

theme
DESIGNING FOR LEGACY
Building Resilient and Impact-Driven Food Systems



SAHEL FOOD SYSTEMS
CHANGEMAKERS
CONFERENCE 2025

Communiqué

theme
DESIGNING FOR LEGACY
Building Resilient and Impact-Driven Food Systems

30th
October 2025

9:00 AM
Prompt

Ladi Kwali Hall
Abuja Continental Hotel



CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Sahel Food Systems Changemakers Conference

The Sahel Food Systems Changemakers Conference, hosted annually by Sahel Consulting Agriculture and Nutrition Limited and African Food Changemakers, is a catalytic platform aimed at transforming Nigeria's agricultural and nutrition landscape. The conference was conceptualised as a localised offshoot of the UN Food Systems Summit in 2021 and has since served as an annual cross-sectoral platform bringing together policymakers, experts, entrepreneurs, and development partners to tackle the nation's food system challenges through collaborative action. Across its first three years, the Sahel Food Systems Changemakers Conference has engaged over 1,500 stakeholders, becoming a catalyst for policy coherence, innovation, and partnership in Nigeria's food ecosystem. Through strategic reflections, thought-provoking dialogues, and real-world case studies, participants get to examine how public-private partnerships and community-driven models can drive agricultural transformation, climate resilience, and inclusive growth. Since its launch in 2022, the conference has grown into a flagship event accelerating food and nutrition security, agricultural innovation, and climate resilience across Nigeria and Africa.



SAHEL FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGEMAKERS CONFERENCE



2022
Curbing the Nigerian Food Crisis:
Ensuring Resilience and
Sustainability in the Agribusiness
Landscape

2023
Rethinking Food and Nutrition Security
in the Face of Climate Change:
Scaling Innovations and Driving Urgent
Public-Private Partnership Actions

2024
Innovative Governance Models:
A Pathway to Food and Nutrition
Security in Nigeria

2025
Designing for Legacy:
Building Resilient and Impact-
Driven Food Systems





Model & Implementation Approach

The Sahel Food Systems Changemakers Conference is a flagship platform designed to strengthen coordination, collaboration, and shared accountability among key actors in Nigeria's food and agriculture landscape. Each edition is thoughtfully aligned with global and national priorities to ensure continued relevance and impact. By engaging government institutions, the private sector, academia, civil society, and development partners, the conference fosters inclusive dialogue and joint action. Its participatory format, through breakout sessions, thematic panels, and networking clusters, promotes practical problem-solving and peer learning across value chains. Beyond conversations, Sahel ensures continuity through post-conference engagement, including documentation of commitments, follow-up with key stakeholders, and impact tracking. This model transforms insights into measurable progress, positioning the conference as a leading driver of collaboration and systemic transformation in Nigeria's food systems.

Advancing Food System Resilience and Nutrition Security – A Case for the 2025 Edition

Nigeria's food system, driven by millions of smallholder farmers and agribusinesses that sustain over 70% of the population, is under growing strain from climate shocks, insecurity, rising production costs, and declining external financing.

With 33 million Nigerians projected to face acute food insecurity in 2025 and food inflation nearing 41%, the system's vulnerabilities are increasingly evident. Women who form most of the agricultural workforce remain constrained by unequal access to land, credit, and inputs, limiting inclusive growth.

As external support contracts and concessional financing shrink, Nigeria's pathway to food and nutrition security depends on domestic resource mobilisation, blended finance, and private-sector partnerships that strengthen value chains and market systems. The moment calls for a transition toward resilient, innovative, and locally anchored solutions that endure beyond short-term projects and external interventions.

A bold and necessary question drives the 2025 Sahel Food Systems Changemakers Conference:

How do we reimagine and design development models that endure beyond project cycles, scale locally, and continue delivering value long after the project timelines have ended?



SAHEL FOOD SYSTEMS CHANGEMAKERS CONFERENCE 2025

theme
**DESIGNING
FOR LEGACY:**
Building Resilient and Impact-Driven
Food Systems

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

Objective 1

Challenge the assumptions behind traditional development models and surface critical lessons from the field.

Objective 2

Explore concrete pathways to transition from donor reliance to locally led, market-responsive solutions.

Objective 3

Forge coalitions and design principles that embed sustainability, inclusion, and institutional strength from day one.

