AIEF 2025 Africa Israel Economic Forum

30 October 2025

המכון ליחסי ישראל - אפריקה
Israel - Africa Relations Institute

VALOP
- Leading the way -

AIEF 2025 Africa Israel Economic Forum

The **Africa–Israel Economic Forum (AIEF 2025)** is an invitation-only executive gathering convening leaders from government, finance, and industry to **mobilize capital, strengthen partnerships, and unlock Africa's $3 trillion market opportunity.**

Co-organized by the **Israel–Africa Relations Institute** and **VALOP Impact Ventures**, the Forum serves as a **platform for strategic dialogue**, **deal-making, and cross-border collaboration** between Africa and Israel's most dynamic sectors.

About the Organizers

המכון ליחסי ישראל - אפריקה
Israel - Africa Relations Institute

The Israel–Africa Relations Institute is d**edicated to strengthening diplomatic, economic, and technological ties** between Israel and African nations. It serves as a bridge fostering mutual growth and collaboration across multiple sectors. The Institute is the **only platform 100% dedicated to Israel's relationship with African nations.**

For more information, visit our website: israel-africa.org

VALOP
- Leading the way -

VALOP Impact Ventures is a **global venture studio and strategic advisory group** operating at the frontlines of **national resilience, institutional recovery, and systems innovation.** It partners with governments, financial institutions, investors, and communities to design, build, and scale ventures that address systemic market failures with speed, precision, and accountability.

VALOP's ventures operate in regions destabilized by extremism, corruption, and systemic collapse — with the aim of **rebuilding and strengthening resilience** at the community and state levels while mobilizing capital for sustainable outcomes.

For more information, visit our website: valopgroup.com

Agenda

09:00–09:30pm
Networking & Welcome Coffee

09:30 – 09:35
Welcome Remarks

Ms. Shiri Fein-Grossman, CEO, Israel Africa Relations Institute

09:35 – 09:45
Building Israel's Financial Architecture for Africa: Mobilizing Capital to Operate at Scale

Prof. Eugene Kandel, Chairman, Tel Aviv Stock Exchange

09:45 – 09:55
"Africa's Economic Future: A $3 Trillion Market Opportunity"

Mr. Mamo Esmelealem Mihretu, former Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE)

10:00 – 10:40
Panel - Access to Finance & Finance Recovery: Africa's Path from Risk to Recovery

Hon. Boima S. Kamara, Director General, West African Monetary Agency (WAMA)

Ms. Cynthia Kropac, Former Chief Enterprise Business Officer, Safaricom PLC

Mr. Aron Ziv, Structured Credit Solutions, AON Israel

Moderator: Mr. Daniel R. Berkove, CEO, Pivot Industries; Former S&P Global Lead Advisor & Regional Head for Africa and the Levant

10:45 – 11:30
Panel - Supply Chains, Infrastructure & Trade: A Fresh Outlook on Growth Engines

Mr. Bobo Dube, Pan-African Entrepreneur and Development Agent, Botswana Pan-African Investor & Development

Agent specializing in trade corridors and investment facilitation in SADC and the greater African region

Mr. Rafael Dreyfus, Founder, Cabynda

Edmilson Angelo, Economic and Trade Officer, Embassy of the Republic of Angola in Israel

Ms. Aya Achimeir, Chief Marketing Officer & Innovation, Mitrelli

Moderator: Mr. Daniel Saka, International Finance and Development Strategist, Democratic Republic of the Congo

11:30 – 11:50

Fireside Chat – Scaling Innovation Through Industry and Trade

Ms. Nili Shalev, CEO, Israel Export Institute

Mr. Ivor Ichikowitz, Executive Chairman, TransAfrica Capital & The Ichikowitz Family Foundation

11:50-11:55

Easier Said than Done: Lessons from a Decade of Israeli Ventures in Africa

Ms. Caylee Talpert, Innovation & Emerging Markets Expert

12:00-12:20

Coffee Break

12:20-12:35

Africa, Geopolitics & Finance: Go-to-Market Strategies for Investors — Risks, Returns, and Models

Prof. Leo Leiderman, Head of IRES (Institute for Research of Economic Strategies) at the Peres Academic Center, Emeritus Professor of Economics at Tel Aviv University and Chief Economic Advisor of Bank Hapoalim. Former Managing Director and Head of Emerging Markets Economics at Deutsche Bank and Advisor to IMF, WB and IADB

