUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

BY HENRY NERIOUS DIETO

Even as Africa's agriculture sector continues to grow, the continent is yet to realize its agricultural productivity potential. The continent is still a net importer of food. A United Nations Conference on Trade and Development report in 2021 indicates that Africa imported about 85% of its food between 2016 and 2018<sup>10</sup>. Ironically, Sub-Saharan Africa has recorded the highest agricultural production worldwide since the year 2000, indicating that the sector can be harnessed to ensure that Africa becomes a net exporter of food, directly increasing the profitability of agribusinesses and household incomes of the agrifood workforce. This requires agripreneurs and other key actors to adopt climate-smart practices, invest in better technologies and mechanization, increase youth and women engagement, add value to agro-commodities, and build the capacity of smallholder farmers.



## Adopting climate-smart practices

Climate change is a critical hindrance to the progression of the agrifood landscape. In Africa, it has manifested in several forms,

including changing rainfall and temperature patterns, floods, and droughts, all of which have impacted agricultural productivity and the availability of nutritious staple foods.

The phenomenon paints a grim picture of the future of Africa's agriculture sector. However, there is a window of opportunity for African agripreneurs to adopt climate-smart agriculture techniques such as integrated crop and livestock production, climate-smart irrigation, intercropping, conservation agriculture, crop rotation, and improved water management. These practices increase productivity and income among agripreneurs and smallholder farmers and enhance their coping mechanisms while sustainably reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

## Investing in better technologies

Technology is increasingly improving the agribusiness sector by spurring innovations that are shaping the future of African agribusiness. Technologies such as soilless farming practices like hydroponics, drones, modern greenhouses, artificial intelligence, and soil moisture sensors have been adopted by several entrepreneurs in the food and agriculture landscape. According to a report by Disrupt-Africa, the African agri-tech space grew by over 110% between 2016 and 2018<sup>11</sup>. This ag-tech surge explains the increasing role of technology in agribusiness. More African entrepreneurs are rolling out digital solutions to help farmers access inputs, finance, insurance, markets and advisory services that increase their productivity.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, these technologies proved essential as agripreneurs embraced digital payments, e-learning and e-commerce, and other digital platforms to

10. Akinwunmi, P., Director for Africa and Least Developed Countries (2020). COVID-19: A threat to food security in Africa. United Nations Conference on Trade Development. <https://unctad.org/news/covid-19-threat-food-security-africa#:~:text=From%202016%20to%202018%2C%20Africa,reach%20%24110%20billion%20by%202025>

11. Jackson, T. (2018, May 9). Agrinnovating for Africa 2018. Retrieved from African agri-tech ecosystem grows 110% in last two years: <https://disrupt-africa.com/2018/05/09/african-agri-tech-ecosystem-grows-110-in-last-two-years/>

weather the harsh containment measures that disrupted the sector. It is no doubt that the future of the African agrifood landscape hinges on the utilization of such technologies. However, these essential tools remain expensive and inaccessible for many agripreneurs – particularly those running small to medium size businesses – which will require funding from external sources to invest in innovations. Such agripreneurs require financial support to access and utilize these tools effectively.

### **Involving women and youth in agribusiness**

Women and youth occupy an important place in Africa's agribusiness sector. On average, women account for about 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force<sup>12</sup>. The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), in its 2020/21 Women's Entrepreneurship Report, revealed that the African continent has the highest percentage of female entrepreneurs globally, with one in four women starting or managing a business<sup>13</sup>. However, there remain glaring gender gaps in access to finance, data and knowledge, visibility and employment that limit women's participation in the sector.

At the same time, Africa boasts of a youthful population that places it top of the list of the youngest continents in the world. Estimates by the United Nations show that over 70% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa is below the age of 30 years<sup>14</sup>. However, like women, the potential of African youth in agribusiness is yet to be fully realized. It is essential for stakeholders in the agribusiness sector, including agripreneurs themselves, to make concerted efforts towards implementing continental frameworks such as the African Agribusiness Youth Strategy and other high impact initiatives and programs targeting youth and gender empowerment to guarantee a better future for the African agrifood landscape, with women and youth meaningfully engaged in all spheres<sup>15</sup>.

### **Building the capacity of smallholder farmers**

Today, Africa has over 33 million farmers who are considered smallholders. They contribute to about 70% of the continent's food supply, making them the backbone of food security and employment in Africa. Despite this contribution, smallholder farmers still face a myriad of challenges that prevent them from fully contributing to the continent's economy. These challenges include limited access to markets and capital, as well as slow adoption to modern farming technologies which leads to low productivity. These challenges can be attributed to the limited penetration of agricultural extension services across Africa, which has contributed to a weak agricultural system that now relies heavily on food importation.

It is of utmost importance to include, engage, equip and empower smallholder farmers through innovative extension services that drive smallholder farmers to use improved seeds, embrace sound water and soil management practices, as well as use technology to receive information on weather, insurance, capital and markets.

