



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



Session n°6: Climate-Resilient Business Models for Women Entrepreneurs Wednesday 26 November 2025 – 14:00-16:00 UTC

HIGHLIGHTS

About the collaboration UN Women and COLEAD

The collaboration between [UN Women](#) and [COLEAD](#) focuses on empowering women entrepreneurs in the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries and beyond. The South-South Series is specifically designed for women entrepreneurs and business leaders, providing a platform for collaboration, knowledge sharing, skill enhancement, market access, and networking opportunities.

Session n°6: Climate-Resilient Business Models for Women Entrepreneurs

The sixth session of the South-South Series focused on **Climate-Resilient Business Models for Women Entrepreneurs**. The session held on the 26th of November 2025 was a success! It attracted a great interest from all regions in the world. 330 persons registered to the session and accessed all information. Moderated by Alonso Bobes, Program Associate at UN Women Caribbean, and opened by Jeremy Knops, General Delegate, COLEAD, and Angela Davis, Program Specialist at UN Women Caribbean, the session featured four accomplished women leaders from Africa and the Caribbean. They shared their experiences in building and supporting climate-resilience business models. The interactive Q&A session fostered an engaging dialogue between participants and speakers. Finally, Nina Desanlis-Perrin, Project Officer at COLEAD, outlined the key points and the next steps and opportunities for continued collaboration. Find all information related to this session on [Agrinnovators](#).

Meet our panellists



Thokozani Amanda Chimasula
Founder, Tac-Maz Sustainable Ventures, Malawi



Sandra McLeish
Chief Executive Officer, Agro Cold Storage Limited, Jamaica



Dr. Emem Aniekanabasi Alban
Chief Executive Officer, Emani Farms Giant Ltd, Nigeria



Nisha Glasgow
Business Development Officer, Centre for Enterprise Development, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines



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Thokozani Amanda Chimasula – Founder, Tac-Maz Sustainable Ventures, Malawi

Thokozani Amanda is the founder of Tac-Maz Sustainable Ventures in Malawi. She explained how her enterprise works across three districts to build resilient food systems by empowering women farmers who are disproportionately affected by climate change. She highlighted Malawi's severe food insecurity and the vulnerability of women (who make up most food producers) to climate shocks such as Cyclone Freddy, which devastated crops and livelihoods in 2023. Tac-Maz addresses these challenges through diversified climate-resilient models that combine horticulture, sustainable livestock production, and value-added activities. Tac-Maz also incorporates youth engagement, tailored training, knowledge sharing, and climate-responsive practices like tree planting, water harvesting, and renewable-energy irrigation. Despite major barriers such as unstable markets, rising input costs, limited technology, and scarce funding, the initiative has reached over 2,000 women and 17,500 students, strengthened partnerships, and expanded to new districts. Looking ahead, Thokozani outlined plans to complete processing facilities and warehouses, achieve export certification, scale production, and support 5,000 farmers by 2028.

Sandra McLeish – Chief Executive Officer, Agro Cold Storage Limited, Jamaica

Sandra McLeish is a Jamaican agro-entrepreneur with over 30 years of experience in agriculture. She shared how her journey, from growing up as a farmer's daughter to managing a 25-acre farm and building the Springvale brand of 60 value-added products, led her to confront the chronic problem of inconsistent raw-material supply. Repeated climate disasters, including Category 5 hurricanes and severe rains that devastated Jamaica's "breadbasket," have intensified post-harvest losses, supply-chain instability, and price shocks that disproportionately affect women farmers, who often lack land ownership, financial access, and visibility in data collection. In response, she founded Agro Cold Storage Ltd. (ACSL), a solar-powered cold-chain and logistics network designed to reduce losses, stabilize supply, empower rural women, and build climate resilience; the model includes 30 planned storage units, six with agro-processing capabilities, strategically placed across Jamaica in partnership with agricultural parks and the Ministry of Agriculture. Emphasizing a deliberate women-centered approach, she ensures that 80% of employees and vendors are women, champions digital literacy, renewable-energy skills, circular-economy practices, cooperative structures, and tailored capacity-building for marginalized women. She highlighted systemic barriers such as financing discrimination and unequal access to public procurement, where women receive only 1% of contracts, and urged women to be proactive in accessing opportunities, influencing policy, and adopting climate-smart, tech-enabled models. Sandra concluded with a call to create a dedicated Gender and Climate Finance Facility in Jamaica to expand flexible funding, support resilient food systems, and scale impact across the Caribbean.

Dr. Emem Aniekanabasi Alban – Chief Executive Officer, Emani Farms Giant Ltd, Nigeria

Dr. Emem is an agribusiness entrepreneur and humanitarian leader from Nigeria. She emphasized that climate change is an everyday reality for farmers facing erratic rainfall, severe heat waves, catastrophic flooding and widespread displacement and crop loss. Through Emani Farms Giant Ltd., she pioneers hydroponic and aquaponic systems that produce vegetables year-round with 80% less water and 3–5 times the yield of soil farming, powered by solar energy that cuts operational costs by up to 45%. Alongside her End Hunger Humanitarian Initiative, she has supported over 2,500 women and families through nutrition programs and training that links farmers, cooks, and schoolchildren. She highlighted major gender barriers, such as the fact that only 10–12% of rural Nigerian women having access to land, carry heavy unpaid care burdens, have low confidence, and lack market access. She described how her Women Agripreneur Hub offers tailored training, mentorship, starter hydroponic kits, microloans, technical support, and guaranteed offtake so women can build profitable enterprises and repay loans sustainably. Emem stressed that storage, not production, is Nigeria's bigger challenge and that empowering women with markets, skills, and technology has increased yields, reduced pesticide use, and strengthened business survival. She called for a national Women's Climate-Resilient Agripreneur Fund to scale support

for 1,000 women, expand solar-powered and hydroponic farming networks, build livestock feed solutions for heat-stressed animals, and advance digital and AI-enabled farming, all aimed at creating sustainable food systems, empowered women, and resilient communities.

