

GLOBAL WARMING MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE FOR CANADIANS AT G8 AND G20 SUMMITS

Nik Nanos

In the run-up to the G8 and G20 summits in Canada in late June, we wanted to know how Canadians ranked the importance of the issues on the leaders' agenda. Nik Nanos, in another exclusive poll for *Policy Options*, came back with surprising and revealing findings. Despite the recession and the financial crisis, reverberations of which are still being felt, Canadians ranked global warming as the number one issue, with economic recovery in second place.

Étonnantes et révélatrices. Force est de qualifier ainsi les conclusions du dernier sondage Nanos réalisé en exclusivité pour *Options politiques*. À l'approche des sommets du G8 et du G20 que le Canada accueillera fin juin, nous avons demandé aux Canadiens de classer par priorité les enjeux à l'ordre du jour des chefs d'État. Et même s'ils subissent encore les contrecoups de la récession et de la crise financière, ils ont classé le réchauffement climatique en tête de ces enjeux, devant la reprise économique.



Canadians regard global warming as the most important issue facing leaders at the G8 and G20 summits, with economic recovery as their second priority. Other agenda items tested, including the Harper government's signature maternal and infant health initiative at the G8, didn't even come close. And climate change isn't even on the agenda of either summit.

This is the principal finding of the latest Nanos Research poll, conducted exclusively for *Policy Options*, in a random survey of 1,003 Canadians between April 30 and May 3.

The findings are somewhat surprising in that climate change has been largely out of the news cycle since the failure of the Copenhagen summit last December, with significantly negative coverage of the failed process as well as many stories of skepticism about the dangers of global warming. Moreover, Canada and the world are still emerging from the worst economic downturn in decades, with reverberations of the financial crisis still occurring, notably the sovereign debt crisis in Greece and other European countries.

Nevertheless, global warming trumped all other issues, even economic recovery, in importance in the eyes of Canadians.

We asked Canadians to prioritize the summit agendas from a grid of six issues: open markets and free trade; global warming; freedom, democracy and human rights; nuclear security; improving maternal and infant health in developing countries; and economic recovery.

Fully 33.7 percent of respondents chose global warming, as against 27.2 percent for economic recovery, while freedom and democracy were at 14.3 percent, maternal health in the developing world at 10.9 percent, open markets and free trade at 6.1 percent and nuclear security trailing at 4.6 percent.

When we asked which issue was the second most important, global warming led the field again at 21.6 percent, with freedom and democracy at 20.2 percent, economic recovery at 17.4 percent, maternal health at 17.1 percent, open markets and free trade at 9.8 percent and nuclear security at 8.6 percent.

The global warming numbers were driven up by results from Quebec, where 46.2 percent of respondents said it was the most important issue, as against only 18.6 percent who prioritized economic recovery.

We then asked Canadians to rank Canada's standing in the world on the same range of issues. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was very weak and 5 was very strong, Canadians had a positive image of themselves on open markets and free trade. Nearly four Canadians in five saw Canada in average to positive terms, and 40.8 percent saw Canada as strong or very strong. But on global warming, only 6 Canadians in 10 saw Canada's standing as average to positive, while only one in four, 25.8 percent, saw Canada's standing as strong or very strong.

Again, on human rights and democracy, the self-perception of Canadians was positive, with over four Canadians in

five seeing Canada's reputation as average to positive and 6 out of 10 respondents, 63.5 percent, seeing Canada's image as strong or very strong. On nuclear security, 6 Canadians in 10 again had an average to positive perception, though only 3 in 10, 30.2 percent, saw our reputation as strong or very strong.

Asked about Prime Minister Stephen Harper's initiative on women's and infants' health in the developing world, two Canadians in three saw this in average to positive

terms, while only 3 in 10, 29.6 percent, perceived Canada's standing as strong or very strong.

