



SAHEL FOOD SYSTEMS

Changemakers

CONFERENCE



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2022

Roadmap: Curbing the Nigerian Food Crisis: Ensuring Resilience and Sustainability in the Agribusiness Landscape

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Background

In September 2021, the United Nations Food Systems Summit was held to set the stage for global food systems transformation to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. World leaders and other stakeholders in the food, nutrition, and agriculture sector renewed their commitments to improve food systems by identifying five action tracks that provide solutions to sustainably ending hunger and malnutrition. However, vulnerabilities such as poverty and unemployment, economic disruptions resulting from shocks and insecurity as well as environmental stress due to climate change continue to wreak havoc on Nigeria's food systems.

As part of its effort to address the issues of food security and challenges facing the agriculture sector in Nigeria, Sahel Consulting Agriculture and Nutrition Limited in collaboration with the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), the European Union Commission in Nigeria (EU), and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and the support of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Development organized the Sahel Food Systems Changemakers Conference themed "***Curbing the Nigerian Food Crisis: Ensuring Resilience and Sustainability in the Agribusiness Landscape***". The event took the discussion beyond the regular rhetoric to a solution-driven-convening.

The conference identified critical steps to address the food crisis taking lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine war. It highlighted success factors for developing private sector-led initiatives to drive transformation in the Nigerian agribusiness landscape, showcased emerging solutions and innovative business models in the agri-food landscape to promote resilience in the food systems, and facilitated dialogue between stakeholders on the urgent need for private sector-led strategies as a sustainable option for a resilient food system. The conference also initiated the conversation towards developing a clear road map for multistakeholder collaboration to curtail the existential food crisis in Nigeria.

Key Takeaways from Breakout Sessions

Through participation in breakout sessions on several key topics relating to the food and agriculture sector, stakeholders and participating organizations provided action-driven resolutions, recommendations, and restated commitments to urgently address the food crisis in Nigeria.

The sessions ranged from primary production to food processing, nutrition, safety and security, trade and export, distribution and logistics, livestock, equity and inclusion, and scaling agribusinesses. Each session was facilitated by representatives from key stakeholder groups and organizations operating along the different focus areas, who commenced with remarks stating the status of the different areas in Nigeria,¹ following which participants discussed solutions and key recommendations.

1. Primary Production: Addressing Input Shortages and Scaling Last-mile Distribution and Extension Support Services

Facilitated by Foluso Adejoro, Policy Advisor Food Security & Climate, Embassy of the Kingdom of Netherlands in Abuja, Nigeria.

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa, with a population of over 200 million and growing at 2.4% annually. This immense population needs to eat, work, and thrive. Despite the contribution and importance of agriculture and crop production to the Nigerian economy, there exist enormous challenges in the sector, which has a negative ripple effect on the lives and livelihoods of the populace. The critical challenge in the sub-sector is the low productivity of farmers. This is attributable to the underutilization of quality inputs (seeds, fertilizers, etc) and poor agronomic practices. Key challenges identified include affordability and accessibility to key inputs, limited access to extension agents, access to finance for smallholder farmers, and inconsistent government policies.

SOLUTIONS

- The government should support the availability of key inputs to the farmers through subsidies, loans, guarantees input credit schemes, and other innovative models.
- There is a need for comprehensive gap analysis, research, and development studies on the input ecosystem and the potential for local production of critical inputs in Nigeria.
- It is critical to bundle seeds with fertilizers, insurance, training, and access to finance for inputs for smallholder farmers.
- Adoption of aggregator models for input distribution and post-harvest activities. Also, disseminating seeds adapted to off-taker demand to create markets for smallholder farmers and facilitate easy repayments of credits.
- The government and development partners should guarantee access to finance for small and medium-scale farmers.

¹ Facilitators developed pre-reads with key information on the status of each of the focus areas. All pre-reads can be found on the conference website, [here](#).