12:40-13:20

Panel - Turning Climate Challenges into Capital Opportunities

Mr. Christian Dunbar, Senior Advisor for Investment Financing & Development to the President, Liberia

Dr. Ruth Dagan, Partner, Head of Environment & Climate Change; Legal Advisor to UNFCCC

Mr. Gil Karie, Growth Director, Ignite the Power

Moderator: Ms. Maya Elnathan, Director, Multilateral Development Banks Unit, Israel Ministry of Finance

13:20-13:25

A New Ambassador to Africa - Bolstering Bilateral Relations

Michael Lotem, Ambassador, Economic and Business Promotion in Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel

13:30-14:15

Panel - Stability as Strategy: Governance and Security for a Resilient Africa

Ms. Emily Winkler, CEO, VALOP Group

Mr. Frantz Sawyer, Executive Director of the Amos Claudius Sawyer Foundation

Dr. Rashid Abdi, Research Director, Sahan Research, Kenya

Dr. Aiman Mansour, VP & Head of Business Development (MENA), Menomadin Group

Moderator: Ms. Shiri Fein-Grossman, CEO, Israel–Africa Relations Institute

14:15

Closing remarks

Ms. Hilly Hirt , Executive Director, Sustainable Finance and Development, VALOP Impact Ventures

14:20–15:00

Light Lunch & Networking

Conference Speakers

Dr. Rashid Abdi

Research Director, Sahan Research, Kenya

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Rashid Abdi is based in Nairobi and is research director at the Kenyan-based Sahan Research think tank that specialises on the geopolitics of the Horn of Africa and the wider Red Sea arena. He previously served as the Horn of Africa Project Director at the International Crisis Group and held senior editorial positions with the BBC Monitoring Service and Kenya's Daily Nation. Rashid has written extensively on the Horn and the Gulf; he holds a master's in mass communication and a doctorate in Comparative Religion and Philosophy.

Ms. Aya Achimeir

Chief Marketing Officer & Innovation, Mitrelli

Aya Achimeir is a strategic leader with two decades of experience in marketing, communication, and innovation. As CMO and Innovation at the Mitrelli, she leads the company's strategy, brand positioning, and global relationships, building partnerships that connect innovation, infrastructure, and social impact across continents.

Aya has worked in Israel, the U.S., Europe, and Africa with leading global brands, government and organizations, developing strategies that strengthen reputation, trust, and long-term value. Known for her collaborative and human-centered leadership style, she bridges business vision with communication and purpose, helping organizations grow with clarity, creativity, and meaning.

With a deep commitment to Africa's sustainable development, Aya focuses on creating value chains and partnerships that drive inclusive growth. She holds academic backgrounds in social sciences, art, political science, and public policy, and is passionate about mentoring emerging leaders and advancing women's leadership and innovation worldwide.

Edmilson Angelo

Economic and Trade Officer,
Embassy of the Republic of Angola in Israel

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LinkedIn: Edmilson Angelo

Edmilson Angelo is a diplomat and academic currently serving as Chief of Staff to the Ambassador of Angola in Israel. In this capacity, he oversees the Embassy's strategic operations and leads initiatives to strengthen economic cooperation and investment partnerships between Angola and Israel. His work focuses on advancing mutual interests in areas such as infrastructure, technology transfer, and sustainable development, while fostering closer ties between government institutions, private sector stakeholders, and international organizations.

With an academic background that spans Oxford University and Harvard University, Edmilson combines scholarly insight with practical diplomatic experience. His studies and research have centered on international relations, political economy, and social development, providing a strong foundation for his work in shaping bilateral and multilateral collaboration frameworks.

Before his current posting, Edmilson accumulated a broad range of experience across the diplomatic, economic, and social sectors of Angola, contributing to policy formulation, development cooperation, and institutional reform. His multidisciplinary perspective enables him to bridge policy and practice effectively, ensuring that Angola's diplomatic mission aligns with the nation's broader goals for sustainable growth and international engagement.

