



Menstrual Health and Sustainability

Intercontinental Think Tank 12 January 2025
3 am to 4.30 am UTC



Housekeeping



Use the chat line to ask questions and make comments

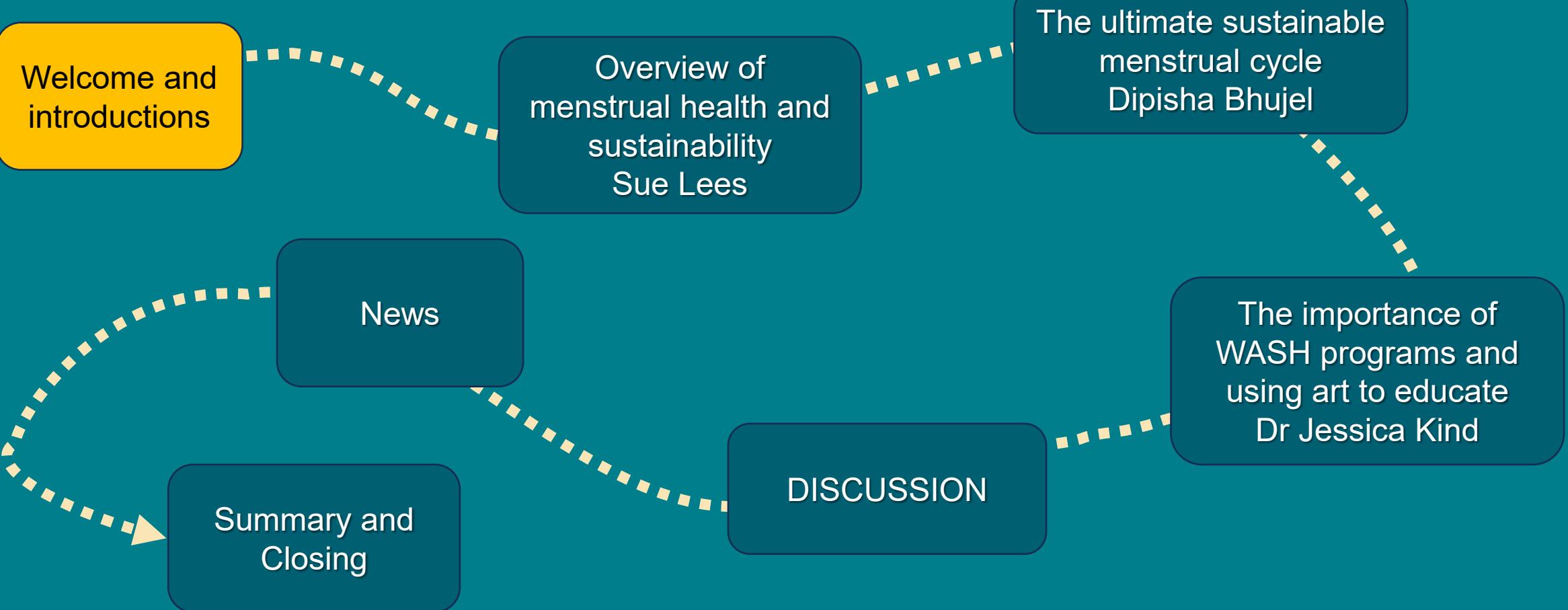
Microphone on mute

Ask questions respectfully

Ask short, succinct questions



Our Journey Today



Today's Team



Dispisha Bhujel
Nepal



Dr Jessica Kind
Guatemala



Sue Lees
Australia



Carole Theobald
Australia

Why does Zonta Say NOW?



Stops the train by taking **climate action** and closing the gender gaps in **leadership, education, economic opportunity, health, and safety**.

Life for women at the end of the train



Selena
Bangladesh
[Source](#)



Sophea,
Cambodia
[Source](#)



Hibaq
Somaliland
[Source](#)



Our Purpose

**Zonta Says NOW
seeks climate justice
for women and girls**

So women and girls can prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from the impacts of climate change on the same basis as men.

We do this by taking gender-equal climate action
locally, nationally and internationally



