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NEWS RELEASE

New Policy Options poll on pension concerns ***Canadians worried about sustainability of pensions***

Montreal – While Canadians don't rank pensions very high on their list of today's public policy priorities, they are deeply concerned about the viability of both public and private pensions in the future, according to the latest exclusive Nanos Research poll for *Policy Options*.

"For the moment, Canadians are more concerned about the economy, debt reduction and even tax relief than they are about their public and private pensions," notes pollster Nik Nanos, president of Nanos Research. "But, the dark cloud on the horizon is their worry about whether pension money is going to be there when they need it. The anxiety of Canadians on pensions churns below the water line, and it runs deep."

The poll found that 38.4 percent of respondents named job creation as their first priority, 21.1 percent selected debt reduction, 15.5 percent chose tax relief, while only 12.5 percent cited strengthening pensions.

More than half of Canadians are confident the CPP/QPP will be able to deliver promised payments to pensioners going forward, and four Canadians in ten were less confident or not at all confident.

"There is a very high level of concern that both public and private pension plans will have to reduce payments to pensioners in the future in order to remain solvent," says Nanos, who notes that there was a striking lack of confidence about the future of pension funds by Canadians in the 30-39 and 40-49 age groups.

"A great demographic divide exists between younger Canadians and those who are nearing retirement or already there," notes Nanos. "There's no question that the viability of public and private pensions is tomorrow's next big public policy issue."

The random telephone survey was conducted from February 5 to 8, among 1,001 Canadians, and has a margin of error of 3.1 percent, 19 times out of 20.

The poll on pensions in the March issue of *Policy Options* can be downloaded free of charge from the Institute's Web site (www.irpp.org).

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For more details or to schedule an interview, please contact the IRPP.

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