

8 MARCH 2025

International Women's Day Conference 2025

"Empowering Women in Agriculture: Navigating Peace, Conflict, and Food Security"

Conference Programme



Agenda at a Glance

Registration	08:30-9:00
Welcome Address and Keynote	09:00-9:30
Panel 1	09:30-10:30
Networking Coffee Break	10:30-11:00
Panel 2	11:00-12:15
Lunch Break	12:15-13:15
Breakout Sessions	13:15-14:30
Break	14:30-15:00
Panel 3	15:00-16:15
Closing Address	16:15-17:00

Empowering Women in Agriculture: Navigating Peace, Conflict, and Food Security

Saturday 8 March 2025 (International Women's Day)

This Women's Day Conference aims to promote women-led innovation and advocacy in agriculture across Africa, address critical issues, and pave the way for sustainable development and peace. Across Africa, approximately 68 per cent of the labour force work in agriculture and the continent has one of the largest representations of women working in agriculture in the world. The agricultural landscape is changing rapidly across Africa with climate change presenting huge challenges not only to environments and economies, but to people's livelihoods, cultures, and identities. In the wake of accelerated environmental and social change, structural inequalities, gendered relations of power, and conflict continue to constrain women's full participation in agricultural activities. Despite these very real challenges, women are forging new pathways for agricultural innovation that address the critical issues of sustainability, inequality, and peace.



This event is co-hosted by the Arab International Women's Forum, the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa, The Centre for Women, Peace and Security, The LSE International Development Department and the LSE Middle East Centre. On International Women's Day 2025, it will platform the diverse voices of women who work or are involved in the agricultural sector and who are leading the way within their own communities and internationally to make the sector sustainable.

Programme

Welcome Keynotes



HAIFA AL KAYLANI OBE

President & Founder, Arab International Women's Forum, Advisory Council Member, World Agriculture Forum



DR CAROLINE GREEN

Manager, Centre for Women, Peace and Security, LSE



NDIDI OKONKWO NWUNELI

President & CEO, ONE Campaign

Bios



HAIFA AL KAYLANI OBE

Haifa Fahoum Al Kaylani OBE is President & Founder of the Arab International Women's Forum, a Harvard Advanced Leadership Initiative Fellow 2017, and Commissioner of the ILO Global Commission on the Future of Work 2017-2019. She is recognised in Arab and international governments, private sector, and NGO circles as an agent of change and a sought-after thought leader and speaker at major international public forums, conferences, and bilateral initiatives. She is globally renowned for her deep knowledge of, and commitment to, women's leadership and youth empowerment, diversity and inclusion, food and water security, education, sustainability, and the future of work. She works for progress, inclusion, peace, and prosperity in the Arab region and internationally. She was appointed an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) in King Charles' 2024 New Year Honours List in recognition of her services to Women, Young People and Cultural Relations between the UK and the countries of the Middle East and North Africa region.

NDIDI OKONKWO NWUNELI

Ndidi Okonkwo Nwuneli is the President/CEO of the ONE Campaign. She has over 25 years of international development experience and has been deeply involved in fostering impactful solutions in the global social innovation landscape, with a focus on Africa. Ndidi started her career at McKinsey & Company's Chicago office and returned to Nigeria in 2000 to serve as the pioneer Executive Director of the [FATE Foundation](#). She is the founder of [LEAP Africa](#), a non-profit committed to developing dynamic, innovative and principled African leaders and [African Food Changemakers](#), providing support for African entrepreneurs to start and scale resilient and sustainable agribusinesses. She is also the co-founder of [Sahel Consulting Agriculture & Nutrition Ltd.](#) and [AACE Foods Processing & Distribution Ltd.](#)



Programme

Panel 1: Women in Agriculture

Highlighting the crucial role of women in agriculture, this discussion will explore how women have significantly shaped the agricultural sector in Africa through their labour and innovative practices. Despite their contributions, women face numerous challenges, including limited access and the utilisation of land, credit, and resources, as well as socio-economic and cultural barriers. Addressing these challenges is essential for promoting gender equality and enhancing the sustainability and productivity of African agriculture.

