

world development report

Public attitudes toward climate change: findings from a multi-country poll

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report presents the findings of a multi-country poll on public attitudes on climate change. Funding was provided by the Trust Fund on Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development (TFESSD), a multi-donor trust fund supported by Finland and Norway.

The poll was carried out by WorldPublicOpinion.org , a project managed by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland.

Public Attitudes to Climate Change: Findings from a Multi Country Poll

The World Bank's World Development Report 2010 on *Climate Change and Development* commissioned an international poll of public attitudes to climate change. The poll is the first to specifically target developing countries and ask a comprehensive set of questions regarding climate policy. The poll aims to a) provide the public in developing countries with an avenue to make their voices heard in a debate often dominated by developed countries' views, and b) provide decision makers with a tool to assess the state of public views on climate change in their countries.

Various World Bank departments contributed to the design of the poll.¹ The polling was conducted among 13,518 respondents in 15 nations— Bangladesh, China, Egypt, France, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Russia, Senegal, Turkey, the United States, and Vietnam. The surveys were carried out by WorldPublicOpinion.org, a collaborative project involving research centers from around the world, managed by the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA) at the University of Maryland. The margins of error for each country range from +/-3 to 4 percentage points. The surveys were conducted across the different nations between September and October 2009.

The poll addresses the following dimensions: a) level of concern, b) beliefs about climate change, c) attitudes toward international cooperation on climate change,; and d) willingness to bear economic costs to support national actions.

Poll Dimension 1: Level of concern

Questions:

- Seriousness of climate change as a problem
- Climate change as a priority
- Effects of climate change on one's country
- Timing of impacts

Results Summary: The publics in all countries polled saw climate change as a serious problem, either very serious or somewhat serious. In low-income countries (Kenya, Senegal, and Vietnam), the numbers who thought climate change is a very serious problem were particularly large. High-income countries (the US, Japan, and France) had somewhat fewer people who saw climate change as a very serious problem; Russia and China also had fewer people who said climate change is very serious.

In nine of 15 countries, the public thought climate change is already doing harm to people in their country; but in six countries, including Russia and the US, only a minority thought climate change is having an effect now. Majorities in all countries thought that there would be widespread adverse effects if climate change were unchecked.

Poll Dimension 2: Beliefs about climate change

Questions:

- Belief about the status of climate change science
- Trajectory of greenhouse gas emissions
- Impact of climate change on wealthy vs. poor countries
- Responsibility and government action

¹ WDR team, DECRG, SDV, EXTOC, DECVP, TFESSD secretariat and donors (the poll is TFESSD funded).

Results summary: The publics in most countries believed that scientists agree that climate change is an urgent problem which is understood well enough that action should be taken. Substantial majorities had this view in low-income countries, while majorities did not perceive this scientific consensus in Russia, the US, and Japan. In all countries, the public thought their greenhouse gas emissions would increase unless their country made changes. A majority of the publics in nine out of 15 countries thought that the effects of climate change would be about equally harmful to wealthy and poor countries; only three countries saw the effects being more harmful to poor countries.

All publics were asked whether they believe their “country does or does not have a responsibility to take steps to deal with climate change.” In all 15 countries, majorities said their country does have such a responsibility. Most majorities were very large and ranged from 90% or more in France, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Senegal, Bangladesh, and Kenya through the 80% range in the US, Japan, Mexico, Turkey, Iran, Egypt, and India. In Russia, a more modest but clear majority of 58% said the country had a responsibility to deal with climate change (22% disagreed and 20% did not answer). On average across 15 countries, 88% said their country had this responsibility. In most of the 15 countries, clear majorities thought their national governments were not doing enough.

Poll Dimension 3: Attitudes toward international climate change cooperation

Questions:

- Effect of one country’s example on others
- Willingness to commit to emissions cuts in the context of an agreement
- National responsibility in the absence of an agreement

In all 15 countries, clear majorities in 14 and a plurality in one thought that if their countries act, other countries will be encouraged to act as well. Should an agreement on cutting emissions emerge from the Copenhagen meeting, very large majorities in all 15 countries said their nation should commit to cut emissions as part of the agreement. If such an agreement does not emerge, majorities in 14 countries and a plurality in one still thought their nation would have a responsibility to act.

Poll Dimension 4: Willingness to bear economic costs to support national actions

Questions:

- Necessity of higher energy costs
- Willingness to pay a specified individual amount
- Willingness to support national steps with economic costs
- Assisting poor countries with adaptation to climate change

In 10 of 15 countries, most thought increases in energy costs would be necessary to encourage conservation and alternative forms of energy. Majorities in 14 countries were willing to pay between 1.0% and 0.5% of GDP per capita in higher prices resulting from steps taken against climate change. In nearly all countries, majorities supported key national steps to deal with climate change, even when the steps were described only in terms of costs, not benefits. As very poor countries face crises in adapting to climate change, all 15 publics thought their countries should contribute to international efforts to assist them.

POLL RESULTS

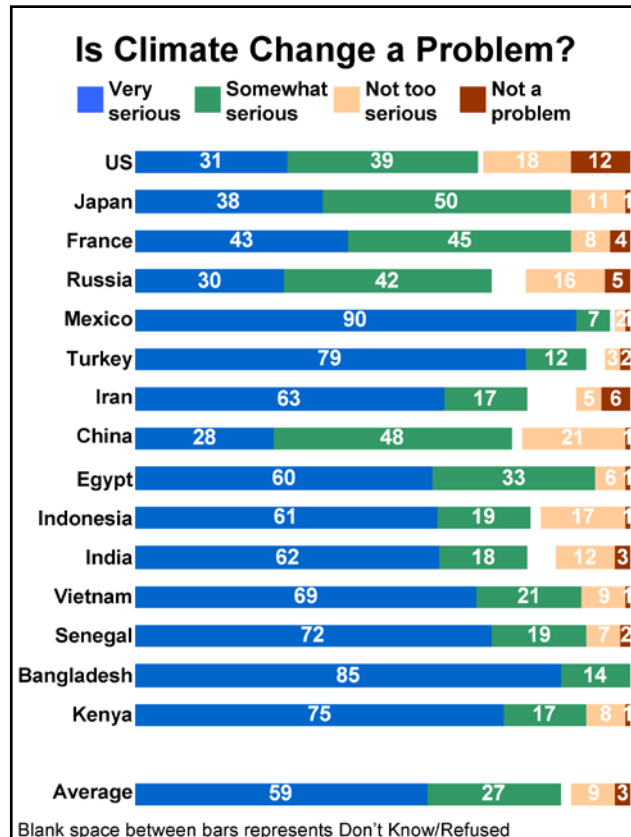
Poll Dimension 1. Level of Concern about Climate Change

Results Summary: The publics in all countries polled saw climate change as a serious problem, either very serious or somewhat serious. In low-income countries (Bangladesh, Kenya, Senegal, and Vietnam), the numbers who thought climate change is a very serious problem are particularly large. High-income countries (the US, Japan, and France) had somewhat fewer people who saw climate change as a very serious problem; Russia and China also had fewer people who said climate change is very serious.

In nine of 15 countries, the public thought climate change is doing harm to people in their country now; but in six countries, including Russia and the US, only a minority thought climate change is having an effect now. Majorities in all countries thought that there would be widespread adverse effects if climate change were unchecked.

1.1 Seriousness of climate change as a problem

There was a belief in all countries polled that climate change is a serious problem. Majorities in every country surveyed called it either a very serious or somewhat serious problem. In all 15 countries, the public seemed comfortable expressing a view on climate change; in only one country (Iran) did as many as 10% not give an opinion; elsewhere, well over 90% of respondents expressed their views on the seriousness of climate change. Notably, large majorities in the low-income countries polled--Bangladesh (85%), Kenya (75%), Senegal (72%), and Vietnam (69%)--saw climate change as a *very* serious problem. In the high-income countries, smaller groups in the US (31%), Japan (38%), and France (43%), saw climate change as *very* serious; Russia (30%) and China (28%) also had relatively fewer who considered climate change to be *very* serious. All of these countries with lower numbers calling climate change a *very* serious problem are also relatively high emitters of CO₂ per capita. However, even in these high-emitting countries, large majorities believed that climate change is at least a *somewhat* serious problem.



1.2 Climate change as a priority

A similar concern was revealed when people were asked if “dealing with the problem of climate change should be a priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs.” Half or more of the public in all 15 countries agreed, either strongly or somewhat, that climate change should be addressed even if there were such economic costs.

