

# AGRI-TECH: Feeding the Future



28<sup>th</sup> August 2024



at the Karachi Expo Center

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Brief overview of the “Agri-tech: Feeding the Future” Conference

- As per the World Bank, agricultural productivity must increase by 60% by 2050 to meet the rising food demands of the growing population.
- The International Trade Centre (ITC) reports that every 1% increase in agricultural productivity leads to a 0.6% increase in regional trade.
- Over \$200 billion is required annually to meet adaptation and resilience investment targets in sectors such as water, energy, agriculture and early-warning systems – three times current funding.



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Given the urgent need for accelerating food security measures for our member states, ICCD’s first event under the BOE Asia regional series focused on the theme of “AgriTech Feeding the Future”. The conference brought together regional Agri business leaders and institutions to share successful business models and best practices for transitioning towards a digital future that can fast-track regional trade and investments. Through dynamic panel discussions and interactive sessions, the event explored opportunities and challenges in leveraging AgriTech solutions to enhance regional trade and drive sustainable economic development in agriculture. The event saw the participation of entrepreneurs from Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, & Afghanistan. The agenda also included keynote speeches from international organizations such as FAO Pakistan, UNIDO ITPO Bahrain and Islamic Food Processing Association, UAE, and COP 29 organizing team member from Azerbaijan.



# FACTS & FIGURES



# INTRODUCTION

ICCD's first event under the -Best of Entrepreneurship Series in Asia on the theme of "Agri-tech: Feeding the Future" brought together visionary leaders and sector experts to discuss the transformative potential of technology and innovation in driving the future of agricultural entrepreneurship in Asia. Key speakers highlighted the transformative power of technology and entrepreneurship in fostering agricultural growth and development.



**H.E. Mr. Yousef Hasan Khalawi**  
Secretary-General of ICCD

Technology is the greatest and easiest gate to our better future in our life but entrepreneurs are driving and creating that future



**Mr. Muhammad Atif Hanif**  
CEO of Al Baraka Bank Pakistan Limited

The halal protein has surpassed \$500 million in Pakistan



**H.E. Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon**  
Acting President of FPCCI

Youth population comprises of 60% of the total population in Pakistan and needs to be utilized to transform Agri Entrepreneurship, which in turn will support the development of rural population of country.

# OVERVIEW

## OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

1

Policy recommendations  
by entrepreneurs.

2

Discussion on supportive policies by  
the banking sector for the farmers.

3

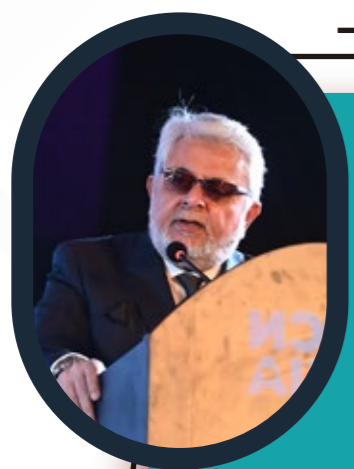
Insights by CEOs that  
have helped their business.

4

Identification of core issues, such as Sharia-friendly poli-  
cies for conservative farmers, technology awareness,  
equal access for farmers in backward areas and how to  
capitalize on arid land for agriculture.

5

Networking between local and international  
entrepreneurs and stakeholders.



**H.E. Mr. Zubair Motiwala**  
CEO of TDAP

Half of Asia can be fed with  
cultivated land from Pakistan,  
we must expand both vertically  
and horizontally.

# NETWORKING SESSIONS

## Networking Lunch

The Networking Lunch during the AgriTech event provided an excellent opportunity for participants to connect and engage in meaningful conversations. It served as an informal platform for industry leaders, entrepreneurs, and international delegates from 14 countries to exchange ideas, build connections, and expand their professional networks. This networking opportunity contributed significantly to the overall success of the event by facilitating discussions on key topics related to the BOE, Asia, AgriTech event.

## Gala Dinner

The Gala Dinner, held at the ICCD headquarters, was a distinguished gathering attended by Consulate Generals, Heads of Organizations, international delegations, and speakers from the BOE AgriTech event. This gathering provided a sophisticated setting for attendees to engage in high-level discussions, forge valuable connections, and reflect on the insights shared during the event further enhancing the success and impact of the ICCD's initiatives particularly its -Best of Entrepreneurship in Asia Series

## One-to-one meeting for international delegates with local businesses and government entities.

The one-to-one meeting for international delegates with local businesses and government entities took place at the FPCCI office, where UNIDO-ITPO briefed attendees on their projects. This session included representatives from Women Chamber of Commerce, Small & Medium Enterprises Authority, Pakistan and senior leadership of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The discussion facilitated direct engagement and discussions on potential collaborations and investment opportunities, strengthening business relations and advancing mutual interests between organizations.