The 2025 Sahel Food Systems Changemakers Conference, themed "Designing for Legacy: Building Resilient and Impact-Driven Food Systems," gathered over 600 participants in Abuja and 150 online to explore how Nigeria and Africa can build food systems that last. Coming at a time when development funding is tightening and the call for self-sustaining solutions is louder than ever, the conference brought together policymakers, agripreneurs, development partners, and private-sector leaders to share bold ideas and real-world innovations. Supported by partners such as CARE, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, the Mastercard Foundation, Heifer International, and the German Development Cooperation (GIZ), the event celebrated collaboration as the cornerstone of transformation and showcased how local innovation, entrepreneurship, and inclusive partnerships can drive long-term impact. Conversations across plenaries and panels centred on scaling homegrown solutions, aligning policy with market realities, and ensuring that Nigeria's vast agricultural potential benefits every community. In the end, participants agreed that true legacy is not measured by the number of projects launched, but by the strength of systems that endure. The conference highlighted the significance of systems that empower youth and women, strengthen local institutions, and build a food future that is inclusive, resilient, and representative of Nigeria and Africa.



Partners





Leadership Perspectives: Inspiring A Legacy Of Sustainable Change

The 2025 Sahel Food Systems Changemakers Conference opened with a series of inspiring addresses from Sahel Consulting's leadership and senior government officials, setting a purposeful tone for the dialogue ahead. Temi Adegoroye, Managing Partner at Sahel Consulting, gave the welcome address, urging participants to move beyond short-term, donor-dependent interventions toward systems that are market-aligned, institutionally strong, and community-driven. He reminded the audience that true impact is not defined by how much is spent, but by what endures when the spotlight fades, calling for collective honesty and collaboration in designing systems that last. Mezuo Nwuneli, Board Chair and Co-founder of Sahel Consulting, emphasised that building resilience in Nigeria's food system is a national imperative as the country's population is projected to exceed 500 million people in the coming decades. He called for homegrown solutions that leverage Nigeria's entrepreneurial spirit and local talent, stressing that transformation requires collective ownership and partnerships that multiply impact. Quoting his words that "legacy is not what we leave for people, but what we leave in people," he urged participants to move from ideas to tangible action that creates lasting change.

Delivering a goodwill message, His Excellency, Peter Obi, commended the conference's focus on reimagining food systems and highlighted Nigeria's vast agricultural potential, highlighting the nation's fertile land and energetic youth population as assets for development. He emphasised that empowering young people and scaling proven local initiatives will be critical to unlocking the country's potential and achieving food self-sufficiency.

His Excellency, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, Honourable Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, reiterated the government's commitment to embedding food system transformation within national economic planning. He emphasised that designing for legacy demands private sector participation, creativity, and value-adding industrialisation. The Minister announced the government's renewed focus on agriculture through policy reforms built on dialogue rather than decree, recognising platforms like the Changemakers Conference as vital for shaping context-specific solutions that leverage Nigeria's 8,809 wards to localise opportunities and stimulate growth across value chains.



Representing the Federal Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, the Director of Nutrition, Mr Nuhu Adamu Kilishi, acknowledged the food system's persistent challenges and called for a collective effort to build systems that adapt, endure, and deliver measurable impact. He emphasised the need to shift from project-based to performance-driven models, strengthen inclusion of women, youth, and displaced people, and design programs with clear exit strategies and accountability frameworks. His message resonated deeply: legacy building means designing systems that outlive projects and ensure no one is left behind.

THEMATIC REFLECTIONS: DESIGNING FOR LEGACY THROUGH VISION, PARTNERSHIP, AND RESILIENCE



Keynote: Catalysing Systems Change Through Enterprise: The New Architecture for Africa's Food Future

The conference's keynote address by Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli, President and CEO of ONE Campaign, the Co-founder of Sahel Consulting and founder of African Food Changemakers, set a reflective tone that blended personal reflection, national challenge, and a clear roadmap for transforming Africa's food systems. Drawing inspiration from her encounter with Norman Borlaug at the 2008 World Food Prize, she recalled his charge to take up the gauntlet to feed the world, a message that continues to guide her mission to secure Africa's food future.

Honouring African changemakers such as Dr Kanayo Nwanze, Wangari Maathai, and Chris Akolade, Ndidi urged participants to define their legacy through impact, not titles. She expressed deep concern about Nigeria's worsening food security and nutrition crisis, noting that many families now survive on a "0-1-0" meal pattern, a stark symbol of deepening poverty and food inaccessibility. "How can our children go to bed hungry in a land as blessed as Nigeria?" she asked, calling on all stakeholders to act collectively because "every Nigerian child is your child."