Chair:



PROFESSOR NAILA KABEER

Emeritus Professor, Department of International Development and International Inequalities Institute, LSE

Speakers:



SARAH EL BATTOUTY

UN Climate Change High-Level Champion, Entrepreneur, Climate Activist, Architect & Non-Resident Scholar at Middle East Institute



HASSAN HALAWY

CEO,
Elite Agritech Division



IMOGEN

BELLWOOD-HOWARD
Research Fellow, Institute of Development Studies

Panel Bios



PROFESSOR NAILA KABEER

Professor Naila Kabeer (FACSS) is Professor Emeritus in the International Development Department and Faculty of International Inequalities Institute at LSE. Professor Kabeer was previously Professor of Gender and Development at LSE, and she is on the governing board of the Atlantic Fellowship for Social and Economic Equity. She has done extensive advisory work with international agencies (World Bank, ADB, UNDP, UN Women), bilateral agencies (DFID, SIDA, CIDA, IDRC) and NGOs (Oxfam, Action Aid, BRAC, PRADAN and Nijera Kori). Her latest book 'Renegotiating Patriarchy: Gender, Agency and the Bangladesh Paradox' (2024) is available as Open Access, LSE Press.



SARAH EL BATTOUTY

Sarah is an architect and climate policy specialist with 22 years experience in the sustainable design and development field. She is a senior advisor to the Egyptian President, and a UNFCCC Global Ambassador with the High Level Champions representing non-state actors. Sarah is a fellow for Vital Voices for greater MENA 2020 and the first leader in the region to be named among the Forbes impact entrepreneurs after receiving the first nomination for the prestigious EarthSHOT prize by an architect in the region. She founded Egypt's leading green building architecture consultancy & multi-award winning EConsult in 2013, which have the highest portfolio of green award projects by a local architect, and the MENA Region's first Carbon Neutral project as well as having the first Net Zero school in the portfolio.



HASSAN HALAWY

Hassan Halawy is an experienced leader in the agricultural sector, deeply committed to advancing sustainable food security through practical innovation and technology. As the CEO of Elite Agro Projects, he oversees agricultural development initiatives across the Gulf Cooperation Council and Africa, managing projects in over eight countries. With a focus on practical solutions and collaboration, Hassan has played a key role in driving improvements in agricultural production and resource efficiency. A graduate in Agricultural Engineering from the American University of Beirut, Hassan began his career in Africa, where he gained hands-on experience in large-scale farming operations. Over time, he transitioned to the UAE, where he focused on integrating new technologies into agricultural systems to address regional challenges. His work has encompassed a wide range of agricultural approaches, from open-field farms to high-tech controlled-environment agriculture, all designed to improve productivity and sustainability.



IMOGEN BELLWOOD-HOWARD

Imogen's research focuses on food systems and human-environment interactions and she has worked extensively in West African urban and rural agricultural settings. Her current research interests include sustainable and low-input agricultural practices, agricultural water governance, city region food systems and rural-urban linkages, and informal urban and rural food markets.

Programme

Panel 2: Impact of Peace and Conflict on Food Security

Examining how peace and conflict have shaped food security in Africa reveals that gender inequality exacerbates the impact on women, whose critical roles in agriculture are often undervalued. Conflicts disrupt their efforts, worsen food insecurity, and disrupt local agricultural ecologies while highlighting the broader implications for global stability. Addressing gender inequality and promoting peace are essential to enhancing food security and recognising women's vital contributions that will benefit not only Africa but the world.

Chair:



DR LOUISE ARIMATSU

Distinguished Policy Fellow, Centre for Women, Peace and Security, LSE

Speakers:



PROFESSOR RYM AYADI

EMEA Founder and President, Professor at the Bayes Business School, City University of London, Co-Founder of the Brain Capital Alliance and of the Brain Economy Hub



DR DINA ZAYED

Independent Strategist, Researcher, and Policy Advisor



CHARLOTTE BROWN

Researcher, LSE Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa, PhD Candidate, International Development, LSE

Panel Bios



DR LOUISE ARIMATSU

Dr Louise Arimatsu is a Distinguished Policy Fellow in the Centre for Women, Peace and Security. Her most recent publications include 'Gendering Peace through International Law' and 'Gendering Aggression' co-authored with Professor Christine Chinkin. She was Honorary Senior Research Fellow in the Law Department at Exeter University (2014-2017), Associate Fellow at Chatham House (2006-2015), NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence Senior Fellow (2013) and Managing Editor of the Yearbook on International Humanitarian Law (2009-2012). She was a member of the 'group of experts' on a project which led to the publication of the Tallinn Manual on the International Law Applicable to Cyber Warfare (CUP, 2013).



