

PANORAMA

AN ANNUAL PUBLICATION OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

of parliamentary elections 2010



AT A GLANCE

- 56 parliamentary chambers in 44 countries (23.40% of the 188 countries with functioning parliaments) were renewed through direct elections in 2010.
- Of the world's 45,688 parliamentary seats, 8,584 (18.79%) were renewed through direct elections.
- Over 1,785 (20.8%) of those seats were won by women.
- In 21 of the 28 countries (75%) where the composition of government depended on the results of parliamentary elections, the ruling party or coalition was returned to power. In seven countries, the ruling party was voted out of office.
- Worldwide voter turnout averaged 65.34 per cent, an annual decrease of 3.95 percentage points based on available data.

A REVIEW OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN WORDS AND PICTURES

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"In any State the authority of the government can only derive from the will of the people as expressed in genuine, free and fair elections held at regular intervals on the basis of universal, equal and secret suffrage."

—Declaration on Criteria for Free and Fair Elections, unanimously adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council at its 154th session (Paris, 26 March 1994)



Inter-Parliamentary Union



▲ A man votes during the Costa Rican general elections. © AFP Photo/Yuri Cortez

Electoral highlights

Costa Rica: Cementing multi-party democracy

Election date: 7 February 2010

Turnout: 69.08%

The 2010 elections in Costa Rica were the first to be held under the new Electoral Code, passed in 2009. This Code made significant changes to the financing of political parties, which saw a reduction in the amount of funding provided by the State. It also introduced provisions that would be implemented for the next parliamentary elections in 2014, including an enhanced quota for women candidates and absentee voting.

The elections were conducted by the Supreme Election Tribunal, which also protects constitutional guarantees relating to elections. The Tribunal admonished a Catholic Bishop who apparently directed his congregation to vote for certain candidates although the Constitution expressly forbids the clergy from engaging in religiously motivated political propaganda.

Costa Rica uses a closed-list proportional representation system, where voters choose from among parties rather than candidates in parliamentary elections. Members of parliament are not eligible for immediate re-election, and must sit out the next term of the parliament before they

can run again. Costa Rica has in recent years shifted from a system that for 40 years was dominated by two strong political forces (the leftist National Liberation Party – the PLN, and the more conservative United Social Christian Party – the PUSC) to a broader multi-party system. The PUSC has lost its former dominance and two new parties – the Civic Action Party (PAC) and the Libertarian Movement (ML) – have emerged. In 2010, the PLN won the largest number of seats, 24, but failed to secure a parliamentary majority. New PLN President Laura Chinchilla, directly elected at the same time as the parliament, therefore requires support from other parties to be able to govern.

The 2009 changes also repealed the *Ley Seca*, literally the “dry law”, which had prohibited the sale and distribution of alcohol during the election period. This change was popular, and no disturbances were reported that could be attributed to the lifting of the ban.

Sudan: Elections under the Comprehensive Peace Agreement

Election dates: 11–15 April 2010

Turnout: Official figures have not been published

Sudan is divided by religion (70 per cent Muslim, 25 per cent animist and 5 per cent Christian), ethnicity (African and Arab origin), tribe, and economic activity (nomadic

and sedentary). Since it gained independence in 1956, the country has been in a nearly constant state of war, the deadliest conflicts being those between the North and South in 1956-1972 and 1983-2005, and, more recently, the one in the Darfur region.

After more than 10 years of negotiations, the North-South war formally ended with the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005. The agreement incorporated the southern Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) into a Government of National Unity, led by the ruling National Congress Party (NCP). It created a transitional parliament, whose members were appointed by the President, and set national elections for 2009, later delayed to 2010.

Boycotted by most opposition parties and marred by incidents of violence and electoral irregularities, the 2010 parliamentary elections were still largely seen as a step forward for democracy. The final results gave 323 of 450 seats to the NCP and 99 to the SPLM. Parallel presidential elections saw incumbent President Al-Bashir re-elected with over 68 per cent of the vote.

In January 2011, a referendum on independence for South Sudan was massively approved by voters in the South. South Sudan is expected to become an independent nation by July 2011 and the mandate of members elected in the southern constituencies in April 2010 should normally be terminated when that happens.

