



Agricultural Transformation Summit

Bingu International Convention Center (BICC), Lilongwe, Malawi
December 4-5, 2018

Speaker Biographies



Giselle Aris manages strategic partnerships and initiatives for Land O'Lakes International Development, and is the organization's subject matter expert for inclusive finance and enterprise development. Since 2011, Giselle has provided technical leadership in the design and execution of agriculture development projects across Africa and Asia, with a particular focus on attracting private investment; accelerating the investment-readiness of small- and medium-sized businesses; facilitating economic diversification of smallholder farmers; and financial modeling. Prior to joining Land O'Lakes Giselle spent two years working in India's dairy sector. She has also worked with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Women's Campaign International and the U.S. Department of State Africa Bureau. Giselle holds a master's degree in International Development from the University of Oxford, where she was a Thouron Scholar, and a summa cum laude bachelor's degree in African Studies from the University of Pennsylvania. Giselle received her MBA from the Wharton School and served for two years as the Director of Investments at Wharton Impact Investing Partners.



Ani Charles Bassey-Eyo is a visionary business leader with expertise in the development and strategic growth of start-up enterprises in the not-for-profit, education, finance, consulting and tech sectors, coupled with an impressive operational background in corporate treasury, change, transformation and project leadership in international tier-one finance environments.

A Fellow Chartered Accountant and Corporate Treasurer (AMCT), he is a portfolio entrepreneur operating in sub-Saharan Africa, and in particular Nigeria. Ani is the CEO of the LANI Group which is comprised of investment holdings in diverse industry sectors such as learning and development (Axiom Learning Solutions, which he co-founded); agro-processing (Sehai Foods, a company that he also co-founded) as well as entities in the professional services, tax management and financial training domains.

His interest in agriculture is largely in apiculture. Sehai Foods processes honey, beeswax, and high-value apiculture produce for food and industrial uses both for the local and international markets. Ani has been innovative in tackling a largely fragmented value chain through public private partnerships, sustainable practices (e.g. linking educations and skills to farming to transform the sector) and upscale quality and quantity of output.

His professional career trajectory (prior to the launch of his entrepreneurial career) includes strategic and operational leadership in functional areas such as corporate treasury, where he achieved the implementation of a Pan-European liquidity management framework as Group Treasury Manager of Polo Ralph Lauren Europe as far back as 2003. He is also an expert on IFRS implementation and has been involved in several large-scale change initiatives in global financial institutions and corporations.

A social entrepreneur, he is involved in social issues such as children's right issues, innovative financing for education, mentoring and self development. He directs social change initiatives under the auspices of the LANI Foundation (the philanthropy arm of LANI Group) where he serves as a founding board trustee) and chairs the think tank International Conference on Disabilities (ICD) comprised of international and local strategic public, private and third sector organisations.

Ani earned a BSc. in Accounting and Finance from the University of Hull and subsequently gained a Post Graduate Diploma in International Tax Law from the University of London. As a subject matter expert in treasury and risk management for sub-Saharan Africa he has authored *The Nigeria Country Guide* in the *International Treasurers Handbook* and *The Asia Treasurers Handbook* published by the JP Morgan and the Association of Corporate Treasurers (UK) for several years. He is a speaker at local and international events and an active advocate for social change.



Gama Bandawe is head of the Department of Biological Sciences in the Academy of Medical Sciences at the Malawi University of Science and Technology. He holds a BSc in microbiology and biochemistry, an MSc in molecular and cell biology and a PhD in medical virology all from the University of Cape Town in South Africa. His postgraduate studies were funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York Research Scholarship Award, the Poliomyelitis Research Foundation of South Africa Postgraduate Scholarship Award and the Canada – Africa Prevention Trials Network Academic Scholarship Award. He was also a Columbia University – Southern Africa Fogarty AITRP Traineeship Awardee and his traineeship was taken up at Duke University Centre for AIDS Research. He was awarded the Colin Kaplan Prize 2014 from the University of Cape Town's Division of Medical Virology in 2014.

