

**Food Security**



**Agri Investing  
Along the New Silk Road**

## **Foreword from Abradat Kamalpour,**

CEO – New Silk Road Forum

The New Silk Road Forum is delighted to commence the 2015 programme with this agri investing event which is being co-sponsored with the Royal United Services Institute and Ashurst.

The position of food security is rising on global political and business agendas. In an annual assessment of global hunger in 2013, the FAO of the United Nations reported that ‘the world produces enough food to feed everyone,’ yet the challenge of food security around the world persists.

This is in part due to global food prices, which have risen three times as fast as inflation in the last decade, making safe food options affordable to fewer people. Growing populations and increasing affluence in industrialising countries intensify the challenge of food security. The overall population of the New Silk Road countries is set to increase by over 600 million in the next 40 years. Not only will this increase the pressure for productive farming systems, but greater competition for land will also emerge as the process of urbanisation encroaches the supply of farming spaces.

Globalisation has led to an increasingly fragmented process between the initial stage of production and the consumption of agricultural produce. As a result, the numerous instances in which food losses can occur create massive economic costs; improper packaging and storage, inefficient shipping, and wastage through contamination has been calculated by the FAO to contribute to \$750 billion worth of food losses annually (according to the 2009 producer price index).

Many of the New Silk Road countries present opportunities for investment within agri related businesses, ranging from farming processes and labour up-skilling, to the development of necessary infrastructure for transportation and storage. The achievement of an operating environment, robust enough to facilitate an efficient market in the long term is essential to food security.

## **Foreword from Sarah Lain,**

Royal United Services Institute

The need to develop the agricultural sector is particularly pertinent for countries within the Silk Road region. In the 2014 Food Security Index compiled by the Economist, which considers affordability, availability and quality, 8 of the 17 New Silk Road countries listed appeared in the bottom half of the 109 listed countries, with Tajikistan ranked at 81.

Physical access to food not only depends on domestic production, but also a country’s ability to process, package, store and transport produce. Many countries of the New Silk Road require investment and development in these areas in order to create sufficient supply and sustainability to guarantee food security for their populations.

Many countries are now beginning to recognise the broader security issues surrounding the provision of food. For example, Kyrgyzstan’s government is aware of its dependence on food imports and lack of development in its own agriculture sector and is taking steps to rectify this through various initiatives including participating in the EBRD/FAO programme “Water along the Food Chain”.

This increasing awareness in the importance of agri business at a national level offers business opportunities in agricultural investment. China and many countries of the Middle East have been actively investing in other countries of the New Silk Road including Ukraine, Australia and Turkey, whilst also acknowledging the potential of the Central Asian countries. The purpose of this event is to discuss both the challenges and opportunities presented around food security for the Silk Road countries.



## Supporting Organisations

### Ashurst - [www.ashurst.com](http://www.ashurst.com)

Ashurst is a leading international law firm advising corporates, financial institutions and governments. Our core businesses are in corporate, finance, dispute resolution, and the development and financing of assets in the energy, resources and infrastructure sectors. In 2013, Ashurst LLP and Ashurst Australia (formerly Blake Dawson) merged to form one global team. With over 420 partners and 1,700 lawyers in total, we offer the international insight of a global network combined with local market knowledge.



Our Global agri business emanates from Australia across the Asia-Pacific region providing expert knowledge of the legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to the agri business sector, in addition to industry experience and regional know-how. We have a track record of successfully managing large and complex multi-jurisdictional transactions, disputes and projects.

We provide consistently high quality, commercially relevant legal advice worldwide, and build teams that are specific to our clients' needs, combining specialist legal skills. Our focus is on getting to the heart of your legal needs and delivering practical, commercial solutions.

### New Silk Road Forum - [www.nsrforum.com](http://www.nsrforum.com)

NSR Forum was formed following a successful New Silk Road conference held on 7 April 2011 in London, where delegates debated geo-economic policies and commercial opportunities arising out of the "New Silk Road".



Through sector focused events, the NSR Forum acts as a medium for participants to meet, discuss and understand the opportunities of the "New Silk Road"; participants include governments, institutions, corporates and professionals.

Past events have explored the areas of Natural Resources, Islamic Finance, Infrastructure and Taxation. Sectors currently under review include Energy, Education and the Significance of New Silk Road Artefacts in the global market.

Additionally, the New Silk Road Forum acts to promote cultural awareness and understanding of the New Silk Road countries through celebrating events such as Nowruz and through the website "Snapshot" series.

### Royal United Services Institute - [www.rusi.org](http://www.rusi.org)

RUSI was founded in 1831, the oldest such institute in the world, at the initiative of the Duke of Wellington. The patron of the Royal United Services Institute is Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.



RUSI is a British institution, but operates with an international perspective. It has amassed over the years an unequalled expertise in its field and an outstanding reputation for quality and objectivity. RUSI's heritage, reputation and contacts with key opinion formers both inside and outside government, gives unique insight and authority.

