



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Fyffes marks International Women’s Day by launching its Global Gender Equality Program in Honduras, one of the most challenging places in the world to be a woman

Fyffes is using the occasion of International Women’s Day to officially launch its new Global Gender Equality Program, which will begin on two of its melon farms in Honduras, as well as its pineapple farm in Costa Rica. Gender equality is one of Fyffes strategic sustainability imperatives, which is closely aligned to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal for Gender Equality.

The aim of the Gender Equality Program is to identify challenges to equality faced by women both in the workplace and in their communities. The issues are likely to vary from region to region given the culture and local context. Interventions taken by Fyffes to advance female equality will be adapted accordingly.

The program gives workers a confidential platform to highlight barriers at work and at home. It will give them skills to become decision-makers and leaders in the workplace, as well as at home with their families and their communities.

The program is being partially funded by the [IDH Sustainable Trade Initiative](#) and conducted in collaboration with [Business for Social Responsibility](#) (BSR), la [Alianza Empresarial para el Desarrollo](#) (AED) in Costa Rica and [Fundación Hondureña de Responsabilidad Social Empresarial](#) (FUNDAHRSE) in Honduras.

To date, the program has conducted independent survey interviews with 90 female and 113 male workers, as well as 7 managers in Honduras. In Costa Rica, the program has undertaken interviews with 21 women, 32 men and 7 managers.

The surveys’ findings have revealed that most workers have a clear understanding of what is not acceptable behaviour at work; including sexual harrasment, harsh discipline or violence. However, there is less awareness of the company policies regarding these behaviours and many workers said they would be reticent to challenge these behaviours or make formal complaints. For example two thirds of female workers interviewed in Costa Rica and 40 per cent of female workers in Honduras said they felt others would disapprove if they made a sexual harrasment claim at work.

To address these issues, Fyffes has undertaken to better communicate its policies on these behaviours. The program is also establishing gender commitees, comprised of both men and women, who will receive training on various gender related issues such as gender based violence,

maternal health, family planning, sexual harassment, as well as communication and confidence building. The role of the committee members is to act as change agents in their workplace and their communities and give workers the confidence to tackle inappropriate workplace behaviour. The committees will also inform Fyffes ongoing financial investment to tackle these issues.

Commenting on the program, Fyffes Global Director of Sustainability, Julie Cournoyer said “I am pleased to be officially launching Fyffes Gender Equality Program on International Women’s Day. I would like to thank our partners for supporting what I believe is a very relevant project; focusing on improving conditions for women both on our farms as well as at home. Fyffes will learn from Costa Rica and Honduras as we continue to implement the Program across all Fyffes operations globally by 2021.”

About Fyffes

Fyffes Limited is a leading international importer and distributor of quality tropical produce and mushrooms headquartered in Dublin, Ireland. Founded over 130 years ago, Fyffes is the world’s oldest fruit brand. Fyffes has trading, farming and export operations in Europe, North, Central and South America, with long established trading relationships with grower groups in Central and South America. The company’s primary activities include production, procurement, shipping, ripening, distribution and marketing of bananas, pineapples, melons and mushrooms. A commitment to the principles of corporate responsibility is at the heart of the Fyffes brand, which has been recognized with numerous international certifications for best practices in social, environmental and general sustainability issues. Fyffes is the number 1 importer of bananas and the leading marketer of organic and Fairtrade bananas to Europe, as well as the importer with the world’s highest number of Global G.A.P. certified production partners. Fyffes has been a subsidiary of Sumitomo Corporation since 2017. (www.fyffes.com)

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