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Preface to the Spanish Edition

The objective of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) is to promote and advance sustainable democracy and to improve and consolidate electoral processes worldwide. In this regard, IDEA is committed to contributing to the debate to advance gender and democracy issues in general, and to promote women's participation and representation in political life.

The objective of IDEA's gender work is to enhance the political participation of women by firstly, compiling research on how women can impact on political processes through their participation, and secondly, by identifying areas in which further information, research and assistance may be required. To this end, the *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers Handbook* was published in 1998. The handbook identifies the obstacles that women face being elected to legislatures, and provides some suggestions and options for overcoming them. It also seeks to move beyond numbers, by identifying the ways in which women can impact on political processes through their participation in decision-making bodies.

Since its release in 1998, there has been an overwhelming interest and demand for the handbook from those advocating for change in all regions around the world. Now, International IDEA has embarked upon a series of regional versions of the handbook. This Spanish version is based on the original English handbook published in 1998. This version builds on the original text, which has been updated and revised, with the addition of a chapter on Latin America and five additional case studies from various Latin American countries to illustrate the different experiences of women in parliaments in the region. Therefore, it is not a mere translation but a regionalization of the handbook to address and bring attention to the experiences of women in parliaments in Latin American.

This handbook would not have been possible if it were not for the groundbreaking and excellent contributions of many individuals. Azza Karam was the driving force behind the production of the English handbook in 1998, and we thank her for her advice and assistance during the production of this regional version.

We thank all the authors who made this handbook possible with their contributions and assistance with updates in this volume: Gehan Abu-Zayd, Drude Dahlerup, Frene Ginwala, Azza Karam, Joni Lovenduski, Richard E. Matland, Mavivi Myakayaka-Manzini, Karen Olsen de Figueres, Christine Pintat, Shirin Rai and Nadezdha Shvedova. We are grateful to the additional authors in this edition: Elisa María Carrio, Piedad Córdoba Ruiz, Lourdes Flores Nano, Mala N. Htun, Nineth Montenegro, Nina Pacari and Jacqueline Peschard.

The main responsibility of producing this Latin American version lay with Julie Ballington and Myriam Mendez-Montalvo. Gender Project Manager, Julie Ballington laid the groundwork for regional versions of the handbook. She was instrumental in steering this handbook to completion, and provided much of the substantive and editorial input. Myriam Mendez-Montalvo, Senior Programme Officer for Latin America, likewise provided conceptual guidance, invaluable editorial input and substantive advice on the new contents of this version, and was key to the finalization of the handbook. Program Managers Reg Austin, Patrick Molutsi and Daniel Zovatto are to be acknowledged for their guidance and substantive input in the process.

Thanks are also due to the production team, notably Peter Stephens and Ana Spross for their work on the production of this publication. Antonio Delgado-Duarte provided excellent editorial support, and Anoli Perera provided the creative artwork. Thanks also to Kate Sullivan, Ana Victoria Soto, Virginia Bermendi-Heine and Ana Lucia Escudero for their contributions. Much thanks are also extended to Jeff Fischer and The International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) for providing great support for the work that took place in Washington for the production of this new version.

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possible.

Lastly, as this publication builds on the earlier version, we renew our thanks to all those who were involved in the production of the English version of the handbook in 1998. We hope they will take pride in the sharing of their ideas and expertise through this translation and adaptation of the original handbook into the Latin American context.

KAREN FOGG,

Secretary-General, International IDEA

ERLING OLSEN

*Former Secretary-General,
International IDEA
Former Speaker of Parliament, Denmark*