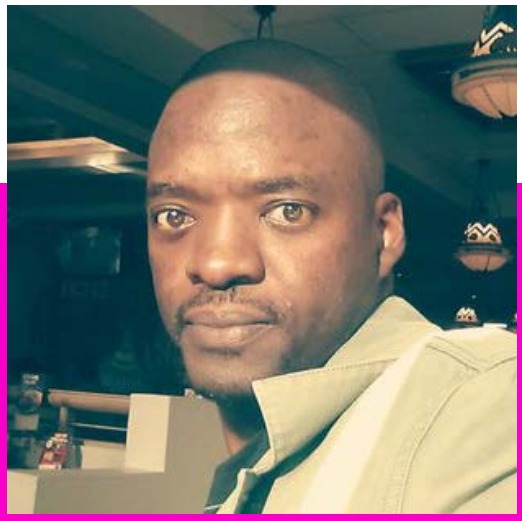
Mr. Daniel R. Berkove

CEO, Pivot Industries

Email: dir@pivotindustries.com

Daniel is a trusted advisor to C-suite executives and government leaders with nearly three decades of experience navigating complex challenges at the intersection of energy, economics, and strategic transformation. He has led major consulting engagements across Africa, the Middle East, and emerging markets, most recently at S&P Global, where he headed the energy consulting practice for Africa and the East Mediterranean region and served on the executive leadership team of CERAWeek, the world's premier energy conference.

His work spans strategy development, corporate transformation, integrated resource planning, and energy–economic development linkages, and his executive and board portfolio includes chemicals recycling, commodity trading, independent power production, fintech, poverty reduction, and mobility technology. Daniel has lived and worked in Israel, France, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, the UK, and the USA. He holds a BA from the University of Michigan.



Mr. Bakisanani Bobo Dube

Pan-African Entrepreneur and Development Agent, Botswana

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LinkedIn: Bakisanani Bobo Dube

Bakisanani Bobo Dube (Bobo) is a Botswana born, seasoned African entrepreneur with many years spent fostering relationships for Africa's development. He has a double-degree having majored in Marketing and Communications from Monash South Africa (A Campus of Monash Australia). Bobo's journey started in 2003 when he undertook to assist students with accommodation related Matters. This paid off as in 2007 he secured an appointment to procure and secure accommodation for students destined to study at Monash South Africa; he performed this task with requisite professionalism and has since exited this market. Bobo is very passionate about Africa and believes that the next big opportunities are presented by this beloved continent. To this end, Bobo has spent years fostering relationships with professionals and like-minded parties in an effort to create a formidable network of associates who will jointly pursue developmental prospects on the continent. Bobo is director of numerous entities and is currently involved in projects in several African states (SADC mainly) namely Botswana, Namibia, South Africa, Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mozambique. Additionally, he continues to engage and foster partnerships with fellow Africans from other African jurisdictions, aim being to establish a Pan African presence. He has interests in diverse sectors and is most passionate about Mining, Healthcare, Infrastructure Development, Oil & Gas, Power Generation, Tourism, Agriculture, ICT, Trade and Investment Facilitation across the Continent. The establishment of Babose Holdings is as a result of a desire to create an investment entity which would use Bobo's extensive network to contribute to the development of his beloved Botswana and the greater African Continent.

Dr. Ruth Dagan

Partner, Head of Environment & Climate Change, Legal Advisor to UNFCCC

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Ruth is a senior partner and head of the Environment and Climate Change Practice at Herzog Law. She has been an environment and climate change law practitioner for over two decades and is internationally recognized as an expert in climate policy and carbon markets. Ruth works closely with multinational corporations, tech companies, financial institutions and investors, to develop curated carbon strategies, ensure compliance with international market standards and resolve complex legal issues relating to the development of carbon projects and carbon market transactions. Ruth is actively engaged in global climate change initiatives, including serving as advisor to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Secretariat Legal Affairs Division on carbon market mechanisms under the Paris Agreement (Article 6) and as a member of VERRA's Verified Carbon Standard Expert Advisory Group, one the world's leading accreditation bodies for carbon credit projects. Additionally, Ruth specializes in sustainability-related regulation and its intersection with climate risk management and climate-related technological innovation. Ruth and the Environment and Climate Change practice she heads at Herzog are ranked Band 1 by the Chambers and Partners Global 2025 ranking. Ruth holds a doctorate from NYU's School of Law, specializing in environmental policy and climate finance. In 2024, Ruth was appointed Director of Climate Change and International Collaborations at the Arison Center on ESG at Reichman University, where she concentrates on research relating to climatech finance.

