

# **LAPOP Survey...Negative review caused by opposition action – Gail Teixeira**

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Weeks after the Latin American Public Opinion Poll (LAPOP) was published which showed a number



Presidential Advisor Gail Teixeira

of declining trends in Guyana, Presidential Advisor Gail Teixeira has said that the context of the opposition action against the government during the survey period should be taken into consideration.

Teixeira made the assertions during a televised interview on NCN earlier this week. In the interview, Teixeira noted with concern, a decline in key indicators including optimism on the economy, satisfaction in police performance and trust in politics. These indicators saw alarming decline between 2012 and 2014.

Teixeira said the secret to the survey was the timing and the context in which it took place. She said the survey was conducted in 2012 and 2014 in the context of Guyana undergoing numerous problems. She noted too, that it was the first time the country had a minority government.

Teixeira went on to say that many of the problems had been brought on by the then separated opposition parties, the Alliance for Change (AFC) and A Partnership for National Unity (APNU).

The Presidential Advisor said that, for three years in a row, the budget had been cut and disapproved by the opposition. This cut, she said, made hundreds of millions of dollars inaccessible. She further said that these cuts not only impacted macro issues such as development programs, but also caused the “ordinary citizen” to become ambivalent on the state of the economy. All of this, she said, was “caused by the behaviour of the opposition”.

“There is that subliminal, psychological impact and that is what is being reflected in the survey...there is uncertainty and unpredictability,” Teixeira said.

She said that in 2006 Guyanese had a “very positive” view on the economy and had believed that investors were coming in. However, she said, a number of recent issues have caused this perception to change and now people are not as confident as they were before.

Teixeira said the survey was conducted after the Amaila Hydropower Project was “defeated”. She said too, that the budget had also been cut, the Anti-Money Laundering Bill was not passed and Guyana was “on the cusp” of being put before the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

Further, she said the opposition had begun speaking of a no-confidence motion being brought against the government while Parliament was not sitting.

“The survey has to be looked at in the context in which it is taking place. So, some of the results are not actually surprising because people are quite conscious and are not disconnected to what is going on in our society,” Teixeira emphasised.

Teixeira also noted that politics was ranked as one of the major concerns facing the Guyanese people. She added that this might be linked to the period in review. “There are a number of things: Parliament, the behaviour of the opposition, cutting of budgets and so on,” she said.

The Presidential Advisor also noted with concern the Guyana Police Force’s (GPF) ranking as the least trusted police in the entire Americas.

Comparing the United States to Guyana, Teixeira said the US ranked higher in police satisfaction. However, she once again linked this ranking to timing.

“Timing plays a key role in determining the population’s satisfaction. Were it [the survey] to be done after the Ferguson case of the shooting of the young black man and the other shootings that took place after that, it would have been interesting to see what the results for the United States were. So sometimes it’s the luck of the draw and sometimes it’s contextual and it happens to fall within that period of review,” Teixeira said.

She went on to say that Jamaica does better than Guyana though Jamaica has a higher homicide rate. “Again, it has to do with perceptions,” she added. She continued, “It would be interesting after the 2015 elections to assess if there have been changes... People could have answered even more negatively. The fact that they didn’t show that there is still some level of stability and there is some trust in that, the political system or the institutional systems are working.”

Teixeira said that LAPOP was the most trusted barometer in the Latin America, Caribbean and Canada and United States on trends within the region, particularly to do with crime and society, democracy and governance.

She said too, that the survey was a very important tool for governments, especially “emerging democracies” such as Guyana’s. Further, Teixeira expressed hope that the survey would be used to identify upward and downward trends and to improve problem areas.

Currently, over 20 countries are surveyed by LAPOP.

Two weeks ago, the findings of the survey were revealed and showed a number of declines for Guyana. Notably, Guyana’s police was ranked the lowest in the Americas while the economy was deemed the most serious problem facing the country.

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