Our Journey Today

Welcome and introductions

Overview of
menstrual health and
sustainability
Sue Lees

The ultimate sustainable
menstrual cycle
Dipisha Bhujel

News

The importance of
WASH programs and
using art to educate
Dr Jessica Kind

Summary and
Closing

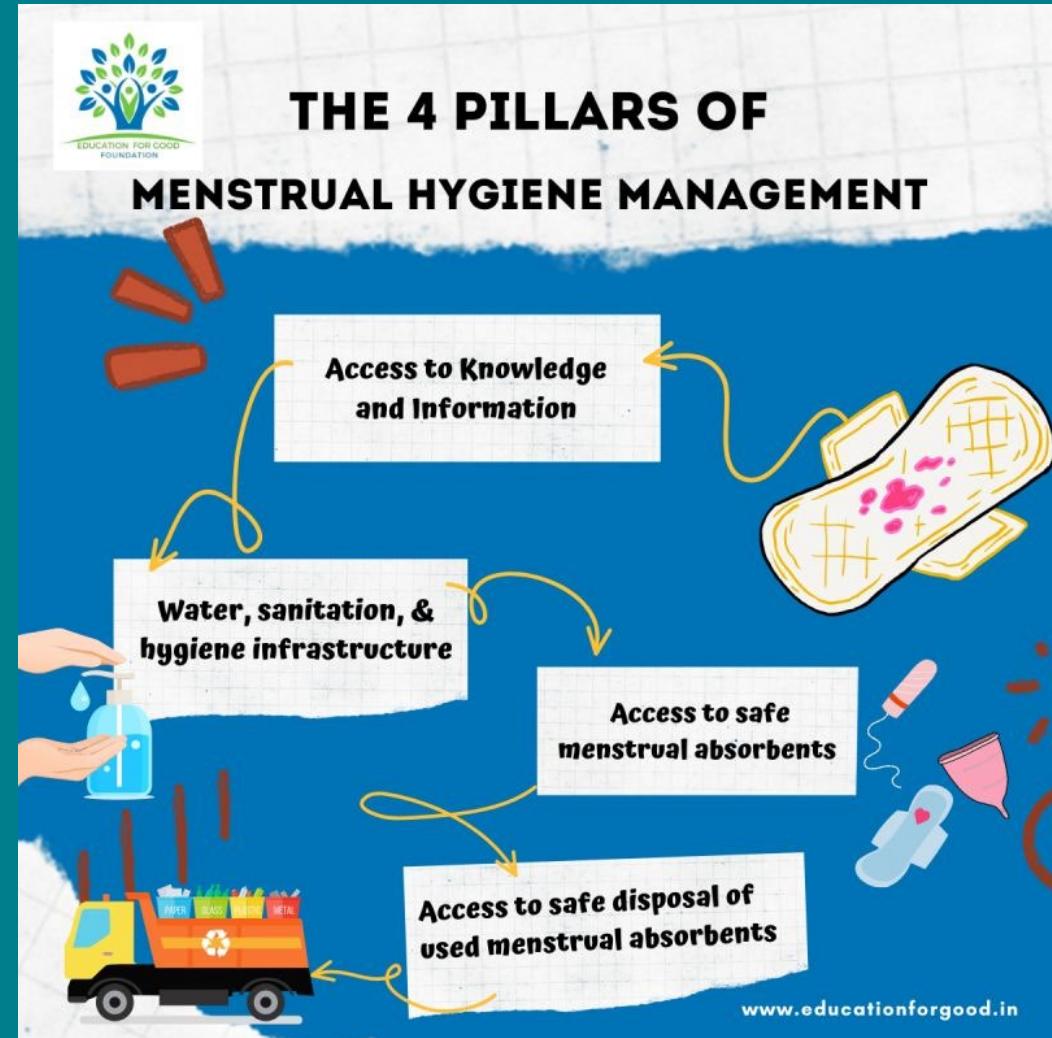
DISCUSSION

What is Menstrual Hygiene Management?

Menstruators having a right to

- clean menstrual management **material** to absorb or collect blood,
- that can be changed in **privacy** as often as necessary for the duration of the menstruation period,
- using **soap and water** for washing the body as required, and
- having access to facilities to **dispose** of used menstrual management materials.

WHO and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)



What are the problems around menstrual hygiene and sustainability?

Products

- Plastic and chemical content
- Many are not
 - reuseable
 - recyclable
 - biodegradable



The 'Pink Tax'

In many countries menstrual products are taxed

For example, in the USA,

- Viagra for erectile dysfunction is a tax exempt health product
- sanitary products are classified as luxury goods and taxed at the highest rate

UN Women

What are the problems around menstrual hygiene and sustainability?

Privacy

- Very difficult when there are no toilets available.

Over 1.5 billion people do not have basic sanitation services e.g. private toilets or latrines

Soap and Water

- Water scarcity – use water for drinking or washing?
- Droughts and floods interfere with water supply



WHO

What are the problems around menstrual hygiene and sustainability?

Disposal

- Burning, burying, flushing down toilet
- Pollution of water bodies, landfill sites
- Microplastics and chemical health hazards



[source](#)

Period Poverty

Climate change shocks fuel period poverty



For Chelma Machiya, a 21-year-old from ward 8, Machiya village in Chimanimani, period poverty and early marriages are the order of the day.

Climate change-induced shocks and poverty have left thousands of young women in the remote areas of Chimanimani exposed to early marriages and period poverty, NewsDay has learnt.

500 million

Where there are no menstrual products - women and girls must use rags, grass and paper...

[Source](#)

1 in 10

One in 10 girls in Sub-Saharan Africa misses school during their period.

65%

65% of women and girls in Kenya are unable to afford menstrual products like sanitary pads.

Chelma,
Zimbabwe

[Source](#)

[Source](#)

Period Poverty is global...

1/2

Over 50% of girls in the UK said they couldn't afford menstrual products at some point in the past year.

64%

In a study in Missouri, US, nearly two thirds (64%) of women were unable to afford menstrual products.

[Source](#)

Australia's largest body of data on periods



5 out of 10 respondents missed work due to fear of leaking

[Source](#)

Cost of menstrual products

Survey of each US State and 107 countries.

Most affordable menstrual products
by percentage of average resident's
monthly income

1. United Kingdom (0.12%)
2. Switzerland (0.14%)
3. Luxembourg (0.19%)
4. United States (0.20%)
5. Australia (0.22%)
6. Netherlands (0.24%)
7. Norway (0.24%)
8. Sweden (0.27%)
9. Slovakia (0.29%)
10. Poland (0.31%)

Least affordable menstrual products
by percentage of average resident's
monthly income

1. Algeria (14.8%)
- =2 Zambia (10.93%)
- =2 Nigeria (10.93%)
4. Ghana (9.39%)
5. Zimbabwe (9.27%)
6. Kyrgyzstan (9.05%)
7. Honduras (8.54%)
8. Jordan (8.38%)
9. Laos (8.33%)
10. Cambodia (7.74%)

Source



Days for Girls International



The basic Days for Girls pad contains one waterproof shield and two absorbent liners.

The full kit also contains panties, soap, washcloth, and instructions.



