Ms. Meena Khanal

A woman in the predominantly male Nepalese government – Ms. Meena Khanal of Kathmandu is passionate about protecting the natural environment and helping the people of Nepal. Meena’s career took her from working at the Ministry of Tourism to her position today, the Joint Secretary, of the Ministry of Environment and its Gender Focal Point. Meena’s journey has been revelatory with regard to gender, both in the personal barriers she faces and the lens through which she views her work. “At COP13, it seemed that the prevailing belief was that in terms of climate change, gender didn’t matter,” says Meena. Having received a post-graduate diploma in Women’s Studies, Meena set out to research the linkages between gender and climate change, particularly in the context of Nepal. She was part of the UNFCCC process and ensured there was a women representative on the delegation. In 2010, Meena’s strengthened confidence led her to propose and deliver an intervention for gender considerations in the subsidiary body negotiations of the Least Developed Countries Expert Group (LEG), which were accepted into the final text. She was also recently appointed the National Project Director of the Pilot Program for Climate Resilience. “I feel empowered and satisfied that I’m being heard. If it were not for the support of the WDF, I don’t believe I would have this opportunity.”