

WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE
**TRANSFORMING THE
GENDER GAP INTO
AN OPPORTUNITY**

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Grow Asia, Singapore
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- Global Initiatives, for co-hosting the Roundtable and the Responsible Business Forum on Food and Sustainable Agriculture
- WOCAN and Syngenta for inputs to the planning of the Roundtable and review of the Outcome Report
- salt communications for coordinating the organization of the Roundtable and preparing the Outcome Report
- Rick van der Kamp (IFC) and Francisco Cos-Montiel (UN Women) for their presentations at the Roundtable
- The participants of the Roundtable (listed in [Section IV](#)) for their time and input

Executive Summary

The Women in Agriculture Roundtable held on 15 March 2017 at the Responsible Business Forum on Food and Sustainable Agriculture in Jakarta is the result of a joint discussion between [Grow Asia](#), [Syngenta](#) and [WOCAN](#). The three organizations had received consistent feedback from stakeholders; many were aware of the obstacles faced by women in agriculture but sought guidance and inspiration on how to do something unique and with impact at scale.

Grow Asia, being uniquely positioned to facilitate a wider stakeholder consultation, organized the Roundtable to identify initiatives that could urgently answer the question of: **“what does the agriculture industry need to do to make it more inclusive of women?”** The clear intention was to galvanize participants and their respective organizations to take more specific actions to address the issue.

The Roundtable was attended by nearly 50 participants from the private sector, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), governments, associations and consultancy firms (see full list in [Section IV](#)). After an initial introduction by Grow Asia, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) gave insightful presentations as they shared their approaches to addressing the topic and answered questions from participants (key messages from both presentations are available in [Section II](#)).

In the second half of the Roundtable, participants were split into three discussion groups to identify practical initiatives in which interested parties could work together. The groups focused on solutions that would target women specifically (rather than smallholder farmers in general); the outputs are listed in [Section III](#).

These solutions represent a continuum, ranging from mapping value chains to identifying where women are the predominant workers, to recognizing women’s empowerment and the derived benefits at the Women in Agriculture Oscars.

As a next step, Grow Asia would like to ask all interested organizations reading this report, whether present at the Roundtable, or an organization seeking practical ways to contribute to women’s empowerment in agricultural value chains, to contact us info@growasia.org to get involved.

Grow Asia welcomes all expressions of interest, as well as contributions and challenges to ensure the identified issues and initiatives are relevant to women in agriculture.

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I. Introduction

The idea to convene a Roundtable on the topic of ‘Women in Agriculture’ came up in late November 2016, as the result of a joint discussion between [Grow Asia](#), [Syngenta](#) and [WOCAN](#). The three organizations had received feedback from stakeholders about low levels of awareness of the obstacles faced by women in agriculture, as well as the need and opportunities to address these. Many expressed that they were seeking guidance and inspiration on how to do something unique and with impact, at scale.

Grow Asia convened a Roundtable discussion to understand what stakeholders in agribusinesses in South-East Asia needed to address the gender gap and to be more inclusive of women.

The session was held under the Chatham House Rule.

A. Context

Latest estimates by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) reveal there are over 1.1 billion women operating across the agricultural sector¹, though this is difficult to quantify because women’s role in farming is often informal and part of a wider range of household duties. Women work two-thirds of the world’s working hours. Yet they earn 10% of the world’s income².





Closing the gender gap could increase agricultural output in the developing world by 2.5 – 4%, on average, with higher gains in countries where women are more involved in agriculture and the gender gap is wider³. Women comprise, on average, 43% of the agricultural labor force in developing countries, ranging from 20% in Latin America to 50% in Eastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa⁴. Within Asia, the sub-regional averages range from about 35 – 70%⁵.

Women are also the majority of the labor force in the supply chain of certain commodities, such as coffee. An estimated 25 million smallholder coffee farmers produce 80% of the world’s coffee; women do much of the work on smallholder coffee farms, including key cultivation and processing activities that affect coffee yields and quality⁶.

FAO estimates that if women had equal access to education, seeds, agriculture training, mechanization and water, they could produce 20 – 30% more food. This is enough to raise 150 million people out of hunger (these data are summarized in this [animation](#)).

But compared to men, women farmers and entrepreneurs face a number of disadvantages, including lower mobility, and less access to training, market information, financing and productive resources⁷.