- Encourage and sustain input subsidies for smallholder farmers by leveraging traditional institutions to reduce corruption in subsidy administration.
- Knowledgeable farmers/ citizens with a passion for agriculture development should coordinate smallholder farmer clusters in their locality to facilitate access to finance and bulk procurement of quality inputs for members.
- There is a need to develop public-private partnerships across the value chains and build inclusive ecosystems that include smallholder farmers in decision-making.
- Farmers can work in cooperatives to ensure access to extension services and sustainable climate-smart practices.
- Promote commodity associations to partner with off-takers for ease of access to inputs and market for small farmer products.

ACTIONABLE NEXT STEPS

Nasarawa Agro-Commodity Company pledged to:

- Support for 20,000 farmers with improved seeds and access to finance within the next year.
- Increase farmers' productivity by training more farmers on good agronomic practices through cluster programs across different value chains.

GIZ committed to:

- Continuously supporting farmer access to finance through existing programs.

National Agricultural Seed Council (NASC) was charged to:

- Foster an enabling environment for public-private partnerships with key stakeholders in the seed sector working to improve farmers' access to quality seeds.
- Create platforms to share information on the availability, accessibility, and affordability of agricultural inputs.

2. Food Processing: Fast Tracking Local Processing of Proudly Nigerian Food and Alternatives to Import

Facilitated by Ms Emma Odundo, GIZ

Nigeria's food industry has been encountering difficulties regarding the regular supply of raw materials of adequate quality, while the bulk of the agricultural production, due to the lack of strong outlets (markets or industry), has remained at subsistence levels. These are characterized by low yields, significant post-harvest losses, and unsafe and poor-quality products. To reduce post-harvest losses and increase food availability, appropriate food preservation/storage and processing/packaging techniques, as well as improved hygiene practices and quality assurance systems, must be implemented in Nigeria.

SOLUTIONS

As the first step to the enhancement of agricultural production, the government must commit to policies and regulations that facilitate access to modern technologies in curbing post-harvest losses; ensure food processors are properly incentivized, and provide adequate and innovative extension services at the state and local levels.

ACTIONABLE NEXT STEPS

Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Investment

- Incentivize and encourage agro-processing SMEs to form clusters and cooperatives for easy access to government interventions.
- Remove import duties on processing equipment for SMEs.
- Conduct training and capacity building for agro-processing SMEs on modern processing techniques.

Federal Ministry of Science and Technology

- Upgrade the technology incubation centres to produce local, effective, and affordable processing equipment.

National Orientation Agency

- Introduce mentoring programs on various media platforms to encourage youth and investors' participation in agro-processing.

Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

- Revive the extension department to improve information dissemination to farmers and processors.
- Improve collaboration between the FMARD, state ministries, and local government departments of agriculture.
- Improve public-private partnerships in the agricultural sector.
- Collaborate with partners to develop and implement policies that support and appropriately incentivize local food processing.

Federal Ministry of Power

- Provide sustainable power supply to aid the operations of SMEs in agro-processing.
- Facilitate access of SMEs in agricultural processing to alternative sources of power e.g., solar and wind energies.

GIZ

- Promote contract farming initiatives; forward agreements specifying the obligations of farmers and buyers as partners in business, achieved through trust building and capacity development.
- Explore the promotion of cluster formation to boost collaboration among farming communities and enhance competitiveness.

African Food Changemakers (AFC) Institute

- Partner with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Federal Ministry of Industry Trade and Investment to devote the current first Thursday (every month) agribusiness training sessions to incentives, tasks holidays, information sharing, and duty waivers - Q4 2022.

3. Nutrition: The Role of Food Fortification in Curbing the Looming Food Crisis

Facilitated by Dr Michael Ojo, Country Director, GAIN Nigeria.

Nigeria suffers from extreme malnutrition with the second highest proportion of under-nourished children in the world. Seven in every ten Nigerian children have anaemia, a rate far higher than the average for all of Sub-Saharan Africa, and much worse than the global average. The incidence of anaemia in Nigeria is among the very highest for any country in the world – largely driven by a deficiency of iron in the diet and indicative of a severe public health problem.

In 2018, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and HarvestPlus launched a commercialization partnership to scale the production and consumption of biofortified crops. Both organizations have over the years leveraged their extensive relationships with governments, donors, and policymakers in the public and private domain to increase access to biofortified crops and foods.

