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Climate Concerns Continue to Increase: Global Poll

Public concern about climate change is at its highest level since GlobeScan began international tracking in 1998, according to a new GlobeScan/BBC World Service poll conducted in 23 countries. Nearly two thirds of those polled now say climate change is a “very serious” problem. However, concern has fallen in China and the USA.

On the eve of the UN climate change summit in Copenhagen, only six per cent of the 24,000 people polled want their government to oppose a climate deal being reached in Denmark.

The poll also shows that, in spite of the global recession, an average of 61% support their governments making investments to address climate change, even if these investments hurt the economy.

However, the poll finds that public opinion in the world’s two largest emitters of CO₂ is more ambivalent. While the Chinese are the most likely to support government investments to address climate change even if these harm the economy (with 89% in favour), only 52% of Americans feel the same way. Also, the percentage of American (45%) and Chinese citizens (57%) who see climate change as “very serious” is below the 23-country average of 64%.

The overall results show that there is strong support for governments taking an ambitious approach to the Copenhagen negotiations. On average, 44%—and majorities in 10 of the 23 countries polled—say they want their government to “play a leading role in setting ambitious targets to address climate change” at Copenhagen. A further 39% think their government should “adopt a more moderate approach and support only gradual action.” Only six per cent want their government to oppose any agreement.

Majorities in major European nations support their government playing a strong leadership role in Copenhagen—62% in the UK, 57% in France, and 55% in Germany. Other governments being pressed by their citizens to show leadership include Canada (61%), Australia (57%), Japan (57%), and Brazil (53%).

In comparison, Chinese opinion about Copenhagen favours a “moderate approach” involving “only gradual action” (49%) over a “leadership approach” (37%). In the United States, 36% favour a “moderate approach” and 14% oppose any agreement, outweighing the 46% of Americans who want their government to show leadership.

The results are drawn from a survey of 24,071 adult citizens in 23 countries, conducted by the international polling firm GlobeScan between 19 June and 13 October, 2009.

GlobeScan Chairman Doug Miller commented: “The poll shows strong worldwide support for action on climate change, in spite of the recession. However, the mixed opinions in the United States and China suggest leadership in Copenhagen may need to come from others.”

Participating Countries



Note: In Brazil, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, the Philippines, and Turkey urban samples were used. Please see Methodology for further details.

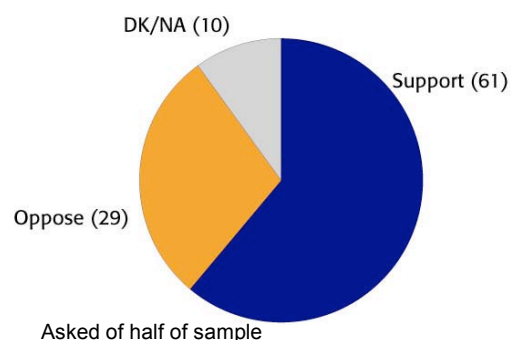
Detailed Findings

The UK, Canada, and Kenya are the countries whose citizens are keenest for their governments to play leadership roles in setting ambitious targets at the summit (UK 62%, Canada and Kenya each 61%). Otherwise, developing countries are generally more cautious in the approach they are looking for their government to play—only around a third in countries like Pakistan and the Philippines (each 36%), or India (33%), and even fewer in Indonesia (23%), support their governments seeking ambitious targets in Copenhagen.

Outright opposition to a deal is limited to small minorities in all survey countries. The countries with the highest proportions of those opposing any international agreement are the United States (14%), Brazil (12%), and Pakistan (12%).

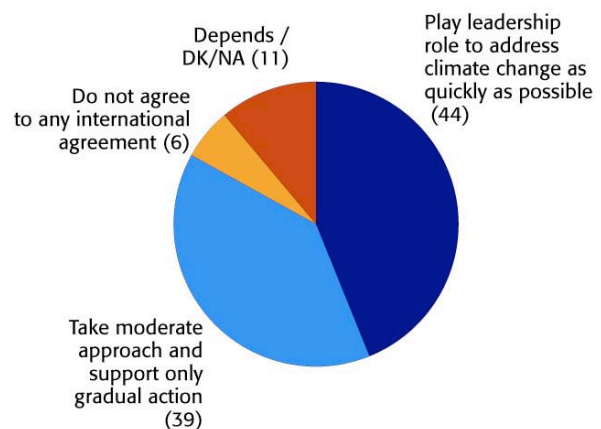
Support for Government Investment to Address Climate Change, Even If It Hurts the Economy