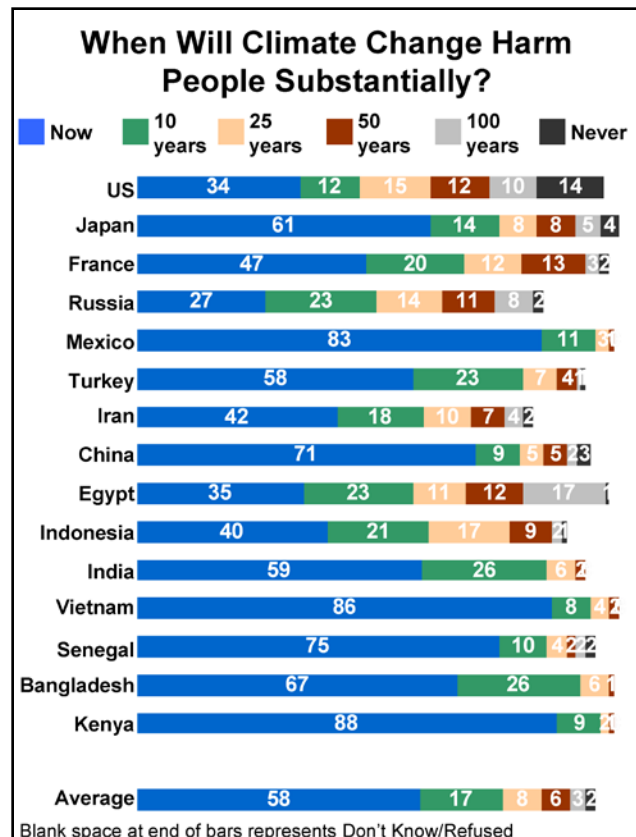
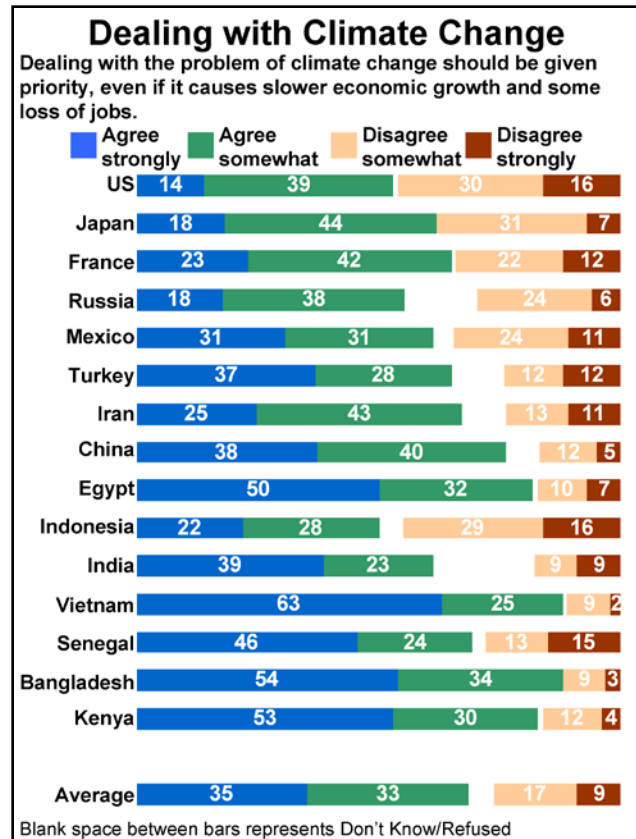
Underlying this support in all countries for dealing with climate change are some clear country differences. Vietnam (63%), Bangladesh (54%), Kenya (53%) and Senegal (46%) were the countries with the highest proportion saying “strongly agree.” The US (14%), Japan (18%) and Russia (18%) were the countries with the lowest proportion saying “strongly agree.” In the US, 46% disagreed that dealing with climate change should be a priority if a consequence would be lower growth or job loss. The pattern of some low-income countries being willing to support addressing the problem, even in the face of economic harm, echoes the findings on seriousness of the problem discussed above.

1.3 Urgency: when the effects of climate change will occur

Views differed across countries about how imminent the damages of climate change are. In nine of the 15 countries, a majority of the public thought climate change is substantially harming their fellow citizens now. Some of the largest majorities on this question appeared among people in the low-income countries: in Kenya (88%) thought people in their country are being harmed now, in Vietnam (86%), Senegal (75%), and in Bangladesh (67%).

In six countries, fewer than half thought the negative impact of climate change on their country is occurring now: Russia (27%), the US (34%), Egypt(35%), Indonesia (39%), Iran (42%), and France (47%).

In addition to showing fairly divided opinion on the seriousness of climate change, the US public is

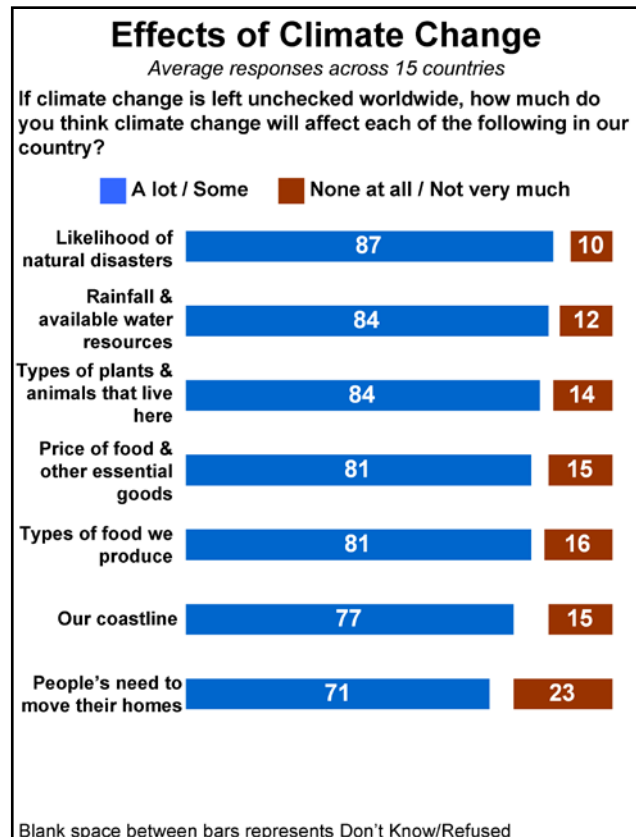


divided on when its effects will start to be felt. Over one-third of the US public said the impact of climate change would not be felt for 50 years or more (50 years – 12%, 100 years – 10%, never – 14%). In Russia, 21% expected the effects of climate change would not be experienced for 50 years or more (an additional 16% did not give an opinion). In Iran, 13% of the public thought Iranians would not be affected for 50 years or more, and an additional 18% did not give an opinion.

1.4 Effects of Climate Change on One’s Country

The poll posed a series of questions like “If climate change is left unchecked worldwide, how much do you think climate change will affect each of the following in our country?” The aspects evaluated were:

- The types of food we produce
- The types of plants and animals that can live here
- Rainfall and other available water resources
- The price of food and other essential goods
- The likelihood of natural disasters, like droughts or floods
- Our coastline
- People’s need to move their homes to different locations



Each country had a clear majority thinking that each of these aspects would be affected either a lot or some; in nearly all cases, the majorities who saw such harmful effects exceeded 70%. On average for the countries polled, only 3% to 7% of respondents said each aspect would not be affected at all. On average across countries, people said the most common effects on their countries would be with regard to the likelihood of natural disasters like droughts or floods, levels of rainfall and water resources, and the types of animals and plants that can live there. There is a modest relationship with lack of concern about climate change: countries such as the US and Russia, which were lower on their perception of the seriousness of climate change as a problem, also scored somewhat lower in beliefs that their country will be affected. Nonetheless, majorities of Americans and Russians saw climate change affecting their country some or a lot in all these respects.

Poll Dimension 2. Beliefs about climate change

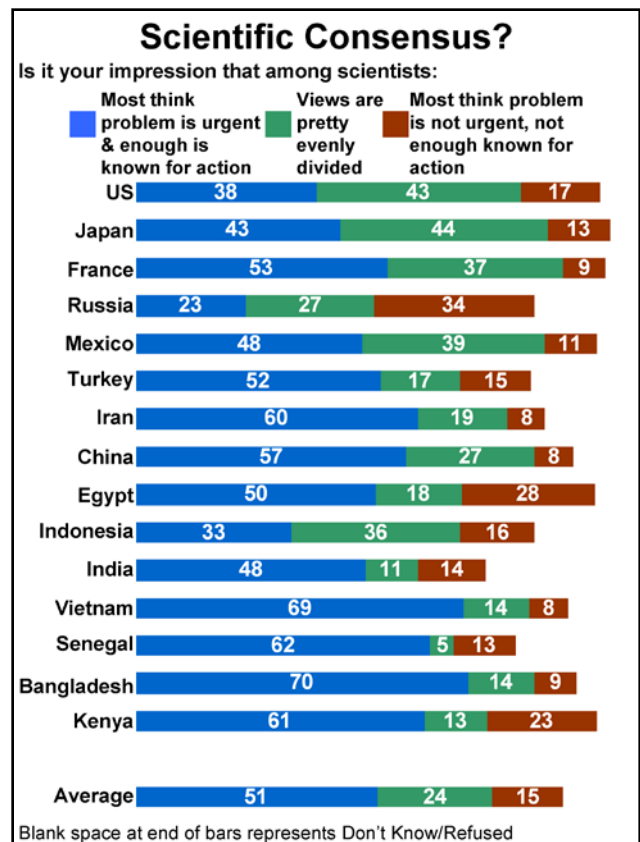
Results summary: In most countries, majorities or pluralities believed that scientists agree that climate change is an urgent problem, one understood well enough that action should be taken. Substantial majorities had this view in low-income countries, while majorities did not perceive this scientific consensus in Russia, the US, and Japan. In all countries, the public thought their greenhouse gas emissions will increase unless their country made changes. Majorities in nine of 15 countries thought that the effects of climate change would be about equally harmful to wealthy and poor countries; only three countries saw the effects as more harmful to poor countries. In most of the 15 countries, clear majorities thought their national governments are not doing enough to address climate change.

All publics were asked whether they believed there was a responsibility for their country to deal with climate change: “Do you think our country does or does not have a responsibility to take steps to deal with climate change?” In all 15 countries, majorities said their country does have such a responsibility.

2.1 Beliefs about the status of climate change science

All participants in the survey were asked what they thought scientists around the world believed about climate change, whether “most scientists think the problem is urgent and enough is known to take action,” or “most think the problem is not urgent, and not enough is known to take action,” or “views are pretty evenly divided.” Of 15 countries, at least half of the public in nine thought that there is a scientific consensus that climate change is an urgent problem and enough is known to take action. Bangladesh (70%), Vietnam (69%), Senegal (62%) and Kenya (61%), all low income countries, had the highest proportions of respondents who saw this scientific agreement.