Nisha Glasgow – Business Development Officer, Centre for Enterprise Development, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Nisha is a Caribbean business-development specialist working with micro, small, and medium women-led enterprises. She described how intensifying climate shocks are severely affecting agriculture and agro-processing, where women make up more than 80% of entrepreneurs. She explained that rising spoilage, damaged roads and rivers, input shortages, and collapsing markets are forcing women to adapt through localized supply chains, product diversification, and low-cost climate-smart tools including digital communication, small-scale processing, and backyard production. Her programs support women through capacity-building, mentorship, seed funding, blended finance, cooperatives, and value-chain clusters that enable shared learning, joint marketing, and collective problem-solving. She emphasized the power of peer learning, sector-based workshops, and safe spaces (both in person and digital) for women to exchange experiences and build confidence, particularly after disasters like Hurricanes Beryl and Melissa. Grants, coaching, and partnerships with regional platforms such as the OAS Clearinghouse have helped women transition between sectors, rebuild destroyed facilities, and adopt climate-smart upgrades. Nisha concluded that resilience must be embedded as a mindset from the outset of business planning, combining preparedness, access to tools, strong networks, and community-based support; and that when women are equipped to adapt and innovate, they not only recover but lead the transformation of entire local ecosystems.

Key highlights

The session highlighted the critical importance of building climate-resilient food systems led by women entrepreneurs across the Caribbean, Africa, and beyond. In fact, extreme weather events, including hurricanes, floods, droughts, and heatwaves, disproportionately disrupt women's agricultural livelihoods and value chains. Structural barriers such as limited land ownership, inadequate access to finance, insufficient technology, and gaps in market networks continue to constrain women's ability to scale and sustain their businesses. Yet, the discussion underscored that these challenges are surmountable through innovation, deliberate support, and collaborative action. The panelists showcased practical solutions including climate-smart production methods such as hydroponics, aquaponics, diversified cropping, renewable energy-powered cold storage and logistics networks, value addition and agro-processing hubs, and digital tools for market access and operational efficiency. The session further highlighted the importance of women-centered initiatives, cooperatives, peer learning, mentorship, and targeted capacity-building programs that enhance confidence, leadership, and business acumen. Beyond immediate interventions, the conversation emphasized gender-responsive climate finance, strategic public-private partnerships, and systemic approaches as essential to empower women, reduce post-harvest losses, stabilize supply chains, and drive sustainable, resilient food systems.

Join the conversation on our [Agrinnovators Forum](#) to explore the questions raised during the session and share your own insights, experiences, and ideas with the community.
You have to create a profile to access the Forum.

Resources

- Publications

African Bank Development Group. 2025. [African Development Bank Showcases Gender-Responsive Climate Finance at Africa Climate Summit.](#)

Center for climate and energy solutions. 2019. [What is Climate Resilience, and Why Does it Matter?](#)

Down to Earth. 2025. [African women entrepreneurs are a smart bet for climate change investment: research shows why.](#)

European Investment Bank. 2022. [Support for female entrepreneurs.](#)

FAO. 2017. [Gender and land statistics.](#)

Gurung, J. 2023. [Scaling Gender and Climate Investment Opportunities.](#)

ILO. 2025. [Guidance note on just transition and women's entrepreneurship development.](#)

International Center for Research on Women. 2019. [Women's Enterprises in a Changing Climate: Barriers and Opportunities.](#)

London School of Economics. [Women Entrepreneurs in Climate Change Adaptation \(The WECCA Project\).](#)

Mansour, M. et al. 2024. [Female leadership and environmental innovation: do gender boards make a difference?](#)

NASA. [What is climate change?](#)

Ngcamu, B.S. 2023. [Climate change effects on vulnerable populations in the Global South: a systematic review.](#)

UN Women. 2022. [In Focus: Climate action by, and for, women.](#)

Women entrepreneurs finance initiative. 2024. [Women Climate Entrepreneurs.](#)

WUSC. 2022. [Towards a Gender Transformative Climate Finance Roadmap.](#)

- Webinars

COLEAD. Access to Finance Webinars. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DbrISulTDI&list=PLV5hWpGiR94I98JI9Ji3tyHjR9A_4fD2C

Innovation Women Speak!: <https://innovationwomen.com/webinars/?utm>

UN Women-COLEAD South- South Series: Empowering and Growing Women-led Business. https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLV5hWpGiR94OwWlfhb-X6vg_fyzwS7zky

- Podcasts

OECD. Women Leading Change Podcast: <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/gender-and-development/women-leading-change-podcast.html>

The Climate Conscious Podcast: <https://theclimateconscious.com/>

- Trainings

COLEAD training materials: <https://training.colead.link/>

ITU Academy. Green and digital entrepreneurship for women: <https://academy.itu.int/training-courses/full-catalogue/green-and-digital-entrepreneurship-women>

SheTrades Academy: <https://learn.shetrades.com/>

UN Trade and Development. eTrade for Women Masterclasses: <https://etradeforall.org/et4women>

UN Women training materials: <https://portal.trainingcentre.unwomen.org/unw-catalog-mobile/>

Coordination team for this Series:

[UN Women Caribbean](#): Alonso Bobes – Program Assistant
[COLEAD](#): Nina Desanlis-Perrin – Project Officer, Ahoefa Soklou – Project Officer



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