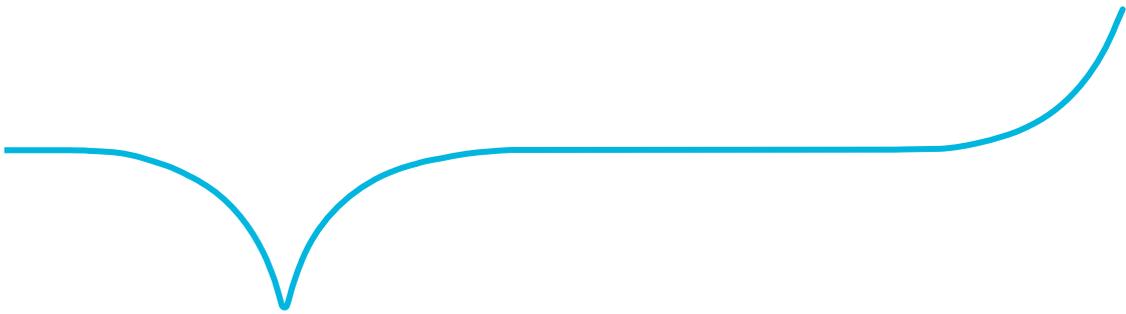




# Climate Change

WORKING PAPER NO. 2 : NOVEMBER 2012

A decorative blue line graphic that starts as a horizontal line, dips into a shallow curve on the left, and then rises into a steeper curve on the right.

## Mainstreaming gender and climate change in Nepal

Jony Mainlay and Su Fei Tan

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Published by IIED, 2012

Mainlay, J. and Tan, S.F. (2012) Mainstreaming gender and climate change in Nepal.  
IIED Climate Change Working Paper No. 2, November 2012

IIED order no: 10033IIED

<http://pubs.iied.org/10033IIED.html>

ISSN 2048-7851 (Print)

ISSN 2048-786X (Online)

Designed by Andy Wilkinson

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# Mainstreaming gender and climate change in Nepal

Jony Mainlay and Su Fei Tan

Climate Change Working Paper No. 2, November 2012

There is growing recognition that finding appropriate responses to climate change requires a broad understanding and approach beyond the scientific, and that policy reform must be part of a process of social and institutional change. This paper examines one dynamic which underpins this process of change: gender. It provides an analysis of the extent to which gender differences are taken into account in the development of policies and plans for adaptation to climate change in Nepal and investigates the opportunities and progress made toward mainstreaming gender into policy more widely. The outcomes of this study are relevant to policymakers and other stakeholders concerned with devising and implementing gender sensitive policies and programmes. Whilst the recommendations presented in this report are particularly tailored for Nepal, they also have wider relevance to other contexts.

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## Acknowledgements

The lead author, Jony Mainaly, would like to thank Apsara Chapagain, the President of the Federation of Community Forest Users Nepal (FECOFUN), Dibya Gurung, Deepak Rijal, Climate Adaptation Design and Piloting Project-Nepal (CADP-N), Gyanendra Karki, NAPA Technical Officer, Jeremy Stone, SNV/Nepal, Kanchan Lama, WOCAN, Gita Khadka, NAPA Gender Consultant, Jeremy Stone, SNV/Nepal and Prabin Man Singh of Oxfam Nepal, for their valuable contributions to the study on which this paper is based. The authors would also like to thank Achala Chandani, Senior Researcher, Climate Change Group at IIED, and Jessica Ayers, former Editor of the Climate Change Working Paper series, for their valuable comments on the first drafts of this paper.

IIED is grateful to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Irish Aid and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark (Danida) for their financial support to the production of this publication.

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## Acronyms

<b>CAPA</b>	Community Adaptation Plan of Action	<b>LDC</b>	Least developed country
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women	<b>LGSA</b>	Local Self Governance Act
<b>CFUG</b>	Community Forestry User Group	<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goal
<b>CID</b>	Climate Induced Disaster	<b>NAPA</b>	National Adaptation Plan of Action
<b>COP</b>	Conference of the Parties	<b>TWG</b>	Thematic Working Group
<b>FECOFUN</b>	Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Plan
<b>GGCA</b>	Global Gender and Climate Alliance	<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change	<b>VDC</b>	Village Development Committee
<b>LAPA</b>	Local Adaptation Plan of Action	<b>WOCAN</b>	Women Organising for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management

## Executive summary

VULNERABILITY IS AN INDICATION OF ONE'S EXPOSURE to external risks and one's capacity to cope with and recover from these stresses. Nepal, as one of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), has a high vulnerability to climate change. In these countries, women are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than men, since women's adaptive capacity is determined by the availability and accessibility of natural resources, which are adversely affected by climate change. Given that men and women have different adaptive capabilities, climate change has an impact on the relationships between them - the gender dynamic. In countries such as Nepal, which is already characterised by discrimination against women in its culture and traditions, climate change exacerbates these existing gender inequalities.

There are clear connections between sustainable development and gender equity, and there are many resources available which can inform the development of climate change policy, where there is limited research on the linkages between adaptation and gender. The findings in this paper indicate that a gender focus needs to be an integral part of climate change policies and programmes so as to move towards the goal of achieving more equitable and sustainable development in the face of climate change.

An examination of existing climate policy in Nepal, including the 2011 Climate Change Policy, the NAPAs, the LAPAs, and other international agreements, shows that despite there being

an understanding of the relationship between gender, poverty and vulnerability in relation to climate change, there has been insufficient focus on the incorporation of a gender analysis into the development and implementation of climate change laws. Gender needs to be more central to all policy development and mainstreaming gender should be an on-going process towards achieving the MDGs.

Some of the mechanisms identified in this study to promote the mainstreaming of gender in climate change policies in Nepal include:

- A need for disaggregated data on livelihood strategies
- A community-led, bottom-up approach to identify challenges
- The empowerment and capacity building of women to adapt to climate change
- Detailed and context specific research on the differential impacts of climate change on women and men drawing on the existing local knowledge
- The strengthening of existing organisations and initiatives which already have gender equity objectives
- The strengthening of existing legal frameworks and tools
- The incorporation of a consistent gender analysis in the development of projects that specifically target women.

