



### OVERVIEW

This newsletter provides an overview of the key findings from the latest Opinion Leaders Panel research. This edition updates you with public opinion from Wave 10 of the Opinion Leaders Panel, conducted during the period 8th March – 22nd April 2008. The survey covered a wide range of issues including updating trend measures on government performance, issues facing the country and Vision 2020. The survey also covered public attitudes to local government performance, reactions to government advertising, views on CEPEP and URP, and a range of other issues.

### NATIONAL ISSUES

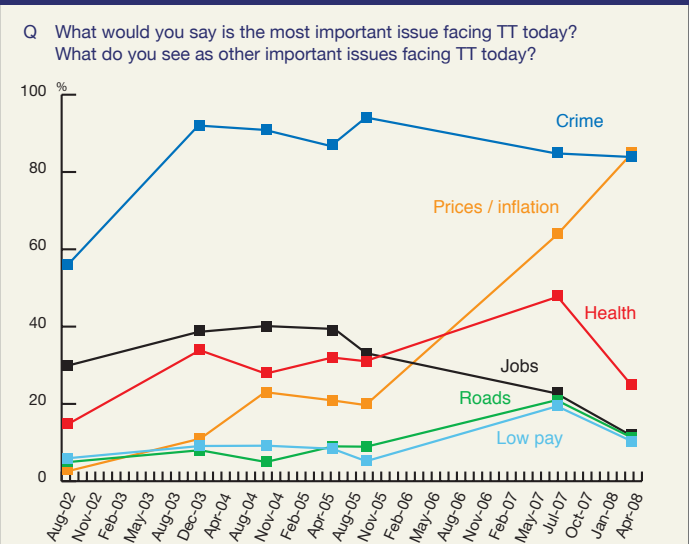
The two issues that are seen by the public as being the most important issues facing the country are “prices/inflation” (cited by 85% of people) and “crime/law & order” (cited by 84%). The proportion of people saying “prices/inflation” is one of the most important issues has risen by 21 percentage points since mid 2007, while the proportion citing crime has fallen slightly since its peak in mid 2005.

Following “prices/inflation” and “crime”, the next most important issue, cited by one in four people (25%) is “health/hospitals”, followed then by three issues each seen as most important by one in eight adults (12%): “unemployment”, “roads” and “low pay”.

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Chart 1: Key Issues Facing TT (Trend)



## GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

One in five citizens (20%) is satisfied with the way the Government is managing the country. This is the lowest level of satisfaction recorded since the Opinion Leaders Panel (OLP) started in mid 2002, and is down 15 percentage points since the start of the year (as measured in OLP Wave 9). The proportion of the public dissatisfied with the Government is also at a record high, with three quarters of citizens expressing dissatisfaction (74%).

Satisfaction with the Government is higher among older members of the public, with three in ten of those aged 55 years and over (29%) expressing satisfaction, compared to just 16% of those between the ages of 18-34 being satisfied. Satisfaction levels also vary by ethnicity, with more Afro-Trinidadians (28%) than Indo-Trinidadians (11%) satisfied with the Government. Satisfaction levels show little difference, however, by gender or class.

## EXPECTATIONS OF THE CABINET

The public has low expectations of the ability of the new Cabinet to take the country in the right direction

