



## **News Release**

November 7<sup>th</sup> 2015

### **Myanmar Voters Have Positive Outlook for the Country, - Issues Ahead of the 2015 General Election**

YANGON – A survey carried out between 14<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2015, found that majority voters have positive outlook for the country but this optimism had declined quite significantly over more than a year ago.

In terms of the general outlook for the country, a strong majority (62 percent) of the respondents believes that the country is going in the right direction. The positive outlook can be observed across all demographic variables.

There are multiple factors behind the positive outlook. Among the main factors are economic and infrastructure development (42 percent), greater democratic space (16 percent), improvement in education (9 percent), good governance (8 percent), reforms (7 percent) and more job opportunities (4 percent).

Despite the strong positive outlook, the figure is relatively weaker compared to previous survey in February 2014. The February 2014 survey indicated that 88 percent voters think that the country was going in the right direction, a drop of 26 percentage points.

Indicative of the cautiousness of some respondents with the overall outlook of the country, 44 percent respondents said that their household income remained the same over the last two years while 21 percent said they were worst off. Only 34 percent respondents said that their household income were better off.

### **Low Level of Political Awareness**

Another interesting finding of this survey is the lack of political awareness among overwhelming majority of the voters. Only 29 percent voters said that they are familiar with the candidates that going to contest in their area while 43 percent said they are familiar with the political parties. These figures suggest that voters have greater tendency to know the political parties that going to contest in their area as compared to the candidates. A record 6,074 candidates will contest in the 2015 general elections and this

huge numbers could pose a great challenge to voters in getting to know their respective candidates. Furthermore, this survey was carried out just a few weeks after the UEC had released the official candidate list, hence majority voters might not be aware of the candidates yet.

In respect to the voters' familiarity with political parties, the emergence of many new parties could be the reason why majority voters do not know the political parties that going to contest in their area. The 43 percent voters who said that they are familiar with the political parties are referring to well established parties like USDP and NLD.

The survey was commissioned by a consortium led by Mizzima Media Group while Merdeka Center for Opinion Research (Malaysia) acted as the technical advisor. The survey implementer is Myanmar Survey Research (MSR). 1,200 adult Myanmar citizens were sampled as respondents via face-to-face interviews. Respondents were selected on multi-stage random sampling. The interviews were administrated in Burmese while interpreters assisted in ethnic minority areas. The survey covered the whole of Myanmar except for Chin state flooding prevented interviews from taking place. The survey is weighted to reflect the national population.

## **About Mizzima**

Mizzima was the first exile media to move back inside Myanmar in January 2012, after the country opened up for democratic changes. Mizzima Media Co. Ltd. produces daily newspaper in Myanmar, a weekly business magazine in English, television programs on business, sports, women and entertainment and websites in both Myanmar ([www.mizzimaburmese.com](http://www.mizzimaburmese.com)) and English ([www.mizzima.com](http://www.mizzima.com)). Additionally, Mizzima media products such as SMS, Radio News, Video News and Images are also available on various digital platforms and mobile phones in Myanmar. Mizzima also prides itself on our active cooperation with other national and international stakeholders in the media reform process in Myanmar.

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## **About Merdeka Center for Opinion Research**

Merdeka Center for Opinion Research was formally established in 2001 as an independent organization focused on public opinion research and socio-economic analysis. Merdeka's mission is to act as a bridge between ordinary Malaysians and other stakeholders with the leading members of the nation – by collecting public opinion studies and expressing them through survey results, analysis and position papers. For details, visit: [www.merdeka.org](http://www.merdeka.org)

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