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Half (48%) Believe Government's Foreign Spending on HIV and AIDS Not Enough

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Ipsos Reid

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Most (91%) Canadians Believe It's 'Important' for Government to Help Increase Access to Treatment for People with HIV and AIDS in Developing Countries

Half (48%) Believe Government's Foreign Spending on HIV and AIDS Not Enough

Toronto, ON – In light of recent media attention paid to the prevalence of HIV and AIDS around the world, most (91%) Canadians believe that it is 'very' (46%) or 'somewhat important' (45%) that the Canadian government help to increase access to treatment for people living with HIV and AIDS in developing countries. Only 9% of Canadians feel it is 'not important'. To that effect, one half (48%) of Canadians believe that the government's foreign spending on HIV and AIDS is 'too little', while fewer believe that the government's spending in this regard is 'about the right amount' (43%) or 'too much' (9%).

With seven in ten (70%) Canadians indicating that they are 'reasonably' (54%) or 'very well informed' (16%) on the issue of HIV and AIDS, six in ten (59%) Canadians agree that HIV and AIDS is a worldwide pandemic best described as an international emergency. One third (36%) of Canadians agree that HIV and AIDS is a serious problem, but to describe it as a pandemic is an exaggeration. 5% of Canadians are unaware of the impact of HIV and AIDS, while just 1% of Canadians agree that HIV and AIDS is a serious problem, but that it does not concern Canadians.

*These are the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted on behalf of Canadian Coalition for Youth and HIV/AIDS in Africa from June 21 to June 25, 2007. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1429 adults was interviewed via Ipsos Reid's I-Say online panel. With a sample of this size, the results are considered accurate to within ± 2.6 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population been polled. The margin of error will be larger within regions and for other sub-groupings of the survey population. These data were weighted to ensure that the sample's regional and age/sex composition reflects that of the actual Canadian population according to Census data. *Question OV 1 was fielded to 1012 Canadians from July 25 to July 27.*

Canadians (91%) Believe their Government should Support Increased Access for those with HIV and AIDS in the Developing World...

With significant proportions of those in Africa and other places of the world suffering from HIV and AIDS, an overwhelming majority of Canadians believe it is 'very' (46%) or 'somewhat' important (45%) that the Canadian government help increase access to treatment for people living with HIV and AIDS in developing countries. Conversely, less than one in ten (9%) believe that it is 'not important' that the government be involved in this activity.

- Women (95%) are more likely than men (85%) to assign importance to the Canadian government helping to increase access to treatment for people living with HIV and AIDS in the developing world.
- Those with a university degree (93%) are more likely than Canadians who do not have a formal education (83% of those without a high school diploma) to agree that the government should be helping to increase access to treatment for those infected with these conditions.

- Residents of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba (93%) are most likely to believe this activity is important, while those in Quebec (88%) are least likely to agree.

Half (48%) of Canadians Say Government Spending ‘Too Little’ on HIV and AIDS...

When it comes to the amount of money the government of Canada spends outside of Canada combating the spread of HIV and AIDS and treating those infected with these conditions, half (48%) of Canadians believe that ‘too little’ is spent in this regard. On the other hand, just 9% say that the government spends ‘too much’ on foreign spending to combat the spread of HIV and AIDS, and to increase the levels of treatment for those with these conditions. 43% of Canadians believe that the government spends ‘about the right amount’.

- Women (53%) are more likely than men (43%) to believe that the government spends ‘too little’ on HIV and AIDS.
- University graduates (61%) are the most likely of all education demographics to believe that the government spends too little, compared to 49% of those with only some post-secondary education, a high school diploma (41%), or no high school diploma (44%).
- Six in ten (59%) Atlantic Canadians believe that the government spends ‘too little’, while just four in ten (41%) Quebecers believe that the government spends too little.
- Residents of Saskatchewan and Manitoba are the most likely to believe that the government spends too much (12%).

Canadians Claim to be Well Informed on HIV and AIDS...

On the issue of HIV and AIDS, seven in ten (70%) Canadians think that they are 'very well' (16%) or 'reasonably well informed' (54%). Just 2% of Canadians believe that they are 'not at all informed', while three in ten (29%) indicate that they are 'a little' informed.

- More Quebecers claim to be at least reasonably well informed, with eight in ten (78%) indicating so. However, less than two thirds (62%) of residents in Saskatchewan and Manitoba claim to be at least reasonably well informed on this issue of HIV and AIDS.
- Middle-aged Canadians, aged 35 to 54, are the most likely to claim that they are at least reasonably well informed (74%), while younger Canadians appear to have the least amount of knowledge in this area (64%).
- Most University graduates claim to be at least reasonably well informed (83%), while just six in ten (60%) Canadians who only possess a high school diploma claim to be at least reasonably well informed.

Access to quality healthcare (95%), cheaper and accessible medicines (94%), increased education and awareness HIV and AIDS, and a reduction of poverty (81%) are all means by which Canadians believe the quality of life can be improved for those individuals living with HIV and AIDS across the world.

Six in Ten (59%) Believe HIV and AIDS are a Worldwide Pandemic...

When presented with a few differing views of HIV and AIDS, including the severity and scope of the problem, six in ten (59%) Canadians believe that HIV and AIDS are best described as a 'worldwide pandemic' and an 'international emergency'. Taking a more

moderate view, nearly four in ten (36%) believe that HIV and AIDS are a serious problem, but to describe them as a pandemic is an exaggeration. 5% of Canadians claim to be 'unaware of the impact of HIV and AIDS', while just 1% of Canadians believe that HIV and AIDS are serious problems, but that they do not concern Canadians.

