



8<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL  
HELVI SIPILÄ SEMINAR

ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN -  
GLOBAL AND NORDIC PERSPECTIVES

March 6<sup>th</sup> 2013  
2:00-4:00 pm

Scandinavia House  
Victor Borge Hall  
58 Park Avenue @ 38th Street  
New York, NY 10016



# ORGANIZERS OF THE SEMINAR

## **Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations NYTKIS**

*[www.nytkis.org](http://www.nytkis.org)*

The Coalition of Finnish Women's Associations NYTKIS is a co-operation forum that brings together women's associations from several key sectors of society, e.g. from the political and research sectors. The objectives of NYTKIS are to achieve equality between women and men and to end discrimination against women.

## **Finnish Federation of University Women FFUW**

*[www.akateemisetnaiset.fi](http://www.akateemisetnaiset.fi), [www.ifuw.org](http://www.ifuw.org)*

FFUW advocates for the improvement of the status of women and girls, promotes gender equality, lifelong education and international understanding. It encourages graduate women to employ their expertise for the good of society. FFUW is a member of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW).

## **Finnish National Committee for UN Women**

*[www.unwomen.fi](http://www.unwomen.fi), [www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org)*

The objective of the National Committee for UN Women in Finland is to support the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in promoting women's status and human rights. The National Committee for UN Women in Finland was established in 1981, as the first National Committee for UNIFEM.

## **National Council of Women of Finland**

*[www.naisjarjestot.fi](http://www.naisjarjestot.fi), [www.icw-cif.info](http://www.icw-cif.info)*

The National Council of Women of Finland has over sixty member organizations. The Council acts as a national link and a forum for discussion for its member organizations. The Council's objective is to promote equality, human rights and the status of women in the Finnish society.

## **YWCA Finland**

*[www.ywca.fi](http://www.ywca.fi), [www.ywca.org](http://www.ywca.org)*

YWCA's work is to empower young women for leadership and social justice. The World YWCA's current priority advocacy areas are eliminating violence against women and girls, intergenerational leadership and promoting women's participation in peace building. In Finland, the national association comprises 26 associations in 22 locations.

# PROGRAM

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## Opening of the seminar

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Welcoming words by Mr Paavo Arhinmäki  
Minister for Gender Equality of Finland

Opening Address by Ms Meryem Aslan  
Chief of UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women

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## Panel Discussion

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### Chair

Professor Helena Ranta  
President, Finnish Federation of University Women

### Panelists

Ms Johanna Pakkanen (Finland)  
Secretary General of NYTKIS, The Coalition of Finnish Women's Association

Ms Randi Iversen (Denmark)  
Chairperson for the Danish Women's Council (Kvinderådet/KR)

Ms Lone Alice Johansen (Norway)  
Head of Information for the Norwegian Shelter Movement

Ms Angela Beausang (Sweden)  
Chairwoman, Roks - The National Organisation for  
Women's Shelters and Young Women's Shelters in Sweden

Ms Michelle Higelin (World YWCA)  
Deputy General Secretary

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# MINISTER HELVI SIPILÄ 1915-2009

HELVI SIPILÄ 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. Helvi Sipilä also held leadership position in several associations, including the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, 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 November 1943, she became only the second woman in Finnish history to practise 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. They included such duties as membership of the UN Commission on the Status of Women from 1960 to 1968 and from 1971 to 1972, serving as Vice President between 1962 and 1966 and President in 1967, and membership of the UN delegation of Finland from 1966 to 1971, including Presidency of the Third Commission in 1971 and Vice Presidency in 1969. She was also appointed UN Special Rapporteur on the Status of Women and Family Planning (1968-1972).

Helvi Sipilä's profession and leadership positions in international organizations, together with the governmental duties, were merits on the basis of which she – as the first woman in the world – was appointed Assistant Secretary-General of the UN in 1972. She held this post until her retirement in 1980. While Assistant Secretary-General, she was appointed Secretary-General of the UN World Conference on Women in Mexico in 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, 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.