"How can our children go to bed hungry in a land as blessed as Nigeria?"

Ndidi outlined a four-pillar framework for building legacy-driven, equitable, and resilient food systems:

Vision
developing a clear, shared ambition that ensures every Nigerian can access affordable, nutritious food, with national strategies centred on family well-being and dignity.

Milestones
establishing measurable targets that align government, private sector, and development partners around shared outcomes, while promoting local sourcing and shorter value chains because, as she emphasised, "*the shorter the value chain, the healthier the food.*"

Partnerships
confronting Nigeria's "wicked problems" through humility and collaboration. She urged actors to "*leave egos and logos at the door,*" emphasising that transformation requires shared ownership and ecosystem thinking.

Sustainability and Leadership Succession
embedding resilience through systems that outlive individuals and institutions. "*The greatest legacy of a leader,*" she concluded, "*is that he leaves behind in others the conviction and will to continue the work.*"

Her remarks underscored a simple truth — that legacy is not an abstract ideal but a responsibility to act decisively against hunger, inequality, and systemic fragility.



EXECUTIVE REFLECTIONS

Following the keynote, a high-level Executive Reflection Session explored how partnerships can evolve for lasting food systems transformation. Moderated by Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli, the fireside session featured Dr Michael Ojo (Country Director, Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition - GAIN), Dr Hussaini Abdu (Country Director, CARE), Dr Inga Stefanowicz (Head of Section, Green Economy, EU Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS), Dr Oladoyin Olawaiye (Deputy Country Director, GIZ Nigeria and ECOWAS) and Dr Lekan Tobe (Country Director, Heifer International).

The Panellists agreed that Nigeria's path to food security requires data-driven action, policy coherence, and inclusive partnerships. Dr Michael Ojo highlighted the power of evidence-based decision-making, mentioning tools like the Food Systems Dashboard and Cost of a Healthy Diet Index, which have been institutionalised to support the collation of relevant data for informed decision-making. Building on this, Dr Hussaini addressed the true meaning of partnerships.

He called for partnerships to move beyond collaboration between similar actors, but a connection of multiple structures across society and sectors. Dr Stefanowicz urged a paradigm shift towards policy reforms and private sector-led development, reminding the audience that "no donor money will solve all the problems". Dr Oladoyin presented a more practical approach focused on co-design and sustainability, advocating a move "from projects to systems, from inclusion to leadership". Dr Lekan Tobe shared insights on the importance of grassroots inclusion in driving food systems action. He emphasised that genuine locally led development is grounded in humility: "We should not be afraid of others receiving recognition for the impact. Let's move beyond rhetoric and truly work together—including the voices of those we serve."

In closing, Ndidi affirmed that enduring legacies are built when leaders embrace ecosystem thinking, champion inclusivity, and ensure continuity across generations.

Key Message:

Sustainable food systems transformation in Nigeria demands data-driven action, inclusive and cross-sector partnerships, policy coherence, and genuine local leadership. True impact will come when actors move beyond isolated projects and rhetoric to embrace ecosystem thinking, shared ownership, and continuity across generations.

EXPERT PRESENTATION

Forging Lasting Partnerships: Scaling Climate Information Services Through Public-Private Collaboration



In a technically grounded and visionary presentation, Mr Chinedu Agbara, Partner at Sahel Consulting, highlighted that overlooking climate risk in agricultural and food system investments threatens the foundations of a sustainable legacy. Drawing on data from across Nigeria, he categorised Nigeria's environmental vulnerabilities into three categories: drought and flooding in the North, erratic rainfall in the Middle Belt, and coastal erosion in the South. He noted that in recent years, flooding displaced over 1.3 million people and destroyed extensive farmlands. Explaining the science, he observed that "for every one-degree rise in temperature, the atmosphere holds 7% more water," intensifying both droughts and floods.

Mr Agbara stressed the need to modernise Nigeria's climate data infrastructure, estimating a \$500 million investment gap to establish adequate and operational weather stations. To bridge systemic gaps, he proposed a public-private climate data consortium, modelled after the Nigerian Interbank Settlement System (NIBSS), to co-own and commercialise usable climate data while ensuring free access for vulnerable farmers.

