



#CNVERGE '25

Rethinking Commodity Finance for Growth

A Ghib Thought-Impact Event

Speaker Bio's

August 6-8, 2025 | City of London



Speaker Bio's



Olukorede Adenowo, (K.O)
Chief Executive Officer, FirstBank UK

Olukorede Adenowo, (K.O), is the Chief Executive Officer of FirstBank UK. He held the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at Standard Chartered Bank (SCB) Nigeria before taking on his role at FirstBank UK in November 2023. Prior to this, he served as MD/CEO for SCB Gambia, including responsibility for Senegal, as well as DMD/DCEO for SCB Cameroon and Managing Director Corporate, Commercial, and Institutional Banking for SCB Nigeria and West Africa. K.O has also been a Non-Executive Director of SCB Gambia and SCB Sierra Leone, Vice President of the Gambia Bankers Association, and Trustee of the Institute of Bankers of Gambia. With 38 years of post-university experience in Banking, Finance, and Consulting, he was honoured with the 2015 Distinguished Alumni award by Deloitte Nigeria, Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria in 2003, Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria in 2024. K.O qualified as a Chartered Accountant in 1990.



Stephen Ahwakyi Abban
Chief Executive Officer, Access Bank Gambia Limited

Stephen Ahwakyi Abban is an accomplished banking executive with over two decades of extensive experience spanning Information Technology and Core Banking. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture from the University of Ghana, a Master of Science in Information Technology from the University of Scotland, UK, and a Postgraduate Diploma in Digital Business from the Emeritus Institute of Management. He has held several senior leadership roles at several Banks including Amalgamated Bank Ltd, Guaranty Trust Bank Ghana Limited and currently Access Bank. A recognized thought leader in financial inclusion and digital innovation, Stephen has been invited to speak at numerous local and international conferences on topics such as electronic payment systems and emerging Retail banking trends.



Hajia Maria Adamu-Zibo
Managing Director, FEDCO

Hajia Maria Adamu-Zibo has 24 years of experience in commodities trading with particular focus on cocoa and finance. She has been the Managing Director of Federated Commodities PLC (FEDCO), one of the leading Licensed Cocoa Buying Companies in Ghana, since 2017. She was at the erstwhile Royal Bank for 5 years as Senior Vice-President in charge of Business Development and Investor Relations. Prior to that, she worked with Cocoa Merchants (Gh) LTD for 12 years in various managerial positions, exiting as the DMD Finance and Administration. Hajia Maria currently serves on many boards and notably became a member of the Board of Directors of the prestigious World Cocoa Foundation (WCF) in 2023. She holds an MSc. from The London Institute of Banking & Finance (UK), an MBA from GIMPA, and a bachelor's degree from HEC Montreal (Canada).



Aamar Ahmad
Founder, Sigma Risk

Aamar is internationally recognized subject matter expert in financial crime prevention holding substantial experience in advising government department, financial regulators, law enforcement bodies, intelligence agencies, financial institutions, and multinational corporations. Aamar is the founder of Sigma Risk; a London based financial crime compliance consulting firm and frequently appears at international conferences as subject matter expert. Aamar has trained several institutions across Europe, Americas, Africa, Middle East, and Asia across various industries.



Rima Kalai

Executive Director, Asset Distribution, ATF Finance

Rima Kalai is Executive Director at ATF Finance, leading the firm's asset distribution efforts from London and driving strategic direction through her board seat on ATF Participation, the company's alternative investment impact fund. With two decades of experience in business development and trade finance across the Middle East and the UK, Rima brings deep expertise in African corporate finance—particularly in commercial and structured trade finance, as well as financial institutions—where she has been a key player for the past 15 years. She holds dual Bachelor's degrees in Applied Sciences from McGill University and Finance from the John Molson School of Business, and has completed executive studies in Brand Management and Marketing Strategies at the London Business School. Rima is known for her sharp market insight, cross-regional perspective, and unwavering focus on unlocking investment opportunities across frontier and emerging markets.