Finally, on economic recovery, where Canada has led all G8 countries, more than four Canadians in five had an average to positive perception of Canada's place in the world, and a solid majority, 53.2 percent, rated Canada as strong or very strong. While confidence in the recovery may be muted, there is a general perception that Canada has weathered the economic storm better than the United

States and its other G8 partners. Even with the economic turbulence, it is clear that Canadians see the gathering of world leaders as an opportunity to further engage in talks about global warming.

Contributing Writer Nik Nanos is president and CEO of Nanos Research, a national public opinion research firm based in Ottawa. He is also research associate professor at the State University of New York (SUNY) in Buffalo.

Question 1a. Of the following issues, which would you rank as the most important in terms of focus for the G8 and G20 meetings?

		Total N	Open markets and free trade %	Global warming %	Freedom, democracy and human rights %	Nuclear security %	Improving maternal and infant health in developing countries %	Economic recovery %	Unsure %
Region	Canada	1,003	6.1	33.7	14.3	4.6	10.9	27.2	3.2
	Atlantic	93	8.0	34.4	18.6	4.1	9.0	21.4	4.5
	Quebec	264	3.4	46.2	10.5	4.7	16.3	18.6	0.3
	Ontario	302	7.0	33.4	12.6	5.7	7.8	29.7	3.7
	Prairies	205	5.9	22.7	21.8	3.4	11.6	30.5	4.2
	BC	139	8.3	26.5	10.9	4.3	7.8	36.9	5.3
Gender	Male	524	7.5	33.0	13.8	3.9	8.0	30.7	2.9
	Female	479	4.5	34.4	14.8	5.4	14.1	23.3	3.4
Age	18 to 29	197	1.1	36.2	10.6	3.2	17.0	29.8	2.1
	30 to 39	192	6.9	39.2	16.9	1.5	11.5	22.3	1.5
	40 to 49	215	7.3	36.6	17.1	5.4	7.3	22.0	4.4
	50 to 59	171	7.4	28.3	13.1	5.3	7.8	33.6	4.5
	60 plus	227	7.6	28.3	13.4	7.3	10.9	29.2	3.3

Question 1b. Of the following issues, which would you rank as the second most important in terms of focus for the G8 and G20 meetings?

		Total N	Open markets and free trade %	Global warming %	Freedom, democracy and human rights %	Nuclear security %	Improving maternal and infant health in developing countries %	Economic recovery %	Unsure %
Region	Canada	1,003	9.8	21.6	20.2	8.6	17.1	17.4	5.1
	Atlantic	93	16.3	22.1	18.9	9.4	15.8	10.5	7.1
	Quebec	264	6.3	23.8	20.0	5.8	22.8	19.4	1.9
	Ontario	302	9.1	20.3	17.2	13.0	13.2	22.6	4.7
	Prairies	205	14.8	20.8	21.0	6.4	17.8	11.9	7.4
	BC	139	6.4	21.5	27.3	7.3	14.9	15.3	7.3
Gender	Male	524	11.2	19.0	20.8	9.9	14.8	19.2	5.0
	Female	479	8.3	24.5	19.6	7.3	19.7	15.5	5.2
Age	18 to 29	197	10.6	17.0	22.3	11.7	22.3	12.8	3.2
	30 to 39	192	7.7	22.3	17.7	10.8	22.3	16.9	2.3
	40 to 49	215	6.8	22.9	18.0	6.3	13.7	25.4	6.8
	50 to 59	171	11.5	27.9	19.3	9.0	11.5	13.9	7.0
	60 plus	227	12.5	19.1	23.4	6.1	15.8	17.0	6.1

Question 2. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very weak and 5 is very strong, please rate Canada's place in the world in terms of open markets and free trade.