Challenges faced by women farmers

<p>A serious gender gap in access to productive resources.</p> 	<p>Less control over land than men and the land women control is often of poorer quality and their tenure is insecure.</p> 	<p>Less ownership of working animals needed in farming. They also frequently do not control the income from the animals they manage.</p> 	<p>The challenge: to move the needle beyond ‘gender sensitization’ and the private and public sectors to create opportunities for women.</p>
<p>Less likely than men to use modern inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers, pest control measures and mechanical tools. They also use less credit and often do not control the credit they obtain.</p> 	<p>Less access to education and extension services, which makes it more difficult to gain access to and use some of the other resources, such as land, credit and fertilizer.</p> 	<p>These factors also prevent women from adopting new technologies as readily as men do. The constraints women face are often interrelated and need to be addressed holistically.</p> 	

¹FAO, 2011. The State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture-Closing the Gender Gap in Development. Rome: UN Food and Agriculture Organization.
²CARE International
³FAO, 2011. The State of Food and Agriculture: Women in Agriculture-Closing the Gender Gap in Development. Rome: UN Food and Agriculture Organization.
⁴Ibid.
⁵Status of Food and Agriculture Team, FAO, 2011. The Role of Women and Agriculture. ESA Working Paper No. 11-02. Rome: FAO, UN Food and Agriculture Organization.
⁶Co-ffee Quality Institute, 2016. The Way Forward: Accelerating Gender Equity in Coffee Value Chains. Washington, D.C.: Co-ffee Quality Institute.
⁷World Bank, FAO, and IFAD, 2009. The Gender and Agriculture Sourcebook. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

B. The Players

WOCAN is a women-led NGO with a large network of member experts and women farmers, groups and entrepreneurs. WOCAN provided input to the framework for discussion.

Syngenta, a global agribusiness that produces agrochemicals and seeds, currently scoping activities they can undertake to address the issue, was keen to share and learn from the experience of other organizations to identify and develop opportunities that can align to **The Good Growth Plan**.

There is a role for **Grow Asia** to drive a broader stakeholder consultation process to find regional initiatives that could urgently address the question of: **“what does the agriculture industry need to do to make it more inclusive of women?”**

Grow Asia’s unique facilitation role

5 country partnerships across ASEAN (Cambodia, Indonesia, Myanmar, the Philippines and Vietnam).	260 partners across these partnerships, including private sector, NGO and governments.	38 working groups on crop and crop value chains.
Mandate to contribute to a more sustainable and more inclusive agriculture in ASEAN countries.	Supports farmers in becoming more responsible e.g. by facilitating access to finance.	Provides a shared platform for all parties working on projects.
Can guarantee an open and pre-competitive space to hold this exploratory discussion.		



II. The Roundtable



Jenny Costelloe, Director, Grow Asia

Photo credits: Gopal Initiatives

Nearly 50 participants from the private sector, NGOs, governments, associations and consultancy firms joined a Roundtable discussion in Jakarta on 15 March 2017 (for a full list of participants, please refer to **Section IV**). The clear intention was for the event not to be restricted to a general discussion about women in agriculture but to **galvanize participants and their respective organizations to take more specific actions to address the issue**.

Therefore, after initial presentations to guide the Roundtable, participants were split into three discussion groups to identify practical initiatives in which interested parties could work together.

The groups focused on solutions that would target women specifically (rather than smallholder farmers in general); the outputs are listed in **Section III**.

The objective of this outcome report is to ensure all agriculture players in the region, not just Roundtable participants:

- Are aware of the practical initiatives identified at the Roundtable that could be jointly developed by interested parties to create business opportunities and contribute to women’s empowerment and sustainable agriculture, and
- Can express their interest to Grow Asia in participating in the further development of these initiatives.

The Roundtable was informed by presentations by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) who shared their approaches to addressing the topic.



Photo credits: Gopal Initiatives

A. IFC Presentation – Investing in Women along Agribusiness Value Chains

As a preamble to his presentation, Rick van der Kamp, Senior Operations Officer at IFC, observed that the issue of gender has become more prevalent and top-of-mind among private sector companies in recent times. Instead of focusing on gender empowerment itself, IFC felt that focusing on the potential value a gender-smart approach brings to the business can be more effective. An optimal approach strikes the balance between the moral imperative and what would make business sense.

