

**Private Sector Meeting**

**2013 HIGH LEVEL DINNER:  
PRINCIPLES ON RESPONSIBLE AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT**

**HOSTED BY:**

International Agri-Food Network [www.agrifood.net](http://www.agrifood.net)



**DATE, LOCATION:**

**Tuesday, October 8** 19:00 – Welcome Reception, 20:00 - Dinner  
Intercontinental, Via Sistina, 67/69, Roma

**SPEAKERS:**

**Master of Ceremonies:**

Hakan Bahceci (United Arab Emirates)  
Chairman, International Agri-Food Network

**Welcome:**

His Excellency Yaya Olaniran (Nigeria)  
Chairman, Committee on Food Security

**Keynote Speaker:**

Jonathan Jacobs (Kenya)  
CEO, Malawi Mangoes

**MEETING SUMMARY**

The meeting saw a gathering of over 100 guests, including Ambassadors and permanent representatives, CEO's, association representatives, donor organizations, and leaders from the Rome-based agencies. The theme of the dinner was "Principles on Responsible Agricultural Investment", with the objective of understanding the key policy recommendations that are needed to build better private sector engagement in the food value chain in developing countries.

Participants at each table were asked to address two main questions and bring about a unified response. The questions asked were: "What is needed to create responsible agricultural investment?" and "How can responsible agricultural investment principles be improved?" Business leaders were to present short case studies on their own experiences with RAI, which would then be compared and contrasted with those of diplomats and agency staff. Finally, all participants were asked to work together to identify commonalities within their experiences and efforts.

Each table was headed by a facilitator and rapporteur. The delegates had very active discussions around the topics and provided a long list of recommendations to enable stakeholders to focus and prioritize its objective in achieving better private sector engagement in the food value chain in developing countries.

At the conclusion of the roundtables, the Master of Ceremonies invited guests to rise and move to the lounge area to enjoy desserts and drinks. This provided an opportunity for people to interact with others beyond those seated at their table.

## **KEY THEMES & DISCUSSION POINTS**

- Agriculture needs to be responsible in considering the sustainability of investment in regards to social, environmental and economic concerns.
- Coherent, long-term visions are required to create a workable field of action.
- Transparency when discussions and consultations take place are an absolute priority.
- A conducive operating environment for responsible investment must be stable and predictable. The enabling environment should be neither too permissive nor too restrictive. Corruption, security risks must be minimized and eventually eradicated.
- Educational and technical transfer programs are essential to success in capacity building.
- Mutual understanding amongst all stakeholders, achieved by incorporating the whole breadth of the value chain and its actors in discussions.
- Organizational innovation is important such as cooperatives, finance geared to women and smallholders, and public-private partnerships.
- Long-term partnerships are needed particularly when developing markets from a very basic level. There is a strong consensus on needed infrastructure; training and quality assurance is needed.

## **What is needed to create Responsible Agricultural Investment?**

- On the ground local knowledge.
- Private sector training capacity development at the country level.
- Clearer communication of how the private sector operates, especially in regards to the wider supply chain.
- Initiative from large buyers to adopt sustainable sourcing and therefore create viable long-term local markets.
- Diversification of crops.
- Fomenting institutions that represent and link local growers and agricultural industries.
- Higher degrees of collaboration between investors and smallholders.
- Links between education (whether public or privately supplied) and technical enabling programs. Ensuring education starts at a young age with

a clear practical focus towards their local opportunities, increasing their ability to integrate into local markets.

- Greater identification and focus regarding gender issues.
- Development of joint definitions and visions of concepts such as “sustainable” and “responsible”, to ensure strong investor-smallholder and public-private cooperation.
- Resolution of international trade negotiations, particularly in the WTO.
- Consistent public policies, particularly in protecting nascent agri-industry.
- Clear land tenure rights.
- Policy coherence in respect to investments, clear legal environment for businesses.
- Development of local finance, both to ensure local investment security and to develop smallholder and local investor participation.
- Accountability for both private and public actors, an overall strengthening of regulatory institutions.
- Data transparency, both private and public.

### **How can Responsible Agricultural Investment principles be improved?**

- Strive for simplicity: some delegates believed that the Zero Draft was too extensive and complex, especially when dealing with local communities.
- In the same vein, to be realistic (and flexible) when the local context demands it.
- Dialogue with local communities and adapt to their principles.
- Transparency in dealing with local communities.
- Better sharing of lessons learned and best practices at the local level.
- Regulate tenure rights and guarantees.
- Bring about better extension services and information campaigns.
- Capture frameworks for farmers unions and cooperatives.
- Enable financing at the local level.
- Be very specific on the role of the state.
- Fair access to land and water resources, a potential government role in creating a fair environment for small landowners.

### **MAIN CONCLUSIONS**

Agricultural investment is extremely important, and needs to be carried out in a responsible manner in order to bolster local relationships and development. A coherent investment policy requires a high level of participation between all sides, as well as trust in each other and a clear view of what each actor has as their roles and responsibilities. Public-private cooperation needs to be clearer and transparent, as well as built around coherent long-term term plans that incorporate local communities. All levels along the

value chain should be involved in the elaboration of discussions. Principles put forward for responsible investment should also be clear and concise, in order to be fully workable.