

**2013 THE "BORLAUG DIALOGUE"**

October 17, 2013 – 8:35 a.m.

Panel: *Lisa Dreier, Moderator*

**PANEL:**

**PARTNERSHIPS AND POTENTIAL: A NEW VISION FOR AGRICULTURE**

*Introduction:*

**Bian Li**

Director of Planning – The World Food Prize

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I'd like to continue the morning with another panel. This is going to look at what kind of mechanisms we have to ensure broad-sector participation and collaboration in development – Partnerships and Potential: A New Vision for Agriculture.

I have the pleasure of introducing Lisa Dreier, who is the Senior Director of Agriculture for the World Economic Forum. Lisa is a great friend to the World Food Prize, and we have a Davos to Des Moines connection. And in the past the World Economic Forum has hosted side events at the World Food Prize, and we're so lucky to have them. So we are delighted to invite this next panel. Lisa is going to introduce our distinguished members, and then we will begin the panel. Thank you very much.

*PANEL:*

## **PARTNERSHIPS AND POTENTIAL: A NEW VISION FOR AGRICULTURE**

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*Panel Moderator:*

**Lisa Dreier**

Senior Director of Food Security and Development Issues, World Economic Forum USA

*Panel Members:*

**Ray Offenheiser** President, Oxfam America

**Bill Cordingley** Managing Director and Head of Food & Agribusiness Research and Advisory, The Americas, Rabobank International

**Davor Pisk** Chief Operating Officer, Syngenta

**Khalid Bomba** Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency, CEO

**Dyborn Chibonga** Chief Executive Officer, National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi (NASFAM)

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**Lisa Dreier**

Thank you, Bian. We're really delighted to be here with you today. We'd like to welcome all of you that are here at the World Food Prize, as well as our virtual audience who may be tuning in by webcast, to discuss our topic of the day, which is Partnerships and Potential: A New Vision for Agriculture. We've been fortunate to have a wonderful collaboration with the World Food Prize over many years with Ambassador Quinn and his team here in making the link that Bian mentioned of Des Moines to Davos. We take all of the amazing ideas and recommendations and inspiration that emerges from this meeting and use it to shape some of the discussions among global leaders that the World Economic Forum hosts each year in January.

A hot topic at those meetings is always the topic of partnership, and in fact partnership has become a bit of buzzword. It seems like these days everyone is in partnership with everybody else, and the concept is a really great one. Essentially it is the idea that organizations with different capacities can combine efforts in order to have a greater impact than they could have alone. So it makes a lot of sense in theory.

But those who have tried it have often found that it's a little more challenging in practice, because joining together with an organization that has a different vision, different incentives, sometimes different organizational culture or even a language in the way they talk about things can be challenging as you seek to figure out a common goal, convince yourselves that the win-win benefit of working together justifies the challenge of working together, and then to actually implement that vision together step by step through the various challenges that emerge along the way.

But increasingly I think we're seeing organizations throughout the agriculture sector finding that, yes, it is worth it to work in partnership, and in fact it's an imperative to work in partnership to address some of the challenges that we need to address today.

The World Economic Forum has a global initiative called the New Vision for Agriculture, which serves as a platform for facilitating and catalyzing partnerships of all kinds between the public sector and the private sector but also bringing in farmer organizations, donor agencies, civil society and others who must be at the table and really an active stakeholder in deciding the direction that agriculture and food security will go. The New Vision relates to a very simple concept, which is that to meet the global challenges that we have before us of feeding nine billion people, we will have to approach agriculture in a new way to ensure that it delivers three things to society - food security, environmental sustainability and economic opportunity. And those three things are equally important and need to be achieved together.

Part of the message of this new vision is that the private sector is ready to be a partner in achieving that vision and that all stakeholders need to work together to achieve it. So we've worked to put that into practice by facilitating and catalyzing partnerships at the national level in Asia, Latin America and in Africa. Particularly in Africa, a regional partnership called Grow Africa, undertaken together with the African Union and NEPAD, is supporting nine different countries, including Ethiopia and Malawi, for whom we have some great panelists with us today, to mobilize investment and partnership into African agriculture. And in 2012 in collaboration with the G8's New Alliance on Food Security and Nutrition, this resulted in over \$3 billion of investment commitments in African agriculture that will benefit 12 to 15 million smallholders in the coming five years.

So we see real results and impacts getting mobilized through this new approach to working together. And we'd like to have a very open discussion today about what that potential is and how we can really capitalize upon it.