Dr. Bandawe has extensive experience in medical virology research, laboratory management and publication having worked with several global consortia including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation-funded Centres for HIV/AIDS Vaccine Immunology (CHAVI), the Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise (GHAVE), and the Centre for the AIDS Program of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA).

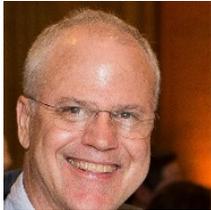
In 2018, Dr. Bandawe and the department became awardees of the Instrumental Access Program of Seeding Labs. He sits on the National Health Sciences Research Committee and is a reviewer for the Malawi Medical Journal.



Frederik Benzel leads CrossBoundary's investment advisory team in Johannesburg. Prior to joining CrossBoundary, he spent seven years in Rothschild's Global Financial Advisory business in Johannesburg, where he provided M&A, strategic and stakeholder advice to multinationals, private equity firms and state-owned entities across multiple sectors. He was also responsible for advancing Rothschild's foray into continental Africa, attending WEF Africa and leading the execution of assignments in Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya. Mr. Benzel started his career in Rothschild's retail M&A team in London, and also worked as Head of M&A for a Munich-based restructuring investor. He holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Business Management from University of Münster, and completed an Erasmus scholarship year at Strathclyde University, Glasgow. He is originally from Germany.



Bouke Bijl is a Project Manager at Agricane Consulting Ltd. Previously, he has acted as Agriculture Manager at Lujeri Tea Estate, Estate Manager for the Coffee and Macademia Estate, and Agronomist at Nchalo Estate. He holds a B.A. in Agriculture and an M.Sc. in Land Resource Management from Wageningen University.



Peter Boone is a Director of Economic Growth at Palladium. Previously, he was Vice President at Carana Corporation. He has led more than 50 economic development projects in a total of 40 countries and in more than a dozen U.S. states and regions, specializing in economic competitiveness and value-chain development. Peter has also held such positions as Principal Economist at SRI International, Assistant Secretary for Papua New Guinea's Department of Agriculture, Economist at the World Bank, and Volunteer for the U.S. Peace Corps in Togo. Mr. Boone holds an M.S. in International Economics from Cornell University and a B.A. in American Studies from Colby College.



Alexander Bulirani is the Controller of Agriculture Services in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Water Development.



Kondwani Chijota is Founder and Head of Growth at GGEM Farming. Kondwani began his working career as an intellectual property lawyer in the UK and then Zimbabwe. Following his move to Zimbabwe in 2009, he quickly fell in love with farming. He traded law for agriculture and began a new career in commercial production, specializing in high value commodity farming and marketing in both Zimbabwe and Malawi. After moving back home to Malawi in 2013, he was met with new challenges which prompted his interest in designing and piloting rural farmer-friendly production solutions. The result: GGEM Farming services that enables commercialized production through an Ethical Market Platform that has already up-skilled and created a production pipeline of nearly 2000 farmers in central Malawi. His extensive experience in managing multiple commercial commodity production projects with smallholder farmers allowed him to develop holistic services that ensure quality, quantity and consistency in supplying the market. GGEM Farming was later launched as a social enterprise in 2016 with the aim of further developing robust, cohesive and competitive market access for rural farmers, that integrate tech savvy pre- and post-harvest solutions to bolster supply and meet demand. Kondwani's overall motivation is to establish GGEM Farming as Malawi's premier agri-solution that boosts rural commercial farming productivity through targeted investment and long-term smallholder farmer engagement.



Betty Chinyamunyamu is a Development Economist with extensive knowledge and experience in agribusiness development, food security, rural development, project development and management, policy and advocacy, farmer organization development and management, and women's economic empowerment.

She is currently the Chief Executive Officer for the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM) - Malawi's largest independent smallholder farmer organization with a membership of over 130,000 farmers and an annual turnover of around US\$20 million from non-tobacco crops. Previously, she worked as a Policy and Programmes Manager for an agribusiness project managed by ACIDI/VOCA. She has also held various positions in NASFAM including Programmes Manager, Development Director, and Deputy CEO.