Networking Sessions



# PANEL DISCUSSIONS HIGHLIGHTS

## Panel 1:

### CEO Insights: Climate Change and Agriculture Development, Sustainability & Future Business Models

The panel discussion focused on the challenges and opportunities within the agriculture sector, particularly in the context of climate change and the critical role of the private sector. The panel featured experts from leading agri-companies who explored how climate-conscious innovations, advanced technologies, and sustainable practices can shape future agriculture business models and address climate change challenges.

#### Keynote speaker:

**H.E. Ms. Natavan Mammadova, a Member of the COP 29 Organizing Committee, Azerbaijan** emphasized the impact of climate change on agriculture, stressing the importance of innovation, climate financing, and digitalization for sustainable development.

#### Moderator

**Mr. Sajeed Aslam, Partner of ESG & Technology at SpectrEco**, has been pivotal in delivering impactful ESG solutions and streamlining compliance across various jurisdictions. He moderated the session on "CEO Insights: Climate Change and Agricultural Development, Sustainability, and Future Business Models."

#### Panelists

**Mr. Amir Shehzad, Executive Director of Unity Foods**, emphasized, "The growth of the agriculture sector relies on active engagement among all stakeholders. At Unity Foods, we've dedicated an Agri team to work closely with farmers, offering hands-on support and training in sustainable practices and modern farming techniques to maximize crop yields." He highlighted the company's Ba Ikhtiyar Kissan initiative, which empowers farmers by providing them with cutting-edge agricultural skills, high-quality seeds, and fertilizers. "Through this initiative, we're not just growing crops; we're cultivating a stronger, more sustainable agricultural economy that fosters lasting livelihoods."

He further added, "Once the crops of these small farmers are ready, Unity Foods is committed to purchasing the entire harvest at market rates, directly from their locations. By eliminating middlemen, we ensure farmers receive fair value for their hard work, enabling sustainable livelihoods and creating a more efficient, equitable agricultural ecosystem."

**Mr. Atif Mohammad Ali, CEO of Engro Fertilizer** noted the 4Rs: "right source, right rate, right time, and right place," stressing that following these principles can mitigate damage. In response to a question from the audience, he acknowledged the harmful impact of urea on soil health. To address this issue, Engro has been investing significantly in developing efficient fertilizers that not only enhance crop yields but also improve soil health.

**Mr. Saleh Abdullah Lootah, CEO of Islamic Food Processing Association, UAE**, discussed creating a corridor for food provision across 57 Islamic countries, stating, "My role is to take this to all Islamic countries and capitalize."

**Mr. Fahad Patel, General Manager Supply Chain, Shan Foods**, underscored, "Holding true to our pledge of sustainability across all operations, Shan Foods is a part of the UN Global Compact and actively works on the SDGs through its corporate platform Shan Shares. Shan Foods also ensures production lines are ethically produced and sourced by initiatives on backward integration where we train farmers of Sindh and work on community upliftment." While answering a question from the audience, he talked about Shan Food's multiple initiatives to support families and empower them to become contributing members of society working not just for the betterment of themselves but for the upliftment of Pakistan's economy."



## Panel 2:

### Empowering Growth: Financing the AgriTech Adoption

The panel brought together financial institutions, including banks, development finance institutions, and investment promotion agencies, to explore the transformative potential of Agri-Tech and Agri financing solutions. The discussion highlighted the importance of both technology and financial support in driving innovation and growth within agriculture.

#### Keynote Speaker

**H.E. Ms. Florence Rolle, FAO Country Representative in Pakistan** highlighted that 90% of farmers own less than 5 acres, use outdated technology, and have limited literacy, leading to low productivity. She stressed the need for a strong food control system, adaptive farming practices, and improved access to financing in remote areas at a subsidized interest rate.

#### Moderator

**Mehreen Shoaib, CEO of Stimulus and a Specialist in Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Development**, moderated the panel discussion on "Empowering Growth: Financing AgriTech Adoption."

#### Panelists

**Mr. Kazim Saeed, CEO of Pakistan Agriculture Coalition** emphasized the importance of supporting smaller farms, with a higher cumulative land area to address larger agricultural issues. He suggested using insure-tech solutions for climate, integrating the use of Land Information Management System (LIMS), and biological risk mitigation and emphasized government support.

"Our mandate at Pakistan Agricultural Coalition is to create new business models for growth in agriculture".

"We cannot disregard the smaller farmers who cultivate about half of Pakistan's agricultural land. Addressing their problems—quality seed, mechanization, insurance, etc.—will automatically help solve the problems of larger farmers and corporate farms".