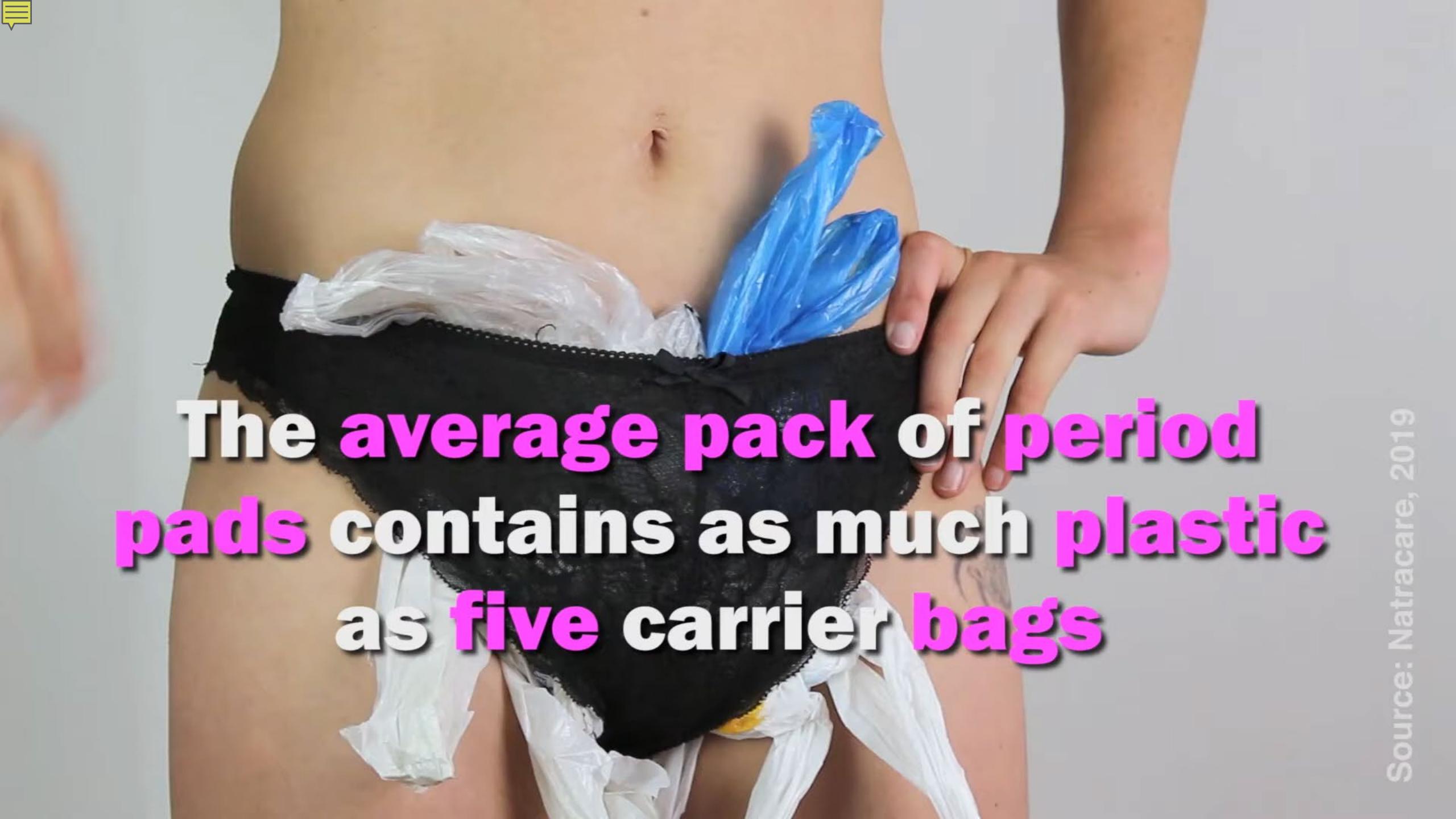


Here are some of the countries that provide free menstrual products....

When you don't have to worry about where their next tampon or pad will come from, they can concentrate more on school, work, and their well-being.

- Scotland (2020) – to anyone that needs them
- New Zealand - schools
- Australia – schools and some other public places
- USA: some states - schools
- France – some schools and all universities

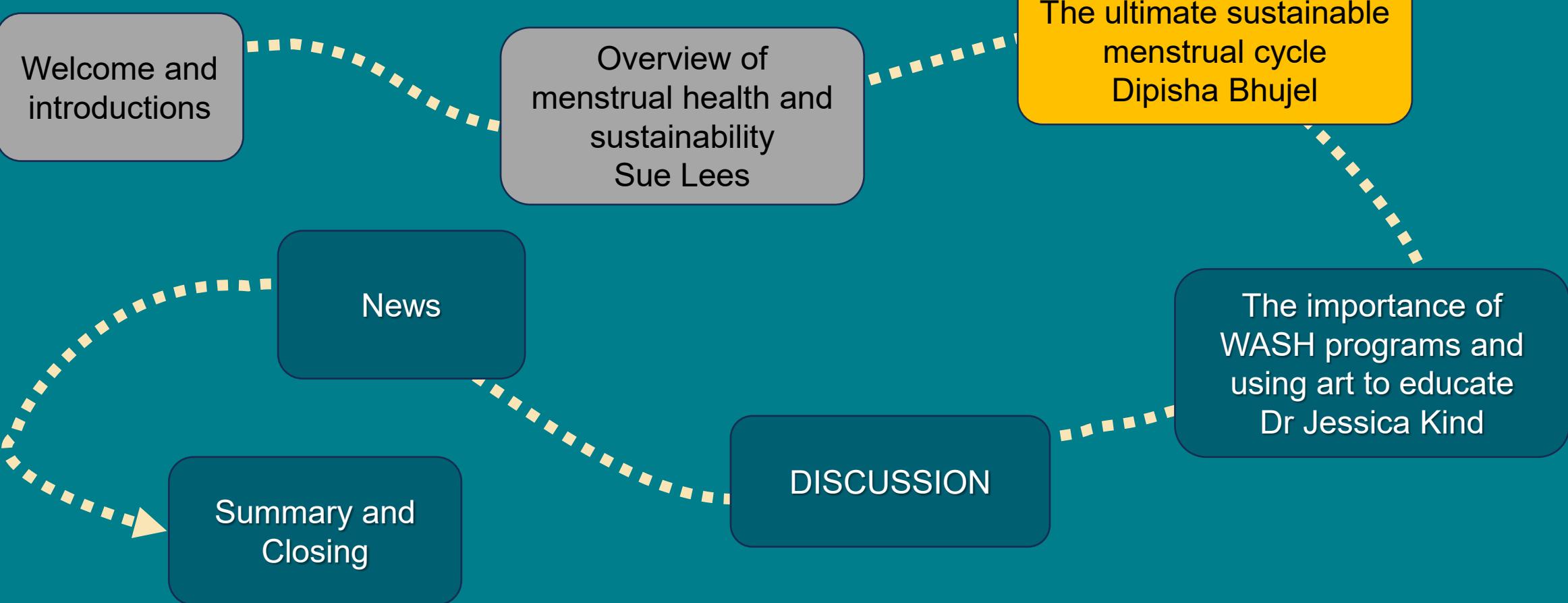
- Kenya – schools
- South Africa - schools
- Botswana – schools
- Seoul, South Korea – pilot
- Uganda – schools
- Zambia – schools
- Canada: some states - schools