Victor Yaw Asante

Managing Director/CEO, FirstBank Ghana LTD

Mr. Victor Yaw Asante is the Managing Director/CEO of FirstBank Ghana LTD, a subsidiary of Nigeria's oldest Bank, FirstBank. With a career spanning almost three decades in the banking and manufacturing sectors, Mr. Asante is experienced in Corporate and Institutional Banking, Structured Trade Finance, Transaction Banking, Marketing & Sales. He has worked in multi jurisdictions including Ghana, Ivory Coast, Cameroun, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Botswana and London. He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Marketing in Ghana, and an honorary Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Bankers, Ghana. The Chartered Institute of Marketing Ghana (CIMG) recently conferred on him, a Chartered Marketer status. Victor is also a key volunteer and has been awarded in Rotary International, serving as a District Governor in 2022-23.



Anthony Wadsworth-Hill

Co-founder & Deputy CEO, Mercore Group

Anthony is one of the co-founders at Mercore and holds the executive role of Deputy CEO. Mercore Group has 2 main business lines. As a non-bank/alternative lender, Mercore Capital specialises in the provision of trade and supply chain finance to SMEs and customers transacting in (or with) developing/emerging markets. This financing activity runs alongside Mercore's second business line, which is the provision of anti-financial crime and due diligence services. Through a combination of these business divisions, Mercore is delivering financing solutions to aspiring businesses that find themselves caught within the global trade finance gap. Anthony's main responsibility is to lead the build out of Mercore's trade and supply chain finance capabilities. Delivering a strategy to leverage digital solutions, wherever possible, to provide a service that is faster and less costly, whilst also being more operationally resilient and sustainable. Prior to Mercore, Anthony spent 18 years at Bank ABC in London working in various leadership roles.



Derrick Anim

Head of Sub-Sahara Africa Financial Markets Sales, Commerzbank AG

Derrick Anim is a Director in Commerzbank's Capital Markets Division, where he leads FX, Money Market, and Commodity Derivatives Sales for financial institutions across Sub-Saharan Africa. Since joining the bank as an intern in 2015, Derrick has steadily risen through the ranks over the past decade, a journey that reflects his commitment to excellence and continuous growth.



Marcelo Mendes

Head of Commercial, Tennant Metals, South Africa

Marcelo has 5+ years experience in the Metals and Mining sector, currently serving as the Head of Commercial at Tennant Metals South Africa, a leading entity in the metals and minerals industry in South Africa specializing in the sourcing and supply of a diverse range of commodities. In his role, Marcelo has been instrumental in implementing and deploying trade finance solutions across various business units within the organization, ensuring the sustainability and growth of the key projects within Tennant Metals.



Bernard Gyebi

Managing Director, Prudential Bank

Bernard Gyebi is the Managing Director of Prudential Bank, overseeing its strategic leadership and operational performance. He has over 26 years of banking experience, having worked across all core areas in reputable banks. Prior to joining Prudential Bank, he was the General Manager responsible for Risk Management at Republic Bank (Ghana) Plc, where he also undertook risk management assignments for subsidiaries across the Caribbean. Bernard has held senior leadership roles at Agricultural Development Bank PLC as Executive Head of Credit Risk and Chief Risk & Compliance Officer, and at Stanbic Bank Ghana Limited as Head of Credit. He also held various credit leadership roles at Barclays Ghana (now Absa Bank Ghana), including Senior Credit Analyst in Johannesburg and Head of Corporate Credit.



Dr. Barnett Quaicoo

Dep. MD (Marketing), Cocoa Marketing Company (Ghana) Ltd

Dr. Barnett Quaicoo is the Deputy Managing Director (Marketing) at Cocoa Marketing Company (Ghana) Ltd, where he oversees Ghana's cocoa trading portfolio valued at over US\$4 billion annually. In this role, he leads international and local sales strategy, supervises contract execution, and manages relationships with key buyers, processors, and banking institutions involved in cocoa trade financing. He brings over two decades of experience in commodity trading, market development, and institutional leadership. His previous roles include Head of Ghana Cocoa Marketing Company (UK) Ltd, where he managed overseas operations and contributed to the successful execution of Ghana's syndicated cocoa loan. Earlier in his career, he served as a Senior Researcher with the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD), where he led critical studies on crop forecasting, LBC performance, and cocoa sustainability programs. Dr. Quaicoo holds a Doctorate Degree from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, an MBA from Central University, and both MPhil and BEd degrees from the University of Cape Coast. He also serves as Chairman of the Membership Committee at the Federation of Cocoa Commerce (FCC) in London, where he helps shape trade standards and dispute resolution across the global cocoa industry.



