



## 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 7 of the Opinion Leaders' Panel, conducted 31st May – 15th July 2007. The survey covered a wide range of issues including updating trend measures on government performance and issues facing the country to new findings on Vision 2020 and reactions to the crime consultations.

## NATIONAL ISSUES

The three issues of greatest concern to people in Trinidad and Tobago are crime (85% say this is one of the most important issues), inflation/ prices (64%) and health/hospitals (48%) – see chart 1.

Crime remains the most important issue for most people although the proportion of the public saying this has fallen from 94% in July – August 2005 (Wave 6) to 85% today (Wave 7).

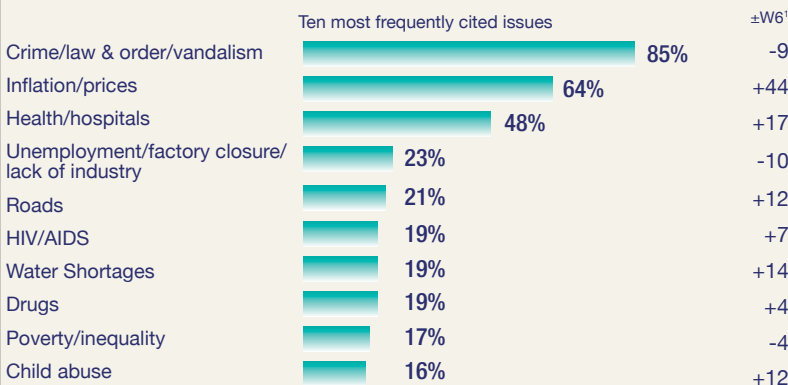
In contrast, there has been a substantial increase in public concern about prices/inflation. Two in every three people (64%) say inflation/ prices is the key national issue, compared with one in five people (20%) when last measured in July – August 2005. In the first Opinion Leaders' Panel, conducted between July – August 2002, only 3% of the public indicated that prices/inflation was a key concern.

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Chart 1: Issues facing the country

Q What in your opinion is the most important issues facing T&T today?  
What do you see as the other important issues facing T&T today?



Base: 2,540 TT adults aged 18+, 31 May – 15 July 2007 (<sup>1</sup>W6 = Jul-Aug 05)

Health/Hospitals was ranked third among the issues of concern to the public with 48% of the public identifying this issue. Again, concern has increased since the last Wave (up from 31% July – August 2005).

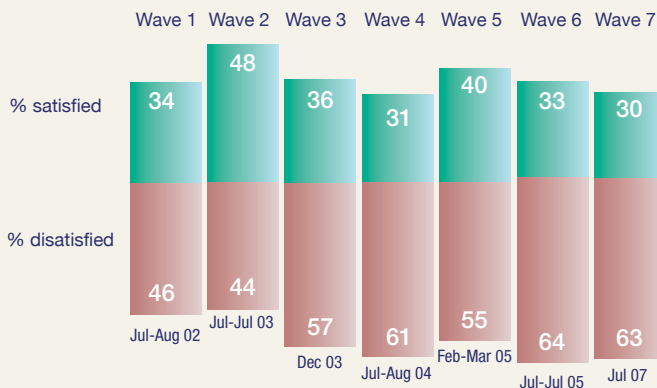
Of the top five national issues, only unemployment was identified as a key national issue by fewer people in 2007 than in 2005. The proportion of respondents indicating that this was a key national issue decreased from 33% in 2005 to 23% in the current wave.

## GOVERNMENT PERFORMANCE

Twice as many people say they are dissatisfied (63%) than satisfied (30%) with the way the Government is running the country (chart 2). These ratings are similar to those from mid 2005.

### Chart 2: Satisfaction with the Government

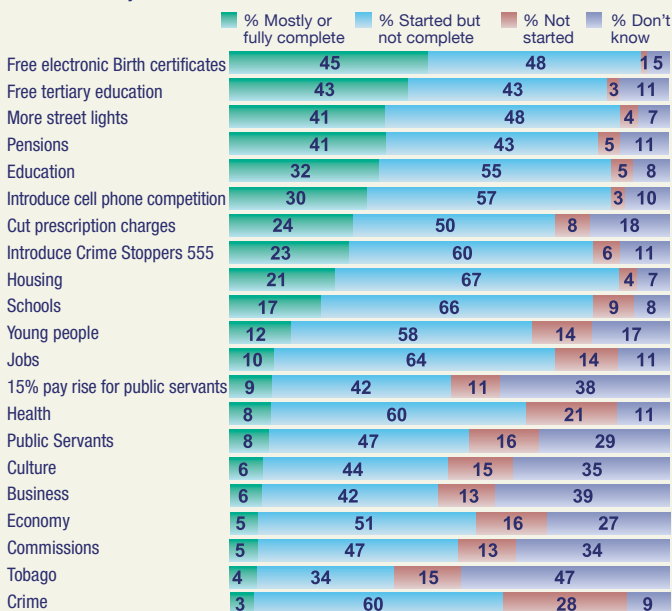
Q Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way the Government is running the country?