Average of 23 Countries, 2009



Preferred Country Strategy at Copenhagen Summit

Average of 23 Countries, 2009



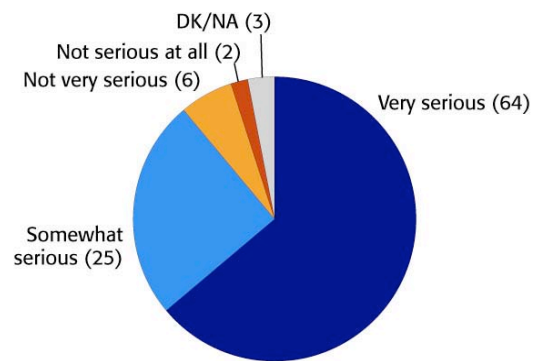
In 19 of 23 countries polled, including all developed nations, there is majority support for government investments to address climate change, including investments in renewable energy, energy efficiency and public transport, even if these hurt the economy. The exceptions are Pakistan, where only 19% would support such investments in these circumstances, the Philippines (32%), Indonesia (38%), and Turkey (49%). After China (89%), the countries where the largest majorities support government investments to address climate

change, even where these would cause economic harm, are Kenya (77%), France (75%), Mexico (71%), Australia (70%), and the UK (70%).

The countries with the largest proportions supporting government action are not always those with the highest proportions regarding climate change as very serious. Brazil (86% “very serious”), Costa Rica (83%), the Philippines (83%), and Turkey (81%) appear to be most convinced of the magnitude of the climate change problem. Despite Kenyans’ enthusiasm for government investment, a lower than average proportion (52%) regard climate change as a “very serious” problem.

Seriousness of Climate Change

Average of 23 Countries, 2009



The survey also finds that concern about climate change continues on an upward trend, even in a recession year. Thirteen of the countries in this year’s survey have been polled regularly by GlobeScan over the last eleven years on their views of climate change: since 1998, the proportion rating it as a “very serious” issue for the world has climbed from 44% to 63%.

In total 24,071 citizens in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, the Philippines, Russia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America were interviewed face-to-face or by telephone between 19 June and 13 October, 2009 (the exception being Japan where the fieldwork was conducted online). Polling was conducted for BBC World Service by GlobeScan and its research partners in each country. The margin of error per country ranges from +/-2.2 to 4.9 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

For more details, please visit www.GlobeScan.com as well as the GlobeScan Insights blog at <http://globescaninsights.blogspot.com>.

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BBC World Service is an international multimedia broadcaster delivering 32 language and regional services. It uses multiple platforms to reach its weekly audience of 188 million globally, including shortwave, AM, FM, digital satellite and cable channels. It has around 2,000 partner radio stations which take BBC content, and numerous partnerships supplying content to mobile phones and other wireless handheld devices. Its news sites include audio and video content and offer opportunities to join the global debate. For more information, visit bbcworldservice.com. To find out more about the BBC’s English language offer and subscribe to a free e-newsletter, visit bbcworldservice.com/schedules.

Key Country and Regional Findings

CHINA

A lower than average proportion in China regard climate change as a “very serious” problem (57%). Chinese people are also less likely than average to support their government playing a leadership role in setting ambitious targets to address climate change, with only 37% backing such an approach, and 49% favouring a more moderate strategy involving only gradual action. However, the Chinese are by some distance the most enthusiastic nation in calling for government investments to address climate change even if these hurt the economy, with 89% in favour and only 8% against.

USA AND CANADA

Along with India, the US is the nation least likely to regard climate change as a “very serious” problem, with only 45% of Americans viewing it in that light. One in four (25%) regards it as “not very” or “not at all” serious—again, the highest proportion of all countries polled. The USA is also the country with the highest proportion opposing any international agreement at Copenhagen (14%)—although the proportion looking for a leadership role from their government is also slightly above average (46%), though lower than in most other developed nations. Americans are third only to Pakistanis and Filipinos in their level of opposition to government investments to address climate change that might hurt the economy (42%).

In Canada, while relatively few (compared to the USA) consider climate change not to be a serious problem (11%), the number regarding it as “very serious” is below average at 58%. Despite this, Canada is among the countries most supportive of a strong leadership role for their government in setting ambitious targets to address climate change at Copenhagen, with 61% in favour. The level of opposition to the government making investments to address climate change even if these damage the economy is also much lower than in the USA, and below the international average, at 26%, with 69% supporting such investments.