### **Promoting Proudly African Foods**

Africa is endowed with rich foods and cuisines that sometimes go unnoticed, under-represented, misrepresented, unrecognized or undervalued in the global food landscape. Such foods include fonio and jollof rice, which occupy an important place in the lives and cultures of many Africans. These foods have the potential to improve the continent's food and nutrition needs, as well as growth in agripreneurship, but are held back by the huge information gap that exists in their production, processing and marketing opportunities. To close this gap, Africa's agribusiness sector must focus on building bridges between African food products and the rest of the world.

Changing the global narratives about African foods and its food entrepreneurs is a key mandate for African Food Changemakers and was the clarion call during the Africa Food Festival organized in October 2022 by the Harvard Center for African Studies in collaboration with the African Food Changemakers. The festival called for stakeholders to jointly promote African foods within and outside Africa through creative storytelling, media advocacy, trade linkages, and enabling policies that encourage global consumption of

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12. (2021). Recognizing the Agricultural Efforts of Women. CGIAR. <https://www.cgiar.org/news-events/news/cgiar-celebrates-international-womens-day-2021/>

13. Ripley, M., Senior Advisor The Lab, ILO (2017, March 1). What Works in SME Development. Improving market access for smallholder farmers. [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/ed\\_emp/-/emp\\_ent/documents/publication/wcms\\_547157.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/-/ed_emp/-/emp_ent/documents/publication/wcms_547157.pdf)

14. Mulikita, J. J., UN Youth Envoy (2022). Young People's Potential, the Key to Africa's Sustainable Development. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/ohrlls/news/young-people%E2%80%99s-potential-key-africa%E2%80%99s-sustainable-development#:~:text=Africa>

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African foods.

In conclusion, the African agrifood ecosystem will need to undergo major changes and shifts if the continent is to meet its increasing food demands and to secure the livelihoods of those who depend on the sector. At the centre of this shift is the promotion of new technologies, climate-smart agriculture, youth and women involvement, capacity building

of smallholder farmers and the elevation of indigenous African foods to play a more significant role in the global agrifood system. The shift in status quo requires joint efforts by private and public sector players to support agripreneurs, particularly SMEs to overcome the debilitating challenges of accessibility and sustainability and implement policies that enable the agribusiness sector to build resilience and flourish.



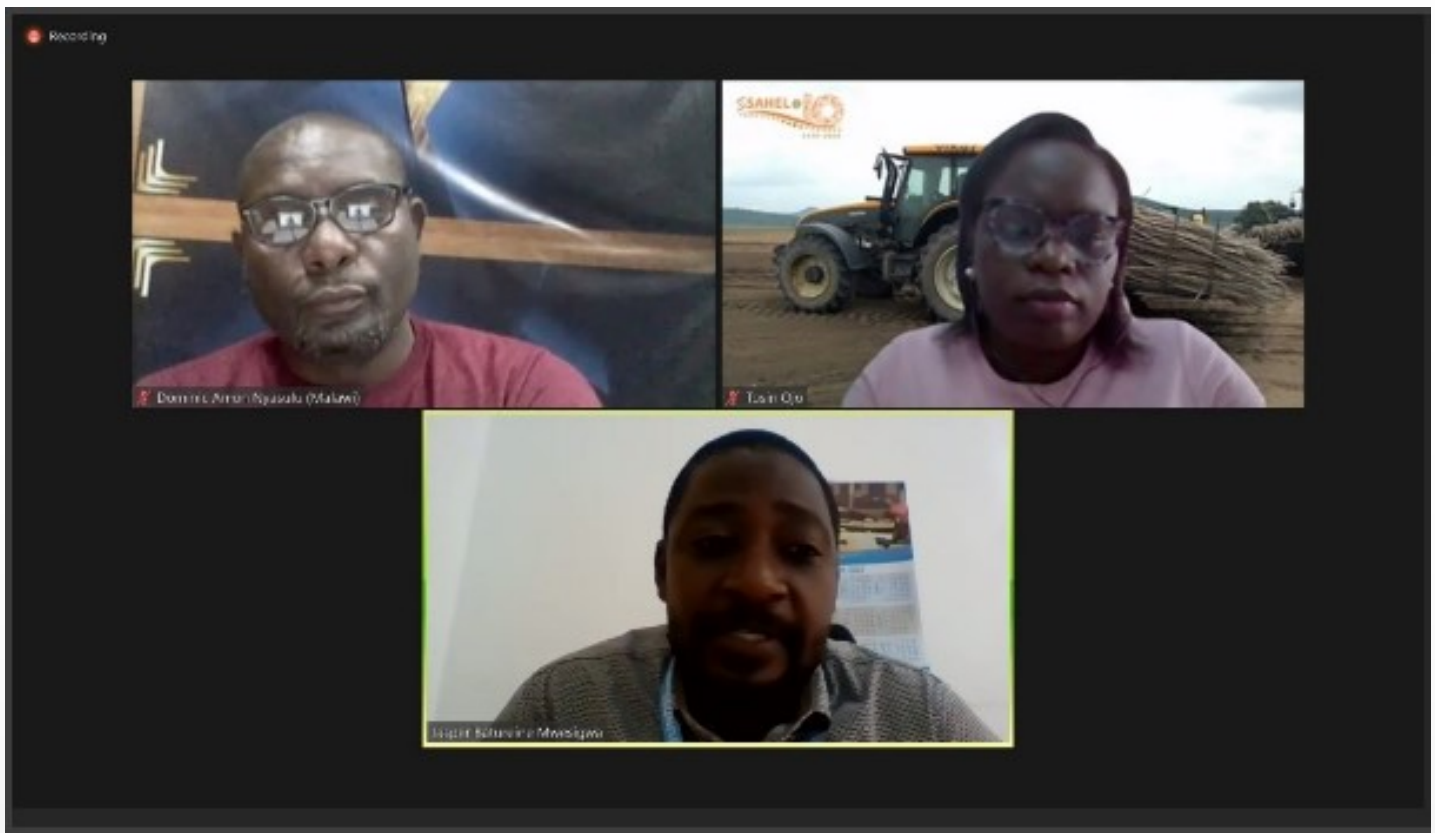
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**Sahel holds Virtual Scholars Conference on Opportunities for African Youth to Lead Sustainable Solutions in a Changing Climate**

