



# DISTRICT 27 AREA 06

MEMBER OF ZONTA INTERNATIONAL

BUILD A BETTER WORLD  
FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

## Areameeting 4 mei 2024 Federaal Parlement

D 27 area 06  
Biennium 2022-2024



**United in Sisterhood**  
Biennium 2022-2024



## Report Areameeting

On the 4th of May, a momentous occasion has been shared as the esteemed members of Zonta International Area 06 came together for their final area meeting of the Biennium 2022-2024 with a challenging theme for a panel discussion: Embracing the future of ZONTA: a forward thinking journey for a brighter future for women and girls.

This area meeting, attended by 70 dedicated Zontians, exemplified our Zonta-community and celebrated the collective commitment to advance our goals forward while commemorating the milestones we've



Graced by the esteemed presence of our distinguished leaders, **Dr. Ute Noeske, District 27 Governor of Zonta International**, and **Mrs. Christiane Lemberg, District 27 Chair Advocacy**, the event resonated with a profound sense of purpose and Sisterhood.



Additionally, we were honored to welcome the first lady, **President of the Senate, Mrs Stephanie D'Hose** and the **Alterman of the City of Brussels, Mrs Lydia Mutyebele** as well as the directors general from our well respected and likeminded sister organizations from UN Women, UNFPA, GUBERNA, and IVGM, whose wealth of knowledge and experience enriched our knowledge and discussions.



We, the audience, were privileged to gain invaluable insights shared by esteemed speakers, each offering a unique perspective on pivotal issues:



**Birgit Van Hout, the Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**, shared with us her profound expertise on combatting gender-related violence and eradicating child marriage. Her unwavering dedication to championing human rights and her leadership at UNFPA have been instrumental in propelling global endeavors towards gender equality and the protection of the rights of vulnerable populations.



**Sandra Gobert, the Executive Director of GUBERNA**, illuminated our discourse with her profound insights into corporate governance and sustainability. With eloquence and expertise, she emphasized the paramount importance of diversity within boardrooms, underscoring how inclusive governance structures foster balanced and effective decision-making within organizations. Her clear commitment to this cause and her leadership roles render her a beacon of inspiration in advocating for equitable leadership.

Her tireless efforts have stood as a beacon, driving forward the cause of women's rights and advocating for their indispensable role in climate action. Through her leadership, she has not only championed equitable representation but also ensured that the voices and needs of women and girls are prominently considered in our collective pursuit of environmental sustainability.

### **Birgit Van Hout**

Birgit's speech started with thanking Zonta International for their continuous support of UNFPA and her insights reminded us profoundly of the critical role we play in combating gender-based violence and ending child marriage. With deep honor, she underscored Zonta International's strategic commitment to this cause, recognizing the far-reaching negative impacts these practices inflict on individuals, families, and societies.

Birgit eloquently highlighted the harrowing realities faced by young girls forced into child marriages, from exposure to sexual violence to the deprivation of education and economic independence. She brought to light the severe health risks, including high maternal and infant mortality rates, underscoring the urgent need for action.

Despite these challenges, Birgit instilled hope by sharing the progress achieved through UNFPA's strategic initiatives in high-prevalence countries. Through community engagement and comprehensive support services, 1.2 million girls have been reintegrated into education, signaling tangible progress in the fight against child marriage.

In conclusion, Birgit's impassioned plea for continued advocacy and partnership resonates deeply. She calls upon organizations like Zonta to sustain momentum and work collaboratively to eradicate child marriages, ensuring a future where every girl can realize her full potential.

### **Sandra Gobert**

Sandra's talk illuminated the indispensable role of diversity in boardrooms, a cornerstone of GUBERNA's mission to cultivate inclusive governance structures. She eloquently articulated the transformative power of diverse perspectives, emphasizing how they catalyze innovation and elevate decision-making processes.

Highlighting the strides made in increasing female representation on corporate boards in Belgium, Sandra acknowledged the progress while acknowledging the journey ahead. Despite significant gains, she underscored the need for continued efforts, particularly in diversifying top executive roles and chairperson positions.