She has also participated extensively in national policy processes, having been involved in the development of almost all national development and agricultural-related policies in Malawi. The highlight of this work was a policy advocacy campaign that she led in the early 2000s that culminated in the administrative removal of withholding tax from smallholder farmers selling their crop on the Tobacco Auction Floors.

Dr. Chinyamunyamu is a Board Member of several organizations in Malawi and the Southern Africa region including the Economics Association of Malawi (ECAMA) and the SADC-founded Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA). She has a Bachelor's degree in Economics (distinction) from Chancellor College, University of Malawi; a Master's degree in Development Studies (distinction) from the University of Cambridge (UK); and a PhD from the University of Leeds (UK).



José Maria Costa serves as Executive Vice President – Value-Added Agricultural Products for Pyxus International, Inc. Most recently, he served as Executive Vice President – Global Operations & Supply Chain for the company's leaf business, where he helped chart the course in strengthening the company's agronomic operations. Prior to joining the Alliance One executive team, he served as the company's Regional Director – Europe from September 2008 through July 2012, and as Regional Financial Director – Europe from April 2005 through August 2008.



Alexander D'Hooghe is an Associate Professor of Architectural Urbanism at MIT and Co-Director of the MIT Center for Advanced Urbanism. He is also a founding partner of ORG Permanent Modernity, a firm operating from the Netherlands, Belgium, and the United States to impact urban design and research worldwide. He holds a PhD from the Berlage Institute, a Master of Architecture in Urban Design from the Harvard Design School, and a Master in Architectural Engineering from K.U. Leuven.



Richard Ferguson is the Managing Director and Founder of Ferguson Cardo and Investment Advisor for the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. His career began in 1989 with the British Linen Bank, an Edinburgh-based investment bank. In 1993, he relocated to Hong Kong where he became the first European to work for a Chinese investment bank. He spent nine years in Asia working as an analyst covering mostly the telecoms, media and technology sectors for Shanghai International, Schrodgers and Nomura. After a four-year spell in Latin America and Paris, Richard re-located to London as a founding member of Nomura's new emerging markets group. During this period he formed an agriculture research function for the bank. After a spell at Moscow-based Renaissance Capital, Richard established Ferguson Cardo, an agribusiness consultancy. He has worked on many agribusiness fundraisings in Latin America (Libero Holdings), Africa (Feronia, Zambeef) and the CIS (Black Earth Farming, RusAgro, PhosAgro). He has also provided independent strategic advice to various companies and organisations including Black Earth Farming in Russia, Feronia in the DRC, Agrokultura in Ukraine, Amorim SA in Portugal, the Centre for Agriculture & Biosciences International and PwC LLP in the UK. Richard holds degrees from the University of Strathclyde in Scotland and L'Ecole Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées in Paris.



Dimitri Giannakis is Director of Farmer's World.



Isaac B Gokah is a Trade Adviser for the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism under The Commonwealth Secretariat "Hub & Spokes" Programme. Previously, he worked with the Ghanaian Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning as an Economics Officer for close to 8 years. He has over 12 years' experience and expertise in economic and trade policy formulation and implementation. Notable works include the Malawi National Export Strategy, Trade Facilitation Action Plan (I), Malawi Programme for Aflatoxin Control (MAPAC), and Malawi Trade Negotiation and Management Strategy. Mr. Gokah holds a Master's Degree in International Law and Economics from the World Trade Institute at the University of Bern, Switzerland, and a First degree in Economics from the University of Ghana.



Andrew Goodman is currently working as Director at Horizon Farming Ltd, Project and Operations Manager at Lisungwi Estate, and Project Coordinator on the Horizon Anchor Farm Integrated Services (HAFIS) Project in partnership with USAID Feed the Future's Malawi Ag Diversification Activity and the Peanut Mycotoxin Innovation Lab/Soya Innovation Lab. He previously worked for Exagris Africa Limited as a Management Trainee, and at Horizon Farming Ltd as Assistant Farm Manager. Andrew studied Agriculture at Sparshot College in the United Kingdom.