# 1 Introduction

*Climate change has pervasive and far-reaching social, economic, political and environmental consequences. The challenge cannot be met without the collective power and knowledge of women and men. (Bennett, 2005)*

THERE IS BROAD INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT THAT human induced climate change is a reality and that it is caused by the emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. To date, climate change has largely been treated as a scientific problem to be diagnosed, understood and modelled by climate scientists. In addition, solutions are being sought through the introduction of economic incentives (e.g. carbon trading schemes and carbon taxes) to push behavioural change and investment in technological innovation. Current plans to address climate change involve the development or reform of policies and action plans and are largely viewed as a technical exercise. However, there is growing recognition that finding appropriate responses to climate change requires a much broader understanding and approach. For it to take hold, policy reform must also be part of the deeper and more mysterious process of social and institutional change (Bennett, 2005, p.2).

Social and institutional change means action at the individual, the community, the local, regional and national level, and in both the private and public sectors. This paper looks at one factor which cuts across all these levels and sectors: gender.

This paper contributes to a greater understanding of the importance of gender in the development of climate change laws, policies and adaptation planning. It provides an analysis of the extent to which gender differences are taken into account in the development and implementation of policies and plans for adaptation to climate change in Nepal and highlights the challenges of mainstreaming gender into climate change adaptation programmes and of making gender more central to all policy development.

The study was carried out in three stages: a desk study, field visits, and data analysis. Data collection was both field and desk-based. Information gathered from interviews with experts working on gender and climate change in Nepal, along with published documents, also informed the research.

## 2 Climate change

### 2.1 Vulnerability to climate change

THE INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION PROCESS OVER how to address climate change recognises that although industrialised countries are largely responsible for greenhouse gas emissions, it is people living in developing countries who will bear the brunt of the effects of increasing temperatures, severe weather events and changes in rainfall patterns. The Initial National Communication Report (INCR) 2004, prepared by the Government of Nepal, and the Climate Change Policy, 2011 reflect the negligible contribution made by Nepal to global emissions and the disproportionate impact it will suffer. Climate change is the world's biggest regressive tax. Its impact is experienced primarily by the poorest (Smith, 2008).

Adaptation to climate change is one of the most difficult challenges that developing countries face. Climate change has the potential to undermine achievements towards sustainable development such as those mapped out in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). There is a consensus among development practitioners, climate change scientists, policy makers and practitioners that while the impacts of climate change vary from region to region and over time, the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and their residents face the greatest challenge because of their lower adaptive capacity. A country's ability to adapt to climate change is determined by a range of factors, including, amongst others, knowledge, technology, and the presence and accessibility of support institutions - in short a nation's resources.

An initial step towards assessing people's ability to adapt to climate change is to develop an understanding of their vulnerability to its effects. Vulnerability is an indication of people's exposure to external risks, shocks and stresses and their ability to cope with, and recover from, the resulting impacts (Davidson, 1993). Vulnerability to climate change is determined in large part by people's adaptive capacity (Care International, 2010). The higher the capacity to adapt, the lower the vulnerability and vice-versa. Jeremy Stone, from SNV/Nepal, observes that in order to assess the vulnerability of various groups in society, it is necessary to disaggregate information in relation to different groups' and individuals' ability to adapt to climate change, and it is therefore important to look at both gender and social difference.

Viewed in terms of a socio-political perspective, the concept of vulnerability refers to a set of general characteristics that

impair the ability of a social group to cope with external (climate) shocks, to respond effectively to them (resilience), or to adapt to a situation of persistent climate change (Rodenberg, 2009). When vulnerability to the impacts of climate change is determined by one's adaptive capacity and when one's adaptive capacity is determined by the availability and accessibility of the available resources, it is fairly established that women are more vulnerable to impacts of climate change than men (Brody *et al.*, 2008 and UN Women Watch, 2009). This vulnerability is shaped by overlapping factors such as gender, culture, geography, access to services and information, economy, policy, etc. Vulnerability to climate change limits women's ability to cope with climate shocks, and hinders their recovery from such shocks (Reid *et al.*, 2009).

### 2.2 Gender and climate change

To date, the debate on climate change has been very narrow, focusing on economic effects, efficiency, and technological problems. However, to be effective, policies and measures that aim to address climate change need to be based on a holistic understanding of human perception, values, and behavioural choices (Hemmati and Röhr, 2009). One piece of this puzzle is a better understanding of how gender affects communities' and people's interactions with their environment (Dankelman, 2002).

A gender analysis recognises that men and women play different roles in their families, communities and societies; they also have different kinds of access to information, resources and networks. It assesses the impact that an activity may have on men and women, and on gender relations. This analysis can help to ensure that men and women are not disadvantaged by an activity, enhance its sustainability and effectiveness, and identify priority areas for action to promote equality between women and men (Hunt, 2004).

Adapting to climate change requires a fundamental shift in people's everyday lives. There is broad agreement in the literature (Brody *et al.*, 2008; Manat and Papazu, 2011) that due to existing gender inequalities, the hardships brought about by this new challenge will hit women of the developing world disproportionately hard and exacerbate the already existing inequalities between the sexes. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Fourth Assessment Report

(IPCC, 2007) discusses the differential impact of climate change on men and women. The physical, psychological, social and economic impacts they experience together with the emergency responses, recovery and ultimately reconstruction are different. Women form the majority of the poorer sections of society - as such they have the least capacity or opportunity to prepare themselves for the impacts of climate change. The Report also recognises that women play an important role in disaster reduction, often informally, through participating in disaster management and acting as agents of social change.

Despite the accepted role that gender plays in determining a person's vulnerability to climate change, globally there has been limited research specifically on the linkages between adaptation to climate change and gender. Much of the research and discourse on climate change adaptation has focused on the scientific, technical and infrastructural aspects of addressing the challenge. That said, there is an existing and underused body of literature and resources on the interlinkages between the goals of sustainable development and gender equity. This information, knowledge and resources are directly relevant to climate change and adaptation and could be drawn upon to inform policy and programme development.