On Wednesday, 11th May 2022, Sahel and Nourishing Africa held its annual Sahel Scholars’ Conference, an event primarily targeted at students and youth to showcase trends in the food and agriculture sector and highlight opportunities for career development. This year, the conference focused on the theme ‘The Climate/Food Nexus: African Youth Leading Sustainable Solutions’, drew participants from 19 countries and featured astounding industry experts across the agriculture, food, and climate ecosystem in Africa. The conference was moderated by Fisayomi Kayode, a Manager at Sahel Consulting and was held virtually..

Deji Adebuseye, Principal at Sahel Capital opened the conference with a welcome address. He emphasized the relevance of the conference and urged African youth to utilize technology and innovation in creating sustainable solutions and to harness available resources in the landscape, to improve their engagement in the food and agriculture ecosystem and develop sustainable solutions in a changing climate. Following the welcome address, Ifeoluwa Olorunnipa, a Manager at Sahel Consulting, introduced the three companies behind the organization of the conference, namely Sahel Consulting Agriculture and Nutrition Limited, Sahel Capital Agribusiness Managers Limited, and Nourishing Africa. She also provided a background into the Sahel Scholars Conference, which was introduced in 2017 as a part of the Corporate Shared Values of the companies.



The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Olufunsho Somorin, a Regional Principal Officer at the African Development Bank (AFDB). In his address, Dr. Somorin encouraged the youth to focus on technology, partnerships, and leadership to support their action and engagement in the sector to drive solutions in the food systems, particularly under a changing climate. He urged the youth and young agri-food entrepreneurs to leverage technology and data in their businesses, to guide food production and ensure that the African continent can sustainably feed itself by 2050. He emphasized the need for young agri-food entrepreneurs to also build strong partnerships in the sector, particularly in areas such as distribution and markets, to support scaling of their business. Finally, he encouraged participants to embrace leadership, recognizing that no individual is too young to engage or lead to drive change in the food and agriculture sector.

Moderated by Tosin Ojo, Vice President at Sahel Capital, the first panel commenced with Jasper Batureine Mwesigwa (Food Security Analyst at the Food and Agriculture Organization, Nigeria), and Dominic Nyasulu (Country Coordinator, Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network (CSAYN), Malawi) discussing ‘Youth Engagement in Climate-Smart Agriculture to Drive Sustainable Solutions’. While acknowledging the various challenges facing food systems across Africa due to a changing climate, such as extreme weather conditions and pest invasions significantly disrupting agricultural activities and leading to food shortage, the speakers noted avenues for youth to engage in climate smart agriculture to mitigate these effects on food systems, stating specifically how their organizations are supporting youth action and engagement. As stated by Mr. Nyasulu, CSAYN engages in awareness creation among youth to build their interest in climate smart agriculture. Th CSAYN also provides capacity building support to graduates of agriculture, and natural resources management through trainings on climate smart agricultural practices such as the use of smart farm and other innovative technologies that piques youth interest and supports the conduct of experimental research and conversion of classroom knowledge to practical solutions on farms. These graduates are then assigned to work with local farmers to further transfer knowledge of these practices to them and ensure their adoption, to support sustainable food production. According to Mr. Mwesigwa, the FAO in Nigeria is also promoting youth engagement in agronomy and Climate-Smart Agriculture through Farmer Field School technologies and recently partnered with the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIMET), to incorporate climate data in all its interventions to support strategic planning of farming activities. In closing, the speakers emphasized the need for support and action from stakeholders in the sector to ensure youth engagement in climate smart agriculture.

After the panel discussion, previous Sahel Scholars, Ezechi Wisdom, a 2019 Sahel Scholar from Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike and Toyin Oyasowo, a 2021 Sahel Scholar from Federal University of Agriculture Abeokuta shared their experiences as interns, including learning and mentorship opportunities they were exposed to, and the impact of the program on their activities, following completion of their internships. They charged young participants in attendance to change their perspective of agriculture, from regarding the sector as merely involving farming, to viewing the sector as one with numerous potentials and opportunities that exist for youth engagement in agribusinesses, beyond farming.

