SAHEL Consulting

HIGH-LEVEL PARTNERS' BREAKFAST 2026

Aligning for Impact: Building the Collaborative Architecture for Food and Health Systems Transformation



Communiqué

Food, nutrition, health and climate meet in the same household. Partners met to explore how to connect the response.

4 November 2026

Sahel Consulting Office, Asokoro, Abuja, and online

Ahead of the 2026 Sahel Food Systems Changemakers Conference



> *If food, agriculture, nutrition, health and climate are so closely connected in people's lives, why do we still address them separately in policy, funding and programme design?*
>
> **Dr. Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli, Executive Chair, Sahel Consulting Group**

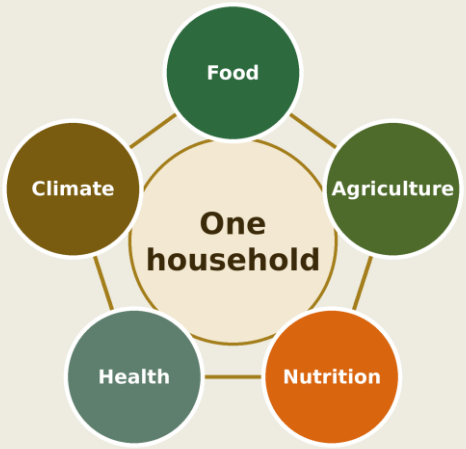
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose and Principal Messages

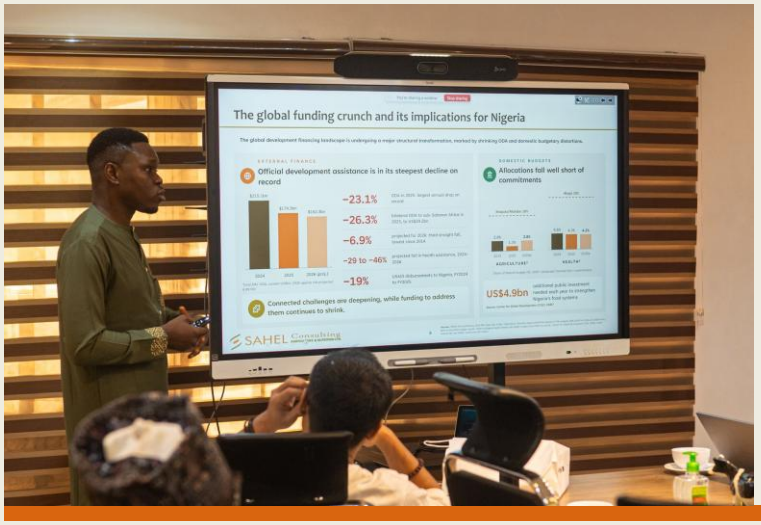
Development finance is contracting while needs deepen. Against this backdrop, Sahel Consulting Group convened its Global Board, development partners, government representatives, philanthropic organisations and private sector leaders to address a shared challenge: food, agriculture, nutrition, health and climate pressures meet in the same Nigerian households, yet they are still planned and funded separately.

- Drawing on experience from Nigeria and across Africa, participants identified what makes collaboration work;
- starting with one community and a common objective; designing around what farmers and customers can afford and sustain;
- involving local organisations before development decisions are executed;
- connecting systems already in place; and measuring whether people and businesses are better off. The weak links between farms and markets, in aggregation, storage, processing and logistics, and limited domestic capital emerged as critical gaps.

Sahel presented its evolution into a Group of four complementary entities built for integrated, sector agnostic, and locally led delivery. The proposed Local Food Sourcing Bill emerged as the most immediate opportunity for joint action, with partners offering evidence, convening and legislative support, alongside opportunities in dairy policy, digital advisory services, last-mile information and donor coordination.



Seen from the household. A poor harvest cuts a family's income and its ability to afford a nutritious diet; unsafe water undermines both productivity and health. Dr Nwuneli asked partners to connect their sectors around the household, and to draw lessons on where collaboration has worked and how it could sustain results in Nigeria beyond individual projects.



THE QUESTION BEFORE PARTNERS

"What will it take to deliver impact at scale with fewer resources?"

CONTEXT

A Tightening Landscape

Temitope Adegoroye, CEO of Sahel Food Systems Advisory, outlined the pressures facing Nigeria's food systems and the communities that depend on them: climate shocks, insecurity, rising input costs, low productivity and post-harvest losses, alongside wider challenges in nutrition, health, education and livelihoods.