In addition, we know from other UN processes that if women's organisations and gender experts are not involved, gender issues are not addressed (Hemmati and Röhr, 2009). Many gender experts (Röhr, 2006; Hemmati, 2008; WEDO, 2010) have criticised the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP) processes as not sufficiently addressing gender in negotiations or of only paying it lip service. This partial

commitment to gender equity can filter down through the process to country level programmes. And in national contexts where gender inequalities are stark, it can be marginalised even further. The result is that women are generally absent from decision making on climate change. Their needs must be represented on these bodies at all levels in order to ensure the development of policies and programmes which recognise that men and women have different adaptive capacities.

Climate change is a serious threat to sustainable development. Its adverse impacts could undo much of the progress made to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).<sup>1</sup> The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resource Guide on Gender and Climate Change contains a useful table analysing the effects of climate change and the implications for achieving the MDGs using a gender lens (UNDP, 2009). For example, solutions proposed to achieve the first goal of reducing extreme poverty and hunger are dependent on improving agricultural production. In much of the developing world, a person's access to land and farming inputs are partially determined by their gender. Therefore, a farmer's ability to adapt to changes in agriculture due to climate change is also determined by their gender. The full analysis of the MDG goals is reproduced in Annex 1.

Finally, there is a tendency to talk about gender aspects of climate change as if women are only victims. Many studies show that women have been instrumental in organising themselves and others around environmental issues and sustainable development (Dankelman, 2002). Policies and programmes to address climate change need to harness women's unique knowledge and ability to act as powerful agents of change.



*A woman carrying fodder for stall feeding in Nepal, 2009*  
Credit: Duncan Macqueen

## 2.3 The case of Nepal

In Nepal, women constitute the majority of the poor and are therefore amongst the most vulnerable (UNDP Nepal, 2009). Women are highly dependent on natural resources for securing their livelihoods through their responsibilities for family farming and activities such as collecting water and biomass for energy. At the same time, cultural, socio-economic, policy and legal structures often restrict women's ability to secure access to resources such as information and education, as well as land, clean water and health for their families. Kanchan Lama, a gender expert, confirms that in the context of Nepal, women are mainly responsible for managing livelihoods, particularly in rural areas. Women are also more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change as they rely more on natural resources, and in particular on agriculture, to secure their livelihoods, but they are less able than men to access the relevant information and skills to manage the impacts of climate change and related disasters (Leduc, 2009). Nepalese culture and society is also characterised by different forms of discrimination based on caste and class – and gender is a crosscutting factor. Structural discrimination has arisen as a

result of the combination of laws, tradition, cultures and values that undermine women's empowerment.

Gender inequality in the context of the impacts of climate change does not only affect existing behaviours and relations, but it can induce adverse changes in gender relations. For example, women are primarily responsible for fetching drinking water and fodder for animals. During times of crisis, women's workloads increase because it requires more time and effort to fulfil these duties (such as having to walk further in search of water or fodder). This extra burden limits their ability to challenge the status quo, further entrenching their roles and responsibilities. Gender inequality, manifested as limited access to resources and information, and exclusion from decision making, limits women's capacity to cope with the changing environment.

Societies which are characterised by patriarchal values, such as in Nepal, often only rely on the privileged sector of society in decision making (Wydra *et al.*, 2010). Generally women's participation is very low in the formulation of laws and policies. Women have no voice and are underrepresented, at the community level and in the international negotiations on climate change (Denton, 2002).

<sup>1</sup> See for example, Ban Ki-moon, *A Stronger United Nations for a Better World*, United Nations Secretary General addressing UN General Assembly in New York, (25 September 2007), available at [www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sghsm11182.doc.htm](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sghsm11182.doc.htm) (accessed on 22 October 2012); and *The Report of the Secretary General: Overview of United Nations activities in relation to climate change*, (2008) available at [www.un.org/ga/president/62/ThematicDebates/a-62-644.pdf](http://www.un.org/ga/president/62/ThematicDebates/a-62-644.pdf) (accessed on 22 October 2012).

### 3. The challenge of gender mainstreaming

THERE ARE TWO ARGUMENTS FOR INCLUDING gender considerations in the process of climate change policy development:

- gender mainstreaming may increase the efficiency of responses to climate change
- if gender considerations are not included, progress towards gender equity may be threatened (Skutsch, 2002 in Hemmati and Röhr, 2009).

Taking this analysis further, the twin objectives of mainstreaming gender into programmes to promote climate change adaptation and sustainable development are mutually reinforcing.

Gender mainstreaming is defined as “the public policy concept of assessing the different implications for women and men of any planned policy action, including legislation and programmes, in all areas and levels. Mainstreaming essentially offers a pluralistic approach that values the diversity among both women and men.” (Booth and Bennett, 2002).

Gender mainstreaming is not an end in itself, but a means to achieve more equitable, sustainable and effective programmes and policies. UN Women explains that gender mainstreaming does not entail developing separate women’s projects within work programmes, or women’s components within existing activities (OSAGI, 2001). It requires that attention is given to gender perspectives as an integral part of all activities across all policies and programmes. This involves making gender perspectives – what women and men do and the resources and decision making processes they have access to – more central to all policy development, research, advocacy, development, implementation and monitoring of norms and standards, and planning, implementation and monitoring of policies and projects.

Mainstreaming does not mean that targeted activities to support women are no longer necessary. Women-specific projects continue to play an important role in promoting gender equality. They are still needed because gender equality has not yet been attained and gender mainstreaming processes are not well developed. Targeted initiatives focusing specifically on women or the promotion of gender equality are important for reducing existing disparities, serving as a catalyst for the promotion of gender equality, and creating a constituency for changing the mainstream. Women-specific

initiatives can create an empowering space and act as an important incubator for ideas and strategies than can be transferred to mainstream interventions. Initiatives focused on men can also support gender equality by developing male allies. Gender mainstreaming and women’s empowerment are in no way in competition with each other. The two strategies are complementary - gender mainstreaming must be carried out in a manner which is empowering for women (OSAGI, 2001).