So we have a wonderful series of panelists with us here. Next to me is Dyborn Chibonga, CEO of the National Association of Smallholder Farmers in Malawi. Next to him is Davor Pisk, Chief Operating Officer of Syngenta International based in Switzerland. Next to him, Khalid Bomba, CEO of the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency in Addis Ababa. Bill Cordingley, Managing Director and Head of Agricultural Research at Rabobank International based in the U.S., and then Ray Offenheiser, president of Oxfam America, also based in the U.S.

## PANEL DISCUSSION

**Lisa Dreier**

So I'd like to start off by asking each of our panelists to make some introductory remarks and really just give us a few of their key perspectives on the issue of partnerships. So, since the New Vision for Agriculture puts farmers at the center of the vision, I think we should start with our farmer leader who's on the panel. And Dyborn Chibonga, you have been in Davos, you've seen world leaders making commitments to work in partnership, and then you've also seen the on-the-ground reality in Malawi. Can you tell us, what do you think the partnerships can

do for smallholder farmers in Africa, and what's your advice on how to best make them come out successfully?

**Dyborn Chibonga**

Thank you, Lisa. Good morning, everybody. Many people regard smallholder farmers as vulnerable people that need support, that need sustenance in order for them to survive. But we regard smallholder farmers as a powerhouse that has got huge potential that can be released to make a difference in life. But as Dr. Norman Borlaug said, "You cannot eat potential."

So the question is – How do you release that potential. First of all, you need to help smallholder farmers to have a change of mindset. Instead of treating farming as a tradition, as a way of life, they need to treat farming as business, and that is exactly what NASFAM does. It helps smallholder farmers realize that farming is business and to help them work in a businesslike manner to make farming improve their livelihoods.

Secondly, you need to help them to access their productive inputs and the rural advisory services. In the past, governments used to be in charge of rural advisory services, but we know that, due to various reasons, that has failed. So you need to have a mechanism where private sector, NGOs, civil society is taking part in providing rural advisory services to the farmers so that the research and development that is most of the time sitting on the shelves can reach smallholder farmers to treat farming in a modern way and not to continue to use the hand hoe, which is something that is preventing our youth from going into agriculture.

To that, when farmers are working collectively, they are now a productive force that can work with governments, that can work with private sector in creating PPPs that actually work. In terms of Malawi, we have the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship, which acts as a broker to bring in governments, to bring in private sector together. Because they're trusted by both sides, they are seen as a force that can actually bring the stakeholders together. And because of that, we as smallholder farmers have joined those PPPs. And under the G8 New Alliance for Agriculture, we're actually taking part.

Two examples that I can give you: As NASFAM we partnered some few years ago to create a company called Afri-Nut. Afri-Nut is looking at processing an Aflatoxin control of groundnuts that are going for exports in Europe. Up to two years ago we were working with TWIN in order to send groundnuts over to England for them to process into various products under fair trade. But that company, which has NASFAM as a partner in Malawi. It has TWIN from the UK as the NGO and Waterloo Foundation was created in order to do some of the value-added back home. And under the new partnership that company has going to invest \$3.9 million over the next few years to bring in new machinery, new equipment, training so that we are actually doing a lot of the value-added

in Malawi, sending product that is already value-added and also creating ready-to-use therapeutic foods, which are used in the clinics and in the medical profession to help children that are malnourished.

The second example I can give you is that at NASFAM we are partnering with other local organizations, especially the USAID Feed the Future initiative where we are helping farmers to be producing seed. If the research stations, ICRISAT especially, in order for farmers to get basic seed and multiple it so that we can actually help farmers to diversify away from tobacco and other based systems. So that partnership in the G8 New Alliance we are going to be investing million dollars a year over the next few years. Farmers enter the seed sector by producing more than a thousand metric tons of seed a year. Those are examples that I can give.

**Lisa Dreier**

Thank you, Dyborn, that's great. Moving to the business perspective, Davor, Syngenta International is a major leader of the New Vision for Agriculture globally and has been involved in partnerships around the world. You also made a major commitment through Grow Africa and the G8 New Alliance of committing to a billion-dollar investment over ten years in Africa. Can you tell us what are some of the lessons you've learned about partnership and how it relates to your business outlook?

**Davor Pisk**

Sure. Thank you, Lisa, and thank you very much for the opportunity to join the panel. I think maybe the first thing I would reflect on is why private-public partnerships in the first place. And it's probably true to say that six or seven years ago Syngenta as a company wouldn't have necessarily looked to private-public partnerships as the key for our growth going forward. We were very much reliant upon bringing our own technology to markets in essentially developed countries, relying on product launches to give us growth.