LIVELIHOODS AND FOOD SECURITY

33.5%[1]

of employment is in agriculture

36.3M[2]

Nigerians projected in crisis-level food insecurity, June–August 2026

NUTRITION AND HEALTH

40%[3]

of children under five are stunted

6.4M[4]

children under five face acute malnutrition in the north

116[5]

under-five deaths per 1,000 live births

HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

70%[6]

of children cannot read a simple text by age ten

63%[7]

of Nigerians are multidimensionally poor

FINANCING

–23.1%[8]

fall in official development assistance in 2025

Public allocations to agriculture and health remain below the Maputo (10%) and Abuja (15%) commitments.[9] Together, these pressures framed the question for the dialogue.



SINCE 2010

16 years

From research and strategic advisory into programme delivery, enterprise development and institutional strengthening.

SAHEL'S IMPACT AND INSTITUTIONAL EVOLUTION

Sahel's Evolution as a Response

Reflecting on Sahel's 16-year journey from research and strategic advisory into programme delivery, enterprise development and institutional strengthening, Mr Adegoroye described partnerships as central to turning evidence into practical solutions. Sahel presented its evolving structure as a way to connect strategic advice, enterprise development and long-term programme delivery across food, health and nutrition, climate, and education systems, with each entity retaining a distinct mandate.

Sahel Food Systems Advisory

CEO: Temitope Adegoroye

Strategic and policy advisory, executive education through the Sahel Academy, commissioned research, institutional strengthening, due diligence and independent MERL, accompanying clients through implementation.

Sahel Health & Nutrition

Lead to be confirmed

Health and nutrition solutions for communities and systems, linking food and nutrition outcomes with health service delivery.

Sahel Development Innovation Ventures

CEO: Chinedu Agbara

Builds viable businesses from services and assets that lose momentum when programmes end. Early opportunities: seed services, weather advisory, digital finance, and local sourcing.

Sahel Impact Initiatives

CEO: Aisha Hadejia

A nonprofit with its own governance, delivering multi-year programmes and platforms, including African Food Changemakers (10,300 verified agrifood SMEs, 50 countries) and the proposed Health and Climate Changemakers.

RESULTS THAT OUTLAST PROGRAMMES

Dr Nwuneli illustrated how the Sahel Consulting Group has consistently designed and implemented initiatives with sustainability in mind from the outset. The Advancing Local Dairy Development in Nigeria programme (ALDDN) left behind a member-run dairy industry association, the Commercial Dairy Ranchers Association of Nigeria (CODARAN), that now leads on sector policy, alongside an annual World Milk Day convening on June 1st that brings the sector together. Sahel's seed systems advisory has likewise supported the creation of new seed companies and a seed entrepreneurs' network that produces and sells improved seeds across communities.

KEY DISCUSSIONS

Insights from Sahel Consulting's Global Board and Partners

Dr Nwuneli invited members of Sahel Consulting's Global Board to open a dialogue on what it will take to break down silos across food, nutrition, health and climate, and where integration has worked in practice. Drawing on their experience and on contributions from partners in the room, five strategic insights emerged.



"We call them farmers, others call them patients, and some others call them beneficiaries. But at the end of the day, we're talking about the same people."

Dr. Shachi Gurumayum, Board Member, Sahel Consulting

01. Start with Household and Community Needs

Effective integration must begin with the needs and realities of households and communities, not institutional or sectoral priorities. Individuals and households interact with multiple systems, including agriculture, health, water and energy,

making it essential to design coordinated interventions that respond to interconnected needs. Community ownership and sustainable maintenance arrangements are equally critical to ensuring lasting impact.

1. **Adopt a community-centred approach to integration.** Clinton White emphasised the importance of using individual communities as the starting point for integrated development, bringing together relevant stakeholders to address interconnected needs. For example, agricultural productivity depends on reliable water supply, which in turn requires access to energy, with implications for health, livelihoods and community resilience.
2. **Design programmes around people, not institutional classifications.** Dr Shachi Gurumayum highlighted how different institutions often label the same individuals as farmers, patients or beneficiaries, resulting in fragmented interventions. A more holistic approach would recognise these overlapping identities and promote coordinated services that respond to the full spectrum of household needs.
3. **Embed community ownership and maintenance in programme design.** Dr Nwuneli noted that the sustainability of development investments depends on community ownership and effective maintenance arrangements. Drawing on Sahel's Advancing Local Dairy Development Programme (ALDDN), she cited the continued functionality of community boreholes as an example of infrastructure sustained by clear local demand, particularly for livestock water during the dry season, and established maintenance mechanisms.
4. **Integrate behavioural change in practice with economic opportunity.** Carla Denizard described World Vision's THRIVE model as an example of combining household-level behavioural change with capacity building, savings mobilisation, access to finance and local value chain development. She referenced women's shea processing groups in Ghana that have gained access to international markets, demonstrating how integrated interventions can strengthen livelihoods and expand economic opportunities.

