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Friday, October 1, 2010

New Brazil leader inherits big economy

Brazilians will soon be voting for a new president. Whoever wins will be charged with leading one of the world's fastest growing economies. Annie Murphy reports.



Brazilian presidential candidate for the Workers' Party Dilma Rousseff speaks at the end of a televised debate in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. (Vanderlei Almeida/AFP/Getty Images)

TEXT OF INTERVIEW

STEVE CHIOTAKIS: In Brazil this weekend, voters will elect a new president. Whoever wins will be charged with leading one of the world's fastest growing economies.

Reporter Annie Murphy has from Rio de Janeiro.

ANNIE MURPHY: Widely favored to win this race is Dilma Rousseff, chief of staff for current President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Lula, as he's commonly called, is a former auto worker and union leader. During two terms in office he's been moderate economically, comforting who critics initially compared him to Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

Economist Marcelo Neri.

MARCELO NERI: Caracas is not here, in the sense that we respect the market, but we also have a strong social agenda.

Under Lula, Brazil's middle class has expanded rapidly. Economic growth is at a healthy 7 percent a year.

Along with Dilma Rousseff, the two other main candidates are Jose Serra -- the current mayor of Sao Paulo -- and Marina da Silva, an environmentalist from the Amazon. Whoever wins isn't likely to stray far from the current economic program, but they'll have to address the widespread inequality that is still a source of concern here.

In Rio de Janeiro, I'm Annie Murphy for Marketplace.

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