PROFESSOR RYM AYADI

Professor Rym Ayadi is Founder and President of the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association, a Barcelona-based regional think tank. Co-Founder of the Brain Capital Alliance and the Brain Economy Hub, and founder and Director of the Euro-Mediterranean and African Network for Economic Studies, Professor at the Bayes Business School of the City University of London and Senior Advisor at the Centre for European Policy Studies. She served as the Chair of the European Banking Authority Banking Stakeholders Group of which was elected Chair from February 2019 to July 2024. Professor Ayadi is an economist and international academic expert on international business and financial systems, financial markets and institutions, global financial regulation and governance, and socio-economic development and foresight in economies in transition. She is currently a member of several international high-level academic, advisory committees and editing boards



DR DINA ZAYED

Dr Dina Zayed is a policy strategist, researcher, communicator and facilitator. Her expertise straddles climate adaptation politics and finance, international development, social and climate justice, and public participation in climate governance. An interdisciplinary social scientist and participatory action researcher and practitioner, Dr Zayed is a former Programme Director with the Climate Emergency Collaboration Group (CECG), a philanthropic pooled fund focused on leveraging multilateralism for greater international ambition. She led CECG's work on climate impacts and resilience, as well as the organisation's equity and inclusion strategy and grantmaking. Dina has also worked on a range of commissioned projects and collaborated with a wide range of philanthropic, research, non-profit, and civil society groups, including the Institute of Development Studies, ODI Global, UNWomen, the International Development Research Centre, [350.org](https://www.350.org), the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, and CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health.



CHARLOTTE BROWN

Charlotte Brown is a PhD student at the Department of International Development at LSE. Her doctoral research focuses on the fractured mobilities resulting from humanitarian policies in Uganda. Her research interests are humanitarianism, mobilities, gender; and areas of interest are Uganda and South Sudan.

Programme

---Breakout Sessions 1 and 2 will happen simultaneously---

Breakout Session 1: Policy and Advocacy for Women in Agriculture (Sheikh Zayed Theatre, CKK)

The panel aims to address the following questions: Where should policy and advocacy initiatives focus on achieving change to advance women's rights and opportunities in agriculture, and how can these initiatives bring together existing frameworks on sustainable development, climate change and women, peace and security? What are the key opportunities on the horizon? How can the voices of women working in agriculture be amplified in advocating for change?

Chair:



DR CAROLINE GREEN

Manager, Centre for Women,
Peace and Security, LSE

Speakers:



MINA KOZLUCA

PhD student, Department of
International
Development, LSE



MUNA ELTAHIR

Country Director,
Practical Action



NBUWAK PEACE YASHIM

Centre for Agroecology,
Water and Resilience,
Coventry University

Panel Bios



DR CAROLINE GREEN

Prior to joining the Centre for Women, Peace and Security, Caroline held various policy and campaign roles on women's rights including at Oxfam, Wateraid, Gender Action for Peace and Security and worked as a consultant for an international project to promote gender in humanitarian action led by UN Women. She worked with Control Arms and feminist organisations to secure the inclusion of a gender-based violence provision within the UN Arms Trade Treaty in 2013. Her research focuses on the intersection of colonialism and women's rights at the UN and the way in which colonial powers sought to slow the cascade of international norms on women's rights in the mid-twentieth century.



MUNA ELTAHIR

Muna Eltahir Hamdan has been the Country Director for Practical Action's Sudan Office since 2015. With over 20 years of experience in humanitarian and development work, Muna has worked with organisations such as FCDO, the Netherlands Embassy, UNOCHA, ADRA, and Windle Trust. Muna holds two master's degrees: one in Economics of Human Resource Development from India, and another in International Community Development from Andrews University of Michigan, USA. She is passionate about gender issues, social equality, and human rights and is committed to promoting poverty eradication, sustainable development, and social change.