The conference also featured a second panel, focused on ‘Lessons from African Youth Exploring Innovative Business Models in the Agri/Food Sector in a Changing Climate’, and moderated by Aisha Hadejia, a Manager at Sahel Consulting. Two trailblazers in the food ecosystem, Bomi Fagbemi (Founder/CEO Bioloop), and Nkiru Okpareke (Co-Founder/Co-CEO, Enviro-Gro Farms), shared their experiences exploring innovative business models and lessons learned navigating their businesses in a changing climate. Key takeaways from the discussion included the need for young entrepreneurs to; identify and partner with the right stakeholders to support their businesses; ensure that the technology being adopted in their businesses is not too far ahead of the environment in which they operate; design and implement operations that are adaptable and resilient to withstand shocks and stresses while still delivering value for customers. The need for increased awareness on the effects of climate change in Africa, to create the urgency for policymakers to design solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change, and the need for accurate, relevant, and timely data on climate and market information, to support agri-food entrepreneurs to make data-driven decisions in their businesses were some additional takeaways from the panel.

Following the second panel session, participants split up into three breakout rooms to discuss the topic ‘Positioning the African Youth for Success: Existing Resources to Support Action and Engagement in the Food and Agriculture Landscape’. The breakout rooms focused on one-on-one engagements with experts from organizations working across the food and agriculture sector in Africa to provide resources for youth engagement and participation. The three breakout rooms were anchored by Rahmat Eyinfunjowo (Co-CEO, Nourishing Africa), Aline Mugisho (Executive Manager, Young Africa Works, International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)) and Nono Sekhoto (Sector Lead, AL for Agribusiness Network, African Leadership Academy).

The session on Nourishing Africa anchored by Ms. Eyinfunjowo focused on the various ways the organization is helping agri-entrepreneurs scale their businesses. This includes opportunities for networking, partnerships and experience sharing; knowledge and capacity building through regular and engaging workshops and convenings that ensure Agri-MSMEs are equipped with the knowledge and skills to scale, and a digital resource hub that provides critical resources on financing, research data, technology, and talents. In the session on Young Africa Works, IITA, Ms. Mugisho explained how the institute is closing the knowledge gap between private sector needs and young graduates’ skills through its Youth in Agribusiness unit.

The unit runs programs for youth across several states in Nigeria and offers training on new technology to ensure that youth are positioned to build businesses that can address identified needs in the food and agriculture landscape. Ms. Sekhoto also spoke about the support African Leadership Academy provides to youth to ensure their participation in the agriculture sector. The academy organizes monthly hangouts with young leaders/entrepreneurs in the sector to provide networking and knowledge sharing opportunities, identifies and connects youth to various internship and job opportunities across the African continent, and provides technical training to youth on how to start and scale their businesses, and access necessary skills, data, and financing as specific to their location.

The conference came to an end with the closing remarks delivered by Temi Adegoroye, Managing Partner at Sahel Consulting. He charged participants to support and contribute to the ongoing efforts of stakeholders in the food and agriculture ecosystem working to mitigate the effects of climate change on food systems, towards achieving self-sufficiency and transformation of the sector in Africa.

## **Sahel Holds Food Systems Changemakers Conference**

### **“Mbelede ka eji ama Dike”**

#### **Disasters help to sift out the resilient, resourceful & brave – Igbo Proverb**

On Thursday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Sahel Consulting Agriculture & Nutrition Limited in partnership with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the European Union, and with support from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), convened the first Sahel Food Systems Changemakers Conference in Abuja. The event themed **Curbing the Nigerian Food Crisis: Ensuring Resilience and Sustainability in the Agribusiness Landscape** attracted over 300 participants across the public, private, donor, non-profit and civil society sectors.

The Sahel Food Systems Changemakers Conference builds on from the UN Food Systems Summit to highlight critical questions around food and nutrition security in Nigeria as well as showcase opportunities to build a more resilient and equitable food system by investing in Nigerian agribusinesses. A dynamic lineup of dignitaries and speakers delivered goodwill remarks and engaged in insightful discussions on the realities of food and nutrition insecurity facing millions of Nigerians.

The welcome address was delivered by Temitope Adegoroye, the Managing Partner of Sahel Consulting who highlighted the importance of collaboration and engagement of the private sector to drive food systems transformation, build a resilient ecosystem and foster growth. He further asserted Sahel Consulting’s readiness to partner with all relevant stakeholders to ensure accelerated growth.

H.E Otunba Adeniyi Adebayo, The Honorable Minister, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment (FMITI) delivered the first goodwill message. As an avid champion for the private sector, he encouraged investors to build strategic partnerships and invest in Nigeria’s property crops such as oil palm and cassava. He also stressed the efforts made by the Federal government in implementing the Nigerian National Quality Policy, aimed at putting in place the necessary regulatory framework and infrastructure to ensure that Nigeria’s agricultural products attain global standards.

The Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning and the National Convenor of Nigeria Food Systems Summit Dialogue (FSSD) Mrs Olusola Idowu also delivered a goodwill message at the conference. In her remarks, she reaffirmed Nigeria’s commitment to the implementation of all the recommendations made in the National Food Systems Transformation Pathways.

