

International IDEA, 2002, *Women in Parliament*, Stockholm (<http://www.idea.int>). This is an English translation of “Préface” in *Les Femmes au parlement : Au-Delà du Nombre*, International IDEA, Stockholm, Sweden 2002. (This translation may vary slightly from the original text. If there are discrepancies in the meaning, the original French version is the definitive text).

Preface – French Edition

International IDEA's objective 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 French 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 three case studies from Francophone West Africa, and a case study on the evolution and implications of the Parity Law in France. Therefore, it is not just a translation but a regionalization of the handbook to address and bring attention to the experiences of women in legislatures in selected Francophone countries.

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 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, Christine Pintat, Shirin Rai, Nadezdha Shvedova and Hege Skjeie. We are grateful to the additional authors in this edition: Nestorine Compaore, Grâce d'Almeida, Aissata de Diop, Mariette Sineau and Alice Tiendrebeogo-Kaboret.

The main responsibility for producing this version lay with Julie Ballington, Gender Project Manager, who was instrumental in steering this handbook to completion, and provided much of the substantive and editorial input with the new contents. Patrick Molutsi, Programme Manager, likewise provided invaluable editorial input and substantive advice on the new case studies in this version. Much gratitude is owed to Marie-Jose Protais, who edited the handbook for substance, clarity and accuracy. Hélène Ahlberger was instrumental in the finalization of the handbook, and we are especially grateful to her for her advice and logistic support. Programme Manager Reg Austin, and former Senior Programme Officer for Francophone Africa, Momar Diop, are to be acknowledged for their guidance and input in the process.

Augustin Loada and Amina Ouedraogo from the Centre for Democratic Governance in Burkina Faso are thanked for their support and assistance with the new case studies. Thanks are also due to the production team, notably Peter Stephens and Ana Spross for their work on the production of this publication. The creative artwork is courtesy of Anoli Perera, and Amadou Bissiri, Anna Nordenmark and Kate Sullivan are acknowledged for their contributions and assistance.

We also thank International IDEA's member states, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) for support that made the production of this handbook 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 French.



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