The UNDP Resource Guide on Gender and Climate Change explains that, in terms of the UNFCCC, the Women’s Caucuses that have been held since the 11th meeting of the Conference to the Parties (COP11) have vigorously negotiated for the inclusion of a gender approach in all areas of the Convention. These caucuses have been facilitated by the Gender and Climate Change (GenderCC) – Women for Climate Justice network.<sup>2</sup> Members of the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA), which was launched in 2007 at COP 13 in Bali, have also been active in promoting gender equality concerns in global efforts to address climate change.

In the UNFCCC documents, the only reference to gender is in the guide on how to prepare National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs). Gender equality is one of the principles included when designing the NAPA and it advises that experts – both women and men – be included on the teams working on gender questions. Many of the national reports submitted by the signatory nations to the UNFCCC Secretariat thus far stress, in very general terms, the vulnerability of women and the importance of equality. Specifically, many of these NAPA recognise that women are mainly responsible for domestic chores such as collecting water, firewood (or other fuels) and producing and preparing meals. They also mention that, in general, vulnerable women are found in the poorest populations. Very few NAPAs recognise women as important agents in adaptation activities.

Some reports mention that when those reports were being prepared there were consultations with groups of women and women’s ministries; the problem is that these consultations do not translate into actions that involve women in any concrete manner. The direct inclusion of women both in policy making and in project planning must be promoted (UNDP, 2009).

During interviews carried out for the research for this paper, Apsara Chapagain, the President of the Federation of

<sup>2</sup> [www.gendercc.net](http://www.gendercc.net)

Community Forest Users Nepal (FECOFUN), and Dibya Gurung, the coordinator of Women Organising for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management (WOCAN), confirmed the importance of women's participation in community-based projects and programmes as well as at international conferences, seminars and negotiation processes in order to achieve climate justice.

The next section looks at women's participation in the development of national laws, policies and strategies on climate change in Nepal, to identify areas that could be improved to bring about stronger institutional frameworks and increased capacity to implement gender sensitive policies and programmes.

## 4 The evolution of climate change policy and gender in Nepal

THERE IS A RANGE OF LAWS, POLICIES AND programmes related to climate change adaptation in Nepal. This section examines their evolution and the extent to which they take gender into account.

### 4.1 NAPAs

The UNFCCC established the National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) in 2001 to address the most urgent adaptation needs of the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the poorest 49 countries in the world. Nepal submitted its NAPA to the UNFCCC Secretariat in September 2010. This Plan outlines Nepal's adaptation priorities and needs. According to the UNFCCC, the rationale for developing NAPAs is based on the high level of vulnerability and the low adaptive capacity of LDCs. Before the NAPA process was established, there was no avenue through which LDCs could identify and report their adaptation needs. An approach was needed that would allow the urgent adaptation needs of LDCs to be reported so that support could be provided for their implementation. The preparation of NAPAs provides countries with a process to communicate information relating to their vulnerabilities and adaptation needs through a simple and direct channel. The process identifies priority activities that respond to their urgent and immediate needs with regard to adaptation to climate change and which offer a platform to create national, country-owned plans (UNFCCC, 2001).

In addition, on 17 January 2011, the Government of Nepal endorsed its Climate Change Policy, reflecting its vision, mission, goals, policies, strategies and plans of action to address the challenges brought about by rising temperatures (see also Section 4.5, this paper).

Encouragingly, Nepal's NAPA report includes gender as a cross cutting theme as recommended in the UNFCCC guidelines. It contains a gender impact analysis of differentiated climate change effects which were said to be collected through consultation processes, including transect appraisals. In addition, the NAPA undertook a study on the implications of observed climate change effects on men and women (Ministry of Environment, Government of Nepal, 2010, p.14). This analysis concluded that men and women are impacted differently by climate change due to their societal

roles and existing socio-political norms. The NAPA, therefore, recommended that these findings be taken into consideration in the development of national adaptation strategies and in the design of adaptation interventions.

The development of the NAPA also comprised a Thematic Working Group (TWG) process to address the different sectoral aspects of climate change. Each group assessed the gender implications for their theme. The **Water and Energy TWG** found that the quantity, quality and access to water resources could add to women's workloads resulting in negative impacts on their health. Moreover, climate induced resource conflicts affect men and women differently – often causing the death of men, whereas women are likely to suffer from violence and anxiety.

A decline in agricultural yields leading to an increase in migration to urban areas and a subsequent increase in rural women's workload were the main findings of the **Agriculture and Food Security TWG**. Similarly, in times of shortage women consume less food leading to malnutrition and ill health. The group found that women are the guardians of local knowledge, skills, and practices for agriculture, seed preservation and other related livelihood activities and that climate change could cause the loss of these knowledge and skills. In addition, because women have less access to credit, markets, land and agricultural extension services, they are more vulnerable to adverse climate effects on agriculture (Ministry of Environment, Government of Nepal, 2010, p.67).

In terms of the **Forests and Biodiversity TWG**, women and marginalised communities depend on forests for their livelihoods. The reduction in the availability of forest products is therefore likely to decrease their income and thereby their adaptive capacity.

The **Urban Settlement and Infrastructure TWG** found that water scarcity was one of the defining problems of climate change. Women will spend more time collecting water. Moreover, migration and temporary displacement due to flash floods pose a risk to women's security as they are more likely to be the victims of sexual violence in times of uncertainty. It also found out that since there is inadequate incorporation of gender related issues and women's needs in urban planning and policies, these mechanisms are likely to undermine women's adaptation options.

The **Public Health TWG** found that because of socially constructed roles, more women than men die or get injured from climate-related health hazards. At household level women are responsible for providing all care for children, the sick, the disabled and the elderly. Respiratory disorders, allergy problems, asthma and other respiratory diseases are more common in women than in men. Therefore, an increased workload as a result of climate change and the resultant health problems for communities will have a greater impact on women.

The **Climate Induced Disasters TWG** suggests that women are more vulnerable to climate induced disasters (CIDs) since they have lesser access to early warning systems and fewer survival skills. Moreover, in post disaster temporary settlements women are vulnerable to sexual violence. They are excluded from disaster recovery decision making in policies and programmes. In addition, food scarcity after CIDs leave women with fewer options for food, and they often eat less causing negative impacts on their health.

