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Public Opinion Poll

On the Formation of Prime Minister Nader Al Dhahabi's Government

Preliminary Results

Public Opinion Polling Unit

**Center for Strategic Studies
University of Jordan**

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Introduction

Category	Completed	Refused	Total
Business People	83	17	100
Leaders of Political Parties	97	3	100
Professionals	92	8	100
Writers, Journalists and Artists	88	12	100
Union Leaders	94	6	100
High Ranking State Officials	84	16	100
University Professors	85	15	100
Total	623	77	700

The Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan conducted a public opinion poll on the formation of Prime Minister Nader Al Dhahabi's government between 11/29/2007 and 12/4/2007. The size of the complete national sample for the poll was 1133, originally 1200, as 67 individuals refused to participate in the poll (the participation rate was 94%.) The size of the complete national sample of opinion leaders was 623, originally 700, as 77 individuals declined to participate in the poll (a participation rate of 89%). The sample was distributed among seven categories, as shown in Table Number 1. This poll aims to identify the viewpoints of Jordanian citizens, **their expectations** of Prime Minister Nader Al Dhahabi's government and the extent to which they think it will be able to carry out its

responsibilities in the coming term. The confidence level for this pole was 96%, and the margin of error was +/- 2%.

Section 1: Expectations for Success of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet

This section presents the expectations of the Jordanian public (the national sample) and the views of the sample of opinion leaders regarding the ability of the government, the prime minister and the ministerial team (excluding the prime minister) to carry out their responsibilities in the coming term. This section will also present the most important of these duties as defined by the respondents from the national sample and the sample of public opinion leaders.

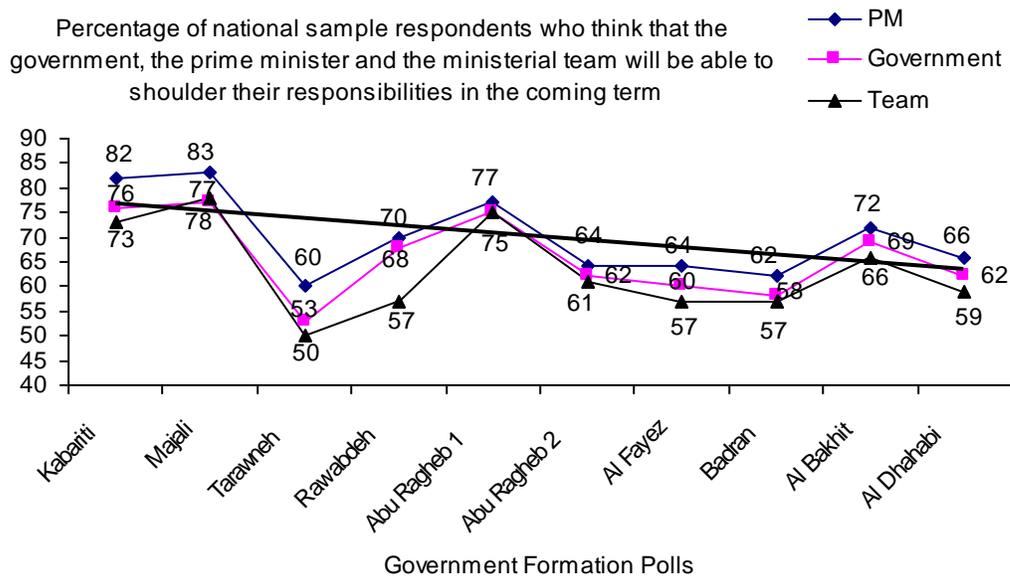
A: The National Sample: The Prime Minister, the Government, and the Ministerial Team

The results of the poll revealed that 62% of the individuals in the national sample thought that the new government would be able to carry out its responsibilities in the coming term to varying degrees (the arithmetic mean of the responses expressed as a percentage), while 66% said that the prime minister would be able to carry out his duties in the coming term. 59% of respondents said that the ministerial team (not including the prime minister) would be able to carry out its responsibilities in the coming term.

A comparison of the expectations for the success of this government (the government, the prime minister and the ministerial team) with the expectations for the success of the three previous governments (the Al Bakhit, Badran and Al Fayez governments) shows that the

expectations for the success of this government remain in the range of the expectations for success recorded for the three previous governments. Although the expectations of the respondents for this government may have decreased or increased in comparison with the previous three, these changes are not statistically significant and fall within the margins of the expectations for the other three governments. Even so, a comparison of the polls on the formation of all of the governments since 1996 indicates that citizens' confidence in the ability of successive governments to carry out their responsibilities is declining steadily, as illustrated in the line graph (**bold black**) in Figure 1 below.

