



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

International
Agri-Food Network

FAO-IAFN-Emerging ag Accelerator Mentorship Programme for Women-led SMEs in Africa Finance Access Workshop

15 April 2026 | 15:00 – 17:00 CEST | *Via Zoom Meetings*

Speakers' Biographies



Robynne Anderson
President
Emerging ag inc

Robynne Anderson is an international thought leader on food and agriculture with expertise in issues management and strategic development across the entire value chain. Over the years, she has advised a broad range of clients from government leaders to business captains, farmers, food processors and researchers. With close to 30 years of international experience, Robynne has contributed to apex multilateral processes and negotiations helping to shape pivotal outcomes like the Sustainable Development Goals. In 2010, Robynne founded Emerging ag, a boutique international consulting firm providing communications and public affairs services to clients in the agriculture, food and health sectors. As its President, she leads a team of 34 dynamic, international professionals providing expert services to clients around the world, with a strong focus on global policy issues and engagement with international organizations. Robynne often represents clients at the United Nations, bringing the voice of agriculture to inter-governmental processes. Prior to founding Emerging ag, Robynne established and ran for almost 20-year Issues Ink, a leading agricultural publishing company specializing in agriculture, and founded the Farming First coalition in 2007. She started her career in Canadian politics as a legislative assistant to the then Deputy Prime Minister. In addition to her role at Emerging ag, Robynne is involved in her family's farm in Dugald, Manitoba, Canada. She is also the founder of the Manyinga school project, a non-profit organization that supports orphans to learn agricultural skills through schools which in 2021 became Farmers Abroad Canada, a not-for-profit charitable organization focused on supporting agricultural education in 2 countries in Africa and growing. Passionate about food, agriculture, and diversity and inclusion, Robynne serves in a number of international boards and advisory groups and is the youngest person inducted into the Canadian Agricultural Hall of Fame in 2017, one of just 11 women in the Hall. She received the 2018 Demeter Award for Women in Agriculture.



Erika Valerio
Gender and Agri-food Systems Expert
FAO

Dr. Erika Valerio is a gender and rural development researcher with 12 years of international experience managing and advising projects across multilateral organisations, applied research programmes, and the private sector. Her primary research interests include women's economic empowerment, inclusive value chains and agribusiness, and qualitative and mixed-method research methodologies. Erika has extensive field experience across Latin America, Southern Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the Pacific. She currently serves as a Senior Gender and Agrifood Systems Expert at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), where she supports the projects and investments on women's economic empowerment. Erika holds a PhD in Gender and Rural Development from Newcastle University.



Lotfi Kourdali
Director - West Africa
Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF)

Lotfi Kourdali is the West Africa Regional Director at AECF, where he leads the organization's expansion and strategic partnerships across the region. He brings over 18 years of experience managing large-scale, donor-funded programs with a focus on agriculture, clean energy, trade, and SME finance. Before joining AECF, Lotfi served as Public-Private Partnership Director for the USAID West Africa Trade & Investment Hub, where he managed a \$96 million blended finance facility that catalyzed over \$500 million in private-sector investments and created tens of thousands of jobs across 14 countries. His career also includes leadership roles with Abt Associates, FHI 360, and Nathans & Associates, where he oversaw complex regional programs and worked closely with governments, financial institutions, and businesses. Lotfi has lived and worked in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire for over eight years and has deep networks with public and private stakeholders across West Africa. He holds an MBA in Strategy and Finance from Babson College and is fluent in English, French, and Arabic.



Zainab Lawal Gwadabe
Chief Executive Officer
The Seed Project Co Ltd - Nigeria

Zainab is a serial entrepreneur, a player in the seed ecosystem, a passionate baker, and an academic. She is the CEO of Seed Project Co. Ltd, a pioneering seed company based in Kano, Nigeria. The company specializes in the production of high-quality vegetable and arable crop seeds. Over the years, Zainab has been dedicated to bringing women to the forefront of seed production, working tirelessly to create an enabling environment for women and other marginalized groups within the industry. Her mission is to transform the Nigerian seed value chain and ensure sustainable agricultural practices.