The Honorable Minister of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr Mahmood Abubakar was represented by Mr Ukata, Director, Federal Department of Agriculture who delivered the Minister’s remarks. He emphasized the important initiatives championed by FMARD to boost food production such as support for the promotion and use of organic fertilizer, the provision of supplementary irrigation facilities to support food production, and promotion of ranching in the sector via the National Livestock Transformation Plan amongst others.





L – R: Temitope Adegoroye, Managing Partner, Sahel Consulting; Ana Vinambres, Head of Program, GIZ NICOP; Dr. Valentine Ururuka, Deputy Director, Financial Policy and Regulation Department, CBN, Ndidi Nwuneli, Co-founder and Executive Chair, Sahel Consulting; Aggie Konde, Vice President, Program Innovation & Delivery, AGRA, Kehinde Makinde, Country Director, AGRA; Markus Wagner, Country Director, GIZ; Mr Ukata, Director, Federal Department of Agriculture, FMARD; Beau Davis, Head of Program, GIZ-SEDIN

On behalf of the Deputy Governor, Financial Systems Stability, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Ms Aishah Ahmad, Dr Valentine Ururuka, Deputy Director, Financial Policy and Regulation Department of CBN delivered the goodwill message. In his message, he highlighted some of CBN's developmental initiatives aimed at proactively galvanizing agricultural production toward meeting the requirements of Nigeria's growing population, such as the Bank's flagship initiative, the Anchor Borrowers Program focused on sustaining food supply and security by providing critical support to smallholder farmers across the country.

In his goodwill message, Mr Markus Wagner, Country Director of GIZ reiterated that food security is indeed a top priority for the German government in Nigeria. He mentioned some of GIZ's efforts in Nigeria to strengthen multiple agricultural value chains and increase competitiveness through assistance to smallholder farmers, businesses, and the government at national and local levels. He also highlighted GIZ's programs such as Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and Market Oriented Value for Job and Growth in the ECOWAS region (MOVE), which aim to inspire the required change for long-term agricultural transformation in Nigeria.

The keynote address focused on the topic Curtailing the Food Crisis: Urgent Actions for Nigeria, Leveraging Global Best Practices and was delivered virtually by Dr Enoch Chikava, Interim Director, Agricultural Development, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. He emphasized the need for Nigeria to accelerate action towards alleviating the immediate effects of food insecurity on Nigerians. He also stressed the need for more investment in technologies, business models and initiatives to scale viable solutions for long-term strategies.

To set the stage for the interactive sessions, a presentation on Building a sustainable and resilient food ecosystem in Nigeria – Building on the roadmap from the UN Food System Summit was delivered by Ndidi Nwuneli, Executive Chair of Sahel Consulting. The presentation provided more context on the effects of crisis and shocks on the lives of average Nigerians.



L – R: Aggie Konde Vice President, Program Innovation & Delivery, AGRA; Aminu Nyako, CEO, Sebore International Farms; Winifred Okafor, CEO, Bonita Treats; Anthony Job, Group Technical Head, Value Seeds Ltd; Nkiru Okpareke, CEO, EnviroGro Farms; Ayodeji Balogun, CEO, AFEX; Kolade Dada of SARO Africa.

The presentation was followed by a panel discussion on **Food System Transformation in Action** moderated by Ms Aggie Konde – Vice President, Program Innovation & Delivery at AGRA. The discussion highlighted scalable evidence-based solutions as well as profitable and innovative approaches being applied toward curbing the food crisis in Nigeria.



L – R: Ifeoluwa Olorunnipa, Partnership Development Manager, Sahel Consulting; Mariska Lammers, First Secretary Food Security & Climate, Netherlands Embassy Abuja; Ms Leila BenAmor Mathieu, Head, Human Development, Delegation of the European Union to the Federal Republic of Nigeria and ECOWAS; Ms Aggie Konde, Vice President, Program Innovation & Delivery at the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa

The panel was followed by a second high-level dialogue, discussing **The looming food crisis – What have we learnt, what are we doing to curtail this disaster, and what more can we do?** moderated by Ifeoluwa Olorunnipa, Partnership Development Manager at Sahel Consulting. The dialogue highlighted learnings from other world regions in addressing the food crisis, and shared strategies on how to ensure donor alignment and build for long-term sustainability given the challenge of climate change and other shocks.

For more information on the Panel Discussions, [click here to watch](#)



L – R: Fisayo Kayode, Productivity Improvement Manager, Sahel Consulting; Dr Michael Ojo, Country Director, GAIN Nigeria; Mr Kamaldeen Raji, MD, AFEX; Mrs Evelyn Obidike, NEPC; Mr Foluso Adejoro, Policy Advisor Food Security & Climate Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Abuja, Nigeria; Dr Bola Karimu, Private Sector Development Adviser, Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO); Ms Emma Odundo, GIZ; Mr Andrew Smith, GIZ; Mr Deji Adebusey, Principal, Sahel Capital

A major highlight of the event was the interactive and insightful breakout sessions where discussions focused on success factors for developing private sector-led initiatives to drive transformation in the Nigerian agribusiness landscape, and highlighted steps for developing a clear roadmap for multi-sector collaborations to curtail the food crisis in Nigeria.