But what we recognized more recently is that, if we're really going to be serious about attacking food security, we can't rely on large, developed, sophisticated agriculture, typically in the Northern Hemisphere. If we're going to grow more food in the next 30 years than we've ever done before in the last 10,000, we're going to have to do some things differently. And the first and most important thing we're going to have to do differently is increase productivity among smallholders, the 450 million smallholders around the world who have still today suboptimal yields, suboptimal productivity from the land.

Now, in order to address the smallholder challenge and to realize this potential, we realize it's going to need a multidisciplinary approach. These are complex challenges that one organization, one government on the ground can't possibly solve. We're talking about access to markets, we're talking about constructing value chains, we're talking about education, yes, access to technology as well; but all of these need to be brought together in a multidisciplinary approach.

Now, we have been active, as you've said, for the last couple of years with New Vision for Agriculture in a number of projects. And the learnings I think for us have been, first and foremost, this is the right approach. And we have engaged in projects from Mexico to Indonesia to Tanzania. And what we've seen, and perhaps I'll pick out the Tanzanian example where we're cooperating on the agricultural growth corridor project in Southern Tanzania, working with USAID, World Bank, the government of Tanzania, many NGOs as well as private companies such as YARA, to try and optimize the rich soil potential of this area of Tanzania that's equivalent in size to the state of Arizona here in the U.S. – a huge potential if we can bring all of the components of the value chain and technology together.

Now, in the last couple of years what we've been able to do, focusing specifically on rice and corn, we've been able to increase yields a hundred percent in three years. But importantly, and this gets back to your earlier point about sustainability being a key part of the overall equation, we've done this without increasing the need for more inputs, and we've done it in a way that hasn't contributed to any increase in greenhouse gas emission either. So this is truly sustainable productivity growth, which has to be the goal. So the first lesson for me has been this approach – these partnerships that we've put in place really do work.

The second lesson for me is that, if this is going to be successful going forward, and certainly private companies such as Syngenta need to do this as our core business activity, this can't be some sort of corporate social responsibility exercise on the periphery of our business activities. This has to be strategic; it has to be something that all of our employees get behind and support. And that's why we've launched very recently what we call the good growth plan, which outlines our strategic commitments to increase productivity in a sustainable way, particularly focusing on productivity growth in smallholder agriculture.

And I guess a third lesson that I would highlight is the fact that this is difficult. This is going to take many, many years to be successful. We need to adopt the phrase that we use in Syngenta – “Burning patience.” Because there is absolute urgency to start on these projects now to make sure that we build these partnerships. But let's recognize that we're not going to transform smallholder agriculture in any part of the world in one or two seasons. This is going to require sustained effort from governments, from NGOs, from the private sector if we're really going to make a difference.

**Lisa Dreier**

Thank you. Maybe turning then to the example on the ground in Africa. Khalid, the Ethiopian Agriculture Transformation Agency is a very unique and innovative organization that has attracted a lot of attention. Can you tell us, what does the New Vision for Agriculture, Grow Africa,

and other partnerships of this kind mean from the perspective of a country like Ethiopia.

**Khalid Bomba**

Sure. Thank you, Lisa. For a country like Ethiopia where 45% of GDP comes from agriculture and of that, 95% of production comes from smallholder farmers, the investment to drive economic development, to reduce poverty has to be with smallholder farmers in agriculture. And as a result, over the past ten years Ethiopia has been one of the few countries in Africa that has actually met the Maputo Declaration of investing over 10% of its budget in the agriculture sector, investing about 14% in that area.

Now, that's led to growth overall in the economy of double digits over that period of time and in agriculture over 8%. However, I think there's a recognition by the government that this model, although it's driven by government investment, it's driven by development to state model, is undesirable from a long-term perspective and is only there because of necessity, because of some of the market failures that existed in the past.

And although the model over the past ten years has been driven by government with a significant amount of support from development partners, be they bilaterals, multilaterals and foundations, it was recognized that a significant piece of the puzzle was missing for long-term economic growth. And that was the engagement with the private sector. In many parts of Africa I think the private sector sees smallholder farming as too risky, as not scalable, and as very difficult to work with.

And I think the government realizes that it has to do more to encourage the private sector, both domestic and international, to be a valued partner in working with us in developing smallholder farmers in a win-win basis. And that type of partnership is one that, as was just indicated, takes time. It is not linear. It is not easy, and there will be some challenges that we face across the way.

But the ultimate objective from the government's perspective is – how do we turn our smallholder farmers from subsistence farmers to ones that are market oriented, that understand the opportunities that exist in not just growing food for their own consumption but identifying both domestic and international markets to serve and also in working with the private sector when it comes to, be it input supply or postharvest processing.

