

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The annual Corporate Communications Survey explores awareness of relevant and timely international issues related to global problems, regions and countries that are important to Canada, as well as awareness of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT), departmental performance, the Canada-United States relationship, the United Nations, foreign policy priorities, Canada's importance as a world player, and drivers that influence Canada's foreign policy.

When asked about international issues, Canadians cite the environment and war as major concerns. Afghanistan, which had been below the public radar for the past five years, also emerges as a significant concern. Public concern over terrorism and world poverty has remained steady over the past two years.

The Americas continue to be the most important region for Canadians, but Africa is viewed as almost equally important. Asia is very important to British Columbians but much less so to the rest of Canada. Europe has lost the importance it once had from the public viewpoint.

Despite the fact that Asia, as a region, is far less important in the public eye than the Americas and Africa, China is ranked as the second most important country to Canada, just behind the United States. Afghanistan is emerging as an important foreign policy priority to Canadians as well.

Public knowledge of DFAIT is at quite a low level. Most Canadians say they are unfamiliar with the activities of the Department, and a strong majority of survey respondents can't recall the Department's name.

Canadians believe that the Department is heading in the right direction, giving it high marks for its performance across a wide range of indicators: representing Canada's interests internationally, promoting world peace and security, helping Canadian travellers overseas, promoting human rights internationally and promoting Canada's international stature. The Department gets a significantly lower mark for addressing global starvation and Third World poverty.

While public satisfaction with the Canada-U.S. relationship is much higher in 2006 than in 2005, some of the increase can be attributed to a change in the response bank categories for the question. Despite this, Canadians do feel that the relationship with Canada's largest trading partner has improved.

Public opinion is nearly split on the assessment of the performance of the United Nations. Despite a growing concern that the organization is ineffective, Canadians still believe in the UN and have said that, with reform, it could be an effective multilateral institution.

The most prominent foreign policy concerns are reconstruction in war-torn areas after the fighting has stopped and the war on terrorism. Reform of the UN is also cited as a priority, as is asserting Canadian sovereignty over the Northwest Passage and the Arctic, together with improving relations with the United States and preparing for a flu pandemic.

Canadians expect Canada's international stature to grow over the next decade. The percentage of respondents who take this position has remained the same for the last two years.

The Canada-U.S. relationship emerges as the strong favourite as the most influential driver behind Canadian foreign policy. Reasonable-sized minorities believe that foreign policy is driven by economic considerations, world events, Canadian values and security interests.