

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Mark Adams
Director, Head of Communications
Tel.: +41 (0) 22 869 1210
Fax: +41 (0) 22 869 1394
E-mail: mark.adams@weforum.org
<http://www.weforum.org>

STRICTLY EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE UNTIL 10.00 CENTRAL EUROPEAN TIME ON Monday 15th JANUARY 2007

Worldwide survey highlights lack of faith in leaders in an uncertain world

Geneva, Switzerland, 15 January 2007 - The findings of a global survey carried out for the World Economic Forum show a growing lack of confidence in leaders to improve our lives. As leaders from business, politics and civil society prepare for the Forum’s Annual Meeting in Davos, the findings from the Gallup International “Voice of the People®” survey highlight a lack of faith that leaders can make positive change in such a fragile global environment. Survey respondents found that political leaders in particular are not wielding power effectively.

The World Economic Forum’s Annual Meeting (January 24-28) will be held in Davos this year under the general theme ‘Shaping the Global Agenda – The Shifting Power Equation’ – and it is clear from the finding of the survey that of those questioned (55,000 in 60 countries) do not feel confident that their leaders are capable of improving the state of the world. The interviews which were carried out in November and December 2006 represent the views of 1.5 billion global citizens – and this is the fourth year the survey has been carried out.

Respondents were also asked about prospects for a safer and more economically prosperous world for the next generation. The results show there is declining optimism about these two important global aspects, particularly notably in Western Europe and the Americas. The survey also found that business leaders are widely held in better esteem than their political counterparts but significant proportions still criticize both sets of leaders, with dishonesty heavily associated with political leaders.

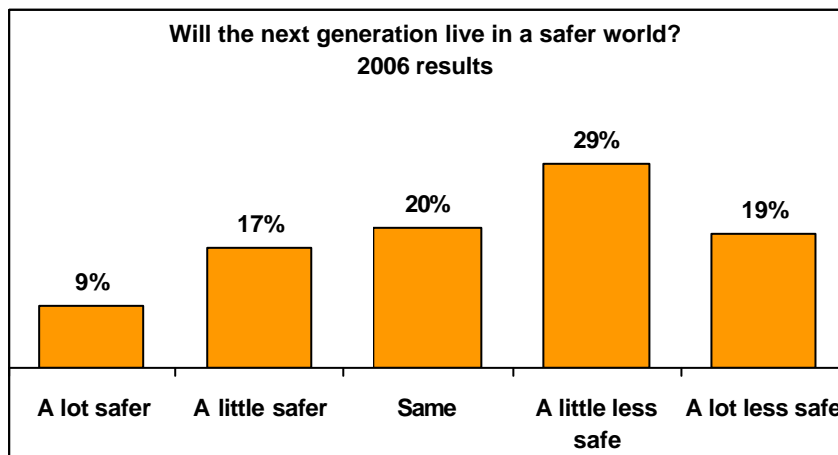


Figure 1: Gallup International Voice of the People® 2006

Commenting on the survey findings, Klaus Schwab, Executive Chairman and Founder of the World Economic Forum, said: “We are witnessing everywhere a changing power equation. Power is moving from the centre to the periphery. Vertical command and control structures are eroding and are being replaced by horizontal networks of social communities and collaborative platforms. As leaders try to cope with this rapidly changing environment, our Annual Meeting will help them to address the global

agenda and hopefully restore much needed confidence in the ability of global leadership to improve the state of the world for all.”

“This survey is unmatched in its ability to gauge the views and the mood of the people of the whole world. No other poll can match the **Voice of the People**® survey to capture what the world is really thinking, and what it demands of its leaders,” added Meril James, Secretary-General of Gallup International Association, which carried out the research.

Opinions about whether the next generation will live in a safer world show increasing pessimism compared to previous years – a quarter (26%) think the world will either be a lot or a little safer but they are outweighed by almost half of all respondents (48%) who feel that the next generation will live in a little or a lot **less** safe world.

Regionally, Western Europe is the most pessimistic region in the world about future prospects for safety – two-thirds (68%) in this region feel the next generation will live in a less safe world (either a lot less safe or a little less safe) while only one in ten (10%) feel the world will be a lot or a little safer for the next generation.