Base: 2,540 TT adults aged 18+, 31 May – 15 July 2007

### Chart 3: Progress on pledges

Q Now thinking about each of these pledges. Please tell me whether you think the Government has . . . .



Base: 2,540 TT adults aged 18+, 31 May – 15 July 2007

## RECALL OF GOVERNMENT PLEDGES

Respondents were asked which of the Government's 2002 pledges they could remember from memory. Recall was highest for the Government's pledge on "Jobs" (the Government will generate gainful sustainable employment for 20,000 citizens per year), with 13% of the public remembering this pledge.

Fewer than one in ten people were able to recall any other pledge made by the Government in 2002.

## PROGRESS ON DELIVERING PLEDGES

Respondents were shown a full list of Government pledges and other initiatives and asked to state the extent to which they feel the Government has implemented each of them. For each pledge, the respondent could say it was 'mostly or fully complete', 'started but not complete', 'not started' or say they did not know (chart 3).

The five pledges that the public sees as being most likely to have been completed are "Free Electronic Birth Certificates" (45% say this is mostly or fully complete), "Free Tertiary Education" (43%), "More Street Lights" (41%) and "Pensions" (41%).

For the most part, the public believes that each of the Government's pledges has at least been started, if not completed. With the exception of only two pledges, at least 50% of the public believe each of the twenty-one pledges covered in the survey have at least been started. The two exceptions are "Tobago" (because almost half say they don't know about progress on this pledge) and "Business" (again a high proportion say don't know).

## IMPACT OF GOVERNMENT PLEDGES

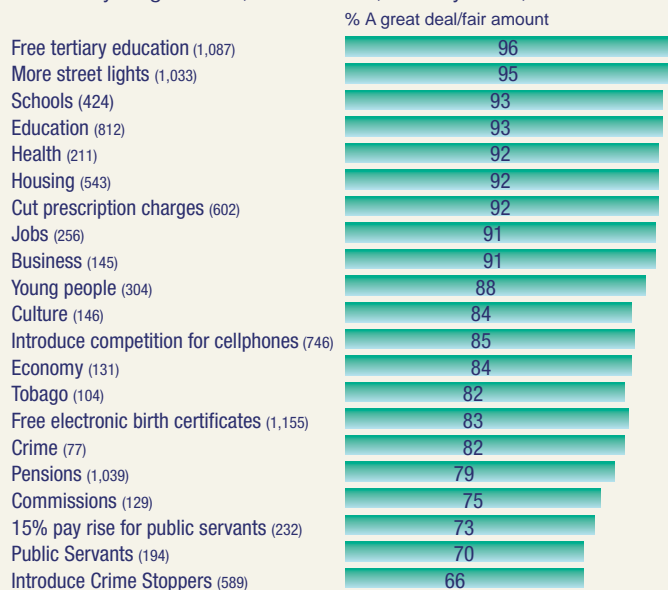
Among people who believe that a pledge has been mostly or fully complete, many believe these pledges have had a positive impact on people's lives (chart 4).

"Free Tertiary Education" and "More Street Lights" are seen as the pledges which have had the biggest positive impact on the quality of people's lives. Nearly all of those who feel that the Government has delivered on these pledges say that they have had a great deal or a fair amount of impact on the quality of life for residents (96% say this about "Free Tertiary Education" and 95% about "More Street Lights").

More than nine in ten people believe that several other pledges have had a fair amount or great deal of impact on people's lives once they have been mostly or fully complete: "Schools" and "Education" (both 93%); "Health", "Housing" and "Cutting Prescription Charges" (all 92%); and "Jobs" and "Business" (both 91%).