As is evident from these findings, gender is relevant to and cross cuts the findings of all the Thematic Working Groups (Khadka, 2010). However, it is regrettable that no authorities that deal with women's issues such as the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare, or the Women's Commission were consulted or included in the NAPA process.

## 4.2 LAPAs

Ideally the preparation of the NAPA is carried out through a participatory and bottom up process so that local communities' needs and concerns are taken into account when identifying adaptation priorities (Ministry of Environment, Government of Nepal, 2010). To facilitate this participatory approach in Nepal, Local Adaptation Plans of Action (LAPAs) were developed. During this process, the climate adaptation, design and piloting project funded by the Department for International Development, UK (DfID) also carried out a study of planning processes and the decentralisation framework while devising LAPAs so that climate change adaptation programmes could be mainstreamed into other planning processes. The Government of Nepal recently approved the LAPA framework. With the objectives of supporting climate adaptation at the local level to ensure mainstreaming climate adaptation into development planning framework, LAPAs were introduced as a mechanism for formulating the National Plan.

The preparation of LAPAs began in mid-2010. They are devised at the local level with the participation of local communities and organisations to identify local adaptation needs and devise appropriate adaptation responses. Four directive principles guide their development: **a bottom up approach, inclusive, responsive and flexible processes**. The planning units for LAPAs are Village Development Committees (VDCs) and municipalities. The Ministry of Environment, Nepal explains that the LAPAs should:

- Enable communities to understand the changing and uncertain future climatic conditions and engage them effectively in the process of developing adaptation priorities

- Implement climate resilient plans that are flexible enough for responding to changing and uncertain climatic conditions, and
- Inform sectoral programmes and catalyse integrated approaches between various sectors and sub-sectors

Ministry of Environment, Government of Nepal, no date)

LAPAs are prepared at the local level by a multi-stakeholder team including vulnerable communities (Wiseman *et al.*, 2011). The approach was piloted in seven out of 75 districts. Four of these took a sectoral approach (agriculture, forestry, public health, and water and sanitation), one looked at the role of microfinance institutions in supporting adaptation, the other one explored the potential for adaptation planning at the watershed scale and the final pilot tested a systems-based approach to adaptation planning and mainstreaming. These needs-based LAPAs are one of the practical approaches to analysing critical and site specific climate issues and addressing them accordingly with people's participation (Wiseman *et al.*, 2011).

There are seven steps in the implementation of the LAPA framework:

1. climate change sensitisation (carried out in all steps)
2. climate vulnerability and adaptation assessment
3. prioritisation of adaptation options
4. developing/formulating LAPAs
5. integrating LAPAs into planning processes
6. implementing LAPAs
7. assessing progress (carried out in all steps)

(Ministry of Environment, Government of Nepal, no date)

LAPAs were developed using two modalities; one being Community Adaptation Plans of Action (CAPAs) and the other being direct LAPAs. CAPAs were prepared at Community Forestry User Group (CFUG) level and later synthesised to Village Development Committee (VDC) level. LAPAs were prepared at the VDC level.

## 4.3 The Constitution and international agreements

Nepal has signed a number of international conventions, for example the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and passed some laws which support gender equity (Nepal Law Commission, 2006). They are reinforced by the Interim Constitution of Nepal, 2007, which reaffirms the principle of equity and gender equality and prohibits all forms of discrimination based on gender (Section 13). However, not much has been done to apply these national laws to push for women's advancement, aside from some progressive precedents set by the Supreme Court of Nepal. In addition, some of the provisions contained in international instruments on women's rights are not reflected in national legislation. In addition, although some policy and legislative frameworks support gender equity in Nepal, their implementation has been weak.

Article 16 of the Interim Constitution of Nepal 2007 provides that every person has the right to live in a clean environment and the right to free basic health services. The incorporation of the right to live in a clean environment is a milestone development in the constitutional history of Nepal. It requires that the State play a role in ensuring a healthy environment for its citizens. This is reinforced by Article 35(5) of the Interim Constitution which provides that “the State shall make necessary arrangements to maintain the natural environment. The State shall give priority to special protection of the environment, and rare wildlife, and prevent further damage due to physical development activities, by increasing awareness of the general public about environmental cleanliness. Provision shall be made for the protection of the forest, vegetation and biodiversity, their sustainable use and for equitable distribution of the benefits derived from them.” How exactly these constitutional provisions should be applied to climate change is still being interpreted by the courts.

#### 4.4 The Local Self Governance Act

The Local Self Governance Act (LGSA) of 1999 is the law which governs decentralisation in Nepal. It requires participatory governance approaches for governing, planning and implementation at the local level, including the participation of women in these processes. The LGSA legislates for women’s representation on Village Development Councils (8.2.c) and Committees (12.2.c). It also states that Village Development Committees (VDCs) must give priority to plans and projects which benefit women (11.4.e), and that these activities must include income generating activities for women (11.6.d). The bottom up and participatory development planning framework contained in the Act assures the inclusion of women, and marginalised groups. Even though there is excessive central level control with budgets and planning guidelines set by central government, the actual task of formulating plans involves communities in the identification of local priorities. This is an important legal tool for addressing gender within the current environment regime in Nepal.

The NAPA has to be implemented in line with Nepal’s development planning framework which requires women’s involvement as stated in the LSGA. This is a great opportunity for gender issues to be mainstreamed into activities to address climate change. The bottom up and participatory development planning framework devised through LAPAs, aligned with the LSGA, ensures the inclusion of marginalised groups, the majority of whom are women, in the planning phase.

Despite a decade of conflict in Nepal, which has dismantled local infrastructure and capacity, local participation is embedded in development planning. This is unique as all other institutional frameworks have weakened as a result of the conflict, but community-led development approaches through social mobilisation with support of NGOs are still strong.

In summary, if climate adaptation programmes align themselves with Nepal’s development goals and processes, gender issues will be addressed as women’s participation in local decision making is provided by law. Women’s participation in these fora will ensure that their adaptation needs and capacities are taken into account. Women’s

participation in local bodies and women targeted programmes required by the LSGA ensure women’s empowerment, making women both decision makers as well as beneficiaries, and mainstreaming their voices.

