

# PHILIPPINES

**Date of Elections:** 11 May 1992

## **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the elective seats in Parliament. General elections had previously been held in May 1987, and a transitory provision in the Constitution of the same year stipulated that congressmen then elected would serve until 30 June 1992, at the latest.

## **Characteristics of Parliament**

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

The Senate has 24 members elected for 6 years on nomination of the President of the Republic. Of the Senators elected in 1992, the first 12 obtaining the most votes are to serve for 6 years and the remaining 12 for 3 years. No Senator may serve for more than two consecutive terms.

The House of Representatives has a maximum membership of 250 members with 3-year terms of office. Of these, 200 are directly elected and 50 are appointed by the President of the Republic as sectoral Representatives. At present, the House has 201 members - 188 elected and 13 appointed. No Representative may serve for more than three 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 appointed 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 currently has 200 elected members, chosen by closed party-list 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. A maximum of 20% of House members are "sectoral Representatives" appointed by the President from lists of nominees submitted by varied interest groups except the religious sector.

By-elections are held, or appointments made, to fill congressional vacancies which arise between general elections.

**Background and Outcome of the Elections**

The 1992 congressional elections were held simultaneously with polling for President of the Republic and thousands of provincial and local posts. The three-month campaign opened on 7 February.

Main contestants to succeed President of the Republic Corazon Aquino (who chose not to seek re-election after six years in office) were her endorsed candidate, former Defence Secretary Fidel Ramos of the *Lakas* - National Union of Christian Democrats (*Lakas* - NUCD) Party; Mrs. Miriam Santiago of the People's Reform Party (PRP); Mr. Eduardo Cojuangco, a conservative businessman belonging to the National People's Coalition (NPC); and former House Speaker Ramon Mitra of the ruling *Lahan ng Demokratikong Pilipino* (LDP) party. Also in the running but considered an underdog was Mrs. Imelda Marcos, widow of the former President. The powerful "watchdog" Commission on Elections (COMELEC) had narrowed the field by disqualifying numerous candidates, as it did for the Congress. While issues such as the country's economic revival, relief of unemployment and poverty, left-wing and ultra-right armed threats, and corruption in official circles figured prominently in the campaign debate, there was also much focus on the personalities of candidates. Another key question was the extent to which the country's rediscovered democratic process could be entrusted to any of the traditional politicians ("trapos"). In this connection, both Mr. Ramos, a Protestant liberal, and Mrs. Santiago, a former judge, reportedly benefited from their public reputations as political "outsiders".

Like the campaign, polling day passed off in a generally peaceful and orderly way. Early returns had Mrs. Santiago ahead but final results - announced in June - gave the victory to Mr. Ramos, with only 23,5% of the vote. Mrs. Santiago alleged electoral irregularities. In the congressional races, the LDP emerged triumphant in the Senate, capturing 16 of the 24 seats while the *Lakas* - NUCD came out on top in the House with 72 seats.

On 22 June, the newly elected Congress proclaimed Mr. Ramos President and Mr. Joseph Estrada, who had run on a rival ticket (NPC), Vice-President.

**Statistics**

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

Number of registered electors. . . . . 32,105,782

Political Group	Number of Seats	
	Senate	House of Representatives
<i>Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino</i> (LDP)	15	40
National People's Coalition (NPC)	5	40
<i>Lakas</i> - National Union of Christian Democrats (NUCD)	3	72
Liberal Party - <i>Partidong Demokratikong Pilipino</i> (PDP) - <i>Laban</i>	1	13
Others	-	6
Independents	-	19
	24	196*

## 2. Distribution of Members of Congress according to Sex

	Senate	House of Representatives
Men . . .	10	175
Women	4	21
	14	196*

\* Excluding vacancies.