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Preface

The Institute has conducted a number of studies of economic reform programs around the world, addressing most geographic regions: Latin America, most recently in *Latin American Adjustment: How Much Has Happened?* (1990); Eastern Europe, especially in *Currency Convertibility in Eastern Europe* (1991); the former Soviet Union, primarily in *Economic Consequences of Soviet Disintegration* (1992); Africa, in *African Economic Reform: The External Dimension* (1991); and East Asia, notably in *Pacific Basin Developing Countries: Prospects for the Future* (1991).

These studies had three common themes. First, all of them focused primarily on the economics of policy reform, albeit with the Institute's usual attention to the pragmatic implications of the various proposals and their impact on the real world. Second, most of our analyses derived at least partly from conferences sponsored by the Institute that considered papers presented by experts from individual countries on the experiences of those countries; we would then try to draw general lessons from the different experiences, with the ultimate aim of providing guidelines for future efforts in the region and perhaps elsewhere as well. Third, several of the projects—particularly concerning Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the former Soviet Union—were organized, led, and summarized by John Williamson, a Senior Fellow at the Institute who has developed the technique of synthesizing national case studies in search of such general conclusions.

This volume represents an effort to apply the conference technique, and the expertise that Dr. Williamson has developed on both the substance of policy reform and this methodology for appraising its success, to an even more difficult issue: the *politics* of the reform process. As explained in the introductory chapter, we selected a dozen countries that had achieved successful economic reform—across a wide spectrum, both geographically and in terms of per capita income—for analysis of the political process through which that reform had occurred. We added