Figure No. 1



This decline is evident in the comparison between the expectations for the success of the Kabariti government and the subsequent Majali government as shown in Figure 1. 76% of citizens expected Mr. Abd Al Karim Kabariti's government to succeed in carrying out its responsibilities when it was formed in February 1996, compared with 77% for Dr. Abd Al Salam Majali's government, 53% for Dr. Fayeze Tarawneh's government, 68% for Mr. Abd Al Ra'ouf Rawabdeh's government, 75% for Mr. Ali Abu Ragheb's first government and 62% for his second, 60% for Mr. Faysal Al Fayeze's government, 62% for Dr. Adnan Badran's government and 69% for the government of Mr. Ma'arouf Al Bakhit. Considering Mr. Nader Al Dhahabi's government, we find a **decrease** of about seven percentage points in the number of respondents who expect that the government will succeed in carrying out their responsibilities compared with their predecessors, the government of Dr. Al Bakhit. This observation also applies to the expectations for the success of the prime minister and the ministerial team (excluding the prime minister). However, respondents' expectations for the success of the government, prime minister and ministerial team are higher than they were for the governments of Mr. Badran and Mr. Al Fayeze. **It is notable that the percentage of those who expect the prime minister to succeed** is generally higher for all prime ministers than the percentage of those who expect the entire government or the ministerial team (excluding the Prime Minister) to succeed.

This slow, cumulative and continuous decline in citizens' expectations for the success of governments can be attributed, with some exceptions that do not represent a trend, to the fact that in the past few years citizens have not witnessed noticeable improvements in the level to which the issues they prioritize are addressed. However, citizens are hopeful when governments are formed that the new government will work to address these main issues. Likewise, this government is liable to experience a decline in the level of confidence of citizens (the national sample) if they do not feel that it makes significant achievements with regard to their key issues.

Respondents were requested to identify the most important duties that the government should carry out in the coming term. The poll results showed that the Jordanian public considers addressing the problem of price hikes as the most important responsibility, as this issue accounted for 32.5% of all answers. Price hikes were followed by the issue of raising salaries and improving citizens' standard of living at 14.5%, the unemployment issue at 14.0% poverty at 8.4%, improving health and education services and lowering their cost at 7.5%, improving the investment environment at 7.2%, and working to achieve the principle of the rule of law and equality between citizens and to strengthen democracy at 4.9%. Working to improve public services accounted for 3.1% of all answers, as shown in Table 2.

It is notable that issues related to citizens' economic situation continue to occupy their attention, representing a fundamental difference from their level of concern about foreign policy or issues of stability and security. However, the results of this poll clearly reveal that price hikes, citizens' income levels and standards of living are their top concerns, replacing the issues of unemployment and poverty that had been citizens' primary concerns for several years according to the results of previous polls. In order for the government to maintain the public's confidence in its ability to succeed, citizens must feel that its performance reflects positively on them.

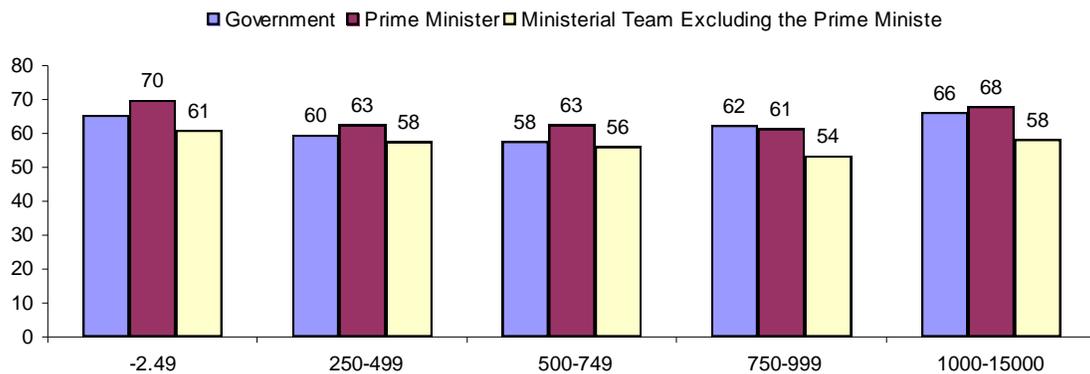
Table 2: Most important responsibilities for the government to shoulder in the upcoming term according to the views of the national sample

