

PHILIPPINES

Date of Elections: 11 May 1987

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the elective seats in Parliament provided for in the February 1987 Constitution*.

Characteristics of Parliament

The bicameral Parliament of the Philippines, the Congress, consists of the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The House of Representatives comprises 250 members elected for 3 years. Of these, 200 are popularly-chosen members and 50 are selected from lists drawn up by political parties and interest groups. No Representative may serve for more than three consecutive terms.

The Senate has 24 members elected for 6 years on nomination of the President of the Republic. No Senator may serve for more than two consecutive terms.

Electoral System

All citizens of the Philippines over the age of 18 years, not disqualified by law, resident in the country for at least one year and in their voting district for at least six months immediately preceding election day, are entitled to vote. Voting is compulsory.

Each candidate for the House of Representatives must be a natural-born citizen of the Philippines, at least 25 years of age, able to read and write, a registered voter in his district (except for party-list representatives) and a resident thereof for at least one year immediately preceding the polling. Senate candidates must satisfy similar requirements, except for age (35 years) and residency (two years in the country). The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with any other office or employment in the Government, or any subdivision, agency, or instrumentality thereof, including government-owned or controlled corporations or their subsidiaries. No member of Congress may, furthermore, act as legal counsel (in courts, electoral tribunals or administrative bodies) or be a government contractor.

The House of Representatives has a maximum of 250 members. Representatives are elected by simple majority vote from legislative districts apportioned among the provinces, cities and the Metropolitan Manila area according to population. Each city with at least 250,000 inhabitants, or each province, has a minimum of one Representative. Twenty per cent (currently 50) of the House members are elected through a party-list system of registered national, regional and sectoral parties or organizations.

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, pp. 16-17.

For three consecutive terms after the ratification of the 1987 Constitution, one-half of the seats allocated to party-list representatives are to be filled by selection or election from the labour, peasant, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, women, youth and such other sectors as provided by law, except the religious sector.

Senators are nominated by the President and elected at large rather than from a specific district or territory within the country. The top 24 vote-getters are declared returned.

By-elections are held to fill congressional vacancies which arise between general elections.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Following the previous (May 1984) general elections, the former unicameral National Assembly was dissolved in March 1986*, after Mrs. Corazon Aquino succeeded Mr. Ferdinand Marcos as President of the Republic. The new Constitution promulgated in February 1987 provided for a bicameral Congress. The general election date had conditionally been set on 5 November 1986.

On 20 February 1987, the President's nominations to the Senate were announced. These included eight Cabinet Ministers. The election campaign opened on 9 March for the Senate and on 24 March for the House of Representatives. It was marked by violence and generally featured a contest of personalities rather than issues, with many candidates promising to return integrity to Philippine politics. Altogether some 1,900 were in contention for the House seats and 84 for the Senate.

Supporters of President Aquino were overwhelmingly returned on polling day, capturing 22 of the Senate seats and approximately 150 of the directly-elected House seats. These candidates were generally considered to run under the banner of the *Laban* (*Lakas ng Bayan*, or "People's Power Movement") coalition as opposed to those of the Grand Alliance for Democracy (led by Mr. Juan Ponce Enrile, the former defense secretary), the New Society Movement (KBL) that had governed under Mr. Marcos, and the left-wing Alliance for New Politics (PNB). The opposition denounced the polling results as fraudulent.

The newly-elected Congress convened on 27 July.

See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XX* (1985-1986), p. 14.

Statistics

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

| | | |
|---|------------|-----------|
| Number of registered electors | 26,400,000 | (approx.) |
| Voters | .90% | |

2. *Distribution of Senators according to Sex*

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Men | 22 |
| Women | 2 |
| | 24 |