

ECUADOR

Date of Elections: 29 April 1979

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of Parliament provided for by the Constitution approved by popular referendum in 1978*.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Ecuador, the National Chamber of Representatives, comprises 69 members: 12 members elected by national vote and 57 members elected by provincial vote. The latter include 2 Representatives for each of the country's provinces (except those with less than 100,000 inhabitants, which have only one Representative) and one additional Representative for every 300,000 inhabitants or fraction exceeding 200,000. All members are elected for 5 years.

Electoral System

All Ecuadorian citizens who are at least 18 years of age and in full possession of their civil rights are entitled to vote. Disqualified from voting are the insane; persons convicted for fraud in the public sector or connected with elections; those who are imprisoned or detained; drunkards, vagabonds and pettifoggers; tax evaders; and members of the armed and police forces.

Officials of the State Civil Registry are responsible for keeping the electoral registers up to date. Voting is compulsory, except for illiterates and persons over 65 years of age.

Ecuadorian citizens by birth who are 25 years of age or more, in full possession of their civil rights and belonging to a legally recognized political party, are eligible to be candidates for Parliament. Provincial candidates must moreover be natives of, or have resided for three consecutive years prior to polling day in, the province where running. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with membership of the Government, certain posts and offices connected with the public sector, membership of the armed forces on active duty, Government contractor, membership of the clergy and the function of legal representative of a foreign company.

Candidates are nominated by political parties. They are elected according to a list system of proportional representation, without preferential voting or vote splitting.

The distribution of seats is carried out as follows:

1. Where only two Representatives are to be elected in a constituency, one seat is allotted to the first candidate on the list which has received the most votes and the other

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 12.

one to the following list, provided that the latter has obtained at least 50% of the votes received by the winning list. If this is not the case, both seats go to the list which is leading.

2. Where more than two Representatives are to be elected in a constituency, the procedure is as follows:

- (a) The total valid votes cast are divided by the number of seats to be filled, and those lists which have not received a number of votes equal to at least 50% of the quotient thus obtained are eliminated;
- (b) The total votes won by the eligible lists are divided by the number of seats to be filled so as to obtain a second quotient. Each list obtains as many seats as this quotient is contained in its own total. Seats left unfilled after this first distribution are allocated on the basis of the system of greatest remainder.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

It will be recalled that the bicameral Parliament elected in June 1968 was dissolved in June 1970. In 1976, the ruling military junta announced its intention to lead the country back to representative democracy. In this context, a new Constitution establishing, *inter alia*, a unicameral Parliament elected by universal suffrage was approved by popular referendum in January 1978*.

The legislative elections were held simultaneously with the second round of voting for President of the Republic, the first stage of this poll having taken place in July 1978. Primary contenders for the parliamentary seats were the left-wing Concentration of Popular Forces (CFP), the Democratic Left (ID) and the Conservative Party. Altogether some 10 parties fielded candidates.

The newly-chosen Parliament was due to hold its first session on 10 August 1979, the same day foreseen for the inauguration of President-elect J. Roldos Aguilera (CFP). At the same time, the 1978 Constitution would enter into force and the military junta would cease to function.

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 12.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the National Chamber of Representatives

Number of registered electors.	2,000,874
Voters.	1,675,195(83.72%)
Blank or void ballot papers.184,481
Valid votes.	1,490,714

Political Group	Number of Seats
Concentration of Popular Forces (CFP)	30
Democratic Left (ID).15
Conservative Party.9
Radical Liberal Party.	4
Democratic Institutional Coalition.	3
Social Christian Party.	3
Revolutionary Nationalist Party.	2
Popular Democratic Union.1
Democratic Popular Movement.1
National Velasquista Party.1
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