

A stylized illustration of a group of diverse women with various hairstyles, colors, and accessories, positioned on the left side of the slide.

South-South Series: Empowering and Growing Women-led Business

Session 6: Climate-Resilient Business Models for Women Entrepreneurs

26 November 2025

South-South Series | UN Women and COLEAD

Climate-Resilient Biz for Women Entrepreneurs

SANDRA MCLEISH

AGRO COLD STORAGE LIMITED (ACSL)

26 November 2025

About the Speaker



Entrepreneur

Jamaican entrepreneur and renewable-energy advocate;
Agro Cold Storage Ltd (ACSL) - solar-powered cold-chain network,

Sankhard Company Ltd - Springvale branded agro-products
Focus: gender-responsive climate resilience, women in value chains, inclusive financing

Nation Server

30+ years in agriculture, manufacturing, and climate-health policy

Vice President, JMEA

national board member (NCE)

Pastor

Climate Reality in the Caribbean

Extreme Weather

Category-4+ hurricanes (e.g., Melissa), flooding, landslides
Heat stress damaging crops, livestock and factory productivity
Drought causing crop losses, water scarcity, reduced yields
Rising energy costs affecting women-led small enterprises

Gender Impact

Women impacted disproportionately
Higher unpaid care burden,
Limited land/asset ownership → limited climate finance access, Disrupted value chains affect women-dominated microbusinesses



Impacts on Women-led Businesses



Post-harvest Losses

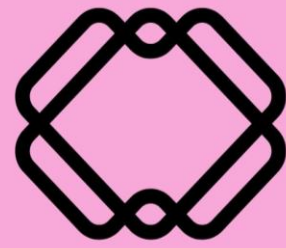
Post-harvest losses rising above the “normal” 30–40% after extreme weather.

Women farmers have less access to irrigation, inputs, credit, and training



Supply Chain

Price volatility disrupting women's micro-enterprises.
Supply-chain interruptions reducing export potential,
Increased food insecurity burdens rural women



**Agro Cold
Storage
Ltd**

ACSL is creating sustainable cold storage and logistical solutions for the Jamaican agricultural sector, reducing post-harvest losses, empowering local communities (particularly women) and building climate resiliency.

ESSENTIALLY, WE DELIVER RELIABLE AND CONSISTENT TECH-ENABLED COLD-CHAIN ECOSYSTEM (STORAGE AND LOGISTICAL SOLUTIONS) SUPPORTING FOOD SECURITY

Climate-Resilient Agro-Processing

Diversification

Product diversification protects against crop-season volatility,
Uses local crops (pumpkin, mango, pepper, sorrel) → supports small farmers

Export diversification (UK, USA, Caribbean) building resilience

Sustainability

Solar integration and efficient equipment reduce emissions

Results

- Higher value-added per crop
- More stable farm-to-market pathways for rural women



Women Entrepreneurs Strategies that Works

Diversifying products

Developing value-added products and specialty foods; diversification reduce risk from commodity price volatility, extend market reach, and enhance income stability.

Using renewable energy

Climate-smart agriculture, Renewable-energy tech + cold chain, Digital tools

Digital transformation

Online sales, remote logistics planning and e-commerce

Shared Assets

Cooperative purchasing & shared assets (shared cold storage, shared marketing)

Flexible Models

Flexible business models (farm-to-factory, contract farming, small-batch production)



Gender Barriers that Limit Climate Action

➤ Land Ownership

- Women own <20% of titled farmland in the region

➤ Cultural bias

- Unpaid care restricts time for training

➤ Financing

- Limited collateral → limited loans for adaptation, Gender bias in financing ("bring your husband to sign")
- underrepresented in STEM and RE
- Climate finance flows rarely reach women-led enterprises....even in public sector

What Women Need to Scale Climate-Resilient Businesses

1. Gender-responsive climate finance e.g. concessional loans and grant top up
 2. Capacity development e.g. woman farmers prioritized for training
 3. Networks & mentorship
 4. Policy alignment e.g. climate-smart equipment tax waivers
 5. Meaningful PPP e.g. ACSL partnership model
- Government provides land at agro-parks

Collaboration Opportunities

➤ Tech Transfer

- Climate-smart processing tech transfer, Women-led RE solutions (solar pumps, cold storage)

➤ Value Chains

- Joint export value chains, Digital trade platforms led by women

➤ Capacity Building

- Peer-learning cohorts on gender-climate policy, Shared training in regenerative agriculture & green jobs

Call to Action

Gender & Climate Finance

Create a dedicated Gender & Climate Finance Facility for the Global South - with guarantees, grants, flexible collateral rules, and targeted support for women in agriculture, STEM, and renewable energy. Led by: UN Women + regional development banks + private sector alliances



Thank You

Name



Thank you

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