Mr. Rafael Dreyfus

Founder, Cabynda

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Rafael Dreyfus is a Swiss-born professional who has lived most of his life in Israel. Over the past twenty years, he has worked extensively across Africa's shipping and logistics landscape, developing a deep understanding of the continent's ports, trade routes, and transport systems. His work has centered on connecting markets and improving the movement of goods through ports, roads, and inland corridors across West, East, and Southern Africa. Rafael's career includes senior roles with global shipping lines and regional logistics providers, where he has managed vessel deployment, local operations, and business development. He has been directly involved in setting up new shipping routes, negotiating port services, and coordinating multimodal transport solutions that link seaports with inland destinations. Much of his work has involved close cooperation with port authorities, customs agencies, and local partners to resolve operational bottlenecks and create more reliable cargo flows. Rafael has been part of logistics projects supporting industries such as oil and gas, agriculture, and infrastructure development. He has gained first-hand experience in adapting transport solutions to challenging environments — from improving container handling at small coastal ports to supporting overland cargo deliveries to remote project sites. Rafael's approach combines practical problem-solving with a genuine interest in how logistics supports economic growth and regional trade. He values collaboration, transparency, and long-term partnerships as the foundation for effective operations. Based in Tel Aviv, he continues to work with companies and institutions involved in African trade, helping them navigate the region's evolving logistics networks and build dependable supply chains.

Mr. Christian Dunbar

Senior Advisor for Investment Financing & Development to the President, Liberia

Christian Dunbar is a global finance and investment executive recognized for mobilizing institutional capital and advancing innovative financial solutions across emerging markets. He currently serves as Advisor to the President of Liberia on Investment Financing and Development, leading national strategies to attract foreign investment, structure development financing, and forge partnerships for sustainable economic growth.

Appointed in 2025 by President Joseph N. Boakai, Sr., Mr. Dunbar plays a central role in implementing Liberia's ARREST Agenda for Inclusive Development (AAID)—a transformative plan requiring over US $8 billion in investments between 2025 and 2029. He leads initiatives to design investment frameworks, coordinate cross-border financing, and develop new asset classes such as the Liberia Sovereign Investment Fund and debt instruments to mobilize global capital for infrastructure, energy, and climate resilience.

Before joining the Government of Liberia, Mr. Dunbar was Managing Partner at Frontier Bridge Advisory (FBA), a global consultancy focused on strengthening capital markets and facilitating institutional investments across Africa and other emerging economies. Previously, as Treasurer for the City of Philadelphia, he managed one of the largest municipal investment portfolios in the U.S., overseeing nearly US $7 billion in assets and a US $9 billion debt portfolio, while managing credit ratings for major city entities including the Philadelphia Airport and Gas Works.

He also chaired the Mobilizing Institutional Investors for the Development of Africa (MiDA) initiative under USAID, catalyzing over US $1 billion in U.S. pension fund investments into African markets. He later co-founded the Institutional Investor Network (IIN) under Prosper Africa, deepening private-sector engagement in Africa's growth.

Driven by innovation and impact, Mr. Dunbar continues to bridge global capital with Africa's development ambitions—advancing inclusive, sustainable investment across frontier markets.

Ms. Maya Elnathan

Director, Multilateral Development Banks Unit, Israel Ministry of Finance

LinkedIn: maya-elnathan

Maya Elnathan is the Director of the Multilateral Development Banks (MDB) Unit at the Israeli Ministry of Finance, leading Israel's partnerships with the World Bank, ADB, AIIB, EBRD, and IDB. She works to connect Israeli innovation and expertise with global development needs, guiding Israel's representatives at the banks and building opportunities for collaboration in areas such as water, health, and energy.

Previously, Maya worked at the EBRD in London, managing strategic and transformation projects across the Bank's core functions and developing partnerships between Israeli companies and the EBRD as part of a government-sponsored position. She began her career at Deloitte, later joining a startup developing policy tools for local authorities.

Maya holds a B.A. in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and an MBA (summa cum laude) specializing in social enterprises and impact investing from the The College of Management Academic Studies

Ms. Shiri Fein-Grossman

CEO, Israel–Africa Relations Institute

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hiri Fein-Grossman is the CEO of the Israel–Africa Institute and a leading expert on foreign policy, Africa's global role, and regional normalization, including the Abraham Accords and advancing ties with Saudi Arabia. She specializes in cross-border connectivity and building strategic partnerships between the public and private sectors. Previously, she served as Director of Government Relations Development at the global investment platform OurCrowd, where she developed partnerships across Israel, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Before that, Shiri held senior roles at Israel's National Security Council, where she led policy work on the Abraham Accords and helped shape strategic ties with Gulf states. She was also the Council's first-ever Gender Equality Officer. Shiri holds an M.A. in Public Policy from Tel Aviv University and an LL.B. in Law and Government from Reichman University.

