

## PARAGUAY

**Date of Elections:** 1 May 1989

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament following premature dissolution of this body on 6 February 1989. General elections had previously been held in February 1988.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The bicameral Parliament of Paraguay, the Congress, consists of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. The Senate has 36 members, the Chamber of Deputies 72\*. The term of office of all members of Parliament is 5 years.

### **Electoral System**

All Paraguayan citizens at least 18 years of age have the right to vote. This right is lost or suspended by reason of loss or suspension of citizenship, the latter including physical or mental incapacity declared by a court, the serving of a judicial sentence with a punishment depriving the convicted person of his freedom, and active military service.

In order to be able to vote, electors must have their names entered on the electoral register. Voting is compulsory except for those over 60 years of age or prevented by certain circumstances (absence, sickness, etc.).

In order to be eligible for election as Senator or Deputy, a person must be a natural-born Paraguayan. Furthermore, in order to be eligible for election as a Senator, he must be at least 40 years of age and, in order to be eligible as Deputy, at least 25. Members of the clergy and persons on active military service may not be elected to Congress. Neither may persons who are employed by an enterprise that operates a public service or has obtained a concession from the Government, nor attorneys, representatives or advisors to such enterprises.

Members of Congress are elected by a party-list system applicable to the country as a whole. Each recognized political party must present a list of candidates with as many names on it as seats are available. Any vote must be expressed for the list of a given party.

Two-thirds of the seats, in either Chamber, belong to the party which obtains the highest number of valid votes, whereas one-third of the seats are distributed proportionately among the other parties. This latter distribution is carried out as follows: the total of the votes obtained by the minority parties is divided by the number of seats remaining to be filled (that is, by 12 for the Senate and 24 for the Chamber of Deputies); the number of votes obtained

\* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 15.

by each of the said parties is then divided by the resulting quotient; the result of this division indicates the number of seats available to each party. The seats which still remain to be filled after this computation go to the party which has received the highest number of votes.

The seats available to any party are allocated to the candidates of that party in the order in which such candidates appear on the list of the said party.

If, during the legislative term, a vacancy occurs, it is automatically filled by alternate Senators or Deputies who have also been chosen at general elections.

### **Background and Outcome of the Elections**

On 3 February 1989, the President of the Republic since 1954, General Alfredo Stroessner, was deposed in a coup d'Etat led by General Andres Rodriguez. The latter - who was sworn in as provisional President - dissolved the bicameral Congress that had been dominated for years by General Stroessner's Colorado Party, and announced that new presidential and legislative elections would be held on 1 May 1989.

After the revolt, eight political parties were legalized; prominent among those was the Authentic Radical Liberal Party (PRLA), headed by Mr. Domingo Laino. During the 90-day campaign, Gen. Rodriguez portrayed himself as a populist and promised democratic reforms; he aimed to crack down on corruption, reduce Paraguay's foreign trade deficit and renegotiate its debt.

On polling day, Gen. Rodriguez won 74% of the vote as his Colorado Party won solid majorities in both Chambers of the enlarged Congress. He was inaugurated for the four-year presidential term on 15 May and his new Cabinet was sworn in the same day.

## Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in the Congress

Number of registered electors 2,200,000 (approx.)

Political Group	Votes obtained	*4	Number of Seats	
			Chamber of Deputies	Senate
<i>Colorado Party</i> . . . . .	804,159	72.8	4K	24
Authentic Radical Liberal Party ( <b>PRLA</b> ). . . . .	221,949	20.1	<b>19</b>	<b>1d</b>
Revolutionary <i>Febrerista</i> Party ( <b>PRF</b> ). . . . .	23,262	2.1	2	1
Radical Liberal Party ( <b>PLR</b> ) . . . . .	12,376	1.1	1	1
Christian Democrat Party (PDC)	11,248	1.0	1	—
Liberal Party (PL). . . . .	4,808	0.4	1	
			72	36