So there are many ways in which we think that private sector could certainly work with government and also development partners in helping us achieve our aims.

**Lisa Dreier**

Fantastic. Thank you so much. And perhaps returning back to the business perspective, Bill, Rabobank has been very involved in Africa for

a long time and many other partnerships around the world. How do you see partnerships relating to Rabobank's core business strategy around the world?

**Bill Cordingley**

Absolutely. Thanks, Lisa, for the opportunity to be here. Well, partnerships, I think, are critical to success in the food and ag chain, and I don't just mean in the development context. I think that's true of wherever food and ag is done around the world and whoever is operating in that chain. The big change I think we've seen in the last seven to ten years is a fundamental shift in the nature of our global food system in terms of high prices, more volatility, greater dislocation between where production takes place and where consumption takes place, increasing need to focus on environmental and sustainability, social elements of the food chain. All of this has created huge, additional complexity to what was traditionally more a local country-based or regional-based supply chain. Basically, we're seeing our market globalized. We've seen those complexities double or triple, and the road ahead looks just as complex, if not more complex.

In that context, we don't know any of our clients – and we bank the food industry all around the world – who would say we can do it all by ourselves and we can really find a solution even for our business and our supply chain that doesn't require them to look again at how they organize themselves in a supply chain, partner along that supply chain, for a sustainable, commercially viable business.

So I think those lessons are clear for everybody, whether it's North America, Australia, where I come from, the developing world, Southeast Asia or Africa.

I think what's clear is where the infrastructure in an enabling environment is less robust, the need for partnerships is even greater. So in a market like in North America that's been established for a long time, highly specialized at all points in the value chain, one can specialize a little more and be more dependent on their partners upstream and downstream, or their suppliers upstream and downstream, and have a different sort of partnership relationship.

In the developing world where often the supply chains, as we've heard, have to be built from scratch, the ability for a company to go in and bring their unique capability to that marketplace and for it to make any impact at all is highly compromised, unless, as we heard, there's a multi-stakeholder approach, including the government that helps to establish that proper enabling environment, that range of services that are needed for a supply chain to work effectively.

And then I think turning towards the more developing world and smallholders, I think one critical element that's been touched on – the



three P's - people, planet, profit. People need to make a profit, and they need to be incentivized correctly. So it's no good for us to increase the yields of a farmer, double and triple in a local area if there's no market for them to sell into - all that does is crush their market and demoralize the effort. And eventually we know that will last a year or two.

So really again it's that ability to align interests, not just improve yield. But why are we improving yield? We're improving yield because we've got a pathway to a market, we've got a pathway to a new opportunity for these farmers. And we're aligning their interests with the processors, with the distributors and with the end-users.

And I think in Africa that's a critical step to get right, because if we don't align those interests, what we will see, I think, is a very challenging situation in terms of creating the lasting impact and benefit for the weakest link in the chain, which is often the smallholders.

So an example of that could be ICM Agribusiness in Rwanda who are doing a rice project. They have brought together the farmers in terms of their cooperatives and individually, and they've invested in a number of processing mills. And they've given these farmer cooperatives a share in these processing mills. So it immediately aligns their interests with the success of the mill. Part of the challenge, I understand, often is you invest in a mill in a developing market, and all that capital goes in. If the farmers can get a better price down the street, they're very much incentivized to doing that. If they are tied to the success of that mill and the downstream supply chain, that presents a longer-term, more sustainable opportunity to build a value chain through partnerships.

So partnerships are critical. We see it across all of our clients around the world, particularly large clients who are now facing this higher volatility, the challenge of being sustainable. So they've got to manage their risk, they've got to address their consumer's concerns in the Western world. I heard the CEO of McDonald's just this last Sunday say one of the biggest megatrends they think about is the connectivity, increased connectivity of consumers these days. So when something happens over in China, consumers in America know about it. So if someone gets sick somewhere, sales drop in another part of the world. It's an increasingly connective world.

And so the ability for big companies with brands at stake to know what's going on back up the supply chain is different than it has been for many years, not just because of sustainability, because of food safety, but as a real brand value driver. So I think we're seeing a lot more interest in brand, going back upstream and understanding, oh, what the heck's going on in my supply chain? Is their child labor? Is this being produced environmentally and sustainably? How can I play a role there that I never

was interested in before? And I think that's a big shift, and we'll see that continue.