Sylvie Sagbo Gommard
Director General

SENAR – Les Délices Lysa (Lysa & Co) - Sénégal

After more than fourteen years in the financial markets in Paris, Sylvie Sagbo Gommard decided in 2015 to return to Senegal, her country of origin, to take over the family business, SENAR – Les Délices Lysa, founded in 1982 by her mother, Lydie Sagbo. Born in Dakar to a Beninese father and a Togolese mother, Sylvie holds a Master's degree in Finance and Capital Markets from the École Supérieure de Gestion de Paris. Before returning, she worked as a consultant in asset management, investment banking, and strategic consulting,

accumulating nearly fifteen years of international experience. Driven by a passion for entrepreneurship and a desire to promote local agricultural products, she transformed a family-run artisanal business into a leading national brand in Senegal's agri-food sector. In 2018, she established a strategic partnership with Téranga Capital, an impact investment fund, which enabled the construction of a new processing facility and the launch of the Lysa & Co. brand. Under her leadership, the company has undergone significant modernization, expanded its product range, and enhanced the professionalism of its teams. Sylvie embodies a generation of African women who combine rigor, innovation, and social impact, while working to empower rural women and promote African agricultural sectors.



Chania Frost
Associate Partner
McKinsey & Company

Chania Frost is a consultant with McKinsey & Company's Africa Delivery Hub, based in Nairobi, Kenya. Since joining McKinsey in 2017, she has been instrumental in supporting governments and social sector institutions across the continent to improve service delivery in critical sectors such as health, education, infrastructure, energy, and agriculture. Her work focuses on driving sustainable, high-impact solutions that enhance the quality of life for African citizens and stimulate economic growth. With a strategic and collaborative approach, Chania contributes to transformative

projects that strengthen governance and improve public sector performance. Before joining McKinsey, Chania spent over six years working in strategic planning, operations, and project management within East Africa's biodiversity conservation sector, fostering her deep commitment to sustainable development. She holds an MSc from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, and a BSc from the University of Edinburgh. Her academic and professional background equips her with analytical and leadership skills to address complex challenges and drive long-term change across the continent.



Farah Bala
Founder
Farsight

Farah Bala is a Leadership EDIA Executive Coach, Consultant and Speaker. Through her agency FARSIGHT, Farah's mission is to support organizations and leaders redefine the concept of leadership by making Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Oppression a core leadership competency. Her clients include executives in the C-suite, creatives and entrepreneurs, and

organizations across wide-ranging sectors and industries. She is also a faculty coach at multiple learning and development institutions. Farah believes equity and inclusion are the foundational pillars for effective leadership and communication.

She is a recipient of the Diversity Award by the World Zoroastrian Organization, recognized for her work in raising awareness towards gender, culture, racial equity and inclusion globally.

Farah has been featured in Forbes and is a contributing member to the Forbes Coaches Council. She is co-creator of Wonder Women, an invite-only executive women-of-color leadership development community under FARSIGHT.



Michelle Gacinya
Administration Manager
Bank of Kigali

Self-directed and driven professional expert with experience working in banking, international trade and development industries leading continuous improvement, supply chain transformation, logistics and cross functional teams to ensure success and achieve goals. I am now in banking supporting seamless running of bank operations in the most customer centric way and towards the achievement of the bank's strategy. She brings on board skills and experience in business operations management, customer relationship management, business development, supply chain and risk management, and global

logistics backed up by MSc Logistics and Supply Chain Management from Herriot Watt University & Bachelor of Business Administration (Finance).



Ramla Msuya
Head of Sustainability Programmes
CRDB Bank plc, Tanzania

Ramla Msuya is the Head of Sustainability Programmes at CRDB Bank Plc, with nearly 20 years of experience in credit risk, environmental and social risk management, ESG, and climate finance. A Certified Public Accountant with an MBA in Finance from Coventry University (UK), Ramla is also a Certified Expert in Sustainable Finance from the Frankfurt School and holds a certification in Environmental Management from North West University, South Africa. She has played a pivotal role in positioning CRDB as a leader in sustainable finance, including leading the bank's



successful accreditation to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and developing its first Environmental and Social Management System. Ramla also served as an advisor to a GCF Board Member and continues to drive climate adaptation and mitigation funding proposals. Based in Dar es Salaam, she is passionate about advancing sustainability in Africa and seeks opportunities to contribute at board level within international or climate finance-focused organizations.



