

ECUADOR

Date of Elections: 1 June 1986

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the provincial seats in Parliament. Originally due to be held in early 1986, the polling was postponed pursuant to an October 1985 electoral reform law.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Ecuador, the National Congress, comprises 71 members: 12 members elected by national vote and 59 members elected by provincial vote. The latter include 2 Deputies for each of the country's 20 provinces (except those with less than 100,000 inhabitants, which have only one Deputy) and one additional Deputy for every 300,000 inhabitants or fraction exceeding 200,000. National Deputies are elected for 4 years and provincial Deputies for 2 years; they are eligible for re-election after the lapse of one legislative term.

Electoral System

All Ecuadorian citizens who are at least 18 years of age and in full possession of their civil rights are entitled to vote. Disqualified from voting are the insane; persons convicted for fraud in the public sector or connected with elections; those who are imprisoned or detained; drunkards, vagabonds and defrauders; tax evaders; and members of the armed and police forces.

Officials of the State Civil Registry are responsible for keeping the electoral registers up to date; they are revised every two years. Voting is compulsory, except for illiterates and persons over 65 years of age.

Ecuadorian citizens by birth who are 25 years of age or more, in full possession of their civil rights and belonging to a legally recognized political party are eligible to be candidates for Parliament. Provincial candidates must moreover be natives of, or have resided for three consecutive years prior to polling day in, the province where running. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with membership of the Government, certain posts and offices connected with the public sector, membership of the armed forces on active duty, government contractor, banker, membership of the clergy and the function of legal representative of a foreign company.

Candidates are nominated by political parties. They are elected according to a list system of proportional representation, without preferential voting or vote splitting.

The distribution of seats is carried out as follows:

1. Where only two Deputies are to be elected in a constituency, one seat is allotted to the first candidate on the list which has received the most votes and the other one to the following list, provided that the latter has obtained at least 50% of the votes received by the winning list. If this is not the case, both seats go to the list which is leading.

2. Where more than two Deputies are to be elected in a constituency, the procedure is as follows:

- (a) The total valid votes cast are divided by the number of seats to be filled, and those lists which have not received a number of votes equal to at least 50% of the quotient thus obtained are eliminated;
- (b) The total votes won by the eligible lists are divided by the number of seats to be filled so as to obtain a second quotient. Each list obtains as many seats as this quotient is contained in its own total. Seats left unfilled after this first distribution are allocated on the basis of the system of greatest remainder.

Substitutes elected at the same time as titular members of Parliament fill seats which become vacant between general elections.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The mid-term congressional elections were originally scheduled for January 1986; they coincided with polling for 512 posts in provincial and municipal councils and a popular referendum on the issue of allowing independent candidates to stand in elections, which the Government favoured.

The five-month campaign was described as acrimonious. Sixteen parties vied for the 59 provincial seats at stake. The centre-left and leftist parties opposing the ruling five-party conservative coalition were headed by the Democratic Left (ID). Economic issues (especially the difficulties caused by the slump in world prices of oil, Ecuador's main export earner) were widely debated. The opposition criticized the Government's austerity measures, as well as its alleged authoritarianism and its pro-Western foreign policy.

On polling day, the governing coalition, headed by President of the Republic Leon Febres Cordero Rivadeneira's Social Christian Party, was decisively defeated in both the congressional races and the constitutional reform referendum, as the opposition parties won a total of 35 seats compared to 17 for Government loyalists who formerly held 41. This outcome meant that the congressional majority changed hands halfway through President Febres Cordero's four-year term. On 6 June, a reshuffling of his Cabinet was announced.

Statistics

I. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the National Congress

Number of registered electors.	4,200,000	(approx.)
Voters.70%	(approx.)

Political Group	Number
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Democratic Left (ID), other left and centre-left parties.	35
Social Christian Party (PSC).17
Centrist parties.7
	59*

* Provincial Deputies only.