He also outlined a user segmentation model for financing climate services, from smallholders ("anchors") to commercial farmers, banks, and insurers, emphasising that shared value flows are essential for sustainability.

"If government, private investors, and local actors can work together, we can turn risk into opportunity and build a true legacy for Nigeria's food future"

In closing, Mr Agbara shared that, "When we predict weather correctly, we can turn risk into opportunity". He shared a success story from Jigawa State, where farmers used accurate forecasts to double-crop production and yield within one rainy season. He also recognised the efforts of the African Food Changemakers, an NGO which has empowered over 3,000 agribusinesses to integrate climate-smart practices into their operations, yielding profitability increases of up to 30%.

Key Message:

Forging lasting partnerships for climate resilience requires modernising Nigeria's climate data systems through public-private collaboration and shared value models. By investing in robust climate information infrastructure and ensuring accessible, data-driven tools for all farmers, Nigeria can transform climate risks into opportunities, enabling productivity, profitability, and sustainability across the agricultural value chain.



CHANGEMAKERS SPOTLIGHT

This session celebrated the ingenuity and resilience of agripreneurs who are redefining Nigeria's food systems through locally driven innovation, enterprise, youth engagement, and agri-commerce. Their initiatives illustrated how community trust, data-informed strategies, and adaptive business models can drive enduring transformation that outlives donor funding and builds truly sustainable food systems.

Through their work, these leaders illustrated that enduring change is anchored in relationships, consistency, and purpose. Extension Africa showcased a network of 5,000 agents serving over a million farmers across 16 states, transitioning from traditional extension to agribusiness advisory. The Grocery Lady demonstrated market resilience by linking 200 women strawberry farmers to value-added opportunities, turning post-pandemic loss into innovation. Gengle Farms highlighted how modern dairy logistics blended with the traditional pastoral heritage of smallholder rural dairy farmers can drive inclusive livestock development and youth engagement.

The session emphasised that lasting transformation in agriculture is built on trust, consistency, and genuine engagement with farming communities. Entrepreneurs must prioritise integrity and invest in farmers' well-being to sustain credibility. Participants also highlighted the growing importance of digital and data literacy as essential tools for competitiveness and informed decision-making.

Strengthening food safety and quality standards through continuous farmer training was identified as a key to unlocking premium markets. The speakers urged agribusinesses to scale strategically, focusing on depth of impact rather than numbers and to build resilience by anticipating shocks and integrating adaptive, value-adding strategies into their operations.

The speakers shared some key takeaways and recommendations to guide other entrepreneurs on how to thrive in the agricultural sector and truly transform the food system.

- **Lead with purpose, not speed:** Transformation is gradual; build change that lasts, not change that impresses.
- **Value relationships:** Trust is earned through consistency, empathy, and shared problem-solving with farmers.
- **Put dignity at the centre:** Treat farmers as co-creators. Knowledge exchange, not instruction, drives lasting adoption.
- **Strengthen identity and leadership in youth:** Young agripreneurs must define their "why" and grow with intentional mentorship and self-awareness.
- **Measure depth, not reach:** Real impact comes from strengthening existing farmer networks before expanding outward.
- **Scale only after value is created:** Local solutions should mature and prove resilient before expansion.
- **Be consistent and accountable:** Visibility, presence, and clarity build credibility over time.

ACTION ROUNDTABLE ONE

Breaking Barriers:

Youth & Women Entrepreneurs Shaping Policy Commitments

The breakout plenary, anchored by the Mastercard Foundation explored how policy, evidence, and entrepreneurship must intersect to enable greater inclusion of youth and women in the food and agriculture sector. The Policy Innovation Centre (PIC) illustrated the power of participatory policy design through its collaboration with Lagos State on the Women's Economic Empowerment Policy, which grounds reform in market realities



and community feedback on taxation, loan access, and business challenges. This approach is now attracting partners and positioning the model for national replication. Speakers emphasized that while government frameworks aim to guide private sector action, weak coordination and enforcement continue to limit their impact, particularly for women and young people facing barriers to land, finance, and leadership. Ongoing initiatives such as the Bank of Agriculture concessional loans, the National Agricultural Land Development Program, SMEDAN Agribusiness Programs, and the Women's Agriculture Value Expansion Scheme seek to address these gaps, though outreach and accessibility remain uneven. The AfCFTA Implementation Office underscored emerging export opportunities but noted that limited certification literacy and supply consistency constrain participation. At the end of the session, youth entrepreneurs were spotlighted and shared their lived realities of exclusion and adaptation. They reiterated that systemic transformation must be anchored in dignity, access, and continuous skills development.