The Americas are the next most pessimistic region with six out of ten (59%) also supporting the view that the world will be a less safe place for future generations, while only 15% felt that the world would be a safer place. It is also worth noting that two thirds of the Americans interviewed (64%) also held the view that the world would be a less safe place for future generations with one in ten (11%) maintaining the opposite view that the world would be either a lot or a little safer.

In the Middle East, an area of the world that has experienced many conflicts in recent times, the region’s population is less upbeat about prospects for safety in the future. A quarter of those interviewed (24%), feel it will be safer (a lot or a little), compared with close to half (46%) who feel the opposite.

Within the Middle East region, interviews were conducted in Afghanistan and Iraq. Both these countries show a considerable decline in optimism on the issue of safety since last year. Last year in Afghanistan, three-quarters (77%) thought the next generation would live in a safer world – this year the figure has declined to two thirds (68%). In Iraq this view was held by six in every ten (61%) interviewed at the end of 2005 but has declined to less than half this figure with only a third (36%) believing it at the end of 2006.

This question was first asked in the 2003 and then again in the 2004 and 2005 Voice of the People® surveys. This year’s results represent a significant decline from last year’s, as Figure 2 shows, although it should be noted that last year seems to have been a year of unusually high levels of optimism whilst the 2006 results simply follow the trend already seen in previous years.

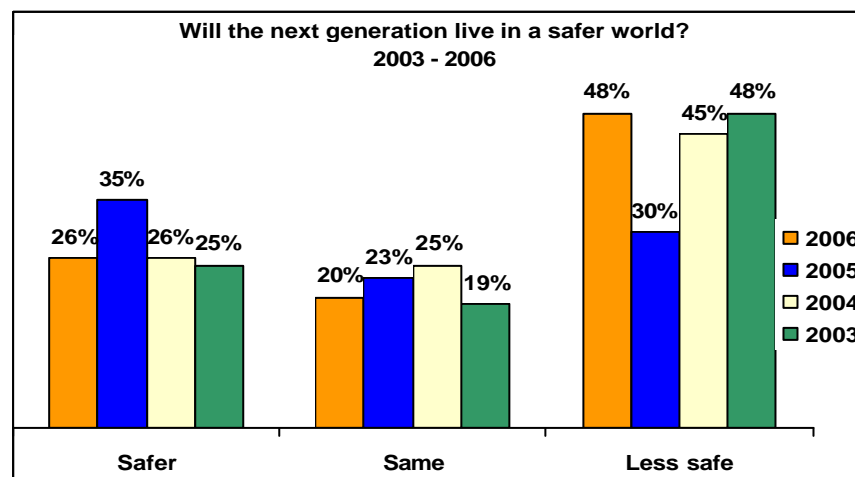


Figure 2: Gallup International Voice of the People © 2003-2006

Respondents were also asked whether they think the future generation will live in a world of greater or less economic prosperity and the results show that there has been little change in optimism regarding this element.

Four out of ten respondents globally (40%) indicated that the next generation will live in a lot or little **more** economically prosperous world than now, while one-third (31%) felt it would be a lot or a little **less** prosperous for the future generation.