Rob Henning is Director of Agriculture and Economic Diversification Programs at the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. Rob spearheads the Foundation's work to help prepare smallholder tobacco farmers for a smoke-free future by designing, funding, and managing programs that will drive diversified and inclusive economic growth in tobacco-dependent economies.

Rob has 20 years of experience at all levels of emerging economies with expertise in promoting investment and economic growth in developing countries. He has worked at all levels of frontier markets, from the grassroots to the boardroom, to help create prosperity with a focus on entrepreneurship, value chain strategy development, frontier market investing and market research. Prior to joining the Foundation, Rob was a Director at Chemonics International where he developed and set the strategy for new business efforts in the agricultural sector for a range of clients including USAID, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and corporate clients.

Earlier in his career, Rob co-founded and led ESPartners, an advisory and investment firm focused on entrepreneurship, private sector development, and SME investment in developing countries. Rob also worked at OTF Group, where he led long-term competitiveness initiatives in multiple fragile economies such as Rwanda, Afghanistan, and Haiti. His first foray into international development was as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer in Benin and Guinea-Conakry, West Africa, where he was small enterprise development advisor.

Rob is based in Washington, DC. He has an MBA from the McDonough School of Business at Georgetown University and a BA from the University of Vermont.



Abdulrazak Ibrahim is an agricultural biotechnologist trained in the Brazilian Agricultural Research for Development (AR4D) System of EMBRAPA. He has worked as a Research Officer in Jigawa State Agricultural Research Institute, Nigeria (from 2000), and later (2008) joined the Department of Biochemistry of Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Nigeria, where he rose to the rank of Senior Lecturer. He currently facilitates capacity development activities for the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA).

He has taught several courses in biology, biochemistry, plant science, agricultural biotechnology, nutrition, biosafety etc., at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels and has supervised both PhDs and MSc students. He was involved in the development of a national agenda and policy on agricultural biotechnology in Nigeria and serves as a resource person for the country's Biotechnology Development Agency. He has participated and facilitated trainings and workshops on AR4D in Africa and Brazil including capacity development and intercontinental technology delivery and scaling activities involving FARA and other development partners. He is the Assistant Editor-in-Chief of the Nigerian Journal of Biotechnology and has published several articles in peer reviewed journals, conference papers, policy briefs, and technical notes. He holds a doctorate degree in Molecular Biology from Universidade de Brasilia, Brazil, where he spent 5 years in the EMBRAPA Center for Genetic Resources, a Master's degree in Plant Biochemistry from Universidade Federal de Ceara, Brazil and a BSc degree in Biochemistry from Bayero University, Kano, Nigeria.



Prince Kapondamgaga is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Farmers Union of Malawi (FUM), an umbrella body for farmers in Malawi, and the President of the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry. As CEO of FUM, Prince heads the senior management team which is responsible for the strategic management of FUM. Prince has 15 years of experience in agribusiness development projects and programme/grants management, financial management, strategic management and monitoring and evaluation. Prior to joining Farmers Union, he held a number of senior positions in other organizations such as World Vision and Concern Universal. Prince Kapondamgaga is a holder of a BSc in Agriculture and an MSc in Crop Science obtained at the University of Malawi, Bunda College of Agriculture.



Rizvaan Khan is a Programs Manager for Agricultural and Economic Diversification at the Agricultural Transformation Initiative, where he manages program development and operations. He is responsible for securing internal and external partners to design, implement, and manage grant and investment programs that provide income diversification opportunities for smallholder farmers in Malawi.

Rizvaan has over 18 years of commercial and developmental experience in the agriculture and horticulture sector. He has spent much of his career in Africa, working in Malawi, Mozambique, Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In his previous roles, Rizvaan supported the development and funding of agriculture-based commercial out-grower schemes in Malawi and Mozambique where he promoted business linkages of commercial farmers to markets. He also served as a Business Associate for AgDevCo, where he oversaw general program and investment operations, scoping potential investments that were applicable to country portfolios.

