

## NICARAGUA

**Date of Elections:** 4 November 1984

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the seats in the new National Constituent Assembly provided for in the Electoral Law of March 1984\*. This was the first nationwide poll in Nicaragua since 1974.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The unicameral Parliament of Nicaragua, the National Constituent Assembly, comprises 96 members elected for 6 years. Six of the Assembly seats are held by unsuccessful candidates in the 1984 presidential race.

### **Electoral System**

All Nicaraguan citizens at least 16 years of age, in full possession of their civil and political rights and registered as electors, are entitled to vote. Voting is not compulsory.

Citizens who are 21 years old or more and in full possession of their rights may be candidates for the National Assembly if nominated by a legally-recognized political party. The parliamentary mandate is deemed incompatible with membership of the Supreme Court and the judiciary, election-connected offices and membership of the armed forces on active service.

For election purposes, Nicaragua is divided into nine constituencies. Deputies are chosen via a system of proportional representation, with remaining seats allotted on the basis of a national quotient in the course of three rounds. The number of Deputies representing each constituency is dependent on its population. There is one Deputy for every 30,000 citizens or 20,000 electors.

Vacancies which arise in the Assembly between general elections are filled by substitutes elected at the same time as titular members of the legislature.

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

The parliamentary elections were held simultaneously with those for President and Vice-President of the Republic. The polling date had been announced on 21 February 1984 and, on 15 March, the Council of State approved a new Electoral Law.

Issues during the 12-week campaign centered on the internal security threat posed by counter-revolutionary guerillas (or "contras") in Nicaragua, as well as economic problems caused largely by the civil war. Polling day results confirmed the anticipated victory of the

\*See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XVIII (1983-1984)*, p. 18.

ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN), but opposition parties gained a larger proportion of votes than had been expected. The three member parties of the *Coordinadora Democrática Nicaraguense* (CD), a coalition formed in 1981, had boycotted the elections. Mr. Daniel Ortega Saavedra, hitherto Co-ordinator of the governing junta, won the presidential race.

The newly-elected Assembly held its first session on 9 January 1985, thus replacing the former legislature known as the Council of State. It is to draft a new Constitution.

## Statistics

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

Number of registered electors. . . . .	1,551,597	
Voters. . . . .	1,170,142	(75.4%)
Blank or void ballot papers. . . . .	71,209	
Valid votes. . . . .	1,098,933	

Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats
Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN)	727,042	66.5	61
Democratic Conservative Party (PCDN)	151,624	13.9	14
Independent Liberal Party (PLI) . . . .	105,564	9.3	9
Popular Social Christian Party (PPSC)	61,694	5.7	6
Communist Party of Nicaragua (PCN)	16,384	1.5	2
Nicaraguan Socialist Party (PSN) . . . .	15,177	1.4	2
Marxist-Leninist Popular Action Movement (MAP-ML) . . . . .	11,170	1.0	2
			96

### 2. Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Sex

Men	83
Women	13
	96