"Start with one community..."

Clinton White, President of Counselor Global Solutions (CGS), LLC and Sahel Board Member

02. Design for Commercial Viability and Continuity

Sustainable value chain integration requires commercially viable models that deliver lasting benefits to farmers, enterprises and markets. Improving access to inputs, finance and market opportunities must translate into increased productivity, reliable demand and sufficient returns to sustain participation beyond initial programme support. Demand-side incentives, such as local investment and enabling policies that strengthen market linkages and reduce dependence on external funding, are equally important, or buyers revert to imports.

Key points

1. **Prioritise commercial sustainability, not just access.** Access to agricultural inputs must be accompanied by affordability, appropriate training and reliable market opportunities. Solutions such as smaller input packages, flexible payment arrangements and stronger market linkages can improve adoption and profitability. A key measure of success is whether farmers generate sufficient returns to reinvest in inputs for subsequent production cycles (Patrick Tognisso, drawing on experiences in Senegal and Mali)
2. **Leverage local knowledge and partnerships in programme design.** Local organisations should be actively involved in programme design and implementation to ensure interventions reflect community priorities, market realities and local contexts, strengthening programme relevance, local ownership and long-term sustainability (Participants).
3. **Unlock domestic investment to sustain results.** Significant pools of capital exist within Nigeria but remain concentrated among a limited number of investors. Development partners should identify and engage potential local investors with clearly defined, commercially attractive and evidence-backed investment opportunities to diversify financing sources and reduce long-term reliance on external funding (Binta Max-Gbinije, Chief Executive of BMG Seven Limited).
4. **Strengthen supply chain reliability to encourage local sourcing.** Private-sector buyers require consistent supply volumes, quality assurance and competitive pricing to source locally. The challenges faced by a major buyer in securing consistent maize supplies highlight the need for stronger supplier networks, aggregation systems and coordination mechanisms to bridge the gap between domestic production and commercial demand (Mezuo Nwuneli).
5. **Advance policies that stimulate demand for locally produced food.** Renewed consideration should be given to the Local Food Sourcing Bill, first proposed 15 years ago. Brazil's experience with local procurement requirements for school feeding programmes demonstrates the potential of institutional purchasing policies to create predictable

markets for domestic producers, strengthen agricultural value chains and advance national food security (Dr Ndidi Nwuneli).

6. **Pair local sourcing mandates with investments in supplier capacity.** Procurement requirements alone cannot guarantee sustainable local sourcing. The experience of a Senegalese dairy manufacturer, which reverted to imports despite a requirement to source 20–30% of its inputs locally, illustrates the consequences of inadequate domestic supply capacity. Effective sourcing policies must therefore be supported by targeted investments in productivity, aggregation, quality assurance and supply chain infrastructure to enable local producers to meet commercial requirements consistently (Participant observation).

03. Coordinate Early and Institute Local Leadership

1. **Involve partners before design is fixed.** Key decisions are often settled before programmes are discussed with local partners. Country teams, headquarters and local partners should exchange earlier (Archie Stay, British High Commission).
2. **Invest in inception and build in flexibility.** A proper inception phase matters, as does the ability to adapt when policy or context changes, since approvals that take months can miss the opportunity. (Dr Michael Ojo, with Aisha Hadejia).
3. **Convene a "big tent" around one problem.** Actors stay together until policy becomes a bill and then an act, as happened with the Nigeria Startup Act (Oge Modie).
4. **Fix the funding and incentive problem.** Sector-specific donor funding makes integrated programmes hard to finance. Integration ultimately depends on willingness, a common objective, leadership, individual behaviour and incentives for institutions to work together (Dr Gurumayum).
5. **Back local leadership.** The view that African institutions lack the capacity to lead is wrong: local organisations reach communities others do not and deliver world-class work at a fraction of the cost (Dr Nwuneli).



"Did they make any money? Training hours mean little if businesses don't earn more"

Ony Chinedu, the Interim Executive Director at African Food Changemakers, asked while commenting on how enterprise support should be measured.

04. Connect Systems That Already Exist

1. **Extend existing policy and structures (Dairy Policy and Digital Advisory).** Communicating and implementing the national dairy policy can bring more livestock farmers into formal supply chains. The existing agricultural working group can connect farmer registration, weather and soil information, and digital advisory services.
2. **Reuse channels that already reach farmers.** The same channels can share information on nearby health facilities, serving the same people across sectors, from last-mile delivery to locating the nearest facility during an outbreak (Emmanuel Adinya, 3iS Nigeria).
3. **Make interoperability the goal.** Systems must be able to work with one another, and no single development partner can achieve this alone (Dr Andrea Ruediger, GIZ).

