Women's Leadership and Climate Change – Why the Need? 
Experience from Nepal

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Studies and experience from Nepal show that the leadership role of women is crucial for effective mobilization of climate change related resources, increasing agricultural productivity, and sustainable forest management. This is particularly observed among the grassroots women within both formal and informal institutions. Grassroots women leaders and women’s groups have demonstrated that given recognition as rights holders and opportunities to lead, they can successfully organize and engage women and vulnerable groups to access state and non-state climate change related resources. When women assume leadership positions, they help accelerate their economic growth and social change processes. Experience shows that professional women and men with knowledge and expertise in gender and social exclusion issues are key agents of change for mainstreaming gender in climate change. Despite these experiences and studies, women are still not considered to be rights holders and are excluded from key leadership positions on a number of levels. The number of women at the national decision making levels, particularly those from the excluded social groups, is also very low. This has implications for setting gender related agendas, priorities, and policies. This paper examines the importance of women’s leadership in effectively addressing the impacts of climate change; and the key and emerging issues, needs, opportunities, and barriers faced by women at local, professional, and policy levels. The findings of the recent assessment carried out by WOCAN and HIMAWANTI on women’s exclusion in REDD+ in Nepal and the pilot project on rural women’s leadership will be used to support the analysis.