**Chart 4: Impact of mostly/fully complete pledges**

Q How much impact, if at all, do you think achieving the pledge on [INSERT PLEDGE] has had on the quality of people's lives in this country? A great deal, a fair amount, not very much, none at all?



Base: asked of those who think each pledge is mostly or fully complete. (Numbers in brackets represent number of respondents.)

Fewer people are convinced about the impact of the pledges on "Introducing Crime Stoppers 555", the "Economy", "Commissions" and on "Public Servants" where they believe these pledges are mostly or fully complete. However, the majority of persons who think these pledges have been delivered believes that the pledges have had a positive impact on quality of life.

## IMAGES OF PUBLIC SERVICES

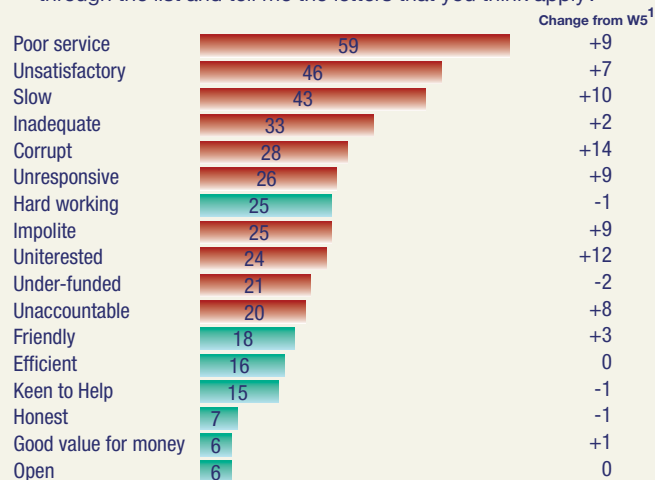
Public services have a poor image in Trinidad and Tobago. When asked to select from a list the words or phrases they would use to describe public services, the most popular choices are negative ones (chart 5). In fact, the top six words or phrases the public use to describe public services are all negative: poor service (59%), unsatisfactory (46%) and slow (43%). This is followed by inadequate (33%), corrupt (28%) and unresponsive (26%).

The same question was also asked in Wave 5 of the Opinion Leaders' Panel (Jan – Apr 2005). Since that time, there has been a general shift towards the public becoming more negative about public services.

The biggest changes in opinion since 2005 are the increases in the proportion of the population describing public services as corrupt (up 14 points), uninterested (up 12 points) and slow (up 10 points).

**Chart 5: Image of the Public Service**

Q These are some words that people have used to describe public services like schools and hospitals. Please read through the list and tell me the letters that you think apply?



Base: 1,282 TT adults aged 18+, 31 May to 15 July 2007 (<sup>1</sup>W5 = Jan-Apr 05)

## IMAGE OF TEACHERS, POLICE, DOCTORS AND NURSES

The survey also measured the public image of four categories of public servants: teachers, police, doctors and nurses. The results are shown in chart 6 where the proportion of the public selecting each characteristic is given in brackets. Green bars represent a positive attribute and red bars a negative one.

These four types of public servants have very different images with the public. Teachers are generally seen in a positive way (their net image rating is +15) whereas the police have a negative public image (their net image rating is -19).

The attributes most frequently selected to describe teachers are all positive. These are “hardworking” (55%), “friendly” (28%), “keen to help” (27%), “efficient” (23%), “honest” (18%) and “open” (16%). However, since 2005 the generally positive image of teachers has slipped somewhat since 2005.

The image of the police is very poor and this has become worse since 2005. They are most likely to be described as corrupt (53%), poor service (45%) and slow (37%).

The public has similar views of doctors and nurses, and generally the image of these two groups is mixed. The net image rating of nurses is -4 and of doctors is 0. An equal number of people view them as “hardworking” as would describe them as “providing a poor service”. The key difference in the image of doctors and nurses is that more of the public say nurses are “impolite” (27%) than say this of doctors (12%).

A noticeable distinction people make between the police and the other three types of public servants is that while “corrupt” is selected by more people to describe the police than any other attribute, few people select this to describe teachers (3%), nurses (4%) or doctors (5%). All four types of public servants do share one characteristic in common: few people say they provide “value for money” and it is one of the least selected characteristics for each of them: teachers (6%), police (4%), nurses (4%) and doctors (6%).