The average pack of period pads contains as much plastic as five carrier bags



Our Journey Today



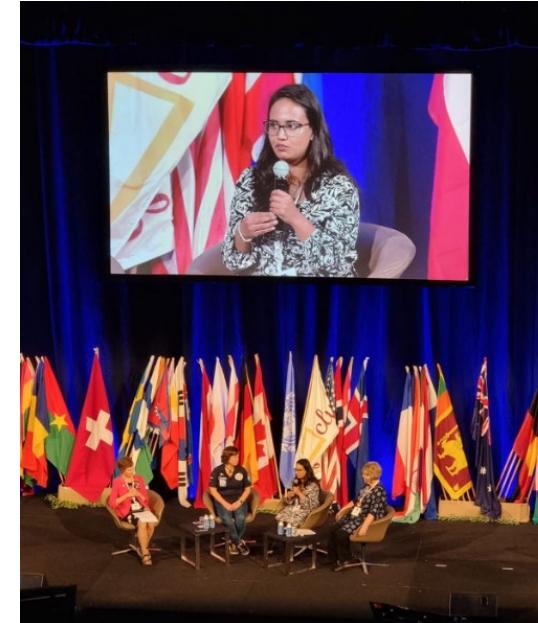
Dipisha Bhujel



Social entrepreneur,
menstrual equity advocate



- International Young Women in Public Affairs Awardee
- Co-founder and Chairwoman at Sparśa – a social enterprise producing compostable menstrual pads from banana plants with profits going to menstrual health education
- Winner of The Iris Project STEM prize in 2023.





Dipisha Bhujel



Social entrepreneur,
menstrual equity advocate



Dipisha's presentation



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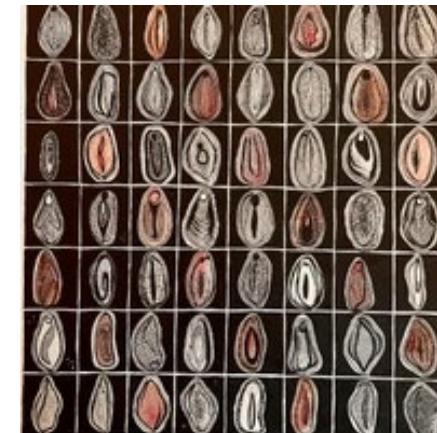


Climate scientist,
environmental
consultant and artist



Cherish our planet and confront the climate crisis

- Pioneer in sustainable development
- Specialises in climate science, carbon markets, water, sanitation and hygiene
- Artist celebrating the beauty of nature and addressing social issues including gender inequality





Dr Jessica Kind



Climate scientist,
environmental
consultant and artist



Jessica's presentation

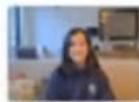


VIRTUAL ART GALLERY

HOME SUBMISSIONS

ENVISIONING A GENDER-EQUAL SUSTAINABLE FUTURE THROUGH THE ARTS

We are bombarded with the science and numbers of climate change, and for many people the numbers are meaningless. However, through the arts, we can connect with our feelings and emotions and cut through the numbers to better understand the problems and the possible futures we can create.



View 2024 Submissions

Paintings, Sketches, Videos,
Photography, Mixed Media,
Digital Arts, Poetry
AND MORE!

<https://zontasaysnowvirtualartgallery.org>

Entries close at the
end of February 2025

Open to
Zontians
and family
members

Virtual Art Gallery

<https://zontasaysnowvirtualartgallery.org/>

Forest Fire



Artist: Mita Mitra

Location: Supporting Zonta Member, Germany

My painting recaptures a scene of a forest fire in Saxon Switzerland, a national park in eastern Germany. Renowned for its freestanding sandstone cliffs and dense greenery, this region burst into flames in the hot summer of 2022. I saw photos of charred trees and some still standing stalwart amidst red flames in the national park.

On a family vacation to Australia in 2018 I witnessed a wildfire. While driving along Princes Highway to Melbourne, we noticed the sky had suddenly turned dark. Grey smoke billowed from a nearby forest, and eventually, we saw burning bushes.

This moment has a place in my recreation of a forest fire. I would like to give recognition here to all fire-fighters who work in life-threatening situations.