In four countries--Russia (23%), the US (38%), Japan (43%) and Indonesia (33%)--only minorities thought there is a scientific consensus on the urgent need to address climate change. In Russia, 34% felt that most scientists think climate change is not an urgent problem, and 27% thought views of scientists are divided. In the US, 17% mistakenly thought the scientific view is skeptical about climate change, while 43% thought views of scientists are evenly divided. Japan showed a similar pattern to the US: 13% of Japanese said that most scientists feel climate change is not an urgent issue, and 44% feel that the views of scientists are pretty evenly divided. Among Indonesians, 52% said either most scientists are skeptical or that scientific views are divided. The pattern of understanding of the status of the climate change science across countries suggests that the results are not due principally to variations in education or awareness of the issue. Even in France--seen by many as informed about climate change and supportive of strong action--37% said scientific views are pretty evenly divided.



2.2 Trajectory of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

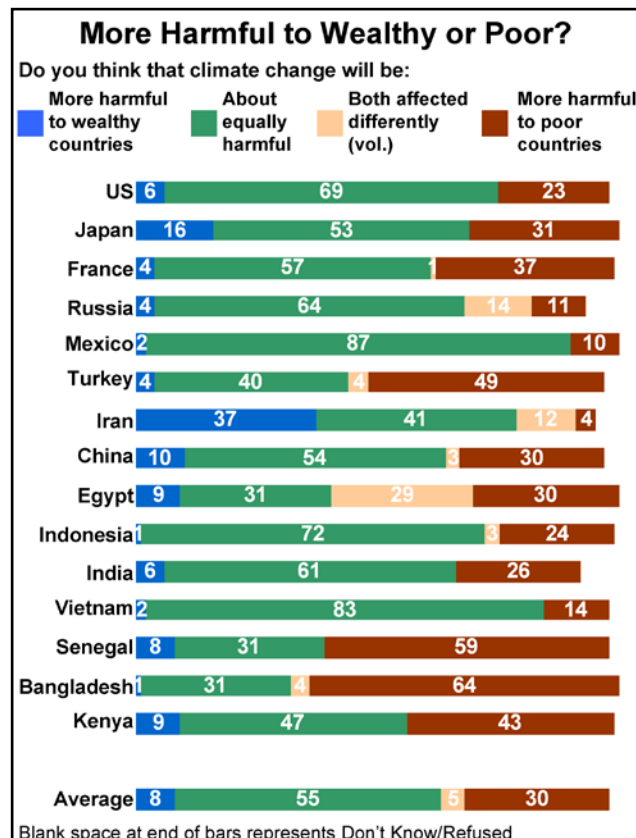
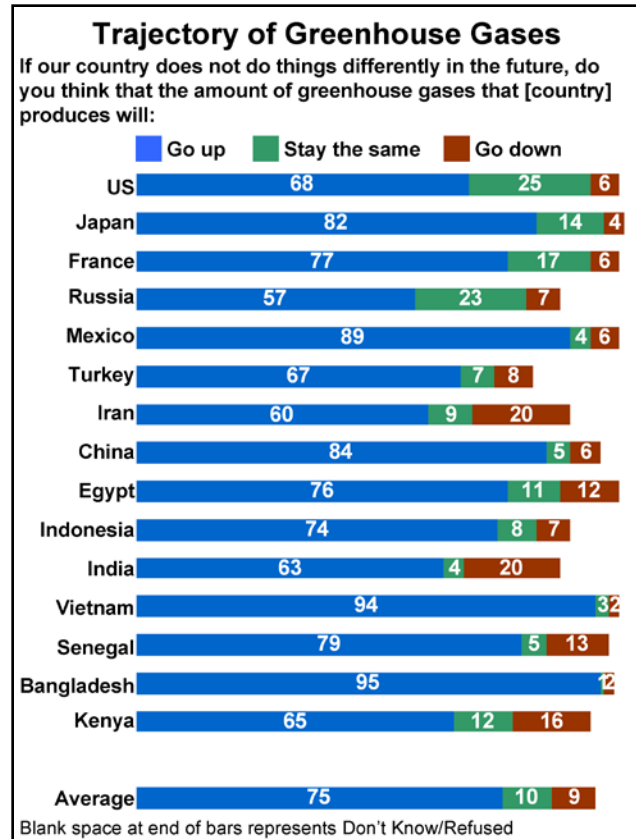
Early in the interview, the concept of greenhouse gases was described as the product of burning coal, gasoline/petrol, or other fossil fuels, in part to ensure that everyone had a similar basic vocabulary for the survey. In this question people were asked, if their “country does not do things differently in the future,” whether they thought the amount of greenhouse gases it produces would go up, stay the same, or go down.

In all countries, a majority of the public thought that the amount of greenhouse gases their country produces would go up if their country did not do things differently. The proportion of those saying their greenhouse gas emissions will rise ranged from a high in Bangladesh of 95% to a relative low in Russia of 57%. While clear majorities everywhere thought that greenhouse gases are on an upward trajectory in their countries unless interventions occur, in a few countries noteworthy minorities had different views. Among Americans, 25% thought greenhouse gases produced by their country would stay the same, and among Russians, 23% felt this about Russian emissions. In two countries, Iran (20%), and India (20%), appreciable numbers said that greenhouse gas emissions from their nation would go down, even in the absence of any actions.

2.3 Impact of Climate Change on Wealthy vs. Poor Countries

Many informed observers have pointed out that climate change will have the most deleterious effects on poor countries, because 1) many poor countries already are adversely affected by climate and are experiencing such effects as droughts, desertification and flooding, and 2) poor countries have fewer resources for adapting to the effects of climate change.

The survey explored public awareness of this issue by asking respondents whether climate change would be more harmful to wealthy countries, more harmful to poor countries, or about equally harmful to poor and wealthy countries. Publics tended to think that climate change would be “about equally harmful to poor



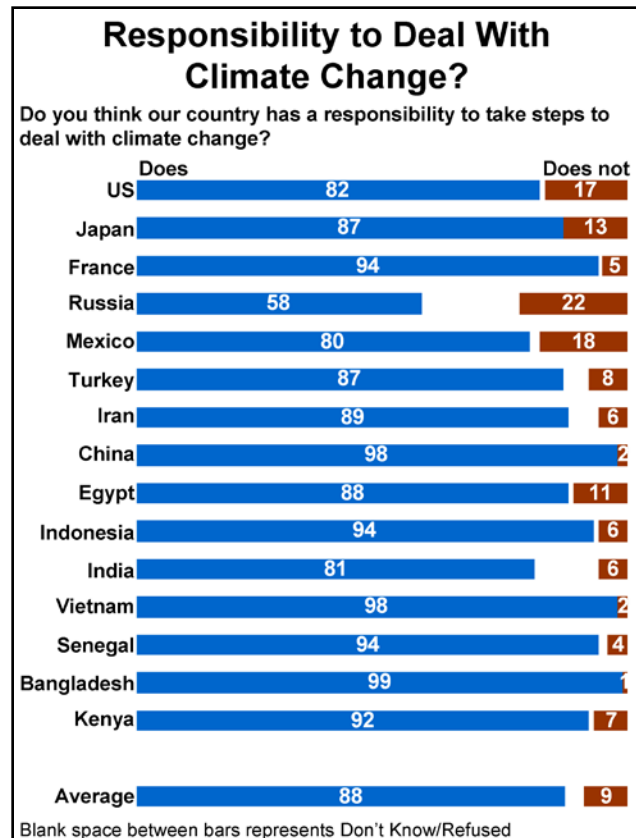
and wealthy countries.” Majorities in nine countries out of the 15 saw harm to be distributed about equally between poor and wealthy countries. In only three countries—Bangladesh (64%), Senegal (59%) and Turkey (49%)--was the most common answer “more harmful to poor countries.” Iranians were divided with 41% saying “about equally,” and 37% saying “more harmful to poor countries.” Kenyans were divided, with 47% saying “about equally” and 43% saying “more harmful to poor countries.” Egyptians were divided, with 31% saying “equally harmful,” 30% saying “more harmful to poor countries,” and 29% volunteering that both rich and poor countries will be affected, but in different ways.

Across all countries polled, an average of 55% of respondents said that poor and wealthy countries will be equally harmed, and only 30% said climate change would be more harmful to poor countries. This finding (arguably a misperception) raises interesting issues about what beliefs about the impact of climate change will be more likely to influence policy views: are people more motivated out of a sense of responsibility to poor countries or a sense that all countries together will suffer from climate change? Further analysis of these data can examine this question.