Mr. Gil Karie

Growth Director, Ignite the Power

Gil Karie is an innovation and growth specialist with extensive experience in building, leading, and supporting startups and business ventures across diverse industries and stages. He currently serves as Growth Director at Ignite Energy Access, Africa's leading provider of Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE) solutions. Ignite's operations span 12 countries, delivering solar-based energy access to more than 20 million people and addressing their most critical needs. Since joining Ignite in 2018, Gil has been at the forefront of the company's growth, innovation, strategic initiatives, and business development, driving expansion and impact across the continent. Before joining Ignite, Gil was the Project Manager of the Zell Entrepreneurship Program at IDC Herzliya (now Reichman University) — one of the world's top academic programs in entrepreneurship. Earlier in his career, he served as Deputy Editor-in-Chief of Forbes Magazine Israel, where he covered the Israeli startup and innovation ecosystem.

Prof. Eugene Kandel

Chairman, Tel Aviv Stock Exchange

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Eugene Kandel born in Moscow, USSR, lived in the US, and resides in Israel, served as a Professor of Economics and Finance at the Hebrew University, and previously taught at the University of Rochester and the University of Chicago. Since 2023, Kandel has served as the Chairman of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange. Kandel is also the Chairman of ISFI, a non-profit aimed at increasing the resilience of Israel as a state. He chairs RISE Israel, a non-profit dedicated to supporting the resilient and innovative Israeli economy. In 2015-21 Kandel was the CEO of the Start-up Nation Central, a non-profit focused on Israeli technological innovation solving pressing problems around the world. In 2009-15 Kandel served as the Head of the National Economic Council and the Economic Advisor to the Prime Minister of Israel and was actively involved in shaping the economic strategy and policy of Israel.

Hon. Boima S. Kamara

Director General, West African Monetary Agency (WAMA)

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Hon. Boima S. KAMARA, Economist; MPhil Econs, MSc Applied Econs. A goal-driven Liberian and Economist with outstanding managerial and technical skills. Humbly served in several capacities in Liberia, including Minister of Finance and Development Planning and Deputy Governor (DG) for Economic Policy at the Central Bank of Liberia. He comes with institutional memory about the ECOWAS Monetary Cooperation Program (EMCP), which seeks to establish an ECOWAS Monetary Union with the ECO as the single currency to facilitate regional trade in goods and services. He also served as International Consultant assigned to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) sub-Regional Office for West Africa, based in Niamey, Niger, and was part of a team that drafted the ECOWAS Vision 2050 Framework Document. He comes with continental experience given his role as Health Financing Advisor to the Africa Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Health Economics and Financing Program (HEP), a specialized institution of the AU Commission. He has a mix of technical aptitude, policy-making experience, and regional-continental exposure, coupled with a leadership style of TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK.

He has academic training in MPhil Economics from the University of Ghana, Legon and an MSc in Applied Economics with an emphasis in Financial Economics from Johns Hopkins University, USA. He is also an alumnus of the African Economic Research Consortium's Collaborative Master of Arts Program.

Boima is a devout Christian, married to Attorney Nadia Sartus Kamara. A union blessed with 5 children

Ms. Cynthia Kropac

Former Chief Enterprise Business Officer, Safaricom PLC

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Cynthia is a global business and technology leader recognized for driving transformation at scale — from Fortune 100 boardrooms to Africa's fastest-growing markets. Most recently Chief Enterprise Business Officer at Safaricom, East and Central Africa's largest telecom and the first in the region to surpass a $1 trillion valuation, she has redefined how technology advances growth, security, and digital inclusion.

Over a 25-year career spanning AT&T, Accenture, and Safaricom, Cynthia has led high-impact initiatives at the intersection of technology and business. She spearheaded the United States' largest IoT medical device tracking system — still the most extensive healthcare IoT deployment nationwide. In Kenya, she convened the region's largest cybersecurity summit, shaping national strategy on digital resilience. She also launched Grow, a platform empowering small and medium-sized enterprises with the tools to scale — democratizing access to innovation and capital.

