

PRESS RELEASE

The next election in Guyana is constitutionally due in another twelve months and already there is considerable speculation regarding the likely outcome and the possible configurations for both the governing PPP/Civic and opposition groups. Against this background, CADRES conducted a major political opinion survey in March of 2010 that covered all ten administrative regions of Guyana. In pursuit of these objectives approximately 1,000 Guyanese voters were interviewed and these were randomly selected from villages in each of the ten administrative regions of Guyana and in each instance the sample was proportionate to the percentage of the population that actually lives in that administrative region. The margin of error associated with a survey of this nature is +/- 5% and as such it could be said to be a reasonable indicator of public opinion in Guyana at the time it was conducted. CADRES has now been given approval to release the findings of this survey to the public and will now do so by way of three separate Press Releases over the next three weeks that will speak to issues of **Party Support**, **Major Issues** and finally **Leadership**.

Party support is of greatest interest in these surveys and in this regard respondents were asked which party they would support if an election were held at the time of the survey (March 2010) and persons responded as follows: PPP/Civic 25%; PNCR 23% AFC 25%; Other Parties (*cumulatively*) 3% and Don't know/Won't say (*cumulatively*) 24%. It is clear from this raw data that the "Don't Know/Won't Say" category is large and while this is not unusual this far away from an election, the size of this category is sufficiently large to alter the course of the election and therefore more needs to be said about these voters. Over the years, CADRES has developed a method of predicting the way that these voters will behave that relies on historical trends and this has been proven to be a most reliable indicator. This approach projects PPP/Civic support at 38%; PNCR support at 31% and AFC support at 26%.

The contemporary political reality can therefore be best analysed from the perspective of electoral swing which measures improvement and deterioration in the fortunes of a political party between elections. The swing analysis indicates that in March the PPP/Civic's support had fallen by 16% while the AFC's had risen by some 18% and the PNCR's fallen by 3%. This clearly indicates that the AFC is currently the political party that Guyanese have taken the most interest in over the last four years and while it continues to be the least popular "big" party, it clearly has captured the interest of Guyanese and appears to have absorbed the 16% of voters who defected from the PPP/Civic and also the 3% that moved away from the PNCR. In the final analysis, however the PPP/Civic is still leading and the PNCR is still the second most popular party, however the AFC would have been in a position to hold the balance of power if an election were called in March of this year.

The analysis of survey data from the perspective of age and race was also interesting as it speaks to voter characteristics in Guyana. Regarding age, it was clear that the PNCR's supporter tends to be older, while the AFC's tends to be younger, while those who refused to state their political opinion were more inclined to be middle aged. The PPP/Civic's cohort of support is, interestingly enough relatively evenly spread across all age groups.

There were few surprises regarding the racial profile of the voters, since the PNCR's support base is still largely Afro-Guyanese, while the PPP/Civic's is still predominately Indo-Guyanese. The AFC is at present a mixed party but more inclined towards the Afros than Indos, while the smaller party supporters are more mixed and those who refused to state their political party support are now more inclined to be Afro.

The foregoing data presents a political scenario that can be interpreted from different perspectives depending on one's preferred party. If one were to speak from a Pro-PPP/Civic perspective, it can be argued that these data are no different to those which emerged prior to the 2006 election BEFORE the PPP/Civic launched its campaign and moreover reflects a level of uncertainty that has emerged based on the imminent departure of the PPP/Civic's Presidential Candidate. Moreover, the data does demonstrate that the PPP/Civic still commands the single largest bloc of voters and would have first option to form a government if an election were held.

The opposition perspective can be favourable at this time but only if these disparate entities form an alliance of some sort since no individual party is sufficiently well organised in terms of party support to threaten the PPP/Civic's dominance. No single opposition force can now command a majority on its own and moreover the trends in the data suggest that the AFC has and will continue to erode PNCR support but cannot win on its own. In this regard the demographic of the voter who refused to state their political opinion is critical and it was noted above that these persons are predominately Afro-Guyanese who one might assume would support the PNCR, but could be influenced to support the AFC based on current trends.

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