**Chart 6: Image of different types of Public Services**

Teachers (+15)	Police (-19)	Nurses (-4)	Doctors (=)
Hardworking (55)	Corrupt (53)	Poor service (34)	Hardworking (33)
Friendly (28)	Poor service (45)	Hardworking (33)	Poor service (31)
Keen to help (27)	Slow (37)	Impolite (27)	Slow (22)
Efficient (23)	Unresponsive (30)	Slow (26)	Unsatisfactory (22)
Honest (18)	Unsatisfactory (25)	Unsatisfactory (23)	Friendly (21)
Open (16)	Uninterested (24)	Friendly (23)	Inadequate (20)
Uninterested (15)	Impolite (24)	Uninterested (22)	Efficient (20)
Unsatisfactory (15)	Hardworking (22)	Inadequate (20)	Uninterested (19)
Poor service (12)	Inadequate (21)	Keen to help (20)	Keen to help (19)
Inadequate (11)	Unaccountable (19)	Unresponsive (17)	Unresponsive (15)
Underfunded (11)	Underfunded (10)	Efficient (16)	Unaccountable (14)
Unaccountable (8)	Keen to help (10)	Unaccountable (14)	Impolite (12)
Slow (8)	Efficient (10)	Underfunded (10)	Honest (10)
Impolite (8)	Friendly (9)	Honest (9)	Open (10)
Unresponsive (7)	Honest (5)	Open (8)	Underfunded (8)
Good value for money (6)	Open (5)	Corrupt (6)	Corrupt (8)
Corrupt (3)	Good value for money (4)	Good value for money (4)	Good value for money (6)

Source: OLPW7 (May-July 2007)

## SATISFACTION WITH KEY PUBLIC SERVICES

The public is more likely to express satisfaction rather than dissatisfaction with most public services covered in this survey. The most highly rated services are TT Post and T&TEC. The great majority of the public express satisfaction with these services (84% for TT Post and 79% for T&TEC).

The public is also, on balance, satisfied with TSTT and WASA (65% and 63% satisfied respectively). However, although the majority of the public is satisfied with these services, a sizeable minority are dissatisfied with the quality of the services provided (22% and 26% respectively).

The services recording the highest levels of dissatisfaction are hospitals, where almost half of the public (46%) are dissatisfied, and the police (43%).

Satisfaction with services can also be calculated among only those people/households who have **used the service in the past year**. This allows satisfaction levels to be assessed for people who have personal experience of using the respective service, and who are therefore less likely to base their feelings on third party information (chart 7).

Service users are most satisfied with TT Post (89% satisfied) and T&TEC (81% satisfied), mirroring the trend evidenced by the public as a whole. Users of primary schools, tertiary institutions and pre-primary schools are also satisfied. Again, following the pattern exhibited by the public as a whole, dissatisfaction levels are highest among those who have used the police service in the past year (51% dissatisfied), and among users of hospitals (47% dissatisfied).

### Chart 7: Satisfaction with Public Services among Users

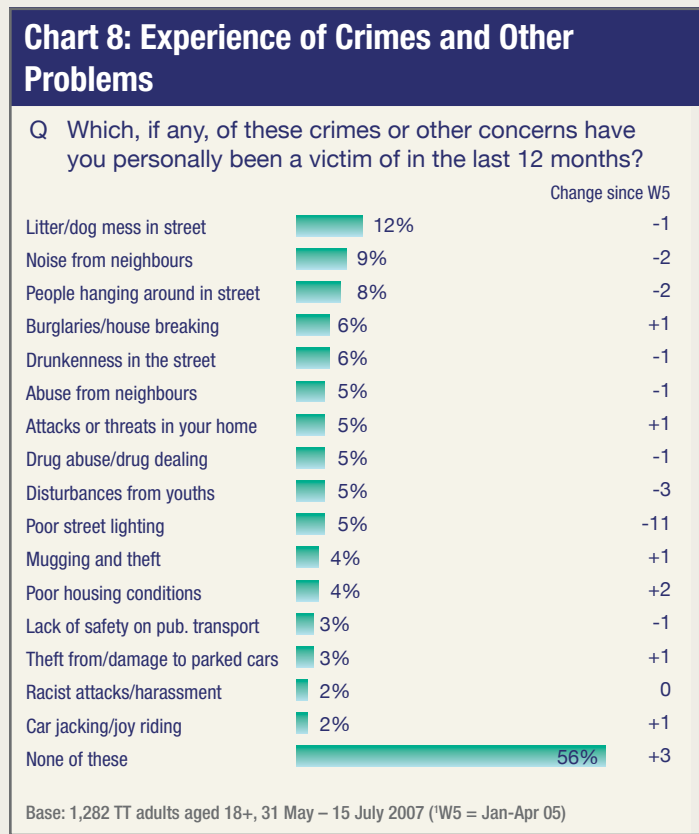
Q I would like you to tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you are with the quality of each.