		Total		1 = very weak %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 = very strong %	Unsure %
		N	Mean						
Region	Canada	1,003	3.33	3.3	12.7	38.7	30.6	10.2	4.5
	Atlantic	93	3.42	3.4	8.7	41.3	35.0	10.9	0.7
	Quebec	264	3.20	4.4	17.5	42.4	24.7	10.7	0.3
	Ontario	302	3.41	2.5	11.7	35.3	32.4	11.0	7.1
	Prairies	205	3.42	2.0	10.6	34.8	35.6	8.8	8.2
	BC	139	3.24	5.1	11.7	42.8	27.4	8.9	4.3
Gender	Male	524	3.31	4.0	14.4	37.4	29.2	11.4	3.5
	Female	479	3.36	2.6	10.8	40.0	32.1	8.8	5.7
Age	18 to 29	197	3.36	2.1	7.4	44.7	33.0	6.4	6.4
	30 to 39	192	3.24	3.8	15.4	37.7	29.2	8.5	5.4
	40 to 49	215	3.35	2.4	16.1	32.2	35.1	9.8	4.4
	50 to 59	171	3.42	1.6	11.9	40.6	29.1	13.5	3.3
	60 plus	227	3.28	6.1	12.5	38.9	26.4	12.8	3.3

Question 3. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very weak and 5 is very strong, please rate Canada's place in the world in terms of global warming.

		Total		1 = very weak %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 = very strong %	Unsure %
		N	Mean						
Region	Canada	1,003	2.86	12.6	23.4	35.4	16.2	9.6	2.8
	Atlantic	93	2.92	8.7	21.7	43.5	19.6	5.8	0.7
	Quebec	264	2.89	20.4	22.2	24.2	13.6	19.3	0.4
	Ontario	302	2.87	10.2	20.4	41.6	17.5	5.2	5.1
	Prairies	205	2.94	6.3	25.6	39.8	17.7	7.2	3.4
	BC	139	2.65	15.1	30.3	31.6	13.9	6.3	2.8
Gender	Male	524	2.78	15.5	22.4	36.8	15.7	7.9	1.7
	Female	479	2.96	9.5	24.5	33.9	16.7	11.4	4.0
Age	18 to 29	197	3.04	7.4	21.3	38.3	19.1	10.6	3.2
	30 to 39	192	2.84	13.8	25.4	34.6	13.1	12.3	0.8
	40 to 49	215	3.03	9.3	19.5	36.1	22.0	9.3	3.9
	50 to 59	171	2.73	16.4	24.2	34.0	14.8	7.8	2.9
	60 plus	227	2.67	16.4	26.7	34.0	11.9	7.9	3.0

Question 4. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very weak and 5 is very strong, please rate Canada's place in the world in terms of freedom, democracy and human rights.

		Total		1 = very weak %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 = very strong %	Unsure %
		N	Mean						
Region	Canada	1,003	3.78	3.5	9.1	21.6	35.3	28.2	2.3
	Atlantic	93	3.74	1.5	11.7	21.3	41.4	23.4	0.7
	Quebec	264	3.74	3.5	9.9	26.0	30.2	30.4	0.0
	Ontario	302	3.82	3.0	8.6	19.8	35.4	28.9	4.2
	Prairies	205	3.83	3.4	6.8	20.1	40.1	27.7	1.9
	BC	139	3.68	5.8	10.0	19.6	34.0	26.7	3.8
Gender	Male	524	3.75	4.0	10.6	20.4	34.8	29.0	1.1
	Female	479	3.80	2.9	7.3	23.0	36.0	27.4	3.5
Age	18 to 29	197	3.97	2.1	3.2	19.1	44.7	28.7	2.1
	30 to 39	192	3.76	3.1	6.2	27.7	34.6	26.2	2.3
	40 to 49	215	3.72	3.4	12.2	19.5	34.6	27.3	2.9
	50 to 59	171	3.83	2.9	9.8	19.3	35.2	30.7	2.0
	60 plus	227	3.63	5.5	13.1	22.5	28.6	28.6	1.8

Question 5. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very weak and 5 is very strong, please rate Canada's place in the world in terms of nuclear security.