For more information on the roadmap and next steps for each breakout... [click here](#)



Breakout session on Safety and Security: Addressing insecurity in farming communities.

Sahel Consulting and the stakeholders at the conference believe that now more than ever, there is an urgency to push for innovative and practical strategies to strengthen the Nigerian agribusiness landscape toward building a safe, sustainable and resilient food system. The focus must shift to the development of business models that encourage local sourcing of raw materials, value addition in-country, and promote the consumption of made-in-Nigeria products.

The Sahel Food Systems Changemakers Conference ended with closing remarks delivered by Aisha Hadejia, the Partnerships Development Manager at Sahel Consulting who thanked the event partners, panelists and audience for their participation and urged all stakeholders to be ready to collaborate towards fostering a more resilient food system in Nigeria.

### Nourishing Africa, Changing Narratives Africa Merge and Rebrand to African Food Changemakers



To accelerate our growth and scale impact, Nourishing Africa (based in Lagos, Nigeria) and Changing Narratives Africa (based in the USA), both founded by Ndidi Nwuneli have merged operations to create a compelling one-stop platform, the African Food Changemakers (AFC), for agri-food entrepreneurs who are starting and scaling resilient and sustainable agribusinesses that feed Africa and the world.

This merger is based on the unifying belief that small and medium-sized enterprises are the lifeblood of the food ecosystem in Africa. These enterprises are driven by visionary, dynamic and innovative entrepreneurs who operate as primary producers, aggregators, processors, distributors, finance and technology providers, chefs, cooks, consultants and innovators; they are our Continent’s true Changemakers.

The new entity is envisioned to be the leading agribusiness ecosystem Hub enabling a million entrepreneurs to build successful businesses and provide affordable, accessible and acceptable food sustainably across Africa and the world. The tagline of the new organization “Nourishing Africa and Changing Global Narratives” reflects the bold mission of AFC to enable African entrepreneurs to start and scale resilient and sustainable agribusinesses that feed Africa and the world by providing training, funding opportunities, exposure, trade linkages and fostering a vibrant community of changemakers.

Nourishing Africa and Changing Narratives Africa were established by Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli in 2019 and 2021, respectively, to provide access to opportunities and support to African agri-food entrepreneurs across the Continent. Over the years, both organizations have launched initiatives and programs that have provided innovative solutions to the knowledge, market, and

opportunity gaps experienced by agri-food entrepreneurs.

Examples include a Resource and Membership Hub that provides a community for networking, knowledge sharing, partnerships, and resource exchange; an Entrepreneur Support Program (ESP), a capacity development program launched in 2020 that trained over 1,000 grassroots and MSMEs, (up to 40% of which were women-led) to rebuild and strengthen their businesses following the impact of COVID-19; the Youth in Agri-food Export Development Program (YAEDP), an export-focused program launched in January 2022 to develop the capacity of young Nigerian agri-food entrepreneurs to participate in export; and the Narrative Changers African Food Fellowship, launched in September 2021 that engaged eight fellows and two rising stars who benefited from participation in a range of training sessions, media and speaking engagements, participation in the Dubai Expo Food Ecosystem week, and opportunities to pitch to international distributors and retailers.

Prior to the merger, Nourishing Africa and Changing Narratives Africa had collectively reached over 145,000 unique hub users, trained up to 10,000 entrepreneurs, disseminated over 500 funding and knowledge resources in the sector, organized 60+ knowledge-sharing sessions, and engaged a community of agri-food entrepreneurs from 37 African countries.

We appreciate all our partners, members, supporters, and stakeholders who have contributed to these incredible milestones. We are excited about this new journey and look forward to working with stakeholders to achieve even greater impact.

### African Food Changemakers Holds YAEDP Export Workshops in Lagos and Kano, Nigeria



The Youth in Agri-Food Export Development Program (YAEDP) - an export capacity-building program implemented by the African Food Changemakers (formerly Nourishing Africa) and supported by the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) entered the technical assistance phase following the completion of the first stage of the Program. The first stage included a six-module online course completed by over 1,700 participants. Participants also completed an export-readiness diagnostic tool to assess their export readiness level prior to engagement in the ongoing second phase of the Program.

The second and final stage of the YAEDP is dedicated to providing technical support to the participants towards facilitating market access for their agro-commodities and food products. This stage kicked off with a two-day workshop and one-day field trip in Lagos and Kano States, Nigeria and included interactive sessions aimed at enhancing participants' knowledge of product and market development in readiness for international trade.

The first workshop kicked off on 18 October 2022 in Lagos – Nigeria's largest commercial hub – and ended on 19 October 2022, with participants from 14 other states in the West African country: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Ebonyi, Edo, Ekiti, Enugu, Imo, Kogi, Kwara, Ogun and Oyo. The second workshop was held in Kano in Northern Nigeria on 25 October 2022 and 26 October 2022, with participants drawn from five other Nigerian states: FCT, Kaduna, Katsina, Niger and Taraba.