Mr van der Kamp then explained the IFC report, ‘Investing in Women along Agribusiness Value Chains’, was commissioned to address this need and to place enough emphasis on the value and benefits of a gender-smart approach to doing business. With value comes opportunities, so the wider challenge is to change how the gender gap is currently perceived and transforming it from an issue to an opportunity.

By applying gender-smart solutions, companies can reap business benefits such as improved supply chain stability, increased crop yield and access to new markets and consumers. Mr van der Kamp shared a few examples of gender-smart solutions adopted by private sector companies, including:

- In Bangladesh, Krishi Utsho, a micro-franchise network of small kiosks that sell agriculture inputs, supplies and services to farmers, provided women farmers with reliable and affordable access to agriculture inputs and services. Krishi Utsho benefitted through a successful path for last-mile distribution.

- Gender mapping informed the design of Mondelez International’s Cocoa Life Program in Indonesia, which aims to reach 40,000 farmers by 2022 and allowed it to define specific interventions for women. For instance, promoting coffee value chain training at times convenient for them to attend.
- Africa Exchange Holdings (AFEX), a regional commodity exchange, provided small-scale farmers in Nigeria, including women-led cooperatives, with access to agricultural warehousing. This allowed farmers to store their harvest without loss of value while capitalizing on maximum commodity price. AFEX benefited due to access to large volumes of commodities for sale at their warehouses.
- Primark, a European fashion retailer, partnered with agricultural experts CottonConnect and the Self-Employed Women’s Association (SEWA) to build a sustainable cotton supply chain with female farmers in India. By working directly with women cotton farmers, Primark increased yields, achieved a more efficient water usage, reduced the amount of pesticide used by 50%, and increased average amount of profit by 200%.

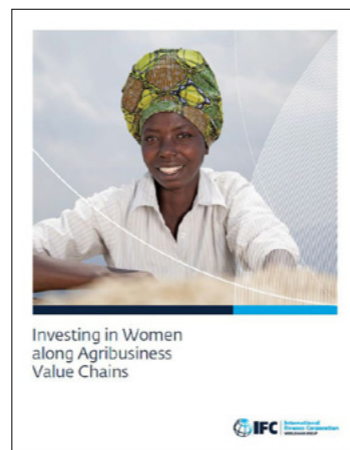
Please see [Section V](#) for the full presentation.

IFC’s three key reasons why investing in women makes business sense

- 1. Investing and including women across the whole value chain pays off. The economic benefits are clear and demonstrable.
- 2. Recognizing women as a customer market can result in market opportunities.
- 3. Gender mapping can help identify gaps and opportunities in company value chains.

“The discussion on gender gap all too often stops at acknowledging the importance of doing something about it. But we’re doing ourselves a disservice if we don’t end by saying how we all become gender-smart”

- Rick van der Kamp, IFC



B. Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs)^a and Women in Agriculture, a presentation from UN Women, the United Nation’s Entity for Gender Equality

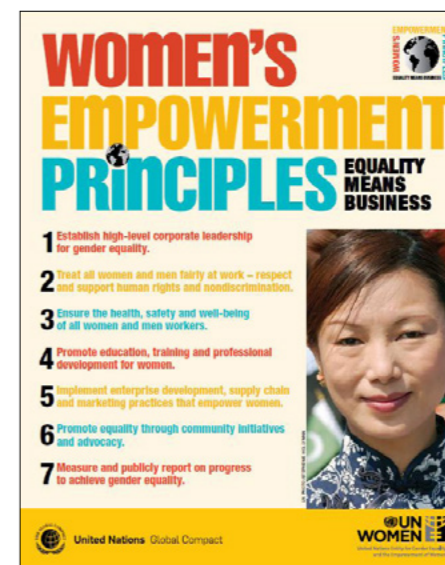
Francisco Cos-Montiel, Regional Advisor for Women’s Economic Empowerment, UN Women Asia-Pacific, reiterated that companies stand to benefit significantly by addressing gender equality. He concurred with IFC that there is currently a significant business opportunity that many companies are missing out on.