Medium: Acrylic

Virtual Art Gallery

<https://zontasaysnowvirtualartgallery.org/>

A Letter to Mother Earth: Love Wins



Artist: Andrea Lenz

Location: Zonta Club of Dresden, District 27, Germany

Thank you Mother Earth for your beautiful nature and all the wonderful beings on your planet. Thank you for your selfless generosity and infinite support.

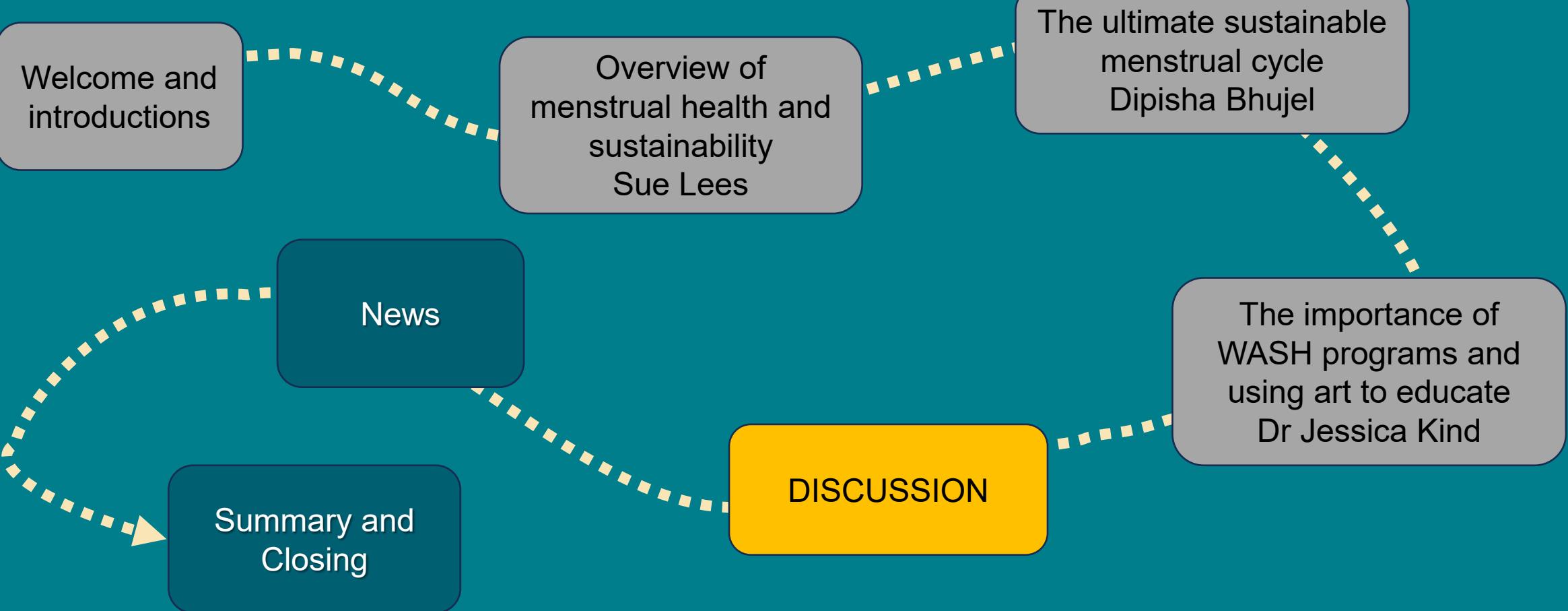
Since a very long time, we have been able to indulge in an absolutely perfect system, which is called nature and creation. All over the world, creation is the most mysterious process, generating life. But, recently, the secret and the magic of Mother Earth's planet are being endangered. Hopefully, human awareness, respect, gratitude, and LOVE will reduce suffering and stop the decline of our unique world.

Medium: Photographs

[2024 Zonta Says NOW Virtual Art Gallery Promotional Video](#)