Her influence now extends into financial markets, where she is collaborating with global players and investors to strengthen Africa's digital and financial infrastructure. Cynthia has long argued that Africa's capital markets are the next frontier for alpha growth, positioning technology as the conduit between global investment and local opportunity.

A champion for women, entrepreneurs, and inclusive innovation, Cynthia challenges the "lift and shift" model of importing solutions. Her philosophy: innovation must be contextual, courageous, and co-created. She leads by embracing paradox — driving progress through partnership and purpose, ensuring transformation that is both scalable and sustainable.

A lifelong advocate for education, Cynthia has taught finance at the community college level and promotes financial literacy as a foundation for empowerment. Her leadership has been honored with awards including Rising Star in STEM by Women of Color Magazine and Supplier of the Year from one of the world's largest healthcare OEMs.

Cynthia holds an MBA in Finance from Kent State University and a BSc in Finance from the University of Toledo.

Prof. Leo Leiderman

Chief Economic Advisor, Bank Hapoalim

Leonardo Leiderman is Professor (Emeritus) at the Berglas School of Economics and Visiting Professor at the Coller School of Management, Tel Aviv University. He also serves as Chief Economic Advisor at Bank Hapoalim, Israel's largest commercial bank, and heads the Institute for Research of Economic Strategies (IRES) at the Peres Academic Center. In addition, he acts as a strategic advisor to several deep-tech firms.

Previously, Prof. Leiderman held senior international roles, including Managing Director and Head of Emerging Markets Economics at Deutsche Bank (New York and London, 2000–2002), and Senior Director and Head of Research at the Bank of Israel (1996–2000), effectively serving as Deputy Governor. Earlier, he was Advisor to the Bank of Israel's Governor (1992–1996) and Chairman of the Department of Economics at Tel Aviv University (1988–1991).

Born in Argentina and an Israeli citizen, Leiderman earned his Ph.D. at the University of Chicago under Nobel Laureate Robert E. Lucas, Jr. Since joining Tel Aviv University in 1979, he has held visiting positions at institutions such as the University of Chicago, Boston University, the IMF, World Bank, and the Inter-American Development Bank. He twice headed the Pinhas Sapir Center for Development at Tel Aviv University (1994–1996, 2008–2011) and has been a Best Teacher Award recipient in Social Sciences.

A frequent lecturer in international executive MBA programs (Kellogg-Recanati, Kellogg-WHU), Leiderman has advised central banks and finance ministries in numerous countries, including Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Poland. He has also served on the boards of Poalim Asset Management (UK), Bank Pozitiff (Turkey), and PAM Funds (Ireland).

Prof. Leiderman has published over 70 academic papers and seven books on topics such as monetary policy, globalization, and international finance, with a focus on emerging markets, inflation targeting, and capital flows.

Ambassador Michael Lotem

Ambassador, Economic and Business Promotion in Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel

LinkedIn: Michael Lotem

Ambassador Lotem is a career diplomat who served in seven different countries during more than 30 years in the service. Michael was Israel' s Ambassador in Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Consul General in Saint Petersburg, Russia and recently returned from Kenya. While in the headquarters he served, most of the time, in the Economic division including representing MFA as the Special Envoy for Energy. Michael holds B.A in Chinese studies and in International Relations from The Hebrew University, as well as M.A in International Relations. Married and father to three.

Dr. Aiman Mansour

VP, Head of Business Development, MENA Region, Menomadin Group, Cyprus

LinkedIn: Aiman Mansour

An expert on geopolitics and international affairs has an extensive and diverse experience. For nearly 15 years he served at Israel's National Security Council. In his last role, he headed the Middle East and Africa Division (2015-2019). During his term, Dr. Mansour had a key role in various international diplomatic negotiations with regional players and was an integral part of forming new diplomatic relations between Israel and other countries. Dr. Mansour holds a Ph.D. in political science from Haifa University and up until recently was a fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security.