EUROPE

Europeans are broadly in line with the international average in terms of their assessment of climate change as a “very serious” problem, with 77% of Spanish, 68% of Italians, 65% of French, 61% of Germans, and 59% of British seeing it that way. However, a relatively high number of Germans (16%) do not see climate change as a serious problem.

Turks are among the nationalities most convinced of the gravity of the issue—more than four in five (81%) view it as a “very serious” problem. Russians are well below average in considering climate change to be a “very serious” problem, with fewer than half (46%) viewing it in this light.

Europeans are well above average in their propensity to look to their governments to play a leadership role in the Copenhagen negotiations. Here, expectations are highest in the UK (where 62% want their government to play a leadership role), but are also elevated in France (57%), Italy (56%), and Germany (55%). The exception here is Spain, where one of the lowest proportions in any country (25%) wants their government to help set ambitious targets at Copenhagen, despite the Spanish people’s strong perception that climate change is “very serious.”

Except for Germans, Europeans are also more likely than most other nations to support government investments to address climate change that might harm the economy, with 75% of French, 70% of British, 68% of Italians, and 67% of Spanish backing them.

ASIA PACIFIC

Outside the Philippines and Japan, the proportions of those in the Asia Pacific region regarding climate change as “very serious” is below average—while 83% of Filipinos and 65% of Japanese feel this way, only 60% of Indonesians, 58% of Australians, 57% of Chinese, and 45% of Indians feel likewise.

When it comes to the role that governments should play at Copenhagen, Australia and Japan show higher than average support for a leadership role in setting ambitious targets to address climate change. While 57% of Australians and Japanese—well above average—would support such an approach from their government, only 37% favour this strategy in China, 36% in the Philippines, 33% in India, and 23% in Indonesia. In Pakistan, the proportion opposed to any international agreement addressing climate change is relatively high (12%).

There is a clear split between the Asia Pacific nations in their willingness to contemplate government investments in fighting climate change that might harm the economy. A very large proportion of Chinese would back them (89%), as well as sizable majorities of Australians (70%) and Japanese (68%). But elsewhere support is below average—in India (56%), Indonesia (38%), and the Philippines (32%).

AFRICA

A lower than average proportion of those in Kenya (52%) and Nigeria (48%), the two African countries polled, regard climate change as a “very serious” problem. However, the two countries are divided when it comes to the strategy they want their governments to adopt at the Copenhagen summit. Opinion in Kenya is clearly in favour of their government seeking to play a leadership role and helping to set ambitious targets, with 61% favouring this approach. Opinion is divided in Nigeria, however, with more backing a moderate approach (46%) than favouring an ambitious approach (43%). Kenyans (77%) are also more likely than Nigerians (68%) to favour their government making climate change investments even if these harm the economy—though in both cases the proportions backing this are above the global average of 61%.

