

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

Date of Elections: 26 April 1988

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament following premature dissolution of this body. General elections had previously been held in February 1985.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of the Republic of Korea, the National Assembly, comprises 299 members elected for 4 years. Of these, 224 are elected directly from a like number of districts and 75 "national constituency" seats are set aside for proportional representation*. All members have the same status while in office.

Electoral System

All citizens who have attained the age of 20 are entitled to vote. Disqualified are the insane, undischarged bankrupts, persons convicted of crime unless the execution of the sentence has been suspended or the term of imprisonment completed, and certain persons convicted of electoral fraud.

Electoral registers are compiled on the local (city, county, town) level as of the announcement of the polling day and revised continuously during this pre-election period. Voting is not compulsory.

Every qualified elector who has attained the age of 25 may be a candidate for the National Assembly. Certain government officials, members of the armed forces, holders of election-connected offices, officers and employees of public corporations and of agricultural, marine and rancher co-operatives, as well as journalists or teachers who are not eligible for membership of political parties may not simultaneously be Assembly members.

Candidates may figure on party lists or run as independents. In the latter case, they need the support of 500 to 700 voters in their constituency. All candidates must make a monetary deposit - 10,000,000 *won* for party nominees, 20,000,000 *won* for independents; these sums are forfeited if at least one-third of the valid votes cast in the constituency are not obtained by each unsuccessful candidate (or, by "national constituency" candidates, if their party does not obtain at least five seats in the district constituencies).

Under the Electoral Law, Assembly members are chosen according to a combined system of simple majority direct election and proportional representation in the country's

* See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 14.

14 provinces, each being allotted seats according to its population. The party that wins the most seats via simple majority but less than half of those in the 224 single-member district constituencies is automatically given half (38) of the remaining 75 seats, with the rest divided proportionately among the other parties in accordance with their winnings, on condition that these have captured at least five elective seats. All minor parties must be dissolved if they have not won at least one seat or 2% of the valid votes cast.

By-elections are held to fill constituency seats which fall vacant between general elections, while vacant proportional representation seats are filled by the "next-in-line" candidates of the political party concerned.

Background and Outcome of the Elections

The election date was officially announced on 8 April 1988 and the campaign began the same day. Challenging the ruling Democratic Justice Party (**DJP**) of President of the Republic Roh Tae-woo (who had been elected in December 1987) were chiefly the Reunification Democratic Party (RDP), led by Mr. Kim Young-sam, and the Party for Peace and Democracy (PPD), headed by Mr. Kim Dae-jung, both of whom had unsuccessfully contested the presidential race. President Roh favoured a programme of cautious liberal reforms and a "common man" approach to the major issues facing the country, while the opposition called for a policy of dynamic and meaningful political democratization. The personalities of the party leaders were for their part considered motivating factors. Altogether 1045 candidates were in the running.

On a somewhat turbulent polling day, the divided opposition recorded surprisingly significant gains as the conservative **DJP** won the most seats but fell short of an overall majority in the enlarged National Assembly - the first time this befell a governing party. The PPD became the leading opposition force (replacing RDP) and the headway made by the smaller, moderate New Democratic Republican Party (NDRP) placed it in a swing position. Cabinet changes were announced in the first week of May.

Statistics

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

Number of registered electors.	26,198,205	
Voters.	19,840,815	(75.73%)
Blank or void ballot papers.	198,775	
Valid votes.	19,642,040	

Political Group	Number of Candidates in Districts	Votes obtained	Number of Seats		Total Number of Seats
			Direct Election	Proper- tional Repre- sentation	
Democratic Justice Party (DJP).	224	6,670,494 33.96	S7	38	125 (-31)
Party for Peace and Demo- cracy (PPD).	168	3,783,279 19.26	54	16	70 (+46)
Reunification Democratic Party (RDP).	202	4,680,175 23.83	46	13	59 (+11)
New Democratic Republican Party (NDRP).	181	3,062,506 15.59	27	8	35 (+27)
Other parties and indepen- dents.	270	1,445,586 7.36	<u>10</u> 224	75	10 (-24) 299*

* 23 seats added since last elections.

2. *Distribution of Members of the National Assembly
according to Profession*

Politicians.	178
Businessmen.	37
Lawyers.	20
Teachers.	13
Agriculture.	5
Journalists.	5
Construction workers.	4
Pharmacists, doctors.	4
Clergy.	3
Civil servants.	3
Fishermen.	2
Miners.	2
Farmers (livestock).	2
Others.	21
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3. *Distribution of Members to the National Assembly
according to Sex*

Men.	293
Women.	6
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4. *Distribution of Members of the National Assembly
according to Age*

30-39 years	12
40-49 »	99
50-59 »	139
60-69 »	47
Over 70 »	2
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