

WOMEN AND POWER IN THE AMERICAS: A REPORT CARD

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Introduction

In 1975, female politicians and women's groups from around the world met in Mexico City for the U.N.'s First World Conference on Women. They discussed the plight of women, from their absence in politics to the unique social and economic problems women face, and devised a set of recommendations for improving women's status. These recommendations laid the groundwork for the U.N. Convention on Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was passed in 1978 and has since been ratified by almost every country in the world. The most specific plan of action emerged from the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 in Beijing in the form of the Beijing "Platform for Action." Since Beijing, countries have made significant progress toward implementing recommendations in the Platform, and numerous international and regional organizations have followed up on the success of the Beijing meeting with meetings and efforts of their own (such as the Summits of the Americas) to encourage countries' compliance with the recommendations.

CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action encourage states to take steps to end discrimination against women and promote women's equality. They recommend that states remove discriminatory language from laws and constitutions, establish government institutions to monitor and promote gender equality, and pass legislation to eliminate economic, social, and political inequality for women. The plans address a wide range of problems that women face including poverty, sex trafficking, limited reproductive health freedoms, violence against women, inequality in marriage and divorce rights, lack of access to education, discrimination in the workplace, and limited roles in political decision-making. They also suggest ways countries can eliminate these problems. Efforts thus far show progress toward achieving the goals of women's equality, but while discrimination against women has been reduced, it is far from eliminated.

This report focuses specifically on the progress that countries in the Americas have made getting women into positions of decision-making power. Increased access to political power is not only a goal in itself but can facilitate compliance with other aspects of these international and regional accords. This report updates the Inter-American Dialogue's 2000 report on the status of women in politics. It begins by describing women's representation today and the changes experienced in recent years. Then, it examines some reasons why women's representation has increased and why it continues to vary widely across countries. It includes a separate section on the important role of affirmative action measures, specifically gender quotas, which have played a key role in women's increased access to decision-making. Finally, it offers recommendations to build on past accomplishments and ensure continued progress for the future.

The overarching conclusion of this report is that women's participation in the political arena has increased, but there is still room for improvement. Women's gains have been most impressive at the national level. Chile and Jamaica elected female presidents for the first time, the proportion of women in cabinets has grown from 14 percent in 2000 to 21 percent in 2006, and women's representation in national legislatures has increased from 14 percent in 2000 to 19 percent in

2006. At the subnational level, women are less visible. Of countries in the Americas with gubernatorial offices, women comprised only 11 percent of governors, on average in 2006. At the mayoral level, only 6 percent of mayors were female in the early 1990's.¹ While the progress women have made is remarkable, it varies widely across countries in the Americas. And, most importantly, women have not achieved parity with men across the board in any country. Despite the accomplishments of the past six years, there is much work to be done to reach the goal of gender equality in political decision-making in the Americas.

Where Are Women?

Women in the Americas have made great strides gaining access to the traditionally male-dominated political arena. From the top office of president or prime minister to ministerial positions in the executive branch to national legislatures and governorships, the numbers of women have increased over the past thirty years.

(See Figure 1 in Annex)

Chief Executives

On March 11, 2006, Michelle Bachelet was inaugurated President of Chile, becoming the first woman to hold the top political position in the country. A few weeks later, Portia Simpson-Miller became the first female prime minister of Jamaica. Both elections were heralded as examples of the significant progress women have made toward equality and political advancement in the Americas. While Ms. Bachelet became the first democratically elected president in the Americas who has not achieved prominence through the political connections of a male relative, she is not the first woman ever to be the chief executive of a country in the Americas. Thirteen women have served in the top post. Eight have served as interim leaders for short terms of 2 years or less. The other three, excluding Ms. Bachelet and Ms. Simpson-Miller, have served full terms in office, though had influential family connections to politics.

(See Table 1 in Annex)

In addition to the successful elections of Michelle Bachelet and Portia Simpson-Miller, the past six years have seen growing numbers of women running, albeit unsuccessfully, for the office of chief executive. To win the Concertación's nomination as presidential candidate in Chile, Bachelet had to defeat another woman, Christian Democratic candidate Soledad Alvear. In Peru, Lourdes Flores was a frontrunner for many months in the first round of the 2006 presidential election. She lost by less than one percentage point to Alan García who went on to defeat Ollanta Humala in the run-off election. That same election saw another female candidate, Martha Chavez, come in fourth. This was Flores' second near-miss. She was also a candidate in the 2001 presidential election where she lost in the first round by one and a half percentage points to García.

Cabinet Ministers

The number of women appointed to ministerial positions has increased as well. Today, Chile is the only country with parity in its cabinet. This is a result of a concerted effort on the part of

¹ Comparative data on mayoral offices are scarce.

newly elected president Michelle Bachelet to appoint women and men in equal numbers to her cabinet. Several other countries are close behind Chile: 41 percent of the cabinet in Paraguay is female, Peru's cabinet is 38 percent female, and Honduras and Colombia have 33 percent and 31 percent, respectively. All of these cases represent significant increases since 2000.