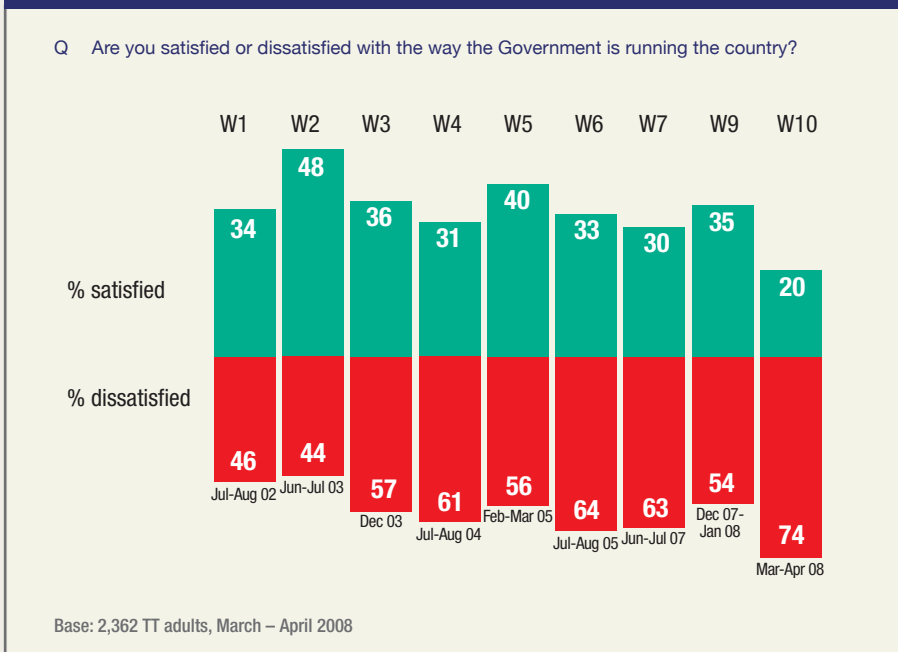
and deliver on the promises they made at the General Elections. For both of these areas, only two in five express confidence that the Cabinet will deliver (40% feeling the country will be taken in the right direction, and 37% feeling that election promises will be delivered).

## VISION 2020

The latest measurements of public opinion concerning Vision 2020 shows that three out of every four adults (76%) have heard a great deal or a fair amount about Vision 2020. One in four people (23%) say they know little or nothing about it. As was the case at the start of 2008, very few people are completely unaware of Vision 2020 (2%).

For the first time, more people are now sceptical that Vision 2020 will be achieved than are optimistic. Half the public (50%) feels that Trinidad and Tobago is unlikely or will certainly not be a developed nation by the year 2020, compared to two in five (41%) who believe it is likely or certain to happen. This gives a “net confidence” rating of -9. At the start of 2008, the “net confidence” rating was +9.

**Chart 2: Satisfaction with the Government**



## GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

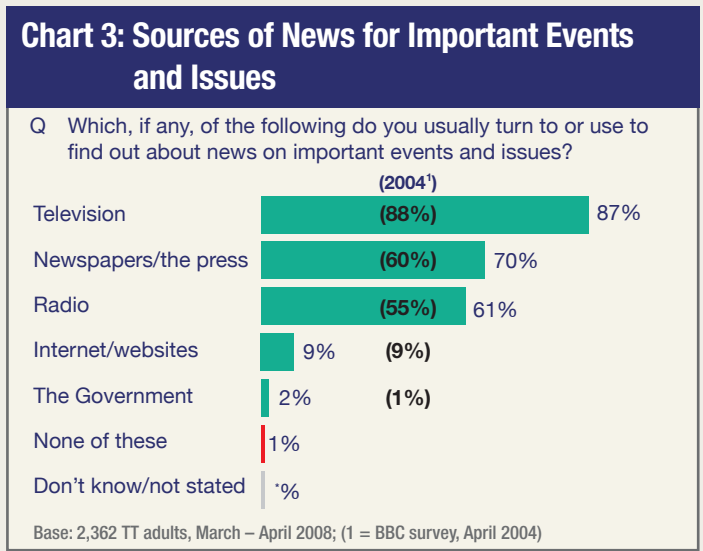
Two in five members of the public (40%) feel that they are adequately informed about the services and benefits provided by the Government, with almost three in five (58%) saying they are not well informed. This gives a “net informed” rating of -18, which compares to a “net informed” rating of +9 when this same question was asked in 2005. This means that compared to three years ago, fewer people currently feel informed about the services and benefits provided by the Government.

Just over half the public agrees that the “Government is too remote and impersonal” (54%), with a quarter in disagreement with this statement (24%). This pattern is similar to that recorded in 2005.

As such, it is not surprising that the majority of the public (62%) thinks that there is too little information from Government Ministries in newspapers, and just 5% think that there is too much.

## NEWS AND IMPORTANT EVENTS

Television (87%) is the most often used media people turn to for news on important events and issues, followed by newspapers (70%) and radio (61%). This pattern of findings is similar to that from 2004.



