

Key Takeaways – ATLAS Roundtable

Solution Pathways to Scale Sustainable Agriculture in Africa

Paris Peace Forum | October 30, 2025

Co-hosted by: The Paris Peace Forum and the ATLAS Initiative

Moderated by: **Patrick Dupoux**, Managing Director and Senior Partner, BCG; **Facundo Etchebehere**, co-founder of Ambition Loop

Speakers: **Alain Beauvillard**, Policy, and Innovation at the Fund, Green Climate Fund; **Ismahane Elouafi**, Executive Director, CGIAR; **Leonardus Vergütz**, Director of Sustainability Science, OCP Group; **David Laborde**, Director, Agrifood Economics and Policy Division (ESA), FAO; **Emmanuel Marchant**, SVP Sustainability Partnerships et GM Danone Ecosystem, Danone; **Younes Addou**, Vice President, INNOV’X; **Qahir Dhanani**, Managing Director & Partner, Washington, DC, Boston Consulting Group; **Khalid Bomba**, CEO and Managing Director, Development Sovereignty Group (DSG); **Elisabeth Claverie de Saint-Martin**, CEO, CIRAD; **Khalil Elouardighi**, France Director, ONE; **Muez Ali**, Senior Research and Policy Associate, EARTHNA, Qatar Foundation; **Leonard Mizzi**, Head of Unit, DG INTPA-European Commission; **Inbal Becker-Reshef**, Managing Director, AI for Good Lab, Microsoft; **Fiona Hoffman**, Director for Strategic Growth, PULA; **Raphael Hara**, Managing Director, Ksapa; **Dr Racine Ly**, Director, Data Intelligence and Governance, AKADEMYA2063; **Abdirahman Ali**, National Coordinator on Food Systems Resilience Project, Gouvernement of Somalia; **Franck Saint-Martin**, Environmental Impact Manager, Global Public Affairs and ESG Engagement, Nestlé.

Executive summary

This roundtable convened African and global leaders across government, business, finance, and research. The discussion focused on defining what *sustainable agriculture* means for Africa and identifying actionable financing mechanisms to scale these models in alignment with both local realities and global sustainability frameworks.

Participants agreed that Africa’s agricultural transformation hinges on redefining sustainability in pragmatic, African-led terms—grounded in local realities yet aligned with global goals. Sustainability, they emphasized, must not be limited to environmental metrics but integrate social and economic dimensions such as productivity, livelihoods, and resilience. Achieving this balance requires coherent policies, coordinated financing, and innovation systems tailored to African contexts.

A key challenge identified was the fragmentation of sustainability frameworks and metrics. The proliferation of global indicators, while reflecting growing attention to the issue, often increases complexity and compliance costs—discouraging investment. Participants called for a streamlined, outcome-based approach anchored in reliable, interoperable data systems that can

serve both public and private actors. Transparency and data coherence were described as essential public goods to measure progress, attract finance, and build trust across value chains.

Discussions underlined that Africa must shift from land expansion to innovation-driven productivity. While past agricultural growth in many regions relied on expanding cultivated land, the continent's future depends on “smart intensification”: investing in research, improved seeds, irrigation, and precision inputs such as customized fertilizers that raise yields and efficiency while minimizing environmental impact. Innovation was seen not only as a driver of sustainability but also as a source of competitiveness and economic inclusion.

Financing the transition at scale remains an urgent priority. In a context of declining Official Development Assistance (ODA) and rising debt pressures, concessional public finance must be used strategically—to de-risk private investment, not replace it. Participants highlighted blended finance, agricultural insurance, and guarantee mechanisms as key tools to bridge the risk gap, but stressed the need to simplify and standardize such instruments for scale and replicability. Policy coherence, debt sustainability, and institutional capacity were repeatedly cited as prerequisites for sustainable investment.

Finally, participants emphasized that Africa's agricultural transformation must be led and owned by African actors—governments, research institutions, and the private sector. Building strong local institutions, ensuring policy predictability, and investing in public goods such as data systems and digital soil maps were identified as critical enablers. True sustainability, they concluded, will emerge from systems that combine innovation, local ownership, fair economic returns, and responsible governance.