

## **BRAZIL**

**Date of Elections:** November 15, 1974

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the members of the Chamber of Deputies and one-third (22) of the members of the Senate on the normal expiry of their term of office.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

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

The Senate is composed of 66 members elected for 8 years, 3 coming from each of the country's 22 States. One-third (22) and two-thirds (44) of the Senate seats are renewed alternately every 4 years.

The Chamber of deputies comprises 364 members elected for 4 years \*. The number of deputies for each State is a function of the number of electors in that State. Each State has a minimum of 7 Deputies and each of the country's Federal Territories (except for the Territory of Fernando de Noronha) is allotted one deputy.

### **Electoral System**

All citizens, of either sex, at least 18 years of age are qualified to vote if registered as electors in the constituency in which they reside; disqualified for being registered are illiterates and persons incapable of expressing themselves in the national language, the insane, prisoners and persons not having full exercise of their political rights, as well as military personnel below the rank of sergeant.

Electoral registers are drawn up on the municipal level and revised prior to each election. Voting is compulsory, abstention being punishable by fine.

Candidates for Congress must be Brazilian by birth, have full exercise of their political rights and be members of one of the country's two official political parties. Persons running for the Chamber of Deputies must moreover be at least 21 years of age and resident in the State in which they seek elec-

\* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 9.

tion, whereas candidates to the Senate must be at least 35 years old. Persons convicted for acts committed against national security, the political, economic and social order, and various morality codes are among those ineligible for the Congress. Offices considered incompatible with the parliamentary mandate include a number of high public and military positions and certain posts in public or semi-public corporations.

The 361 deputies from the country's 22 States are elected under a party-list system with seats allotted proportionally among the lists according to the method of highest average. The seats won by each list are afterwards allocated to the candidates who have collected the most preferential votes cast by the electorate.

The 3 deputies from the 3 Federal Territories are elected by simple majority vote. Senators are likewise chosen by simple plurality. Each elector votes for one candidate in elections (such as that of 1974) when one-third of the Senate seats are to be filled, and for two when two-thirds are at stake.

Substitutes elected at the same time as titular members of Congress are called upon to fill seats which become vacant between general elections. A by-election is held if no substitute is available and there remains at least 15 months before the end of the term of the member of Congress concerned.

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

The November 1974 Congressional elections were combined with those for the State Assemblies.

As in the previous (1970) general elections, the ruling National Renewal Alliance (ARENA) Government party, founded in 1966, was opposed solely by the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB). During the campaign, President of the Republic, Gen. Ernesto Geisel, emphasized that a two-party system was indispensable for advancing parliamentary democracy in the country; he furthermore underlined that the country's economic and social development could only be achieved in a climate of security and moderate behaviour. ARENA candidates in general pointed to the past achievements of their Government, while MDB candidates called for greater political liberties and criticized the Government's social and economic policies, complaining about the country's rising inflation (estimated at 33 %).

On election day, the MDB made large gains as compared to the number of congressional seats it previously held. With 160 seats in the Chamber of Deputies, it easily achieved its goal of obtaining the necessary one-third which would allow it to form investigative committees. One woman was elected to the Chamber of Deputies.

Statistics

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

Number of registered voters.	35,720,715
Voters.	28,980,769 (81.1 %)

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	Seats won	Number of Seats won at Previous Elections
National Renewal Alliance (ARENA)	475	12,162,851	204	223
Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB)	295	11,158,007	160	87
			364 *	310

\* 54 seats added since last elections.

2. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the Senate

Number of registered voters.	35,646,074
Voters.	28,925,451 (81.1 %)

Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained	Number of Seats won in 1974 Elections	Number of Seats held before Elections
National Renewal Alliance (ARENA)	22	10,067,796	6	46
Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB)	21	14,486,252	16	20
			<b>22</b>	<b>66</b>

3. Average Age of Members of Congress

Chamber of Deputies: 60 years  
 Senate: 45 years