(See Figure 2 in Annex)

Several things have contributed to the recent increase in women cabinet members – a diffusion effect such that after one country adds women to its cabinet, others quickly follow; the rise of leftist parties and presidents who tend to appoint more women to cabinet posts than do rightist leaders; increased party competition in recent elections; and the growing numbers of women in legislatures, particularly in parliamentary systems where cabinet members must be members of parliament.² Colombia's success is due, in part, to its May 2000 gender quota law for political appointments. The law mandates that fifty percent of all politically appointed posts, most visibly the president's cabinet, must be filled by women. Colombia is the only country to have passed such a law for political appointments, but other countries have made explicit efforts to increase women's access to ministerial positions.

In addition to the increased numbers of women in cabinets, the types of ministries that women head has diversified.³ Today, women in many countries occupy top bureaucratic posts in ministries with high prestige, such as defense, foreign relations, economics, finance, and agriculture. For example, after his 2002 election, Álvaro Uribe appointed Martha Lucía Ramírez to be Colombia's first female defense minister. Michelle Bachelet also served as defense minister of Chile before running for president, and Soledad Alvear served as foreign minister before her bid for the Concertación candidacy. This is an important change from the past when the few women who were appointed to cabinets usually received posts in less powerful ministries dealing with traditionally feminine issues such as health, education, and social services, or more recently, women's ministries.

National Legislatures

Representation of women in national legislatures, both lower and upper houses, has grown significantly in recent years. Just since 2000, the average proportion of women in congresses has increased 4 percentage points from 15 percent in 2000 to 19 percent today. In 1980, the average percentage of women in legislatures in the Americas was only 5 percent.

(See Table 2 in Annex)

The 19 percent Americas average obscures wide variation in women's representation by country. With the 2006 election, the percentage of women in Costa Rica's Legislative Assembly grew from 35 percent to 39 percent, making it tied with Argentina as the country in the Americas with the highest representation of women. At the other end of the spectrum, several countries are still struggling to get anywhere close to the Americas' average. Averaging across both legislative chambers, Guatemala has the smallest representation of women with only 8.5 percent of the

² Escobar-Lemmon, Maria C., and Michelle M. Taylor-Robinson. 2005. Women Ministers in Latin American Government: When, Where, and Why? *American Journal of Political Science* 49 (4):829-844.

³ Ibid.

Congress of the Republic comprised by women. Other legislative chambers with very small proportions of women include Haiti's lower house (4 percent) and the upper houses of the Dominican Republic (3 percent), Bolivia (4 percent), and Chile (5 percent).

A couple of chambers witnessed significant gains in women's representation in the past six years. Argentina's Chamber of Deputies and Senate both surpassed the 30 percent gender quota stipulated by law. In Peru, the percentage of women in the legislature increased 9 percentage points and Ecuador, it increased from 15 percent to 25 percent with the 2006 election. Honduras saw an increase from 5.5 percent to 23 percent after its 2005 election.

Not only have more women won legislative election in the past six years, but they have also gained access to top leadership positions within some legislative chambers. Nancy Pelosi became the first female Speaker of the House in the United States after the Democratic Party won the majority of seats in the House of Representatives in 2006. In 1999, the Colombian Chamber of Representatives elected its first female President followed by another in 2005. The Colombian Senate elected its first female President in 2005, as well. Costa Rica has had 3 women serve as President of the Legislative Assembly, two since 1999. In Bolivia, an indigenous woman was elected to head the Constituent Assembly that is rewriting the Bolivian constitution.

Governors

Recent reforms in Latin American countries have decentralized political and fiscal power to regional and local governments yielding a new locus of power in which women can be involved. Yet, women are only slowly gaining access to these positions, as evidenced by the fact that only 11 percent of governorships in the Americas are held by women. The three countries where women comprise the largest percentage of governorships are Chile, Honduras, and Panama with 46 percent, 33 percent, and 25 percent, respectively. In all three of these countries, governors are not popularly elected but appointed by the country's president. Six countries currently have no women serving as governors: Argentina, Bolivia, Canada, Cuba, Peru, and Uruguay. Argentina and Cuba are particularly surprising given the large percentages of women serving in their national legislatures.

(See Table 3 in Annex)

The proportion of mayors who are female traditionally has been small. In the early 1990's, women comprised only 6 percent of Latin America mayors, and between 1990 and 2000, there was only a very small increase in the number of female mayors across the Americas.⁴ In a rare exception, Costa Rica saw a rapid rise in the number of female mayors with its 2002 election when women were elected to 46 percent of the mayoral offices. This resulted, in part, from 2002 being the first year that mayors were elected rather than appointed and from the 1996 gender quota law that applied not only to national elections but subnational elections as well. In the

⁴ Massolo, Alejandra. 1998. "Women in the Local Arena and Municipal Power" in *Women's Participation in Mexican Political Life*, ed. Victoria E. Rodriguez. Boulder: Westview Press, 193-203.