Our Journey Today





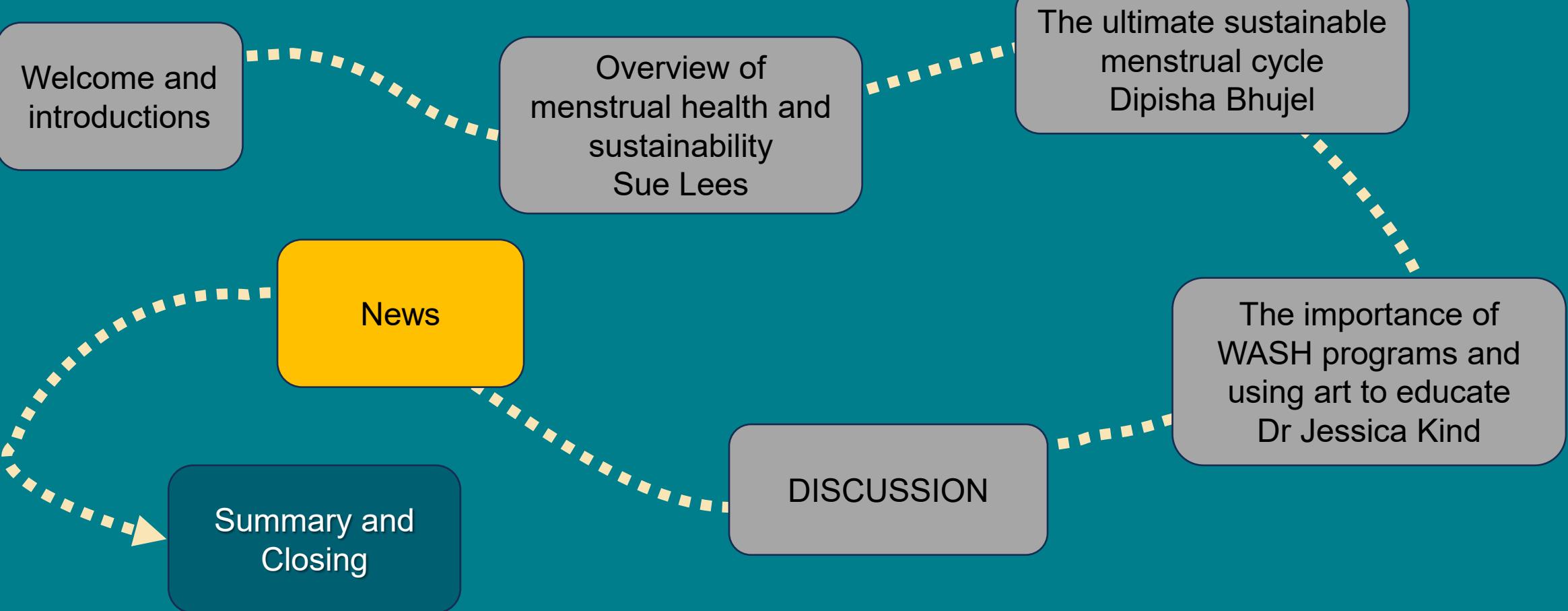
DISCUSSION



1. What did you learn?
2. What will you do?
3. How can we use the Virtual Art Gallery to raise awareness?



Our Journey Today





News

DECEMBER UPDATE

- Fact Sheets
- January Think Tank
- UN Climate Related Activities
- Virtual Art Gallery
- Conversation Circles
- A New Year's Resolution

PDF can be downloaded from
<https://zontasaysnow.org.au/intercontinental-think-tank/>



In this December Zonta Says NOW Intercontinental Think Tank [Update](#):

- [Gather the Fact Sheets](#)
- [January Intercontinental Think Tank](#)
- [UN Climate-Related Activities](#)
- [Virtual Art Gallery](#)
- [Conversation circles](#)
- [A New Year Resolution](#)

Gather the Fact Sheets



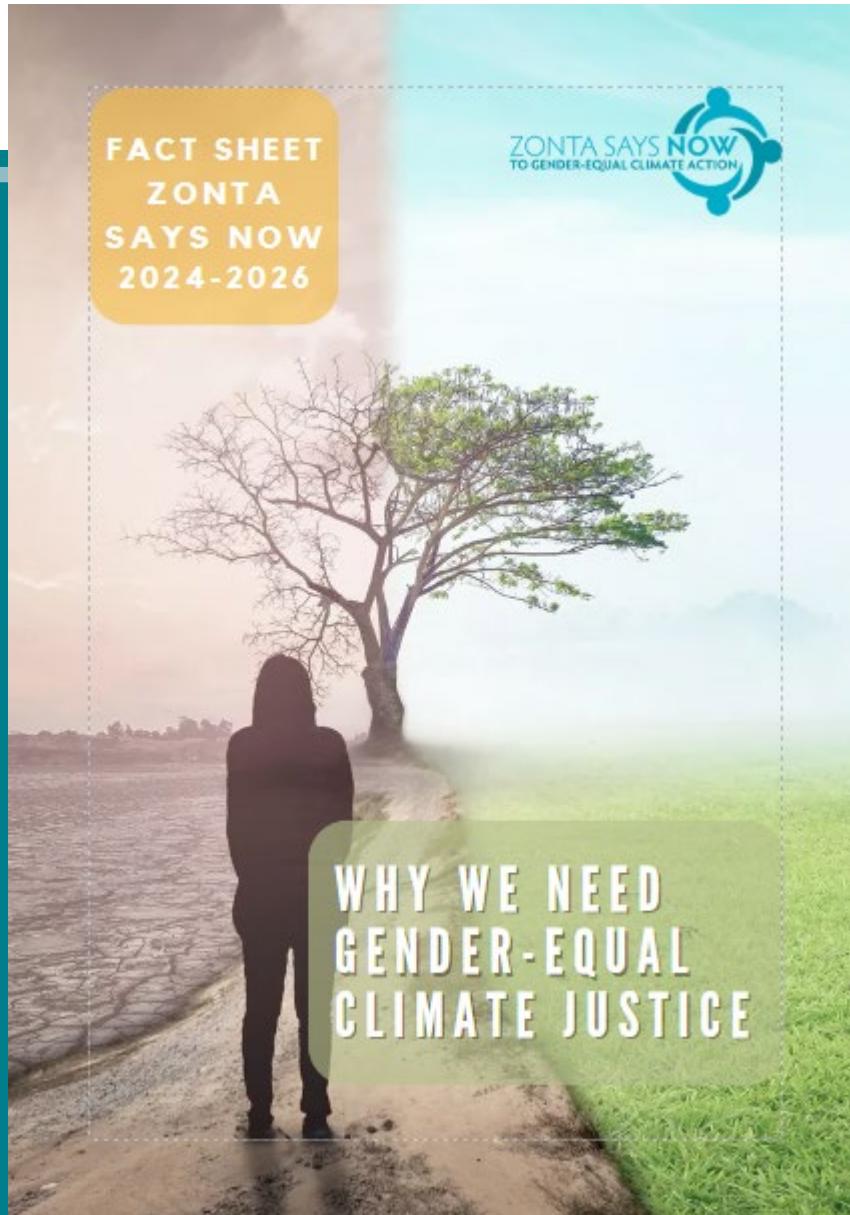
If you are starting your climate justice journey, the International Working Group has developed two new Fact Sheets showing [Why We Need Gender-Equal Climate Justice](#) and describing [Women's Economic Opportunities in the Context of Climate Change](#). (A Fact Sheet on women in decision-making is under development). The Fact Sheets are colourful, with photos, facts, links and practical ideas to show you how to take gender-equal climate action.



