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of Canadians say they are Truly Scared for the Future of the  
Country with What is Going On in Ottawa*

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# **Majority (68%) Of Canadians From Every Part Of Country Supports Governor General's Decision To Prorogue Parliament**

*Fear and Anger Grips the Nation as Almost Three Quarters (72%) of  
Canadians say they are Truly Scared for the Future of the Country  
with What is Going On in Ottawa*

**Toronto, ON** – Whatever arcane elements of Parliamentary democracy or convention weighed heavily on the shoulders of Canada's Governor General Michaëlle Jean in deciding what next steps to take concerning the latest political leadership crisis to affect the country, she did so with the majority support of the Canadian public in agreeing to Prime Minister Harper's request to prorogue Parliament until January 26, 2009 when a new Conservative budget can be brought down and voted on as a matter of confidence.

In this respect, a majority (68%) of Canadians from every part of the country (including 55% in Quebec), believe that Parliament should be ended now, but the Harper Conservatives remain in power until the government is possibly defeated by the coalition in January, 2009. This compares with only 29% who believe that the Conservatives should accept defeat in Parliament now and turn power over to the Coalition.

And if the Prime Minister's request had not been acceded to it is clear that, given a choice, the majority (56%) believe the Governor General should have dissolved Parliament and initiated



an election rather than accepting the proposal from the newly formed coalition of the Liberal, New Democratic and Bloc Quebecois parties to form the government (38%).

In fact, the national poll conducted by Ipsos Reid for Canwest News Service and Global National on Tuesday and Wednesday night, and following the televised address by both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Coalition, indicates that the Harper Conservative government has the support of six in ten (60%) Canadians to 'fight and do everything they can legally do to continue governing because of the severe economic situation the country faces, and the fact that the Liberals and the NDP have entered into an "unholy deal" with the Bloc separatists'. This compares with only four in ten (37%) who believe that 'it's proper that a smooth transition of power to the Coalition takes place'.

What Canadians are witnessing has shaken them pretty much to the core: almost three quarters (72%) of Canadians indicate that they are truly scared for the future of the country with what is going on in Ottawa and the majority (62%) is angry with the Coalition taking over power from the governing Conservatives -- in fact, a majority in every region of the country is angry at the situation, except in Quebec where only 39% expressed this view.

The potential backlash against the Coalition partners is now palpable in the data: if a Federal election were held today it's likely that the Conservatives would reap a very large majority government with 46% of decided voters supporting the Conservatives, compared with 23% for the Liberals, 13% for the NDP, 9% for the Bloc Quebecois (37% in Québec) and 8% for the Green party. Five percent (5%) remain undecided.

*These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted December 2<sup>nd</sup> and December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008 on behalf of the Canwest News Service and Global Television. For the survey, a representative randomly selected sample of 1,001 adult Canadians was interviewed by telephone. With a sample of*

*this size, the results are considered accurate to within  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what they would have been had the entire adult population of Canada 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.*

### ***Fear for the country is throughout the nation...***

Three quarters (72%) of Canadians 'agree' (44% strongly/28% somewhat) that they are 'truly scared for the future of the country with what's going on in Ottawa'. This view touches every region and demographic in the country, with Albertans being the most likely to say this (90%), followed by those living in Atlantic Canada (78%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (76%), Ontario (74%), British Columbia (67%) and Quebec (62%). Just one quarter (26%) of Canadians 'disagree' (11% strongly/15% somewhat) with this perspective.

### ***Canadians oppose the three Party Coalition...***

Under a signed agreement, the leaders of the Federal opposition Liberals, NDP and Bloc Quebecois formed a Coalition to govern Canada that would last for the next 18 Months and possibly until June, 2011. In the new 24 member Cabinet, the Liberals would have 18 seats, the NDP would have six and the Bloc would have none. The coalition intends, shortly, to defeat the ruling minority Conservatives under Stephen Harper in Parliament and then tell the Governor General that together they can form the new government, all of which is legal and doable under our Constitution. Under the agreement Liberal Leader Stephane Dion will serve as interim Prime Minister until a new Liberal Leader is chosen and automatically becomes Prime Minister on May 9, 2009 at a Liberal Convention.

Six in ten Canadians (60%) 'oppose' the newly declared Coalition of the Liberal, New Democratic and Bloc Quebecquois Parties, compared with 37% who support the coalition.

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It's evident that, except in Québec and Atlantic Canada where the view is split (50% supporting /46% opposing in Quebec, 49% oppose/44% support in Atlantic Canada), every other province and region of the country is decidedly against the coalition taking power: Alberta (83%), Ontario (65%), British Columbia (63%), and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (57%). This compares with support for the coalition within British Columbia (37%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (36%), Ontario (32%) and Alberta (17%).