The evening is the most popular time to watch newscasts on television as three quarters of the public view newscasts between the hours of 6pm – 9pm, while radio newscasts are more likely to be listened to in the morning (34% of respondents cite this) or during the day (27% of respondents).

## TELEVISION

CCN TV6 (watched by 82% of the public regularly) is by far the most popular television station. The next most popular television station is CNMG, which is watched by 27% of people. Around a third of the public watch CCN TV6 only

## RADIO

While one TV channel dominates the share of the TV market, this is not the case for radio, with no one station having a significantly higher share than any other. The most frequently listened to station is WEFM 96.1FM, with 15% of the public listening to it regularly. But there is little difference between the top five radio stations in terms of audience share:

- 15%: WEFM 96.1FM
- 13%: Isaac 98.1FM
- 12%: Music Radio 97FM
- 11%: Rhythm City 94.1FM
- 10%: Power 102FM

Nine in ten people (90%) listen to at least one radio station regularly and over half (55%) listen to at least two. Only one in ten people do not listen to a radio station on a regular basis.

## NEWSPAPERS

Newsday (68% of the public read it regularly) and Express (62%) are the most popular newspapers in the country. One quarter of the public (25%) read the Guardian regularly. More than nine in ten people (93%) read at least one newspaper regularly and three in five (62%) read at least two regularly.

## LOCAL AREA: GOOD THINGS

“Peace and quiet” (cited by 53% of respondents) and the “low rate of crime” (38%) are the two things the public likes most about their neighbourhood. “Having good neighbours”, a “strong community spirit” and “living in an accessible neighbourhood” are the next most frequently cited aspects.

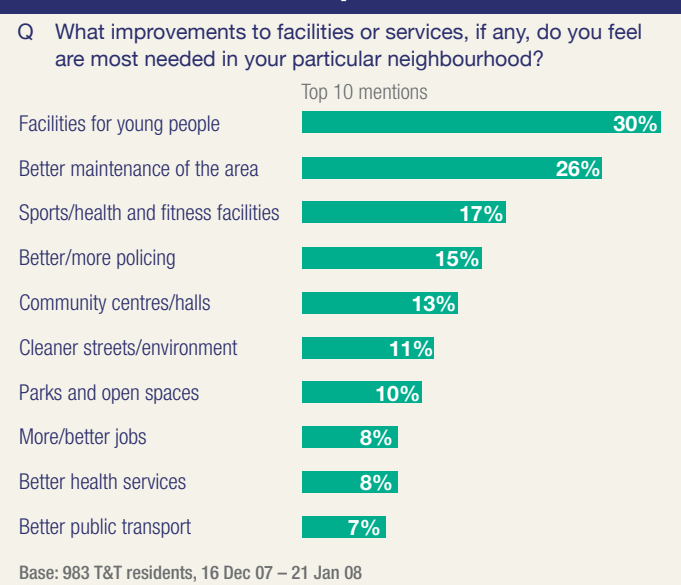
## LOCAL AREA: BAD THINGS

“The condition of the roads” (cited by 33% of the public) and a “lack of things for young people to do” (31%) are seen as the worst aspects of people’s neighbourhoods. These are followed by “drugs/drug dealing” (28%), “poor drainage/flooding” (27%) and “problems with young people hanging around” (23%).

## LOCAL AREA: PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

When asked what improvements to facilities or services are most needed in their neighbourhoods, two main aspects emerge: “facilities for young people” (30%) and “better maintenance of the area” (25%). Secondary areas for development concern were “sport/health and fitness facilities”, “policing” and “community centres/halls”.

**Chart 4: Priorities for Improvement in Local Area**



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODY: SATISFACTION AND INFORMATION

More of the public is dissatisfied (45%) than satisfied (37%) with their Local Government Body. Moreover, while a quarter (26%) says they are very dissatisfied with their Local Government Body, only 6% say they are very satisfied.

The public feels uninformed about their Local Government Body, with over three in five (63%) saying they do not know very much or know nothing at all about them, compared to a third (34%) who claim to know a great deal or a fair amount.

Overall satisfaction and levels of feeling informed about Local Government have fallen sharply over the past five years when these measures were last asked in Opinion Leaders Panel Wave 2 (in 2003).