The Institute has three main activities:

**Research** - Drawing on a range of world-class experts from the permanent staff and associate fellows, we undertake rigorous, expert and objective analysis of current trends and developments, both for the Institute's own publications and events and commissioned privately for clients.

**Events** - We produce a comprehensive programme of conferences, seminars, workshops and talks by leading experts designed to provide insight and foster debate among practitioners, policy makers and analysts.

**Publications** - We publish a varied collection of periodicals, with contributions from leading thinkers and practitioners, that are timely, innovative and relevant, designed to meet the needs of members and others.



**Venue:** Ashurst, Broadwalk House, 5 Appold Street, London EC2A 2HA

**Event Schedule:**

8.30 - 9.00: **Registration and Breakfast**

9.00 - 9.15: **Welcome and Introduction: Vice Admiral Rory McLean CB OBE**

9.15 - 10.30: **Panel 1: The Food Security Challenge and Related Opportunities**

**Moderator:** Torsten Böhler

**Speakers:** Iride Ceccacci, Richard Crane, Professor Jane Harrigan, Sarah Lain

- Issues surrounding Food Security in both a global context and pertinent to the New Silk Road group of countries
- Challenges and incentives associated with agri investing

11.00 - 12.15: **Panel 2: Agri Investment Solutions From the New Silk Road**

**Moderator:** Abradat Kamalpour

**Speakers:** His Excellency Mr Erzhan Kazykhanov, His Excellency Mr Otabek Akbarov, Geoffrey Conaghan

- National Representatives will discuss investment opportunities offered by the New Silk Road countries

12.30-2.00: **Lunch: Celebrating Nowruz with Flavours from the New Silk Road**



### **His Excellency, Mr Erzhan Kazykhanov**

His Excellency, Mr Erzhan Kazykhanov, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Kingdom was appointed in September 2014. Ambassador Kazykhanov has previously held several senior positions within the government including Assistant to the President (2012-2014) and Minister of Foreign Affairs (2011-2012).

Additionally, His Excellency has served as Ambassador and Permanent Representative in a number of postings including Permanent Representative to the United Nations (2003-2007).

Ambassador Kazykhanov holds a bachelor's degree in Oriental Studies from St. Petersburg State University and completed a PhD in History at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University.

### **His Excellency, Mr Otabek Akbarov**

His Excellency, Mr Otabek Akbarov, was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the United Kingdom in 2007. He was subsequently also appointed as the Uzbek Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway and to Ireland. Ambassador Akbarov has held several positions within the Department of European Countries, part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan, including Head of Unit for the Department of Cooperation with Countries of Europe.

Ambassador Akbarov studied at the Faculty of Oriental Studies at Tashkent State University and undertook further studies at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations and at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy.

### **Geoffrey Conaghan**

Geoffrey Conaghan is Agent-General for the State of Victoria, Australia to the UK heading the Victorian Government Business Offices in London and additionally Frankfurt to develop investment and trade opportunities for Victoria.

Geoffrey was previously Victoria's Commissioner to India (2009-2013), responsible for launching an ambitious engagement programme with India underpinned by a series of trade missions that saw the largest Australian delegations ever to visit India.

Between 1994 and 2009 he held senior positions at Melbourne Airport in roles including marketing, government relations, corporate affairs and international airline business development.

Between 1985 and 1994 he held various positions in the vocational education and training sector with Tourism Training Australia, including founding Executive Director of the Tourism and Hospitality Industry Training Board.

Between 1998 and 2009 he served five terms on the board of Tourism Victoria.

### **Vice Admiral Rory McLean CB OBE**

Vice Chairman of the Royal United Services Institute

Vice Admiral McLean CB OBE has had a distinguished 40 year naval career and in that time he has undertaken many roles in both active service and senior management. Notably, Rory was responsible for the maritime element of the Defence Review (1997), then assumed command of HMS Invincible (1999-2001) and for a period of 4 years, was responsible for the management of the entire UK defence budget.

Since 2008, he has worked as a consultant in security and as an advisor to an investment fund in Vietnam and a UK beverage company. Further to this, Rory has worked as a consultant for a company specializing in change management and culture shift programmes in the health and defence sectors.

He has been actively involved with RUSI for 20 years holding various positions, including Chairman of the Investment Committee, Trustee and currently Vice Chairman.



## **Torsten Böhler**

Managing Director, ABACUS Emerging Markets  
torsten.boehler@abacusem.com

Torsten is a highly experienced Investment Banking and Corporate Finance Executive with more than two decades of proven ability to mould profitable strategies and transactions in alignment with diverse financial services and products.