The WEPs offer a set of seven principles and concrete steps to help business sectors promote gender equality in the workplace, market place and community. As a joint initiative of UN Women and UN Global Compact (a policy platform and network for companies that are committed to sustainability and responsible business practices), the WEPs were developed through multi-stakeholder consultation and informed by real-life business practices.

Please see [Section V](#) for the full presentation.

“There is a huge opportunity for agri-business to be part of these principles”

- Francisco Cos-Montiel, UN Women



Seven Key Women’s Empowerment Principles, Developed Through Multi-Stakeholder Consultation, And A Useful Tool For Companies To Anticipate Change

- 1. Establish high-level corporate leadership for gender equality.
- 2. Treat all women and men fairly at work – respect and support human rights and non-discrimination.
- 3. Ensure the health, safety and well-being of all women and men workers.
- 4. Promote education, training, and professional development for women.
- 5. Implement enterprise development, supply chain and marketing practices that empower women.
- 6. Promote equality through community initiatives and advocacy.
- 7. Measure and publicly report on progress to achieve gender equality.

^aA joint initiative of UN Women and UN Global Compact launched in 2010

UN Women's key messages on Women in Agriculture:

- Health and safety of the workforce is particularly important in agriculture.
- Men are generally concentrated in 'productive' roles (while women are also doing domestic chores).
- Women represent 70% of consumer power in the world – but their voice is not represented to this scale in business.
- By 2030, agricultural job growth, which is dominated by women, will be stagnant.
- The [HeForShe](#) Corporate Impact Champions have made gender equality an institutional priority for their organizations.
- The more developed a country, the fewer women work in agriculture, as they tend to shift from agriculture to the manufacturing sector to services. Therefore, thinking about how women can get involved in more advanced value chains is essential.
- The impact of technology on agriculture will be transformational, so we must ensure access to technology is gender equal.

“ If we don't take action now, those women in agriculture are at risk of losing their jobs and livelihoods ”

- **Francisco Cos-Montiel,**
UN Women



Case Study of UN Women in Vietnam:

The study [“Towards gender equality in Vietnam: Making inclusive growth work for women”](#) is an ambitious effort to look at Vietnam's economy through a gender lens. Drawing on a comprehensive gender-based analysis of selected economic sectors, it highlights the unequal distribution of productive resources across different groups of women and men, persisting gender segmentation in the labor market, and greater vulnerability in female workers' working conditions and pay. The study assesses Vietnam's policy framework and provides recommendations to better realize women's potential and make their economic livelihoods more secure, be they small-scale farmers, domestic paid workers, or garment factory workers.

III. Ideas for Action

Following the two presentations, Roundtable participants were divided into three discussion groups tasked with brainstorming practical, industry-wide initiatives that would benefit businesses and contribute to women's empowerment and sustainable agriculture. The following section summarizes the ideas generated by the three groups and subsequently presented to the plenary.

A. Information Research and Best Practice Sharing

1. Set up an open-source online resource center to **gather gender issues and resources**, including guidelines and best practice case studies and the business case for change.
2. **Conduct academic research to gather data and proof points about specific women's land ownership and access to finance issues across Asia.** For instance, understand better the reasons and drivers for women losing their land, such as mass scale plantation and mining industries in Indonesia.

B. Knowledge Sharing and Capacity-Building

3. Assess sectoral interest for **application of WOCAN's W+** (a standard to measure women's empowerment) across, for example a specific supply chain.
4. **Form a new Grow Asia working group** which could be
 - (1) instrumental in exploring new projects aimed at empowering women in agricultural value chains
 - (2) a 'buddying system' that could improve the effectiveness of existing Grow Asia working groups and projects by reviewing their initiatives through a gender lens.
5. **Create / replicate the Grow Asia working group mentioned above as an app** that various organizations could use to pose specific questions and issues around gender equality, seek solutions and share experiences.
6. For each global initiative supported by Grow Asia, set up country-specific, **local chapters in each country where Grow Asia can play a role** (5).
7. **Encourage knowledge sharing and replication to scale up existing associations whose mission is to empower women** through training, technical assistance, business development etc. For example – [ASPPUK](#) – a network of 54 women NGOs across 20 provinces in Indonesia supporting small businesses and women entrepreneurs.
8. Grow Asia to **coordinate and deliver business consultancy to member organizations** to help them identify business opportunities for greater gender equality.



