

TUVALU

Date of Elections: 8 September 1981

Purpose of Elections

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

Characteristics of Parliament

The Parliament of Tuvalu is unicameral. It is composed of 12 elected members and an *ex-officio* member, the Attorney-General. Although the Attorney-General sits in Parliament, his role is purely advisory and he has no vote.

The 12 members are elected by universal suffrage for a term of 4 years. The number of members to be elected from each constituency is determined by population in the ratio of one member for every 1,000 people. The 12 elected members in turn elect a Prime Minister and a Speaker from amongst themselves by secret ballot.

Electoral System

Members of Parliament are elected by the simple majority system. The eight islands of Tuvalu constitute boundaries for the eight constituencies, four of which return two members each and the four others one each.

To be a candidate for membership of Parliament a person must be a citizen of Tuvalu, 21 years of age and proposed by three electors. No monetary deposit is required. However, any person who owes allegiance to a foreign power or State, is an undischarged insolvent, insane or of unsound mind, under sentence of death or serving imprisonment for a term exceeding 12 months, disqualified from membership under an election law, or one who, unless exempted by law, holds any public office, is not qualified to be elected as a member of Parliament.

Every citizen of Tuvalu who has attained the age of 18 years and is resident in Tuvalu may vote in general elections provided that he/she registers himself/herself as an elector. No person who has been sentenced to death or imprisonment exceeding one year, is insane or disqualified under any law in force in Tuvalu relating to offences connected with elections, shall be entitled to be registered as an elector.

Electoral registers are revised once a year. A major revision takes place before every general election. Voting in Tuvalu is not compulsory.

There are no recognized political parties. Each candidate is considered independent and responsible for his own election campaign. There is no prescribed duration for campaigning. A list of candidates, in alphabetical order, is published in each constituency at least 21 days prior to polling day, giving name, profession and age of each of the candidates and of his/

her three proposers. The candidate securing the highest number of votes is elected. In the two-member constituencies, the top two with the highest number of votes are declared the winners.

Seats which fall vacant between general elections are filled through by-elections.

General Considerations and Conduct of Elections

The previous elections to the House— then called the House of the Assembly—were held in August 1977. After independence in October 1978, the House of the Assembly became the Parliament of Tuvalu.

The Parliament was dissolved in July 1978 and thereafter the Government was acting in a caretaker capacity only. The September 1981 elections- the first since independence were completed in one day. From among 26 candidates, 12 were elected after a rather straight-forward and simple polling procedure. They were named and transported to the capital—Funafuti—for electing the Government.

The present Government, headed by Dr. Tomasi Puapua, has a 7:5 majority in Parliament, over the group headed by former Prime Minister Mr. Toaripi Lauti.

Statistics

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1. Distribution of Members of Parliament according to Professional Category

Retired civil servants	10
Businessmen	2
<i>Ex-officio</i> (Attorney-General)	1
	13

2. Distribution of Members of Parliament according to sex

Men	13 (including one <i>ex-officio</i> J
Women	

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