LATIN AMERICA

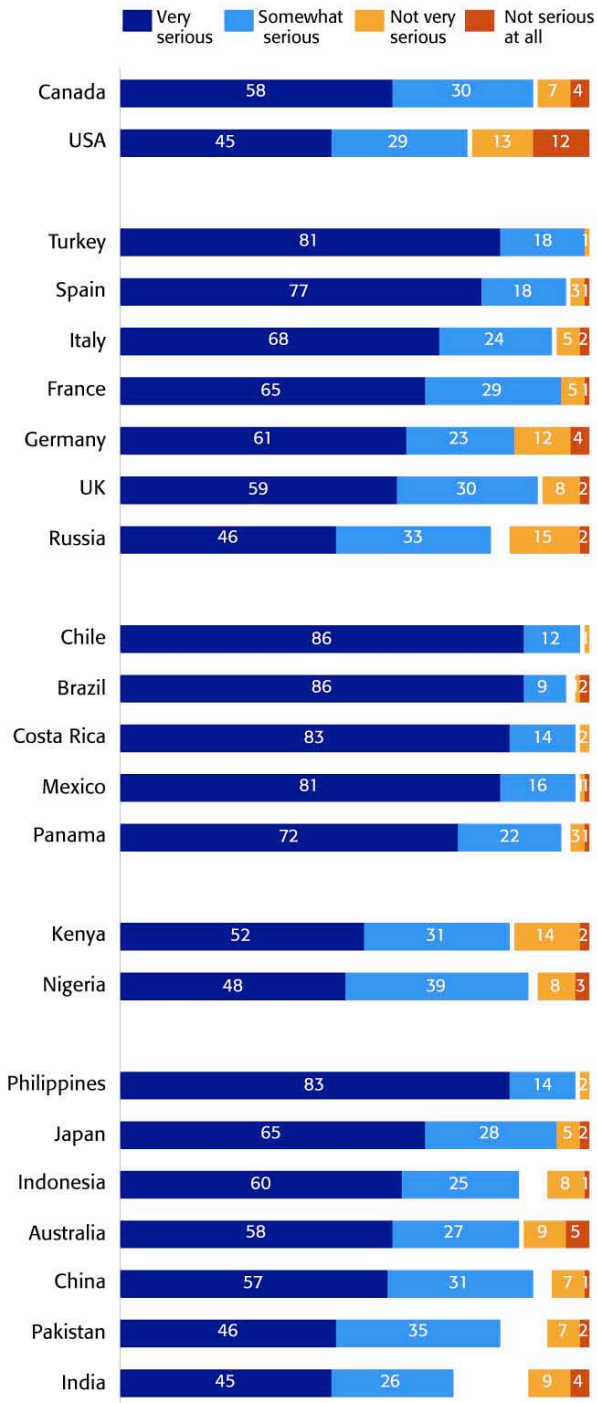
Of all the regions, it is in Latin America where the greatest number see climate change as a “very serious” problem, with 86% of Brazilians and Chileans seeing it in that light, as well as 83% of Costa Ricans, 81% of Mexicans, and 72% of Panamanians.

There is a distinct split between the Central American countries in the region, which have a cautious attitude towards their governments’ strategies at Copenhagen, and the South American countries, where above-average proportions want to see their governments play leadership roles. Only 38% in Mexico, 37% in Costa Rica, and 25% in Panama would prefer their governments to seek to set ambitious targets. In Chile, 54% favour this approach, and 53% of Brazilians would also favour an ambitious strategy from their government.

Despite this split, all populations in the region show average or above-average willingness in wanting their government to make investments to address climate change, even if these harm the economy. Seventy-one per cent of Mexicans support these investments, as do 67% of Chileans, 62% of Brazilians, and 60% of Costa Ricans and Panamanians.

Seriousness of Climate Change

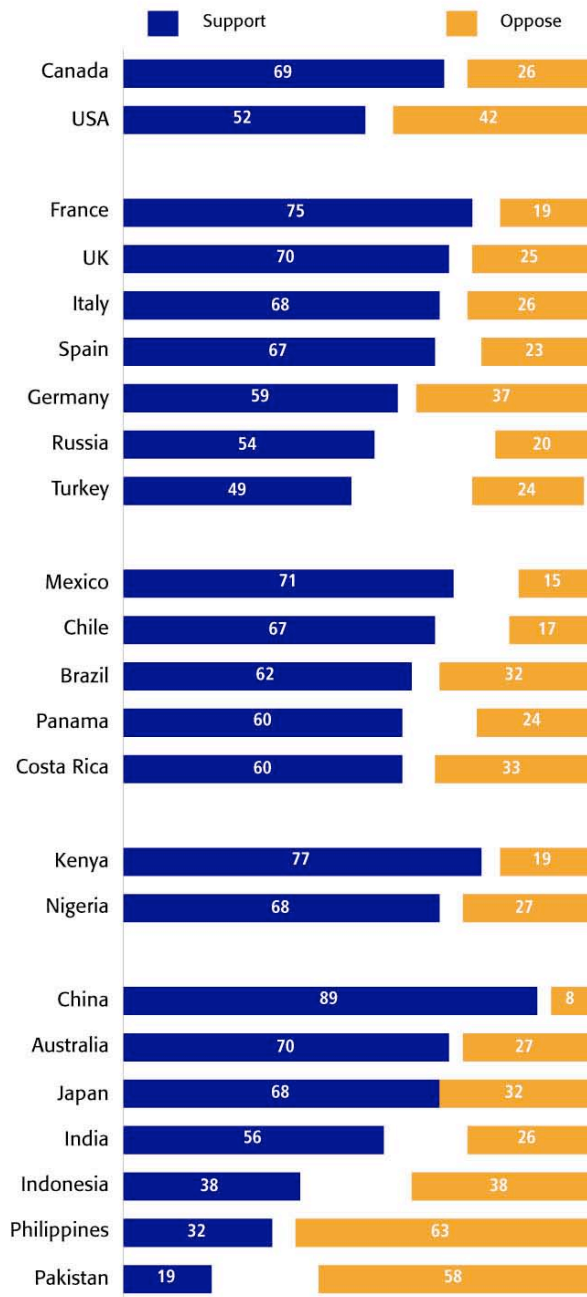
By Country, 2009



The white space in this chart represents "DK/NA."