C. Gender Mapping and Gap Analysis

9. **Provide free-of-charge gender mapping tools or self-assessment toolkits** (potentially provided by the IFC) to kick-start targeted activities and feed into big data analysis.
10. **Conduct gender mapping to identify which value chains are dominated by women** (drawing on key findings from the IFC report) and understand roles, access, control and barriers. This could be done in, for example, the coconut sector, to understand who's involved in planting/harvesting first and then deciding on the best initiatives to empower women in the value chain.

One participant shared that their gender mapping exercise in Asia demonstrated the majority of farm production is done by women. The mapping shows who actually does the farming work; it is also critical in enabling financing to reach women, because they don't have land titles. It also helps to address the fact that male farmers are the ones who attend workshops and trainings.

11. **Map women's groups at a local level** as they are often under the radar, yet they wield significant influence within their local communities and can provide businesses with access to those communities.

12. **Conduct a gap analysis to identify the differences between how men and women operate across different agricultural value chains.** The aim of the exercise will be to fully understand how women approach their work differently by relying both on common knowledge (interviews, focus groups) and secondary data. The gap analysis provides a baseline and set of assumptions for how to empower women in those value chains. What is it they need to reach the same level of productivity and economic gain as men – is it skills, fertilizer, or access to products and finance?

13. **Conduct a gap analysis of women's role in the value chain,** looking at

i) women's compensation and seeking to guarantee equal pay for equal work and reduce the burden of unpaid work;

ii) the poverty of time as a challenge faced by women in rural communities and exploring how technology and community infrastructure can help address this;

iii) rethink distribution channels to address gaps in access given that women often assume multiple roles, including the main care giver at home.

D. Education, Skills and Training

14. **Produce an agriculture-specific version of UN Women's Seven Principles.** This will establish a common reference point that different stakeholders can agree to work towards to.
15. Establish an education program or scheme to **upskill women in basic economics, bargaining and commodity trading skills** (to ensure higher direct economic benefit for women). Help them understand and analyze the value chain of the product they sell so they can identify more profitable opportunities. Apply key learnings from Indian women's organizations working in handicrafts.
16. Provide a **platform to connect and match women looking for work with available jobs in the supply chain.**
17. **Identify opportunities for female employment outside the agricultural supply chains,** for instance – empower women to become entrepreneurs.



E. Access to Finance

18. Encourage the set-up of **micro-finance initiatives that are exclusive to local women farmers** to facilitate women's access to capital so they are still able to access key crop input products (e.g. fertilizers and pesticides) to increase yield, particularly in patriarchal societies and in places where women have limited land rights.
19. Using the value chain attribution from the gender mapping exercise suggested above, **set up a value chain financing system** targeted at women so that, at the start of the harvest cycle, women can get the resources they need (where otherwise it would not be attributed to them).
20. **Identify and target private sector companies involved in those women-dominated value chains** and help them use the value chain financing system so that when they buy from e.g. coffee farmers (predominantly women), the financing attributes most of the funds to women.



F. Marketing and Branding

21. Create demand from women (representing 70% of consumers) for gender-smart projects. This could involve **gender-related branding of products** sourced from female cooperatives in supply chains typically female-dominated.

It could replicate the set up and the success of [Lijjat](#), an Indian women's cooperative that produces papads, soaps and detergent, bakery products, masala (spices) and flour.

22. Work with lobby accreditations and/or **certifications well-established with consumers** (e.g. Rainforest Alliance or FairTrade) to ensure they are more inclusive or have a gender-smart indicator in place for certification. For instance, whether we consider the Roundtable for Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) or FairTrade for coffee, these certifications need to have a direct measure on gender empowerment, requiring certified members and products to source a fixed percentage from women farmers in the supply chain.
23. **Apply certification/standard e.g. W+ Standard for Women's Empowerment to create competition among companies.** The W+ Standard allows comparison between companies and could become a driver/incentive for activities that empower women.

24. **Connect the W+ Standard to the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index**, developed by USAID, the International Food Policy Research Institute, and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative to track women's engagement in agriculture in five areas (production, resources, income, leadership and time use).

25. **Connect the Index to Stock Exchanges** that already have sustainability targets in place. The bottom line being improved productivity and profitability throughout the value chain for traders, collectors, farmers and the community.