Philippines: Elections marred by violence

Election date: 10 May 2010

Turnout: 73.42%

Parliamentary elections were held in the Philippines in parallel with presidential elections. The Philippines remains affected by armed conflict between the State and groups demanding an independent Muslim State on the southern island of Mindanao. This conflict continually interrupted the peaceful conduct of the polling, with violence prior to and on election day itself, including

the bombing of polling stations. Polling was suspended in some districts where election staff were harassed and received death threats.

The 2010 elections saw the rolling out of increased technology in the electoral process, including the use of electronic scanners. This technology was intended to streamline the counting and vote aggregation process,



▲ Electronic voting machine in the Philippines. © Flickr/Juan Tan Kwon

but observers noted that there was room for improvement. Some people argued that the technology actually created opportunities to manipulate the vote.

With a turnout of over 73 per cent, the Liberal Party of President Benigno Aquino III received the largest share of seats in the House of Representatives. Seats were won by eight parties and one independent. New members included outgoing President Gloria Arroyo in the House and former Philippine First Lady Imelda Marcos in the Senate.

Kyrgyzstan: Steps towards the consolidation of democracy

Election date: 10 October 2010

Turnout: 56.59%

65

The maximum number of seats that one party is allowed to hold in the 120-member parliament in Kyrgyzstan.

The October 2010 parliamentary elections initiated a new political system in Kyrgyzstan, one with more features of a parliamentary system than the presidential model previously used in the country. Following the removal of long-serving President Akayev in the 2005 tulip revolution, President Bakiyev came to power and was re-elected

in controversial elections in July 2009. He came under criticism for alleged vote rigging and widespread corruption. When protests across the country turned violent in April 2010, President Bakiyev was himself overthrown by an interim government; he subsequently went into exile in Belarus. At the initiative of interim President Roza Otunbayeva, a new Constitution was drafted and put to a referendum on 27 June. In the run-up to the referendum, violence broke out in the south of the country. While ethnic Uzbeks constitute about 14.5 per cent of the overall population, they account for between 40 and 50 per cent of the inhabitants of the southern regions of Jalalabad and Osh. Initial clashes occurred between supporters of ousted president Bakiyev and those of the new government, but it soon became apparent that the violence targeted the Uzbek minority. Despite continuing tensions and clashes (resulting in at least 400 deaths and a large-scale refugee movement across the border into Uzbekistan), the referendum went ahead and saw over 90 per cent of voters approving the new Constitution.

The new Constitution increases the membership of the parliament from 90 to 120 seats and vests more power in the Prime Minister than in the President, who may serve one term only. At least 30 per cent of a party's candidates must be women. Interestingly, no single party may hold more than 65 seats (54.17%) in the new chamber.

The October elections proceeded as scheduled, and were contested by 29 parties. International observers praised the pluralism that had characterized the elections and the vibrancy of the campaign, considering this as an important stage in the consolidation of Kyrgyzstan's democracy. The results were generally viewed as representing the will of the people.

The Ata-Jurt party, which included some supporters of former President Bakiyev, came first, winning 8.89 per cent of the votes. Of the three parties in the transitional government, the Social Democratic Party came second with 8.04 per cent and Ata-Merken took 5.6 per cent, while Ak-Shumkar failed to surpass the national threshold. In all, 28 women (23.33%) were elected.

On 20 December, interim President Otunbayeva swore in a new government formed by Ata-Jurt (28 seats), the Social Democratic Party (26 seats) and Respublika (23 seats).

Tonga: Embracing greater representativeness

Election date: 25 November 2010

Turnout: 90.85%

17

The number of directly elected seats in parliament in **Tonga**. Another 9 seats are indirectly elected by the nobility.

The 2010 elections to the Tongan Legislative Assembly marked an important step in the kingdom's reform process, where the monarch holds significant executive power. However, King George Tupou V has pursued a variety of reforms since a pro-democracy rally in November 2006 turned

violent, leading to deaths and the imposition of a state of emergency. A committee of nobles, ministers and commoners failed to reach a consensus on the composition of the Legislative Assembly in time for the 2008 elections, which were run under the old system, where directly elected members formed a minority in the Assembly.

The Constitutional and Electoral Commission subsequently recommended the formation of a 26-member Assembly, with 17 members elected by universal suffrage using the single transferable vote method and nine members elected from and by the nobility. The Assembly accepted the recommendation for 17 popularly elected members but chose to retain the existing first-past-the-post method.