05. Measure What Changes for Farmers and Businesses

1. **Judge support by earnings, not training outputs.** Enterprise support is often reported through training hours and numbers of engagements. The more meaningful measure is whether farmers and businesses increase their incomes as a result (Ony Chinedu, African Food Changemakers, drawing on the platform's new accelerator programme).
2. **Fix the middle of the value chain.** Without effective aggregation, logistics and market access, higher production can mean more waste rather than higher (Participants).
3. **Invest in intermediaries who carry technology to farmers.** Improved technologies often already exist but need intermediaries to deliver them. Many seed companies created for government programmes disappeared when those programmes ended (Dr Gurumayum).
4. **Document and share what works.** Models that have delivered lasting results should be recorded and shared so others can learn from and replicate them (participants).

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Areas of Convergence

Integrated responses
for households facing connected pressures

Local partners
involved from the design stage

Outcomes, not activity
as the measure of success

Sustainability by design
programmes and services planned to continue after funding ends

Opportunities for further exploration



PRIORITY FOR JOINT ACTION

The Proposed Local Food Sourcing Bill

Encouraging hotels, restaurants, retailers and other major buyers to source from Nigerian producers, matched by practical support for suppliers to meet volume, quality and price requirements.

PARTNERSHIPS AND WAY FORWARD

Proposed Next Steps and Commitments

Invited by Dr Nwuneli to identify what they could take forward, participants made the following commitments. Sahel will follow up with each participant to confirm contributions, leads and timelines.

Local Food Sourcing Bill	Dr Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli invited interested partners to join the effort, and Aisha Hadejia, CEO of Sahel Impact Initiatives, undertook to lead it, building on Sahel's engagement with the Food Systems Coordinating Unit in the Office of the Vice President. A development partner committed to working with the team and offered evidence from Nigeria and other countries. Nsikan Essien, Head / Team Lead of Operations for the National Assembly Business Environment Roundtable (NASSBER) at the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) indicated that NESG could support convenings and technical briefs for the National Assembly; NESG was invited to contribute its expertise on food imports and local sourcing.
Working groups and pooled funding	A development partner proposed forming working groups and offered to share lessons from a locally led pooled funding model.
Partnership proposals	Archie Stay of the British High Commission welcomed partnership proposals in Nigeria and offered to connect relevant regional initiatives with colleagues at headquarters.
Dairy and livestock	Dr Andrea Ruediger of GIZ invited partners to help communicate the national dairy policy. Sharon Chiahemen, of the Office of the Senior Special Adviser to the President on Livestock Development, undertook to relay feedback, welcomed closer private sector engagement and offered to help partners access government and financing information.
Farmer data and advisory services	Dr Ruediger proposed using the agricultural working group's task force to connect digital advisory systems and link weather and soil information with farmer identification systems. A private weather services provider expressed interest in joining the proposed data exchange.
Last-mile information	Emmanuel Adinya, Head of Office 3iS Nigeria, proposed using collaborative platforms and its chatbot to connect last-mile delivery with information on nearby health facilities. Dr. Nwuneli called on NiMet and telecommunications operators to explore SMS weather and hazard alerts.
Sahel Consulting Group	Sahel Advisory committed to supporting clients through implementation as well as design. Sahel Development Innovation Ventures will approach partners on risk-sharing, engage on potential ventures and present selected opportunities through a roadshow. Sahel Impact Initiatives will consult partners on a shared platform for mapping donor-funded projects, and Sahel will bring back the *Sahel Quarterly*.



CONCLUSION

The Way Forward

The High-Level Partners' Breakfast made a clear case for addressing food, agriculture, nutrition, health and climate together, starting with the needs of the households and communities these sectors serve. With financing under strain, partners must involve local actors early, align investments and build institutions that sustain results.

The proposed Local Food Sourcing Bill offers an immediate opportunity to turn that shared intent into action, ensuring that incentives for local purchasing are matched by practical support for Nigerian suppliers. Building on Binta Max-Gbinije's reminder that going far requires going with others, Dr Nwuneli urged partners to act as changemakers.

Success will be measured not by the number of partnerships formed, but by what they deliver: more reliable markets and stronger livelihoods for farmers, more viable businesses and services that communities can continue to rely on.

> *"We must go fast and far together. We have no choice. We have to be in legacy mode in this sector. But to do that, we have to leave our egos and logos at the door… putting the needs of those who are not in this room ahead of our own personal needs."*
>
> **Dr Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli, calling on partners to act as changemakers.**

SOURCES

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4. IPC acute malnutrition analysis, Northern Nigeria, Oct 2025–Sep 2026, cited by ICRC (March 2026).
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