

Summary of Remarks by Veda Simpson, Mrs. Veda Simpson, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Quidiyou Inc.

To empower women in the agro-processing sector, it is important to have interventions that are country specific and that would bring together women, researchers, academics, universities and department of agriculture.

It is also important to provide technical assistance that are targeted to women in cooperatives, on farms, and out of the cities. Training should ensure to connect rural women with women in the cities as well as with women running small businesses in an integrated and coherent way at the microlevel.

One of our main challenges is the imports of food across the regions of the continent. We have the resources on the continent, and we simply need to look inward and be able to source those. Why are we importing orange juice? Why are we importing pineapple juice?

There are large organizations throughout the world that are sourcing products like cashews, almonds, and being able to live to deliver them to the West.

But then, it does not do much for the local growers in West Africa. They get most of the benefits because they're processing and all we're doing is farming these products.

We need to empower our women so our women can work with our men, so that Africa becomes the powerhouse that we know it can be.