Winston Bell-Gam

Partner, HCR Law LLP

Winston Bell-Gam is a Partner in the Banking & Finance team at HCR Law LLP. He specialises in international trade and commodity finance from a legal perspective. Winston works with lenders, traders and borrowers across the EMEA region who are active within the commodities sector and has worked on a range of funding transactions in Africa, the Middle-East and South-East Asia."



Natalia Andrew

Head of Multinationals & Financial Institutions, Zenith Bank (UK)

Over the last 20 years, Natalia has been working in various leadership positions with a focus on Emerging Markets, and particularly Africa. Since joining Zenith Bank in 2016, Natalia has provided executive-level leadership and strategic direction to corporate Client Coverage and Origination teams, set up Financial Institutions business and was responsible for Correspondent Banking. Previously, 12 years at Standard Chartered Bank, she was a Director in Loan Syndications and headed business finance for the Global Financial Institutions team. Natalia's early career included banking audit at E&Y, where she qualified as an ACCA (now a Fellow). Natalia holds a Ph.D. in banking risk and an MBA with Distinction from Warwick Business School.



Kevin Dadzie

Regional Manager and Head of Country, BP Ghana

Kevin Dadzie is Regional Manager and Head of Country, bp Ghana. As part of the leadership team for bp Refining Products Trading in Europe & Africa, he plays a key role in advancing bp's strategic priorities for the sub-Saharan African business. He has more than two decades of experience in delivering cross commodity trade solutions in the oil and gas/energy markets in Africa. Before bp, Kevin was Group Executive Director of CH Group a regional conglomerate, where he led the group's expansion in oil and gas, real estate, and telecommunications. During his tenure, he originated and structured new businesses in petroleum products supply, retail, storage offshore exploration assets, waste recycling operations, and off grid energy solutions. Kevin is the chair of YPO Ghana and a member of the YPO Africa regional Board. He previously served on the board of Vivo Energy Ghana Ltd. (a Shell licensee).



Sylvia Solomon, ASIP

Partner/CIO, Dhow Advisory FZCO and Board Director, CFA UK

Sylvia Solomon, ASIP, has over 30 years of experience in the global investment industry, specialising in equities, trade finance, sustainable investing and ESG integration. She spent 25 years managing a diverse range of funds, including pensions, life funds, endowments, unit trusts, wealth management portfolios, and alternative investment funds. Sylvia has held leadership roles on influential boards and advisory groups such as the CFA Society of the UK and the UN PRI Global Policy Reference Group. She is a member of the Advisory Board for the Impactable Investment Group and has recently been appointed to the University of Aberdeen Investment Committee. Sylvia spearheaded the creation of the CFA Institute's Sustainable Investing Certificate and has been instrumental in advancing industry standards, professional education, and responsible investment practices worldwide. A recipient of the CFA Institute's 2022 Inspirational Leader Award for Education, she also contributed to the Alternative Investment Management Association (AIMA) 2023 ESG Handbook.



Rocco Falconer

CEO, Demeter Holdings

Rocco runs Demeter Holdings, with a primary focus on trade in agricultural commodities in and out of West Africa. In Ghana, Demeter is a pre-eminent agricultural inputs supplier, as well as lead investor in Ghana's largest AI services company, Aya Data Ltd. Demeter is headquartered in London and also has offices in Ivory Coast, Togo, and Sierra Leone. CEO since 2014, Rocco has lead Demeter through its growth from a small player in the Ghanaian market, to a regional champion and investment house. He is also on the board of Aya Data, Oko Environmental, and Frafra Baskets Ltd. Prior to his role at Demeter Holdings, Rocco was an officer in the British Army, and graduated from Cambridge University with a Double First.