MINA KOZLUCA

Mina Kozluca is a PhD student in the Department of International Development with an interest in agrarian political economy, the political economy of global value chains, and class relations. Her research explores the underlying dynamics and consequences of the adverse incorporation of migrant labour into global value chains with a specific focus on the hazelnut value chain in Turkey. Prior to joining the LSE, Mina worked as a research assistant at the European Research Council Project "The New Politics of Welfare: Towards an 'Emerging Markets' Welfare State Regime". In 2020-2021, she was a visiting researcher at Koç University Center for Asian Studies. Mina has a MSc from SOAS, University of London, and a BA from Koç University in Turkey.



NBUWAK PEACE YASHIM

Nbuwak Peace Yashim is a final-year PhD researcher at the Centre for Agroecology, Water and Resilience at Coventry University. Her expertise lies at the intersection of gender, agriculture, and food systems, with a particular focus on food and seed sovereignty, feminism, and agroecology. Her current research critically examines the role of women in African food systems, employing ethnographic and participatory methodologies to explore the complexities of power within rural Zimbabwe's seed systems through the lived experiences of women.

Programme

---Breakout Sessions 1 and 2 happen simultaneously---

Breakout Session 2: Student Debate & Expert Panel, Alumni Theatre, CKK

Agenda:

- 10 minutes student debate on: "The widespread adoption of genetically modified crops is essential for achieving food security in Africa."
- 15 minutes presentation by PfAL student, Amna Haroon
- 20 minutes audience engagement led by PfAL student Zainab Sanni
- 20 minutes expert panel on "Harnessing Technology & Entrepreneurship for Women in African Agriculture"
- 10 minutes Q&A

Student Debate

"The widespread adoption of genetically modified crops is essential for achieving food security in Africa."

Proposing



ANNE CHIDEBEM OBA
MSc Economic History, LSE



ETSEOGHENA KHANOBA
MSc Health Policy, Planning and Financing, LSE

Opposing



PERAZIM SINGO
MSc Development Studies, LSE



IMANE SEKKAT
MSc Development Studies, LSE

Student Presentation by:



AMNA HAROON
MSc in Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship, LSE

Audience Engagement led by:



ZAINAB SANNI
MSc Media, Communication and Development, LSE

Expert Panel on Harnessing Technology & Entrepreneurship for Women in African Agriculture

This panel will explore how innovative financing, sustainable technology, and entrepreneurship can empower women in Africa's agricultural sector. Experts will discuss strategies for unlocking finance, accessing technology, scaling production, reducing post-harvest losses, and driving inclusive growth.

Chair:



YOUSRA ABDELMONEIM

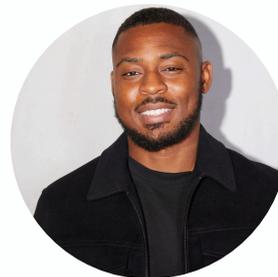
Senior Manager, PwC UK, working on providing assurance and consulting on Capital Projects and Infrastructure

Expert Speakers:



DIONNE ABRAHAMS, CA

Senior Manager Operational Risk, Sahara Farms Ltd
Director, Barclays UK



JOSEPH ADEYEMI

Director, Agrivine

Panel Bios



YOUSRA AHMED

Yousra is a Senior Manager at PwC UK, working on providing assurance and consulting on Capital Projects and Infrastructure, e.g. on Giga projects in the Middle East. She studied Economics at the University of Sussex and is a Chartered Accountant (ICAEW) and Certified Internal Auditor (IIA) by background with experience working in Sudan, the Middle East and the UK. She co-led the PwC refugee group, which supports refugees to transition into professional employment and leads efforts on raising awareness and advancing social mobility.



DIONNE ABRAHAMS, CA

Dionne has senior experience as a finance professional at Barclays' headquarters and also works as Senior Manager of Operational Risk at Sahara Farms with significant hands-on experience of agri-financing with a focus on empowering African sustainable agriculture. She is a Director at Barclays UK.