#### 4.5 Climate Change Policy, 2011

Nepal’s Climate Change Policy of 2011 recognises that there are differential impacts of climate change on communities. It acknowledges that the impact of climate change is greater in poor, developing, landlocked countries and on village women. The Policy also states that the government has not integrated a gender perspective as it does not address the vulnerabilities of marginalised people.

The Policy recognises support to address the impacts of climate change as an opportunity for the socio-economic and sustainable development of Nepal. In its objectives for capacity building, people’s participation and empowerment, the Policy provides for women’s participation in the implementation of climate adaptation programmes. Section 8.4.2 of the Policy calls for “ensuring the participation of poor people, Dalits, marginalised indigenous communities, women, children and youth in the implementation of climate adaptation and climate change related programmes.” It also provides for the capacity building of local bodies and ensures the implementation of local level activities.

#### 4.6 Gender and climate change policies

In Nepal there is an existing framework for the inclusion of gender issues in the development of local development plans. This is comprised of provisions set out in the Local Self Governance Act for women’s inclusion in decision making and the requirement to align adaptation plans with local development plans, together with Nepal’s commitment to promote gender equity as demonstrated in the constitution and its signing of CEDAW. However exactly whether gender equitable approaches will be used when these policies are implemented remains a question.

Nepal’s NAPA acknowledges gender specific vulnerabilities and women are recognised as a vulnerable group, but it does not provide any targets for women’s involvement or capacity building, nor does it contain any gender specific projects. The NAPA project profiles generally target vulnerable groups and communities and recognise that climate change impacts affect poor communities more severely, but there is not a single project or target based on gender differentiation. Many different voices in Nepal are highlighting the importance of gender mainstreaming. Apsara Chapagain, President of the Federation of Community Forest Users, Nepal (FECOFUN) stated that there is no point in talking about climate change or related activities in Nepal while gender is not mainstreamed as a strong component.

Worryingly, during a research interview for this paper, Gita Khadka explained that she was not fully involved in the overall NAPA process despite being its gender consultant. She explained that she was hired for three months at the end of the process and that the vulnerability assessment she made

was totally based on a literature review. She expressed her dissatisfaction at having to prepare the gender sensitivity analysis based on a literature review rather than including an element of field research. One important tool for the development of the NAPA was a transect walk. She was not involved in this activity. When she did review the report of the transect walk, she found that there were no questions posed (by the team) in relation to gender, and few participants expressed gender related concerns. Khadka said gender was one of the least prioritised areas in the NAPA. Moreover, even though gender analysis is mentioned in the NAPA document, none of the nine prioritised project profiles mention gender.

Gurung from WOCAN also said that the TWGs for Nepal's NAPA processes are very technocratic, male dominated groups. There were no female TWG coordinators and only two women TWG facilitators among the six. One female consultant of two was hired to address gender and social inclusion.

Although at the local level women are environmental managers, they are excluded from decision making. Even though gender mainstreaming is very important at every level from designing programmes to the evaluation of the project or the programme, it is not prioritised. Prabin Man Singh from Oxfam Nepal added that the inclusion of a gender perspective in the prioritised projects in the NAPA would strengthen their outcomes.

When asked about gender, Gyanendra Karki, the NAPA technical officer, explained that they have gone further than the guidelines required in terms of incorporating gender. In response to the question of why there are no gender specific projects included in any of the NAPA's nine prioritised projects profiles, he explained that many projects incorporate vulnerable groups. The NAPA identifies women as a vulnerable group and therefore they are directly incorporated in the implementation phase. This illustrates a paradox common in Nepal. Experts underline the importance of gender mainstreaming in climate change programmes, but the process for developing one of the most important climate change related programmes (NAPA) was in the end not that consultative.

Prabin Man Singh also highlighted the importance of gender disaggregated data. He stated that because climate change

impacts differently on different genders, if we do not have gender disaggregated data we are unable to determine if policies and programmes favour either men or women. He also emphasised the importance of using a gender disaggregated approach in planning and in the implementation of projects or programmes. In his opinion, the NAPA is good in terms of vulnerability assessment but falls down at the planning stage. He urges a review of the NAPA from a gender perspective.

Often climate change activities are planned without appropriate consultation with rural women who suffer most from the effects of climate change. Moreover, the low priority given to gender in the formulation of the NAPA demonstrates a lack of commitment to gender equity. Regrettably, when asked for a list of participants for the different consultations, workshops and meetings carried out to develop the NAPA, the response was that the complete list had not yet been prepared. This information would have provided data on the composition of participants, enabling an assessment of their profiles and whether expertise in gender issues was a criterion for selection.

Although the NAPA and the LSGA incorporate pro-poor inclusive approaches that target poor and disadvantaged people and the research and reports show that women are the majority amongst poorer groups, there is still no official recognition of this correlation. As a result, this analysis has not been translated into strategies or actions to reduce women's vulnerability. There is a lack of a consistent gender analysis which carries through from the vulnerability and needs assessment through to incorporation into the project profiles and implementation mechanisms for the NAPA. As Prabin Man Singh of Oxfam Nepal rightly observed, in the first stage of the NAPA a vulnerability assessment was carried out. This is a good point of departure in terms of considering gender, however this was not carried through to the planning stage.

In contrast, the LAGA was designed through a bottom up approach and was developed in line with the Local Self Governance Act. The LSGA has strong provisions for gender mainstreaming from both the point of view of women's participation in decision making and in ensuring that projects are developed that address their interests. This is a powerful legal tool for promoting gender mainstreaming in the implementation of local adaptation plans of action.

## 5. Achievements

THE CASE STUDY OF NEPAL ILLUSTRATES SOME BROAD achievements with regard to the incorporation of gender equity into climate change negotiation processes and the design of policies and programmes to strengthen local people's ability to cope with the effects of changes in rainfall, temperature and more severe weather events.