United States, the proportion of female mayors was higher than the average for the Americas with 17 percent of mayoral offices held by women in 2006.⁵

In most of the Americas, women have gained access to sub-national governments much more slowly than national governments. This contrasts with the United States where local offices are viewed as stepping stones toward national political office, and consequently, women have entered local government much more rapidly than national government. This is due, in part, to the fact that political and fiscal decentralization has been relatively recent in most Latin American countries (past 10 to 20 years) such that local political offices have only recently become elected political positions with limited but growing political and fiscal power.⁶ It also reflects the emphasis of most gender quota laws, which have been designed more often for national legislative offices rather than sub-national governments.

Summary

Women in the Americas have made significant gains increasing their numbers as chief executives, ministers, national legislators, and some local officeholders. However, the regional averages are still under 20 percent for most offices – far from equality with men – and the progress made by different countries varies significantly with some countries getting much closer to the international goals of parity in decision-making than others. What explains these differences and how can countries continue moving toward the goal of gender equality in representation?

Why Has Women's Representation Increased?

There are a wide range of factors that affect women's election to political office including characteristics of the socioeconomic environment, party rules, and electoral rules.⁷ These factors influence different stages of the election process from getting individuals into the "candidate pool" (the body of citizens who have the experience and qualifications to be a candidate for political office) to recruiting candidates from the pool to serve on party ballots, to finally, electing representatives from those ballots.

The socioeconomic environment in a country favors the election of women where countries are more economically developed, where women are getting university degrees in equal proportion to men, and where more women participate in the paid labor force. The growing numbers of women getting college educations and entering the workforce over the past forty years has contributed to the increased representation of women in political offices. As women become more educated and economically independent, they gain experiences and qualifications that make them viable contenders for political office. This makes them more attractive candidates to political parties and voters. Increasing the number of women in the candidate pool is an

⁵ Center for American Women and Politics, CAWP. 2007. Facts and Finds: Women Mayors. Accessed from <http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/Facts/Officeholders/mayors-curr.html> [February 28, 2007]. Percentage is for mayors of cities with more than 30,000 citizens.

⁶ For example, Colombia only began electing governors in 1994 and Costa Rica only elected mayors for the first time in 2002.

⁷ Rule, Wilma. 1987. Electoral Systems, Contextual Factors and Women's Opportunity for Election to Parliament in Twenty-Three Democracies. *Western Political Quarterly* 40 (3):477-498. Norris, Pippa. 1985. Women's Legislative Participation in Western Europe. *West European Politics* 8 (4):90-101. Reynolds, Andrew. 1999. Women in the Legislatures and Executives of the World: Knocking at the Highest Glass Ceiling. *World Politics* 51 (4):547-572.

important place to start, but it does not guarantee the election of more women. For example, countries such as the United States and Chile are developed countries with high levels of women's participation in education and the workforce but they fall behind many less developed countries in terms of the election of women.

Political parties often have very different rules for how they nominate candidates to their ballots. Some political parties tightly control the nomination process using a centralized system where a handful of party leaders choose the candidates. Other political parties use a decentralized process that puts the decision in the hands of party members or voters. If party leaders control nominations and those party leaders view gender equality in nominations as an important goal, then centralized nomination can help women. This is particularly the case in political systems with gender quotas that require a certain percentage of party ballots to contain women. Where gender quotas do not exist, however, the effect of nomination procedures may be different. Since party leaders typically are men and may see women's ascendancy to political office as a threat to their longstanding political power, centralized nominations may hurt women's chances of getting onto party ballots. Thus, in political parties or political systems without gender quotas, decentralized nomination processes may be better for increasing women's representation because, as research has shown, voters tend not to discriminate based on candidate gender.⁸

The benefits of decentralized nominations can be seen in Honduras, a country with a quota law, albeit a largely ineffective one (see next section). In 2004, Honduras moved from highly centralized candidate selection processes to decentralized primaries. In the 2005 election, the number of women elected to Congress jumped from 5.5 percent to 23.4 percent despite no change in its very weak quota law.

A country's electoral rules also influence women's election. Where districts have only one seat, women are less likely to win office than men. The larger the district size, the more women elected. This is because when only one seat is open, political parties generally favor a male candidate. When more than one seat exists, gender balancing is easier.

In addition to the size of a district, electoral norms for legislative reelection can hurt women. In the United States, incumbency is very high with approximately 90 percent of the Congress running for reelection, on average. This makes it very difficult for newcomers, who often are women, to enter the political arena. In many Latin American legislatures, reelection rates are much lower. This makes it easier for female newcomers to compete since they are not competing against incumbents. The advantage is even larger where term limits prohibit immediate reelection, which is the case in Costa Rica and Mexico (and Ecuador from 1979-1994).⁹

In addition to these characteristics, there are other factors that can affect women's election chances. Recent research in the United States suggests that women are less likely than men to

⁸ A large number of studies have shown that when women run, they are as likely to win as are men. There appears to be no identifiable gender or sex bias in elections. Burrell, Barbara. 1994. *A Woman's Place is in the House: Campaigning for Congress in the Feminist Era*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Matland, Richard E. 1994. Putting Scandinavian Equality to the Test: An Experimental Evaluation of Gender Stereotyping of Political Candidates in a Sample of Norwegian Voters. *British Journal of Political Science* 24:273-292.