Another major change to the country's political system was that the Assembly would now choose a Prime Minister from among its members, and that the Prime Minister would decide on the composition of the cabinet. Previously,

those powers were exercised by the King, who announced that he would be guided by the advice of the Prime Minister in exercising his remaining executive powers.

The King dissolved the old Assembly in September and called the first elections under the new system. Several political parties registered to contest the elections; they fielded 147 candidates, including 10 women. Campaigning was vibrant and turnout high, recorded at over 90 per cent. Addressing Tongans before the voting commenced, the King called the elections "the greatest and most historic day for our kingdom [as] you will choose your representatives to the parliament and, thus, the first elected government in our country's long history."

A newly formed pro-democracy party, the Democratic Party of the Friendly Islands, won 12 of the 17 directly elected seats. The five other seats in this category were won by independents. On 22 December, the Assembly elected one of the noble representatives, Lord Tu'ivakano, as Prime Minister with the votes of the nine noble members and the five independents. His cabinet, announced on 31 December, includes the Democratic Party leader 'Akilisi Pohiva.

Haiti: Elections amid disaster

Election date: 28 November 2010

Turnout: 22%

Following a devastating earthquake on 12 January, parliamentary and presidential elections were postponed to November. The elections went ahead even after Hurricane Thomas and an outbreak of cholera caused further disruptions, with serious implications for the electoral process. Many citizens were internally displaced, and many more had lost their identification papers (required for both registration and voting) in the earthquake. Despite the huge obstacles, a joint Organization of American States-Caribbean Community electoral observation mission found that the election campaign had been relatively well conducted, for which they credited the political parties and the citizenry.



▲ People waiting for their Haitian National Identification cards so they can vote.
© UN Photo/Logan Abassi

Countries without a functioning parliament, 2005–2010

Country	Before	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Afghanistan	1992	■					
Bangladesh				■			
Central African Republic	2003	■					
Fiji			■	■	■	■	▶
Guinea					■	■	▶
Haiti	2004	■	■				
Iraq	2003	■					
Madagascar						■	■
Mauritania		■	■	■			
Myanmar	1988	■	■	■	■	■	■
Niger							■
Thailand			■				

■ Dissolution of parliament ■ Restoration of parliament

In all, 18 candidates were elected in the first round (out of 99 seats). There were allegations of widespread fraud and irregularities, as well as election-related violence late in the campaign period. Controversy over which candidates would go forward to the second round of the presidential elections brought the electoral process to a halt. In the end, the electoral commission changed the order of the candidates in the presidential poll, and run-offs for the parliamentary and presidential elections were set for 20 March 2011.

Myanmar: First elections since 1990

Election date: 7 November 2010

Turnout: 77.26%

25%

The proportion of seats reserved for the military in the House of Representatives and the House of Nationalities in Myanmar.

Myanmar had been without a functioning parliament since 1988, when the legislature was dissolved by the military. The military regime refused to recognize the victory of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) in the 1990 elections, and never convened the newly-elected parliament.

In 2003, faced with mounting international pressure, the junta published a roadmap to democracy, which led to a new Constitution being approved by referendum in May 2008. Although the new Constitution provides for a civilian government, significant power remains in the hands of the army command, with a quarter of the seats in the bicameral parliament reserved for military officers.

Under the Constitution, nationals married to a foreigner are barred from running for public office. The provision

is widely considered to have been adopted to specifically disqualify the NLD leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. She spent 15 of the past 21 years under house arrest and was finally released on 13 November 2010, six days after the elections. The NLD decided to boycott the 2010 elections, which resulted in the authorities dissolving the party on 14 September for failing to register as a political party. Some NLD members, who chose to take part in the elections, did so under the banner of the National Democratic Force (NDF).

Following a tightly controlled campaign and boycotted by the main opposition parties, the elections were held on 7 November. A party formed by former officials of the military junta, the USDP, won 259 of the 326 seats in the House of Representatives and 129 of the 168 in the House of Nationalities. The NDF took nine and four seats respectively. On 31 January 2011, the parliament was convened for the first time in nearly 23 years.

