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.

II Western Samoa

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

General elections had previously been held in February 1982, when the Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) won a majority of the Legislative Assembly seats. A total of 156 candidates were in contention in the 1985 poll.

On polling day, the ruling HRPP improved its standing, capturing a total of 31 seats; the remaining 16 went to supporters of the newly-founded Christian Democratic Party (CDP). Fifteen new members were elected to the Legislative Assembly. Prime Minister Tofilau Eti Alesana, in power since December 1982, continued in office and announced the formation of a new Cabinet.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections

Number of registered electors 16,000 (approx.) *matais* 1,600 (approx.) individual voters

Women _______ 2

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