SOLUTIONS

- Implement and enforce already existing policies on fortification and fortified foods by relevant stakeholders.
- Ensure fortified products are used to produce livestock feed or proper feeding of livestock to reduce the amount of fortification done later.
- Ensure materials needed for biofortification are easily and locally accessible to processors.
- Leverage existing development programs like the National Home-Grown School Feeding Program (NHGSFG) to link smallholder farmers to the biofortification program, and support farmers in the production of biofortified crops and meal fortification for children.

ACTIONABLE NEXT STEPS

GAIN

- With support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, GAIN has launched a project to facilitate quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) systems that will be co-designed with producers of fortified foods, and other key actors.
- Food processors would be encouraged to utilize import duty exemption certificates (IDEC) from the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Investment (FMITI) as this makes it easy to procure the necessary equipment for the fortification process.
- Connect farmers with relevant departments at the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, and FMITI and link them with the market created by the Home-Grown School Feeding Programme at the State level to create a system of flow for biofortification.
- Champion the sensitization and awareness creation of large-scale fortification and biofortification of staple foods. The continuous sensitization and awareness creation at the grassroots with an emphasis on promoting household production and consumption of biofortified crops will go a long way in curbing the looming food crises.

Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

- Facilitate policy conversations for commercial supply of inputs needed for biofortification.

4. Safety and Security: Addressing Insecurity in Farming Communities

Facilitated by Dr Bola Karimu, Private Sector Development Advisor, FCDO, Nigeria

Insecurity is a collective issue affecting all; therefore, all hands must be on deck to resolve it. The Federal Government of Nigeria has deployed various strategies in curbing insecurity in the country and hasn't recorded significant success in the fight against insecurity. As a result of its inability to provide a solution, this has affected the country's Foreign Direct Investment thereby impacting the nation's GDP.

SOLUTIONS

- More engagement and demonstration of political will and action by the government.
- Transparent and equitable management of land administration rights and procedures.
- Address rising levels of unemployment, especially among the youthful population.
- Engage vigilantes and empower local security bodies across the communities.
- Build and sustain trust and empower traditional and spiritual leaders.
- Encourage community champions and traditional and religious leaders to invest in agriculture to engage youth in meaningful and profitable work.
- Boost organized community-based policing at the national and sub-national levels of governance.
- Foster collaboration between all levels of government and traditional rulers to enhance information sharing and timely dissemination of suspicious activity in communities.

ACTIONABLE NEXT STEPS

Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

- Align programs and initiatives with the National Livestock Transformation Agenda, in collaboration with coordinating ministries to enforce land usage policy, establish grazing reserves, and commercial ranching.
- Improve the use of technology like drones in combating the menace of insecurity.
- Adopt farm settlement schemes and provide social amenities to curb the rift between herder and settler communities.

5. Trade & Export

Facilitated by Ms Evelyn Obidike, Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC)

Value addition creates opportunities for premium markets which drives production and curtails losses. Coaching to bridge the information, knowledge, and competency gap around what the market wants is needed to boost agri- trade and export in Nigeria. For example, Nigeria has enough high-value spices that we can trade in and has no business importing spices from other countries. There is a need to disseminate information about the unique opportunities in our local foods and value chains and the key markets/export destinations for our products.

SOLUTIONS

- Urgent and broad-based education about existing and emerging opportunities in our value chain. Examples involve the immense demand for snail slime in the beauty and pharmaceutical industry which snail entrepreneurs can leverage instead of discarding the slime. Information dissemination must leverage technology for broad-based awareness.
- Training and capacity building of young people to provide information on standard agricultural practices for export produce, export markets, key value chains, product development, certification, policies, and trade agreements.
- Support for local programs promoting export such as the Youth in Agrifood Export Development Program (YAEDP).
- Provision of critical support to SMEs to enhance value addition and packaging for international markets to compete with global brands.
- Provision of innovative export financing tailored to the seasonal nature of agribusiness. Organizations like the African Export-Import Bank and the AfDB have initiatives focused on financing exporters. Financing must be accessible to agribusinesses and combined with technical assistance for effectiveness.
- Stakeholder collaboration is key in international trade. Exporters need to identify and collaborate with critical ecosystem players to reduce incidences of lost goods, returned goods, or failed trade. This will include partnerships with verified certification agencies,

trade ministries, and missions, logistics providers, packaging companies, shipping lines, research agencies, etc.