	Number	Percentage
Addressing the problem of price hikes	792	32.5
Raising salaries and improving citizens' standard of living	355	14.5
Addressing the unemployment issue	341	14.0
Addressing the poverty issue and supporting the poor	205	8.4
Improving health and education services and reducing their costs	184	7.5
Improving the investment environment	176	7.2
Working for the rule of law, equality between citizens and to strengthen democracy	120	4.9
Improving the level of public services	77	3.1
Fighting corruption	56	2.3
Maintaining security and stability	30	1.3
Foreign policy, particularly as it relates to the Palestinian cause	25	1
Other	24	1
Don't know/Refused to answer	57	2.3
Total (All answers)	2441	100

The results show that there is no difference between respondents by region (north, center, south) regarding their expectations for the success of the government, the prime minister and the ministerial team. However, the results show a slight degree of optimism among female respondents when compared to male respondents. The age category between 25-34 showed the least optimism regarding the success of the government compared with the overall average (although not statistically significant). 60% of respondents in this age category indicated that the government will be able to carry out the coming period's responsibilities, while 63% said that the prime minister will be able to shoulder the responsibilities of the coming term and 55% said that the ministerial team (excluding the prime minister) will be able to carry out such duties.

As for the expectations of respondents according to household income, the category with the highest percentage of respondents who expect the government to succeed is the group whose income is less than JD 250 (JD 1-249) and the group whose income exceeds JD 1000 (1000 and higher). However, the expectations for the success of the government, the prime minister and the ministerial team among the categories with income ranging between JD 250-999 were lower than those of the public overall.

Figure 3: Respondents who believe that the government, the prime minister and the ministerial team will be able to shoulder the responsibilities of the coming term according to household income



B: Opinion Leaders Sample: The Prime Minister, The Government, and The Ministerial Team

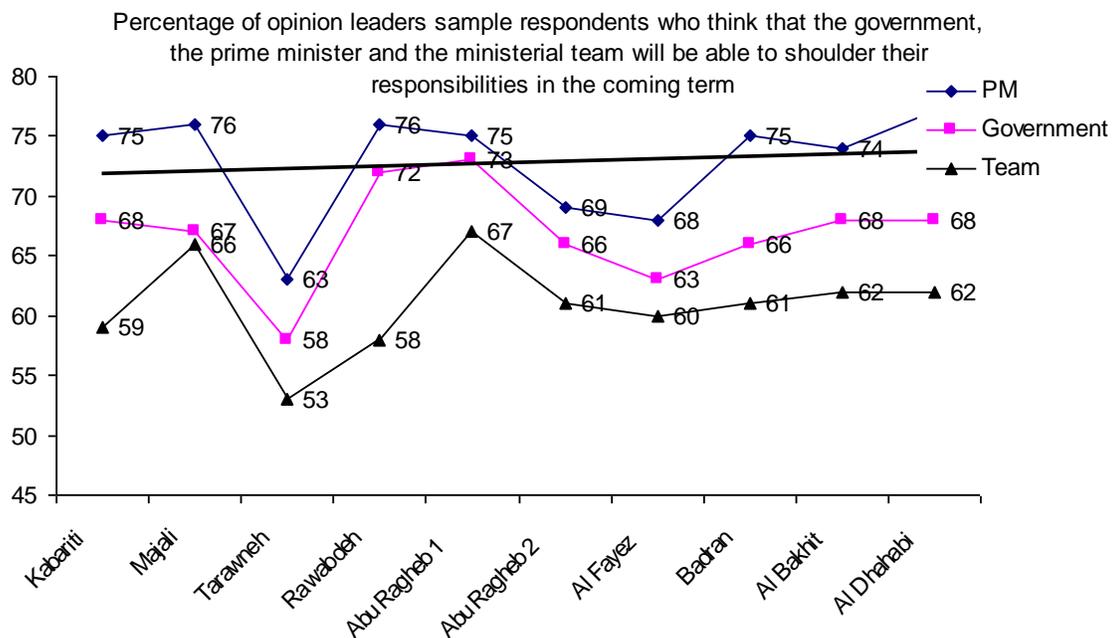
Opinion leaders' positions differ from those revealed in the national sample. Despite the fluctuations they display from one government to another, public opinion leaders have generally expected the success of successive governments since 1996 at practically consistent percentages, as demonstrated in the line graph (**bold black**) in Figure No. 3. The opinion leader poll results showed that 68% of the respondents expect that the new government (Nader Al Dhahabi's government) will be able to shoulder the responsibilities of the coming term. 77% of the respondents believe that the prime minister will be able to carry out the duties of the next period, while 62.0% of respondents think that the ministerial team (excluding the prime minister) will be able to carry out its duties. The expectations for the success of the government, the prime