Expanding the discourse beyond gender, she emphasized the multifaceted nature of diversity, encompassing nationality, professional background, age, and personality. She underscored the importance of tailoring diversity



**Maritza Formisano Prada, the Deputy Director of UN Women Brussels Office**, delivered a poignant speech on the convergence of gender (in)equality and climate change. Her



initiatives to meet the unique needs of each enterprise, aligning with international directives aimed at enhancing gender diversity in leadership roles.

In closing, Sandra reaffirmed GUBERNA's commitment to fostering diversity as a catalyst for building stronger, more resilient organizations and, ultimately, a better world.

### **Maritza Formisano Prada**

Martitza's speech at our Area Meeting was a profound acknowledgment of the intersectionality between gender equality and climate change. With heartfelt gratitude, she commended Zonta International for its commitment to addressing this pressing issue, recognizing the disproportionate impact it has on women and girls worldwide.

Maritza passionately emphasized the urgent need for action, highlighting how climate and environmental crises exacerbate existing gender inequalities, leading to heightened risks of violence, health issues, and economic hardships. She warned against the potential reversal of hard-won gains in women's rights and called for immediate integration of gender considerations into climate policies and financing mechanisms at all levels.

Drawing from successful partnerships and initiatives, Maritza outlined strategies to empower women economically while enhancing climate resilience. She stressed the importance of supporting women's organizations and fostering female leadership in green and blue economies, citing inspiring examples from around the globe.

Maritza's stirring call for solidarity and partnership resonates deeply. She urges us to join forces in advancing gender equality and climate resilience, paving the way for a future where every individual, regardless of gender, can thrive in harmony with our planet.

### **Panel discussion**

The inspiring panel discussion, expertly moderated by Fien Sabbe of the VRT, encapsulated the essence of the insightful contributions shared. Each perspective offered valuable insights, empowering us all to reflect and integrate these wisdom nuggets into our future endeavors.

Closing the discussion, a gospel choir uplifted spirits with soul-stirring renditions of "Amen" and "Oh Happy Day," embodying the joy and inspiration felt by all present. This harmonious conclusion affirmed the transformative power of collective dialogue and celebration, leaving an indelible mark on our hearts and minds.

### **Honoring ceremony**

At last but not least, a ceremony held to honor the Club Presidents and members of the Area Board was a testament to the power of collective dedication and service. Each was graciously celebrated with a Zonta bracelet, a symbol of unity and solidarity crafted with care by a fellow Zontian from Metz.

Amidst heartfelt expressions of gratitude, the commitment of the Area Director was acknowledged, illuminating the profound impact of her leadership during her tenure. Her tireless efforts have not only enriched our community but have also paved the way for a brighter future.

As the ceremony concluded, the energy of sisterhood flourished during the networking reception and walking lunch. Here, amidst shared laughter and warm conversations, the torch of leadership was gracefully passed as the outgoing Area Director extended heartfelt congratulations to her successor, imparting blessings for a successful journey ahead.



### Guided Tour

As the afternoon knocked on the door, 40 Zontians embarked on an exclusive journey into the “behind-the-scenes” areas of the Belgian Federal Parliament and Senate. This tour not only provided a rare glimpse into the heart of governance but also served as a catalyst for enriched discussions and newfound perspectives.

### In Conclusion

As we concluded our exploration, a sense of gratitude filled the air, echoing the collective dedication to our shared goals. In every corner of the parliamentary halls, the indomitable spirit of Zonta, the spirit of unity, was palpable to all who were present.

In moments like these, we are reminded of the power of collaboration and the beauty of shared experiences. Let us carry forward this spirit of Sisterhood and inspiration, knowing that together, we can achieve remarkable feats and make a lasting impact on the world around us.





## Area meeting in pictures





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## AREA MEETING 2024





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# I have a dream ZONTA

Composer

1 I have a dream give wo - men wings

5 it helps us cope with an y - thing

9 if you see the po - wer of the Zon-ta clan you can take the

14 challenge you can get it done I be lieve in

18 Zonta gi-ving wo-men rights and dig - ni - ty I be -lieve in

22 Zonta wo-men live world-wide in li - ber - ty I dream these

26 things give wo - men wings

Creatie Districtboard 2010-2012  
 Governor  
 Frieda Demey



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