

While 46% of those respondents who cite economic issues as their most serious world concern believe this to be the top priority of the government, even in this area the majority (54%) believes its views differ from the government's foreign policy initiatives. However, over the last six months there has been an increase in the number of persons indicating that the government's top foreign policy priority matches their own top concern in the area of economic issues (from 42% to 46%). This appears to be due to an increasing number of Canadians citing economic issues as their main global concern, rather than any change in perceptions of government priorities.

Crosstabular analyses reveal significant demographic differences in perceived government priorities. Those over 65 years of age (29%), those whose household income is below \$10,000 (32%), those with an elementary education (19%) and francophones (34%) are less likely to view economic issues as the government's top foreign policy priority than are persons between the ages of 25-34 (47%), those with household incomes of \$50,000 or more (56%) and the university educated (52%).

These demographic differences provide a clear challenge for the federal government in the foreign policy area. As shown in Table 6, there are significant differences between the public's global concerns and their perceptions of the government's top priority regarding economic issues. Consistent with findings of six months ago, persons of higher socio-economic status, that is, the well educated and high income earners, experience greater disparity between their concerns and what they perceive to be the government's top priority. As noted earlier, these groups are more likely to be interested in international events or issues and feel well informed about world affairs, as well as having greater influence upon public opinion.