Support for Government Investment to Address Climate Change, Even If It Hurts the Economy

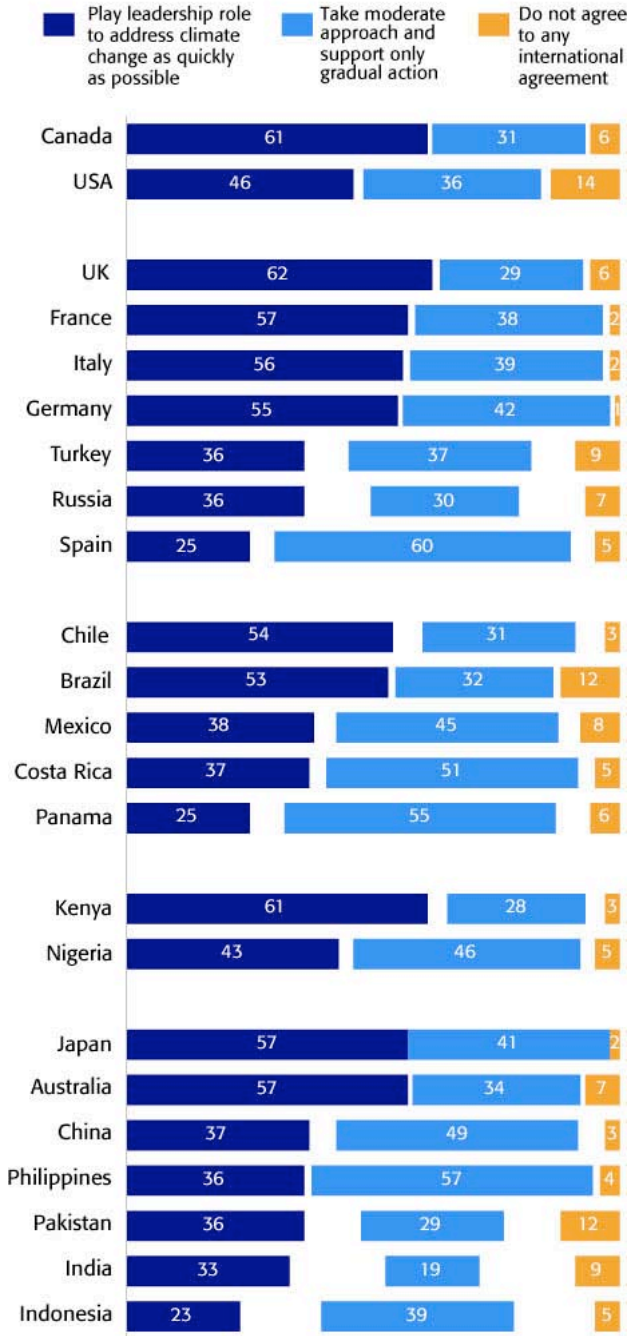
By Country, 2009



Asked of half of sample
The white space on this chart represents "DK/NA."

Preferred Country Strategy at Copenhagen Summit

By Country, 2009



The white space in this chart represents "Depends" and "DK/NA."

Questionnaire

CC1t. How serious a problem do you consider each of the following issues to be? Is each of the following a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, not very serious problem or not a serious problem at all?

ct) Climate change or global warming, due to the Greenhouse Effect

- 01 - Very serious problem
- 02 - Somewhat serious problem
- 03 - Not very serious problem
- 04 - Not a serious problem at all
- VOLUNTEERED (DO NOT READ)
- 99 - DK/NA

CC6. Do you support or oppose the government making investments to address climate change even if this hurts the economy?

- 01 - Support
- 02 - Oppose
- VOLUNTEERED
- 99 - DK/NA

CC7. This December, countries from around the world, including [COUNTRY], will meet in Denmark to discuss how they can work together to reduce emissions of gases that cause climate change.