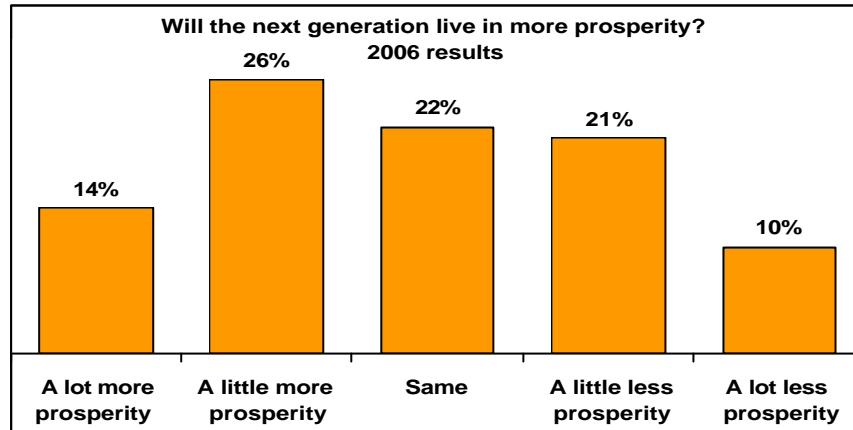


Figure 3: Gallup International Voice of the People © 2006

Once again, Western Europe is by far the most pessimistic region with less than one in five (19%) feeling the world will be more prosperous for the next generation, whilst more than half (53%) think it will be a lot or a little less prosperous. Although American citizens are also not overly optimistic about economic prospects- a quarter here (26%) think the next generation will have a lot or a little more prosperity - far fewer US citizens(37%) than those in Western Europe feel that the next generation will be a lot or a little less prosperous economically than now.

Respondents in the new EU countries of Bulgaria and Romania are even more upbeat about future prosperity with half of all Bulgarians (49%) and Romanians (55%) interviewed believing that the next generation will live in a lot or a little more prosperity – considerably better figures than either country achieved last year.

Respondents who were interviewed in six Chinese cities also show remarkable optimism about future economic prospects with 86% thinking the next generation will live in a lot or a little more economic prosperity although this is the same as last year's figure (85%) when Beijing was included in the survey for the first time. .In Asia overall, more than half (53%) think the next generation will live in a lot or a little more economically prosperous world, compared with just a quarter (23%) who believe the opposite.

Again, results here reflect a trend, with a slight decline in the proportion of people from last year in previous years believing that the next generation will live in a more prosperous world, as shown by Figure 4.

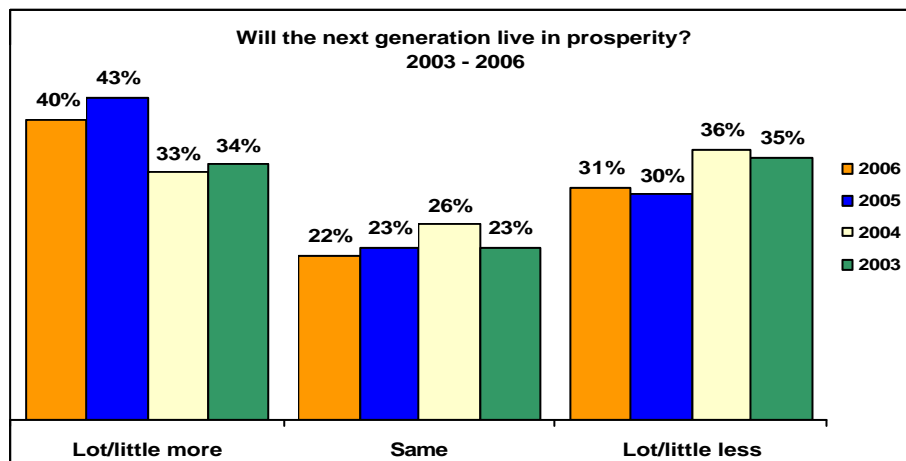


Figure 4: Gallup International Voice of the People© 2003-2006

The Voice of the People© also asked respondents to compare the characteristics of political leaders with those of business leaders.

As in previous years, business leaders are consistently rated more positively than political leaders, with criticisms of the latter group featuring heavily on their dishonesty – mentioned by more than four out of ten global citizens (43%).