Earlier in his career, Rizvaan was a Senior Business Advisor for TechnoServe Inc., where he developed and advised horticulture and agriculture development initiatives. Rizvaan also oversaw business management and development for the USAID-funded Emprenda program that developed horticulture activities in the Beira Corridor in Mozambique.



Economics.

Kobus Louw is General Manager, Group Credit at FMBcapital Holdings Plc, holding company of First Capital Bank Plc Malawi. He previously worked as Head of Business Banking for First National Bank, Namibia. Kobus has over 30 years' experience in the financial services sector, having worked for two of the largest banks in South Africa in a range of capacities. He holds an MPhil in Futures Studies, an MBA and a Bachelor of



Jim Lutzweiler, a public policy and market development expert, is Vice President of Agriculture and Livelihoods at the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. He has more than 20 years of experience developing public-private partnerships to reduce food insecurity globally, and spent a decade working and living in West and Central Africa while focused on agriculture program design and implementation, market development and policy formulation. Before joining the Foundation, Jim was senior director of global public policy at PepsiCo where he developed strategies to encourage consumer uptake of healthier food and beverage alternatives. Prior to his position at PepsiCo, Jim served as vice president of AARP Foundation, a U.S.-based

nonprofit that provides people age 50 and over with programs and services related to housing, hunger, income and isolation. He was also a founding member of the Root Cause Coalition, a diverse group of hospital systems, nonprofits, and corporate partners dedicated to making hunger a health issue embedded within the social determinants of health. Jim has also served in leadership roles with Joint Aid Management, World Vision and Catholic Relief Services.

Jim is originally from New Jersey, United States, and has an MA from Duquesne University in policy analysis, as well as a BA in political science and philosophy from Hope College.



Richard Mkandawire is a Socio-economist and a Rural Development expert. He is currently the Africa Director of the Alliance for African Partnership (AAP) Secretariat and the Chairman of the Malawi Planning Commission. Before joining AAP, he worked as Vice President of the African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership where he led a team of experts in driving innovative interventions for efficient and effective delivery of fertilizers among smallholder farmers in Africa. Prior to joining AFAP, Prof. Mkandawire was Senior Advisor to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), where he was the principal architect of NEPAD's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Program (CAADP) and a catalyzer for its acceptance by African Heads of State and Donor Agencies. During CAADP's critical initial decade, he served as CAADP's heart and soul, as well as its public face.

Prof. Mkandawire's academic career includes teaching and research at Bunda College of Agriculture (LUANAR) where he was at the helm of leadership in the establishment of the Centre for Agriculture Research and Development (CARD). He also served as an external examiner to a number of Universities in East and Southern Africa. Prof. Mkandawire's development initiatives have been recognized across the continent. In 2008 he received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of Kwazulu Natal for his work in spearheading the CAADP agenda, and was also an awardee of "Drivers of Change" for his leadership in driving CAADP acceptance by African Heads of State and Governments and development partners. In 2012 the University of Pretoria appointed him as "Extra-Ordinary Professor" for his contribution to spearheading agriculture transformation in Africa.



Stellah Mutoni is a Programs Manager for Agriculture and Economic Diversification at the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. In this role, she oversees the Agricultural Transformation Initiative's program development and operations. Based in Malawi, Stellah is responsible for securing internal and external partners to design, implement, and manage grant and investment programs that provide income diversification opportunities for smallholder farmers.

Stellah is a finance professional with extensive experience in risk management, impact fund management, and microfinance, as well as small and medium enterprises investing in North America and Africa. In her previous roles, Stellah has contributed to creating economic opportunities for excluded segments of the population, predominantly in agriculture, applying both quantitative and qualitative analysis to ensure that resources are directed into investments that optimize transformational impact.

