

# A Canadian priorities agenda: Policy choices to improve economic and social well-being <sup>[1]</sup>

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## AVAILABILITY

- Order form <sup>[2]</sup>

- News release <sup>[3]</sup>

## Project overview:

The Canadian Priorities Agenda (CPA) is designed to initiate a broad-based and informed public debate on policy choices and priorities for Canada over the medium term. The central theme of the project is scarcity and the need for choice: governments have limited resources and therefore must choose carefully which policies to pursue and which to leave behind. In so doing, they must weigh not only political considerations, but also the overall costs, benefits and distributional effects of alternative policies. One of the main objectives of the CPA is to produce research on key policy challenges within a common analytical framework based on that overarching perspective.

## Phase I - Setting the agenda

In January 2006, the IRPP brought together a group of twelve distinguished policy experts to decide on the most important broad policy challenges facing Canada over the medium term. The results of this meeting, along with each participant's top priorities and rationale, were published in the April/May 2006 issue of Policy Options.

## Phase II - Commissioning the research

Based on the results of the agenda-setters meeting, the IRPP commissioned a research paper for each of eight broad policy challenges. In addition to describing the nature of the challenge at hand, each analyst was asked to propose three specific policies designed to address this challenge and to analyze the overall effects of these policies. Each paper will be reviewed by two critics (experts in relevant disciplines and practitioners), who provide their assessment and critique of the paper.

## Phase III - Making the choices

In the final phase of the project, the analysts and critics were convened in March 2007 to present their arguments to a panel of six judges, eminent individuals chosen for their knowledge and expertise in Canadian economic and social policy:

- Wendy Dobson (Professor, Rotman School of Management and former federal Deputy Minister of Finance)
- Alain Dubuc (Syndicated columnist for La Presse and author of *Éloge de la richesse*)
- John Helliwell (Research Fellow, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, Professor emeritus, University of British Columbia and author of *Globalization and Well-Being*)
- Richard Lipsey (Fellow, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, Professor emeritus, Simon Fraser University and co-author of *Economic Transformations*)
- Carolyn Tuohy (Professor emeritus of political science, University of Toronto)
- William Watson (Associate Professor of economics, McGill University and columnist, National Post, Montreal Gazette and Ottawa Citizen)

Based on the evidence gathered, the critics' comments and the follow-up discussions held at the symposium, each judge has been asked to choose from among the 24 specific policy recommendations the "policy package" that will best enhance the economic and social well-being of Canadians.

**Region:** Canada <sup>[4]</sup>

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