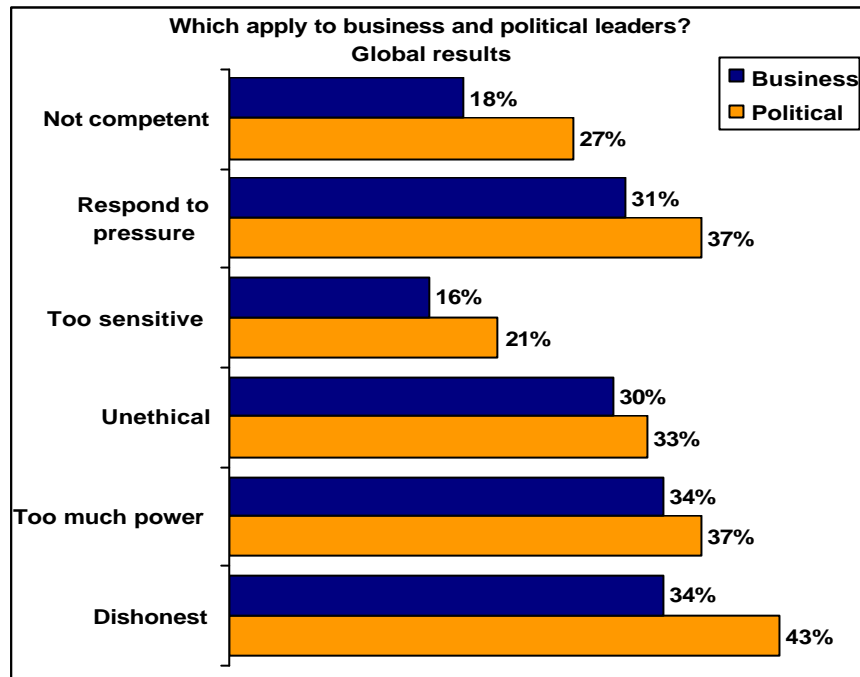


Figure 5: Gallup International Voice of the People© 2006

Africans were the most critical of their politicians. In this region, eight out of ten (81%) said political leaders are dishonest. But six out of ten East Europeans (60%) also think this is a characteristic of their political leaders, reaching eight out of ten in Serbia (81%). Indeed in this region, it is only in Bosnia (48%), Croatia (45%), Georgia (25%) and Kosovo (33%) where less than half those interviewed claim their politicians to be dishonest.

Over half of those interviewed in the Americas (56%) agree with this assessment but it is the Latin American countries of Bolivia (90%), Peru and Ecuador (89% in each) and Venezuela (80%) that this view is most prevalent. It is worth noting that over half of all US citizens interviewed (52%) also think their politicians are dishonest.

In Western Europe, respondents were generally more positive about their politicians although 76% of Austrians and 69% of Germans also labelled their politicians as dishonest as did majorities in Belgium (54%), Norway (52%) and Switzerland (50%).

People were asked to say what they thought leaders should focus on in the coming year, another trend question since 2004. In previous years, economic objectives such as *promoting economic growth* and *closing the gap between rich and poor* scored marginally higher than the other priorities offered. This year sees *reducing wars* edging slightly ahead of the other priorities, mentioned by 15% of all those interviewed. The *war against terror* was also the priority for 12% globally, but was mentioned by a quarter of those interviewed in the Middle East (25%) over half in Iraq (52%) and by a quarter of US citizens (23%).

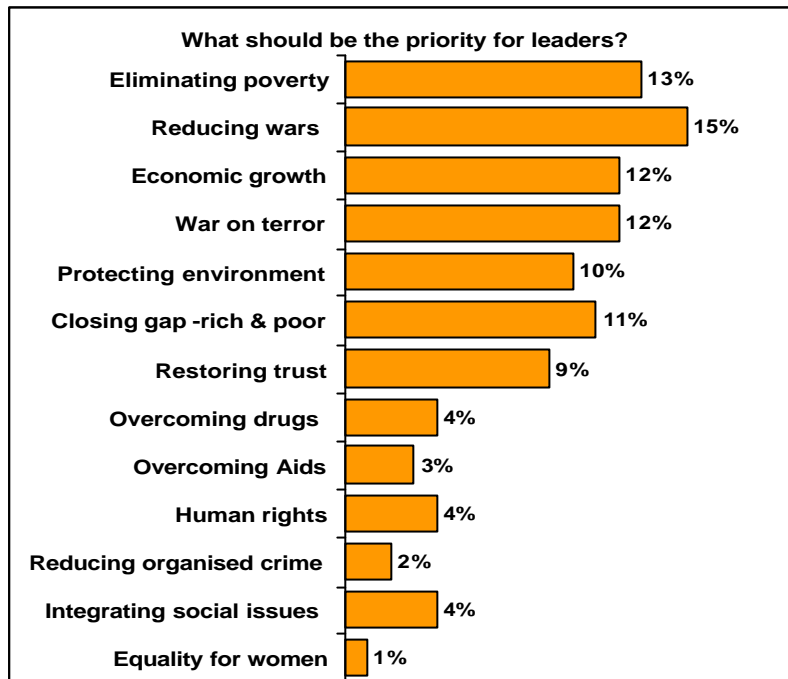


Figure 6: Gallup International Voice of the People© 2006

When asked how to restore trust in public and private institutions, global citizens are clear. The mistakes of recent years have taken their toll and citizens feel that greater transparency and improved governance are necessary (32%), along with more punishment of fraudulent behaviour by officials (30%).