Previously, Stellah served as Senior Associate Financial Standards Manager for Export Development Canada's Risk Management team, where she was responsible for obligor and sovereign risk analysis to generate pre-deal risk ratings and perform ongoing covenant monitoring.

Stellah has also worked as a Consulting Grants Officer for the Malawi Innovation Challenge Fund, where she analyzed financial and social impact, pre- and post-disbursement. Additionally, she was a co-founder of GreenRoot Finance Limited, a micro-financing company that offered credit to low income employees and women entrepreneurs using alternative means of collateral or structuring to reduce risk to a commercially viable level.

Stellah is fluent in English, French, Swahili, Tumbuka, and Chewa, and has a Bachelor of Commerce degree with option in Finance from the University of Ottawa, Canada.

George Mwale is the President of Rotary Club of Lilongwe.



Ronald Ngwira is the Leaf Production Director for Alliance One Tobacco Malawi Ltd and has portfolio responsibility for the Smallholder Operations, Direct Commercial Farming and Forestry Divisions. He has been in the Tobacco Industry since 2003. He has worked in the Agribusiness sector for 24 years in various roles and sectors and has a wide range of experience in small scale and commercial input and output marketing with organizations such as NASFAM. He has also served on boards of institutions including ARET, Bunda Farm MAAFAS and Lilongwe Wildlife Trust. He is passionate for development of the agricultural base and improvement of livelihoods and productivity within the sector. He has a MSc in Project Management from University of Bolton and a BSc from University of Malawi. Married with 2 daughters and a passionate farmer at heart.



Maness Nkhata is the Managing Director of Kakoma Estate and Lakeshore Agro-Processors Enterprise (LAPE). Maness grew up in Malawi, and became an entrepreneur in 2008 after finding herself unable to find a formal job. Leveraging her background in farming, she has now been implementing and managing projects for more than 8 years. Because of her achievements in farming and agro-processing, she became first ever Board Chairperson for the National Youth Council of Malawi at the age of below 30. She has experience working with development partners such as USAID, IFAD, USDA, NORAD, the public sector, and the private sector, as well as with multi stakeholder set-ups. Because of her work as a youth, Maness studied with Southern University Agri Centre in Louisiana and CGIAR in Nairobi, where she got her Certificate in Agribusiness and Entrepreneurship and Certificate in Women Leadership and Management, respectively. She is also a young Ambassador for the Southern African Confederation of Agriculture Unions (SACAU). Maness holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from The Malawi Polytechnic, a constituent college of the University of Malawi.



Candida Nakhumwa is the Foundation for a Smoke Free World's Country Director for Malawi. Dr. Nakhumwa manages the Foundation's agricultural transformation activities in the country. She works closely with smallholder farmer organizations and private sector to identify and develop structured value chains that will promote transformation and inclusive growth for Malawian farmers. She is also responsible for management of strategic partnerships with government, private sector, development partners and civil society in the agriculture sector in Malawi.

Dr. Nakhumwa has extensive experience in agricultural marketing and agribusiness and has collaborated with government and key stakeholders to establish agriculture, trade and finance policies. She has spent most of her career working on the development of farmers and farming organizations in Malawi, including managing contract farming initiatives and connections to input and output markets. Most recently, Dr. Nakhumwa served as Director of Research, Policy and Partnerships at the Farmers Union of Malawi, where she coordinated research, policy engagement, strategic partnerships, evaluation, and communication and knowledge systems to support the organization's mission and purpose.

Dr. Nakhumwa currently sits on the board of the NICO Life Insurance Company, NICO Pensions and Bunda Farm Limited and is active in several other government-led technical working groups. She holds a doctorate in agricultural economics from the University of Greenwich, U.K. She also earned her master and bachelor of science degrees in agricultural economics and agriculture, respectively, from the University of Malawi.