In terms of Rabobank, we're in many countries around the world. F&A is our core focus outside of the Netherlands. It represents some 40% of total global business now, and it's growing. Being a partner is critical in lending money. We don't want to give enough rope to our clients to hang themselves with; it's about a sustainable relationship. So really understanding the position of our clients in their value chain and the sustainability of their businesses is a really important function of our team on the research side. And really that's about creating and providing the credit that the market needs, the financial liquidity that the market needs for the longer term, not just for this season's crops.

So lots of challenges, lots to talk about, but I'll hand it back.

**Lisa Dreier**

Great, thank you. And lastly, Ray, Oxfam is an active factor in many processes and then also acts as what you call a critical friend and constructive challenger to make sure partnerships are on the right track. What would you advise to ensure that partnerships really benefit smallholder farmers and have the intended outcomes?

**Ray Offenheiser**

Well, thank you, Lisa, and thanks for having us join the panel this morning. What I'd like to do perhaps is do two things. One is provide maybe a little bit of a historical perspective on how the public-private partnership has emerged, and then offer sort of four challenges that actually we see as we think about this.

For us, as we look at these issues, I think there's a focal question for us, is: To what degree, and how, are public-private partnerships and increased private sector investment in the agricultural sector going to ensure what we might call inclusive economic growth in the agricultural sector, as well as shared prosperity? And a lot of this has to do with how small farmer families, and women in particular, are going to be included in the outcomes of these kinds of initiatives.

By way of history, I think it's important to appreciate a little bit the road we've been down over the last 20 or 30 years in terms of agricultural investment. In the 1980s we collectively had bought the idea that there were going to be perpetual surpluses around the world that countries could rely on, availability of cheap food in the international market for some time to come. The consequence of that was, agricultural investments, foreign direct investments in agriculture, went down 75%.

And as a consequence of that, many governments disinvested in the agricultural sector to significant degrees in many ways compromising a lot of the critical institutions in their countries that actually support the agricultural sector - agricultural extension, national research institutions,

agricultural training institutions and universities, agricultural financing institutions, the cooperative sector, the social organizations that actually bring small farmers together. So you've had a real weakening of the agricultural sector because of that disinvestment in the 80s.

2008 arrives, and there's a game-changer that occurs. What basically happened is there's a reversal of the trend in decreasing investment in the agricultural sector. Actually it starts to rise again as a variety of different actors – donors, governments, private sector firms – got interested in agriculture again for very different reasons. In some cases it was about national security, it was about food shortages, or it was about investment opportunity.

But the good news here is that agricultural investment did actually increase or has been increasing. In fact, in the 90s over the last number of years it's doubled from \$13 billion to \$26 billion, although there's a paradox in actually the way that agricultural investment has been coming into countries. A lot of it is from developed to developed countries or developed to emerging economies, not necessarily from developed to low-income countries where perhaps it's most needed and where we've got the most significant amount of poverty that we've got to address.

The good news is that the initiatives like the New Vision for Agriculture and the public-private partnership narrative that we're discussing today have emerged. It's good news; it really represents the interest of the private sector in becoming a real partner in the development process. And I think one of the other things that has been a significant change that maybe is worth noting is – foreign direct investment from the private sector as a percent of overall foreign direct investment in agriculture has been rising dramatically relative to ODA, Overseas Development Assistance. So aid is going down and private sector investment is going up. The private sector as a development actor is now a fact, and it's something that I think we need to acknowledge, and we need to find creative ways, like the New Vision, for addressing the opportunity that that represents.

Three or four challenges that I think we're all facing as we look at this going forward: I think one of the challenges we face is the question of investment itself, investing at scale. As I said, investment has gone up, it's doubled between 2007 and 2009 from 13 to 26 billion. As I indicated, it's not necessarily going to the low-income countries.

The other thing to recognize, though, is the FAO has indicated we need \$80 billion a year in investment to really move the agricultural sector in a way that's going to drive the kind of growth we'd like to see and really reach the kinds of populations we want to reach. And so we're only at \$26 billion; we've still got a ways to go in order to really reach scale.

And in thinking about this investment, I think we've got to realize that there is a role for the private sector, but we've also got to be sure that the public sector is playing its role as well in terms of creating the kind of enabling environment that other members of the panel have commented on.

The second major challenge as we see it is ensuring that investments that are made are raising incomes, making farmers more resilient and improving food security - which really are the main goals of the New Vision, as Lisa has articulated them.

But I think it's really also important about who are we really investing in? And the real investors in the agricultural sector in most countries are farmers themselves and oftentimes small farmers. And small farmers are often the significant portion of the agricultural sector in many countries, but they're often overlooked by policymakers and investors.