"Farmers are not protected from climate and biological risks. Insure-tech firms can use weather and satellite data, and surveys to support insurers in providing a robust solution with government covering the insurance premium for small farmers".

**Mr. Asim Asif, Group Head SME & Commercial Banking, Al Baraka Bank Pakistan Limited**, noted the need for banks to design specific products for farmers, adapt their cash flow cycles to different crops, diversify the cash cycles and extend their presence in remote areas. He also called upon larger Agritech firms to support startup firms to grow and scale.

"Banks should design specific products for the farmers".

"Farmers are unaware of the bank facilities, and even with awareness, the incentive product knowledge is not available".

"The cash flow cycle is different for all crops. Banks should have more inclusive and diverse cycles to facilitate all types of farmers".

**Nasir Ali Shah Bukhari, Chairman, KASB Group** discussed initiatives like planting one billion trees and the Land Information and Management System (LIMS) for landowners with 100 acres. He emphasized the benefits of technology in agriculture, including drone spraying over manual methods, and the potential of Agri-marketplaces to connect farmers, particularly the youth, with broader markets and service providers.

"Our mission is to grow 1 billion trees".

"Land Management Information services (LIMS) is providing cutting edge technology to enhance agricultural productivity in Pakistan".

"The proposal is to focus on service providers and establish Agri-malls by Green Corporate Initiative".



## Panel 3:

### Agri-preneurs: Empowering Local Innovations

The session emphasized the crucial role of entrepreneurs and international organizations in advancing agricultural innovation and supporting local solutions. Through insightful discussions, the panel also highlighted how these key players drive progress and foster effective, region-specific agricultural practices.

### Keynote Speaker

**H.E. Dr. Hashim Hussein, Head of Investment, UNIDO ITPO Bahrain**, highlighted the need to enhance the entrepreneurial ecosystem through partnerships with chambers, educational institutions, and research bodies, particularly in AgriTech. He stressed the importance of knowledge-sharing, understanding the climate for small farmers, and using smart finance options like angel funding and crowdfunding, with a focus on women's progression.

### Moderator

**Mr. Talha Ahmed**, Digital Transformations Specialist at ICCD, moderated the panel discussion on "Agri-preneurs: Empowering Local Innovations".

### Panelists

**Mr. Muzaffar Manghi, Co-Founder, Farmdar** highlighted the role of AI in precision farming to optimize water usage in irrigation, judicious use of inputs and yield increase for Pakistan's small farms averaging 2.5 acres.

**Mr. Ramil Azmammadov, CEO of Dr Agro** discussed the challenges faced by Azerbaijani farmers in adopting new technologies, stressing the need for trust-building. He shared that more than 95% of startups are going to fail within 3 years and to counter that, knowledge-sharing is important to align farmers with moving times.

**Mr. Izzat Rahman, CEO and Founder of Kayuh Industries** highlighted the potential of aquaculture and biomass production particularly in ASEAN countries, underscoring the value of precision farming and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in agriculture.

**Mr. Muddassir Shafique, Agribusiness Lead, Upstream Middle East, Central Asia, Pakistan & Afghanistan (MCT Region), IFC** highlighted the organization's role in improving farm productivity, access to formal credit, supply chain efficiency, and sustainability for small / medium farmers, citing BigBasket's journey from a startup to a unicorn as an example of potential success in agribusiness."



## FIRESIDE CHATS:

### Harvesting Success—An Entrepreneur's Path in AgriTech



Ms. Rassarin Chinnachodteeranun, CEO at Listenfield

**Ms. Rassarin** spoke about her entrepreneurial journey and her startup - Listenfield, which was founded in 2017 with a mission to enhance farmers' lives through advanced agricultural technology and is operating in six South Asian countries today. The company develops precision tools for soil scanning, optimizing fertilizer use, and managing crop growth to boost productivity and reduce costs. Among their notable initiatives is the rapid soil analysis to optimize fertilizer use, including the creation of fertilizer ratio maps that account for climate uncertainties. Listenfield, also addresses soil analysis methods and carbon balance in rice cultivation, emphasizing sustainable practices and technological innovation to empower farmers and promote global food security.

In collaboration with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Listenfield is working on a project to assist highland farmers in transitioning from conventional to organic farming. This project aims to help farmers understand soil conditions, adjust their fertilizer practices, produce organic herbs, and ensure traceability to enhance transparency and build buyer trust.

