

## **Alliance Names CEO of Kenyan Cooking Fuel Company as Woman Entrepreneur of the Year**

**May 2, 2018, Lisbon** -- At the Sustainable Energy for All Forum today, The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves announced Chebet Lesan as the winner of its Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Award. The award program, in its second year, recognizes outstanding female leaders in the household energy sector who are advancing clean cooking solutions in emerging markets.

Chebet founded BrightGreen in 2015 to create cost-cutting, eco-friendly cooking fuel for low-income families in Kenya. BrightGreen produces and processes organic and agro-waste into eco-friendly charcoal briquettes. Families cook with the briquettes, which burn more efficiently than unprocessed solid fuels. In addition to her roles as founder and CEO of BrightGreen, Chebet also serves as a mentor, educator, and role model for women and students in her community.

"I'm passionate about my work," says Chebet. "I'm passionate about serving low-income communities, about solving their challenges, and about co-creating and thinking through solutions with them, and I'm honored to receive this award from the Alliance."

Alliance CEO Dymphna van der Lans presented Chebet with the award at the Sustainable Energy for All Forum, which is focused on "Leaving No One Behind" by accelerating progress on global sustainable energy goals.

"The success of the clean cooking sector goes hand in hand with the success of women entrepreneurs," said van der Lans. "Women like Chebet are inspiring leaders as this sector continues to grow, and I'm honored to present the Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Award to Chebet today in recognition of her tireless work. We know that the clean cookstoves and fuels value chain offers pathways for women's economic empowerment and livelihoods creation, and Chebet is an inspiring example of this."

"Chebet is a go-getter," said Jona Repishti, the Social Entrepreneurship Manager at MIT D-Lab, who works with Chebet as part of D-Lab's Fellowship program. "An important part of her approach is working with and training women and building their capacity to scale the distribution of BrightGreen's products. She's breaking into a very challenging market, but has really taken a strategic approach to identifying the type of distributors that are best fit to carry the company's products."

The Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Award has had a positive impact on last year's recipient of the award, Betty Ikalany, who founded Appropriate Energy Saving Technologies LTD, a woman-led social enterprise that creates livelihood opportunities for women in the improved cookstove and alternative fuel value chain in Eastern Uganda. "Being given the award of Woman Entrepreneur of the Year has increased my confidence to work hard with my head up," Betty says. "It has increased the visibility of

my company, as well as myself as a woman. This has encouraged many women who look up to me as their mentor."

With support from the U.S. Department of State's Partnership on Women's Entrepreneurship in Renewables (wPOWER), the Woman Entrepreneur of the Year award winner receives sponsorship to attend the SE4ALL Forum, as well as global recognition and increased visibility for her work. The Alliance proudly acknowledges the ongoing contributions and leadership of many women leaders in the clean cooking sector, as well as those working toward energy access for all.