**Recognition:** There is broad recognition at the international policy level of the necessity of incorporating a gender analysis into climate change programmes in order to achieve desired outcomes. This is reflected in UNFCCC guidelines for the formulation of NAPAs which acknowledge the importance of including a gender analysis in the process. This has translated to the national level, with countries such as Nepal including a gender component in the formulation of their NAPAs. In addition, a review of policies and legislation which are related to climate change can also reveal some useful levers for the inclusion of gender equity approaches. The Local Self Governance Act in Nepal is a case in point. This Act is a crucial mechanism for planning at the local level and includes a strong requirement for the inclusion of gender equity in the formulation of local level initiatives. As such this legislation can be used as a tool for ensuring gender equity is addressed in projects to address climate change adaptation.

Recognition at the policy level is an achievement, its translation to implementation remains problematic. Without a consistent approach to incorporating a gender analysis in the design and execution of programmes to reduce people's vulnerability to the effects of climate change, the achievements made in gaining recognition of the importance of gender in high level policy will remain unrealised.

**Awareness and political will:** While there is awareness in international and national level policy circles, it appears that political will for mainstreaming gender in implementation

remains weak and, in the case of Nepal, perhaps even tokenistic. The view of the NAPA Technical Officer in Nepal that gender issues are addressed through projects that work with "vulnerable groups" is a case in point. This statement demonstrates that at an institutional level there is a weak understanding of the principles of gender equity and benefits which can be achieved by gender mainstreaming in terms of achieving wider objectives such as sustainable development. In addition, the appointment of a gender consultant at the end of the NAPA process to review results shows a lack of understanding of the benefits that an integrated and holistic approach to gender analysis brings. Consequently the outcomes of the transect study carried out to identify key challenges to adaptation did not adequately incorporate a gender analysis of the context. While this study is limited to the case of Nepal, this lack of awareness, translated into weak implementation, is applicable in many other national contexts.

**Obstacles to implementation:** In addition to a lack of understanding of the benefits and moral imperatives of a gender equity approach, this study reveals two further obstacles to mainstreaming gender into climate change policies and programmes. The first is a lack of disaggregated statistical and qualitative data. There are still very few studies done to understand the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and men. This is further exacerbated by the lack of disaggregated statistical data at the national level. Without this basic understanding it is impossible to design appropriate projects or to measure progress towards objectives. Secondly, in many developing countries women's representation on decision making bodies, national or local, political or project, is weak. Their lack of voice in these fora means that women's interests are not adequately taken into account when decisions are made.

## 6. Results and recommendations

THIS PAPER HAS USED NEPAL AS A CASE STUDY TO investigate the opportunities and progress made toward mainstreaming gender into climate change policies and programmes. While the recommendations presented here are particularly tailored for Nepal, they have wider relevance to other contexts.

There is adequate understanding of gender, poverty and vulnerability in relation to climate change in Nepal, but there has been insufficient focus on the incorporation of this analysis into the development of programmes. The inclusion of gender in the policies and programme documents, but not in the implementation framework for adaptation to climate change, is a backward step. Women must be included in climate change related processes and decision making at all levels. Given the analysis of the legal and policy framework, there are several opportunities for strengthening the incorporation of gender issues into the development of policies and programmes to address climate change.

- A first step is to address the need for disaggregated data to describe men's and women's differing livelihoods strategies, circumstances and opportunities. This information is crucial to measure and to properly understand the gendered effects of projects to address climate change vulnerability.
- A bottom up approach of involving communities in identifying the challenges they face leads to more sustainable and appropriate outcomes. It also enables programmes to build on existing mechanisms and initiatives which share gender equity objectives such as Aama Samuha (Mothers' Groups) and Community Forest User Groups (CFUGs) rather than creating new institutional mechanisms. Chapagain, an expert in working with communities in Nepal, confirms that women benefit least from existing structures and institutions and as a result are affected most at times of crisis. She also adds that the best approach is to work with existing community level organisations, supporting women to strengthen their capacity to voice their needs and have them met by these organisations. Strengthening existing organisations and initiatives which work to achieve gender equity can offer opportunities for effectively achieving the sustainable development within a context of climate change.
- The Local Self Governance Act in Nepal is an important tool for ensuring women's participation in the planning

and implementation of projects. The use of this legal framework needs to be strengthened to ensure the development of initiatives that target women's interests and reduce their vulnerability to climate change. The lesson here is that the identification and use of favourable existing legislation and legal tools, such as the LSGA, can prove to be powerful mechanisms for promoting the mainstreaming gender in initiatives to address climate change.

- One key aspect to achieving gender equity and reducing women's vulnerability is empowerment. Women must have the skills and capacity to ensure that their needs are met. It is recommended that a gender focused service delivery mechanism be developed to strengthen women's ability to adapt to climate change.
- The incorporation of a consistent gender analysis that translates into programmes and initiatives to address women's specific interests needs to be strengthened. In Nepal, for example, there is further scope for review and incorporation of gender issues in the NAPA document and processes and for the development of projects that specifically target women.
- More detailed and context specific research also needs to be carried out on the differential impacts of climate change on women and men in Nepal and elsewhere. This should draw on existing studies of traditional livelihoods highlighting existing local knowledge of natural resource management and of coping strategies to deal with climate variability. This process can meet two objectives; i) to learn more about different livelihoods strategies and gender relations within those contexts; and ii) to raise awareness of climate change within these communities and to take steps to build their capacity to adapt.

In summary, there are still many opportunities to mainstream gender in the implementation of policies which strengthen the ability of communities to adapt to climate change. Moreover, if the capacity of existing local level institutions and service delivery mechanisms to address gender is strengthened, these mechanisms can be useful for achieving the goal of gender equity. The framework for a bottom up, participatory approach to addressing climate change exists in Nepal. With a little work, gender equity can be addressed through these existing mechanisms. What is needed is the political will and commitment to ensure that this takes place.