And I think one of the things we're finding as the private sector comes into this arena is - it's oftentimes really hard for the companies to find ways to incorporate small farmers into their supply chains in meaningful ways. And some of it has to do with the fact that we don't necessarily have the institutional architecture in place today that may be needed in terms of the kinds of ag extension that might be required, technical outreach, farm organizations and so forth that the private sector needs to work with in order to make deals and advance the agenda. And oftentimes small farmers are in vulnerable areas, conflict zones in areas that are difficult to reach and problematic perhaps for private sector investors who are looking perhaps for a lower risk investing environment.

The third challenge is, I think, avoiding bad investments. Not all investments are equal, and not all investments are good. And one of the things we've been seeing in the aftermath of the global food crisis in 2008 is the phenomenon of land grabs particularly across the African Continent - something that I think a lot of civil society organizations are worried about, particularly in cases where they're displacing small farmers. But I think what this particular issue highlights is the existence of poorly administered land tenure systems where there's really a need particularly for governments to take action in this area and enable small farmers to secure land as an effective bankable asset.

So in that area I think there's real need for action to improve the regulatory systems in countries, have legal parity for women farmers to enable women to actually own assets and be a part of the productive process and secure financing, bankable land tenure, grievance mechanisms in supply chains where farm organizations can actually grieve an issue perhaps that might arise with a company that they're relating to, as well as strong social protection schemes.

And finally I think the fourth challenge is really at the heart of the New Vision initiative and others of this sort, which is really trying to encourage effective collaboration between the public and private sectors. Governments across Africa and other parts of the world have actually created their own agricultural plans, their development plans. And historically donors and other investors have not necessarily aligned themselves with those plans. But going forward I think this alignment is going to be critical if we're going to evapotranspiration the kind of outcomes that we're all hoping for.

And the private sector, of course, has got its own particular interests in advancing its agenda and securing profit, of course. And I think the trick here is going to be – can the private sector, with best intentions to reach small farmers and participate in positive development outcomes, align itself with the national agendas of the sort that say college is coordinating in Ethiopia.

I think the New Vision is an important initiative, because I think it brings together the key stakeholders in these discussions that have to be talking and networking and learning together, and it builds the opportunity for the kind of constructive dialog that will hopefully produce the kinds of inclusive growth and shared prosperity that I think we're all hoping for.

**Lisa Dreier**

Thank you, Ray, and a lot of your points were about the importance of strengthening institutions, and I noticed that a number of you mentioned the important role of government, both as an investor in the private sector and as the organization that really sets the policy environments that can enable smallholder farmer capacity building and market access. Khalid, since you are the representative on the panel from a government organization, what do you think is the role of government, and how has the Ethiopian government taken a very unique few steps on this front.

**Khalid Bomba**

I think a lot of people have mentioned enabling environment as being critical to ensure that some of these public-private partnerships are efficient. When we think about enabling environment, I think there's a couple of different ways of considering that.

First and foremost, of course, is for government to create the policy and framework for these partnerships to succeed and for private sector to have clarity. I think a lot of what we hear from our private sector partners is, just be sure that you have consistent rules and regulations and that you stick to them. It doesn't matter what they are – just make them consistent. So that consistency in policies and regulatory framework I think is one thing enabling environment that governments can provide.

The second one is the priority setting. The priorities, the metrics for success, the kinds of targets that really identify, what are we trying to achieve, rather than just working in a vacuum. And some of those targets

can be very sector-specific, and others are actually things like ensuring the participation of women is documented in a very targeted way, be it in participation in supply chains, as was commented on at the previous panel, not only in the production side of the equation but further up the value chain. So that target-setting, I think, is something that governments can play a very important role on.

Then thirdly, from a broad perspective, I think there are investments that could be made in institutions, in infrastructure, in the public goods that create the underlying bedrock upon which many of these partnerships are built.

So I think those are three broad kind of enabling environments.

Now, beyond that, I think we have to get a bit more granular to get things done. And that's why an organization like ours at ATA, I think, plays a special role. Because beyond these broad policy and regulatory and infrastructure investments, ultimately deals have to get done. And what ATA does is place a catalyzing, facilitating role in playing a translating, almost, function between the different partners and making sure that everybody not only understands the rules of the game but the response that they have to one another. So we create a platform that enables people to not just talk to one another but to really transact, to really work together.