Rim Dakir

**Global Affairs – Strategic Stakeholder Engagement
OCP SA**

Rim Dakir is an experienced professional in global affairs and compliance, currently engaged at OCP SA since November 2021, focusing on strategic stakeholders engagement and public affairs. Previously, Rim held the position of Senior Compliance Consultant at ADIT from November 2017 to January 2022, where responsibilities included due diligence, risk assessment, and training junior consultants in the MENA region. Additionally, Rim has contributed to academia as a lecturer in country risk evaluation at IRIS SUP' and worked as a security analyst at Risk&Co, providing insights into the MENA region's political and security landscape. Early career roles included positions in business intelligence and journalism, with a strong educational background in international relations and geoeconomics from prestigious institutions such as IRIS Sup' and the University of Geneva.



Sara Zukari

**Private Sector Partnerships Specialist
FAO**

Sara Zukari is a project coordinator and translator with a Master's in Translation Studies and 7 years of experience in international and multicultural environments. At the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, I manage partnerships, events, and knowledge platforms. Her strengths are in project management, cross-cultural communication, content development, and problem solving. Skilled in Microsoft Office, CMS tools (WordPress, Sitefinity, Typo3), CRM (Salesforce) and translation softwares (Trados, OmegaT). Passionate about initiatives that support marginalised communities, and eager to expand into new and unexpected roles. Whether in communications, project management, or knowledge management, she can apply my adaptability and problem-solving mindset to co-create and accelerate impact.



Charity Jepkosgei
Associate
Raising Capital

Charity is an investment professional with hands-on experience in capital raising and transaction advisory for businesses across Sub-Saharan Africa. Her work spans financial analysis, investor engagement, and preparation of investment materials that support deal execution and growth strategy. Her cross-sector exposure has deepened her understanding of how capital can unlock value and resilience in emerging markets. She is particularly interested in how finance can be used as a tool for sustainable development and long-term impact. With a strong foundation in analytical thinking, client

engagement, and investment operations, she brings a collaborative, detail-driven, and solutions-oriented approach to every mandate.



Fred Kiio
Associate Director, Agribusiness
Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF)

As the Associate Director of Agribusiness, Fredrick Kiio leads a team that supports high-risk and innovative commercial agribusiness businesses to scale while creating sustainable social and economic transformation. He leverages innovation and partnerships to support businesses in designing and executing sustainable business models to resolve social and economic challenges in Africa. He has over 18 years of progressive experience in strategy development, commercial excellence, business development, agri-tech innovation, and food

systems. Before joining AECF, Fred spent over 17 years in the telecommunications sector at Safaricom PLC, where he championed various commercial initiatives for both consumer and enterprise customers. He is also credited with pioneering Safaricom's AgriTech innovation, DigiFarm, and is a social entrepreneur. Fredrick holds a bachelor's degree in commerce accounting, a Public Accountant (CPA) certification, and several leadership certificates. He is currently pursuing a master's degree in Agribusiness Management.



Milica Petruljeskov
Senior Private Sector Specialist
FAO

Milica Petruljeskov is an economist at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). Based in FAO's headquarters in Rome, Italy, Milica supports agribusiness and private sector partnerships work in Africa. Milica has more than 12 years' experience on rural finance, agricultural investments, value chain analysis and private sector partnerships, through the support of various

FAO projects and normative work in Africa and globally. Milica holds advanced degrees in Economics (MSc.), and Development Economics and International Cooperation (MSc.).



Priya Chana
Group Strategy
Equity Group Holdings PLC

Priya Chana is the Group Strategy Associate Director at Equity Group Holdings, where she leads strategic initiatives to drive business growth, strengthen market positioning, and foster sustainable development. With a solid background in corporate strategy, marketing communications, CRM, and new business development, Priya brings extensive experience in agribusiness, resource mobilization, and improving financial access for SMEs and marginalized communities. Formerly Chair of the British Chamber of Commerce Kenya, she has a proven track record of collaborative leadership and innovation. Multilingual and entrepreneurial, Priya excels in building strategic partnerships and delivering impactful solutions that promote resilient communities and inclusive economic growth across the region.



Susan Njihia
Innovation and CX Lead
Hello Tractor

Susan Njihia is the Lead Consultant for Innovation and Customer Experience at Hello Tractor, an agri-tech company leveraging IoT technology to connect smallholder farmers with equipment owners. With over 8 years of experience supporting startup growth and innovation, Susan brings deep expertise in product design, customer experience, and the innovation ecosystem across Eastern Africa. She also serves on the board of the Digital Agricultural Association, where she explores the agricultural market system and its impact on economic growth and stakeholder livelihoods. Passionate about leveraging frontier technologies like AI, Susan is committed to developing customer-centric solutions that drive agricultural innovation and enhance food security.



