

# UN pays tribute to the Organization's founding mothers

Women have played a pivotal role in the United Nations since its inception in 1945, including in the first international agreement proclaiming gender equality as a fundamental human right: the [UN Charter](#).

According to recent studies from scholarly research, women delegates from developing countries, or the Global South, played a significant role in ensuring that the Charter made specific mention of gender rights. And yet, out of the 850 delegates who signed the historic document, only four were women.

Speaking on Tuesday at an event headlined, *Women and the Origins of the United Nations – a Southern Legacy*, Maria Luiza Viotti, UN [Chef de Cabinet](#), said that even as the world body works for equality today, “we must also remember our history.”

“That means paying tribute to the pioneers from the early years of the struggle,” she added.

The event honouring the women of developing countries who defended their rights more than seven decades ago, provided not only long-overdue recognition today, but also served to correct an incomplete historical narrative, which failed to reflect the role of women from countries like Brazil, the Dominican Republic, India, Mexico, Pakistan, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Ms. Viotti recalled their push to defend women’s rights, and inspire a global shift in recognition, when many of the countries at the 1945 [San Francisco Conference](#), did not even allow women to vote.

“Since then, the UN has elaborated an extensive body of laws, standards and norms articulating women’s rights – from the opportunities to which they are entitled to the protections they must be assured,” she continued, noting that today, it presses for gender parity not just across the world but across the world body itself.

“The struggle continues. Laws and goals on paper are essential. But what is needed even more is tangible steps to bring these rules and rights to life,” concluded Ms. Viotti.