COMMITMENTS

Kingsley Uzoma

(SSA to the President on Agribusiness and Productivity Enhancement)

To promote visibility and drive policy support for women and youth in Agriculture through multiple channels, including advocacy engagement with the President, leveraging testimonial videos shared by young entrepreneurs who were spotlighted at the changemakers conference

Osasuyi Dirisu

(Executive Director, Policy Innovation Centre (PIC))

The PIC will provide capacity-building, mentorship and finance opportunities for agribusiness owners, especially women and youth, through its annual Hackathon, which opens up in mid-2026.

Franca Achimungu

(Strategy and Planning Coordinator, AfCFTA Implementation Office, Nigeria)

The AfCFTA pledged to expand access to trade and export readiness platforms for women and youth agripreneurs, such that they can easily gain information, understand regional market requirements, and connect to export opportunities

ACTION ROUNDTABLE TWO

Designing Programs for Financial Independence & Anchoring Change in National Systems.

This plenary on Designing Programs for Financial Independence and Anchoring Change in National System was collaboratively anchored by the German Cooperation and the NADF. It explored how development initiatives can transition from donor



dependency to sustainable, nationally anchored financing models. Speakers emphasised that lasting transformation in Nigeria's food systems requires aligning finance with long-term value creation and institutional capacity. Discussions from the Development Bank of Nigeria highlighted the importance of catalytic lending, credit guarantees, and capacity building to empower small and medium enterprises beyond donor cycles. The National Agriculture Development Fund addressed the significant financing gap in agribusiness and outlined new risk-sharing mechanisms to attract private capital and strengthen public-private collaboration. The Bank of Agriculture shared its efforts to drive innovation through partnerships that support seed technology transfer, fertiliser production, and mechanisation hubs to build more resilient rural economies. Sahel Capital urged young entrepreneurs to prioritise execution, partnerships, and practical business validation over theory, emphasising that credibility and collaboration are critical for scaling enterprise-led solutions. The dialogue further expanded to climate-linked finance, with commitments toward reforestation and carbon-credit initiatives that integrate sustainability into agricultural systems. Collectively, the discussions underscored that financial independence in Nigeria's food system will depend on ecosystem-wide accountability, innovation, and partnerships that embed resilience within national structures rather than project cycles.

COMMITMENTS

Maryesther Ezeadi

(Head, Credit Operations & Collections, Development Bank of Nigeria (DBN))

The Development Bank of Nigeria committed to partnering with development finance institutions to expand aggregator programs, leveraging digital platforms to enhance MSME inclusion, and co-creating innovative financing mechanisms with private investors to empower youth and women in agribusiness.

Muhammad Abu Ibrahim

(ES/CEO, National Agriculture Development Fund (NADF))

The National Agricultural Development Fund pledged to integrate innovative programs from development partners within national institutions, scale public-private collaborations with organisations such as the Mastercard Foundation, and ensure that financing reaches smallholder farmers and grassroots enterprises to strengthen inclusive agricultural growth

Ayo Sotinrin

(MD/CEO, Bank of Agriculture (BOA))

The Bank of Agriculture pledged to digitise its financing systems to reduce bureaucracy, expand value chains in partnership with the National Agricultural Development Fund, and strengthen access to quality seeds and mechanisation services for women and youth farmers

ACTION ROUNDTABLE THREE

Strengthening Multi-Agency Governance for Climate Information Services (CIS) in Nigeria

The deliberations from this roundtable plenary session focused on improving institutional coordination, data integrity, and public-private collaboration in climate risk management. The speakers examined how fragmented mandates, limited infrastructure, and weak information-sharing mechanisms continue to hinder effective climate action. Discussions revealed progress in building synergy among agencies,



particularly through recent coordination efforts led by the Office of the Vice President, which brought NiMet, NIHSA, and NEMA into closer alignment on data sharing and national forecasting systems. However, participants emphasised that deeper collaboration and clearer role definition remain essential to prevent overlapping responsibilities and conflicting public communications. Private sector contributions, exemplified by Ignitia's weather intelligence platform, were highlighted as critical to expanding last-mile access to climate information, especially for rural communities that often lack connectivity or early warning systems. The dialogue underscored the importance of establishing joint data standards, strengthening regulatory coherence, and building trust between institutions to ensure reliable and actionable climate information. In their closing remarks, the panellists called for accelerated collaboration between government agencies, the private sector, and NGOs to ensure that climate intelligence directly benefits farmers and local communities, positioning Nigeria for more adaptive and resilient food systems.