So there is a problem-solving role that we play in helping people identify – what are the issues that they face, and who is responsible for solving those problems? Sometimes it's just a mere misunderstanding; other times there are policy issues that need to be addressed. But we can play that role as a government institution in sitting between the different partners and not having essentially a stake in the game. Our role is just to make sure that things get done. So that problem-solving role is something that I think is sometimes overlooked, to have an objective organization that's sitting there, whose sole task is just to see deals close, who doesn't have a stake at the end, except for the wellbeing of the smallholder farmer.

**Lisa Dreier**

And to our other panelists, as you look at both your own countries and governments around the world – and perhaps, Davor, we could start with you in looking at Ethiopia and many other governments that you deal with – what are some examples of what you think governments are doing right in leading and brokering partnerships and creating the enabling environment for what needs to get done? And what would you like to see them do more of?

**Davor Pisk**

Yeah, I think there's many examples from around the world. We do a lot of work in Vietnam, in Indonesia. I think the commitment and the support we have from individual agencies is very similar to Khalid's

example from Ethiopia – real recognition that agriculture is important to their societies and a willingness to attract best practice investment, biotechnologies, etc. I think the things that clearly the scope for further improvement is that consistency of policy.

Now, one of the challenges, of course, we have is sometimes governments change. Sometimes policy priorities change, and that makes it very difficult when individual private organizations that committed on a long-term basis and then suddenly the support, the direction that they were relying on from policymakers changes potentially overnight.

So I think more consistency, certainly an emphasis on that regulatory policy environment, which provides for that stability, I think these are the things that we absolutely do need to encourage and see more of.

I'd also like to see more nongovernmental organizations commit to some of these projects as well, because I think one of the challenges that we face is that we don't have the credibility around some of these projects that we would like without the broader engagement of civil society, both in local countries but multinationally as well.

**Lisa Dreier**

Any thoughts on that, Ray, in terms of how involved is the civil society, and how could they become more involved in some of these public-private partnership processes?

**Ray Offenheiser**

Well, I think there's a lot of enthusiasm amongst not-for-profits for getting involved in these initiatives and I think in some cases a bridging role between existing farmer associations and perhaps private sector interests. Because I think one of the difficulties we're seeing now, as companies that are coming in and trying to really actually extend their supply chains and reach farmer organizations are confronting, is that actually there's a variety of things that may be needed that are very basic in a community.

So, for example, we worked for a number of years with the coffee sector in Ethiopia and where there was very limited amount of high-quality coffee that was being exported. And the farmer associations locally needed washing stations, they needed some investment capital to improve quality, they needed better capacity in assessing sort of the quality of their product and what they were going to set aside and what they were actually going to send in to the international market. Those are things that actually we as an NGO could actually offer and provide that actually meant an enormous difference in getting them into the supply chain, even doing things as unusual as taking farmer groups to tradeshow in the United States and actually tasting competitions with actually major commercial producers to actually demonstrate that the products of these farmers were actually quite good, which resulted

actually in increasing sales five, ten times over about a three-, four-year period.

So I think there is that kind of brokering role where we can enable folks to acquire kinds of skills that maybe historically ag extension groups might have been providing but aren't providing today because of the shortage of funds that I described. And in terms of bridging into those markets, we can actually provide the ability of farmers to get to places maybe they wouldn't otherwise be able to get to.

**Lisa Dreier**

That's great. Another theme that you mentioned, which a lot of the speakers have mentioned, is the importance of inclusivity and harnessing the capabilities of both civil society and business to invest in the capacity of farmers to treat farmers as a business, as Dyborn was saying. One thing that a lot of people are mentioning is the importance of strengthening the participation of women in agricultural value chains, both as producers and as entrepreneurs. How can we actually make that a reality? I think everyone buys into the goal, but there's some really interesting examples of how business capabilities can help to empower women farmers and entrepreneurs. Dyborn, would you comment on that?

**Dyborn Chibonga**

Yes, Lisa. I think Africa has to work harder at that, because of our traditions and our cultures which regard women as second class, and maybe most of them have not been to school because they are told you get married, and when the resources are few, it's the men in the house that are actually sent to school. The uptake for us is that we provide adult literacy and we make sure that the women are trained, and invariably you find that in a class of 60, for example, after three weeks of training, even the men that are avoiding the other classes see the differences that are there in the women and want to join in. Where a class build up to maybe 800 people and you've only got two or three teachers. We find that actually women in leadership positions are better at the institutions because they've got more passion for what they are doing. They've got a more medium-long-term view, and they've got more capacity to improve their families.

On my own board, for example, we've got eight board members, and four of them are women, and my board chair is a woman. I find that when I've got the women that I have to respond to, my job is much easier than when I have men to respond to.

