

# *Evo Morales Retains Huge Lead in Bolivia's Presidential Poll*

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La Paz, September 16 (RHC) – Bolivian President Evo Morales is the clear favorite to win the general elections on October 12th, a new UNITEL poll shows.

The poll released Monday shows that Morales, of the Movement Towards Socialism, is likely to win the election with 54 percent of the vote and has a 40 point lead over his Democratic Unity Party rival, Samuel Doria. The right-wing candidate comes second with 14 percent, followed by former president Jorge Quiroga of the Christian Democratic Party (PDC) with seven percent.

More than six million people are expected to go to the polls next month to choose a president and vice president, as well as 36 senators and 130 deputies.

Bolivia's first indigenous president has gained popularity through the wide-ranging socio-economic achievements made during his term in office in the Andean nation. The nationalization of strategic sectors, including hydrocarbons, mining and telecommunications has provided significant funds for social and educational

programs.

Morales is also seen to have empowered indigenous and farming communities, especially among the coca growers. Morales is the first president to come from Bolivia's indigenous community.

The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) intends to send forty observers to Bolivia to witness the electoral process.



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