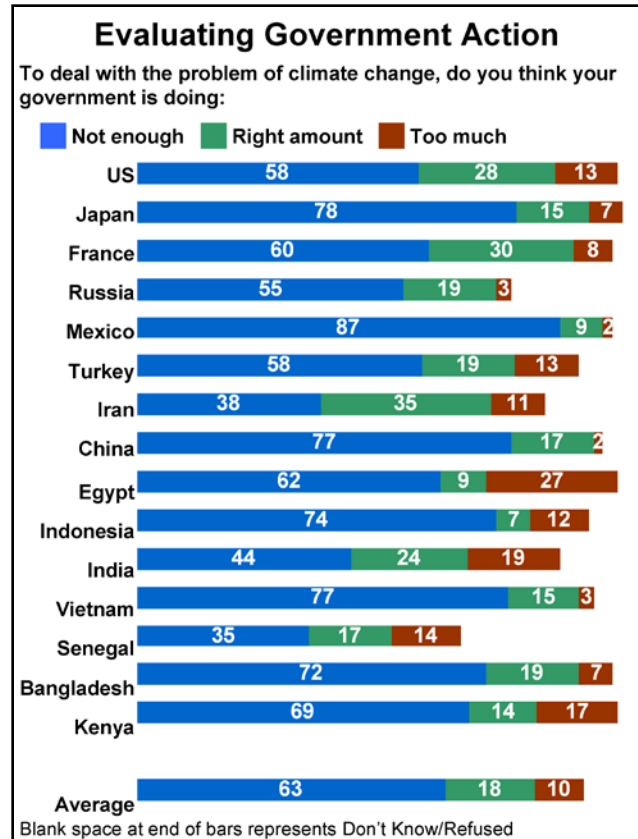
2.4 Responsibility and government action

In all 15 countries, clear majorities thought their country has a responsibility to take steps to deal with climate change, although clear majorities thought their national government is not doing enough to address climate change. All publics were asked whether “to deal with the problem of climate change, do you think your government is doing too much, not enough, or about the right amount?” In 12 of 15 countries, majorities thought their government was not doing enough. In one country a plurality thought the government was doing either the right amount or too much; in another, views were divided. On average, 63% thought their government was not doing enough; just 10% thought it was doing too much; and 18% thought it was doing the right amount.

The numbers seeing their government as not doing enough were highest in Mexico (87%), Japan (78%), China and Vietnam (both 77%), and Indonesia (74%). They were also high in Bangladesh (72%), Kenya (69%), and Egypt (62%). Among developed countries, France (60%), the United States (58%), and Russia (55%) all had clear majorities thinking their governments were doing too little. This sentiment was lower in Senegal (a 35% plurality, with 33% not answering), and in India, where 44% thought the government was not doing enough but 43% thought it was doing either too much (19%) or the right amount (24%). In Iran, a 46% plurality saw the government as doing the right amount (35%) or too much (11%), while 38% said it was not doing enough.



Views on government action on climate change were broadly distributed up and down the economic spectrum among the 15 countries--with all three of the highly developed countries polled plus most of the developing countries agreeing their governments were doing too little.



Poll Dimension 3. Attitudes on international cooperation on climate change

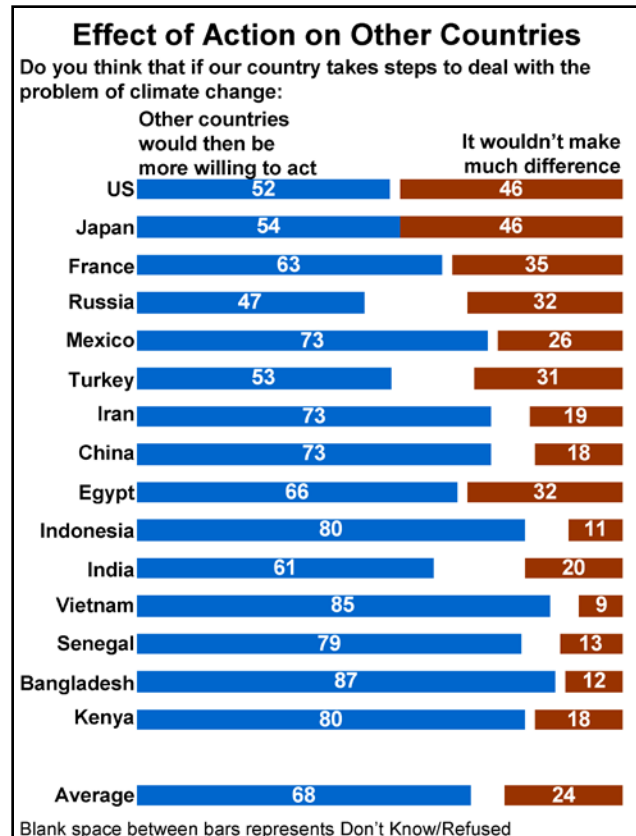
Results Summary: Clear majorities in 14 and a plurality in one thought that if their countries acted, other countries would be encouraged to act as well. Should an agreement on cutting emissions emerge from the Copenhagen meeting, very large majorities in all 15 countries said their nation should commit to cut emissions as part of the agreement. If such an agreement does not emerge, majorities in 14 countries and a plurality in one still thought their nation would have a responsibility to act.

3.1 Effect of One Country’s Example on Others

One overhanging question in the difficult global process of forming measures against climate change is the power of example and mutual efforts: if some nations lead, will others be inclined to follow—not only on a world scale, but also regionally, or among neighboring countries? Respondents were asked whether they thought “that if our country takes steps to deal with the problem of climate change, other countries would then be more willing to act, or do you think it wouldn’t make much difference?”

In 14 of 15 countries, majorities thought the example of their country acting would affect other countries’ willingness positively—and in Russia, a plurality also thought so (47% to 32%). On average, 68% in all 15 countries thought other countries would be affected by their example, and only 24% did not. Developed countries had smaller majorities believing in the power of their example, while many developing countries showed much more confidence in it.

Thus Bangladesh, Senegal, Kenya, Indonesia and Vietnam all had majorities of 79% or higher who thought that if their country took such steps, other countries would be then more willing to act. Mexico, Iran and China were almost as confident (all at 73%). Egypt (66%) and India (61%) had substantial majorities thinking so; France was similar at 63%. However, Japan, the United States and Russia were all significantly less confident that their example would make any difference. In Japan, 54% thought their example would encourage other countries, while 46% did not; in the US 52% thought it would make a difference, while 46% did not; and in Russia 47% thought it would, and 32% that it would not.



3.2 Willingness to Commit to Emissions Cuts in the Context of an Agreement

There was an extraordinary level of support across high-, middle- and low-income countries for responding to an agreement at Copenhagen by committing to emissions cuts. Very large majorities—none below 70%--agreed to this proposition across 15 countries. Respondents were asked:

“As you may know [our country] and other countries from around the world will be meeting in December in Copenhagen to develop a new agreement to take steps against climate change by limiting greenhouse gas emissions. If the other countries come to an agreement, do you think [our country] should or should not be willing to commit to limiting its greenhouse gas emissions as part of such an agreement?”

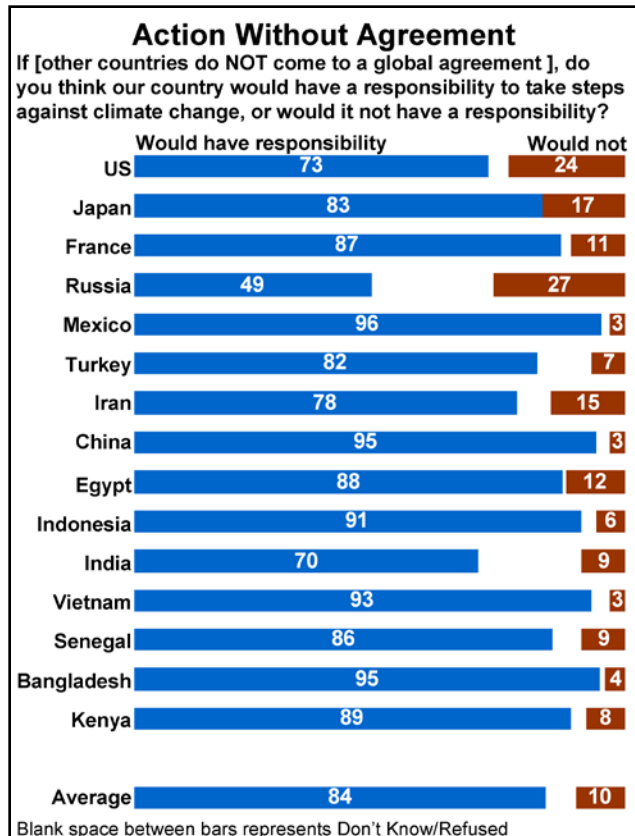
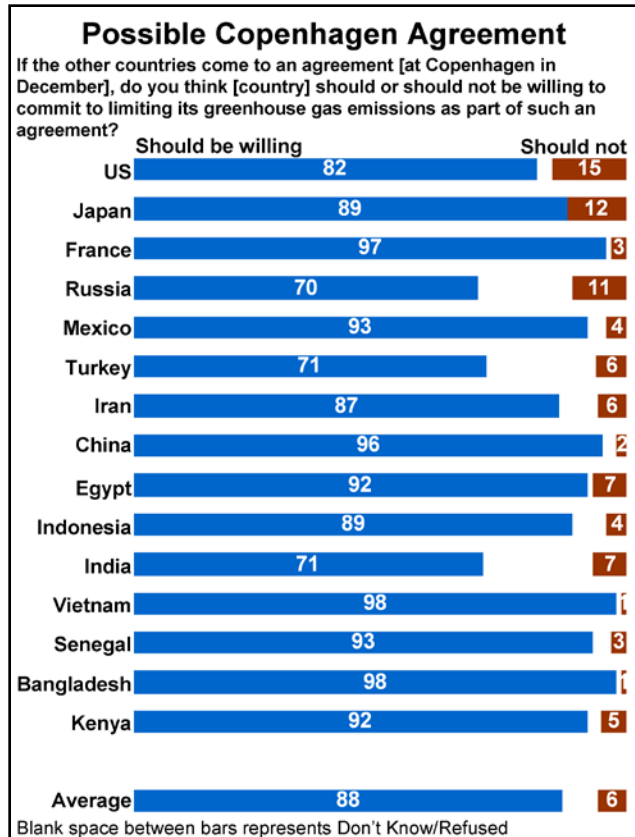
On average across 15 countries, an overwhelming 88% supported making this commitment in the context of an international agreement. Only 6% were opposed. Countries with support above 90% included France, Vietnam, Bangladesh, China, Kenya, Senegal, Egypt, and Mexico. In the 80% range were Indonesia, Iran, Japan and the United States. In the 70% range were Russia, India, and Turkey.