ACTIONABLE NEXT STEPS

Nigeria Export Promotion Council, NEPC

- Per its mandate, the NEPC will continue to promote export activities through capacity development, trade promotion, research, and support to stakeholders in the sector. NEPC is currently building state-of-art warehousing solutions for exporters across the country.

African Food Changemakers (AFC) Institute

- African Food Changemakers (previously Nourishing Africa) has partnered with the NEPC to implement the ongoing Youth in AgriFood Export Development Program (YAEDP), a one-year program designed to develop the capacity of young Nigerian entrepreneurs aged 25 – 40 to participate in export. AFC is willing to partner with stakeholders in and outside the country to scale and accelerate the impact of the program and implement a second phase in 2023. AFC is also committed to building a dedicated resource hub for disseminating information, including data, markets, stakeholders, policies, opportunities, etc. in export.

Alufamasuco Limited

- Alufamasuco Limited is a beneficiary of the ongoing YAEDP and is committed to disseminating knowledge of the opportunities in export trade to his agri-SME and farmer networks.

Development Institutions

- Development partners must commit to leveraging the AfCFTA and engagement with trade missions across the globe to disseminate relevant information on trade to private and public sector actors. Development banks must engage agrifood businesses to design innovative financing products that suit local businesses.

6. Distribution and Logistics: Strategies for Minimizing the High Cost of Transportation

Facilitated by Mr Kamaldeen Raji, Managing Director, AFEX Commodity Exchange, Nigeria

Logistics and distribution refer to the management of the flow of goods between the point of origin and the destination, which includes inbound and outbound transportation, handling, production, packaging, and inventory control. However, throughout the last decade, Nigeria has shifted irregularly on the Logistic Performance Index (LPI) and is currently ranked 90 out of 160 countries worldwide. The LPI evaluates the ease with which goods flow factoring: customs,

infrastructure, international shipment, logistics competency, tracking & tracing, and competence.

SOLUTIONS

- A collaborative approach among stakeholders to improve the collection and distribution of agri-commodities and organize transporters to deliver food-related products more efficiently. This will greatly lower the cost of transportation and impact food delivery.
- Implementation of Federal Government policies to empower state & local government actors to construct roads that would improve transportation of agricultural commodities.
- Organisations should consider locating processing plants closer to the production site, develop a tracking system for the trucks transporting commodities, and organize collectives (e.g., aggregators and cooperatives) to pool resources for reduced cost of logistics.

ACTIONABLE NEXT STEPS

AFEX:

- Drive collaboration/aggregation of MSMEs to collect and transport goods on selected days through GIG transport (End of October 2022)
- Explore opportunities around storage to reduce the cost of bringing commodities closer to markets for consumption during the off-season (Dec 2022 - January 2023)
- Engage the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade & Investments and Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to identify verified agro-commodity traders and facilitate clearance through certification of vehicle branding to reduce losses experienced through extortion from agencies across the highways (Dec 2022 - January 2023).

Capture Solutions, West Africa:

- Conduct sensitization and awareness creation on the agricultural investment, logistics, and storage landscape.

7. Livestock: Driving Growth and Productivity in the Livestock Sub-Sector in an Equitable and Sustainable Manner

Facilitated by Ms Fisayo Kayode, Productivity Improvement Manager, Sahel Consulting

The Nigerian livestock sub-sector has the potential to significantly contribute to the nation's economy and attain food security if the different stakeholders develop strategic and sustainable models for increasing production efficiencies and driving development. There is an increasing demand for animal-sourced food products arising from Nigeria's rapidly growing population and urbanization. By 2030, the country's population is expected to increase by about 30% necessitating the need for an improvement in production efficiency and increased investments.