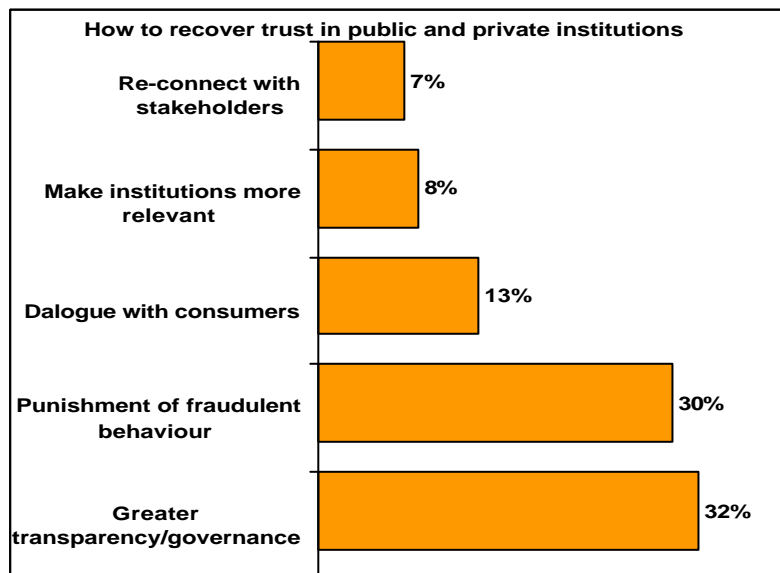


Figure 7: Gallup International Voice of the People© 2006

Finally when asked seven out of ten interviewed (71%) thought that global platforms where leaders from all parts of society talk to find solutions are either very or quite useful, so it seems the pressure is on in Davos for global leaders to achieve some of these objectives for the citizens of the world who, in doing so, improve their own ratings and the opinions that global citizens hold of them.

-----Ends-----

Notes for Editors:

- Please ensure the survey is credited fully as **Gallup International Voice of the People**® and that you refer to Gallup International Association (not Gallup or Gallup Poll). For more information on the **Voice of the People**® survey, please visit the Gallup International website: www.gallup-international.com, or contact, Gallup International, paula.power@tns-global.com; +44 207 868 6655 or Marita Carballo +44 207 868 6655 marita.carballo@tns-global.com
- Please note that **Monday 22nd January** we will release details of our Voice of the Leaders Survey. This survey will take exactly the same questions asked in this report (**Voice of the People**®) and pose them to leaders attending the World Economic Forum Annual meeting at Davos.
- Everything about the **Annual Meeting 2007** can be found here: www.weforum.org/annualmeeting
- In depth **Interviews** with key business participants are here: www.weforum.org/annualmeeting/indepth
- Leave your comments in our **Weblog** at: www.forumblog.org
- Subscribe to or download **Press Releases** here: www.weforum.org/pressreleases
- Download print-quality high resolution **Photographs** of the Annual Meeting free of charge here: www.swiss-image.ch/forum (login: world; password: forum)

Gallup International Association is registered in Zurich, Switzerland as a not-for-profit *verein* (*association*). George H Gallup and his European colleagues established it in 1947. Gallup International has member agencies in more than 65 countries across the world, conducting opinion and market research in over 100 countries.

•

The World Economic Forum is an independent international organization committed to improving the state of the world by engaging leaders in partnerships to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

Incorporated as a foundation in 1971, and based in Geneva, Switzerland, the World Economic Forum is impartial and not-for-profit; it is tied to no political, partisan or national interests. (www.weforum.org)