Fact Sheet

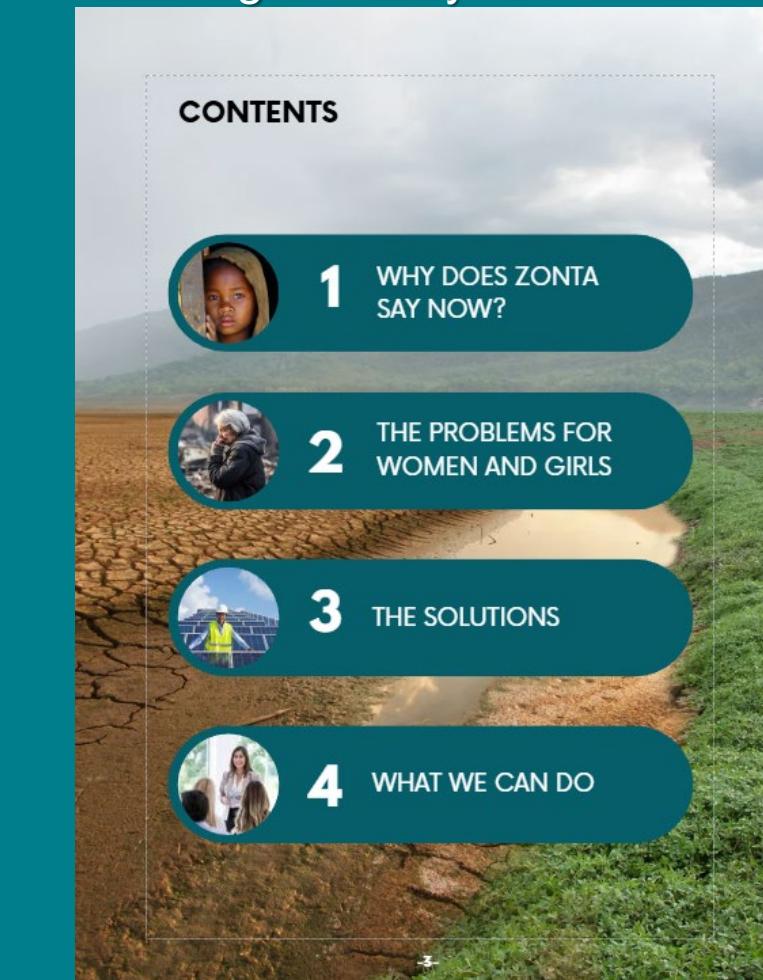
Zonta.org/zontasaysnow/resources





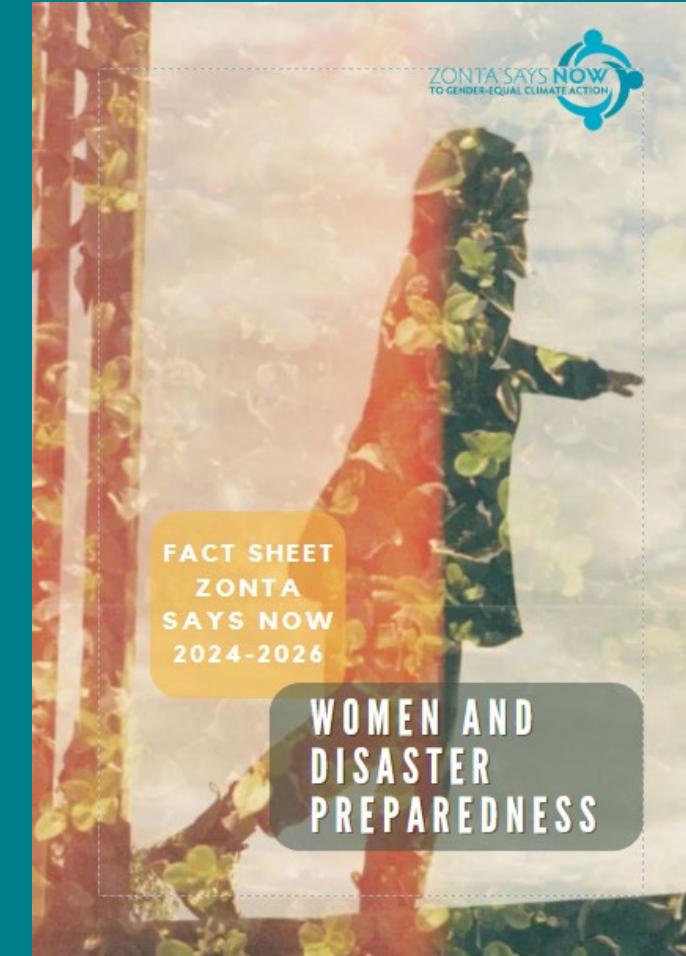
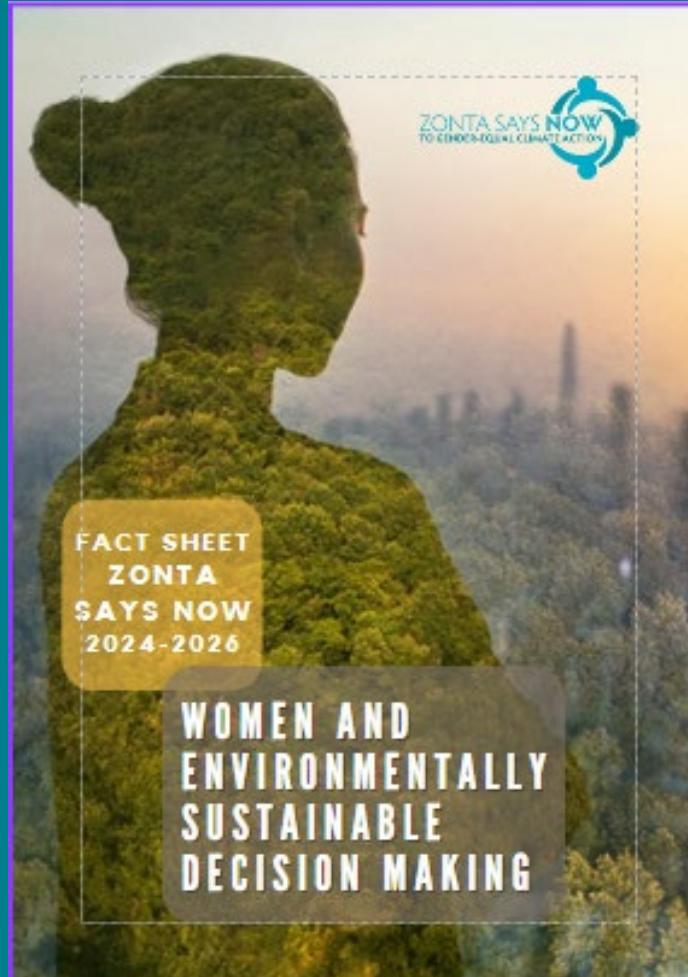
Fact Sheet