Suggest/lobby for **specific product lines to support women's empowerment in the chain**, inspired by examples in the garment industry.

26. Award a **competitive marketing grant** to organizations that put forward a compelling business case for women's empowerment and demonstrate a solid collaboration between the private and public sector.
27. Award a prestigious prize (e.g. the **Women's Oscars of Agriculture**) to acknowledge women for their contribution to agriculture and celebrate women's inclusion and empowerment in the value chain.

Conclusion



The ideas above represent a continuum, ranging from mapping value chains to identifying those where women are the predominant workers; to recognizing women’s empowerment and the derived benefits at the Women in Agriculture Oscars.

While Grow Asia is not set up to implement these initiatives, particularly those relating to in-depth research or that could be funded by donor organizations, there is a clear role for Grow Asia to reconvene this group and continue the discussion.

Call to Action

Whether you were present at the Roundtable in Jakarta on 15 March, or are an organization seeking practical ways to contribute to women’s empowerment in agricultural value chains, we would like to hear from you.

Please contact us info@growasia.org to express your interest in one or a few of the numbered initiatives above and provide an indication of your willingness and commitment to invest time and resources. We welcome all contributions and challenges to ensure the identified issues and initiatives are relevant to women in agriculture.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report and publicizing it with other organizations who may be interested to contribute and work jointly with others to transform the broader perception of women in agriculture into tangible business opportunities for all.

IV. Appendix – List of Participants

Mix of private sector companies, donors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), partnership platforms and Government agencies.

Name	Organization
Indira HAPSARI	ActionAid
Reynaldo CABANO	Asian Farmer Association
Mark INGRAM	Business for Development (B4D)
Tim BISHOP	CARE International
Dipanwita CHAKRABORTY	Cargill
Dr Sri MARIATI	Conservation International
Somang YANG	CropLife Asia
Karen PONG	CSR Asia
Clelia DANIEL	CSR Asia
Naomi COOK	DFAT
Anita NEVILLE	Golden Agri-Resources (GAR)
Hari M BASUKI	Government of Canada
Outi ANNALA	Global Initiatives
Beverley POSTMA	Harvest Plus
Silvana PAATH	HIVOS
Daisy Vakarathiwe KAMBALAME	IDH
Mayank KAUSHIK	Inditex
Rick VAN DER KAMP	International Finance Corporation (IFC)
Imran NASRULLAH	Louis Dreyfus Commodities
Priscilla TEO	Louis Dreyfus Company
Andi IKHWAN	MercyCorps Indonesia
Andi SITTIASMAYANTI	Mondelēz International
Nur-Shilla CHRISTIANTO	Nestle Indonesia
Debora TJANDRAKUSUMA	Nestle Indonesia
Amy Melissa M. CHUA	Philip Morris International
Lisa MCCOOEY	Philip Morris International
Erwin PAKPAHAN	PT HM Sampoerna Tbk
Dr Markus PAULI	Singapore Management University (SMU)
Sinta KANIAWATI	Unilever
Francisco COS-MONTIEL	UN Women
Jenny COSTELLOE	Grow Asia
Grahame DIXIE	Grow Asia
Reginald LEE	Grow Asia
Jonathan PARRY	Grow Asia
Linh TK LUONG	Landmark Asia
Daryl Px SIM	Landmark Asia
Andy LAST	salt Communications
Tan LONG	salt Communications
Marianne BLAMIRE	salt Communications
Stephanie TAN	Spurwing Communications
Cindy LIM	Syngenta
Jeannette GURUNG	WOCAN

V. Appendix - Resources

A. IFC Presentation

[Investing in Women along Agribusiness Value Chains](#),
a presentation by IFC

B. UN Women Presentation

[Women's Empowerment Principles \(WEPs\) and Women in Agriculture](#),
a presentation by UN Women

C. Useful References

[Women in Agriculture: A Business Opportunity](#),
Jenny Costelloe, Grow Asia

[Investing in Women along Agribusiness Value Chains](#),
a report by IFC

[Women's Empowerment Principles](#),
UN Women

[A Study of Agribusiness Companies' Engagement in Women's Empowerment](#),
a study by WOCAN

[W+ Standard for women's empowerment](#)