



Intercontinental Think Tank UPDATE

In this November Zonta Says NOW Intercontinental Think Tank Update:

- [The Rocky Road of Climate Progress](#)
- [Menstrual Health and Sustainability - January Intercontinental Think Tank](#)
- [Women's Economic Opportunity - November Intercontinental Think Tank](#)
- [Zonta Says NO Virtual Summit](#)
- [Conversation circles](#)

The Rocky Road of Climate Progress



Progress on climate justice has been difficult this month in Azerbaijan and Colombia.

In the annual '[family photo](#)' of government leaders at the Climate Conference of the Parties (COP 29) in Azerbaijan, it was a case of 'find the women'. At the Climate COP, speaking time and decision-making positions are routinely monopolised by men with women playing an administrative, rather than a technical role. This has to change.

[UN Women](#) points out that on the first day there were only eight women speaking out of 78 government leaders and only four leaders mentioned the impact of climate change on women. Negotiations have been gridlocked over climate finance and capacity building, leaving little time to discuss [gender equality](#) that is scheduled near the end of the COP. On the plus side, the [COP](#) has included care work in the draft outcome document on just transitions, and the need to address gender gaps in STEM and women's access to green jobs. Let's see if they are mentioned in the final version.

[Watch](#) the heartfelt appeal [7mins] for climate action from UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell speaking from the remains of his neighbour's house destroyed by a hurricane. More videos from COP29 are available [here](#).

Next year's Climate COP will be held in Belem in Brazil, but we don't know if Australia or Turkiye will be hosting the event in 2026 as discussions have reached a standstill.

Meanwhile the Biodiversity COP 16 in Colombia had [mixed outcomes](#). Delegates agreed to establish the *Cali Fund* to share the benefits of genetic resources, and a new permanent advisory body for Indigenous people was established. However, debate was gridlocked on a new fund to finance biodiversity action and only 22 per cent of the parties had come up with new biodiversity plans showing how they will meet the goals of the [Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework](#).

What's next? In December we have the 'crunch time' final discussions on the [Global Plastics Treaty](#) in South Korea, and the [Desertification COP16](#) in Saudi Arabia. We'll keep you posted on what happens.

[Back to top](#)

Menstrual Health and Sustainability



Have you ever considered how much plastic is used with menstrual products? The UNEP [reports](#) that single-use menstrual products such as tampons and pads can contain up to 90 percent plastic and are often individually wrapped - with around 80 percent ending up in landfill. It can take 500 years for the plastic components to break down. What are the solutions?

The **Sunday 12 January Intercontinental Think Tank, at 3-4.30 am UTC** will be hosted by Zontians from Asia and Oceania. It will focus on menstrual health and sustainability and our guest speakers will be:

- [Dipisha Bhujel from Nepal](#), who is a menstrual health advocate. Dipisha founded Project Sparsa, a company that makes compostable sanitary pads from banana fibres.
- [Dr Jessica Kind from Guatemala](#), who is a climate scientist, environmental consultant and artist. Jessica has worked on many community development programs promoting Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) initiatives.

We will also explore the transformative power of art in education and encourage members to enter the Zonta Says NOW Virtual Art Gallery. Please share this [pdf flyer](#), and register today, so the event is in your diary!

**Register for the 12 January
Intercontinental Think Tank**

[Back to top](#)

Women's Economic Opportunity



At the November Think Tank, we shared the newly released Fact Sheet on [Women's Economic Opportunities in the Context of Climate Change](#). This 24 page document is colourful and easy to read. It is designed to be read online as it contains many hyperlinks. If you don't understand the links between climate change and women's economic opportunity, this is the document for you!

The November Think Tank was fascinating. Speakers from Sweden and Uganda explored *How international financial architecture impacts gender-equal climate justice*.

Jennie Sinclair shared her experiences and the opportunities she creates for women through the [Swedish Ownershift Foundation](#). Her research on ownership in Sweden showed that men own twice as much as women. She explained how fathers tell their sons how to invest while mothers tell their daughters how to relate. Ownershift provides support for women to 'invest in themselves, to own their future'.

Dr Saadat Nakyejwe Kimuli is an Assoc Professor of Entrepreneurship at Makerere University Business School. In Uganda, only 16 percent of women own land independently, yet 90 percent of rural Ugandan women are agricultural workers, producing 90 percent of the country's food. Women make up 30 percent of entrepreneurs and the number is rising. Saadat explained how microloans enable women to start a business and achieve financial stability. Achieving gender parity in land and business could substantially strengthen Uganda's economy..

Hosted by Zontians from Europe and Africa this event also explored well-being economies, doughnut economics and the economic cost of gender-based violence. Missed the event? See the [video](#) and [slides](#).

[Back to top](#)

Zonta Says NO Virtual Summit



This event on **Tuesday 10 December CST** will raise funds for the Zonta Foundation for Women - a very worthy cause. Tickets are US\$10 and US\$5 for students.

The times of this Zonta Says NO to Violence Against Women Virtual Summit may be challenging for some Zontians, but registration entitles you to see the recordings from the three sessions that feature:

- **Susanne Strand, A Psychological View of Violence Against Women.** Susanne is a professor of criminology from Sweden who specialises in risk assessment and management of intimate partner violence. (8-9am)
- **Tony Porter, A Call to Men - Ending Violence Against Women.** Tony is an author, educator and activist working to advance gender and racial justice to create a more equitable society. (12-1pm)
- **A Conversation with Elizabeth Flock about Gender-Based Violence.** Elizabeth is an Emmy Award-winning journalist and author with a focus on stories about gender and justice. This session is being set up as a 'book club', and all those who purchase a ticket will be given an excerpt from her book [The Furies](#). There will be an interactive Q and A about the reading. (4-5pm)

[Register here for the Virtual Summit.](#)

Can't make this event? How about donating \$16 to mark each day of the 16 Days of Activism using the button below as part of [Every Member, Every November](#)!

**Donate to the
Zonta Foundation for Women**

CSW 69 Conversation Circles



2025 marks the 30th anniversary of the 4th World Conference on Women, and the 30th anniversary of the [Beijing Declaration and Platform For Action](#).

To commemorate this important year, the Zonta International UN Committee is hosting a series of 12 weekly Conversation Circles from November to February, each covering one of the twelve critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action.

The first two events covering Women and Poverty and Violence Against Women prompted lively discussion as Zontians compared the situations in their own countries.

The events are held at 9.00 am CST and the next topics are:

- Dec. 11 - Women and Health
- Dec. 18 - Women and Armed Conflict
- Jan. 8 - Women and the Economy
- Jan. 15 - Women in Power and Decision Making
- Jan. 22 - Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women
- Jan. 29 - Human Rights of Women
- Feb. 5 - Women and the Media
- Feb. 12 - Women and the Environment
- Feb. 19 - The Girl Child

The meetings are not recorded and the [Chatham House Rule](#) applies to all conversations - stimulating open discussion. The Conversation Circles are listed on the Events page at zonta.org.

**Register for the Conversation
Circles from the Events Page**

**Zonta Says NOW
to Gender-Equal Climate Action**
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Zonta Says NOW Intercontinental Think Tank meeting.

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