		Total		1 = very weak %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 = very strong %	Unsure %
		N	Mean						
Region	Canada	1003	3.05	9.1	18.6	32.5	18.8	11.4	9.6
	Atlantic	93	2.92	13.4	10.9	38.3	17.2	6.9	13.3
	Quebec	264	2.97	12.5	22.4	30.3	16.0	14.4	4.3
	Ontario	302	3.10	8.4	15.6	33.2	20.8	10.2	11.8
	Prairies	205	3.23	4.8	17.0	31.4	23.4	11.5	12.0
	BC	139	2.95	7.8	25.2	32.8	14.4	11.1	8.6
Gender	Male	524	3.07	9.7	19.7	30.2	21.4	12.3	6.7
	Female	479	3.03	8.5	17.3	35.0	16.0	10.4	12.7
Age	18 to 29	197	3.26	5.3	14.9	31.9	25.5	11.7	10.6
	30 to 39	192	2.83	13.1	23.1	31.5	12.3	10.8	9.2
	40 to 49	215	3.09	6.3	18.0	36.1	18.5	10.2	10.7
	50 to 59	171	3.02	11.1	19.3	32.0	18.9	12.3	6.6
	60 plus	227	3.05	10.3	17.9	30.7	18.8	12.2	10.0

Question 6. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very weak and 5 is very strong, please rate Canada's place in the world in terms of improving maternal and infant health in developing countries.

		Total		1 = very weak %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 = very strong %	Unsure %
		N	Mean						
Region	Canada	1,003	3.09	7.5	16.2	37.9	19.6	10.0	8.9
	Atlantic	93	2.97	9.1	12.8	46.4	20.6	3.8	7.2
	Quebec	264	3.13	12.2	14.9	35.2	16.5	17.8	3.3
	Ontario	302	3.12	5.9	16.2	37.2	20.7	8.8	11.2
	Prairies	205	3.13	4.3	16.1	39.1	20.6	7.7	12.1
	BC	139	2.99	5.8	20.8	36.7	20.9	5.1	10.7
Gender	Male	524	3.07	8.7	17.0	37.2	20.5	10.0	6.6
	Female	479	3.12	6.2	15.2	38.7	18.6	10.0	11.3
Age	18 to 29	197	3.22	3.2	8.5	46.8	21.3	6.4	13.8
	30 to 39	192	3.08	9.2	16.9	38.5	15.4	13.8	6.2
	40 to 49	215	3.09	5.4	17.6	37.6	22.0	7.3	10.2
	50 to 59	171	3.04	9.4	18.0	36.5	20.1	10.2	5.7
	60 plus	227	3.04	10.3	19.5	31.0	19.1	12.2	7.9

Question 7. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is very weak and 5 is very strong, please rate Canada's place in the world in terms of economic recovery.

		Total		1 = very weak %	2 %	3 %	4 %	5 = very strong %	Unsure %
		N	Mean						
Region	Canada	1,003	3.55	3.6	10.6	30.6	35.0	18.2	2.1
	Atlantic	93	3.54	4.1	9.5	34.2	31.9	19.6	0.8
	Quebec	264	3.46	4.2	9.7	37.8	32.8	15.3	0.3
	Ontario	302	3.56	3.4	11.3	27.9	35.8	18.3	3.3
	Prairies	205	3.71	2.6	7.7	27.9	36.4	23.1	2.2
	BC	139	3.47	3.8	15.5	24.3	37.8	15.1	3.5
Gender	Male	524	3.56	4.1	12.3	27.2	34.3	20.7	1.3
	Female	479	3.54	2.9	8.6	34.4	35.8	15.4	2.8
Age	18 to 29	197	3.54	2.1	11.7	30.9	37.2	16.0	2.1
	30 to 39	192	3.46	4.6	11.5	31.5	36.9	14.6	0.8
	40 to 49	215	3.52	3.4	9.8	34.1	32.2	17.1	3.4
	50 to 59	171	3.54	3.7	11.5	29.5	32.8	19.3	3.3
	60 plus	227	3.67	4.0	8.8	27.1	35.9	23.4	0.9