Egypt: Elections that did not live up to public expectations

Election dates: 28 November and 5 December 2010

Turnout: 34.95%

The first round of parliamentary elections took place in November. Those elections followed reforms that increased



▲ Egypt: Men watch candidates of the ruling National Democratic Party speak at a rally. © Flickr/Al Jazeera English

the number of elected seats in parliament and for the first time reserved 64 seats for women. The ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) has dominated Egypt's tightly controlled politics since the party's inception in 1978. Since then, the NDP has always held over two-thirds of the seats in the People's Assembly. The clamp-down on politics had included restrictions on the formation of political parties, an outright ban on a political party being formed by the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and a state of emergency in place since 1981 that severely curtailed freedom of assembly and association. At recent elections, MB members had been permitted to run as independents and in 2005, they won over half of the 150 seats they contested. Neither international nor national observers were allowed access to the polls in the 2010 elections, which some opposition parties boycotted.

The official turnout figure of 34.95 per cent was disputed by local commentators and the opposition, who suggested the actual turnout may have been less than 10 per cent of eligible electors. Following a second round of elections in early December, the final results were reported as 427 seats for the NDP, 16 for opposition parties and 69 for independents. A series of legal challenges to the election results ensued, but the Higher Elections Commission dismissed all court rulings that would have required fresh elections to be held.

On 14 January 2011, popular protests forced Tunisian President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali to flee his country. A wave of unrest quickly spread to several countries in the region. In Egypt, massive demonstrations called for the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak and radical changes to the political system. After 18 days of mass protest, the President handed over power to the Supreme

Council of Armed Forces on 13 February 2011. A constitutional referendum is expected within two months to provide for a new political settlement. This referendum would then be followed by elections for new State institutions.

In brief

Colombia held its most peaceful parliamentary elections for many years after being plagued by years of turmoil and violence. International observers noted a more "normal" electoral atmosphere than at previous polls and a more open campaign environment. The elections returned the governing Social Party of National Unity to power. It garnered the largest share of seats in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

The 7 March elections in **Iraq** were the second to be held since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003. The Council of Representatives had been enlarged from 275 to 325 members, with 82 seats reserved for women and eight for minorities. In all, 6,529 candidates, representing 82 political parties, ran in the elections. The final results did not produce a clear winner. They gave 91 seats to the secularist Iraqi National Movement and 89 to incumbent Prime Minister Maliki's State of Law coalition. The Iraqi

National Alliance and the Kurdish Alliance took 70 and 43 seats respectively. The country remained without a government for 249 days, until the Council of Representatives re-elected Jalal Talabani as President, who in turn re-appointed Nouri al-Maliki as Prime Minister.

82

The number of political parties that took part in the 2010 elections in **Iraq**, where 6529 candidates contested 325 seats.



▲ Votes are counted at a polling station in Bogota, Colombia.
© AFP Photo/Eitan Abramovich



▲ Iraqi policemen after voting early in parliamentary elections
© U.S. Army/Joel LeMaistre



▲ A voter at a polling station in a village near Chisinau, Republic of Moldova. © OSCE/Jens Eschenbaecher

2010 focus: Elections with no clear winner

An interesting trend in 2010 was a series of inconclusive elections.

The 28 November parliamentary elections in the **Republic of Moldova** were the country's third in 20 months. The July and September 2009 elections had not returned a parliament with the ability to muster the required 61 votes (from 101 members) to elect a President of the Republic. A referendum held in September 2010 proposed a return to direct presidential elections, but that referendum did not meet the 33-per-cent turnout requirement. After the November polls, no single group held the key number of 61 seats in the parliament. The party of Moldovan Communists took 42 seats and the main opposition coalition - the three-party Alliance for European Integration - won 59. The Alliance formed a government, but presidential elections are yet to take place.

In the **United Kingdom**, the 6 May elections resulted in the first "hung" parliament since 1974. The incumbent Labour Government of Gordon Brown lost almost 100 seats in the House of Commons. The main opposition Conservative Party was unable to claim a majority of the 650 seats with its tally of 306. In all, 10 parties gained

representation in 2010. A period of uncertainty followed that was unusual for a first-past-the-post system with two strong parties, where a clear election result usually immediately follows the balloting. Eventually, David Cameron, the Conservative Leader, formed a coalition with the Liberal Democrats, which had 57 seats. He is not only the youngest Prime Minister since 1812, but also heads the first UK coalition government since the Second World War.