Mr. Mamo Esmelealem Mihretu

Former Governor, National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE)

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H.E. Mr. Mamo E. Mihretu has served as the 10 th Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia before leaving his post in September 2025. As Governor of the Central Bank of Ethiopia, Mamo Mihretu led Ethiopia's historic economic reform that quadrupled central bank reserves, doubled exports, modernized Ethiopia's monetary policy. In addition, he led sweeping financial sector reforms that enabled foreign bank entries in 50 years and established a new Banking Proclamation, recapitalized key banks, and modernized regulatory oversight. Under his leadership, the Central Bank transitioned to a market-based exchange rate system after 50 years of centralized control, easing foreign currency access and improving external competitiveness. He also anchored Central Bank transformation through a new Legislative Act that institutionalizes and enhances its autonomy. Before his appointment as a Governor of the National Bank of Ethiopia, Mr Mihretu served as the founding CEO of Ethiopian Investment Holdings, one of Africa's largest sovereign wealth funds with $37B in Asset under Management and 220K+ employees across subsidiaries. He has also been Senior Advisor to the Ethiopian Prime Minister on policy reforms and Ethiopia's Chief Trade Negotiator at the WTO. In short, he has more than twenty years of experience in economic policy reforms. Prior to joining the public sector in 2018, Mr Mihretu was a Senior Project Manager at the World Bank Group. His other past roles included lecturing at the Addis Ababa University and related academic institutions. Mr Mihretu MPA from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. Additionally, he has MA from University of Amsterdam and Pretoria and LLB from Addis Ababa University.

Mr. Ivor Ichikowitz

Executive Chairman, TransAfrica Capital & The Ichikowitz Family Foundation

Ivor Ichikowitz is a proud African industrialist, philanthropist, and global thought leader dedicated to ensuring that Africa's voice is heard on the world stage. He believes that Africa, with its rich history, immense potential, and dynamic youth, is at a defining moment—one where it can move beyond the constraints of its past and claim its rightful place in global affairs. Recognized as one of the most influential commentators and thought leaders on the African continent, Ivor's impact extends far beyond business into diplomacy, security, and global policymaking. His insights and thought leadership have been featured in some of the world's most prominent international media, including CNN, BBC, Newsweek, Politico, Al Jazeera, The Guardian, The Financial Times, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, and Reuters. He is a frequent speaker at global forums, engaging on critical issues related to business, security, conservation, governance, and global cooperation. Ivor has been decorated by multiple governments and institutions worldwide in recognition of his political work, contributions to conflict resolution, and civic and community development initiatives. His strong relationships with heads of state, governments, key business figures, and global thought leaders allow him to influence policy and foster meaningful international collaborations

Ms. Nili Shalev

CEO, Israel Export Institute and International Cooperation Institute

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Nili has 30 years of experience in diplomatic and public positions in areas of economic development, export promotion, Innovation policies and international R&D collaboration.

In her previous position Nili served as VP International Collaboration Division of the Israel Innovation Authority and as the Director General of ISERD - The Israel-EU R&D Directorate at the Israel Innovation Authority. Prior to that she served as Israel's Economic Minister to North America on behalf of the Ministry of Economy and as Israel's Trade Commissioner in Australia and New Zealand. Among other positions she also managed the Start-up Fund in the office of the Scientist

Ms. Shalev holds an MBA (1996), and an MA in Communications (1996) and a BA in International Relations, all from The Hebrew University in Jerusalem. She is married with two children.

Mr. Daniel Saka

International Finance and Development Strategist, Democratic Republic of the Congo

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Daniel Saka is an international finance expert with over 15 years of experience in global banking and management consulting. He specializes in financial crime prevention and organizational transformation, and currently focuses on connecting Francophone Africa to global markets by leveraging regional insight and financial regulation expertise. Previously, he served at BNP Paribas Investment Bank in New York and at BearingPoint in Paris. An Atlantic Council affiliate, he holds a Master's in Public Administration from Harvard Kennedy School and a Master's in Software Engineering from Polytech'Lille in France.

Mr. Frantz Sawyer

Executive Director, Amos Claudius Sawyer Foundation

Frantz Sawyer is a seasoned strategic adviser with extensive experience in government relations and policy advocacy. As Senior Advisor at SGR, LLC, he serves as the key liaison between the firm's clients and federal government stakeholders, including the U.S. Senate.

Drawing on decades of leadership in governance, civil-rights initiatives and public-sector engagement, Frantz is deeply committed to capacity-building, youth empowerment and rule-of-law advancement, particularly through his work in Liberia and across West Africa

The Amos Claudius Sawyer Foundation (ACSF) is a Liberian non-profit organization dedicated primarily to promoting good governance as a cornerstone for national development. Inspired by the legacy of the late Professor Amos C. Sawyer, ACSF works to strengthen democratic values, accountability, civic participation, and leadership excellence across Liberia and west Africa.

