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- Blends research and field experience, develops methodologies and provides training to improve democratic processes;
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# Women in Parliament

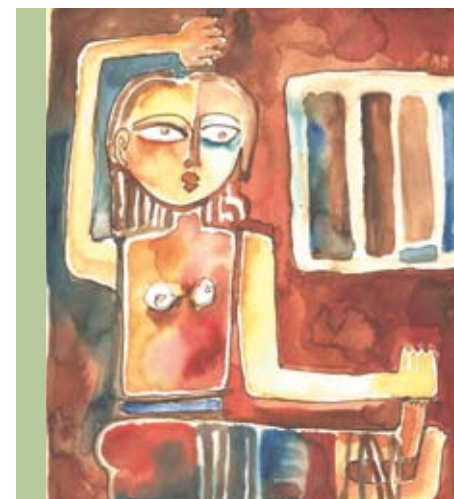
## Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers

*A Revised Edition*



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# Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers

**A Revised Edition**

**Foreword by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf,  
President of the Republic of Liberia**

*Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers – A Revised Edition* covers women's access to the legislature in three steps: it looks into the obstacles women confront when entering parliament; it presents solutions to overcome these obstacles, such as changing electoral systems and introducing quotas; and it details strategies for women to influence politics once they are elected to parliament, an institution which is traditionally male dominated.

Little research had been done so far on the extent of female parliamentarians' influence on politics. The past decade has seen gradual progress with regard to women's presence in national parliaments.

This second edition of *Women in Parliament* incorporates relevant global changes and presents new and updated case studies. With this Handbook, the focus shifts from getting more women elected, to giving those elected the means to make a greater impact on politics. Key findings include:

- It is not all about numbers – While a critical mass of women is necessary to ensure women's representation, the quality of the representation is just as important. Training is crucial to avoid the trap of electing "token women".
- Gender perspectives, not gender issues – Women elected to parliament change politics globally: they introduce a women's perspective into all areas of political life.
- Representation means more than elected politics – It means that more women must have seats at the Cabinet table, more women must be appointed to senior decision-making positions, and more women's voices must be heard and included when major political reform or transformation is undertaken.

Written by politicians, researchers and activists, the Handbook targets first and foremost female parliamentarians and those campaigning for office. It is also of use to a wide range of actors working to promote the participation and representation of women in political structures as well as members of civil society, including activists, academics, researchers and journalists working to advance women in politics.

*"The Handbook is at once an overview, an analysis and a guide, focused on the obstacles faced by women, the means of overcoming them, the modalities of impacting on and through legislative structures, and the varied and rich experiences available around the world from which to learn.*

*Each moment we live through is a turning point in history, each event a symbol of what is transpiring. This Handbook is one such event in a rapidly changing, and ever interesting, moment in our global human development."*

From the Foreword by Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf,  
President of the Republic of Liberia

## Contents:

### Chapter 1. Introduction

Provides a background and an overview of the objectives, as well as highlights the main findings.

### Chapter 2. Obstacles to Women's Participation in Parliament

Identifies the problems that affect the political participation of women, categorized into political, socio-economic and psychological factors.

### Chapter 3. Enhancing Women's Political Participation: Legislative Recruitment and Electoral Systems

Illustrates the consequences of different electoral systems. While they alone do not determine the level of representation of women, electoral systems are important because they help determine who is elected, how a campaign is fought, the role of political parties, and most importantly, who governs. This chapter also highlights the impact of political parties as they assume the primary responsibility for candidate nomination.

### Chapter 4. Increasing Women's Political Representation: New Trends in Gender Quotas

Examines quota systems and how they have come to play a critical role in increasing the representation of women. It provides the various arguments for and against the use of quotas and gives comparative examples of their implementation around the world.

### Chapter 5. Women in Parliament: Making a Difference

Shifts the focus to how women can move 'beyond numbers' in parliament to make an impact on the political process. This chapter outlines how women can reform the inherent 'institutional masculinity' which characterizes most legislatures. It also suggests a framework for and acting on the question of how women can enhance their parliamentary decision-making power. The Handbook identifies three key areas: learning the rules, using the rules and changing the rules.

### Chapter 6. Conclusions

#### Case studies

The Handbook includes case studies from Argentina, Burkina Faso, Ecuador, France, Indonesia, Rwanda, South Africa and Sweden, as well as regional overviews from the Arab World, Latin America, South Asia and a case study on the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).