

PHILIPPINES

Date of Elections: 14 May 1984

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the elective seats in the National Assembly on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of the Philippines, the National Assembly (*Batasang Pambansa*), comprises 200 members, of whom 183 are directly-elected representatives. The remaining 17 members are appointed by the President of the Republic, three of whom are Cabinet members and 14 sectoral representatives of youth, agriculture and labour organizations. All members serve for a term of 6 years.

Electoral System

All citizens of the Philippines over the age of 18 years, not disqualified by law, resident in the country for at least one year and in their voting district for at least six months, are entitled to vote. Voting is compulsory.

Assembly candidates must be natural-born citizens, at least 25 years of age (except representatives of the youth sector, who must be between 18 and 25), literate, registered voters in their district and resident thereof for a minimum of six months immediately preceding the polling. Ineligible for Assembly membership are persons found guilty of any crime involving disloyalty to the Government. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with any other office or employment in the Government (except that of Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, member of the Cabinet or Deputy Minister), or any subdivision, agency, or instrumentality thereof, including government-owned or controlled corporations. No member may, furthermore, be a government contractor.

Directly-elected members of the Assembly are chosen by simple majority vote, seats being apportioned in each district according to population. By-elections are held within 60 days to fill Assembly vacancies which arise at least 18 months before a regular election.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The election date was announced on 1 November 1983, and the campaign commenced on 27 March 1984. During the latter, which was occasionally violent, debate centered on economic problems (especially foreign debt), the question of the extent of presidential powers in legislative and other fields, and the ongoing inquiry proceedings into the assassination, in August 1983, of opposition leader Benigno Aquino.

The ruling New Society Movement (**KBL** - *Kilusang Bagong Lipunari*) was confronted by a somewhat divided opposition, certain groups having decided to boycott the elections. The United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO), a coalition of parties headed by former Senator Salvador Laurel, fielded the majority of the some 1,200 opposition candidates.

On polling day - the first since the lifting of martial law in 1981 - the KBL retained its parliamentary majority despite significant gains by the opposition (82 seats as compared with its previous total of 13), particularly in urban areas including Manila. Final results were announced after several days of vote counting. By 30 June, the entire Cabinet had resigned in accordance with President Ferdinand Marcos' request. A new one, headed by Prime Minister Cesar Virata, was then named.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors.	25,000,000 (approx.)
Political Group	^ ^
New Society Movement (KBL).101
United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO).64
Others.	<u>.18</u>
	183*

* 17 other members are appointed by the President of the Republic.