## CRIME AND OTHER CONCERNS

The most common crimes, anti-social behaviours or other concerns people say they have experienced over the past year are litter or dog mess in the street (12%), noise from neighbours (8%) and people hanging around in the street (8%). While more people are likely to have experienced anti-social behaviour than serious crimes, six percent say they have been a victim of burglaries or house breaking and four percent say they have been a victim of mugging or theft (chart 8).

Since Wave 5 of the Opinion Leaders Panel, there has been relatively little change in peoples' experiences of these crimes and problems, with changes of just one or two percentage points typical (i.e. not statistically significant). The only large shift concerns street lighting: the proportion saying they have suffered from poor street lighting has declined from 16% in 2005 to 5% in 2007.



Although there has been no increase in the proportion of the public saying they have experienced a range of different crimes or problems in the past 12 months compared to when this was measured in Wave 5, in general the public thinks that these crimes and problems have increased in Trinidad and Tobago over the past year.

Out of the 21 crimes and problems asked about in the survey, the public feels that 15 are bigger problems now than they were a year ago. Drug abuse or drug dealing is the crime felt to have shown the biggest increase over the past year. A clear majority (64%) feels that there are more drug related problems in Trinidad and Tobago compared to 12 months ago, compared to just 7% who feel things have got better.

Kidnapping (47% say higher now), burglaries/house breakings (45% say higher now), people hanging around on streets (44% say higher now) and drunkenness in the street (44% say higher now) are the next most likely to be seen as bigger problems now than a year ago.

The problems that people, on balance, feel have become less of a prevalent over the past year are poor street lighting (60% say lower now), arson (29% lower vs. 19% higher), poor housing conditions (34% lower vs. 25% higher), racial attacks or harassment (25% vs. 22%), abuse from neighbours (23% vs. 19%), and noise from neighbours (23% vs. 21%).

## PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

The great majority of the public (81%) was aware of the public consultations on crime held by the Prime Minister and Minister of National Security in 2007, with half (52%) saying they knew a fair amount or a great deal about the consultations.

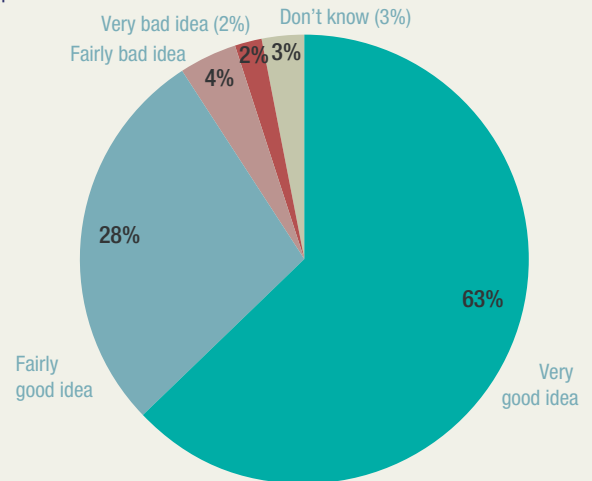
The public is highly supportive of the consultations on crime (chart 9). Nine in ten (91%) feel they are a good idea, including a clear majority who think they are a very good idea (63%). Just six percent of the public regarded the crime consultations as a bad idea.

A high proportion of the public (82%) also thinks that the consultations will be useful in helping the Government in their drive to develop policies and initiatives to reduce crime, including half the public (51%) who feel the consultations will be very useful (chart 10). This compares to 14% who think the consultations will not be useful.

The survey also shows that there is public support for consultations on other issues, with rising prices (44%), health (23%) and jobs (16%) being the most popular topics for discussion.