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# Annex 1

The Millennium Development Goals and the effects of climate change: an analysis of the implications of gender inequality

Millennium Development Goals	Effects of climate change	Implications
<b>1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</b>	The main solutions proposed to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger may be affected by and impede, among others: Agricultural subsistence; commercial production; food security; access to safe drinking water; use of forests.	<p>Loss of plant and domestic animal species used by women to ensure their families are fed.</p> <p>Drop in production of cereals and basic grains due to droughts and floods.</p> <p>Reduction, mobilisation or disappearance of marine species used by women as part of their diet and as a productive activity.</p> <p>In many parts of the world, women are responsible for agricultural production, and climate changes could affect production and crop susceptibility to disease. This will not only reduce productivity but will increase the burden on women.</p> <p>Many women collect forest products and use them for fuel, food, medicines or food for livestock; the reduction or disappearance of these products endangers their own and their families' welfare and quality of life.</p>
<b>2. Achieve universal primary education</b>	<p>Climate change increases the work of agricultural production and other subsistence activities such as collecting water and firewood, which could put pressure on families to take their children out of school.</p> <p>Increased migration of families because of extreme climate changes and disasters could interrupt and limit educational opportunities.</p>	<p>It is generally women and girls who are responsible for collecting water and firewood. Extending the time they need for these tasks puts their ability to attend school at risk.</p> <p>According to UNHCR, 80% of the world's refugees are women and children, which is one reason why the younger generations have limited access to education. A study by IPCC in 2006 calculated that, by 2050, the number of possible climate change refugees could reach 150 million.</p> <p>As men migrate more often than women, many households are headed by women and need girls to help out with family work, preventing them from attending school.</p>
<b>3. Promote gender equality and empower women</b>	Deaths and injuries are effects of extreme climate events such as floods, landslides and storms, and they may affect women and men in different ways depending on their independence and the means they have at their disposal to ensure their own safety.	<p>In different regions of the world, restrictions on the independence and empowerment of women hamper their access to shelter or medical care during cyclones, earthquakes and floods.</p> <p>Loss of natural resources and agricultural productivity increases women's workload and leaves them less time to participate in decision making processes, conservation and income-generating activities.</p>
<b>4. Reduce infant mortality</b> <b>5. Improve maternal health</b>	Climate change will harm health because it will heighten people's vulnerability to diseases caused by poor nutrition, poor quality water, increase in vectors and more favourable conditions for spreading viruses associated with temperature and heat.	<p>Due to women's traditional role of taking care of family health, their workload will increase and so will their probability of catching infectious diseases.</p> <p>Loss of medicinal plants used by women impedes their traditional capacity to treat ailments.</p> <p>Pregnant women are particularly susceptible to water-borne diseases and malaria. Anaemia, as an effect of malaria, causes one-quarter of maternal mortality.</p> <p>The high index of mortality of mothers/women during disasters causes an increase in infant mortality and more children to be orphaned.</p>

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<b>6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases</b>	<p>In less developed countries, the poorest households affected by HIV/AIDS have fewer resources to adapt to the effects of climate change. For example, it is harder for households headed by women and with family members suffering from AIDS to adopt new crop strategies or rear cattle.</p> <p>Increase in climate change related disasters has consequences that add to the risk of the spread of HIV/AIDS.</p>	<p>In less developed countries, the poorest households affected by HIV/AIDS have fewer resources to adapt to the effects of climate change. For example, the need to adopt new strategies for crops (i.e., irrigation) or cattle rearing is more acute for households headed by women and with family members suffering from AIDS.</p> <p>Post-disaster increase in the number of girls getting married at an early age, school dropouts, sexual harassment, trafficking in women and prostitution with more risk of transmitting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS.</p> <p>Because families are separated and people are forced to crowd together, migration following climate change increases the risk of HIV/AIDS infection.</p>
<b>7. Ensure environmental sustainability</b>	<p>Climate change causes species extinction, changes in their composition, alterations in symbiotic relationships and trophic chains, and other phenomena. Such alterations change the quantity and the quality of available natural resources and reduce the productivity of ecosystems.</p> <p>Climate change affects natural patterns of floods, droughts and glacier recession as well as the polar ice cap.</p>	<p>Without secure access to and control over natural resources (land, water, cattle, trees), women are less likely than men to be able to confront climate change.</p> <p>Limited availability of drinking water increases the work of collecting, storing, protecting and distributing it, and has negative impacts on the work done by women.</p> <p>Measures to adapt to climate change, including those related to combating desertification, generally require long, hard working days.</p> <p>At all levels (local, national, regional and international), women are not represented or do not participate in decision making on climate change.</p> <p>Most policies on climate change do not reflect women's ideas, needs and priorities.</p> <p>Decrease in forestry resources used by women; rural women in developing countries collect forest products and use them as fuel, food, medicines or food for their livestock. The reduction or disappearance of these products will have a negative impact on the well-being and quality of life for them and their families.</p> <p>Environmental degradation in areas where women obtain their resources may lead them to illegally exploit resources in protected areas.</p>
<b>8. Create a global development partnership</b>	<p>Climate change increases the challenge of complying with the MDG.</p> <p>There is a need to increase financial resources for adaptation and mitigation initiatives.</p>	<p>Incorporate the gender approach when transferring technology and promoting programmes and projects in order to improve mitigation and adaptation.</p> <p>The response to climate change to support national adaptation and mitigation efforts must include principles of gender equality and ethnicity. Building capacities, management of South-South and North-South assistance and cooperation are vital in developing adequate responses.</p> <p>Investment in preventive infrastructure with a gender approach will lower rehabilitation costs.</p>

Source UNDP, 2009



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WORKING PAPER NO.2 : NOVEMBER 2012

IIED is an independent, non-profit organisation promoting sustainable patterns of world development through collaborative research, policy studies, networking and knowledge dissemination.

The Climate Change Group works with partners to help secure fair and equitable solutions to climate change by combining appropriate support for adaptation by the poor in low and middle income countries, with ambitious and practical mitigation targets.

The work of the Climate Change Group includes:

- Supporting public planning processes in delivering climate resilient development outcomes for the poorest.
- Supporting climate change negotiators from poor and vulnerable countries for equitable, balanced and multilateral solutions to climate change.
- Building capacity to act on the implications of changing ecology and economics for equitable and climate resilient development in the drylands.

Published by IIED, 2012

IIED order no: 10033IIED

<http://pubs.iied.org/10033IIED.html>

ISSN 2048-7851 (Print)

ISSN 2048-786X (Online)

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