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**Contact: Sandip Roy - sroy@newamericamedia.org or
Dan Rader - drader@newamericamedia.org
Ph: (415) 503-4170**

NATION'S FIRST MULTILINGUAL POLL UNCOVERS TENSIONS AMONG THE LARGEST ETHNIC GROUPS IN AMERICA

Groups Express Contrasting Views of American Society, but See a Brighter Future

WASHINGTON-The nation's first multilingual poll of Black, Hispanic and Asian Americans has uncovered serious tensions among these ethnic groups, including mistrust and significant stereotyping, but a majority of each group also said they should put aside differences and work together to better their communities.

The poll, which was released today during a news conference at the National Press Club, was sponsored by New America Media (NAM) and nine ethnic media outlets who are founding members of the organization.

"This extraordinary poll reveals some unflattering realities that exist in America today," said Sandy Close, Executive Editor and Director of NAM, the nation's first and largest collaboration of ethnic news media. "The sponsors of the poll strongly believe the best way to move forward is by identifying the problems and initiating a dialogue that can bring ethnic groups closer together in their fight for equality and against discrimination."

Broadly, the poll of 1,105 African-American, Asian-American and Hispanic adults found that the predominantly immigrant populations - Hispanics and Asians - expressed far greater optimism about their lives in America, concluding that hard work is rewarded in this society. By contrast, more than 60% of the African Americans polled do not believe the American Dream works for them. Blacks also described themselves as more segregated from the rest of America than the other groups.

The poll found that friction between ethnic and racial groups, which at times has erupted into highly-publicized incidents around the country, is clearly rooted in the mistrust that

the groups harbor towards each other, as well as the sentiment that other groups are mistreating them or are detrimental to their own future. For instance, 44% of Hispanics and 47% of Asians are “generally afraid of African Americans because they are responsible for most of the crime.” Meanwhile, 46% of Hispanics and 52% of African Americans believe “most Asian business owners do not treat them with respect.” And half of African Americans feel threatened by Latin American immigrants because “they are taking jobs, housing and political power away from the Black community.”

Moreover, the three groups seem more trusting of whites than of each other. The poll found that 61% of Hispanics, 54% of Asians and 47% of African Americans would rather do business with whites than members of the other two groups.

“The poll reaffirms that while race relations between ethnic groups and whites grab the headlines, there are also serious racial problems between minority groups in America,” said Sergio Bendixen, who is an expert on Hispanic and multilingual polling. “Blacks feel they are left out of the American Dream and are being displaced by newcomers, and each group buys into the negative stereotypes about the other two. What’s clear is the need to dissolve this friction. The poll results show that the overwhelming majority of ethnic Americans want that positive outcome.”

Specifically, the poll also found that:

- A majority of Hispanics and a significant percentage of Asians believe in the concept that every American has an equal opportunity to succeed. By contrast, the majority of Black respondents – 66 percent – disagreed with that notion.
- Blacks overwhelmingly believe the criminal justice system favors the rich and powerful; most Hispanics and an even larger majority of Asians disagree.
- A large majority of each group believes that they should put aside their differences and work together on issues affecting their communities; they also say the country would be better if more from all three groups were in positions of authority at universities, businesses, media and government.
- All three groups are optimistic about the future. Strong majorities of each group believe that racial tensions will ease over the next 10 years.

Further, Ms. Close said the poll found “a shared appreciation” for each group’s cultural and political contributions. “Hispanics and Asians recognize that African Americans led the fight for civil rights and against discrimination, forging a better future for the other groups,” she said. “Asian Americans and African Americans say Hispanic culture has enriched the quality of their lives. African Americans and Hispanics perceive Asian Americans as role models when it comes to family and educational values.”

Poll respondents sent mixed messages to the ethnic media, which many depend on for news about their community. While criticizing the ethnic media’s coverage of race

relations, particularly other groups outside their own community, all three groups maintained that the ethnic media must play a vital role by strengthening inter-group communication and helping to break negative stereotypes.

The ethnic media is embracing their challenge to do better. “The poll is part of our campaign to address mutual misunderstandings, of which there are many,” said Sok Jeong, editor of the Korea Times. “The poll is a call to action for ethnic media to expand coverage of our mutual communities and help our readers gain a better understanding of the other ethnic groups.”

About the Poll

The poll of 1,105 African American, Asian American and Hispanic adults was conducted by telephone during the months of August and September 2007. The sample was designed to be representative of the adult population of the three major racial and ethnic minorities in the United States. Hispanic respondents were interviewed in English or Spanish, and Asian American respondents were interviewed in English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese or Tagalog. RDD (Random Digit Dialing) methodology was employed in areas of the country that have significant (10 percent or more) African American, Asian American and Hispanic populations.