

## WESTERN SAMOA

**Date of Elections:** 23 February 1985

### **Purpose of Elections**

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

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The unicameral Parliament of Western Samoa - the Legislative Assembly - consists of 47 members elected for 3 years. Forty-five of these are Samoans elected from 42 territorial constituencies on a franchise confined to *matais* (elected family leaders - *matai* being the head of an *aiga*, which is the traditional Samoan extended family unit) and two are elected by universal suffrage of those outside the *matai* system (mainly Europeans) and registered on the individual voters' rolls.

### **Electoral System**

Elections are held under the simple majority system. To be a voter, a person must be a citizen of Western Samoa, 21 years of age and a resident. Persons who are insane, undischarged bankrupts or who have been convicted, in Western Samoa or American Samoa, of an offence punishable by death or by imprisonment for a term of two years or more, or convicted, in Western Samoa, of a corrupt practice (unless such offenders have received a free pardon or have undergone their sentence of punishment) are disqualified from voting.

Electors for representatives of *matais* chosen from constituencies must be holders of a *matai* (chief) title - male or female - and registered on the electoral roll of the constituency concerned. Other citizens of Western Samoa - descendants of non-Samoan races - may have their names entered on the individual voters' rolls. No name can simultaneously appear both on the *matai* and the individual voters' rolls.

Electoral rolls are revised annually. Voting is not compulsory.

Candidates for the Legislative Assembly must be qualified voters. A member is not allowed to hold any office of profit. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with that of a public servant. Public servants who become members must resign.

Candidates must be nominated by two registered electors and make a monetary deposit of an amount equivalent to US\$35, which is forfeited if the candidate obtains less than one-half of the total number of votes polled by the successful candidate.

By-elections are held for Assembly seats which become vacant between general elections.