⁹ Schwandt-Bayer, Leslie A. 2005. The Incumbency Disadvantage and Women's Election to Legislative Office. *Electoral Studies* 24 (2):227-244.

consider running for political office.¹⁰ They may be deterred by family or work obligations, childbirth, unsupportive spouses, and a lack of female role models among other factors. In interviews that I conducted in Costa Rica (2002) and Argentina (2006), female legislators often mentioned campaign financing as a particular problem for women. They suggested that women often have a harder time asking for money than do men and this can deter women without independent sources of wealth from even considering running for political office.

Last, but certainly not least, gender quotas can influence the election of women. The following section examines how quotas affect women's representation drawing on the experience of countries in the Americas with gender quotas.

Affirmative Action in Action: How Effective are Gender Quotas?

In 1991, Argentina passed a national gender quota law requiring that women comprise 30 percent of the candidates put forth by all political parties running for election to the Chamber of Deputies. The idea of gender quotas was not new (international organizations had been pushing quotas since the 1975 U.N. First World Conference on Women) nor was the use of gender quotas new as some political parties, most commonly in the Nordic countries, had used quotas since the 1970's. But, the Argentine law was the first by a democratic state, that applied to *all* political parties and, consequently, offered the greatest opportunity to increase women's representation in the *entire* legislature not just in one political party's legislative delegation.¹¹ Evidence from Argentina suggests that quotas have been successful. In the 1993 election, the first after the quota law went into effect, women won 14.4 percent of the seats in the Chamber compared to only 5 percent in the 1991 election. By 2005, Argentina's Chamber of Deputies was 35 percent female and the Senate was 43.1 percent female placing Argentina among the top ten countries in the world in terms of women's representation in national parliaments.¹²

Twelve countries in the Americas followed Argentina's example and adopted gender quotas either through national legislation or constitutional provisions (or both) in the years since 1991. However, many of these countries have not been as successful as Argentina in implementing gender quotas. Honduras, who adopted a quota law in 2000, saw an initial decline of 3.9 percent in the percentage of women elected. Brazil's lower house elected 5.7 percent women in its first post-quota election in 1998 and that increased to only 8.6 percent in 2002 and 8.8 percent in 2006 even after increasing the mandated percentage of women on party ballots from 25 percent to 30 percent for these latter two elections.

(See Table 4 in Annex)

Some quotas are more effective than others because quota *laws* vary across countries. The laws differ along three key dimensions. The first is the quota target – the percentage of women that the quota requires political parties to include on their ballots. In the Americas, this is as high as

¹⁰ Lawless, Jennifer L., and Richard L. Fox. 2005. *It Takes a Candidate: Why Women Don't Run for Office*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

¹¹ Nepal constitutionalized a 5% gender quota in 1990, but being a non-democratic monarchy, it was far less notable than Argentina's change to its electoral law.

¹² Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). 2006. "Women in National Parliaments (as of February 28, 2007)" <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm> [accessed March 9, 2007].

40 percent in Costa Rica and as low as 20 percent in Ecuador for its first quota election in 1998. The second dimension on which quotas vary is whether the quota law includes a placement mandate. A placement mandate stipulates that female candidates must be placed in winnable positions on party ballots. Eight countries in the Americas have placement mandates. They usually require male and female candidates to alternate on the list – one of every three candidates if the quota is 30 percent, for example. The third dimension is the strength of the quota law’s enforcement mechanisms. Some countries specify no means by which the quota can be enforced while others include hefty consequences for parties that submit lists of candidates not meeting the quota. Strong enforcement mechanisms usually require parties to comply with the law or prohibit them from running any candidates. Weaker enforcement mechanisms are those such as Panama’s where parties have to make a “good faith” effort to comply with the quota, but if they fail, then they can nominate men in those positions. This turns the quota into a mere recommendation.

(See Table 5 in Annex)

The quotas that have resulted in the largest average increases in women’s representation in national legislatures are those with high quota targets, placement mandates, and strong enforcement mechanisms.¹³ Three of the countries with the largest percentages of women in their legislatures, Argentina, Costa Rica, and Mexico, all have high quota targets (30-40 percent), placement mandates, and strong enforcement mechanisms. The quota countries with lower legislative representation of women, Panama, Venezuela, and Brazil, have smaller target percentages (25-30 percent), no placement mandates, and weak or no enforcement mechanisms.

The broader political context in which quotas are implemented also condition their effectiveness. For example, quota laws only work when they are compatible with electoral rules.¹⁴ Quotas in single-member district electoral systems, where parties only nominate one candidate per district, make little sense because parties can only nominate a man OR a woman. They are much more applicable in proportional representation electoral systems where the number of candidates on the party ballot is equal to the number of legislative seats in the district. In these systems, parties can nominate both men AND women.