Torsten joined ABACUS Emerging Markets in early 2014. He has extensive experience in cross-border financial markets businesses aimed at assisting premier institutional clients with their asset-raising and monetization needs across Europe, Asia and the Middle East. Prior to joining ABACUS Emerging Markets Torsten served as an Executive Committee Member at Kleinwort Benson and CEO of their Asian subsidiary based out of Singapore. Before joining Kleinwort Benson Torsten held various senior positions at Dresdner Kleinwort, Credit Suisse, BNP Paribas and UBS. Between 2000 and 2007 Torsten served as a visiting lecturer for Applied Corporate Finance at the MBA program of Sir John Cass Business School in London.

Torsten holds an MBA from Sir John Cass Business School and a BA (Hons) in Business and Economics.

## **Iride Ceccacci**

Food Security Economist, Office of the Chief Economist/Agribusiness, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)  
Ceccacci@ebrd.com

Iride is an expert in Agriculture and Food Security. She currently works for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), where she manages the EBRD Private Sector for Food Security Initiative.

Through technical assistance and public-private policy platforms, the Initiative supports private sector efforts for food security outcomes and facilitates coordinated, transparent and predictable public policies in the EBRD countries of operations.

Prior to this assignment, Ms Ceccacci worked in the Strategy and Policy Unit of the World Bank, Agriculture and Rural Department, where she supported implementation of the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP) and the Global Food Crises Response Program (GFRP). She was one of the lead authors of the WBG Agriculture Action Plan 2013-2015.

Ms Ceccacci started her career at the UN World Food Program about 8 years ago, where she mainly focused on emergency agriculture and food response programs during the Food Price crisis of 2007-08. Her work brought her to Eastern European countries, Africa, Middle East, Latin America and East Asia. She holds an MA in International Economics from SAIS Johns Hopkins University.

## **Richard Crane**

Partner - Head of Food and Agriculture, Deloitte LLP  
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Richard Crane leads Deloitte LLP's global agricultural practice in the UK. He has been a partner for 15 years with Deloitte and in that time has worked with businesses right across the food chain with an emphasis on producers both in the UK and overseas carrying out audits, IPO related workstreams and advisory projects. He founded the London Global Agribusiness Forum with the London Stock Exchange to promote London as a centre of capital raising for global agribusinesses and has been involved with many aspects of developing a robust financial reporting framework for agricultural businesses.

Richard obtained a first class degree in Agriculture from Edinburgh University, has several interests in farming businesses in the UK and is a member of the City Livery Farmers' Company .



## **Professor Jane Harrigan**

Professor of Economics at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)

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Professor Harrigan is Professor of Economics at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) University of London. She works on food security in the Middle East and North Africa as well as in sub-Saharan Africa. She has also worked extensively on the political economy of IMF and World Bank economic reform programmes in both regions as well as on foreign aid more generally. Prior to joining SOAS, Professor Harrigan held posts at the University of Manchester and in the Ministry of Agriculture in Malawi. She has acted as a consultant to numerous international organisations, including the World Bank, The Food and Agriculture Organisation, the African Development Bank and UNCTAD. She is the author of eight books and numerous journal papers, including the 2009 book "Aid and Power in the Arab World" and the 2014 book "The Political Economy of Arab Food Sovereignty" published by Palgrave Macmillan

## **Abradat Kamalpour**

Partner – Head of Emerging Markets and Islamic Finance(SDG), Ashurst; CEO New Silk Road Forum

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Abradat Kamalpour is a finance partner in London. He has extensive experience in securitisation, debt capital markets and structured finance transactions. Abradat is the head of the Emerging Markets and Islamic Finance Desk of the Securities and Derivatives Group. Abradat has one of the leading emerging markets practices in the market and is the CEO and Founder of the New Silk Road Forum ([www.nsrforum.com](http://www.nsrforum.com)).

Abradat has been at the forefront of structuring Islamic-compliant capital markets and securitisation transactions, transforming non-compliant structures into instruments acceptable to Islamic investors and has recently been ranked in Band 1 for Banking and Finance (Islamic finance) by Chambers UK 2010 and named as a Leading Individual in Islamic finance by Legal 500 2009. He is also ranked as one of the world's top 25 pre-eminent Islamic finance practitioners in Expert Guides, Best of the Best 2014 and was named a Leading Lawyer by Islamic Finance News (2009). Abradat was also included in The Lawyer's Hot 100, 2008 of the 100 legal professionals to watch as well as being a key member of the team that won the Euromoney award for Best Global Islamic Finance Legal Advisor 2006-2007.

## **Sarah Lain**

Research Fellow

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Sarah Lain's research focuses on Russia and the former Soviet Union. She is currently working on a significant project examining Central Asia and China's growing influence in the region.

Prior to joining RUSI, Sarah was an Assistant Manager in the Corporate Intelligence team within KPMG London's Forensic practice. Before KPMG, she worked as an Associate Consultant on the Russia/CIS desk of the Corporate Investigations department at Control Risks. In these roles she conducted integrity due diligence investigations into prospective business partners and provided analysis on the business risks of the region.

Sarah has lived in Ukraine and Russia. She holds a BA in History from the University of Cambridge and also holds the Certified Fraud Examiner qualification.





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