3.3 National Responsibility in the Absence of an Agreement

A strong test of a sense of national responsibility in regard to climate change is the willingness to soldier on even if there is no international agreement. Respondents were put to this test in the following way:

“Imagine that at the meeting, the other countries do NOT come to a global agreement on taking steps against climate change. If this happen, do you think our country would have a responsibility to take steps against climate change, or would it not have a responsibility?”

Fourteen of 15 countries had very large majorities saying that their country’s responsibility to act would remain, in spite of an international failure to come to agreement. On average across 15



countries, 84% thought this; only 10% thought their country would not have a responsibility. Countries with majorities in the 90% range included Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Vietnam and Mexico; in the 80% range, Kenya, Senegal, Egypt, Turkey, France and Japan; and in the 70% range, India, Iran and the United States. In Russia, a 49% plurality saw an ongoing national responsibility, while 27% did not.

Poll Dimension 4. Costs of Mitigation and Adaptation

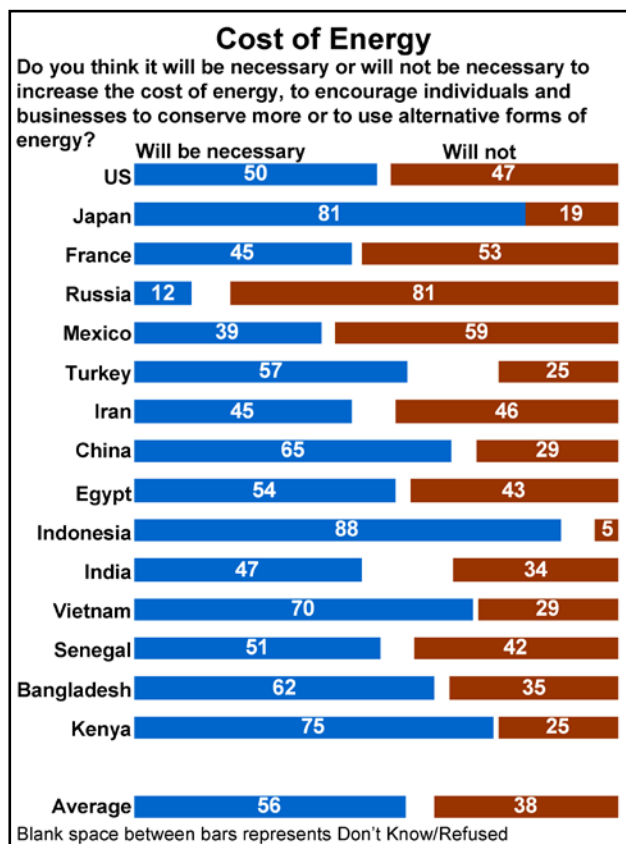
In 10 of 15 countries, most thought increases in energy costs would be necessary to encourage conservation and alternative forms of energy. Majorities in 14 countries were willing to pay between 1.0% and 0.5% of GDP per capita in higher prices resulting from steps taken against climate change. In nearly all countries, majorities supported key national steps to deal with climate change, even when the steps were described only in terms of costs, not benefits. As very poor countries face crises in adapting to climate change, all 15 publics thought their countries should contribute to international efforts to assist them.

4.1 Necessity of higher energy costs

Asked whether it will or will not “be necessary to increase the cost of energy, to encourage individuals and businesses to conserve more or to use alternative forms of energy,” across 15 countries polled, nine majorities and one plurality thought this would be necessary. In three countries, majorities thought cost increases would not be necessary, and two countries were divided. On average across the 15 countries, 56% thought this would be necessary and 38% did not.

The countries where more thought it would be necessary to increase the cost of energy included several less-developed countries—Indonesia (88%), Kenya (75%), Vietnam (70%), Bangladesh (62%), Egypt (54%), Senegal (51%)—and also some rapidly developing countries—China (65%) and India (a plurality, 47% to 34%). One middle-tier country, Turkey, also agreed (57%), as did one of the three highly developed countries, Japan (81%).

The three countries where more disagreed with this proposition were two middle-tier nations, Russia (81%) and Mexico (59%), plus a high-income country, France (53%). Two countries were divided: Iran (45% will, 46% will not) and the USA (50% will, 47% will not). Interestingly, among the publics opposed or divided, all but France are oil producers.



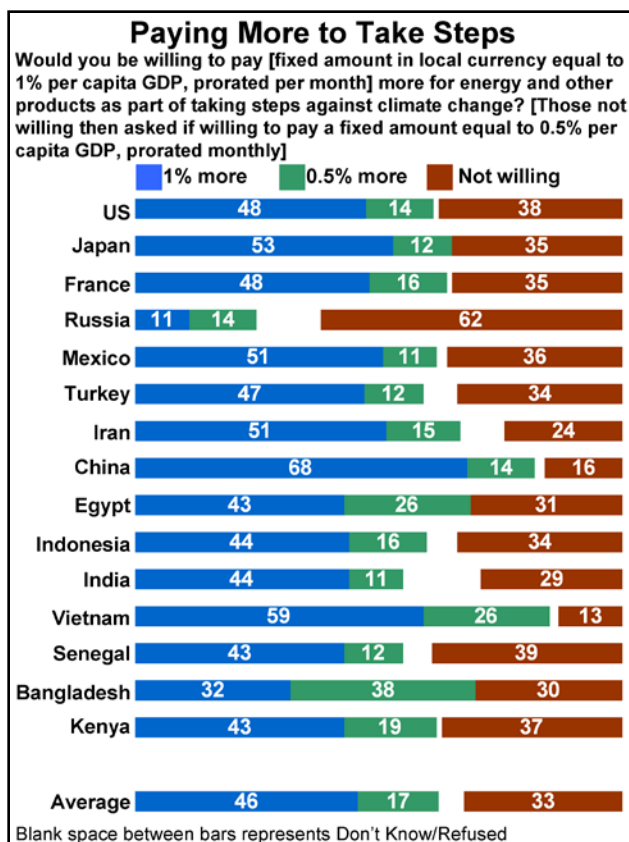
4.2 Willingness to pay for climate action

It is fascinating to note that the question above does not provide a reliable guide to how publics respond when they are offered a specific monthly “price” that has been scaled to their national economy. In each country, respondents were asked about an amount that equaled 1% of their country’s annual per capita GDP, prorated on a monthly basis, and told to “Imagine that taking steps against climate change would increase costs to the average person for energy and other products by [local currency amount] per month.” They were then asked, “Would you be willing or not willing to pay this cost as part of taking steps against climate change?” Those who said they were *not* willing were then asked if they would pay half of the amount (0.5% of per capita GDP, prorated to a monthly amount).

Broadly, in 14 of the 15 countries, majorities said they would be willing to pay either the higher or lower amount; in only one country (Russia) did a majority decline both amounts. Six countries had a majority (5) or a plurality (1) willing to pay the higher amount; in 6 countries a majority (5) or a plurality (1) declined the higher amount. Three countries were evenly divided, with about half willing to pay the higher amount. On average across 15 countries, 63 percent were willing to pay, and 46% were willing to pay the higher amount; 33% were unwilling to pay either amount.

By far the most common pattern was that roughly half were willing to pay the higher amount, and between about 10% and 38% more were willing to pay the lower amount. This pattern reappeared in countries as economically disparate as the United States and India.

The countries where most were willing to pay the higher amount included China (68%), Vietnam (59%), Japan (53%), Iran and Mexico (both 51%), and a plurality in India (44% yes, 39% no). Most declined the higher amount in six countries: Russia (81%), Bangladesh (67%), Egypt (57%), Kenya (56%), Indonesia (53%), and Senegal (49% to 43%). In the second stage, those who declined the higher amount were asked about paying half that amount. Groups willing to pay the smaller amount ranged from 38% of the full sample (in Bangladesh) down to 11% (India and, Mexico). Overall, majorities in 14 of 15 countries were willing to pay one or the other amount to take steps against climate change. Majorities were highest in Vietnam (85%) and China (82%), but also substantial in Bangladesh (70%), Egypt (69%), Iran (66%), Japan (65%), France (64%), and the US, Mexico, and Kenya (all 62%).



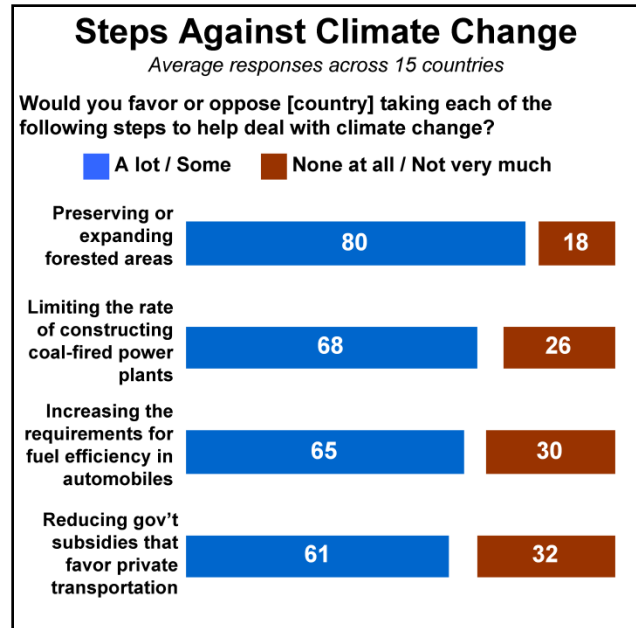
One would naturally expect those with higher income (in accordance with their national scale) to be more willing to pay an amount to take steps against climate change than those with lower income. This expected relationship is borne out, but it is milder than might have been assumed. In the aggregate of all countries polled, 40-43% of those with very low or low incomes are willing to pay the higher amount, while 51-54% of those with middle incomes or above are willing to do so. After the lower amount has been offered as well, 56% of those with very low incomes and 64% of those with low incomes are willing to pay some amount. This rises to 68-70% of those with medium and high incomes.