Australia went into general elections on 21 August with its first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, having taken office just two months previously. The elections, dominated by the government's financial and immigration policies, returned an inconclusive result. Gillard's Australian Labour Party won 72 seats in the House of Representatives and the main opposition Liberal/National Coalition 73 seats. Neither, therefore, could muster a majority in the 150-seat House. This was due to the Green Party winning its first seat in the House of Representatives and independent members claiming a further four. In the end, Gillard was able to form a minority government with the support of the Greens and three of the four independents - the first minority government in 70 years.

The unusual results in the United Kingdom and Australia – and the ensuing uncertainty about how such



▲ An Afghan worker verifies the identification card of a resident at a polling station. © U.S. Army/ Jeffrey Alexander

hung parliaments would function – stand in stark contrast to the Parliament of **Canada**. Despite its close historical links to the UK and Australia, Canada has more experience with multi-party, multi-polar election results and is currently governed by a minority government for the ninth time since 1945. Although speculation was rife, no general election was held in Canada in 2010.

The September elections to the Wolesi Jirga, the lower house of Parliament in **Afghanistan**, provided no clear direction for the country. Only 9 per cent of candidates were affiliated to a political party, making ethnic composition the only other point of reference for analysis. In 2010, the final results gave a significant political boost to the Hazara minority and diluted the power of the Pashtun community, the country's largest ethnic group. The composition of the chamber remained disputed, with a Special Election Court established by President Karzai to investigate the results in 24 of the country's 34 provinces. The Wolesi Jirga was not convened until January 2011, and on 27 February 2011, it elected Abdul Raouf Ibrahim as Speaker after 16 sessions devoted exclusively to the matter.

For many observers, the most inconclusive election of 2010 was the one that took place in **Belgium** on 13 June. On 17 February 2011, Belgium reached 250 days without a government being formed - breaking the world record (249 days held by Iraq following its 2010 elections). The major issue in the elections was Belgium's institutional structure. The country has a complex three layers of government to represent the federal level, the regional level

and a community level that represents the three linguistic communities: Flemish, French and German. Political parties themselves are split along the linguistic divide. Previously, the country had been left without a functioning government for 196 days after the 2007 elections. A series of interim and then coalition governments were subsequently formed before a final collapse led to early elections in June 2010.

In the June elections, the New Flemish Alliance (N-VA) of Bart De Wever increased its share of seats from five at the last elections to 27, making it the largest force in the House of Representatives. The two socialist

parties – of Wallonia and Flanders – form the largest “family” in the chamber, with 39 seats. However, with 12 parties – which cross the political spectrum and the linguistic divide – sharing the 150 seats, it has so far proven impossible for a government to be formed. As power is heavily decentralized in Belgium, public services and other government functions have largely continued as usual.

250

On 17 February 2011, **Belgium** broke a world record of going 250 days without a government following the 2010 elections. It surpassed the 249 days recorded in Iraq the same year.

Power shifts

Hungary: First non-coalition government since 1990

Election dates: 11 and 25 April 2010

Turnout: 64.38% in first round, 46.66% in second

Hungary's parliamentary elections took place during difficult economic times and after the shortest election campaign since the end of communism in 1989. The 2006 elections had returned the governing coalition of the Hungarian Socialist Party and the Alliance of Free Democrats (the first such re-election since 1989), which faced regular criticism for its economic and financial policies and alleged corruption among office-holders. The complex voting system has entrenched a multi-party system while making it difficult for any single party to achieve a majority of seats, thereby necessitating coalition arrangements. During the 2010 campaign, the main opposition party, the Hungarian Civic Union-Christian Democratic People's Party (FIDESZ-KDNP), actively campaigned for a majority that would allow it to govern alone, suggesting that only strong single-party government could take the decisions needed to improve living standards. That proved a persuasive argument for many Hungarians concerned about falling living standards and a decline in public services. After the second round of voting, the FIDESZ-KDNP controlled 263 of the 386 seats in parliament, giving it not only freedom from coalition but also sufficient votes to amend the Constitution with a view to enacting promised political reforms. Women hold 9.07 per cent of the seats in the parliament, down from 10.36 per cent following the 2006 elections.

Suriname: Return of a familiar face

Election date: 25 May 2010

Turnout: 73.21%

34

The number of votes required to elect the President of **Suriname**. The Mega Combination coalition won 23 of the 51 seats in the Assembly, and gained the necessary 34 votes with the support of two smaller groups.