Ms. Caylee Talpert

Global Innovation & Emerging Markets Expert

Caylee Talpert has spent the past two decades working in emerging markets at the intersection of innovation, business and development impact. She currently leads corporate growth at AnyWay Solutions, a company specializing in technology-driven solutions for climate resilient infrastructure in developing nations. Prior to that, she served as Chief Business Officer (CBO) of &frnds, a high-tech company focused on emerging markets. Her work has taken her from enabling all Rwanda's citizens to access e-government services through their mobile phones, to providing the technology platform for an agency banking network serving over 4 million low-income customers in Indonesia to building a distribution network that served over 150,000 micro-retailers across South-East Asia. Caylee has worked closely with some of the world's largest consumer goods companies (e.g. Coca-Cola, Unilever, P&G), financial institutions (e.g. IFC/World Bank, Asian Development Bank, local banks) and technology companies (e.g. Microsoft, Mastercard) as well as non-profits, startups, mobile operators and government ministries. Caylee holds an MSc in International Development from the London School of Economics (LSE), an MA in Politics and Sociology from Hebrew University and a business degree in Economics and Finance from the University of Witwatersrand and teaches courses on entrepreneurship at the Technion Institute of Technology and Tel Aviv University.

Ms. Emily Neilson Winkler

Founder & CEO, VALOP Group

Email: emily@valopgroup.com

sraeli-American | Based 30,000 feet above ground - always on the move between VALOP satellites in the U.S., U.K., Israel, West Africa, South Africa, and Australia.

Emily Winkler is an Israeli-American impact entrepreneur, national resilience strategist, and sustainability expert redefining how nations and businesses safeguard progress in an era of global volatility. As Founder and CEO of VALOP Group, she leads a network of international companies dedicated to fortifying national resilience and integrity through innovation, compliance, and intelligence.

Emily's work centers on building frameworks that ensure transparency, accountability, and due diligence in international development and trade, empowering governments, investors, and enterprises to prevent corruption, strengthen institutions, and deliver sustainable growth. Her approach bridges geopolitical strategy with pragmatic implementation, emphasizing that compliance and ethical governance are not bureaucratic barriers but catalysts for prosperity and stability.

Before founding VALOP, Emily established LINK, an Israeli venture studio aligning profit with purpose through scalable technologies addressing Africa's most pressing environmental and social challenges. Her leadership has been recognized globally, including being named Best Economic Development Solutions Facilitator by Business Excellence Magazine, one of Israel's Youngest Industry Leaders by the Israeli Manufacturing Association, and a Zionist Leader of Our Time by the Jerusalem Municipality and Herzl Center.

Ms. Hilly Hirt

Executive Director, Sustainable Finance & Development, Valop Impact Ventures

Hilly Hirt is the Executive Director for Sustainable Finance and Development at VALOP Impact Ventures Group, where she leads initiatives to mobilize capital toward inclusive growth, resilience, climate and scalable innovation. She recently served as Interim CEO of the Israeli Forum for Impact Economy (IFIE), Israel's National Partner to the Global Steering Group for Impact Investment (GSG) co-leading and design of Israel's first national blended-finance vehicles in collaboration with the Accountant General, institutional investors, and philanthropic partners, unlocking catalytic capital for public good.

Previously, Hilly headed the Impact Entrepreneurship Division at the Edmond de Rothschild Foundation (IL), where she developed innovative financial tools—including endowment-backed debt models as well as the Foundation's impact measurement and ESG reporting frameworks, embedding accountability across its programs. Earlier, as Emerging Markets Specialist at the Israel Innovation Authority (IIA), Hilly oversaw the $40 million India–Israel Industrial R&D and Technological Innovation Fund (I4F) and launched the IIA's first joint call for proposals with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) on water challenges in Latin America.

Hilly previously served as Deputy Director of the Pears Program for Global Innovation, where she worked to expand Israel's role in international development through technology-driven and financially sustainable solutions, and as Commercial Officer to the Indian Ministry of Economy, advancing bilateral trade, technology transfer, and policy cooperation

Mr. Aron Ziv

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Aron leads structured credit at Aon Israel. He has a wealth of experience having been the VP in charge of all insurance operations at Ashra, the Israeli ECA. He then worked for the Eisenberg Group on project finance in Asia. Since joining Aon in the year 2000, he has developed the capabilities across a range of products that include political risk insurance, project finance, structured credit, credit insurance, surety and bonds.

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