



## PRESS RELEASE

### **New Standard to Recognise and Reward Women’s Sustainability and Climate Change Contributions Wins Prestigious UN Award** **Trailblazing Initiative to be Honoured at UN Climate Conference in Marrakech**

(Bonn, Germany, 29 September 2016) – A break-through standard that for the first time allows for the measuring of the progress of women’s empowerment in projects was announced today as one of the 13 winners of a United Nations climate change award.

The [W+ Standard](#) was developed by the Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture & NRM (WOCAN), a leader in women’s empowerment in agriculture and natural resource management, based in San Francisco, USA, and has been successfully applied to a range of projects from Kenya to Nepal.

The W+ Standard is a unique certification scheme, which measures how companies, governments and individuals can drive social and economic empowerment for women. It can accelerate investments in women as it ‘rewards’ projects that combine climate action with women’s empowerment, and by doing so recognizes and values women’s critical role in tackling climate change.

“WOCAN is pleased to have the W+ Standard recognized as an innovative and transformative mechanism that credibly measures the impacts on women’s empowerment, as well assures that the contributions of women’s labor and time addressing climate mitigation are acknowledged and compensated,” said Jeannette Gurung, WOCAN Executive Director.

“This award will help shine a gender spotlight on the application of the W+ Standard as a first of its kind mechanism, facilitating gender financing while measuring and monetizing the co-benefits of climate mitigation and supporting women’s empowerment,” said Lee West, WOCAN Co-Chair.

The [Momentum for Change](#) initiative is spearheaded by the UN Climate Change secretariat to shine a light on some of the most innovative, scalable and replicable examples of what people are doing to address climate change. Today’s announcement is part of wider efforts to mobilize action and ambition as national governments work to implement the Paris Climate Change Agreement.

“It is impressive to see so many original and creative ways to tackle climate change,” said Nick Nuttall, UNFCCC Spokesperson. “The W+ Standard is proof that climate action is building in countries, communities, companies and cities everywhere. Not only do this year’s winning activities address climate change, but they also help drive forward progress on many other Sustainable Development Goals, such as innovation, gender equality and economic opportunity.”

The ‘W+ Standard’ project was awarded under the Momentum for Change *Women for Results* focus area for its work to measure women’s empowerment in six domains: time, income/assets, health,



leadership, education/knowledge and food security. The measurement of progress results in women-benefit units (W+ units) that buyers can purchase. The sale of units generates revenues that are shared with women beneficiaries and their groups, putting money into the hands of women.

The W+ Standard Pilot Project measured the time saved for 7,200 rural Nepalese women who replaced their wood-generated stoves with biogas stoves, relieving them of the need to collect fuel wood from the forest and saving 2.26 hours per day. By eliminating this time-consuming, labor-intensive task, women gained time for leisure and self-improvement, and to engage in income generation and community activities.

This shift to biogas not only transformed women's lives but reduced the pressure on forests. To date, the W+ has also been applied to similar biogas projects in Indonesia cook-stove projects in Lao PDR and Honduras, a livelihoods and agroforestry project in Kenya, and a water and sanitation project in Cambodia.

Together with the other winning projects, it will be showcased at a series of special events during the UN Climate Change Conference in Marrakech, Morocco (7-18 November 2016).

The 2016 Lighthouse Activities were selected by an [international advisory panel](#) as part of the secretariat's Momentum for Change initiative, which operates in partnership with the [World Economic Forum Global Project on Climate Change](#) and the [Global e-Sustainability Initiative](#).

**Please note:** A full list of winners and more information about each of the 2016 Momentum for Change Lighthouse Activities can be found here: <http://bit.ly/m4c-award>

**Digital assets:**

Photos, videos and other digital assets are available for download at: <http://bit.ly/m4c-assets>

**For more information, please contact:**

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