The 25 May parliamentary elections in Suriname were crucial not just for the composition of the National Assembly but also because of the role the Assembly plays in the election of the President. Due to the number of largely ethnically-based political parties, political alliances are often needed to reach the two-thirds majority required in parliament to elect a President. Indeed, in 2005, the parliament was unable

to reach the threshold, triggering the use of a wider People's Assembly, as provided for in the Constitution, to break the deadlock.

President Ronald Venetiaan's ruling New Front for Democracy and Development faced competition from the Mega Combination, led by former military ruler Desi Bouterse. The Mega Combination coalition won 23 of the 51 seats in the Assembly, and gained the necessary 34 votes to elect a president with the support of two smaller groups, the A Combination (A-Com) of former rebel leader Ronnie Brunswijk and the People's Alliance of small Javanese parties. All of these groups joined a coalition government that Bouterse subsequently formed. The new President is a familiar but controversial figure. In addition to being identified with Suriname's military rule, he is wanted on a Dutch arrest warrant for drug smuggling charges and also faces local legal proceedings relating to events that occurred during the military rule.

Netherlands: A changing political scene

Election date: 9 June 2010

Turnout: 75.4%

On 20 February 2010, the governing coalition collapsed over the renewal of the mission of Dutch military forces in Afghanistan. Early elections were set for June. The Netherlands uses a proportional representation system to elect the 150 members of the House of Representatives. The low threshold for gaining seats has resulted in the emergence of a large number of political parties, with the Netherlands having experienced many forms of coalition government. Outgoing Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende's Christian Democratic Appeal had the largest number of seats after the 2006 elections and governed in coalition with the Labour Party (PvdA), the Christian Union and Democrats 66. The Labour Party's withdrawal over Dutch troops in Afghanistan prompted the collapse of the coalition. Nevertheless, the campaign was dominated by economic issues, including government spending and pensions. An emerging right-wing party, the Freedom Party (PVV) of Geert Wilders, tried to steer the campaign towards issues of social cohesion and integration of immigrants.

The Liberal Party (VVD) emerged as the largest party with 31 seats, with the Labour Party fractionally behind on 30. The PVV came third with 24 seats, up from nine seats previously. The Christian Democrats' share fell to 21 seats, prompting outgoing Prime Minister Balkenende to announce that he was quitting politics.

The Liberal Party leader Mark Rutte reached a coalition agreement with the Christian Democrats, having intimated during the campaign that his party would find it difficult to enter into a coalition with Labour. The new Rutte gov-

ernment is supported in parliamentary votes by the PVV, although the latter is not part of the government per se. Rutte is the first Liberal Prime Minister in nearly a century, and leads the first minority administration since the Second World War. The Liberals' message of economic austerity resonated with the Dutch electorate. Its decision to accept the support of the PVV was a controversial move that many say signals a shift in Dutch culture and politics.

Inclusive elections

Although most 2010 elections led to more women in parliament than previous polls, the rate of progress is still slow. Nine chambers joined those that have reached the United Nations target of 30 per cent or more women members, bringing the worldwide total to 43 chambers. The global average for women in all chambers of parliaments is 19.1 per cent.

Representation of Pacific women continues to lag

The independent island States of the South Pacific have very low or no female representation. Four of them – Nauru, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu – held elections in 2010, but no women were elected. That was particularly disappointing in light of the efforts made by international and local advocates to improve the diversity of those parliaments. In the Solomon Islands, a group called Women in Shared Decision-Making (WiSDM) campaigned for the inclusion in a political reform bill of reserved seats for women as a transitional special measure, but to no avail. In all, 25 women candidates (out of a total of 509) ran in 2010, down from 26 women candidates in 2006, but all were unsuccessful.

Trinidad and Tobago elects first woman Prime Minister

The elections of May 2010 saw Trinidad and Tobago elect its first woman Prime Minister. Kamla Persad-Bissessar led her People's Partnership coalition to victory over the 14-year government of Patrick Manning's People's National Movement. Winning 29 of the 41 seats, Ms. Persad-Bissessar became the sixth female head of government in the Caribbean. The House of Representatives includes 11 other women members.

Sweden: pioneer experiences setback in women's representation

Following the 19 September elections for all 349 seats in the Swedish Parliament (Riksdagen), women held 157 seats,

or a 44.9 per-cent share. That was the first time the percentage of female parliamentarians dropped (from 46.42%) since 1991. Sweden has consistently enjoyed one of the highest proportions of female parliamentarians in the world, a position reached through the introduction of internal party measures to promote women's participation. In 2010, a new far-right party, the Sweden Democrats, entered parliament for the first time with 20 seats. With only 15 per cent of their candidates being women, their presence decreased the overall representation of women in parliament.