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT BODY: PRIORITIES

The public’s top priorities for local government are for their Local Government Body to “provide equal treatment for all residents” (38% say this is the most important thing to do), “maintain good quality local services” (32%), “ensure equal treatment for all areas” (29%), “listen to local people” (29%) and “promote the wellbeing of the area” (26%).

Public satisfaction with how well they think their Local Government Body is meeting these priorities is low:

- 20% satisfied with “treating all residents equally”
- 20% satisfied with “maintaining good quality local services”
- 16% satisfied with “treating all areas equally”
- 19% satisfied with “listening to local people”
- 19% satisfied with “promoting the wellbeing of the local area”

## LOCAL SERVICES

Although satisfaction with their Local Government Body and with many of the public's priorities for their Local Government Body is low, satisfaction with several public services is much higher. From a list of 12 local services, more of the public is satisfied than dissatisfied with ten of the 12 services.

The highest levels of satisfaction are with street lighting (85% satisfied), garbage disposal and landfills (74%), street cleaning (72%) and upkeep of cemeteries (67%). Public dissatisfaction is highest with drainage (52% dissatisfied) and roads (53%). In addition, two in five people (41%) are dissatisfied with litter bins in their local area.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

Just one percent of the public feels that the current system of local government "works extremely well and could not be improved". Most people feel that the system could be improved "quite a lot" (42%) or "needs a great deal of improvement" (34%).

The majority of the public knows little about the government's plans for reforming local government. Three in ten (29%) claim to have heard a great deal or a fair amount, compared to two thirds (67%) who haven't heard very much or have not heard about the plans at all. By far the largest category is those who have not heard about the plans at all (40%).

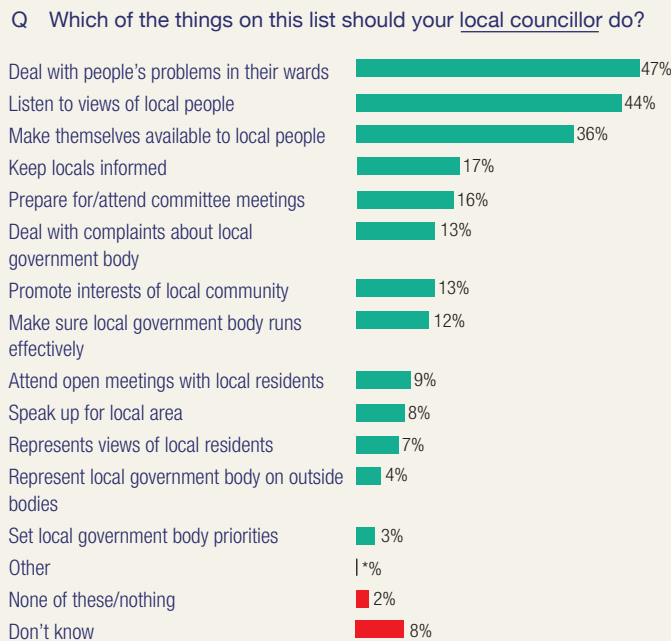
Those who have heard of the government's proposed reforms of local government are broadly in support of the plans (64% in support vs. 9% in opposition). However, the public do not feel the government is interested in listening to ordinary people about how they would like to see local government reformed. Only three in ten (30%) persons think the government is interested in public opinion on this matter, compared to half the public (50%) who do not believe that the government is.

## LOCAL COUNCILLORS

A quarter of the public (26%) can correctly name their local councillor. This level of awareness is similar to that recorded in 2003 (30%). However, few people feel they know what their local councillor does. The most popular response is that he or she "listens to the views of local people", which is selected by 12% of the public and the local councillor "deals with people's problems in their wards" (selected by 10%).

Despite low levels of awareness about what local councillors do, the public is clear about what they think councillors should be doing. The priorities for councillors in the public's view revolve firmly around engaging with local people – they should be "dealing with people's problems in their wards" (cited by 47%), "listening to the views of local people" (44%) and "making themselves available to local people" (35%).