### From Idea to Impact— The Entrepreneurs Journey



Mr. Firnando Buenayre Sirait, Co-founder & COO, Hara (Indonesia)

**Mr. Firnando, COO of HARA**, highlighted key challenges faced by farmers in Indonesia, including high interest margins, unequal access to technology, and asymmetry of information. Majority of farmers are smallholders that manages land below 0,5 Ha, escalating difficulties in the agricultural sector. Mr. Firnando emphasized the importance of data collection for farmers by creating Agripreneurs equipped with mobile app technology which will be a new source of income through enabling access of farmer to a wider reach of opportunities. He also stressed the role of tokenization in ensuring transparency, allowing end-users to trace the origin of raw materials.

Recognizing the fluctuating nature of entrepreneurship, Firnando advocated for sustainable business models that balance profitability with social and environmental responsibility. HARA, an Agri-tech Solutions, aims to empower smallholder farmers by providing access to crucial information, financial services, and fair market opportunities, driving a more equitable agricultural ecosystem.

## CLOSING REMARKS

**Brigadier Nayyar, Project Director (Sindh), Agriculture at Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC)** highlighted that in the next 26 years, humanity must produce as much food as it has in the past 8,000 years, underscoring food security's importance. Agriculture contributes to 22% to Pakistan's GDP and employs 27% of the labor force. Of 79.6 million hectares, only 24.2 million are cultivated. The Green Pakistan initiative under SIFC aims to cultivate an additional 4.5 million acres. Pakistan's 12 ecological zones support diverse agricultural products, including wheat, meat, mangoes, cotton, and milk.

**Ms. Aalia Jafar, Director of International Relations at ICCD** stressed that today's youth is more powerful than ever before because technology gives them access to the world on their fingertips. While there are grave challenges we face today, we must be creative & bold to find our indigenous solutions based on learnings of the world. ICCD believes it its duty to bring together all stakeholders to support our youth with platforms for awareness, networking and inspiration. For this, she thanked all the partners and supporters of ICCD in this endeavor.

**Mr. Mazhar Ali Nasir, Former Vice President, FPCCI** emphasized the importance of creativity. He noted Pakistan's potential to capitalize on raw materials creatively, with government, international, and youth support being essential. Mr. Nasir advocated for the agriculture sector to be given industry status to attract investment, stating that industrialization is crucial for its development, and mentioned SIFC's success with corporate farming in Punjab.



## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

01

Facilitate the growth of AgriTech and digital startups to modernize the agriculture sector, including initiatives like branch-less banking to improve financial inclusion among farmers.

02

Strengthen agricultural exports by leveraging partnerships with international chambers and creating export corridors, especially within the OIC and other regional blocs

03

Increase investment in mechanization and innovative farming techniques, such as precision farming and the adoption of AI, to enhance productivity and address climate-related challenges.

04

Focus on capacity building, access to finance, and the adoption of new technologies for smallholder farmers who own less than 5 acres of land, which make up 90% of the farming community.

05

Create banking products that cater to the religious needs of the population to increase financial participation and reduce the unbanked adult population. Muslim farmers resist banking due to non-Islamic practices.

06

Banks should design diverse financial products that match the cash flow cycles of different crops and are accessible in remote areas.

07

Develop policies to support climate-smart agricultural practices, including crop diversification and the use of sustainable inputs to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

08

Strengthen collaboration between the private sector, research institutions, and farmers to disseminate information on sustainable farming practices, such as optimal use of fertilizers (4Rs) and pest management.

09

Encourage youth participation in agriculture by creating Agri-marketplaces and supporting AgriTech startups that can make farming more appealing and profitable.

10

Develop entrepreneurship ecosystems with smart finance options like angel-funding and crowdfunding to support AgriTech innovators and small businesses in the agriculture sector.

11

Set up networks among Islamic countries and regional partners to share food resources and boost trade, ensuring a steady and secure food supply.

12

Utilize international investments and partnerships, like those with UNIDO and other global organizations, to strengthen agricultural processes and support sustainable growth.

## ABOUT BEST OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP ASIA SERIES (BOE):

Considering the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 & OIC Plan of Action 2025, Entrepreneurship is considered as one of the key drivers of fostering innovation and inclusive economic growth. ICCD member states are well endowed with resources that can contribute significantly to priorities such as Food Security, Clean Energy, Climate Mitigation, Economic growth, and job creation. As the global supply chains shift to regional and local sources, this series of bi-annual events aims to bring together stakeholders and businesspeople to share, learn and develop high potential sectors in the region.

## ABOUT ICCD:

The Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD) is an international non-governmental organization affiliated to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). It represents the private sector of 57 member Islamic countries via their member federations and chambers of commerce, in addition to Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries, with a membership of 67 business entities.

The chamber aims to promote cooperation among its members in areas of trade, industry and information technology, as well as enhance investment opportunities and support cooperation among the Islamic world.