Cristina Hastings
Head of Sustainability
Nuveen Natural Capital

Cristina is Head of Sustainability at Nuveen Natural Capital (NNC), leading the strategy and implementation of sustainability across NNC's global platform. She sits on the Nuveen Natural Capital Leadership Team, the Global Investment Committees and leads the cross-functional ESG Committee, which strives to implement our holistic Nature, Climate and People approach to land-based investments. Cristina brings over twenty-five years' experience in sustainability leadership and implementation, with previously held roles in Louis Dreyfus Company (LDC), Accenture, AstraZeneca and the Tropical Forest Alliance. Cristina graduated with a B.A and M.A. from the University of Oxford, an M.B.A. from the London



Business School, and a Post Graduate Certificate in Sustainable Value Chains from the University of Cambridge.



Amath Pathé Sene
Managing Director
Africa Food Systems Forum

Amath Pathé Sene is the Managing Director of Africa's Food Systems Forum (AGRF), where he leads the Forum's strategic growth and day-to-day operations as a pan-African, multi-partner platform. With a strong vision for advancing food systems transformation across the continent, Pathé brings over 18 years of international experience in agriculture, climate change, sustainable development, and rural transformation. He continues to build on AFSF's momentum by guiding its multi-year strategy in collaboration with AGRA and other

key partners. An Agricultural Engineer by training, Pathé has held leadership roles across Africa, South America, Central Asia, and Europe. Prior to AGRF, he served as Lead Regional Environment and Climate Specialist at IFAD and Country Director for several West African nations. He also held positions with UNDP, UNEP, the EU, and the Senegalese Agricultural Research Institute. His academic background includes advanced degrees from institutions in France, Morocco, and Israel, focusing on rural development, agribusiness, and sustainability. Multilingual and widely respected, Pathé is passionate about inclusive, resilient food systems and is a proud husband and father of three.



Sophie Goudard
Vice President, Operations
Emerging ag Inc

Sophie has joined the Emerging ag team in the role of Vice President, Operations, and focuses primarily on team logistics, scheduling and event planning. Sophie has spent the last 15 years as a professional in the business of live arts. Providing high standard services handling the administration and logistics of many international productions touring stages of the world. She has been honing her skills in an environment requiring precise organization, interpersonal and leadership qualities.

Passionate about development, Sophie's strength is to organize and motivate people to accomplish goals and empowering them by providing clear direction to execute successfully their strategic initiatives. A French national from a mixed background, Sophie holds a Master of Arts in International Cultural Exchange Strategies from the Institute of Political Sciences of Lyon, a BA in Legal Studies and Political Science from the Institute of Political Sciences of Rennes and a BA in History. Sophie speaks English and Spanish after living in North America for twelve years and studying in Mexico, she became proficient in German in the last 8 years working mostly in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. She currently lives in France.



Valérie Itey
Founder & CEO
Clic Recycle

Valérie Itey is the Founder & CEO of Clic Recycle, a pioneering circular-economy and climatetech company transforming human hair waste into regenerative solutions for agriculture, water protection, and marine decontamination. With more than 20 years of international experience across mobile innovation, digital identity, and sustainability, she has led global partnerships in Europe, Africa, and Asia for organizations across healthtech, fintech, smart cities, and green impact sectors. A former executive in mobile solutions and blockchain for public governance, she now drives climate action at the intersection of nature-based solutions, technology, and art. Passionate about water preservation, soil health, and biomimicry, Valérie is also a pianist and environmental activist dedicated to building circular, blue-green economies for future generations.