Joseph Gyakyee Jackson **Chief Executive Officer, Dalex Finance**

Joseph Gyakyee Jackson is Chief Executive Officer of Dalex Finance, Ghana's premier digital finance institution. With over three decades of leadership in finance and technology across Africa, he has been at the forefront of transforming traditional banking into mobile-driven, inclusive financial solutions. At Dalex, he champions strategies that broaden access to savings and credit for underserved communities while reinforcing operational excellence and stakeholder value. His pan-African career spans senior executive roles in Ghana and Nigeria, where he led enterprise software rollouts, regulatory policy initiatives, and fintech innovations for both private firms and national institutions. Widely respected for his strategic insight, Joseph has built cross-border partnerships and strengthened governance frameworks that underpin sustainable growth. A recognized thought leader, he continues to advocate for bold, technology-enabled financing solutions that bridge gaps in access, drive market expansion, and support Africa's long-term economic transformation.



Duarte Pedreira **Global Head of Trade and Working Capital Finance, Crown Agents Bank**

Duarte Pedreira is an experienced banker, who has worked in senior roles in London, Johannesburg and Luanda. Having been exposed to most areas of institutional banking, including operations, coverage, origination, structuring, syndications, distribution, advisory and insurance underwriting, Duarte has developed strong relations with a multitude of clients (corporates, financial institutions, governments, multilaterals) with a focus in emerging markets. He is currently the Global Head of Trade and Working Capital Finance at Crown Agents Bank and also a board member of ITFA, the global trade finance industry body. Additionally, he chairs the newly established Trade Finance Conference of Parties (TF COP), the widest coalition ever assembled in the trade and export finance industry, put together to eliminate the trade finance gap. Duarte's ultimate passion is development through education, especially through the enablement of Early Years Education facilities catering for children who don't have access to learning before official mandatory education begins (normally 6 years of age and above). Working with Shelterthem, a Rwandan grassroots NGO he created the "Power of Choice Early Childhood Development Centre" which currently hosts over 100 children aged between 3 months and 7 years old.



Frank Nimako Akowuah **Partner, Bentsi-Enchill, Letsa & Ankomah**

Frank Nimako Akowuah is a Partner at Bentsi-Enchill, Letsa & Ankomah with over a decade of legal experience. He has been involved in many high-profile transactions in the Ghanaian market, spanning banking & finance, debt & equity capital markets, financial services regulatory, mergers & acquisitions, and regulated funds. His banking & finance expertise cuts across the financing landscape, including trade financing, asset financing, project financing and working capital financing. He regularly advises international and domestic clients on their financing transactions and has played a key role in commodities financing deals of clients such as the Ghana International Bank, African Export-Import Bank, and GCB Bank Plc. Frank is ranked by Chambers Global and is recognised as a market leader in banking and project finance by the International Financial Law Review. He is also ranked as a leading individual in capital markets by the Legal 500. Frank is a member of the Ghana Bar Association.



Amb. Dr. Walton Ekundayo Gilpin (FPMA, HCIB, COOR) MD & CEO of Rokel Commercial Bank Ltd, Sierra Leone

Amb. Dr. Walton Ekundayo Gilpin (FPMA, HCIB, COOR) is the Managing Director & CEO of Rokel Commercial Bank (SL) Ltd in Sierra Leone, bringing over 30 years of international banking and finance experience. He has been a Central Banker, Advisor to the Commonwealth Secretariat, focusing on financial initiatives in over 25 countries, and has collaborated with the IMF, European Union, African Development Bank, World Bank on Banking, macroeconomics and public finance management. He is a philanthropist and seasoned banker with several international awards and recognitions.



Steve Gray Regional Head for West Africa, UK Export Finance

Steve is the UK Export Finance (UKEF) Regional Head for West Africa, based in Ghana for the past 13 years. He leads UKEF's origination across 22 countries in West and Central Africa, with over £2bn supported in the region over the last five years. With 30 years' experience across Sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, Steve has held senior roles in trading, logistics, construction, infrastructure, and mining. He began his career in the UK construction sector. He has served as Vice Chairman of the UK-Ghana Chamber of Commerce and as a member of the British Chambers of Commerce Economic Advisory Board. He holds an MBA from Heriot-Watt University and completed an executive programme at the University of Oxford's Blavatnik School. Steve was awarded an O.B.E. in the 2022 Queen's Birthday Honours for services to British business in West Africa.



