

INTERNATIONAL HELVI SIPILÄ SEMINAR AT THE CSW SINCE 2006

Helvi Sipilä (1915 – 2009) was a Finnish lawyer, diplomat and the first female Assistant Secretary-General of the UN. Sipilä received numerous national and international awards including twelve honorary doctorates, and she was granted the honorary title of Minister in 2001. She also held leadership position in several associations, including the International Federation of Women Lawyers and the International Council of Women.

Helvi Sipilä's profession in law was exceptional at the time. When she announced the opening of her own law firm in 1943, she became the second woman in the Finnish history to practice as a lawyer. She ran her own law firm for 30 years. Private entrepreneurship enabled her to engage in extensive social activities, including service as a member of governmental missions.

While Assistant Secretary-General, she was appointed Secretary-General of the UN World Conference on Women in Mexico 1975. She continued to work as a consultant for the UN until 1981, in order to promote the UN Voluntary Fund for the Advancement of Women, later known as UNIFEM (part of UN Women), set up during the UN Decade for Women 1976 - 1985.

Helvi Sipilä was a well-known and respected advocate for equality and women's rights. Her important legacy will live on. The first international Helvi Sipilä Seminar was organized at the CSW50 in 2006 by the Finnish Federation of University Women (FFUW) in collaboration with four other Finnish Women's organizations to honor the work of Minister Helvi Sipilä.



14th International Helvi Sipilä Seminar

MY BODY IS MINE - how free contraception is linked to empowerment and education

Thursday, 14 March 2019, 10 – 11.15 am
- breakfast served

Permanent Mission of Finland to the United Nations
605 Third Avenue, 35 Floor, N.Y.

[Registrations before 8 March 2019](#)

THE INTERNATIONAL HELVI SIPILÄ SEMINAR series addresses challenging issues that affect women and their lives locally and globally in the 21st century. The event organized during the CSW63 is the 14th seminar in this series.



PROGRAM



Opening

Terhi Heinilä, Secretary General,
The National Council of Women of Finland



How free contraception promotes reproductive and sexual rights

Marjo Lyyra, President,
The Federation of Finnish Midwives



Empowering the youth – the politics of free contraception

Sanna Vesikansa, Deputy mayor for Social Services and Health Care of Helsinki



Access to contraception: a way to address unsafe abortion in Zimbabwe

Edinah Masiyiwa, Executive Director,
Women's Action Group Zimbabwe



Revolutionary Effects of Accessible Family Planning

Stacy Dry Lara, Executive Director,
Graduate Women International (GWI)



Young women's transformative leadership and advocacy in SRHR

Jill Anami, gender specialist, YWCA Kenya



Closing

Katri Viinikka, Ambassador for Gender Equality,
Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

Chair of the seminar

Sari Kuusela, Finnish Federation of Graduate Women

CONCEPT NOTE

CSW63 – 14th INTERNATIONAL HELVI SIPILÄ SEMINAR

14 March 2019

Family planning is one aspect of the targets around universal access to sexual and reproductive health found in the SDGs. With the title **My body is mine - how free contraception is linked to empowerment and education** the seminar will present cases across the globe of how the free contraception has empowered girls to attend school and graduate as well promotes reproductive and sexual rights.

We seek to raise awareness of the benefits of free contraception and further its implementation across the globe. These questions will be examined at the Helvi Sipilä seminar from different angles by our distinguished **speakers**:

Marjo Lyyra (The Federation of Finnish Midwives) will present the benefits of offering free contraception to Finnish youth.

Sanna Vesikansa (The City of Helsinki) will present how did Helsinki implement free contraception for young people. What were the lessons learned and what can other cities, communities and other policy makers learn from the experience?

Edinah Masiyiwa (Women's Action Group Zimbabwe) will highlight the benefits of making contraceptives available to young women as way of addressing unsafe abortions.

Stacy Dry Lara (Graduate Women International GWI) will examine the relationship between the sustainable development goals and reproductive health rights; and the positive effect accessible public services have on girls' education and economies.

Jill Anami (YWCA Kenya) will give us young women's perspectives on leading, advocating and realising their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The seminar is organized jointly by the Finnish Federation of Graduate Women, the National Council of Women of Finland, the Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations – NYTKIS, Finland National Committee for UN Women and the Young Women's Christian Association of Finland YWCA.