Maya Stewart
Co-founder
Lenziemill Milling Ltd

Maya Khonje-Stewart has over 15 years work experience in the private and NGO sector of Malawi. Maya is skilled in business development, sales and logistics, project management, budgeting and negotiation. Momentarily, she is one of the founders and managing directors of Lenziemill Milling Ltd, an independent milling company serving smallholders and up to commercial farmers with high quality animal feeds. Through her work, Lenziemill has signed multiyear forward contracts that supports the commercialization of over 3000 farmers in getting better prices for raw materials such as maize and soya, crucial ingredients for the milling business. Maya has also contributed towards the development of new products and partnerships that has resulted in Lenziemill engaging for the first time in Malawi, fish feed manufacturing in 2022. As one of the innovators, Maya has played an instrumental role in the design and implementation of the EggHub, a transformational smallholder poultry farmer concept that promotes the consumption of eggs in rural Malawi through commercialization of smallholder poultry farming groups. The Egg Hub supports farmers with access to finance as well as access to markets for their surplus eggs with an ultimate goal of improved nutrition in rural households. The EggHub concept is now expanding regionally and globally. Maya is an enthusiastic energy advocate. She co-founded Yellow, the fastest growing yet profitable PAYGO solar home system distribution business in Malawi and the SADC/EAC region. Her work with Yellow targets hardest to reach customers across Malawi through a robust network of contracted agents who have so far achieved over 300,000 sales in under 4 years with a low default rate of less than 1%. This was achieved by offering the consumer an affordable payment plan that fit their previous budget when purchasing candles and batteries for torches. Yellow has grown exponentially raising over USD30M in debt, USD3M in equity and USD1.6M in grants to date. The success has led Yellow to expand operations into Uganda, Rwanda, Zambia and Madagascar with ambitions to enter additional 4 new markets in SADC and EAC before end of 2023. Maya's drive towards leaving no one behind is also evident in her work



in the NGO she founded, MAEVE Project. MAEVE's mandate is improving access to affordable clean household technologies including cookstoves, solar and agri-smart technologies. To date, MAEVE has managed to create awareness and distribute over 1.5 million cookstoves to rural households across Malawi, supported private sector in access to markets for over 800,000 PicoPV solar systems and now is working with smallholder farmers in transitioning from rain fed dependant farming to multi crop yearly farming using PAYGO solar irrigation pumps. Solar irrigation is a tool that is envisioned to assist farmers earn more income sustainably as a way of addressing the impacts of the Ukraine Crisis that is affecting farmers in Malawi.



Duncan Lumwamu
Senior Advisory Specialist
Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF)

Duncan leads the Advisory Team to provide comprehensive Technical Assistance, Investment Readiness, and Investment Facilitation services across 26 African countries. Key sectors include Agriculture, Renewable Energy, and Climate-Smart Technologies, empowering businesses to scale by equipping them with the necessary tools, knowledge, and networks to attract investment and drive sustainable growth. Duncan is also the founder and Managing Partner of Pointe Africa Limited. He has over seven years of experience in Private Equity, Investment Research, Investment Management, Deal Structuring, Strategic Advisory and Impact Investment. Before starting Pointe, Duncan worked at Lattice and Cytonn Investments, where he was focused on Private Equity Investments, Public Markets Research and in-house discretionary transaction advisory, market entry and capital raising. Previously, he was Head of Research at Dyer and Blair Investment Bank and ABC Capital. Duncan started his career at Britam Asset Managers as an Investment Analyst. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Statistics degree from The University of Nairobi.



Langelihle Simela
Business Development Manager, Agribusiness
Absa SA

Langelihle Simela is an Agribusiness Development Manager at Absa Group, where she focuses on enabling emerging commercial agribusinesses to access finance and scale their enterprises. With a strong foundation in agricultural sciences and development finance, she brings over a decade of leadership experience in agribusiness, including past roles as CEO of the National Emergent Red Meat Producers' Organisation (NERPO) and lecturer at the University of Pretoria. Langelihle holds an MPhil in Development Finance from Stellenbosch Business School and an MSc in Veterinary Tropical Diseases from the University of Pretoria, both earned with distinction. She is a passionate advocate for sustainable agricultural development across Southern Africa, recognized for her commitment to smallholder empowerment, strategic partnerships, and inclusive agri-financing models that unlock the potential of Africa's agricultural resources.



Mirte Smits

**Project Manager, Advisory Services for Rabo Partnerships
Rabobank**

Mirte is a Project Manager in Advisory Services for Rabo Partnerships, providing technical assistance to financial institutions in emerging countries. She is based in the Rabobank head office in Utrecht, The Netherlands and current projects she manages are located in Africa and South-eastern Europe and entail a range of topics, from commercially expanding agri value chain financing to compliance to data privacy regulation. Mirte is passionate about access to finance, agriculture finance, credit risk management, banking operations and challenging Rabo colleagues to execute their daily expertise in a different setting at Rabo's partner banks. Mirte has a solid background in Lending, having worked as Investment Manager for the Acquisition Finance/Leveraged Lending team of Rabobank's Wholesale department, providing structured loan products to private equity-backed companies. She holds a master's degree in Financial Economics from Erasmus University Rotterdam.



