



Views of Climate Change

ASIA BACKGROUNDER

Australia

Australians believe that human activity is a major factor contributing to climate change, that major steps are necessary to address the issue, and that developing countries should limit their emissions. More than four out of five (81%) agree that human activity is a significant cause of climate change. An overwhelming majority (95%) endorses taking action, including 70 percent who say major steps should be taken “very soon.” A large majority (71%) also thinks less wealthy countries should be expected to impose limits on greenhouse gas emissions because their total output of such pollutants is “substantial and growing.” Only 23 percent takes the opposing position that less wealthy countries should not have to do so because their emissions are relatively low in per capita terms. Australians are among those most supportive of providing financial assistance to less wealthy countries that agree to limit emissions (84%). Most Australians say they are informed about global warming: 90 percent say they have heard a great deal (54%) or some (36%) about the issue.

China

Most Chinese respondents favor taking major steps to address the problem of climate change and believe both developing and developed countries should limit their emissions of greenhouse gases. A very large majority (87%) of the Chinese agree that human activity, “including industry and transportation,” is a significant cause of climate change. Seventy percent of respondents say “major steps starting very soon” are necessary to address the problem. Only a quarter believes only “modest steps over the coming years” (25%) and very few think nothing need be done (4%). A large majority of the Chinese public (68%) supports the argument that “because total emissions from less wealthy countries are substantial and growing, these countries should be asked to limit their emissions of climate changing gases along with wealthy countries.” Only 27 percent take the view that since “countries that are less wealthy produce relatively low emissions per person, they should not be expected to limit their emissions of climate changing gases.” The Chinese are overwhelmingly in favor (90%) of a deal requiring less wealthy countries to limit emissions in return for financial assistance and technology from wealthy countries. This is the largest majority in favor of such an agreement among the 21 countries polled. Most Chinese respondents are aware of the problem of global warming: 72 percent say they have heard a great deal (30%) or some (42%) about the issue.

India

The Indian public tends to agree that human activity is a significant cause of climate change, that steps should be taken to address the problem, and that developing countries should limit their emissions. But these views are less widespread than in other publics and large numbers declined to respond. Indians agree that human activity is a significant cause of climate change by 47 percent to 21 percent but large numbers (33%) would not answer. A majority (63%) agrees that steps are needed to address climate change, including 37 percent who favor “major steps very soon” and 26 percent who prefer “modest steps over the coming years.” Only 12 percent say no steps are necessary but 26 percent do not answer. Asked whether less wealthy countries should limit their greenhouse gas emissions because they are “substantial and growing” or whether they should not do so because they are relatively low in per capita terms, Indians lean toward the former position by 33 percent to 24 percent. But nearly half of those polled (43%) would not take either position. Forty-seven percent of Indians favor an agreement requiring less wealthy countries to cap emissions in return for financial assistance and technology from wealthy countries while only 19 percent do not. But about a third (34%) would not answer. Compared to other publics, Indians are less aware of the issue of global warming: only 48 percent say they have heard or read a great deal (15%) or something (33%) about it while 36 percent say they have not heard much (33%) or anything (3%).

Indonesia

Indonesians agree that human activity is a significant cause of climate change and support taking immediate action to address the problem. But most Indonesians indicate that they are largely uninformed about the issue. More than seven in 10 (71%) agree that human activity contributes significantly to the problem of climate change. Nearly two out of three (64%) believe “major steps starting very soon” should be taken and another 22 percent favor “modest steps over the coming years.” A modest majority (54%) believes that the developing world should take action to cap greenhouse gases “because total emissions from less wealthy countries are substantial and growing.” Only 24 percent choose the opposing view that emissions from less wealthy countries are “relatively low per person” and therefore they need not take action. However, about one in five (22%) decline to take a position. Three out of four (78%) would support a deal requiring less wealthy countries to limit emissions provided wealthy countries give them financial assistance and technology. Indonesia has the largest majority who say they have not heard much about climate change: 65 percent say they have not heard much (47%) or anything (18%) about climate change, while just 28 percent say they have heard some (20%) or a great deal (8%).

Philippines

Filipinos believe humans contribute to climate change and support taking immediate action to address the problem, though support is somewhat weak for emissions caps in less wealthy countries. More than three-quarters (76%) share the view that human

activity, “including industry and transportation” is a significant cause of climate change. Filipinos support taking “major steps starting very soon” to address global warming (70%). Only 19 percent believe only “modest steps over the coming years” are necessary and very few (7%) think nothing should be done. Roughly half (49%) believe less wealthy countries should be expected to limit their “substantial and growing” emissions while 37 percent disagree because these emissions are lower in per capita terms than those produced in rich countries. Seven out of ten (71%) would favor a deal requiring less wealthy countries to impose emissions caps in return for financial assistance and technology from wealthy countries. Filipinos show moderate awareness of climate change: 63 percent say they have heard a great deal (38%) or some (25%) while just 36 percent say they have not heard much (31%) or anything (5%).

South Korea

While South Koreans agree that human activity contributes significantly to climate change, they are somewhat less likely than other publics to support immediate action to address the problem. An overwhelming majority (91%) agrees that human activity is a significant cause of climate change. South Koreans favor “major steps starting very soon,” instead of “modest steps over the coming years,” by a relatively small margin of 48 percent to 45 percent. A majority (56%) of South Korean respondents take the position that because emissions from less wealthy countries are substantial and growing, they should be expected to impose caps. Only 39 percent accept the argument that because less wealthy countries produce relatively low emissions per capita, they should not have to enact limits. Seventy-two percent of South Koreans would favor a deal requiring wealthy countries to provide financial assistance and technology to less wealthy countries that agree to limit their emissions. Most South Koreans are aware of the issue of climate change: 94 percent say they have heard a great deal (43%) or something (51%) about it.

For more information on this poll, please see the Questionnaire/Methodology:
http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/pdf/sep07/BCCClimate_Sep07_quaire.pdf