minister and the ministerial team (excluding the prime minister) in shouldering the responsibilities of the coming period, despite fluctuations between governments, have been almost identical since 1996, the year such polls began to be conducted. It is very obvious that the expectations among respondents in the opinion leaders' sample regarding the success of the government, the prime minister and the ministerial team are more optimistic than those among the respondents in the national sample.

Similar to polls regarding previous governments, the results of this poll showed that opinion leaders' expectations for the success of the prime minister are higher than their expectations for the success of the government and the ministerial team excluding the prime minister.

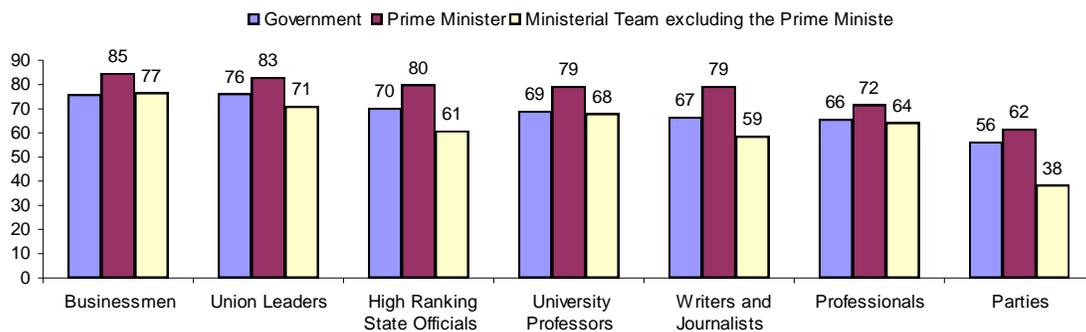
Perhaps the reason for opinion leaders' consistent expectations for the governments of the past 11 years is the high level of interrelation and interaction between members of the Jordanian political elite, in spite of the differences that occasionally emerge between them. When comparing the expectations of opinion leaders with those of the national sample with regard to successive governments, we find that the expectations among respondents in the national sample have generally declined, while opinion leaders' expectations have remained consistent since 1996. This indicates a certain level of discord between the Jordanian elite and citizens in terms of their expectations for successive governments. It is noteworthy that the national sample's expectations for the success of successive prime ministers in shouldering the responsibilities of the coming term were initially higher than those of the opinion leaders. As the national sample's expectations for the success of the prime ministers and their governments gradually decreased, the expectations of the opinion leaders remained practically consistent, with minor fluctuations from one government to another.

Figure 3



When comparing the expectations for the success of the government, prime minister and ministerial team (excluding the prime minister) among the categories of the opinion leaders sample, the results show that business people, union leaders, high ranking state officials and university professors display the highest level of expectations for the success of the government. The expectations for the success of the government, the prime minister and the ministerial team in all of these categories exceeded those of the opinion leader sample respondents in general. The category of business people indicated the highest percentage of expectations for the success of the prime minister at 85%, the success of the government (76%) and the success of the ministerial team (77%). However, the category of political party leaders indicated the lowest level of expectations for the success of the government, the prime minister and the ministerial team in carrying out their tasks. 56% of the respondents in this category thought that the government would be able to shoulder the responsibilities of the upcoming term, 62% indicated that the prime minister would be able to carry out the duties of the next period, and 38% indicated that the ministerial team (excluding the Prime Minister) would be able to carry out its responsibilities in the coming term.

Figure 4: Respondents from the opinion leaders sample who believe that the government, the prime minister and the ministerial team will be able to shoulder the responsibilities of the upcoming term according to sample categories.



