

Julia Maciel González, Paraguay

Counsellor of the Mission of Paraguay to the UN, Former Minister of Planning

On women in senior public life: “Unless we get involved, we cannot change the system.”

Overcoming challenges: “You have a conviction, that’s what I say. You have a conviction and that conviction is what provides the resilience and persistence: you fall and you get up. Like Gandhi said, ‘Be the change that you want to see in the world’: become the message. Other leaders that you see in the world, why have they succeeded? Because they became the message. So, I have that conviction in the broader goal of my work and if you see your goal clear, it helps you overcome all these frustrations along the way.”

On being one of few women Ministers: “I succeeded because sometimes I had to work three or four times more than men in order to have myself respected.”

Lessons: “If you want to be a leader, the first thing you have to recognise, humbly, is that you don’t know everything; this helps you to find opportunities to learn, to enrich and hopefully to do something for the rest.”

“First of all, you have to dream; you have to have a goal and an objective. Dream big and I’ll tell you something, it’s only as far as you can see that you can go; only as high as you can reach that you can achieve and only as big as you can dream that you can become. You will find difficulties everywhere but you have to keep fighting.”

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