

## **BRAZIL**

**Date of Elections:** 15 November 1982

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the seats in the Chamber of Deputies and for one-third of those in the Senate on the normal expiry of the members' 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 69 members elected for 8 years, 3 coming from each of the country's 23 States. One-third (23) and two-thirds (46) of the Senate seats are renewed alternately every 4 years.

The Chamber of Deputies comprises 479 members\* elected for 4 years. The number of Deputies for each State varies according to the population of that State. Each State has a minimum of 6 Deputies and each of the country's Federal Territories (except for the Territory of Fernando de Noronha) is allotted 2 Deputies.

### **Electoral System**

All citizens who are at least 18 years of age are qualified to vote if registered as electors in the constituency in which they reside; disqualified from being registered are the insane, prisoners and persons not having full exercise of their 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 a 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 election, whereas candidates to the Senate must be at least 35 years old. Persons convicted of 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 479 Deputies from the country's 23 States are elected according to 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.

\* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 8.

Simple majority vote applies to Senate elections, each elector voting for two candidates when two-thirds of the seats are to be renewed, and for one candidate (as in the 1982 poll) if only one-third 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 remain at least 15 months before the end of the term of the member of Congress concerned.

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

As previously reported in the *Chronicle\**, Congress passed a bill in November 1979 disbanding the two parties in existence since 1965 - the governing National Renewal Alliance (ARENA) and its traditional opponent, the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB) - in favour of the formation of new parties. At the 1982 elections, five of these - the Social Democratic Party (PDS), the Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB), the Democratic Labour Party (PDT), the Brazilian Labour Party (PTB) and the Workers' Party (PT) - fielded candidates at the federal, state and municipal levels.

Polling day was preceded by the introduction, in 1981, of new legislation and voting regulations, one of which stipulated that electors could vote for only one party in all three (federal, state, municipal) elections. The election campaign lasted four months; while much of the debate focused on the country's economy, personalities of the candidates also played a significant role. Voting results gave the ruling conservative PDS a majority of the seats in the Senate but not in the Chamber of Deputies. The PMDB, led by Mr. Ulisses Guimaraes, which had previously merged with the Popular Party (PP), came out second best, thus constituting the main opposition.

• See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XIV (1979-1980)*, p. 9

## Statistics

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

Number of registered electors. . . . .	58,557,030
Voters. . . . .	48,455,879 (82.75%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	7,330,871
Valid votes. . . . .	41,125,008

Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats
Social Democratic Party (PDS) . . . . .	17,775,738	43.22	235
Brazilian Democratic Movement (PMDB)	17,666,773	42.96	200
Democratic Labour Party (PDT) . . . . .	2,394,723	5.82	24
Brazilian Labour Party (PTB) . . . . .	1,829,055	4.44	14
Workers' Party (PT) . . . . .	1,458,719	3.54	6
			479

*2. Distribution of Seats in the Senate*

Political Group	Number of Seats won at 1982 Elections	Total number of Seats
PDS .	5	46
PMDB	9	21
PDT .	1	1
PTB .	1	1
	15	69