In addition, quotas will be more effective when parties decide the order of candidates on the ballot and electoral rules do not allow voters to disturb that order with a preference vote, such as closed-list proportional representation systems. If voters can select the individual candidate that they prefer, as they can in open-list, single transferable vote, and preference vote systems, then quotas with placement mandates becomes meaningless.

Citizen and government perceptions of quotas also will condition their effectiveness. If quotas are minimally supported in society and/or the broader political system, then the quota law risks being tweaked or derogated entirely via a popular referendum or court ruling. This is exactly

¹³ Schwindt-Bayer, Leslie A. 2006. “The Effectiveness of Gender Quotas.” Prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association in Atlanta, January 5-7

¹⁴ Htun, Mala N., and Mark P. Jones. 2002. Engendering the Right to Participate in Decision-making: Electoral Quotas and Women's Leadership in Latin America. In *Gender and the Politics of Rights and Democracy in Latin America*, edited by N. Craske and M. Molyneux. New York: Palgrave Publishers.

what happened in Venezuela where the gender quota was eliminated after Hugo Chavez took power and rewrote the constitution. The Court struck down the quota law in 2000 as unconstitutional. In contrast, broader political support for affirmative action measures within countries can yield more powerful quotas laws than initially implemented. In Argentina, a 1993 court ruling upheld the quota and strengthened the quota adding a placement mandate and enforcement mechanisms. A similar situation arose in Costa Rica where the Legislative Assembly initially passed a watered-down quota law leaving many women frustrated. They took their fight for placement mandates and stronger enforcement to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal where they won a revision to the law in 2000. Colombia's quota law for political appointments faced a threat similar to what occurred in Venezuela. Male political leaders, including President Andrés Pastrana, tried to have the law declared unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court but women's groups, some female politicians, and quota supporters rallied behind the law and won.¹⁵

For affirmative action measures to increase the representation of women, they must be implemented effectively and in an environment of wider political support. Quotas need high target percentages, placement mandates, and strong enforcement mechanisms, and they must be adopted in political systems with electoral rules compatible with the quotas. Perhaps most importantly, they need political support to get adopted in the first place and avoid being overturned later. Quotas can be effective mechanisms to increase representation of women but only if implemented appropriately.

Conclusion: Policy Recommendations

The numbers of women in decision-making bodies in the Americas has increased significantly just in the past six years. Yet, numerous obstacles still remain to achieving parity with men. How can countries continue working towards gender equality in decision-making and build on past success?

- **Prioritize women's education and economic independence:** Increasing the proportions of women in higher education and the workforce will broaden the pool of female candidates with qualifications and experiences needed to run for and win political office. Further, diversifying the fields in which women get degrees and the sectors of the workforce they enter (engineering, political science, economics, etc.) will help to increase women's access to the candidate pool.
- **Adopt effective gender quotas:** Gender quotas are a key tool to increasing the number of women in office *if and only if* they are implemented fully. They need to specify a moderately high proportion of women (30-40 percent) to be represented on party ballots, mandate that women must be placed in electable positions on ballots, and include strong enforcement mechanisms.
- **Decrease advantages for incumbents:** While reelection is good for creating more professionalized legislatures, it can hurt women's ability to enter the political arena. Prohibiting reelection is one solution, though not very desirable given its other effects.

¹⁵ Importantly, gender quotas are highly divisive among women, themselves. Some feel that quotas can hurt women's election by serving as a ceiling rather than a floor or that women elected under quotas are simply tokens rather than highly qualified and capable politicians.