To check whether these aggregate figures disguised some national anomalies, five countries were examined in detail: China (the second most willing to pay among 13 countries), France and Turkey (countries near the average in willingness to pay), and Russia (the least willing). Lower- and higher-income respondents in all five countries answered in accord with the patterns shown in the aggregate results just discussed.

4.3 Willingness to Support National Steps with Economic Costs

Publics in virtually all countries expressed majority support for a range of policy changes that countries could make as steps to deal with climate change. Though each policy was described as having a cost, and no corresponding benefit was mentioned, support for each was quite widespread.

Majorities in 14 countries and a 50% plurality in Russia supported “limiting the rate of constructing coal-fired power plants, even if this increases the cost of energy.” This step was strongly favored in Vietnam (91%, 54% strongly), Turkey (81%, 54% strongly), and Egypt (80%). There were also about two-thirds majorities in China, India and Kenya (all 67%), Bangladesh and the United States (both 64%). On average across all countries polled, 68% supported the measure (31% strongly) and 26% opposed it (8% strongly).



Majorities in 14 countries and a plurality in one supported “gradually increasing the requirements for fuel efficiency in automobiles, even if this raises the cost of cars and bus fares.” Highest overall support was in Vietnam (87%, 45% strongly), Japan (78%), the United States (71%), Turkey (70%, 44% strongly), and France (69%). The lowest support was in Mexico, where a 50% plurality favored the measure and 44% were opposed, and Iran, with 52% in favor.

Majorities in 12 of 15 countries also supported “gradually reducing government subsidies that favor private transportation, even if this raises its cost.” One country (Russia) had plurality support, another (Iran) had plurality opposition, and a third (Mexico) was divided. Support was highest in Vietnam (86%), Kenya (71%), and Turkey (68%), while support was also in the 60 range in the United States, France, Egypt, China, Bangladesh and Indonesia. In India, whose expanding market for cars has garnered much media attention, 57% supported reducing relevant subsidies, with 25% opposed. On average across all countries polled, 61% favored the measure while 32% did not.

Finally, majorities in all countries supported environmental policies that could help to deal with climate change: “preserving or expanding forested areas, even if this means less land for agriculture or construction.” The highest majorities in support were in Vietnam (97%), Turkey (89%, 68% strongly), China (88%, 53% strongly), France (86%), and Russia (80%). Also noteworthy was India at 75% (52% strongly). No country’s support for this measure was below 68%. On average across all countries polled, 80% favored the measure, with 18% opposed.

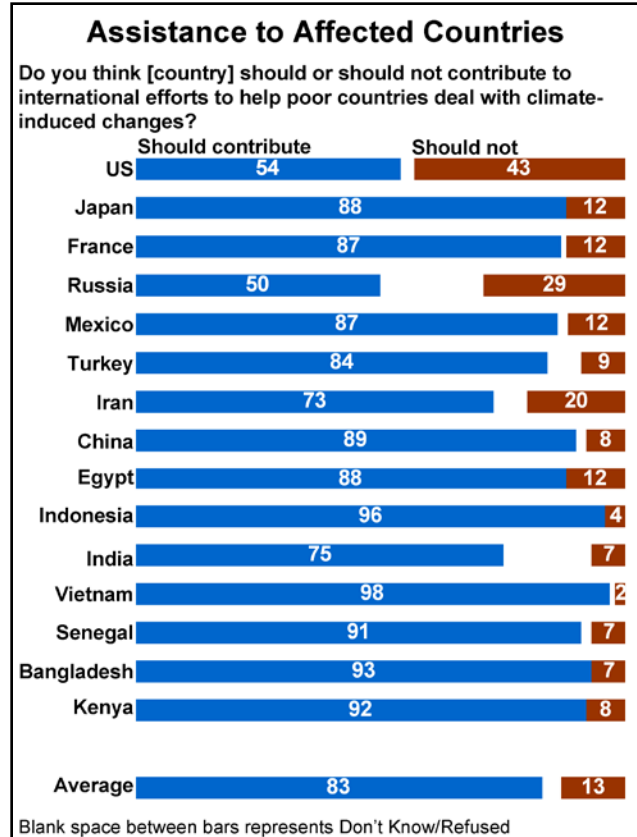
4.4 Assisting Poor Countries with Adaptation to Climate Change

Publics in all countries (whatever their level of income) were asked about helping poor countries adapt to the effects of climate change. Of 15 countries, 14 majorities and 1 plurality were positive about doing so. Adaptation—as distinct from mitigation—is an aspect of the climate change issue that is less discussed by media and less well known to publics. All respondents heard:

Climate change will probably harm some countries more than others. For example, poor countries with low-lying coastal areas will likely have widespread flooding and will not have the resources needed to assist their people. Do you think [our country] should or should not contribute to international efforts to help poor countries deal with these climate-induced changes?

Most countries had very large majorities supportive of contributing to international efforts to aid poor countries’ adaptation processes. This included many developing countries that might well have seen themselves in the description that the question supplied. Support in the 90% range came from Vietnam, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kenya and Senegal. Support in the 80% range came from two highly developed countries—Japan and France—and four middle-tier countries, China, Egypt, Turkey, and Mexico. Support in the 70% range came from India and Iran. The lowest support came from the United States (54%) and Russia (50% to 29%).

Especially noteworthy was the high level of public support in less developed countries to act in solidarity, aiding other countries that are not unlike themselves.



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International Poll on Public Attitudes toward Climate Change

December 3, 2009

Q1. In your view, is climate change, also known as global warming, a very serious problem, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not a problem?

	Very serious problem	Somewhat serious	Not too serious	Not a problem	DK/R
USA	31	39	18	12	1
Japan	38	50	11	1	0
France	43	45	8	4	0
Russia	30	42	16	5	7
Mexico	90	7	2	1	1
Turkey	79	12	3	2	4
Iran	63	17	5	6	10
China	28	48	21	1	2
Egypt	60	33	6	1	0
Indonesia	61	19	17	1	2
India	62	18	12	3	6
Vietnam	69	21	9	1	0
Senegal	72	19	7	2	0
Bangladesh	85	14	0	0	0
Kenya	75	17	8	1	0
Average	59	27	9	3	2

Q2. As you may know, when coal, [petrol/gasoline], or other fossil fuels are burned for energy, this releases gases that stay in the atmosphere and trap heat, making the world hotter on average. If our country does not do things differently in the future, do you think that the amount of greenhouse gases that [country] produces will:

	Go up	Stay the same	Go down	DK/R
USA	68	25	6	1
Japan	82	14	4	0
France	77	17	6	1
Russia	57	23	7	13
Mexico	89	4	6	1
Turkey	67	7	8	19
Iran	60	9	20	11
China	84	5	6	5
Egypt	76	11	12	1
Indonesia	74	8	7	11
India	63	4	20	13
Vietnam	94	3	2	1
Senegal	79	5	13	3
Bangladesh	95	1	2	2
Kenya	65	12	16	7
Average	75	10	9	6

Q3. Do you agree strongly, agree somewhat, disagree somewhat or disagree strongly with the following statement: Dealing with the problem of climate change should be given priority, even if it causes slower economic growth and some loss of jobs.

	Agree strongly	Agree somewhat	Disagree somewhat	Disagree strongly	DK/R
USA	14	39	30	16	1
Japan	18	44	31	7	0
France	23	42	22	12	1
Russia	18	38	24	6	15
Mexico	31	31	24	11	4
Turkey	37	28	12	12	11
Iran	25	43	13	11	9
China	38	40	12	5	7
Egypt	50	32	10	7	1
Indonesia	22	28	29	16	5
India	39	23	9	9	21
Vietnam	63	25	9	2	1
Senegal	46	24	13	15	3
Bangladesh	54	34	9	3	0
Kenya	53	30	12	4	1
Average	35	33	17	9	5

Q4. If climate change is left unchecked worldwide, how much do you think climate change will affect each of the following in our country?