The responsibilities of the coming term as defined by the respondents of the opinion leaders sample differed in order from what the Jordanian public indicated. Qualifying the investment environment ranked first with 24.4% of all responses, followed by the problem of price hikes at 17.2%, raising salaries and improving citizens' standard of living at 9.9%, solving the problem of poverty at 9.8%, enhancing democracy and political reform (9.5%), and addressing the problem of unemployment at 9.1%, as outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Most important responsibilities for the government to shoulder in the upcoming term according to the views of the opinion leaders sample

	Number	Percentage
Qualifying the investment climate	336	22.4
Addressing the problem of price hikes	258	17.2
Raising salaries and improving citizens' standard of living	148	9.9
Addressing the poverty problem	147	9.8
Strengthening democracy, political reform and public freedoms	143	9.5
Addressing the unemployment issue	136	9.1
Foreign policy, particularly as it relates to the Palestinian cause	73	4.9
Improving education and health services	69	4.6
Improving the level of public services	64	4.3
Fighting financial and administrative corruption	52	3.5
Maintaining security and stability	35	2.3
Achieving the principles of equality and equal opportunity between citizens	27	1.8
Don't know/refused to answer	4	0.3
Other	10	0.7
Total	1502	100

Section 2: Expectations for the success of the government regarding specific issues

This section explicates the public's expectations and the opinion leaders sample's attitude about the success of the government in addressing the matters with which it is tasked.

A. The expectations for the success of the government regarding specific issues; National Sample

The results indicate that one third of citizens were aware of the content of the designation letter sent to the government, while two thirds of respondents were not aware of its contents. This is similar to the percentage of citizens who were aware of the contents of the designation letter for Dr. Ma'arouf Al Bakhit's government (39%) and that of Dr. Badran (33%).

The majority of national sample respondents expect the government to succeed in addressing all 15 issues contained in the designation letter as indicated in Table No. 4. Nader Al Dhahabi's government is the only government that the national sample respondents expected would succeed in addressing all issues and topics entrusted to it, when compared with the last three governments. The national sample respondents expected the government of Dr. Ma'arouf Al Bakhit to succeed in addressing 17 out of the 19 issues it was tasked with, while respondents expected Dr. Adnan Badran's government to succeed in addressing 11 out of the 16 issues it was tasked with.

Despite the fact that the public expects the government to succeed in addressing all of the issues entrusted to it, the results indicate that citizens are more optimistic about the government's success in some areas than others, such as: developing education and higher education, upgrading official media, assisting the Palestinian people in establishing their independent state, enhancing the independence of the judiciary, and implementing the current housing projects than they are for the government's success in addressing other areas such as establishing the principle of equal opportunity among citizens, linking salaries with inflation rates, providing employment opportunities to citizens, protecting limited and low income population segments (alleviating poverty), and accelerating progress in a program for nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Table 4 shows the percentages of respondents in the national sample who believe that the government will succeed in addressing key issues contained in the designation letter compared to the governments of Faysal Al Fayez, Adnan Badran, and Ma'arouf Al Bakhit when they were formed.

National Sample				
	Al Fayez	Badran	Al Bakhit	Al Dhahabi
Strengthening political participation and developing political party life	-	-	-	60
Expanding health insurance to cover all citizens	52	54	72	65
Developing education and higher education	-	72	82	76
Accelerating the progress of the nuclear energy for peaceful purposes program	-	-	-	59
Working to solve the water problem	-	-	-	61
Developing official media	-	-	-	70
Improving the salaries of workers and employees in the public sector and the armed forces	-	-	-	65
Carrying out current housing projects	-	-	-	69
Working to protect the limited and low income populations (alleviating poverty)	29	35	44 *	55
Fighting all forms of corruption	41	48	55	59
Supporting the independence of the judiciary	-	-	-	69
Assisting the Palestinian people in establishing their independent state	-	67	78**	69
Achieving the principle of equal opportunity among citizens	43	49	51	57
Providing employment opportunities to citizens (Reducing unemployment)	36	41	49	59
Linking salaries to inflation rates (price hikes)	-	-	-	56

Note: These provisions were contained in the designation letters of previous governments, although the wording was different.

B. Opinion Leaders Sample

The results show that approximately three-quarters of the opinion leaders sample respondents (73%) were aware of the contents of the government's designation letter. The opinion leaders sample was less optimistic compared to the national sample regarding the government's ability to address the issues it was tasked with. Opinion leaders think that the government will succeed in addressing 9 of the 15 issues, as outlined in Table 5 below.

