

New Brazil leader faces hard times

Rio de Janeiro – Whoever wins Brazil's presidential election on Sunday will have their work cut out, juggling market pressure to implement austerity measures while trying to drag 23 million people out of poverty.

According to a World Bank report presented to the 13 candidates, Latin America's biggest economy is facing "three chal-

lenges: a major fiscal imbalance... a lack of sustainable growth in productivity... [and] the state's ever-increasing difficulty in providing basic public services".

In Brazil, "part of the population still lives in the 19th century and the other part is already in the 21st century," says Getulio Vargas Foundation economist Marcelo Neri.

Neri says millions of Brazilians have a poor education, live without access to water and sanitation and are confronted by "levels of violence worthy of a war".

Public debt hit 77% of gross domestic product in July, up from 56% in 2014. The World Bank says it won't stabilise unless Brazil manages an unlikely 4% annual growth through to 2030. – *AFP*