More information can be found in the IPU's *Women in Parliament 2010: The Year in Perspective* (<http://www.ipu.org/english/perdcls.htm#wmn-year>).

2010 focus: Elections and the global economic crisis

While economics and government finance have always been important election issues, the impact of the global economic crisis featured prominently in many election campaigns in 2010. In some elections, the major feature was the unpopularity of the incumbent government's financial policies, which offered fewer new spending programmes and stressed greater fiscal discipline. In other countries, government and opposition parties alike struggled to formulate programmes that were both feasible and affordable. In the European Union (EU), election contestants had to contend with the reality that agreements and treaties concluded in times of plenty carried costs as well as benefits. European elections in 2010 – and those to come in 2011 – demonstrate the need for national parliaments to articulate a clear role in ensuring accountability for decisions and actions at the EU and national levels.

In **Japan** elections to the House of Councillors were fought largely over the issue of taxation. In the **United States**, the actions of the US Government in response to the economic crisis fuelled a debate on the role and size of the federal government. This led, in part, to the formation of the "tea party" movement that backed many successful candidates who campaigned on a programme of "smaller government" in the mid-term elections. In the **Czech Republic**, the elections were dominated by proposed responses to a record government deficit. **Latvia** held elections in October against the backdrop of assistance from the International Monetary Fund and the EU, a 20 per cent unemployment rate and a series of austerity measures. Most elections in the EU featured discussion on the role of the Union, the euro and associated economic agreements. This held particularly true in June in **Slovakia**, which had adopted the euro in 2009 and helped fund the bailout for Greece in May.

Voter turnout

The average turnout for parliamentary elections in 2010 was 65.34%. In the 33 countries for which the IPU holds comparative data for the previous elections before 2010, voter turnout rose in 16 countries and fell in 17.

Ethiopia

Election date: 23 May 2010

Turnout: 93.44%

Ethiopia's fourth parliamentary elections since the end of the guerrilla war that led to the creation of an independent State of Eritrea, delivered another victory to the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front, which took 499 of the 547 seats in elections that were contested by 63 political parties. Turnout in Ethiopia was the highest in 2010 for countries where voting is not compulsory.

