

Women's empowerment in different spheres of the industry is visible

## Women Play Leading Role in ExpoEspeciales Café de Colombia 2016

*Producers, leaders of associations, representatives of farmers, cup tasters and baristas are protagonists in the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the most important specialty coffee expo in Latin America and the Caribbean.*



Women were protagonists in the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the most important specialty coffee expo in America Latin and the Caribbean, ExpoEspeciales Café de Colombia 2016.

Producers, leaders of farmer associations, representatives of coffee growers, tasters and baristas gave proof of their growing empowerment. And the academic agenda of ExpoEspeciales was not the exception.

**The growing participation of women in the coffee industry has translated into greater welfare for their families and communities, because of the key role they play in reinvestment and distribution of income. This was evident after the talk "Gender equity as an opportunity for growth and consolidation of the coffee business in Colombia," which took place under the frame of ExpoEspeciales Café de Colombia 2016.**

"For me, the most important thing is training on the activities I perform to contribute to productivity of the farm. Besides, when man and woman are united, this yields greater profitability," said Yuliana Salinas, a coffee farmer from Risaralda, who recognizes her husband's valuable and permanent support.

"Sometimes in the countryside there are not many opportunities or time, but training contributes to gender equity and generational change," Salinas added. "We are becoming visible as coffee-growing women."

During the second day of the Expo, as part of the round table "Successful coffee stories from the experience of producers" (sponsored by the FNC, Colombia Responds, ARD and USAID), women from different coffee regions exposed how this empowerment has occurred.

"We are managing to become visible as coffee-growing women. We are key pieces for the organizations to work," said Aurora Noscué, a coffee leader from Toribío, Cauca.

"One year and a half ago, I was just a housewife, I didn't go out without my husband's permission and today I am here. This has been important for my organization, for my municipality. (...) When we give an opportunity to women and youth, things change," said Amparo Arias, a coffee farmer from Planadas, Tolima.

"The passion I feel for coffee and the community is a great added value in my life," she added.

Libia Omaira, a producer from Mesetas, Meta, gave emphasis to the increased care for the environment thanks to sustainable practices. "We've worked very hard and achieved environmental sustainability, with systems to manage coffee wastewater, grey waters and leachates, so that water sources are not contaminated," noted the farmer, whose association has also worked on agroforestry (shade management), reforestation and management of solid waste, besides avoiding use of chemicals.

Female coffee leaders have also become multipliers. "A leader is not who gets saturated of information, but who forms more leaders for the organizations to continue growing," Aurora said, acknowledging that such expos as ExpoEspeciales

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and coffee quality contests are the best showcases to become visible to the rest of the country and the world.

### **About ExpoEspeciales**

ExpoEspeciales Café de Colombia, which integrates the whole coffee chain (from seed to cup), is part of the quality, differentiation and added value strategies of the Colombian Coffee Growers Federation (FNC) and Café de Colombia to showcase the great diversity of Colombian coffees and project them to the rest of Colombia and the world.