JOSEPH ADEYEMI

Joseph Adeyemi is an agriculture entrepreneur and founder of Agrivine, an investment company driving sustainable food production in Africa. He partners with farmers to scale production, develop processing facilities, and integrate solar-powered infrastructure to reduce post-harvest losses. Beyond agriculture, Joseph has a professional background in technology, having worked at Amazon Web Services in technology strategy, where he supported large private and public sector organisations with transformational projects. He also invests in commercial real estate as part of his long-term strategy. His mission is to leverage technology, clean energy, and strategic investments to transform Africa's food systems and economic landscape.

Programme

Panel 3: Moving Forward

In the final session of the day, we will focus on action planning, developing a comprehensive roadmap to support women in agriculture. This session will identify key strategies, policies, and initiatives to empower women, enhance their contributions, and address the challenges they face. Together, we will chart a path forward to create a more inclusive and sustainable agricultural sector.

Chair:



JOSEPHINE CHINAME

Atlantic Fellow for Social and Economic Equity, LSE

Speakers:



DAN COLLISON

CEO, Farm Africa



FUNKE MICHAELS

Author, Communications Practitioner & Policy Academy Fellow, Newcastle University



MICHAELLE KUBWIMANA

Founder, Kawah Coffee & Network Director, Rwanda Business UK



OLUCHUKWU OKONKWO

PhD Student and Researcher, Collaborator, Sugarcrete

Panel Bios



JOSEPHINE CHINAME

Josephine is a social justice and movement lawyer with expertise in business and human rights, climate justice, environmental child rights, and sustainable and equitable natural resource governance. Currently, as a Senior Fellow with the Atlantic Fellows for Social and Economic Equity and an independent consultant, she specialises in research, advocacy, programme and strategy design, and process facilitation in these critical areas. Previously, she led the Responsible Investments and Business Programme at the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association, where she spearheaded initiatives to promote a more inclusive, just, accountable, and equitable business within Zimbabwe's and Africa's natural resources sector.



DAN COLLISON

Dan is the CEO of Farm Africa. Prior to Farm Africa, he led the international programmes for War Child, working on children's rights in conflict-affected countries such as Afghanistan and Yemen. He worked for several years for Save the Children, including in Myanmar and in southeast Asia, as well as in southern Africa and Angola. He lived and worked in Kenya and South Sudan for a number of years with Christian Aid. Dan has led the development of Farm Africa's new five-year strategy, building on the organisation's strengths in agriculture, market engagement and natural resource management, and increasing the focus on food systems and climate action.



FUNKE MICHAELS

"Nigerian, Kenyan, citizen of the world," is how Funké Michaels describes her mixed cultural heritage. A Fellow of the Policy Academy at Newcastle University, she was raised in the ancient tradition of Yoruba griots, and beginning as a child-broadcaster at the age of 3, has addressed remarkable audiences over decades of public speaking. She was featured variously on Nigerian national television as a child-analyst and debater speaking mainly on education and the girl-child. She held several high-profile brand management roles before transitioning fully into academia.



MICHAËLLE KUBWIMANA

Michaëlle Kubwimana is a passionate entrepreneur dedicated to community development and sustainable business. As Founder and CEO of Kawah Coffee, she empowers Rwandan farmers, especially women, by adding value at source and ensuring fair compensation through a direct trade model. She also leads Rwanda Business UK, fostering economic ties between Rwandan and UK entrepreneurs through trade, investment, and collaboration. Committed to sustainability and empowerment, she envisions a world where business drives lasting positive change.



OLUCHUKWU OKONKWO

Oluchukwu Okonkwo is a researcher and PhD student who has been a key collaborator of the Sugarcrete project since its creation in 2021. She holds both a Bachelor's and Master's degree in Architecture, and incorporated Sugarcrete into her final thesis, which secured her nominations for the RIBA Skin-Thinking Award, one of the most prestigious awards in academia, and Architects Journal Sustainability Award in 2023. Sugarcrete is a revolutionary biomaterial made from sugarcane waste. This award-winning product has quickly gained the attention of leading sugarcane plantation companies who wish to convert this waste into sustainable construction blocks. September last year, the Sugarcrete team completed their first proof-of-concept building: a school extension in India, constructed entirely with Sugarcrete bricks. Oluchukwu received the prestigious "Double Gold Responsible Innovation Award" by Global WIIN, a community that celebrates outstanding women investors and innovators for their great achievements.

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