#### From Classroom...

The workshops included technical sessions facilitated by experts in the landscape who took participants through key export

topics such as Product Development, Export Documentation, Export Logistics, Pricing, Promotions and Partnerships, Incoterms, and drafting and negotiating the export Contract of Sale. The participants were also taken through standard practices involved in handling and processing agri-food products for export, good harvesting practices, value addition, warehousing, insurance, shipping, tracking, and determining the relevant incoterms for specific transactions.

One of the highlights of the workshop included group activities where participants were divided into smaller groups for practical exercises. On Day One of the workshop, the groups were tasked with recreating the product development and export transaction processes from product design to delivery to the export destination. This involved creating the documentation checklists and preparing their agri-food products for export. They brainstormed on their product value chains, value addition, packaging, labelling and the documentation checklists such as proforma invoice, Certificate of Origin (COO), bill of lading, packing list, business licenses, among other critical steps.



On Day Two of the workshop, the groups reviewed a case study of a failed export transaction and presented their findings and mitigation strategies. This activity was of immense help in visualizing the various critical dos and don'ts in an export transaction process.

"Now we know the practical implications from the beginning to the end of product sourcing, down to getting to your export destination. We have also learnt about the nitty gritty of what is expected of us exporters and even most importantly, the challenges one is likely to face during the exportation process," said Gloria Ihekauche who attended the export workshop in Kano.

### ... To Field Trips

The workshops ended with a field trip to top export facilities in Lagos and Kano States to aid immersive learning and on-the-field practical experience. The Lagos participants visited Starlink Global & Ideal Limited, Nigeria's biggest cocoa exporting company, where they were taken through the cocoa export process from the receiving point where cocoa pods are offloaded from trucks, weighed, tested and dried to the documentation review process, and finally, to the point of loading containers for transportation to the seaport. At AJ Investment Limited – another export company based at one of Nigeria's Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in Kano State - participants were taken through the process of receiving hibiscus flowers, testing, pest control, fumigation, documentation and shipping off to the port.

As the YAEDP draws to a close in December 2022, the workshops also served as the Program's first in-person engagement with the participants and provided an incredible opportunity for the business owners to meet, network and collaborate. The participants shared their experiences with our team and media crew, who were also available at the workshops and field trip.: Watch the video below to hear from them.

### ... To Markets

Next in the YAEDP, the participants will engage in mentoring sessions to provide one-on-one coaching and handholding to support their export exploits. They will also benefit from exposure to an array of actors in the export sector – including international buyers, quality and certification bodies, e-commerce platforms, as well as logistics providers.

- Aisha Hadejia spoke at the US Business Summit on July 19th, 2022 held in Morocco.
- Ifeoluwa Olorunnipa spoke at the 9th edition of the Lagos State Climate Change Summit on 3rd of August 2022
- Fisayo Kayode spoke at the 9th edition of the Lagos State Climate Change Summit on 3rd of August 2022
- Ndidi Nwuneli spoke at the Agribusiness Conference organized by Covenant Capital July 30th, 2022
- Ifeoluwa Olorunnipa was a moderator and keynote speaker at the Agribusiness, Food Security, and Nutrition Summit on the 17th of August 2022
- Fisayo Kayode spoke at the Agribusiness, Food Security and Nutrition Summit on the 17th of August 2022.
- Chinedu Agbara spoke at the National Agricultural Seed Policy -Validation Workshop on 18th August 2022
- Fisayo Kayode Spoke at the capacity-building training organized by FMARD on 23 August 2022
- Ndidi Nwuneli, Temi Adegoye, Aisha Hadeja and Ife Olorunnipa spoke at the AGRF 2022 Summit on 5th September 2022
- Ndidi Nwuneli spoke at the Goalkeepers 2022 session on 20th September 2022 during the UNGA week in New York.
- Afees Adeoye spoke at the World Animal Day celebration on 4th October 2022
- Ndidi Nwuneli spoke at the African Food Festival Event on 13th October 2022 held at Harvard University in Cambridge MA USA.
- Fisayo Kayode spoke at the ASAN-NIAS Annual Conference on the 26th of October 2022.
- Ifeoluwa Olorunnipa spoke at the UN Women/WISCAR Training on Gender Action Planning and Gender Responsive Budgeting training held on 27th October 2022
- Ndidi Nwuneli spoke at the Danish Pavillion COP27 conference on 8th and 10th November 2022 and six other sessions on financing, nutrition, food value chains, resilience and partnerships in Sharm El Sheik Egypt
- Edima Etudor spoke at the CSP Capacity Building Training for Seed Companies on 15th/18th November 2022
- Fisayo Kayode spoke at the National Animal Identification and traceability System and Stakeholders Engagement that held on 17th November 2022
- Aisha Hadejia spoke at the GIZ/ECOWAS gap analysis pre-validation workshop on 23rd November 2022
- Chinedu Agbara spoke at the Seed Connect Conference and Exhibition on 28th November 2022
- Temi Adegoye spoke at the Centre for African Leaders in Agriculture (CALA) graduation event on the 29th of November 2022
- Ifeoluwa Olorunnipa and Chinedu Agbara spoke at the ISSD Emergency Response and Innovation Workshop on 30th November 2022
- Chinedu Agbara spoke at the CSP Steering Committee Meeting on 30th November 2022