James Macharia

**Director of Credit
Hello Tractor**

James Njenga Macharia is a seasoned credit and risk management professional with over two decades of experience in the financial services sector across East and West Africa. Currently serving as the Director of Credit and Collections at Hello Tractor, he oversees credit and risk operations in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria, Rwanda and Ethiopia, driving strategic adherence to credit policies, corporate governance, and innovative risk frameworks.

James has held progressively senior roles, including Head of Credit at CIM Credit Kenya (Aspira) and Jamii Bora Bank (now Kingdom Bank), where he demonstrated a strong command of credit analysis, portfolio management, collections, and regulatory compliance. At Hello Tractor, he also served as Senior Portfolio Manager for PAYG, building robust credit risk models and policies aligned with business goals.

Over the course of his career, James has worked with some of Kenya's leading banks, including Barclays Bank (now Absa Bank Kenya), Equity Bank, Family Bank, and Kingdom Bank, where he was instrumental in credit policy development, distressed asset management, and strategic risk oversight. His expertise spans credit underwriting, debt recovery, compliance, and team leadership, with a consistent track record of driving performance and process improvement.

He holds a Bachelor of Education degree in Accounting and Economics from the University of Nairobi. Beyond his professional work, James is committed to social impact and currently serves as Treasurer and Board Member of the International Treasure House Ministry, supporting orphans and vulnerable children, he is also an avid marathon runner and has participated in Nairobi, Kilimanjaro and Serengeti Marathons.



Agnes Makena
Manager, Gender
Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF)

Agnes leads AECF's gender practice, strengthening skills and collaboration across regional teams towards a coherent organizational gender strategy. She supports donor organizations to explore sustainable financing strategies, particularly through gender lens investing. She previously drove Plan International's gender lens investing strategy pilot program in Kenya, and spent 6 years as a management consultant carrying out market research, implementing impact focused programs and supporting social enterprises in East Africa, through capacity building and technical assistance.



Farida Suleiman
Investment Specialist, Business Investment Financing Track and
the Agri-food SME Catalytic Financing Mechanism
African Development Bank (AfDB)

Farida A. Suleiman is a finance and investment expert with over 15 years of experience in corporate finance, blended finance, and portfolio management across Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. She has spent the last 11 years at the African Development Bank, leading gender and climate-inclusive investment strategies in the agribusiness and financial services space. Farida holds an MSc in Banking, Finance, and Risk Management. She is passionate about inclusive growth, sustainable development, and empowering smallholder farmers and women through finance.



Dominique Carter
Principal; Executive in Residence
Lewis-Burke Associates LLC; John Hopkins Medicine

Dr. Dominique Carter is an award-winning scientist whose pioneering work at the nexus of science policy and strategy has advanced the agriculture, health, and bioeconomy sectors. Recognized as a cross-functional thought leader, innovative problem solver, and strategic communicator, Dominique is a former federal government professional who leverages her interdisciplinary technical expertise to champion science and bolster clients' pursuits across various health, agriculture, science, and technology areas. Formerly, Dominique held the position of Vice President of Food & Nutrition Affairs at FoodMinds, where she provided senior counsel on nutrition policy to agricultural commodities and food & beverage companies. Prior to this, Dr. Carter served as Assistant Director for Agricultural Sciences, Innovation, and Workforce at the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy, where her contributions were pivotal in shaping and executing groundbreaking policy initiatives, including the first-ever White House Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health; the National Biotechnology and Biomanufacturing



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Initiative; and National Security Memorandum on Strengthening the Security and Resilience of United States Food and Agriculture (NSM-16).



Lara Gilmour
Director of Policy & Sustainability
Global Pulse Confederation

Lara is a policy and sustainability leader with extensive experience advancing advocacy, communications, and stakeholder engagement across global food systems. She currently serves as Director of Policy & Sustainability at the Global Pulse Confederation (GPC), where she leads global policy strategy for the pulses sector, aligning industry priorities with climate, nutrition, and sustainable food system agendas. Her work includes building partnerships with governments, UN agencies, NGOs, and the private sector, and representing the organisation at major international policy, climate, and food system forums. Previously, Lara was Editor in Chief at GPC, overseeing strategic communications, global campaigns, and stakeholder engagement across the pulse value chain. She brings strong expertise in policy analysis, advocacy, and convening global audiences around shared sustainability priorities.