Femi Oke is an international journalist, writer and moderator. Since the 1980s, she has worked for BBC television and radio, Sky TV, all U.K. terrestrial television networks, CNN and U.S. public radio. Oke's reporting has been recognized by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Communications Agency and InterAction. Femi is currently based in Washington, D.C., where she hosts the interactive current affairs programme "The Stream" for Al Jazeera English. She is also social media correspondent for NPR's Here and Now, and an international moderator, facilitator and mistress of ceremonies. She holds a B.A. in English Literature and Language from the University of Birmingham.



Umezuruike Linus Opara is a Distinguished Professor at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, where he also holds the South African Research Chair in Postharvest Technology. A chartered agricultural engineer and certified food scientist with a background in agricultural mechanization, he has worked in the private sector and universities in Africa, Asia and Oceania for the past 30 years. He was a lead author of the agricultural mechanization component of the 1998-2004 Agricultural Development Plan of Nigeria. He has developed and implemented in-country training programmes on postharvest management in many countries, and provided both policy and technical advice to international agencies such as the FAO of the United Nations, where he was a member of the lead team that formulated the medium-term agricultural development of Timor-Leste (formerly East Timor).

His current research activities focus on novel technologies linking agricultural production to markets, underpinned by building human, infrastructural and institutional capacities. Prof Opara is the founding editor-in-chief of the International Journal of Postharvest Technology and Innovation, founding President of

the Pan African Society for Agricultural Engineering and In-coming President of the International Commission of Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering. His numerous awards and honours include the IMPRESSA Award for “excellence in research and building Africa’s human resources capacity”. He is the 2016 Laureate of the African Union Kwame Nkrumah Continental Prize for Earth and Life Science and a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa. Prof Opara is a highly sought-after keynote speaker on agricultural transformation and food security issues.



Lauren Rawlings is a Senior Advisor at Enclude, with extensive experience developing inclusive business models and inclusive finance solutions in sectors including finance, telecoms, healthcare, and agribusiness. In East and Southern Africa she advised a food and beverage company and an agricultural commodities company on large transactions including interventions to empower smallholder farmers and SMEs to become more productive and reliable suppliers.



Kobi Ruthenberg is an Associate Director in Urbanism at ORG Permanent Modernity, and manages ORG New York. Before joining the firm, Kobi was a research associate at the MIT Center for Advanced Urbanism, specializing in regional resiliency planning. He also practiced both architecture and urbanism in Israel, Africa, China and the U.S. He has been a lecturer in Urban Design at Northeastern University and a visiting design critic at several architecture and planning schools in the US. Ruthenberg obtained his post-professional Masters in Architecture and Urbanism at MIT in 2013 and his Bachelors in Architecture from the Israel Institute of Technology (Technion) in 2008.

Hugh Saunders is Managing Director of Alliance One Malawi.



Matt Shakhovskoy is a Senior Advisor to the Initiative for Smallholder Finance, a multi-donor effort designed to demonstrate how specific products and services can expand the reach of financing for smallholder farmers. Matt previously worked in the areas of private equity and development advisory for a number of leading organizations including Agis Investments, Dalberg, and Deloitte. Over this time Matt has been involved in over 70 projects in 30 countries working with partners such as the Gates Foundation, the World Bank, USAID, MTN, and the G8. Matt holds a MSc in Sustainable Development from the University of London and a Bachelors of Business and Economics from the University of Queensland.



Rachel Sibande is founder of mHub, Malawi’s first technology and innovation hub. She is also Program Director, Africa for the Digital Impact Alliance at the United Nations Foundation. Rachel has managed development projects in agriculture, gender, youth development, business, technology, democracy, and governance in Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. She has also managed partnerships with a diverse range of funders and corporations such as USAID, FICA, GIZ, UNICEF, Google and Facebook, among others. Rachel is a Google Awardee, an alumna of President Obama’s Young African Leaders Initiative and an Ambassador to the Next Einstein Forum Initiative. In 2016, Rachel was named by Forbes as one of Africa’s most promising young entrepreneurs under 30. Rachel holds a PhD

in Computer Science from Rhodes University, a Master's Degree in Information Theory, Coding and Cryptography from Mzuzu University, and a B.S. in Computer Science and Statistics from the University of Malawi.