Sao Tome and Principe

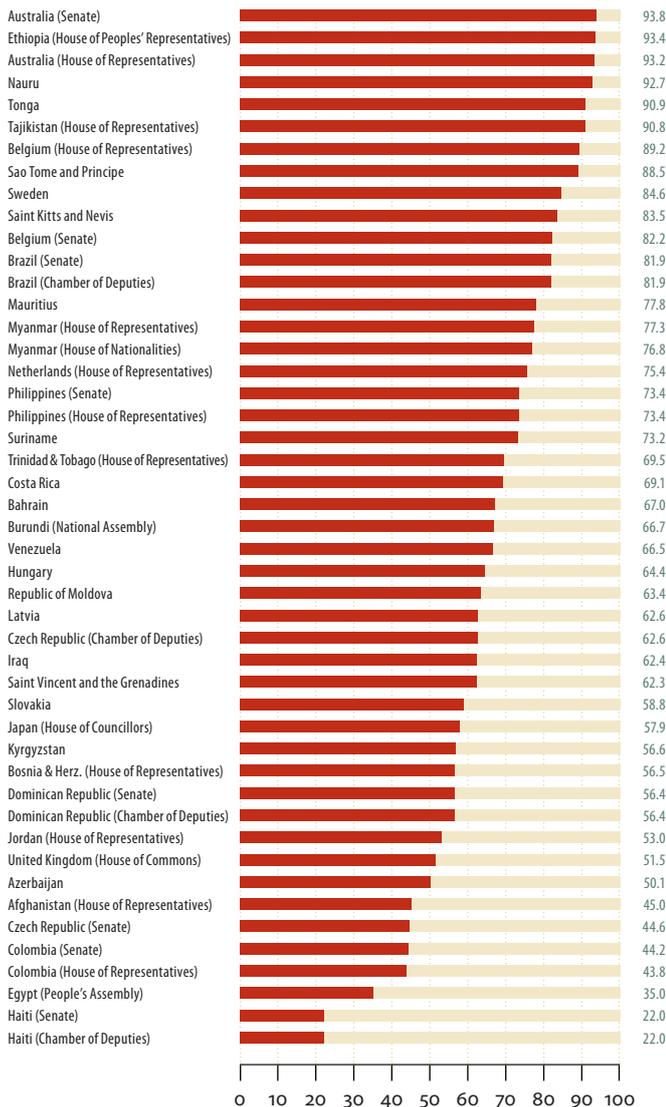
Election date: 1 August 2010

Turnout: 88.45%

Sao Tome and Principe's vibrant democracy saw voter turnout increase by 21.60 per cent compared to the previous elections in 2006. Since the current Constitution was adopted in 1990, no government in the country has lasted for the entire term of the legislature – a challenge for the new government of the Independent Democratic Alliance, which holds 26 of the parliament's 55 seats.

Voter turnout, 2010

(ballots cast/registered voters, per cent)



Difference in turnout between 2010 elections and previous elections, per cent



SCOPE

This publication covers all direct parliamentary elections in 2010. It does not cover indirectly elected or appointed parliamentary chambers. Information is provided on presidential elections when held concurrently with parliamentary elections.

In direct elections, the personal vote of individual citizens determines who will be their elected representatives. In indirect elections, members of an electoral college elect the representatives on behalf of the citizens.

All data in the Panorama of Parliamentary Elections is drawn from the IPU's PARLINE database on national parliaments (www.ipu.org/parline).

All figures are based on data available as at 31 January 2011. Data has been cross-checked with parliaments to the greatest extent possible.

Explanatory notes

Voter turnout: This is calculated as a percentage of the total number of registered electors. Voters include individuals who cast blank or invalid ballots (except in the UK). Those countries for which turnout figures were not available were excluded.

About the IPU

Created in 1889, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the world organization of parliaments. In February 2011, 155 parliaments were Members of the IPU. Eight regional parliamentary assemblies were associate Members.

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Parliamentary elections in 2010

Country	Chamber	Date
Afghanistan	House of Representatives	18 September
Australia	House of Representatives and Senate	21 August
Azerbaijan	National Assembly	7 November
Bahrain	Council of Representatives	23–30 October
Belgium	House of Representatives and Senate	13 June
Bosnia & Herzegovina	House of Representatives	3 October
Brazil	Chamber of Deputies and Senate	2 October
Burundi	National Assembly	23 July
Colombia	House of Representatives and Senate	14 March
Costa Rica	Legislative Assembly	7 February
Czech Republic	Chamber of Deputies	28–29 May
Czech Republic	Senate	15–16 & 22–23 October
Dominican Republic	Chamber of Deputies and Senate	16 May
Egypt	People's Assembly	28 November & 5 December
Egypt	Shoura Assembly	1 & 8 June
Ethiopia	House of Peoples' Representatives	23 May
Haiti	Chamber of Deputies and Senate	28 November & 20 March 2011
Hungary	National Assembly	11 & 25 April
Iraq	Council of Representatives	7 March
Japan	House of Councillors	11 July
Jordan	House of Representatives	9 November
Kyrgyzstan	Supreme Council	10 October
Latvia	Parliament	2 October
Mauritius	National Assembly	5 May
Myanmar	House of Representatives and House of Nationalities	7 November
Nauru	Parliament	24 April
Nauru	Parliament	19 June
Netherlands	House of Representatives	9 June
Philippines	House of Representatives and Senate	10 May
Republic of Moldova	Parliament	28 November
Saint Kitts and Nevis	National Assembly	25 January
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	House of Assembly	13 December
Sao Tome and Principe	National Assembly	1 August
Slovakia	National Council	12 June
Solomon Islands	National Parliament	8 April
Sri Lanka	Parliament	8 April
Sudan	National Assembly	11–15 April
Suriname	National Assembly	25 May
Sweden	Parliament	19 September
Tajikistan	House of Representatives	28 February & 14 March
Tonga	Legislative Assembly	25 November
Trinidad and Tobago	House of Representatives	24 May
Tuvalu	Parliament	16 September
United Kingdom	House of Commons	6 May
United Republic of Tanzania	Parliament	31 October
United States of America	House of Representatives and Senate	2 November
Venezuela	National Assembly	26 September