Zonta.org/zontasaysnow/resources





Fact Sheets in Development





Now to July 2025

International Women's Day

Promote Fact Sheets



Develop short videos, social media posts for clubs to use at IWD events

NGO CSW

Zonta Says NOW to solutions from the heart



One hour Friday 14 March
9 am to 10 am (tbc)

Earth Day

Virtual Art Gallery
Launch 2025 Collection

Submit your entry now!



22 April 2025



Next Meetings



March – CSW69/Beijing +30

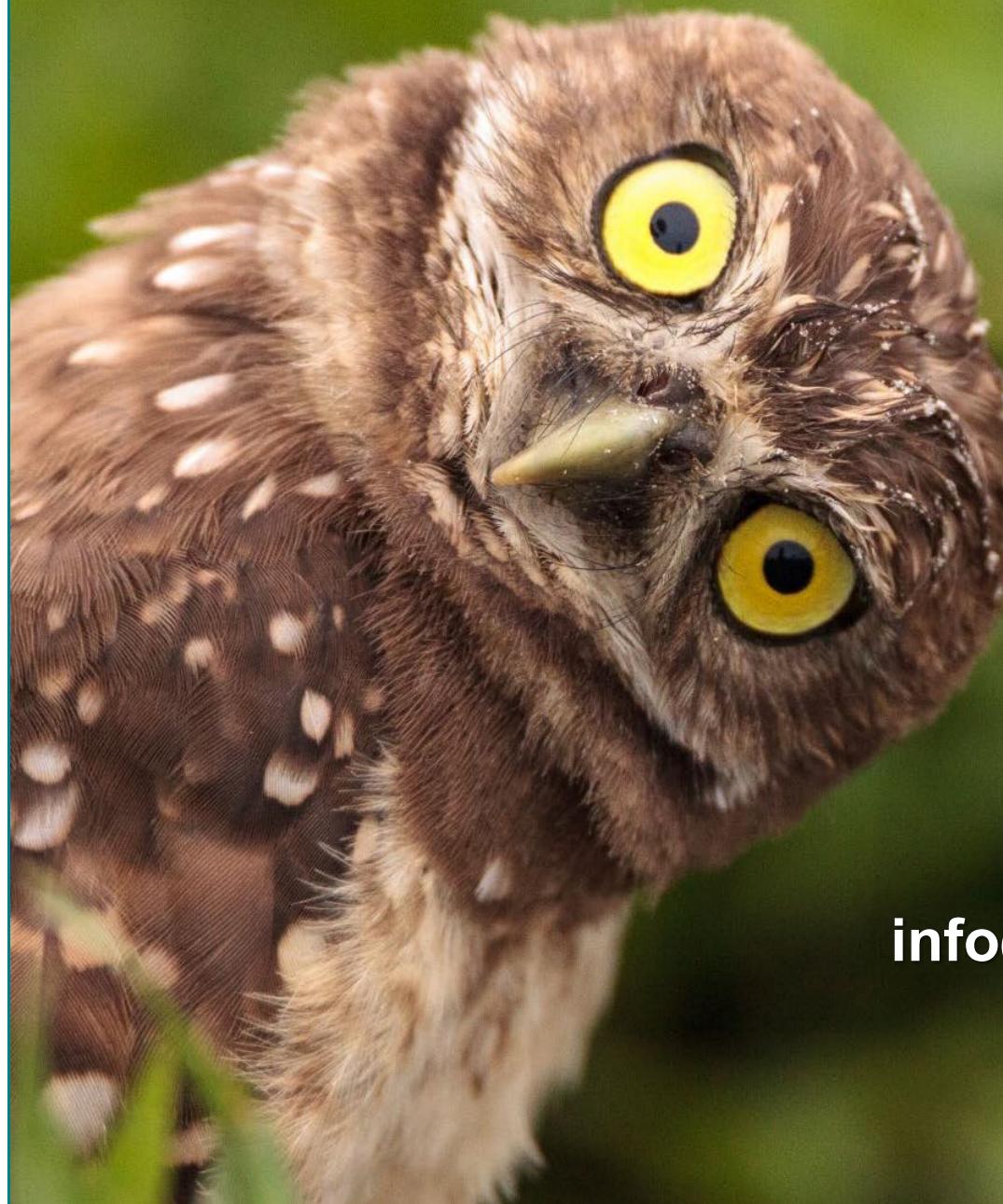
- 10-21 March in New York
- NGO CSW online events
- Conversation Circles
- NO INTERCONTINENTAL THINK TANK

Register at zonta.org/events

SUNDAY 11 MAY 10am UTC

- Hosted by Zontians from Europe and Africa

Register today at zonta.org/Events



Find out more about

Zonta Says NOW

at

zonta.org

or

email

info@zontasaysnow.org.au

Thank you.