Maya Khonje-Stewart has over 10 years work experience in the private and NGO sector of Malawi. An advocate for livestock derived foods and international trade, Maya is avidly involved in the poultry and animal feed industry coupled with commodity trading for the export market. She is a highly experienced strategist with a strong understanding of the African market through years of experience in regional business and trade. As a female, she also appreciates through experience the opportunities and challenges that are faced by fellow women in the agricultural sector. As a result, Maya has developed and implemented several programs over the years in Malawi with exceedingly high success rates specifically in rural agripreneurship. These programs have grown over the years with resultant increased incomes at the local level on an annual basis. Maya is skilled in business development, sales and logistics, project management, budgeting and negotiation. She is also a founder/investor/director in several businesses in the agriculture and energy sector of Malawi and sits on several boards including other environmental sector INGOs and is a service champion as a proud Rotarian.



Felix Thole is CEO of The Tobacco Association of Malawi (TAMA). Mr. Thole is a Bunda College of Agriculture (LUANAR) graduate with a wide and rich experience in tobacco classification. He is the longest serving member of staff of TAMA and a repository of institutional knowledge. Mr. Thole is highly respected in research and monitoring markets and tracks business trends of the local and global tobacco industry with a view to the constant re-positioning of TAMA.



Eduardo Tugendhat is Director of Thought Leadership at Palladium. Throughout his 36-year career, Eduardo has designed and executed market-led approaches to accelerate inclusive economic growth and generate employment opportunities. He is a recognized expert in the areas of inclusive supply chain solutions and has particular expertise in crafting and managing public-private alliances. He has worked in a total of 64 countries generating private sector investments and transforming value chains across industries ranging from agriculture to financial services. Eduardo was co-founder and CEO of CARANA Corporation, now part of Palladium. Prior to Palladium and CARANA, Eduardo was a senior management consultant at Arthur D. Little. He has an AB from Harvard University and an MA from University of Wisconsin.



Melia Ungson is Senior Data Analyst at Fraym, where she applies geo-spatial and econometric analysis to client questions related to development and security. Melia is interested in using data to inform decisions at the intersection of environmental and development challenges. Prior to Fraym, Melia conducted Fulbright field research on urban waste management, analyzed climate change vulnerability at the Center for Development and Environment, and examined the impact of rubber cultivation on poverty in Laos. She has a BA in Global Affairs and International Development from Yale and an MIA in International Environmental Policy and Southeast Asia from UC San Diego.



Elizabeth Schultz Venable is an economics and evaluation consultant living in Lilongwe, Malawi. She served as a staff economist at the White House Council of Economic Advisers during both the Bush and Obama administrations, where she covered international finance, banking and aid. Elizabeth subsequently worked on economic policy and aid effectiveness issues for the Millennium Challenge Corporation, the U.S. Treasury Department, and the Ministry of Finance of Guyana. She also spent three years in Ghana managing randomized evaluations of microinsurance and governance projects, and traveling the country by motorcycle.



Dr. Derek Yach, a global health expert and anti-smoking advocate for more than 30 years, is the president of the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World. Dr. Yach is a former World Health Organization (WHO) cabinet director and executive director for noncommunicable diseases and mental health, where he was deeply involved with the development of the world's treaty on tobacco control, the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. He is also the former chief health officer of the Vitality Group, executive director of the Vitality Institute, SVP global health and agriculture policy at PepsiCo, director of global health at the Rockefeller Foundation, and a professor of global health at Yale University. He has authored or co-authored more than 250 peer-reviewed articles on global health and has served on several advisory boards, including the World Economic Forum, Cornerstone Capital and the Wellcome Trust. From 2007 to 2016, he served on the program advisory committee of the Clinton Global Initiative.

Dr. Yach is a native of South Africa and has an honorary DSc from Georgetown University, MBChB from the University of Cape Town, BSc (Hons Epi) from the University of Stellenbosch, and an MPH from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.