COMMITMENTS

Azeez Salawu

(Community Action for Food Security (CAFS))

CAFS commits to double its farmer training reach from 20,000 to 40,000 farmers by 2029, working with partners to enhance productivity, climate resilience, and nutrition-sensitive practices across farming communities.

Mrs Ayobami Oladipo

(Ignitia)

Ignitia commits to deploy advanced data analytics and AI tools to improve climate forecasting accuracy, and deliver timely, location-specific weather insights to smallholder farmers in partnership with NiMet.

Buba Ayuba

(Extension services, Ministry of Agriculture)

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture commits to train 755 extension agents in climate-smart agriculture by 2026, strengthening local capacity to support farmers in adopting sustainable and resilient farming practices across Nigeria.

Chinedu Agbara

(Sahel Consulting)

Sahel Consulting reaffirms its commitment to fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors through a partnership with Michigan State University (MSU) to jointly develop an integrated Climate Information Data Platform to enhance data aggregation, accessibility and interoperability across public and private stakeholders.

VOICES FROM THE CONFERENCE

The conference provided opportunities for reflection, dialogue, networking and co-learning across the multiple engagement platforms, including plenaries, exhibition tours, media interviews and informal conversations in the foyer. This section captures some of the insightful quotes shared by participants reflecting a shared call for systems that are inclusive, resilient, and led by those closest to the challenges and opportunities.

"We must leave our egos and logos at the door. If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go with others—but today, we must go far and fast together"

"Nigeria is a great nation. We need to rise to the challenge, build ecosystems, solve problems, and be proud of the legacy we leave behind"

– Ndidi Nwuneli



"We need to unlock the economic potential of our rural areas, in which over half of the nation's population resides, to accelerate our growth in the country. We cannot do this alone—partnerships are important as this critical ecosystem impacts all of us"

– Mezuo Nwuneli



"True impact is not measured by what is spent but by what endures, by the systems, by the people and by the institutions that remain standing long after the spotlight fades"

– Temitope Adegoroye



"One thing that resonates with young entrepreneurs we work with is that they just don't want to make money, but doing that in a way that has purpose and impact is important to them as well"

– Aisha Hadejia



"In all your projects and investments, if you don't consider the challenges of climate risk, then the issue of legacy will not be there"

"If government, private investors, and local actors can work together, we can turn risk into opportunity and build a true legacy for Nigeria's food"

– Chinedu Agbara



"Let's take on the challenge before us: to create programs that outlive funding cycles, build institutions that endure beyond individuals, and champion initiatives that strengthen the systems sustaining us all"

– Dolapo Adeseye



"Gender inclusion transforms interventions into systems owned by people, not just implemented for people"

"To truly design for legacy, we must recognise care work, unpaid labour, and the invisible contributions that sustain food systems every day"

– Nyabiyadaticha Kadala



VOICES FROM THE CONFERENCE

"Building a resilient and impact-driven food system should be hard-wired into any economic plan... Because it demonstrates the fact that food system transformation is driven by modernisation, innovation and creativity, which are ingredients for development"

– Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu



"We should not be afraid of someone else taking the glory for impact. That is the beginning of wisdom in partnership for food systems transformation"

– Dr Lekan Tobe



"We must shift our focus from simply increasing output to ensuring that value is captured, that waste is minimised, and that smallholder farmers, youth and women are integrated into dynamic, profitable chains"

– Senator Abubakar Kyari



"Nigeria by all means has no reason to be counted among the hungriest countries in the world. We have vast arable land, youths that if supported can help change the system- we can feed ourselves!"

