

## SWAZILAND

**Date of Elections:** 16 November 1987

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the elective seats in Parliament following premature dissolution of this body on 28 September 1987. General elections had previously been held in October 1983.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The bicameral Parliament of Swaziland consists of the House of Assembly and the Senate.

The House of Assembly comprises 50 members: 40 of these are elected by an electoral college of 80 tribal community delegates and 10 are appointed by the King. The Attorney-General is also a member but may not vote. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker, elected by the House, may be chosen either from its own members (other than the Attorney-General, Ministers or Deputy Ministers) or from among persons who are not members but are qualified to be such.

The Senate consists of 20 members. Ten are elected by the House of Assembly and 10 are appointed by the King. The President and Deputy President of the Senate are chosen either from among the Senators who are not Ministers or Deputy Ministers or from among persons who are not Senators.

The term of office of all members is 5 years.

### **Electoral System**

All citizens who are at least 18 years of age are entitled to vote for members of the electoral college in the tribal community (*tinkhundla*) where they ordinarily reside or work. Employers are obliged to release their employees so that they may exercise this right. The insane, persons owing allegiance to a foreign State, and those under sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding six months may not vote or be eligible for nomination as a delegate to an electoral college.

Each of the 40 *tinkhundla* nominates from two to four candidates for the electoral college, each of whom must have received the support of at least five persons. Two of these candidates are then elected as delegates.

At the first meeting of the electoral college, nomination of candidates for election to the House of Assembly takes place. The two delegates of each *tinkhundla* nominate not more than two candidates: no nomination is valid unless it is supported by five other members of the college.

Election of Assembly members is held within five days of completion of nominations. If not more than 40 persons have altogether been nominated, the Chief Electoral Officer declares them as duly elected members of the House of Assembly. When there are more than 40 nominations, but only 40 candidates have received an absolute majority of college votes over all the candidates, they are for their part declared elected. If more than 40 candidates receive a majority of votes, such candidates who have an absolute majority of all the votes are declared elected; if the number of successful candidates so declared is less than 40, a fresh election for the remaining vacancies is held.

Disqualified or ineligible for election are persons under allegiance to a foreign State, holders of public office, members of the electoral college, undischarged bankrupts, the insane, persons under sentence of death or imprisonment exceeding six months, and certain persons who have previously been imprisoned.

Senators are elected through majority vote of House of Assembly members present and voting.

Both Assembly and Senate vacancies are filled through by-elections.

### **Background and Outcome of the Elections**

On 28 September 1987, King Mswati **III** dissolved Parliament one year before the expiry of its normal term and called elections for November.

Under Swaziland's unique electoral system, the first stage of the process (the selection of the electoral college by *tinkhundla*, or traditional tribal assemblies) was completed on 5 November. On 16 November, the electoral college announced that it had rejected all incumbent House of Assembly members and chosen 40 new faces. The next day, the 10 appointed House members were selected; the nominees included eight former parliamentarians. On 18 November, the renewal of the Senate was completed. Party political activity has been in abeyance since April 1973.

King Mswati - who had succeeded to the throne on 25 April 1986 - chose a new Cabinet on 30 November; the Prime Minister is Mr. Sotsha Dlamini.