- Women (63%) are more likely than men (54%) to classify HIV and AIDS as a worldwide pandemic and an international emergency.
- Two thirds (67%) of Quebecers agree that HIV and AIDS are a worldwide pandemic and an international emergency, compared to just one half (51%) of British Columbians who agree with this sentiment. 43% of British Columbians agree that HIV and AIDS are serious problems, but that to describe them as pandemics is an exaggeration.
- Residents of Alberta are the most likely (7%) to be 'unaware of the impact of HIV and AIDS'.

Lending credence to the notion that Canadians believe this problem to be of a global scope, Canadians are split on who is most vulnerable to the spread of HIV and AIDS. Three in ten believe women (32%) are most vulnerable to the spread of these diseases, while similar proportions believe that men (29%) and young girls (30%) are most vulnerable. However, one in ten (9%) believe that it is young boys who are most vulnerable. Thinking about where in the world these individuals are most vulnerable, seven in ten (69%) Canadians believe that they are vulnerable throughout the world, as opposed to three in ten (31%) who believe that it is a particular region of the world where individuals are most vulnerable to contracting HIV and AIDS.

From among those people who indicate that there is a particular area of the world that is most vulnerable, nine in ten (90%) recognize that Africa is the most vulnerable area of the world, as it currently has the highest incidence rates of HIV and AIDS, particularly among young people. In fact, 92% of Canadians understand that Africa has been the hardest hit by the spread of HIV and AIDS.

What Canadians Believe Contributes to the Spread of HIV and AIDS...

First and foremost, Canadians believe that a lack of education (92%) is a key cause in the spread of HIV and AIDS. With increased knowledge of what HIV and AIDS are, and the steps that one can take to prevent the spread of these conditions. Canadians also believe that poverty (67%) is a key cause in the spread of HIV and AIDS. Perhaps reflecting on the genocides in Rwanda and Darfur, a majority (55%) of Canadians are of the opinion that sexual violence is also a key cause in the spread of HIV and AIDS.

However, taking a more condemning approach of their government and world leaders, two thirds (63%) of Canadians believe that a 'lack of political will in the international community' is a key cause in the spread of HIV and AIDS. With a majority of Canadians placing at least partial blame with the leaders of the world, it is unfortunate that politics comes into play when dealing with an issue of such great magnitude.

- Quebecers (67%) are the most inclined to cite a 'lack of political will' as a key cause in the spread of HIV and AIDS. However, just 46% of Canadians residing in Saskatchewan and Manitoba believe that a 'lack of political will' is a key cause of the spread of HIV and AIDS.

- Older Canadians, aged 55 and up, are more likely (66%) than younger Canadians (58%), aged 18 to 34, to cite a 'lack of political will' as a key cause in the spread of HIV and AIDS.

Very Few Canadians Involved in Combating HIV and AIDS...

Despite their knowledge and understanding of HIV and AIDS, just 5% of Canadians indicate that they are currently involved in an activity to combat HIV and AIDS in developing countries, while only 4% are involved in helping those in Canada who have the disease. But those who are involved are active in a variety of means: seven in ten (70%) donate their money, while four in ten (40%) are involved in raising awareness on this issue. One quarter (26%) of those who say that they are involved are engaged in volunteer work.

Fewer Canadians Feel They Are Informed about HIV and AIDS in 2007 (70%) Than in 2005 (80%)

| | 2007 | 2005 | 2004 |
|--|------|------|------|
| 'Very well' or 'reasonably' informed | 70% | 80% | -- |
| HIV and AIDS is an 'international emergency' | 59% | 75% | 60% |
| HIV and AIDS is a 'serious problem' | 36% | 19% | 32% |
| Canadian government is spending 'too little' | 48% | 39% | 40% |

It seems that awareness and alarm about the scope of HIV and AIDS was at a peak in 2005 and has now come down, closer to 2004 levels. In 2005, 80% of Canadians felt they were 'very' (25%) or 'reasonably' (56%) well informed about HIV and AIDS compared to 70% of Canadians in 2007 who felt they were 'very' (16%) or 'reasonably' (54%) informed. The number of Canadians who feel they are 'a little informed' has increased by more than ten percentage points from 18% to 29%.

In 2005, three quarters (75%) of Canadians felt that HIV and AIDS was a 'worldwide epidemic best described as an international emergency'. In 2007, this number has fallen to 59%, almost the same as when the question was first asked in 2004, when 60% of respondents agreed with this statement. Alternatively, the number of Canadians who feel that while HIV and AIDS are serious problems but do not qualify as a worldwide pandemic has reached a peak. In 2004, 32% of Canadians agreed that HIV and AIDS were serious problems, but to describe HIV and AIDS as a worldwide pandemic was an exaggeration. This was followed by a drop to only 19% of respondents in 2005, and now over one third (36%) of Canadians in 2007 believe that HIV and AIDS are serious problems, but do not qualify as a worldwide pandemic. Despite these decreases in awareness, the numbers still point to a majority of Canadians who feel they are at least 'reasonably' well informed about HIV and AIDS, and that they consider HIV and AIDS to be a 'serious problem'.

In terms of what Canadians feel about the Canadian government's foreign aid contribution with respect to HIV and AIDS, almost half (48%) feel the government is spending 'too little'. The proportion of Canadians who feel that the government is spending too little is higher now than before. In 2004 (40%) and 2005 (39%), this number hovered around four in ten, but is now nearly 10 percentage points higher. It should be noted that the percentage of respondents who felt the government was giving 'too much' (9%) and 'about the right amount' (43%) has also grown from previous years, however this increase is considerably less than the growth in the numbers of individuals who believe that the government is spending too little.



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