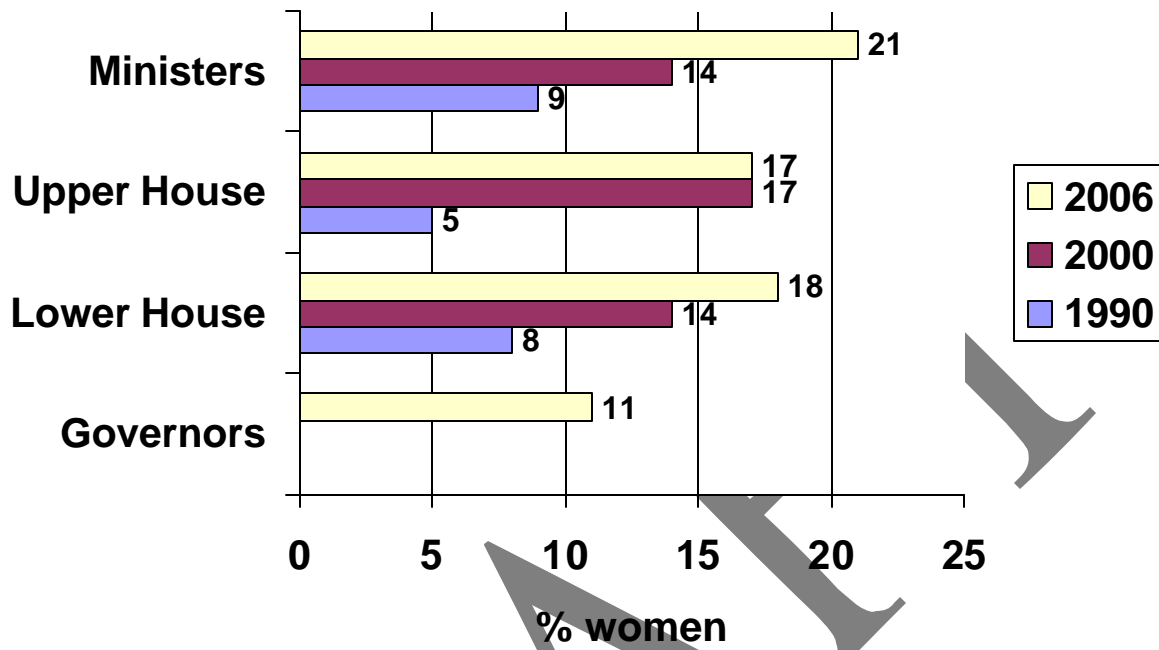
Another solution is decreasing the advantages that incumbents have when they run for reelection. This puts incumbents, who tend to be men, and newcomers, who may be women, on more equal footing at election time. This may mean providing special training to women in how to ask for money and finance campaigns or providing additional advertising access to newcomer candidates.

- **Training and educational programs for women:** If not enough women consider running for political office, then political parties, NGO's, and government agencies could offer training and educational programs to women encouraging them to get involved in politics. Some political parties in Latin America have already created women's divisions to carry out these kinds of activities in an effort to attract female candidates to the party. Building on these examples is one way to get women to consider an election bid.

These are just a few recommendations for continuing the progress that women have made in the past six years. Women's groups, political parties, and governments need to continue to promote women's equality and develop more effective ways to increase women's access to the political arena. The path to political equality is long, and while women in the Americas have made significant progress, this must be tempered with recognition of the work still ahead.

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Figure 1: Representation of Women in Latin American Politics



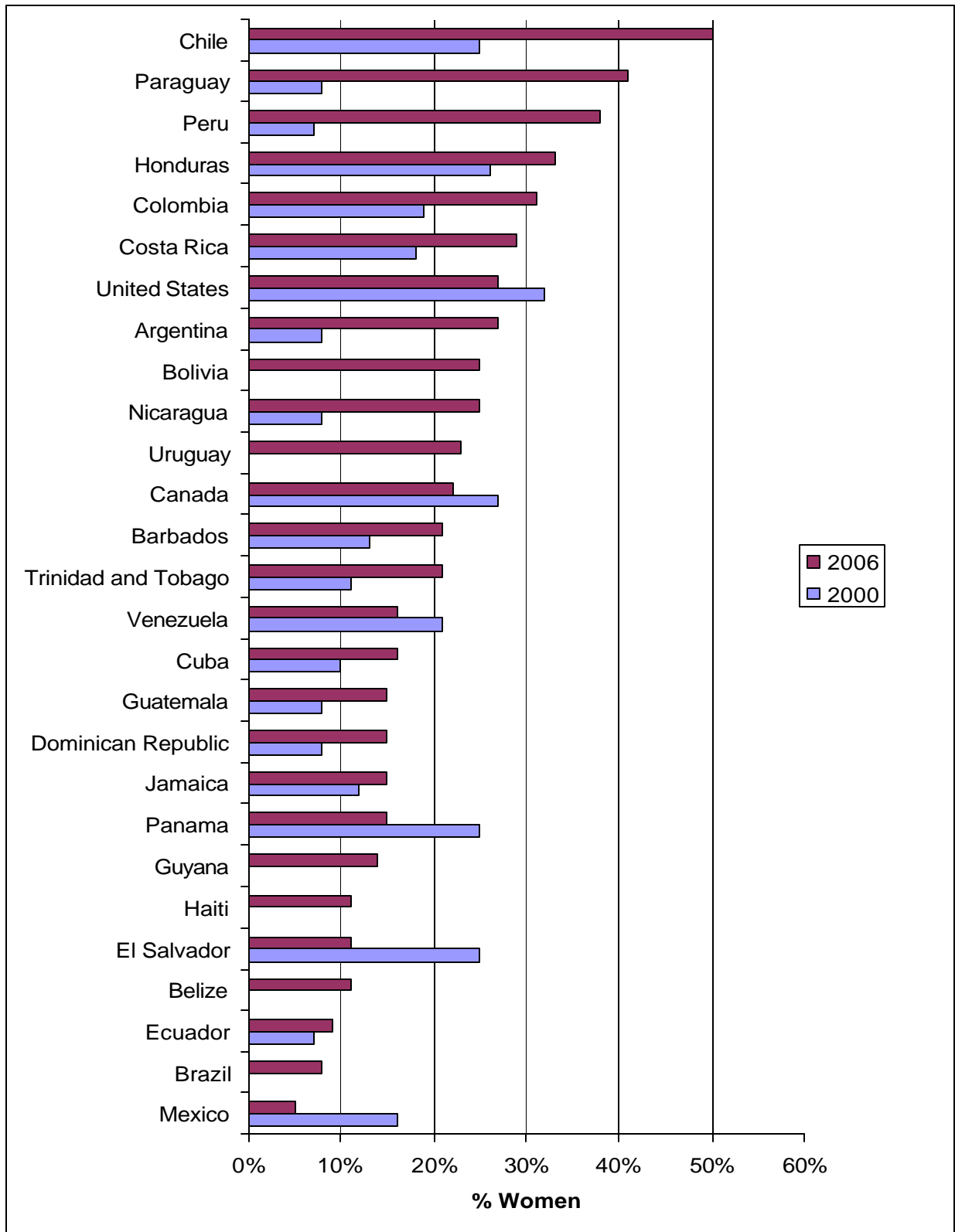
Source: Data collected by Inter-American Dialogue staff.