– H.E, Peter Obi



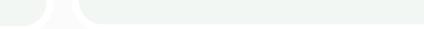
"Nigeria is too big for individual effort; break the silos and work together"

– Dr Hussaini Abdu



"Resilience matters across the entire food chain, but resilience requires tools. Farmers need access to infrastructure that allows them to add value, not just produce raw materials"

– Tope (Loom Cocoa)



"SMEs are the engine of our food system. They are not peripheral; they are central. If we are designing for legacy, we must build models that enable SMEs to grow, scale, and stay resilient"

"Young people need to be present as actors — not waiting to emerge in the future. Leadership spaces must open now"

"Women hold communities together. If they are included meaningfully in decision-making, the outcomes will reflect continuity, care, and collective resilience"

– Dr Michael Ojo



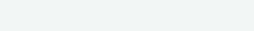
"If we wish to grow and evolve the Nigerian food system, we need to start and focus on evolving our farmers and farms."

– Divine-Favour Iheanacho



"Farming cannot remain just a means of survival. We need innovation, technology, and scale — and we can build globally competitive systems"

– Songy (Agripreneur)



"Transformation requires partnership. We must come together intentionally, make decisions that matter, and hold each other accountable for change"

– Dr Bilkisu Hadejia



EMERGING THEMES

Building on these reflections, the conference distilled its deliberations into key themes that underscore the collective responsibility of all actors to design food systems that are inclusive, enduring, and impact-driven

Collaboration as the Driver of System Transformation

Speakers underscored that no single actor can drive food systems change alone. Meaningful transformation requires shared leadership, coordinated planning, and collective accountability across public institutions, private sector players, and communities. Collaboration fosters trust, optimises resources, and strengthens the systems that sustain progress.

Scaling Homegrown Solutions to Unlock National Potential

Nigeria's agricultural future depends on amplifying innovations that emerge from local contexts. Agribusiness models, digital platforms, and climate-smart practices developed by local entrepreneurs demonstrate scalable pathways for national transformation. With the right policy support and investments, these innovations can transition from pilots to market-ready solutions.

Policy and Investment Frameworks That Enable Systems to Last

Participants emphasised the importance of embedding food systems reform into national development and industrial strategies. Long-term success depends on policies that de-risk agriculture, promote value addition, and align incentives with market realities. Evidence-based policymaking ensures that institutional reforms outlive project cycles and political transitions.

From Projects to Performance: Building Resilient and Inclusive Systems

True legacy is measured not by completed projects but by enduring impact. Systems must be designed for resilience, inclusion, and accountability, where women, youth, and vulnerable groups play central roles in shaping and sustaining change. This shift from project-driven to performance-based programming is key to achieving sustainable outcomes.

Financing for Independence and Institutional Anchoring

Financial independence emerged as a central condition for sustainable transformation. Moving from donor-funded initiatives to blended finance, catalytic lending, and domestic capital mobilisation will strengthen national ownership. Development finance must be designed to empower local enterprises and anchor investments within lasting institutional structures.

Data, Evidence, and Climate Intelligence as Enablers of Change

The conference highlighted the urgency of building harmonised and accessible data systems. Reliable climate and agricultural information enable better risk prediction, investment targeting, and policy coherence. Strengthening coordination among agencies such as NiMet, NIHSA, and NEMA—and partnering with private innovators—will improve climate resilience and decision-making.

Youth and Gender Inclusion as Cornerstones of Sustainability

Inclusive systems are stronger systems. Empowering women and youth as co-creators—not beneficiaries—ensures innovation, continuity, and equitable growth. Expanding access to finance, land, and leadership opportunities for these groups is critical to building a food system that is just productive, and future-oriented

Leadership and Accountability for Lasting Impact

Sustainable transformation requires visionary leadership grounded in transparency, collaboration, and shared stewardship. The conference called for institutional leadership that prioritises continuity and accountability over short-term gains. Strong governance and succession planning are vital to preserve institutional memory and sustain progress across generations.



CONCLUSION

As the conference drew to a close, participants were reminded that the true measure of progress in transforming food and agriculture systems lies not in short-term achievements but in the enduring impact left behind. Dolapo Adeseye, Chief Financial Officer of Sahel Consulting, emphasised that designing for legacy means building institutions, partnerships, and models that withstand time; anchored in community ownership, strengthened through collaboration, and driven by innovation and accountability. He noted that sustaining change requires patience, shared vision, and collective action across public, private, and civic actors. Reaffirming Sahel Consulting's commitment, he highlighted the firm's dedication to advancing inclusive, resilient, and market-responsive systems that place people at the centre of development. The convening concluded with a shared resolve to continue working together toward a future where Africa's food systems are not only productive but also equitable, sustainable, and capable of nourishing generations to come.