SOLUTIONS

- Resuscitate and strengthen the Agric Development Projects (ADP) to support farmers' access to extension services and input support at the sub-national level.
- Comprehensively review existing livestock development policies to improve the performance of the livestock sector in Nigeria.
- Provide training and extension support for key champions at the community levels to become skilled livestock professionals.
- Map and create a database for stakeholders to improve collaboration and increase private sector investments and attract additional funding for the livestock sector.
- Leverage existing interventions such as the climate-smart poultry housing currently being constructed in focus states to provide support and improve response to climate change.

ACTIONABLE NEXT STEPS

Sahel Consulting Agriculture & Nutrition Limited

- Organize conferences and convenings on the Quarterly Livestock Action Review for stakeholders to discuss progress on livestock development challenges, collaboration, opportunities, and next steps.
- Seek collaborations to champion carbon farming in response to climate change issues.

DeliFrost; a private dairy company will:

- Identify smallholder farmers and integrate them into the formal dairy market in addition to the existing activities of the private sector in the dairy sector.

Livestock Genetics Africa

- Provide artificial insemination for the suggested regional breeding services to reduce the high cost of AI procedures and equipment.

Livestock247.com

- Charged to extend its sensitization and advocacy drive on animal health services and transboundary disease to other states across the country outside of engagement on the Advancing Local Dairy Development in Nigeria (ALDDN) program.

Mamuz Electric; a renewable energy company volunteered to

- Collaborate in setting up solar-powered infrastructure for livestock producers.

8. Equity and Inclusion: Bridging the Gender Gap in Agriculture and Agribusiness

Facilitated by Mr Andrew Smith, GIZ

In ensuring resilience and sustainability in agriculture and agri-business, all stakeholders will be needed to address the major hindrance to equity and inclusion such as socio-cultural factors like the land tenure system and land ownership by women. Women are key drivers of informal markets and most of them focus on value addition. They participate in small-scale processing like drying, cutting, and blending to enhance their livelihoods and support their households. Despite the active role of women, their contributions to the agricultural value chain are usually unrecognized and not well remunerated. Some of the current issues in our food systems including high post-harvest losses are linked to the limited support of women.

SOLUTIONS

- Conduct a critical analysis on the real value added by women to amplify their voices and contribution to the development of agriculture for food security.
- Focus on the internal capacity to evaluate the actual representation of the activities taking place within the growing local communities through crowdsourcing.
- Define and refine the role of women in post-processing leveraging their skills, commitment, and entrepreneurship to make a difference.
- Create a space for investment opportunities for women in post-processing, create local business models, and support access to finance at a smaller scale by collating data on gender and inclusion.

ACTIONABLE NEXT STEPS

Network for Agricultural Technical Education in Nigeria

- Currently deploying its capacity to provide structures to capture data across communities.

GIZ

- Provide technical support to key actors to coordinate the information which will be generated to create business models to support women's economic activities.
- Provide the data piece for the development of the business models.
- Lead data collection and gender inclusion advocacy across LGAs and community levels.

Sahel Consulting

- Support GIZ and other donors and development partners through the implementation of gender-focused programs.

9. Starting and Scaling Resilient Agribusiness

Facilitated by Mr Deji Adebuseye, Principal at Sahel Capital Agribusiness Managers

The agriculture supply chain has many risks that can cause disruption; beyond cash flow problems associated with these risks, are problems such as input supply, transportation and logistics, technological issues, and power. Agricultural firms are also at risk due to their dependence on natural resources. Adapting to the changing landscape quickly is vital to an agribusiness quickly and efficiently returning to a sustainable trajectory.

SOLUTIONS

- It is important to broaden the perspective by not only dwelling on the farmers but also following the money, working backwards to explore the value chain from the final customer back to the farmer.

ACTIONABLE NEXT STEPS

African Food Changemakers and Sahel Capital

- Organise mentoring and handholding programs for start-ups.

AFEX

- Support in creating price visibility to help mitigate the constraint in forecasting return on investment (ROI)

Sahel Capital Agribusiness Managers Limited

- Organise convening for Heads of Agriculture at major banks and insurance companies on how to better fund agribusinesses. There should be the development of value chain-specific financial products.
- Work with insurance firms to pilot innovative and scalable ideas.