## SAHEL CAPITAL SPEAKS

- **USAID/Eastern and Southern Caribbean Regional Climate Symposium - July 15th:** Mezuo Nwuneli spoke on a webinar discussing how private capital can support the agricultural sector to ensure climate resilient food systems, and shared lessons learned from its portfolio of agribusiness investments.
- **African Cashew Alliance Conference - 13 September 2022:** Deji Adebusey spoke on Strengthening Sustainable Kernel & by-product marketing in African Cashew Industry.
- **Sahel Changemakers Conference – 15 September 2022:** Deji Adebusey on Starting and Scaling Resilient Agribusinesses, 2022.
- **SME Ventures Forum (The Hague, Netherlands) - October 11th:** Mezuo Nwuneli participated in ‘GP Showcase’ event and presented Sahel Capital and its agribusiness fund investment strategy to institutional investors and forum participants.
- **AFSIC Conference - 11 October 2022:** Deji Adebusey spoke on the Meeting the African Agribusiness Investors panel.
- **Nardone Family Seminar, Center for Emerging Markets, Northeastern University (Boston, MA, USA) - October 26th:** Mezuo Nwuneli gave a presentation on private equity in Africa to faculty and students at the D’Amore-McKim School of Business, and shared case studies from investments Sahel Capital has made.
- **MEDays Forum, Institut Amadeus (Tangiers, Morocco) - November 3rd:** Mezuo Nwuneli spoke on two panels – “Women Leadership & Entrepreneurship in Africa: Closing the Gap” and “Global Food (In) Security: What strategies and what Sustainable Responses? ”
- **Building a Smarter Greener Caribbean, Caribbean Investment Forum (Trinidad) - November 10th:** Mezuo Nwuneli spoke on the AgTechRoundtable panel “Achieving 25 in 5: Reducing the Food Import Bill through AgTech Investments”
- **Nigerian Economic Summit (Abuja, Nigeria) - November 14th:** Mezuo Nwuneli moderated a workshop on “Financing Nigeria’s Human Capital Development” focused on the education and healthcare sectors.
- **Lagos Business School: Africa Business Conference 2022 - 26 November 2022:** Deji Adebusey spoke at the Africa Business Conference 2022 at the Lagos Business School
- **SuperReturn Africa Conference (Cape Town, South Africa) - December 7th:** Mezuo Nwuneli spoke on a panel “Food, Glorious Food” discussing opportunities within the agribusiness sector in Africa.

## AFRICAN FOOD CHANGEMAKERS (AFC) SPEAKS

- **FMARD Capacity Support Project:** Rahmat Eyinfunjowo facilitated a session at Sahel Consulting’s Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development Capacity Support Training on July 27, 2022.
- **August 2022 First Thursdays:** Rahmat Eyinfunjowo, Oladunmade Otitoola and Henry Diato facilitated the August Edition of First Thursdays on “Financing Your Agribusiness” on August 4, 2022.
- **AL for Agribusiness Network Gathering:** Oladunmade Otitoola spoke at the network gathering event organized by ALA Agribusiness Network in Accra, Ghana on August 16, 2022.
- **AGRF 2022:** Rahmat Eyinfunjowo, Ndidi Nwuneli, Temi Adegoroye and Aisha Hadeja allspoke on different panels at the AGRF 2022 Summit held in Kigali, Rwanda on September 5 - 9, 2022.
- **SIPA 2022:** Oladunmade Otitoola and Odunayo Omotosho participated at the Social Innovators Program and Awards (SIPA) 2022 organized by LEAP Africa on September 13, 2022
- **The Idea Pitch:** Rahmat Eyinfunjowo participated as a mentor in the “Idea Pitch Season 4” on September 2, and October 7, 2022.



- **African Food Festival:** Ndidi Nwuneli spoke at the African Food Festival organized by the Harvard University on October 11 –12, 2022, which was organized by the African Food Changemakers in partnership with the Harvard Center for African Studies.
- **YAEDP Export Workshops:** Rahmat Eyinfunjowo and Odunayo Omotosho facilitated sessions at the Youth in Agri-food Export Development Program (YAEDP) export workshop held in Lagos on October 18 – 21, 2022 and Kano on October 25 - 28, 2022.
- **World Food Forum Regional Satellite Event:** Oladunmade Otitoola spoke at the World Food Forum Regional Satellite Event on October 19, 2022
- **UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 27):** Ndidi Nwuneli spoke at the UN Climate Change Conference (UNFCCC COP 27) on "Mobilizing Finance Solutions for Food System Transformation in Africa" on November 9, 2022 and at six other panels in the course of the first week in Sharm El-Sheik.
- **Fidelity International Trade & Creative Connect (FITC):** Ndidi Nwuneli participated at the Fidelity International Trade & Creative Connect (FITC) held on November 15 – 16, 2022 in London, UK. She moderated three panels on trade barriers, financing and quality and engaged in one on the role of women entrepreneurs in driving growth and transformation.



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