***Most Canadians are angry with the Coalition's attempt to take over power from the governing Conservatives...***

Almost two thirds (62%) of Canadians indicate that they are 'angry' (39% very/23% somewhat) with the coalition's attempt to take over power from the governing Conservatives. Conversely, one in three (33%) are 'happy' (12% very/21% somewhat) with their plan.

Only one part of the country appears to be happy, overall, with the thought of this new coalition taking over from the Conservatives: Québec, where 54% say they are happy, while 39% indicate that they are angry about the potential change. In every other region or province of the country the anger is boiling, lead by Alberta (81%) and followed by Ontario (69%), British Columbia (68%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (62%) and Atlantic Canada (60%). Behind Quebec (54%), those in Atlantic Canada (33%) are most likely to be happy with the coalition, followed by those in British Columbia (30%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (29%), Ontario (27%) and Alberta (14%).

***Most in Canada (54%) don't believe that the coalition government may actually make things better for the country...***

A majority (54%) 'disagrees' (37% strongly/17% somewhat) that 'the coalition government may actually make things better for the country, not worse', compared with a minority (44%) that 'agrees' (19% strongly/26% somewhat) that it would.

But it's clear that there is a great regional divide in terms of sentiment: Quebecers (65%) are most likely to 'agree' with this, followed by Atlantic Canadians (46%), British Columbians (40%), Ontarians (39%), those living in Saskatchewan and Manitoba (33%) and Alberta (25%).

But with the exception of Québec (33%) and Atlantic Canada (49%), a majority in every other province and region differs, believing that the coalition will make things worse for the country, not better: Alberta (75%) is followed by Saskatchewan/Manitoba (61%) Ontario (60%) and British Columbia (59%).

***Six in ten (60%) say regardless of how we got here, Harper and the Conservatives should fight on...***

Six in ten (60%) believe that regardless of how we got here, Stephen Harper and the Conservatives should fight and do everything they can legally do to continue governing because of the severe economic situation the country faces and the fact that the Liberals and the NDP have entered into an "unholy" deal with the Bloc separatists. This view is most evident in Alberta (76%), Ontario (66%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (65%), and British Columbia (62%), and less prevalent in Atlantic Canada (48%) and Quebec (44%).

With the only majority support in the province of Québec (54%), only minorities support the view that regardless of how we got here, it is proper that a smooth transition of power to the

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coalition take place if it is apparent the government will be defeated and that the economic policies brought forward by the coalition, and the agreement of support and stability in the separatist Bloc Quebecquois, will be good for the country. Aside from Quebec, support is highest in Atlantic Canada (46%), followed by in British Columbia (35%), Ontario (32%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (25%) and Alberta (17%).

In fact, this is echoed in a similar sentiment: only 39% 'agree' (20% strongly/19% somewhat) with the view that 'it's time for Stephen Harper and the Conservatives to throw in the towel and let the Coalition start governing'. While a majority in Québec (54%) 'agrees', significantly fewer agree in Atlantic Canada (45%), British Columbia (39%), Ontario (36%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (30%) and Alberta (20%).

### ***Two in Three (68%) Agree with Decision to Prorogue Parliament Instead of Turning Power over to Coalition (29%)...***

Two thirds of Canadians (68%) agree with the decision of the Governor General -- to end this session of parliament now and hold off any votes of confidence until January when the government is planning to put forward a new budget. This means that the coalition has to wait until a new Throne Speech in the new year to defeat the Conservatives if they so choose. Support for this course of action is led by those in Alberta (82%) and Saskatchewan/Manitoba (74%), followed by Canadians living in Ontario (71%), British Columbia (68%), Atlantic Canada (67%), and even Québec (55%).

Only three in ten (29%) Canadians believe that the Prime Minister and his party should accept defeat in Parliament now and turn power over to the Coalition. This view is mainly supported by those in the province of Québec (43%), followed by those in British Columbia



(30%), Atlantic Canada (29%), Ontario (26%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (20%) and finally Alberta (14%)

### ***Majority Prefers Election (56%) To Coalition Government (38%)...***

Should the government be defeated in parliament moving forward, a majority of the Canadian public (56%) would rather see the Governor General, Michaëlle Jean, dissolve Parliament and hold another election than accept the proposal from the Coalition government in waiting (38%). In fact, the only province or region in the country that is enthusiastic with the Governor General siding with the coalition is Québec (60%), compared with 37% who believe that Parliament should be dissolved and another election held.

Those who wish to have the Governor General dissolve parliament and hold another election are, in majorities, from Alberta (80%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (67%), Atlantic Canada (60%), Ontario (59%) and British Columbia (59%). Aside from Quebec, those who would rather have the proposal from the Coalition government in waiting are most likely to be in Atlantic Canada (35%) followed by Ontario (34%), British Columbia (34%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (25%) and Alberta (15%).