Table 1: Female Chief Executives in Latin America

Name	Country	Years in Office
Presidents		
Isabel Martinez de Peron	Argentina	1974-1976
Lidia Gueiler Tejada	Bolivia	1979-1980 (8 months)
Ertha Pascal-Trouillot	Haiti	1990-1991 (11 months)
Violeta Barrios de Chamorro	Nicaragua	1990-1997
Rosalía Arteaga Serrano	Ecuador	1997 (2 days)
Janet Jagan	Guyana	1997-1999
Mireya Moscoso de Arias	Panama	1999-2004
Michelle Bachelet	Chile	2006-
Prime Ministers		
Mary Eugenia Charles	Dominica	1980-1995
Kim Campbell	Canada	1993 (5 months)
Claudette Werleigh	Haiti	1995-1996 (3 months)
Beatriz Merino Lucero	Peru	2003 (6 months)
Portia Simpson-Miller	Jamaica	2006-

Source: Women World Leaders <https://www.terra.es/personal2/monolith/00women.htm> and research by Inter-American Dialogue staff.

Figure 2: Percentages of Cabinet Ministers who are Women



Source: Data collected by Inter-American Dialogue staff.

Table 2: Percentages of Women in National Legislatures

Country	Lower House		Upper House		Congress Average 2006
	2000	2006	2000	2006	
Costa Rica	19%	39%	N/A	N/A	39%
Argentina	27%	35%	3%	43%	39%
Cuba	28%	36%	N/A	N/A	36%
Peru	20%	29%	N/A	N/A	29%
Guyana	19%	29%	N/A	N/A	29%
Canada	21%	21%	32%	35%	28%
Trinidad and Tobago	11%	19%	32%	32%	26%
Ecuador	15%	25%	N/A	N/A	25%
Honduras	9%	23%	N/A	N/A	23%
Mexico	16%	23%	16%	17%	20%
Barbados	11%	13%	33%	24%	19%
Venezuela	10%	18%	N/A	N/A	18%
Panama	10%	17%	N/A	N/A	17%
El Salvador	10%	17%	N/A	N/A	17%
United States	14%	16%	13%	16%	16%
Belize	7%	7%	38%	25%	16%
Jamaica	13%	12%	24%	19%	16%
Nicaragua	10%	15%	N/A	N/A	15%
Dominican Republic	16%	20%	7%	3%	12%
Brazil	6%	9%	7%	12%	11%
Uruguay	12%	11%	10%	10%	11%
Bolivia	12%	17%	4%	4%	11%
Chile	11%	15%	4%	5%	10%
Colombia	12%	8%	13%	12%	10%
Paraguay	3%	10%	18%	9%	10%
Haiti	..	4%	..	13%	9%
Guatemala	9%	8%	N/A	N/A	9%
Americas Average	14%	18%	17%	17%	19%

Source: Data collected by Inter-American Dialogue staff. N/A is for countries that do not have an upper chamber.

Table 3: Female Governors in the Americas, 2006

Country	Number of Provinces ⁱ	Number of Women	Percentage of Women	Appointment Type
Chile	13	6	46%	Appointed by President
Honduras	18	6	33%	Appointed by President
Panama	12	3	25%	Appointed by President
Ecuador	22	4	18%	
United States	50	9	18%	Elected
El Salvador	14	2	14%	Appointed by President
Brazil	27	3	11%	Elected
Colombia	32	3	9%	Elected
Guatemala	22	2	9%	Appointed by President
Venezuela	24	2	8%	Elected
Paraguay	17 ⁱⁱ	1	6%	Elected
Mexico	32	1	3%	Elected
Argentina	24	0	0%	Elected
Bolivia	9	0	0%	Appointed by President
Canada	13	0	0%	Elected
Cuba	15	0	0%	Elected
Peru	26	0	0%	Elected
Uruguay	19	0	0%	Elected
Americas Average			11%	

Source: Data collected by Inter-American Dialogue staff.