The results indicate that the opinion leaders sample respondents place a high level of trust in the government in addressing certain issues. 78% expect that the government will succeed in assisting the Palestinian people to establish their independent state, 74% expect that the government will succeed in implementing current housing projects, 70% in enhancing the independence of the judiciary and 66% expect that the government will succeed in upgrading education and higher education, etc. The results also show a split in the opinion leaders sample with regards to the government's potential success in accelerating the nuclear energy program for peaceful purposes and solving the water shortage problem.

The issues that respondents expected the government to fail in addressing are: linking salaries with inflation rates, enhancing participation in political life and promoting political parties, providing employment opportunities to citizens (alleviating unemployment), protecting limited and low income population segments (alleviating poverty), combating all forms of corruption and establishing the principle of equal opportunity among citizens.

Table No. 5 shows the percentages of opinion leaders who believe that the government will succeed in addressing key issues contained in the designation letter compared to the governments of Faysal Al Fayez and Adnan Badran when they were formed.

Opinion Leaders Sample				
	Al Fayez	Badran	Al Bakhit	Al Dhahabi
Assisting the Palestinian people in establishing their independent state	-	79	77	78
Carrying out current housing projects				74
Supporting the independence of the judiciary				70
Developing education and higher education		77	70	66
Developing the official media				64
Expanding health insurance to cover all citizens	48	58	64	60
Improving the salaries of workers and employees in the public sector and the armed forces				59
Accelerating the progress of the nuclear energy for peaceful purposes program				55
Working to solve the water problem				53
Linking salaries to inflation rates (price hikes)	-	41	42**	47
Strengthening political participation and developing political party life				47
Providing employment opportunities to citizens (Reducing unemployment)	34	38	34	47
Working to protect the limited and low income populations (alleviating poverty)	35	34	32*	46
Fighting all forms of corruption	48	53	42	46
Achieving the principle of equal opportunity between citizens	45	48	48	44

Note: These provisions were contained in the designation letters of previous governments, although the wording was different.

When comparing the expectations of the opinion leaders sample for the success of Al Dhahabi's government in addressing the group of issues with which it is tasked to their expectations for the last three governments: (Al Fayez, Badran, Al Bakhit), the expectations of the respondents were similar with the exception of the provision of employment opportunities to citizens (alleviating unemployment) and the protection of limited and low income population segments (alleviating poverty). The results show that the respondents from the opinion leaders sample were more optimistic about this government's ability to realize an achievement in these two areas.

Conclusion

- Data derived from the poll of the national sample indicate that expectations among the Jordanian public for the ability of the government, prime minister and ministerial team to carry out the duties of the upcoming term fall within the range of the public's expectations indicated for the last three governments. The poll results showed that the opinion leaders were consistent in their expectations regarding the ability of the government, the prime minister and the ministerial team to assume the responsibilities of the upcoming term, and that these expectations are more optimistic than those of the public (the national sample) and also fall within the range of expectations indicated by previous opinion leaders samples.
- The national sample respondents indicated optimism regarding the government's ability to address the issues with which it is tasked, as the majority of the national sample indicated that the government would be successful to varying degrees in addressing these tasks. The respondents' expectations regarding the government's success in areas such as upgrading official media, the education sector and higher education were higher than in areas such as the protection of limited and low-income population segments and the creation of new job opportunities.
- The expectations of the opinion leaders sample respondents regarding the government's success in addressing the issues with which it is tasked were lower than the expectations of the national sample. The results showed that the opinion leaders sample respondents expected that the government would succeed in addressing 9 out of 15 issues.
- Increases or decreases in the level of confidence in the government depend on the new government's maintenance of the public's expectations regarding its ability to shoulder the responsibilities of the upcoming term, and on the public's evaluation of its success in achieving the tasks with which it is tasked. The government's most important tasks of the upcoming term are concentrated on addressing economic issues including: price hikes, improving citizens' standard of living, and alleviation of unemployment and poverty. Meanwhile, the most important tasks from the perspective of the opinion leaders sample respondents include qualifying the investment environment, addressing the problem of price hikes, alleviating unemployment and carrying out political reforms.
- Respondents' points of view about the key responsibilities for the upcoming term reflect the priority citizens assign to economic issues. The problems of price hikes and improving the standard of living are citizens' top concerns, replacing the problems of poverty and unemployment that had been the two top priorities for citizens for several years.