Q4a. The types of food we produce

	None at all	Not very much	Some	A lot	DK/R
USA	9	19	45	27	1
Japan	2	11	45	42	0
France	4	7	38	51	1
Russia	7	25	41	17	11
Mexico	2	5	19	69	5
Turkey	4	4	27	62	3
Iran	4	7	37	42	10
China	1	8	41	49	1
Egypt	9	20	33	38	0
Indonesia	4	17	53	26	1
India	7	14	18	54	7
Vietnam	1	7	35	55	1
Senegal	6	18	27	43	5
Bangladesh	1	8	23	68	0
Kenya	1	7	18	75	0
Average	4	12	33	48	3

Q4b. The types of plants and animals that can live here

	None at all	Not very much	Some	A lot	DK/R
USA	9	18	42	30	1
Japan	2	7	36	55	0
France	4	4	25	65	2
Russia	4	18	38	31	8
Mexico	2	5	14	74	6
Turkey	3	5	25	64	4
Iran	3	2	30	58	7
China	2	8	39	51	1
Egypt	8	22	36	34	1
Indonesia	5	15	48	30	2
India	5	15	20	53	8
Vietnam	2	5	29	64	0
Senegal	4	11	32	49	5
Bangladesh	1	7	43	49	1
Kenya	1	7	21	72	0
Average	4	10	32	52	3

Q4c. Rainfall and available water resources

	None at all	Not very much	Some	A lot	DK/R
USA	9	18	40	33	1
Japan	2	7	33	58	0
France	4	6	21	67	2
Russia	4	11	40	39	7
Mexico	2	5	14	73	6
Turkey	3	2	21	70	4
Iran	2	2	23	67	6
China	3	7	36	52	4
Egypt	8	17	40	32	2
Indonesia	3	12	37	47	1
India	5	14	19	55	8
Vietnam	2	9	35	53	1
Senegal	6	16	32	40	6
Bangladesh	1	3	42	54	1
Kenya	0	6	22	72	0
Average	3	9	30	54	3

Q4d. The price of food and other essential goods

	None at all	Not very much	Some	A lot	DK/R
USA	8	15	44	32	1
Japan	2	9	46	44	0
France	7	6	27	59	2
Russia	5	21	38	24	12
Mexico	2	4	12	77	6
Turkey	3	3	24	67	3
Iran	4	4	29	57	7
China	3	13	43	34	7
Egypt	9	22	38	31	0
Indonesia	4	18	46	31	1
India	7	14	18	54	8
Vietnam	2	9	35	53	2
Senegal	6	17	27	43	8
Bangladesh	2	5	34	59	0
Kenya	1	6	25	68	0
Average	4	11	32	49	4

Q4e. The likelihood of natural disasters, like droughts or floods

	None at all	Not very much	Some	A lot	DK/R
USA	9	17	39	34	1
Japan	2	7	33	59	0
France	4	4	18	73	2
Russia	3	9	35	48	6
Mexico	1	2	9	84	6
Turkey	3	3	23	68	4
Iran	4	3	24	60	9
China	2	5	30	61	3
Egypt	10	16	31	41	1
Indonesia	1	6	36	57	0
India	5	13	16	54	11
Vietnam	0	1	15	84	0
Senegal	6	7	24	58	6
Bangladesh	0	2	29	68	1
Kenya	2	10	24	62	3
Average	3	7	26	61	4

Q4f. Our coastline

	None at all	Not very much	Some	A lot	DK/R
USA	9	17	39	34	2
Japan	2	11	47	41	0
France	4	5	30	59	2
Russia	3	11	38	38	10
Mexico	1	4	15	72	8
Turkey	5	6	29	53	7
Iran	4	4	33	46	13
China	2	6	37	39	16
Egypt	9	18	36	36	2
Indonesia	3	24	41	17	15
India	5	14	18	45	18
Vietnam	1	8	38	49	4
Senegal	7	12	28	39	15
Bangladesh	1	4	43	49	4
Kenya	3	18	27	42	10
Average	4	11	33	44	8

Q4g. People's need to move their homes to different locations

	None at all	Not very much	Some	A lot	DK/R
USA	14	28	40	16	2
Japan	7	36	45	12	0
France	13	9	36	39	3
Russia	4	17	36	27	17
Mexico	4	5	20	64	7
Turkey	6	8	25	56	5
Iran	5	5	35	43	12
China	6	16	43	26	9
Egypt	10	23	36	31	1
Indonesia	11	34	39	9	7
India	8	17	19	41	16
Vietnam	6	10	39	42	2
Senegal	4	12	33	45	8
Bangladesh	1	4	40	54	1
Kenya	3	15	31	50	1
Average	7	16	34	37	6

Q5. Do you think that climate change will be:

	More harmful to wealthy countries	More harmful to poor countries	About equally harmful to poor and wealthy countries	Both will be affected, but in different ways (vol.)	DK/R
USA	6	23	69	0	2
Japan	16	31	53	0	0
France	4	37	57	1	1
Russia	4	11	64	14	7
Mexico	2	10	87	0	0
Turkey	4	49	40	4	3
Iran	37	4	41	12	5
China	10	30	54	3	3
Egypt	9	30	31	29	0
Indonesia	1	24	72	3	1
India	6	26	61	0	8
Vietnam	2	14	83	0	2
Senegal	8	59	31	0	2
Bangladesh	1	64	31	4	0
Kenya	9	43	47	0	1
Average	8	30	55	5	2

Q6. On the subject of climate change, is it your impression that among the scientists of the world:

	Most scientists think the problem is urgent and enough is known to take action	Most think the problem is not urgent, and not enough is known yet to take action	Views are pretty evenly divided	DK/R
USA	38	17	43	2
Japan	43	13	44	0
France	53	9	37	1
Russia	23	34	27	16
Mexico	48	11	39	3
Turkey	52	15	17	17
Iran	60	8	19	14
China	57	8	27	8
Egypt	50	28	18	3
Indonesia	33	16	36	16
India	48	14	11	26
Vietnam	69	8	14	9
Senegal	62	13	5	20
Bangladesh	70	9	14	7
Kenya	61	23	13	3
Average	51	15	24	10

Q7. When do you think climate change will start to substantially harm people in [country]?

	People are being harmed now	In 10 years	In 25 years	In 50 years	In 100 years	Never	DK/R
USA	34	12	15	12	10	14	3
Japan	61	14	8	8	5	4	0
France	47	20	12	13	3	2	2
Russia	27	23	14	11	8	2	16
Mexico	83	11	3	1	0	1	1
Turkey	58	23	7	4	1	1	7
Iran	42	18	10	7	4	2	18
China	71	9	5	5	2	3	6
Egypt	35	23	11	12	17	1	2
Indonesia	40	21	17	9	2	1	11
India	59	26	6	2	0	0	7
Vietnam	86	8	4	2	0	0	0
Senegal	75	10	4	2	2	2	5
Bangladesh	67	26	6	1	0	0	1
Kenya	88	9	2	1	0	0	1
Average	58	17	8	6	3	2	5

Q8 . To deal with the problem of climate change, do you think your government is doing:

	Too much	Not enough	About the right amount	DK/R
USA	13	58	28	1
Japan	7	78	15	0
France	8	60	30	2
Russia	3	55	19	23
Mexico	2	87	9	2
Turkey	13	58	19	9
Iran	11	38	35	16
China	2	77	17	4
Egypt	27	62	9	1
Indonesia	12	74	7	7
India	19	44	24	13
Vietnam	3	77	15	6
Senegal	14	35	17	33
Bangladesh	7	72	19	2
Kenya	17	69	14	1
Average	10	63	18	8

Q9. Do you think our country does or does not have a responsibility to take steps to deal with climate change?

	Does have a responsibility	Does not have a responsibility	DK/R
USA	82	17	1
Japan	87	13	0
France	94	5	1
Russia	58	22	20
Mexico	80	18	2
Turkey	87	8	5
Iran	89	6	6
China	98	2	0
Egypt	88	11	1
Indonesia	94	6	1
India	81	6	13
Vietnam	98	2	0
Senegal	94	4	2
Bangladesh	99	1	0
Kenya	92	7	1
Average	88	9	4

Q10. Do you think that if our country takes steps to deal with the problem of climate change, other countries would then be more willing to act, or do you think it wouldn't make much difference?

	Other countries would then be more willing to act	It wouldn't make much difference	DK/R
USA	52	46	2
Japan	54	46	0
France	63	35	2
Russia	47	32	21
Mexico	73	26	2
Turkey	53	31	17
Iran	73	19	8
China	73	18	9
Egypt	66	32	2
Indonesia	80	11	9
India	61	20	19
Vietnam	85	9	6
Senegal	79	13	8
Bangladesh	87	12	2
Kenya	80	18	2
Average	68	24	7

Q11. As you may know, [country] and other countries from around the world will be meeting in December in Copenhagen to develop a new agreement to take steps against climate change by limiting greenhouse gas emissions. If the other countries come to an agreement, do you think [country] should or should not be willing to commit to limiting its greenhouse gas emissions as part of such an agreement?

	Should be willing	Should not be willing	DK/R
USA	82	15	3
Japan	89	12	0
France	97	3	1
Russia	70	11	19
Mexico	93	4	4
Turkey	71	6	22
Iran	87	6	8
China	96	2	3
Egypt	92	7	1
Indonesia	89	4	7
India	71	7	22
Vietnam	98	1	1
Senegal	93	3	4
Bangladesh	98	1	1
Kenya	92	5	3
Average	88	6	7

Q12. Imagine that at the meeting, the other countries do NOT come to a global agreement on taking steps against climate change. If this happens, do you think our country would have a responsibility to take steps against climate change, or would it not have a responsibility?

	Would have a responsibility	Would not have a responsibility	DK/R
USA	73	24	4
Japan	83	17	0
France	87	11	2
Russia	49	27	25
Mexico	96	3	2
Turkey	82	7	11
Iran	78	15	7
China	95	3	3
Egypt	88	12	1
Indonesia	91	6	3
India	70	9	21
Vietnam	93	3	4
Senegal	86	9	6
Bangladesh	95	4	1
Kenya	89	8	3
Average	84	10	6

Q13. Do you think it will be necessary or will not be necessary to increase the cost of energy, to encourage individuals and businesses to conserve more or to use alternative forms of energy?

	Will be necessary	Will not be necessary	DK/R
USA	50	47	3
Japan	81	19	0
France	45	53	2
Russia	12	81	8
Mexico	39	59	3
Turkey	57	25	19
Iran	45	46	9
China	65	29	5
Egypt	54	43	3
Indonesia	88	5	7
India	47	34	19
Vietnam	70	29	1
Senegal	51	42	7
Bangladesh	62	35	3
Kenya	75	25	1
Average	56	38	6

Q14. Imagine that taking steps against climate change would increase costs to the average person for energy and other products by [amount – see chart on page 35] per month? Would you be willing or not willing to pay this cost as part of taking steps against climate change?