And most of the associations – we've got 45 associations as NASFAM – those that are being led by women are much better at doing what they do in empowering farmers, than those that are being led by men. So there is a place for women, but we need to break down the cultural and historical barriers in Africa.



**Lisa Dreier**

Other comments on empowering women? Ray.

**Ray Offenheiser**

Just two comments. One is an initiative Oxfam has been involved in – dialogue with major food and beverage companies about their supply chains. And one of the things we have been challenging them on is the degree to which they’re actually been thinking about the role of women in their supply chains and the extent to which they actually have policies in place to bring that question to the fore in terms of their suppliers and the way they relate to their suppliers.

And what has been surprising to us is the extent to which all of the companies we’ve talked to have been thinking about this but it’s not been clear to them what practically they can be doing. So we’ve actually trying to provide some practical ideas.

The other thing, maybe just underlying Dyborn’s point, is Oxfam has initiated a program, we started somewhat modestly, called “Female Food Heroes” in Tanzania, Nigeria and Ethiopia. The idea was actually to highlight women’s leadership in agriculture and actually get a greater appreciation, not only for the private sector but also in the broader society, of the role that women play in agriculture. The idea was actually to ask for nominations of women who are playing important leadership roles at the village level in doing innovative things in agriculture.

We started modestly in Tanzania. Now we have 7,000 applicants a year, or nominations a year, for this program. We pick and we go through a very rigorous review process. We pick 14, and then they go through a whole leadership training program. And the interesting thing in the country this whole process of their selection and then their participation in leadership training, work with youth, return to their villages, initiation of projects in villages, is all being videoed and portrayed on national television on a nightly basis following the nightly news. And there’s a national audience that’s actually following this as if it’s sort of a reality TV program.

And so it’s really put women and small farmer agriculturists and their lives and challenges right at the heart of national discussion in Tanzania specifically. So it’s something we’re trying to actually take to other countries across the continent as well.

**Lisa Dreier**

Great, thank you. I think unfortunately we could happily talk about this all day long, and perhaps we will continue to do so after this panel, but we have only a few minutes left. I’d like to ask each of you – given that you have a lot of experience in partnerships and we’re hearing from the full group that partnerships are the new reality – there’s a lot of organizations that are trying to navigate this path and there is no roadmap, there is no recipe that’s already defined for how to make partnerships work – so from all of your experience I’d love to ask each of

you to close by giving just a quick one-liner on: If you were giving advice to another organization that was going to start out on the partnership path, what do you think is the one most important success factor to making a partnership work, if you were giving advice to an organization. And perhaps, Dyborn, we could start with you. It might be knocking on your door in Malawi, an international company, an organization from another country or from your own country – what would you tell them in terms of tips for making partnerships work?

**Dyborn Chibonga** I think I would give two tips. One is that government often works at a different speed from private sector, and most of the time the ministry is working in silos that don't even talk to each other, so they have to be aware of that.

And secondly, most of the time private sector treats smallholder farmers as very high risk, and that is not scalable. Having said that, from the example of NASFAM and what we are doing in the New Alliance with Grow Africa, I think we can give examples that it can actually work, but you need the patience.

**Lisa Dreier** Great. Davor?

**Davor Pisk** I think for me it's all about making sure that your choice of partner absolutely shares the same strategic aims and objectives as you have. A partnership is hard work, and if you're not absolutely aligned in terms of the priority you place on specific objectives, then it's probably going to be a futile endeavor.

**Lisa Dreier** Good advice. And Khalid.

**Khalid Bomba** Maybe let me answer the question not from the perspective of how I would advise companies, partnerships, but rather governments about how to think about these partnerships. And I'd say in that perspective that it's important for governments to think about solving structural problems rather than the problems that exist in each partnership independently. Because that's a much more scalable model, if you solve the broader issues rather than going in and trying to solve one by one, every single issue that exists in each partnership.

**Lisa Dreier** Great, and in just one word each, Bill and Ray.

**Bill Cordingley** Yeah. Well, I think it's about alignment, so similar to what we heard – it's those partners need to be aligned, and they need to know where the vested interests lie in that overall system. Very good partnerships with great capabilities can be brought undone if they don't understand that.

**Lisa Dreier** One word for Ray?

**Ray Offenheiser**

Well, I mean, I agree with Khalid that I think we need a broader shared agenda, and I think the key to that is transparency, which leads to trust and requires burning patience, if I can steal the term from Davor.

**Lisa Dreier**

So alignment, transparency, trust, commitment and the burning patience is required to make these partnerships work. We thank all of you for participating and joining us for this discussion, and let's have a round of applause for our speakers.