

## MEXICO

**Date of Elections:** 1 July 1979

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the members of the Chamber of Deputies on the normal expiry of their term of office.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The bicameral Parliament of Mexico, the National Congress, consists of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate.

The Chamber of Deputies currently has 400 members, of whom 300 are elected by majority vote and 100 according to proportional representation\*. All Deputies have 3-year terms of office.

The Senate comprises 64 members elected for 6 years. Two members represent each of the country's 31 States and the Federal District.

### **Electoral System**

All Mexican citizens who are at least 18 years of age and registered in their constituency of residence are entitled to vote. Excluded from this right are the insane, interned drug addicts, persons convicted of a crime involving liability to imprisonment and persons serving a prison sentence.

Electoral registers are continually kept up to date. Voting is compulsory, abstention leading to a fine or imprisonment.

] All citizens by birth at least 21 years of age and in full possession of their political rights may stand for election to the Chamber of Deputies from their State or territory of origin or that in which they have resided for at least six months; the age requirement for Senators is 30.

Ministers of religion, members of the federal army on active duty, police officers of a commanding rank within the district concerned, Secretaries or Under-Secretaries of State, justices of the Supreme Court and Governors of the States are not eligible for the Congress; apart from religious ministers, such disqualification can be overridden if the officials concerned resign from their positions 90 days before the election. Governors cannot be elected in the districts of their jurisdiction during their term of office, even if they resign their position.

In 1979, Deputies were chosen for the first time in accordance with the 1977 Federal Law on Political Organizations and Electoral Procedure\*. Of the 400 members, 300 were

\*1 See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XIII (1978-1979)*, p. 20.

elected by simple majority vote within single-member electoral districts, and 100 were elected by a system of proportional representation from regional party lists within multi-member constituencies. Senators are all elected by simple majority vote.

A political party may be registered if it has at least 3,000 members in each one of at least half the States in Mexico or at least 300 members in each of at least half of the single-member constituencies. In either case the total number of members must be no less than 65,000. A party can also obtain conditional registration if it has been active for at least four years. Registration is confirmed if the party obtains at least 1.5% of the popular vote.

When a vacancy occurs among members of the Congress elected by majority vote, a by-election is called by the Chamber in question; when a vacancy occurs among members of the Chamber of Deputies elected by proportional representation, it is filled by the candidate of the same party who received the next highest number of votes at the last ordinary election.

#### General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Supported by President of the Republic Jose Lopez Portillo, a primary aim of the 1977 Federal Law described above was to allow political parties other than the dominant *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) to improve their representation in Congress. This was achieved in the 1979 elections, as the moderately left-wing PRI won 296 (of the 300 directly elected) Deputies' seats (including all 40 in Mexico City), while the 104 others were shared by six different parties.

On polling day, although three new groups—the Mexican Communist Party, the conservative Mexican Democratic Party and the Workers' Socialist Party—fielded candidates, less than half of the country's registered electorate turned out to vote. The rightist *Partido Action National* (PAN) came out on top among smaller parties, capturing 43 seats; it was followed by the Communist Party, with 18 seats.

## Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the Chamber of Deputies

Number of registered electors. . . . . 27,912,053

	<i>Majority vote</i>	<i>Proportional representation vote</i>
Voters. . . . .	13,888,513(49.76%)	13,801,232* (49.44%)
Blank or void ballot papers . . . . .	810,572	866,072
Valid votes. . . . .	13,077,941	12,935,160

Political Group	Majority votes obtained		Seats	Proportional representa- tion votes obtained		Seats	Total Seats
<i>Partido Revolucionario Ins- titucional.</i> . . . . .	9,699,455	74.17	296	411,682	72.76	-	296
<i>Partido Action National</i> . . . . .	1,490,486	11.40	4	523,728	11.78	39	43
<i>Partido Comunista Mexi- can.</i> . . . . .	690,537	5.28		702,903	5.43	IS	18
<i>Partido Popular Socialista</i> . . . . .	357,500	2.73		387,036	2.99	II	II
<i>Partido Autentico de la Re- volution Mexicana</i>	251,627	1.92		305,704	2.36	12	12
<i>Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores.</i> . . . . .	294,732	2.25		310,990	2.40	10	10
<i>Partido Democrata Mexi- cano.</i> . . . . .	284,104	2.17		293,117	2.27	10	10
Others. . . . .	9,500	0.07					
			300			100	400