**Chart 9: Consultations on Crime**

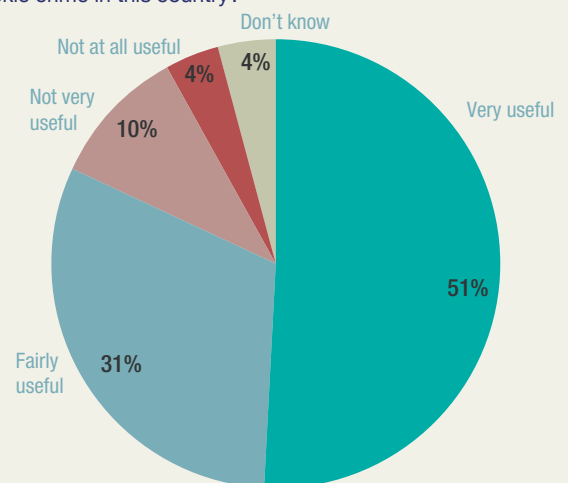
Q Do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea that the Prime Minister and Minister of National Security should hold these public consultations on crime?



Base: 1,257 TT adults aged 18+, 31 May – 15 July 2007

**Chart 10: Consultations on Crime**

Q How useful, if at all, do you think these consultations will be in helping the Government to develop policies and initiatives to tackle crime in this country?



Base: 1,257 TT adults aged 18+, 31 May – 15 July 2007

## VISION 2020

Most people (95%) in Trinidad and Tobago have heard about Vision 2020. The great majority (69%) say they have heard either a great deal (27%) or a fair amount (42%). In early 2003, when this question was first asked, 37% of people said they heard a great deal or a fair amount.

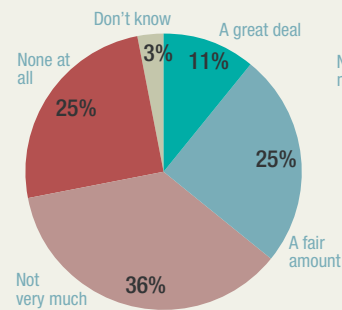
Half the public (50%) thinks it likely that Vision 2020 will be achieved, compared to two in five (39%) who feel it is unlikely that the country will become a developed nation by the year 2020. In early 2003, 63% of the public felt it was likely that Vision 2020 would succeed. This means that over the past four years more people have become familiar with the term Vision 2020, but fewer people think it is likely to be achieved.

The research shows that the three main reasons given by people who are sceptical that Vision 2020 will be achieved are concerns that it is “just political talk” (35%), “no signs of progress so far” (34%) and “the people are not committed/ready for it (25%)”.

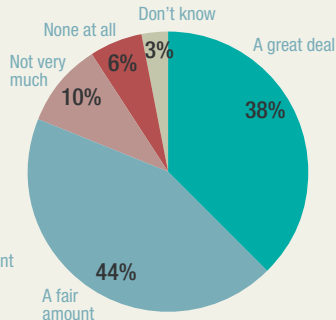
The research also shows there is a great deal of potential for involving more people in the Vision 2020 process (chart 11). Currently, 36% of the public feel they are involved in Vision 2020, compared with 61% who do not feel involved. Yet the vast majority of the public say they would like to be involved either a fair amount (44%) or a great deal (38%).

**Chart 11: Current and political involvement in Vision 2020**

Q How much involvement, if any, do you currently feel you have in Vision 2020?



Q How much involvement, if any, would you like to have in Vision 2020?



Base: 1,329 TT adults aged 18+, 31 May – 15 July 2007

## METHODOLOGY

In total 2,540 adults living in Trinidad and Tobago were interviewed for Wave 7 and who further agreed to become members of the new Opinion Leaders' Panel. Wave 7 constitutes a new “baseline” in the Opinion Leaders' Panel research series and is constituted of almost entirely fresh panel members, because of the long delay since the last wave of the Panel (Wave 6, conducted in July – August 2005). The survey used a three stage sampling design to ensure respondents were selected at random, and to ensure that the Panel is properly representative of all adults aged 18+ living in Trinidad and Tobago.

Interviews were carried out face-to-face, in home, between 31 May and 15 July 2007.

As with all waves of the Panel, after fieldwork was completed, the data were checked and weighted to the latest available information to ensure the results are properly representative of all adults.

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 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**

For more information contact: David Bazil  
 Ministry of Public Administration  
 National Library Building  
 Coner Hart & Abercromby Streets, Port of Spain, Trinidad  
 Phone: (868) 623-8578 Fax: (868) 623 6027  
 Or visit the Opinion Leaders' Panel  
 website: [www.opinionleaders.gov.tt](http://www.opinionleaders.gov.tt)

