

HONDURAS

Date of Elections: 29 November 1981

Reason for Elections

Electors in Honduras were called upon to elect their representatives to the National Congress which was to replace the Constituent Assembly elected in April 1980.

Characteristics of Parliament

Under the terms of the new Constitution, prepared by the Constituent Assembly and promulgated on 20 January 1982, the unicameral Parliament of Honduras, or National Congress, consists of 82 Deputies.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

General legislative elections had previously been held in March 1971. In December 1972, the 64-member National Congress was dissolved following a military coup d'Etat. In April 1980, a 71-seat Constituent Assembly was elected in order to draft a new Constitution and prepare the ground for a smooth return to civilian government*.

The parliamentary elections were combined with those for President of the Republic. Leading contenders in both races were the conservative *Partido Nacional* (PN) and the centrist *Partido Liberal de Honduras* (PLH). Their candidates for President were, respectively, Mr. Ricardo Zuniga Agustinus and Mr. Roberto Suazo Cordova, President of the Constituent Assembly. Both were in favour of gradual reform to raise the country's poor living standards. Also in the running were the centre-left Christian Democrat and Innovation and Unity parties.

On a peaceful polling day, nearly 80% of an electorate of more than 1.5 million turned out to vote. The Liberal Party scored a clear victory, gaining 54% of the popular vote and thus capturing both the presidency and an absolute majority in Congress with 44 out of 82 seats. Dr. Suazo Cordova took office for a four-year term on 27 January 1982.

* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments* X/K (1979-1980). p. 14.