

## TUVALU

**Date of Elections:** 12 September 1985

### **Purpose of Elections**

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

### **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 registers himself 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 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 the Elections**

The 1985 general elections were the second since independence in 1978.

Among the nine members re-elected on 12 September were Prime Minister Tomasi Puapua and Finance Minister Henry Naisali. On 21 September, the newly-chosen Parliament re-elected Mr. Puapua as Prime Minister; he then announced the make-up of his five-member Cabinet.