Sammy Gyamfi Managing Director, GoldBod

Sammy Gyamfi, Esq., is a Ghanaian lawyer, policy strategist, and public servant with a multidisciplinary academic and professional background spanning environmental science, law, and economic policy. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Science and a Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). He was called to the Bar after earning a Barrister-at-Law certificate from the Ghana School of Law and later obtained a Master of Arts degree in Economic Policy Management from the University of Ghana. His leadership development includes Executive Certificates in Emerging Leaders and Strategic Leadership from the Harvard Kennedy School. Mr. Gyamfi began his professional career in the mining sector with Exton Cubic Group Limited, where he developed a keen interest in the governance and economics of natural resources. He rose to national prominence as the National Communications Officer of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), where he played a strategic role in shaping the party's communications and policy agenda. In January 2025, he was appointed by President John Dramani Mahama as the Acting Managing Director of the Precious Minerals Marketing Company (PMMC). In that role, he was tasked with laying the groundwork for the Ghana Gold Board (GoldBod), a major policy initiative of the NDC's 2024 manifesto aimed at reforming and revitalizing the gold industry. Currently serving as the Managing Director of GoldBod, Mr. Gyamfi leads the implementation of a national vision to ensure the sustainable management and marketing of Ghana's gold resources. His mandate includes formalizing the small-scale mining sector, improving regulatory oversight, and providing strategic support services to the mining industry to maximize its contribution to national development. Sammy Gyamfi brings to his role a rare blend of legal acumen, policy insight, and a strong commitment to institutional reform and economic transformation.



Amine Drissi-Kamilli

Business Development Director, BACB

Amine Drissi-Kamilli brings over 15 years of banking experience, with a strong focus on Trade Finance across Africa and Emerging Markets. As Business Development Director at BACB, he leads strategic initiatives across BACB wholesale banking business particularly, driving growth and deepening client relationships. Amine began his career at Bank of Africa UK, where he spent six years between the Paris and London offices. During this time, he served various roles, in Trade Finance, Commodity Finance, and Loan Syndication, building a solid foundation in cross-border financing and emerging market transactions.



Andrew Skipper

CEO, Polymetis Professional Solutions

Andrew is the founder and CEO of Polymetis Professional Solutions (polymetis.co.uk) a consultancy which advises businesses in a range of sectors by bringing experienced and connected networks together and delivering solutions effectively and in collaboration. Andrew is a commercial lawyer of more than 35 years standing having been on the global Management Committee and the head of corporate globally for Hogan Lovells and subsequently Head of their Africa Practice. Andrew is currently Interim Director of the Royal African Society and on various boards in the business and cultural space with a focus on Africa, including recently as Co-chair of the UK Government's Africa Investors Group, being on the Advisory Board of the SA Chamber of Commerce and the legal group of the UK Nigeria EDF. Andrew is also committed to the arts, is on the advisory board to 1-54 and was vice chair of the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art in USA. Andrew received the MBE in the Platinum Jubilee hours list for services to UK trade especially in Africa.



Yaw Nsarkoh

Yaw Nsarkoh is a globally respected business leader with over 30 years of experience across continents and sectors. A former Executive Vice President at Unilever Plc, he is known for his strategic insight, operational excellence, and thought leadership in governance, regulation, sustainability, and organisational development. Recognised for his original perspectives and moral clarity, Nsarkoh influences boardrooms, policy spaces, and academic circles alike. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Directors and serves on multiple professional boards spanning disciplines such as engineering, literature, marketing, and communications. Renowned for detecting emerging trends early, he helps organisations anticipate and shape the future. With deep expertise in talent strategy, diversity, and high-performance team building, he exemplifies modern leadership strategic, decisive, and empathetic. Nsarkoh is also a strong advocate of intercultural solidarity and societal wellbeing through business.



