

IVORY COAST

Dates of Elections: 9 and 23 November 1980

Purpose of Elections

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

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of the Ivory Coast, the National Assembly, is composed of 147 Deputies elected for 5 years. This total was raised from 120 prior to the 1980 elections*.

Electoral System

All citizens of the Ivory Coast who are at least 21 years old are entitled to vote unless they have been declared insane or convicted of crime.

Electoral registers are revised at the national level before each general election. Proxy voting is permitted in exceptional circumstances. Voting is not compulsory.

Qualified electors no less than 23 years of age who are not under guardianship are eligible to run for the National Assembly. Holders of certain public offices, such as inspectors of administrative affairs, education, labour and social security, prefects, directors of government services, magistrates of courts and tribunals of appeal, and officers of the armed forces cannot be candidates until six months after they have resigned from their posts. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with, *inter alia*, membership in the Economic and Social Council and the Cabinet, non-elective public offices, work undertaken for and financed by a foreign State or international organization, and the post of executive in a national enterprise, public company, or business enjoying advantages afforded by the State, having an exclusively financial purpose and appealing for savings and credit, or whose principal activity consists in providing State or public community services.

Candidates for the National Assembly must be members of a political party. Their names appear on the national list of candidates of their party, which must contain as many names as there are Assembly seats and which must be submitted to the authorities at the latest 21 days before the date of the elections. A deposit equivalent to US\$125 must be made for each name on the list, which is reimbursed if the list polls at least 10% of the total votes cast by the electorate.

The Ivory Coast is divided into 147 constituencies. In each of these, the Deputies are elected according to an absolute majority system in two ballots.

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 16.

National Assembly seats falling vacant between general elections are only filled—by by-elections—if at least one-fifth of the seats become vacant. No by-election is however held within the last 12 months of the legislature.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The deadline for nomination of National Assembly candidates was 19 October 1980 and the election campaign opened on 25 October.

The 147 Assembly seats were contested by 649 candidates (among whom 18 women) of the ruling *Parti democratique de la Cote d'Ivoire* (PDCI), the country's only political party, such freedom of choice being unprecedented. For the first time since independence, the elections did not take place under the single national list of candidates system, but by two rounds of an absolute majority vote in 147 constituencies.

On the first polling day (9 November), voter turnout was low; 74 Deputies were elected outright on this date. Final results showed that 120 successful candidates had not been members of the outgoing Assembly; only 27 incumbent members (out of 80 running for re-election) retained their seats.

On 2 February 1981, the President of the Republic, Mr. Felix Houphouet-Boigny, announced the formation of a new 36-member Government, with five Ministers more than before. The President had himself been re-elected for a fifth five-year term on 12 October 1980.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors	3,000,000 (approx.)
Political Group	Number of Seats
<i>Parti democratique de la Cote d'Ivoire</i> .	147

2. *Distribution of Deputies according to Sex*

Men. .	140
Women	7
	147