

Fragmented Congress Poses Challenge for Next Brazilian President



Brasilia, October 8 (Xinhua-RHC) -- The new Brazilian congress is more fragmented than before, as more parties have entered the legislature after Sunday's general elections.

That reality presents a challenge for whoever will become the South American giant's next president, whether incumbent Dilma Rousseff of the Workers' Party (PT) or her conservative rival Aécio Neves of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB).

Fragmentation will be especially obvious in the lower house, or the Chamber of Deputies, where some 40 percent of the federal deputies are new, and the total number of parties has risen from 22 to 28, with six new small to medium-sized political parties represented for the first time.

The Senate, meanwhile, maintained its current profile of 16 parties, with one-third of its members re-elected.

João Paulo Peixoto, a professor of public administration at University of Brasília (UnB), expects the executive and legislative branches to tussle over economic matters.

"The biggest challenge will be related to the economy," said Peixoto. "Everything indicates that 2015 will be a difficult year for the Brazilian economy, and the next government will have to take tough and unpopular measures."

Both Rousseff and Neves have announced they are in favor of political reforms to limit the proliferation of political parties, but the make-up of the new congress makes any of such reforms scarcely possible, unless backed by massive public support.

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