Even without the Governor General involved, it would appear that Canadians believe 'enough is enough'. A majority (58%) 'agrees' (39% strongly/19% somewhat) that 'we should have a brand-new election and not some deal between parties to decide who should govern this country'. The sentiment is supported by most Canadians in every region and province: Alberta (73%), followed by Saskatchewan and Manitoba (59%), Ontario (58%), British Columbia (57%), Atlantic Canada (55%) and Quebec (54%).



This compares with only 43% who disagree with this view, beginning with Quebecers (45%), and followed by those living in British Columbia (43%), Atlantic Canada (42%), Ontario (41%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (38%) and Alberta (26%).

***And if an election were held tomorrow, the Conservatives would likely boast a massive majority government...***

If an election were held tomorrow, the Conservative Party would garner 46% of the decided vote -- up 10 points since the last election -- compared with the Liberals who would receive 23% of the vote, followed by the NDP (13%), 9% for the Bloc Quebecquois (37% in Québec) and 8% for the Green party.

- In **British Columbia** the Tories lead (49%), followed by the Liberals (26%), the NDP (14%) and the Green Party (9%).
- In **Alberta**, the Conservatives (72%) have a commanding lead, while the Liberals (13%), NDP (8%) and Green Party (8%) are trail.
- In **Saskatchewan and Manitoba**, the Tories (54%) also have a commanding lead over the NDP (19%), Liberals (15%) and Greens (10%).
- In **Ontario**, the Conservatives (50%) have opened a very large margin over the Liberals (26%), the NDP (12%) and the Green (10%).
- In **Quebec**, the Bloc (37%) maintains a comfortable lead over the Conservatives (24%), Liberals (21%), the NDP (12%) and the Greens (6%).
- In **Atlantic Canada**, the Conservatives (48%) are at the head of the pack, followed by the Liberals (25%), the NDP (18%) and the Green Party (6%).

## *The Conservatives, not the Coalition, are best able to manage the economy...*

And as was the case in the most recent election campaign, a majority (59%) believes that Stephen Harper and the Conservatives would be the best able to manage Canada's economy during these troubling times. This is true to a majority in every region and province except Québec: Alberta (74%), Ontario (66%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (64%), Atlantic Canada (60%), British Columbia (58%), and Quebec (41%).

This compares with just 33% who believe that liberal leader Stephane Dion and the proposed coalition government would be best able to manage the economy. Only in Québec is this view is supported by the majority (51%), while minorities in Atlantic Canada (37%), British Columbia (34%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (28%), Ontario (26%) and Alberta (19%) believe this.

## *And who is most responsible for causing this situation?*

On this question, the Canadian public is relatively equally divided: 49% blame Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservatives, while 45% blame the Opposition Parties.

Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the Conservatives take most of the blame from those in Québec (64%) followed by those in Atlantic Canada (55%), British Columbia (53%), Ontario (45%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (39%) and Alberta (23%).

The Opposition Parties take the blame most from those in Alberta (72%), followed by those in Ontario (51%), Saskatchewan/Manitoba (48%), British Columbia (45%), Atlantic Canada (37%) and Québec (27%).

### *And just what has caused the situation?*

Canadians are completely divided on what has caused this crisis: 44% believe it began with a policy argument between the government and the opposition parties over the extent of stimulus the government should undertake for the economy -- primarily viewed as such in Québec (57%) followed by Atlantic Canada (53%), British Columbia (45%), Ontario (42%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (39%) and, finally, Alberta (19%).

On the other hand, 45% believe that it is the result of a partisan argument between the government and the opposition parties over federal political party funding -- primarily viewed as such from those in Alberta (64%), followed by those in Ontario (48%), British Columbia (41%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (40%), Atlantic Canada (39%) and Quebec (36%).

### *And, just what about that political party taxpayer funded subsidy?*

#### *A majority (61%) says be done with it...*

In the economic update last week delivered by finance Minister Jim Flaherty, the Conservative government proposed to abolish the system of political financing in which parties receive \$1.95 annually for each vote they get in an election. In response to criticism from opposition parties, the government dropped the proposal. Regardless, a majority (61%) does not believe that political parties should receive this taxpayer funded subsidy -- with this most likely to be the perspective in Alberta (75%) followed by Saskatchewan and Manitoba (68%), Ontario (64%), British Columbia (59%), Atlantic Canada (57%) and Quebec (52%).

This compares with just 36% who believe that this type of taxpayer funded subsidy should continue to exist -- with most support in the province of Québec (48%), followed by Atlantic

Canada (39%), British Columbia (39%), Ontario (32%), Saskatchewan and Manitoba (26%) and Alberta (22%).

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