

GABON

Date of Elections: 24 February 1980

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the members of the National Assembly on the normal expiry of their term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Gabon, the National Assembly, comprises 89 members. All parliamentarians have 5-year terms of office.

Electoral System

All citizens of Gabon who are at least 21 years of age and in full possession of their civil and political rights, who have resided for six months—until 31 March of the current year—in a particular constituency, and who are registered on the electoral lists are entitled to vote. In certain cases, the age for being elector may be lowered to 18. Foreigners fulfilling the necessary conditions may also vote provided they were domiciled in Gabon on 17 August 1960, and have since that date maintained this domicile.

The names of convicted criminals (including those found guilty *in absentia*), those who have been sentenced to imprisonment for more than one month for certain offences against property, or for more than three months for other offences, the insane, undischarged bankrupts, and persons under guardianship cannot, however, be entered on the electoral lists. The right to vote is suspended for persons who are under personal restraint pursuant to judicial and administrative decisions. Certain individuals convicted of offences resulting in prison terms ranging from one to three months, or in fines exceeding Francs CFA 200,000 cannot, for their part, be registered for five years from the date when the judgment in their case became final.

Electoral lists are drawn up at the level of the district or commune. They are considered as permanent and are revised annually, from 1 December to 31 March. Voting is compulsory.

Candidates for election to Parliament must be members of, and put forward by, the single political party in the country, be at least 25 years of age and fulfil the conditions required for voting. Certain high officials of the Government, armed forces, police, judiciary and public enterprises are not eligible for a period of six months after occupying these posts. The office of Deputy is incompatible with membership of the Government, the Supreme Court or the Economic and Social Council, any non-elective public office,

employment remunerated by a foreign State or international organization, and the position of executive or consultant of State-subsidized enterprises.

Candidatures must be deposited with the Supreme Court at least 15 days prior to the election, accompanied by a deposit of Francs CFA 100,000. No candidature can be withdrawn once a list has been submitted.

Deputies are elected in a single constituency comprising the entire national territory, on the basis of the party-list majority system without preferential vote. The list of candidates must contain as many names as there are seats to be filled. A corresponding number of substitutes are elected at the same time as the titular Deputies. In the event of a vacancy and if the substitute is incapacitated, by-elections are held.

General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

Prior to the legislative elections, President of the Republic Omar Bongo was re-elected for a second seven-year term on 30 December 1979. The President had announced the date of the parliamentary elections the previous month.

For the first time since Gabon gained independence in 1960, independents were free to stand against candidates of the ruling *Parti democratique gabonais* (PDG), the country's sole political organization. By presidential decree, the number of elected Deputies in the National Assembly was raised from 70 to 89.

On polling day, PDG candidates won the massive support of the electorate. Prime Minister Leon Mebiame announced the composition of a new 28-member Cabinet on 28 February.

Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the National Assembly*

Political Group	Number of Seats
<i>Parti democratique gabonais</i>	89