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of Life for Aboriginals in Canada is Getting Better
*Six in Ten (60%) Agree that Governments Lack the Political Will
to Make Any Real Changes that Would Benefit the
Aboriginal Peoples of Canada***

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Toronto, ON – Marking the twentieth anniversary of the Oka crisis, a new Ipsos Reid poll conducted exclusively for Canada.com has revealed that a majority (57%) of Canadians don't believe that the quality of life for aboriginals in Canada has been improving.

Twenty years ago, in Oka, Quebec, a confrontation occurred when aboriginals claimed ownership of land and the police intervened to open up a barricade the Mohawks had erected. A policeman was killed, sparking a summer-long crisis in which aboriginals remained in siege behind the barricade. The episode cast national focus on the long-standing complaints of aboriginals, prompted the government to establish a royal commission, and encouraged other aboriginals to become more militant and to set up roadblocks.

Looking back at the last two decades, just four in ten (43%) Canadians believe that the quality of life for aboriginals in Canada has been getting better in the twenty years since the Oka crisis, while the majority (57%) believes there has been no change (49%) in their quality of life, or even that it's getting worse (8%).

Among those who believe that the situation is improving, 56% credit aboriginals and their leaders for the improvement over the last twenty years, while 44% credit governments and politicians. Among those say there's been no change, 54% blame government and politicians for the lack of change, while 46% say aboriginals and their leaders are to blame for the lack of improvement in their quality of life. However, among those who say the situation is getting worse, 59% blame governments and politicians, while 41% blame aboriginals and their leaders.

Overall, six in ten (58%) 'agree' (24% strongly/34% somewhat) that 'governments do enough to help the aboriginal peoples of Canada', while four in ten (42%) 'disagree' (11% strongly/31% somewhat) that governments do enough.

Perhaps helping to explain why a majority does not see an improvement in the quality of life of aboriginals for the last twenty years, six in ten (59%) Canadians 'agree' (21% strongly/38% somewhat) that 'governments lack the political will to make any real changes that would benefit the aboriginal peoples of Canada', while four in ten (40%) 'disagree' (12% strongly/28% somewhat) that this is the case. However, one half of Canadians (53%), collectively, are willing to share some of the onus, 'agreeing' (15% strongly/38% somewhat) that 'the reason governments don't do enough to help the aboriginal peoples of Canada is because we as Canadians don't pressure them enough to take serious action'. Still, the other half (47%) 'disagrees' (18% strongly/29% somewhat) that Canadians in general don't pressure their governments to do enough.

Despite what has happened in the past, Canadians are in the present and looking to the future as six in ten (62%) 'agree' (21% strongly/41% somewhat) that 'the federal government



must act now to help raise the quality of life of Canada's aboriginal peoples'. Four in ten (38%) 'disagree' (15% strongly/23% somewhat) that the time for action is now.

These are some of the findings of an Ipsos Reid poll conducted between July 9 and 13, 2010, on behalf of Canada.com. For this survey, a sample of 1,013 adults from Ipsos' Canadian online panel was interviewed online. Weighting was then employed to balance demographics and ensure that the sample's composition reflects that of the adult population according to Census data and to provide results intended to approximate the sample universe. A survey with an unweighted probability sample of this size and a 100% response rate would have an estimated margin of error of +/-3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20, of what the results would have been had the entire population of adults in Canada been polled. All sample surveys and polls may be subject to other sources of error, including, but not limited to coverage error, and measurement error.

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