	Would be willing	Would not be willing	DK/R
USA	48	51	2
Japan	53	47	0
France	48	51	1
Russia	11	81	8
Mexico	51	46	3
Turkey	47	44	9
Iran	51	41	8
China	68	29	2
Egypt	42	57	0
Indonesia	44	53	4
India	44	39	17
Vietnam	59	38	3
Senegal	43	49	9
Bangladesh	32	67	1
Kenya	43	56	1
Average	46	50	4

[ASK ONLY THOSE WHO SAY “NO” (02) OR “DON’T KNOW” (99)]

Q14a. How about an increase of [amount – see chart on page 35] per month?

	Would be willing	Would not be willing	Would be willing on Q14	DK/R
USA	14	38	48	1
Japan	12	35	53	0
France	16	35	48	1
Russia	14	62	11	13
Mexico	11	36	51	2
Turkey	12	34	47	7
Iran *	15	24	51	10
China	14	16	68	3
Egypt	26	31	43	0
Indonesia	16	34	44	6
India	11	29	44	16
Vietnam	26	13	59	2
Senegal	12	39	43	6
Bangladesh	38	30	32	0
Kenya	19	37	43	1
Average	17	33	46	5

Q15. Would you favor or oppose [country] taking each of the following steps to help deal with climate change?

a. Preserving or expanding forested areas, even if this means less land for agriculture or construction

	Favor strongly	Favor somewhat	Oppose somewhat	Oppose strongly	DK/R
USA	35	40	16	9	1
Japan	19	58	20	3	0
France	41	45	9	3	2
Russia	38	42	11	1	8
Mexico	43	36	10	8	3
Turkey	68	21	2	2	7
Iran	34	39	11	9	7
China	53	35	7	2	3
Egypt	42	34	16	8	1
Indonesia	43	34	18	5	0
India	52	23	7	8	9
Vietnam	76	21	2	0	1
Senegal	40	29	12	17	1
Bangladesh	32	36	21	11	0
Kenya	56	25	13	7	0
Average	45	35	12	6	3

b. Limiting the rate of constructing coal-fired power plants, even if this increases the cost of energy

	Favor strongly	Favor somewhat	Oppose somewhat	Oppose strongly	DK/R
USA	21	43	22	13	2
Japan	20	58	19	3	0
France	37	39	14	7	4
Russia	16	34	28	6	16
Mexico	24	33	19	17	8
Turkey	54	27	4	4	12
Iran	18	36	20	12	14
China	30	37	18	5	9
Egypt	39	41	13	7	0
Indonesia	22	42	28	5	4
India	38	29	12	8	13
Vietnam	55	37	6	1	2
Senegal	35	33	17	11	3
Bangladesh	26	38	24	11	1
Kenya	35	32	22	10	1
Average	31	37	18	8	6

c. Gradually increasing the requirements for fuel efficiency in automobiles, even if this raises the cost of cars and bus fares

	Favor strongly	Favor somewhat	Oppose somewhat	Oppose strongly	DK/R
USA	27	44	18	10	1
Japan	25	53	19	3	0
France	33	36	19	10	3
Russia	23	36	22	6	14
Mexico	21	29	25	19	6
Turkey	44	26	10	8	12
Iran	21	31	18	22	8
China	24	38	25	7	6
Egypt	27	35	27	11	1
Indonesia	22	43	27	5	2
India	34	27	14	11	15
Vietnam	45	42	9	2	2
Senegal	24	38	21	13	5
Bangladesh	21	40	27	13	0
Kenya	28	33	24	14	1
Average	28	37	20	10	5

d. Gradually reducing government subsidies that favor private transportation, even if this raises its cost

	Favor strongly	Favor somewhat	Oppose somewhat	Oppose strongly	DK/R
USA	17	45	25	10	2
Japan	12	42	40	6	0
France	24	36	21	15	4
Russia	14	27	27	10	23
Mexico	20	26	25	21	7
Turkey	42	26	11	8	14
Iran	13	30	23	24	10
China	29	39	19	5	8
Egypt	34	28	23	13	1
Indonesia	26	37	28	5	4
India	31	26	13	12	17
Vietnam	40	46	9	2	3
Senegal	26	33	19	15	8
Bangladesh	28	38	21	12	1
Kenya	43	28	14	10	4
Average	27	34	21	11	7

Q16. Climate change will probably harm some countries more than others. For example, poor countries with low lying coastal areas will likely have widespread flooding and will not have the resources needed to assist their people. Do you think [country] should or should not contribute to international efforts to help poor countries deal with these climate-induced changes?

	Should	Should not	DK/R
USA	54	43	3
Japan	88	12	0
France	87	12	1
Russia	50	29	21
Mexico	87	12	2
Turkey	84	9	7
Iran	73	20	7
China	89	8	2
Egypt	88	12	0
Indonesia	96	4	1
India	75	7	18
Vietnam	98	2	1
Senegal	91	7	2
Bangladesh	93	7	0
Kenya	92	8	0
Average	83	13	4

APPENDIX

Chart for Q14 and Q14A

Country	US\$	1% of per capita income	0.5% of per capita income	1% monthly	Amount in local currency (Q14)	0.5 % monthly	Amount in local currency (Q14a)
Bangladesh	494	5	2.47	0.41	28	0.21	14
Brazil	8,400	84	42.00	7.00	13	3.50	6.6
China	2,912	29	14.56	2.43	17	1.21	8.3
Egypt	1,997	20	9.99	1.66	9	0.83	4.6
France	45,982	460	229.91	38.32	27	19.16	13.5
India	1,068	11	5.34	0.89	43	0.45	22
Indonesia	2,254	23	11.27	1.88	19046	0.94	9523
Iran	5,352	54	26.76	4.46	44366	2.23	22183
Japan	38,443	384	192.22	32.04	2978	16.02	1489
Kenya	895	9	4.48	0.75	57	0.37	28
Mexico	10,211	102	51.06	8.51	114	4.25	57
Russia	11,339	113	56.70	9.45	300	4.72	150
Senegal	1,082	11	5.41	0.90	407	0.45	204
Turkey	10,745	107	53.73	8.95	13	4.48	6.7
Vietnam	1,051	11	5.26	0.88	15697	0.44	7849
United States	46,716	467	233.58	38.93		19.47	

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METHODOLOGY

Country	Sample Size (unweighted)	MoE (%)	Field dates	Survey methodology	Type of sample
Bangladesh	1000	3.1	Oct 6-14, 2009	Face-to-face	National
China	1010	3.1	Oct 11-29, 2009	Telephone	National ¹
Egypt	701	3.7	Oct 1-14, 2009	Face-to-face	Urban and Rural ²
France	600	4	Sep 24-26, 2009	Telephone	National
India	1410	2.6	Oct 3-6, 2009	Face-to-face	National ³
Indonesia	716	3.7	Oct 11-29, 2009	Face-to-face	National ⁴
Iran	811	3.4	Oct 13-18, 2009	Telephone	National
Japan	1000	3.1	Oct 2-5, 2009	Internet	National ⁵
Kenya	1000	3.1	Oct 24-30, 2009	Face-to-face	National
Mexico	811	3.4	Oct 1-13, 2009	Telephone	National ⁶
Russia	796	3.5	Sep 18-22, 2009	Face-to-Face	National
Senegal	1000	3.1	Oct 2-7, 2009	Face-to-Face	National
Turkey	731	3.6	Sep 29-Oct 15, 2009	Face-to-face	National
United States	1132	2.9	Sep 24-26, 2009	Internet	National ⁷
Vietnam	800	3.5	Oct 2-9, 2009	Face-to-Face	National ⁸

¹ In China, the survey was a probability sample of urban and rural households with land-line telephones in the provinces of Anhui, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Hubei, Jiangsu, Shanxi, Shanghai, Sichuan, and Yunnan—representing approximately 60 percent of the mainland Chinese population. The sample was 40 percent rural, 60 percent urban (rural households make up approximately 55 percent of the Chinese population).

² In Egypt, the survey was conducted in the seven governorates which included the major urban areas of Cairo, Alexandria, Giza, and Subra and urban/rural governorates in northern and southern Egypt. Approximately 42 percent of Egypt's population is urban; the sample has 57% of the cases drawn from large cities and 43% from small cities and towns.

³ In India, a face-to-face survey was conducted in urban and rural areas in 14 of the largest Indian states; these states comprise 77 percent of India's population. The sample is 50 percent urban, India's population is approximately 30 percent urban.

⁴ In Indonesia, a national probability sample was conducted in both urban and rural areas and covering approximately 87 percent of Indonesia's population.

⁵ In Japan a demographically stratified sample of members of the research agency's online panel was drawn and invited to respond to the survey.

⁶ In Mexico, a random telephone sample of adults who had landline telephones was conducted in all 31 states and the Federal District. Telephone penetration in Mexico is 55 percent.

⁷ In the United States, the poll was an online survey drawn from a nationally representative sample of the Knowledge Networks' probability-based online panel. Participants are chosen scientifically by a random selection among US households; households without an Internet connection are provided a laptop and ISP connection.

⁸ In Vietnam, the survey was conducted in four major regions: Red River Delta (Hanoi), Central Coast (Danang), Southeast (Ho Chi Minh City) and Mekong Delta (Can Tho). Both urban and outlying areas were sampled, though the final sample was predominantly urban.