

Cuba Inaugurates Parliament with Wide Diversity

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Cuba is inaugurating Wednesday the 9th Legislature of its National Parliament, a body of 605 members representing diverse sectors of society and being 53.2 percent of it women.

The new MPs are meeting Wednesday and Thursday at Havana Convention Center after being elected last March 11, an election day in which over 7,400,000 voters casted their ballots for an 86 percent turnout.

The Parliament's seats will be occupied by workers, farmers, teachers, doctors, scientists, writers, artists, religious leaders, students, political leaders, businesspeople, sportsmen, military and workers from the private sectors.

Furthermore, the legislative house is made up of 40.5 percent black and colored people, 13,2 MPs under 35 years, 86 percent university graduates and a average age of 49 years.

A relevant fact is that 47.4 percent of the legislators was elected in neighborhood meetings and that women make up 53.2 percent of its membership makes the Cuban Parliament the second in the world with most women sitting second only to Rwanda (61.3).

Prensa Latina spoke with several of the newly-elected lawmakers who will take the oath Wednesday for a five-year term, and they all stressed that a priority is to

continue strengthening socialism, following the legacy of the historical leader of the Cuban revolution, Fidel Castro and the revolutionary generation of the process that began on January 1, 1959.

Jorge Luis Romero, a cobbler from Lisa municipality, in Havana, said people are aware of the need to preserving the social achievements.

'Just look at me; I'm a cobbler and I'll be sitting at the National Parliament; this only happens in Cuba where every single day I stay undisturbed when my children go to school or when someone in the family gets sick, because we have free quality education and health; this is why people defend the revolution,' said the self-employed cobbler.

After inauguration, the 9th Legislature will elect by secret vote the Assembly's Speaker for the next five years, and the new Council of State that is the highest governmental body.

In doing that, lawmakers will be electing the President who is head of State and Government, the first Vice President and five Vice Presidents, the Council's Secretary and the remaining 23 members of the Council of State, which represents the National Parliament in between its two ordinary periods of sessions a year.