

CONGO

Date of Elections: 8 July 1979

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the Parliament which was reconstituted* after having been dissolved in April 1977.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of the People's Republic of the Congo, the People's National Assembly, consists of 153 members elected for 5 years.

Electoral System

All Congolese citizens at least 18 years of age who are in full possession of their civil and political rights, meet the prescribed residence requirements and are registered as electors are entitled to vote. Disqualified are persons convicted of crime and certain other offences, undischarged bankrupts and persons incompetent to manage their own affairs.

An electoral register is drawn up in each of the country's districts or communes. It is permanent and revised annually. Although voting is considered a civic duty, no sanction is imposed on abstentionists.

All qualified electors may be candidates for Parliament. The exercise of public functions is in principle not incompatible with the office of Deputy. This latter office is nevertheless incompatible with that of Minister, and any Deputy who uses his title to publicize a particular enterprise is suspended from Parliament for one year.

Lists of candidates are compiled by the Central Committee of the *Parti congolais du Travail* following "grass roots" consultation of the electorate by delegations composed of members of the Party and mass organizations. Candidates need not necessarily be Party members.

The 153 Assembly seats are allotted to representatives of the Party (69 seats), of mass organizations (36), of the armed forces (10), of the country's regions and the capital of Brazzaville (20), and of workers (18). The number of candidates equals the number of seats to be filled; all candidates appear on the same national list.

Deputies are elected by majority list system without vote splitting; voting is secret. By-elections are held to fill seats which fall vacant between general elections.

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, pp. 9-10.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Subsequent to the assassination of the President of the Republic. Marien Ngouabi, on 18 March 1977, the country was governed by a Military Committee of the Congolese Labour Party (*Parti congolais du Travail-PCT*). The *Acte fondamental* which was promulgated on 5 April 1977 largely abrogated the 1973 Constitution, and Parliament was dissolved the following day.

The PCT—the country's official political organization—held an extraordinary congress at the end of March 1979 and elected Colonel Denis Sassou-Nguesso President of the Republic; the latter was then also confirmed as Head of the Party. On 4 April, on the advice of the Party's Central Committee, Colonel Louis-Sylvain Goma was named Prime Minister and the other 16 members of the Council of Ministers were designated; according to the Constitution, the President of this Council is the Head of State. Seven Ministers in the former Government were not in the new Council.

The Electoral Law of 10 May 1979 set the framework for the 8 July 1979 poll. Principal campaign issues were "national detente", "revolutionary vigilance" and "the realization of left-wing unity". The Central Committee of the PCT nominated the Assembly candidates following consultation of the electorate, and these appeared on one national list. On polling day, the electorate also voted for the members of the people's councils of the regions, districts and communes. The poll moreover served as a referendum on a draft Constitution*. All candidates were elected and the Constitution was approved. A total of 9.7% of the registered electorate abstained from voting.

* See section *Parliamentary Developments** pp. 9-10.

Congo

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the People's National Assembly

Number of registered electors.	826,193
Voters.	746,082 (90.3%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	20,101
Valid votes.	725,981

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Political Group Number
of Seats

Congolese Labour Party (<i>Parti congolais du Travail</i>).153
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2. Distribution of Deputies according to Professional Category

Civil servants.109
Members of the armed forces.14
Workers.12
Farmers.7
Officials of State or semi-public enterprises11
	153

3. Distribution of Deputies according to Sex

Men.140
Women.13
	153

4. Distribution of Deputies according to Age Group

Under 30 years.10
30-35.42
36-40.45
41-45.28
46-50.17
51-55.7
56 and over.4
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