Tola Awosika-Afe

Chief Compliance Officer and MLRO, FidBank UK

Tola Awosika-Afe is the Chief Compliance Officer and MLRO at FidBank UK, with over two decades of experience in UK banking compliance and financial crime prevention. She leads the bank's financial crime, and conduct risk frameworks, holding SMF16/17 responsibilities, and has spent the last 10 years in senior compliance roles at Fidelity Bank NG-UK and its predecessor, Union Bank UK. Earlier in her career, Tola held compliance roles at Abbey National, Barclays, Lloyds Banking Group, and Banco Espirito Santo. A non-practising lawyer with an LLM from the London School of Economics, Tola also holds a CISI Diploma in Investment Compliance and INSEAD's Executive Certificate in Emerging Leadership. She is known for her practical approach to financial crime risk, regulatory alignment, and embedding a robust compliance culture in trade-focused banking environments.



Farihan Alhassan

Managing Director, GCB Bank

Farihan Alhassan is a seasoned financial specialist with 20 years of banking experience. He most recently led the Business & Commercial Clients Unit at Stanbic Bank Ghana, driving strategic growth and performance. He began his career with a notable milestone—becoming the youngest regional manager at Barclays Bank (now Absa)—and later served as Head of Retail and Distribution, known for his people-focused and results-driven leadership. At Stanbic, Farihan earned recognition for his strategic vision and customer-first approach. His appointment at GCB Bank is seen as a move to strengthen the Bank's leadership and market position. He brings deep expertise in retail and business banking, with a strong track record in business development, operational management, credit and risk oversight, and team empowerment. Respected for his dynamic leadership, Farihan is committed to shaping Ghana's banking sector and supporting business growth nationwide.



Simon Cook

Partner, Sullivan & Worcester

Simon is a Partner at Sullivan & Worcester, an international law firm. He has experience in a wide variety of banking and finance transactions, including structured trade finance, trade finance, commodity finance, insurance-backed finance, project finance, invoice discounting facilities, warehouse finance, supply chain finance, ECA finance and borrowing-base facilities. His work in the structured trade arena covers a range of financings acting for both lenders and borrowers, notably in the oil, telecoms, soft commodities and metals sectors. He has particular experience in Africa and in the Middle East, where he was based for four years. Simon also acts for industry bodies including the International Trade and Forfeiting Association (ITFA) and participates in structured trade finance conferences throughout Europe, the Middle East and Africa.



Mark Hogg

CEO, Mere Plantations Ltd

Mark Hogg is a successful entrepreneur, with almost 30 years of proven track record in developing start-up business, in multiple sectors. These businesses include sectors within media, television production, Print, Plantations, Forestry and Carbon Credit generation. Many of Mark's enterprises have been located within the developing world and emerging markets. His main focus over the last decade has been the reforestation of over 10,000 acres of U.N. classified fully degraded forest land. Today, as a family business, Mark's businesses have an audited net balance sheet of over £1 billion pounds



Guy Sagar

Managing Director, Promontory Financial Group

Guy Sagar, before joining Promontory, worked for more than 30 years at the Bank of England and the Financial Services Authority. He held roles covering supervision and corporate and individual authorizations, including extensive experience liaising with overseas regulators at senior level. He also worked in the Bank of England's international division. Most recently at the FSA, he headed the regulatory transactions department for five years, where he regularly chaired the FSA decision-making committee that considers recommendations for formal refusal of corporate and individual applications.



Ousman M Jobarteh

Managing Director, Gambia Ports Authority

Mr Ousman M Jobarteh was employed by the Gambia Ports Authority (GPA) as Traffic Officer in 1991 and rose through the ranks to the position of Traffic Manager, Director of Operations, Deputy Managing Director and was appointed Managing Director in August 2018. An alumnus of Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone (undergraduate 1990) and University of Wales College of Cardiff (post graduate 1992), Mr Jobarteh is bilingual in English and French and has also benefitted from numerous academic and professional training, both in The Gambia and abroad. Occupying the position of Managing Director of GPA, Mr Jobarteh brings extensive experience in maritime operations and port management to his role. Under his leadership, the GPA has embarked on significant modernization initiatives to enhance operational efficiency and capacity improvement. The portfolio he manages under the GPA includes the Port of Banjul, Gambia Ferry Services, Banjul Shipyard Company and Banjul Fisheries Jetty.