**Chart 5: What Should Councillors Do?**



Base: 2,362 TT adults, March - April 2008

## AWARENESS OF CEPEP AND URP

Three quarters of the public (73%) say they know a great deal or fair amount about CEPEP, with a quarter (24%) saying they do not know very much about the programme (only one percent say they have never heard of it). Awareness levels have risen over the past three years. In 2005, fewer than three in five (57%) said they knew a great deal or fair amount about CEPEP.

There are similarly high levels of awareness about the Unemployment Relief Programme (URP) with seven in ten people (68%) saying they know a great deal or a fair amount about it.

Two thirds of the public (65%) has seen a great deal or a fair amount of activity by CEPEP workers in their area in the past 12 months and a similarly high proportion (70%) believe that CEPEP has made a great deal or a fair amount of impact on the cleanliness of their area.

For URP, just over half the public (52%) has seen a great deal or a fair amount of URP activity in their area in the past year, and the same proportion believe URP has impacted on the cleanliness of their area.

## SUCCESSSES OF CEPEP AND URP

CEPEP and the URP are both well regarded programmes, with CEPEP being seen as the more successful:

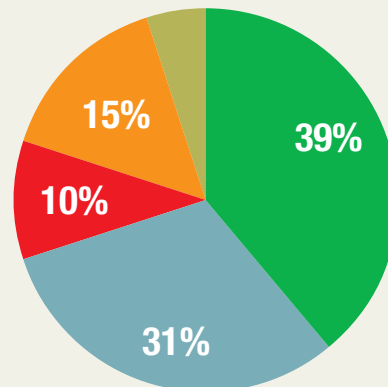
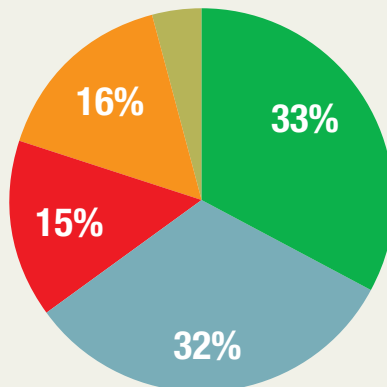
- Nine in ten people (90%) feel that CEPEP has been successful in enhancing the environment, compared to 64% who think this about URP
- Just under nine in ten (86%) think that CEPEP has successfully provided employment for semi-skilled and unskilled people, compared to 64% for the URP
- Two in five people (42%) feel that CEPEP has been successful in establishing new business (this question was not asked about URP)
- Overall, seven in ten of the public is satisfied with how CEPEP has worked in their community, with just one in eight (12%) expressing dissatisfaction
- Half the public (51%) is satisfied with how URP has worked in their community, and around a quarter (27%) dissatisfied

**Chart 6: Visibility and Impact of CEPEP**

Q How much activity, if any, have you seen by CEPEP workers in your community over the past 12 months?

Q To what extent, if at all, has CEPEP improved the cleanliness of your community?

■ A great deal ■ A fair amount ■ Not very much ■ None/not at all ■ Don't know



Base: 1,143 TT adults who have heard of CEPEP, March – April 2008

## HOUSING AND THE HDC

45% of the public do not think the Government has done enough to provide affordable housing to families on low income. In 2004, 58% of the public felt this way.

Almost all respondents have heard of the Housing Development Corporation (HDC) and among those who have contacted it in the past 12 months the majority (70%) found that the staff was “helpful”. In contrast, fewer than two in five (37%) found them to be “quick”. Approximately half of the respondents (52%) who had contacted the HDC were dissatisfied with the final outcome of their contact. The length of time taken to deal with their enquiry was the key reason cited for dissatisfaction.

Among those people who do not currently live in an HDC home, two in five (41%) believe that they personally qualify for a HDC home. Three in ten (29%) believe someone else in their household is eligible to qualify, and a third (34%) say they do not know. When asked what criteria determine eligibility for an HDC home the public say the following:

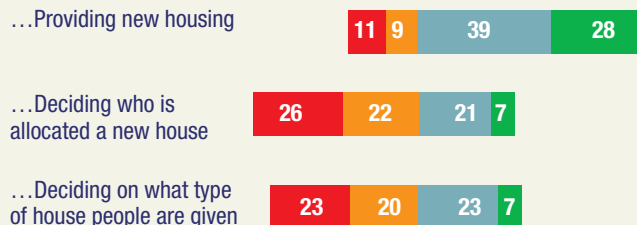
- 78%: be a resident of Trinidad and Tobago
- 74%: have a steady reliable income
- 54%: be at least 21 years olds’
- 40%: not own any other homes
- 16%: have a Inland Revenue tax file number
- 6%: know someone who works for the HDC
- 6%: have the support of your MP
- 6%: be recommended by your MP

The public believes the HDC is doing a good job at “providing new housing” (67%) but fewer think it is doing a good job at “deciding who is allocated a new house” (28%) or “deciding on what type of house people are given” (30%).

### Chart 7: Performance of the HDC

Q Do you think the Housing Development Corporation is doing a good job or a poor job of the following? . . .

■ Very good ■ Fairly good ■ Fairly bad ■ Very bad



Base: 1,173 TT adults, March – April 2008

## CONSUMER AFFAIRS: BUSINESS COMPLAINTS

Most people (71%) say that they did know that if they had a complaint about a vendor or business they could report them to the Consumer Affairs Division at the Ministry of Legal Affairs. The majority of people (59%) subsequently advised that they would be likely to complain to the Consumer Affairs Division at the Ministry of Legal Affairs if they wanted to make a complaint about a business or a vendor.

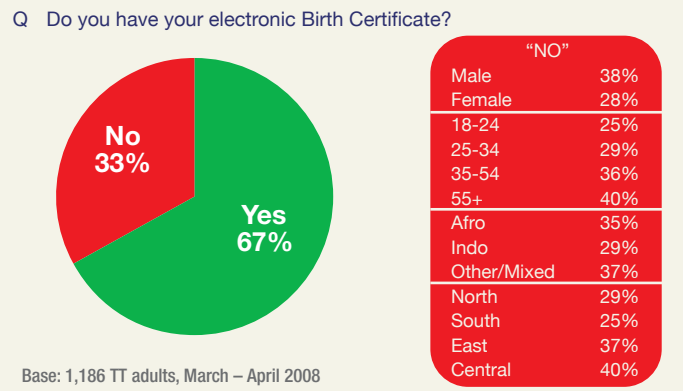
The primary reason for not making a complaint to the Consumer Affairs Division is the feeling that “the complaint would not make any difference” (cited by 61%). The next most frequently cited reasons are a “lack of time” (15%) and the perception that “it would be too difficult to complain” (7%).

## ELECTRONIC BIRTH CERTIFICATES

Two thirds of the public (67%) have their electronic Birth Certificate – one third (33%) do not. Men are less likely to have their electronic birth certificate than women (38% of men do not have it, compared to 28% of women), as are older members of the public (40% of those aged 55 years and over do not have it, compared to 25% of those aged 18-24 years).

The key reason given for not having an electronic Birth Certificate is that “it is too difficult or time consuming to get one”, cited by over half (54%) of those who do not have their Birth Certificate. One in five (21%) say that they have applied for their birth certificate, but have not yet received it.

**Chart 8: Electronic Birth Certificate**



## METHODOLOGY

In total 2,362 adults living in Trinidad and Tobago were interviewed for Wave 10. This was based on the existing Panel of 2,147 members and some new recruits for this Wave. The completed interviews comprised of 1,758 existing Panel members and 604 new recruits. This gives an overall response rate of 82% of the original Panel – (1,758 out of 2,147).

All interviews were conducted face-to-face between 8 March and 22 April 2008. As with all waves of the Panel, after fieldwork was completed, the data were checked and results weighted by age, ethnicity, gender and regional corporation to the 2000 census data. Weighting for work status is derived from an analysis of the most recent labour force survey data.

Where results do not sum to 100, this may be due to multiple responses, computer rounding or the exclusion of cases indicating “don’t know/not stated”.

## THANKS AND CONTACTS

**Thanks again to the Panel members for their participation in the research. The Opinion Leaders’ Panel is a very important tool for Government in determining ways and means to make its services more responsive and more efficient. We need your fullest support in helping us to shape our Public Services to improve service to all citizens. More updates will be provided in later issues of Opinion Leaders’ News**

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