



FACT SHEET: VENEZUELA'S 2012 ELECTIONS

- 17.8 million Venezuelans are already registered to vote in 2012
- 27,116 Venezuelans living in the U.S. are registered to vote in 2012 (0.15% of the electorate)
- 75% of registered voters went to the polls in the last elections in 2006

Presidential elections will be held in Venezuela on October 7, 2012. They will be overseen by the National Electoral Council (CNE), the independent body of government responsible for ensuring that the voting is efficient, transparent, and inclusive.

Due to its proven success in carrying out free and fair elections, Venezuela's CNE is widely recognized by electoral experts, scholars, and observers as a model for the region.¹ Since 1998, the CNE has conducted 16 electoral processes at the national, regional, and local levels, and all of them were verified by international observers including the OAS and the Carter Center.

So far, 17.8 million Venezuelans are registered to vote in 2012 (out of a population of 28 million).² Electoral participation is higher than ever, thanks to a national campaign to increase participation by issuing more national ID cards and establishing more voting centers, particularly in underserved areas. During the last presidential elections in 2006, voter turnout was an impressive 75 percent.

All Venezuelan citizens over the age of 18 have the right to vote, including those residing abroad. As of July 31st, 2011, a total of 60,015 Venezuelans living abroad were registered to vote, which amounts to 0.34 percent of the electorate. In the U.S., there are 27,116 Venezuelans registered to vote (0.15 percent of the total electorate).

Since 2003, Venezuela has undertaken a dramatic process of improvements to the country's electoral system, including updating and modernizing the voter registry and voting infrastructure.

The voting process in Venezuela is now fully automated and audited to ensure accuracy. Each voter casts an electronic ballot and immediately receives a paper receipt to double-check and place in a ballot box, and the paper ballots are later checked against the electronic results by poll workers.

In the last regional survey conducted by the respected polling firm Latinobarómetro, support for democracy in Venezuela was measured at 84 percent, the highest in the region.³ Citizen participation is a hallmark of Venezuela's democratic system, and voting continues to be one of the most important components of national political life.

1 "Surprising lessons from Venezuela's 2004 election," by Larry Hise and Karen Weill, *Seattle Times*, Dec. 23, 2008. http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/opinion/2008553815_opin24hildes.html

2 This and other statistics in this fact sheet can be found on the website of the CNE: www.cne.gov.ve

3 Informe Latinobarómetro 2010, Corporación Latinobarómetro, December 2010. www.latinobarometro.org

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