

KEY STORIES FROM THE CANADA'S WORLD POLL

- 1 **Canadians feel strongly connected to the world outside their country's borders. This connection comes through both their engagement with international events, and their personal connections to people and cultures in other countries.**

Canadians follow international news about as closely as they follow news closer to home, at the federal, provincial and local levels. This strong engagement with international events suggests that Canadians, in some respects, feel they are as much citizens of the world as they are citizens of their own country. Two-thirds of Canadians say they feel a personal connection to a country or region in another part of the world—and while a plurality cite an ancestral link as the reason, many others say they simply have a personal interest in the country or region because of meaningful personal experiences or because they know people there (more than half have friends and family abroad with whom they maintain regular contact).

Three-quarters of Canadians have travelled outside Canada and the United States at some point in their lives, and one-quarter have taken more than 10 trips outside North America. And the connection also extends to financial assistance: In the past two years, four in ten Canadians have donated to organizations or causes that address issues in other countries (projected to total \$7.3 billion annually), and one in five have given financial help to family or others they know abroad (estimated at \$20 billion annually). These amounts sent by individual Canadians abroad dwarf the \$4 billion in official development assistance given by the Canadian government in 2006.

- 2 **Canadians are proud of their country's history of military bravery and sacrifice, but believe the country's most important future contributions to world affairs will be in other ways.**

When asked to name Canada's greatest contribution to the world since becoming a country, Canadians most often name their country's participation in past World Wars. But when asked how they believe Canada can make the greatest international contributions in the future, Canadians see a new kind of heroism, and focus on a very different type of effort, demonstrating leadership on global warming and the environment, confronting human rights abuses and fighting hunger and poverty.

- 3 **When Canadians think about how their country can make a positive difference on the international scene, they are more likely to put their faith in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private citizens, than in Canadian businesses or the federal government.**

Canadians want their country to "do good" in the world, and can more easily see this happening through the work of non-governmental organizations or individual citizens than by what Canadian business and government might accomplish (explaining in part their generous support to organizations working overseas). Most Canadians like the fact there are three million of their fellow citizens currently living abroad, because they see them as positive ambassadors for Canada, who will bring valuable experiences home with them. And many here at home would like to join them overseas: Six in ten express interest in personally travelling abroad for three months or more to do volunteer work (given the opportunity).

4 Canadians feel a strong sense of personal connection to the United States, but many disapprove of America's recent activities on the international stage.

Many Canadians also have strong ties to their southern neighbour. Two-thirds have visited the U.S. in the past five years, and one-third have visited family or friends over this time period. At the same time, Canadians are also distinctly uncomfortable with the American's current role in world affairs, and the U.S. is the country they name most often as one that stands out as being a negative force in the world today (52% name the U.S., Iran comes second at 21%).

Canadians may be worried about the current state of affairs in the U.S., but rather than reflect knee-jerk anti-American sentiment, these results may in fact reveal how much Canadians care about their cousins to the south and desire a return to the days when America was widely respected around the Globe. Evidence for this can be found in the fact that Canadians are paying close attention to the current battle for the U.S. White House: Almost half (46%) believe the outcome of this race matters a great deal to Canada, and 15 percent say they would give up their vote in the next federal election if it meant they could cast a ballot in the United States and influence that country's election. And, while the presidential candidates have yet to be picked, Canadians clearly prefer to see a Democrat (34%) over a Republican (5%) become the next to occupy the White House.

5 Canadians feel the world is a more dangerous place because of nuclear weapons, and overwhelmingly support a complete elimination of such weapons, if this could be accomplished through an enforceable ban.

Nuclear weapons have been a reality of the modern age for more than 60 years and, while nuclear disarmament has been off the political and policy radar screen for the past few decades, Canadians are anything but complacent about the threats inherent in this technology. Nine in ten (88%) Canadians believe nuclear weapons make the world a

more dangerous place, and almost as many (73%) strongly support total elimination if this could be accomplished through an enforceable ban. While Canada does not face the moral dilemma of possessing its own nuclear arsenal, it does export nuclear technology and most believe such exports should not be allowed to any country that might end up using them to develop nuclear weapons.

6 Foreign-born Canadians understandably maintain stronger connections to the world outside Canada. And yet their opinions and perspectives about Canada and its role in the world are notably consistent with the national average.

As would be expected, Canadians born in other countries tend to follow international news more closely, travel outside Canada and the United States with greater frequency, and generally feel more personally connected to people and events abroad. But these new Canadians are surprisingly like their native-born compatriots when it comes to how they view Canada's strengths and weaknesses, and how their adopted country might best contribute to the world.

7 The country's youth (those aged 15 to 24) are as connected to world events and individuals as older Canadians, but are also more idealistic in their view of Canada's place in the world today, and what it could be.

While today's youth tend to be less engaged with local, provincial and national news, young Canadians match the national average when it comes to paying close attention to international issues and events. Canadians aged 15 to 24 are also as likely as the national average to have made a donation to an international cause or organization in the past two years. Young Canadians are as likely as others to say they feel a personal connection to another part of the world, although less likely to place that connection with the United States or Western Europe. Fifteen- to 24-year-olds express the highest levels of interest in living abroad, whether for study or volunteer projects, or simply for cultural and linguistic immersion. When it comes to the difference Canada could be making in the world,

young Canadians stand out in their belief that their country could be doing more to end hunger in the developing world, tackle global warming and fight human rights abuses worldwide.

8 While Canada is often a nation of regional division when it looks inward, when Canadians look outwards, they are remarkably similar in their degree of “global connectivity” and views about their country’s place in the world and what this might be.