Which of the following do you think should be [COUNTRY's] strategy at this meeting?

- 01 - Play a leadership role in setting ambitious targets to address climate change as quickly as possible.
- 02 - Take a more moderate approach and support only gradual action to address climate change.
- 03 - Do not agree to any international agreement that addresses climate change.
- VOLUNTEERED
- 04 - Depends
- 99 - DK/NA

Methodology

In total 24,071 citizens in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, the Philippines, Russia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America were interviewed face-to-face or by telephone between 19 June and 13 October, 2009 (the exception being Japan where the fieldwork was conducted online). Polling was conducted for BBC World Service by GlobeScan and its research partners in each country.

In Brazil, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Mexico, Panama, the Philippines, and Turkey urban samples were used.

Question CC6 was asked of half samples in each country.

The margin of error per country ranges from +/-2.2 to 4.9 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

Country	Sample Size (unweighted)	Field dates	Sample frame	Survey methodology	Type of sample
Australia	1,014	July 17 – August 17, 2009	18+	Telephone	National
Brazil	835	July 2–14, 2009	18–69	Face-to-face	Urban ¹
Canada	1,006	June 24 – July 24, 2009	18+	Telephone	National
Chile	1,000	June 25 – July 9, 2009	18+	Face-to-face	Urban ²
China	1,000	July 2–16, 2009	18+	Telephone	Urban ³
Costa Rica	1,038	August 6–14, 2009	18–45	Face-to-face	Urban ⁴
France	1,002	June 19 – June 25, 2009	15+	Telephone	National
Germany	1,004	July 1–22, 2009	16–70	Telephone	National
India	1,346	July 20–25, 2009	18+	Face-to-face	National
Indonesia	1,000	July 16–28, 2009	18+	Face-to-face	National
Italy	968	October 6–13, 2009	18+	Telephone	National
Japan	1,000	July 10–14, 2009	20+	Online	National
Kenya	1,008	July 1–8, 2009	18+	Face-to-face	National
Mexico	1,000	July 1–16, 2009	18+	Telephone	Urban ⁵
Nigeria	1,000	July 15–22, 2009	18+	Face-to-face	National
Pakistan	2,003	July 19 – August 9, 2009	18+	Face-to-face	National
Panama	1,000	July 30 – August 2, 2009	18+	Face-to-face	Urban ⁶
Philippines	1,000	June 26 – July 15, 2009	18+	Face-to-face	Urban ⁷
Russia	1,008	July 24 – August 3, 2009	18+	Face-to-face	National
Spain	800	September 3–16, 2009	18+	Telephone	National
Turkey	1,000	July 6–27, 2009	15+	Face-to-face	Urban ⁸
United Kingdom	1,003	July 14 – August 1, 2009	18+	Telephone	National
USA	1,009	July 1–29, 2009	18+	Telephone	National

1 In Brazil the survey was conducted in Belo Horizonte, Brasília, Curitiba, Goiânia, Porto Alegre, Recife, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and São Paulo, representing 16% of the total national adult population.

2 In Chile the survey was conducted in 78 cities, representing 85% of the national adult population. The cities were located in the Antofagasta, Araucania, Arica y Parinacota, Atacama, Bio Bío, Coquimbo, Libertador Bernardo O'Higgins, Los Lagos, Los Rios, Maule, Santiago Metropolitan, Tarapacá, and Valparaiso regions.

3 In China the survey was conducted in Beijing, Beiliu, Chengdu, Dujiangyan, Fenyang, Fuyang, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, Manzhouli, Quanzhou, Qijing, Shanghai, Shenyang, Shuangcheng, Wuhan, Xi'an, Xining, and Zhengzhou, representing 45% of the total national adult population.

4 In Costa Rica the survey was conducted in $n=36$ cities, representing 20% of the total national adult population.

5 In Mexico the survey was conducted in the 16 largest cities and media market regions, constituting 40% of the national adult population and 80% of the residential telephone land lines.

6 In Panama the survey was conducted in $n=52$ cities, representing 41% of the total national adult population.

7 In the Philippines the survey was conducted in the National Capital Region, representing 12% of the total national adult population.

8 In Turkey the survey was conducted in Adana, Ankara, Antalya, Bursa, Diyarbakir, Erzurum, Istanbul, Izmir, Konya, Samsun, and Zonguldak, representing 34% of the total national adult population.

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