ⁱ Some countries use the language of provinces, for others it is states or departments. For this table, they are all considered “provinces.”

ⁱⁱ Does not include the capital district.

Table 4: Percentage Change in Women's Representation Pre and Post Gender Quotas

Country	Chamber	Pre-Quota	Post-Quota	% Change
Argentina ⁱ	Upper	2.8 (1998)	33.3 (2001)	+ 30.5
Ecuador	Unicameral	3.7 (1996)	17.4 (1998)	+ 13.7
Argentina	Lower	5 (1991)	14.4 (1993)	+ 9.4
Peru	Unicameral	10.8 (1995)	20.0 (2000)	+ 9.2
Paraguay	Upper	11.1 (1993)	17.8 (1998)	+ 6.7
Mexico	Lower	16.0 (2000)	22.6 (2003)	+ 6.6
Venezuela	Lower	5.9 (1993)	12.1 (1998)	+ 6.2
Bolivia	Lower	6.9 (1993)	11.5 (1997)	+ 4.6
Dominican Republic	Lower	11.7 (1994)	16.1 (1998)	+ 4.4
Costa Rica	Unicameral	15.8 (1994)	19.3 (1998)	+ 3.5
Mexico	Upper	15.6 (2000)	17.2 (2006)	+ 1.6
Guyana	Unicameral	18.5 (1997)	20.0 (2001)	+ 1.5
Venezuela	Upper	8.0 (1993)	8.8 (1998)	+ 0.8
Panama	Unicameral	9.7 (1994)	9.9 (1999)	+ 0.2
Bolivia	Upper	3.7 (1993)	3.7 (1997)	0
Paraguay	Lower	2.5 (1993)	2.5 (1998)	0
Brazil	Lower	6.6 (1994)	5.7 (1998)	- 0.9
Honduras	Unicameral	9.4 (1997)	5.5 (2001)	- 3.9

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), various years.

ⁱ Argentina's Senate held its first election in 2001, the year the quota went into effect. Prior to 2001, the Senate was an appointed body.

Table 5: Gender Quota Laws in Latin America

Country	Chamber	Year Adopted	Preference Vote	Target Percentage	Placement Mandate	Enforcement Mechanism	Percentage of Women Elected ⁱ
Argentina	Upper	2001	No	30	Yes	Strong	38.2
	Lower	1991	No	30	Yes	Strong	26.3
Costa Rica	Unicameral	1996	No	40	No / Yes ⁱⁱ	None/Strong	31.0
Guyana	Unicameral	2000	No	33	No	None	24.5
Mexico	Lower	2002	No	30	Yes	Strong	22.6
	Upper	2002	No	30	Yes	Strong	17.2
Peru	Unicameral	1997	Yes	25/30 ⁱⁱⁱ	No	Strong	22.5
Ecuador	Unicameral	1997	Yes	20/25 ^{iv}	Yes	None	19.5
Dominican Republic	Lower	1997	No	25	Yes / No ^v	None	17.7
Bolivia	Lower	1997	No	33	No	Strong	15.6
	Upper	1997	No	33	No	Strong	7.4
Honduras	Unicameral	2000	No/Yes ^{vi}	30	No	None	14.5
Paraguay	Upper	1996	No	20	Yes	Strong	13.4
	Lower	1996	No	20	Yes	Strong	6.3
Panama	Unicameral	1997	No	30	No	Weak	13.3
Venezuela ^{vii}	Lower	1997	No	30	No	Weak	12.1
	Upper	1997	No	30	No	Weak	8.8
Brazil	Lower	1997	Yes	25/30 ^{viii}	No	Weak	7.4

Source: Adapted from Schwindt-Bayer, Leslie A. 2006. "The Effectiveness of Gender Quotas." Prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association in Atlanta, January 5-7.

ⁱ The percentage of women elected to the chamber averaged across all elections that have occurred between adoption of the quota and December 31, 2006.

ⁱⁱ Costa Rica implemented a placement mandate and enforcement mechanisms in 1999, such that they applied to the 2002 election.

ⁱⁱⁱ Peru increased the quota target to 30% prior to the 2001 election.

^{iv} Ecuador's quota law was passed in 1997 with a target of 20%. However, the target is to increase by 5% with every succeeding election. In the most recent election (2002), the quota was 25%.

^v For the 2002 election, the Dominican Republic shifted from requiring placement by law to allowing political parties to interpret the quota law placement mandate as they see fit.

^{vi} Honduras changed its electoral law to allow voters to express a preference vote for as many party candidates as there are seats in the district. This coupled with a widespread desire to vote incumbents out of office may have led to the sudden increase in the number of women elected in 2005 – 24.5% (Personal communication with Michelle Taylor-Robinson, 2007)

^{vii} Venezuela's quota was passed in 1997 and applied to the 1998 election but was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2000.

^{viii} Brazil's quota increased to 30% for the 2002 election.