



Suite 30 Ground Floor | Bretton Hall | # 16 Victoria Avenue | Port of Spain

Get The  
Story  
Straight!



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## **The Facts on Proportional Representation**

Opponents of proportional representation (PR) try to protect the outmoded way of electing parliamentarians by spreading misconceptions and myths about proportional representation.

Let's have a look at some of the most common myths and get the facts straight:

### **Myth # 1**

**PR would be too difficult for the voters to understand.**

Why underestimate the intelligence of voters.

Under most PR systems, there is a simple relationship of cause and effect for the voter.

If you vote for a candidate, you increase his or her chances of getting elected. If you vote for a party, you increase that party's entitlement to seats.

### **Myth # 2**

**PR creates unstable coalitions.**

There is nothing wrong with a coalition government because it's more likely to achieve better national consensus.

But single party governments can exist under PR; all that is required is for a party to command wide support among the electorate. The research shows that there is no difference between PR systems and First-Past-the-Post in terms of delivering stable and effective government.



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### **Myth # 3**

#### **Small parties call the shots under PR**

The smaller party achieves some of its objectives, but the programme for government is mainly based on the manifesto of the larger party. The larger party has most of the executive appointments and, therefore, more opportunity to use the power of government in line with its philosophy.

It's really the First-Past-the-Post system which creates the problem of a small group deciding who is in government because election results depend on the outcome of a small number of marginal seats.

### **Myth # 4**

#### **PR does not let you kick out an unpopular government.**

It's the ability of First-Past-the-Post to kick out an unpopular government which is overstated.

By taking safe seats for granted and focusing on marginal seats, a party can win an election despite being unpopular which essentially is the problem in T&T!

### **Myth # 5**

#### **PR weakens strong government.**

Are we looking for a stronger government or are we looking for stronger REPRESENTATION and more power in the hands of the people?

### **Myth # 6**

#### **PR is divisive.**

It's actually very inclusive because it ensures all groups in society are represented and every voter has an equal voice unlike First-Past-the Post. Everyone is represented in Parliament under proportional representation – men, women, young, old, rural, urban, conservative, liberal.