

23 August, 2021

The Right Honourable David Johnston
Commissioner
Leaders' Debates Commission
155 Queen St, Suite 301
Ottawa, ON, K1P 6L1

Dear Mr. Johnston,

On behalf of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute, the Canadian International Council, the Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health, Cooperation Canada, and Global Canada, we invite the Leaders' Debate Commission to ensure the questions raised during the leaders' debates organized during the 2021 federal election reflect the importance of Canada's global engagement.

Collectively, we represent broad communities of individual Canadians, businesses, non-governmental organizations and thought leaders from across the country who have an interest in Canada's foreign policy and global engagements. These issues are rapidly gaining in importance. Key concerns on the minds of Canadians: the COVID-19 pandemic, environment, social and governance issues are all global challenges any future government will be called to address. According to the Abacus Data [poll from June 2021](#), 70% of Canadians are thinking about the risk of new COVID-19 variants and are following news about the impacts of the pandemic around the world. In fact, 82% are at least somewhat worried that an insufficient global response might slow down Canada's economic recovery. The tremendous interest Canadians have demonstrated for events in Afghanistan and Haiti in the last few weeks attests to their interest in foreign policy.

As it is becoming increasingly clear, our ability to protect our health, environment, and economy depends on the effectiveness of our global coordination. Canada's trade, diplomacy, international assistance, and defense strategies must be coherent to reflect the urgency and the scale of the global crises affecting us everywhere. As one of the largest global economies, Canada has an imperative and incentive to invest in coordinated global solutions. How Canada's political leadership plans to rise to such a challenge is a critical question for public debate.

Canadians have a right to know how their leaders will lead, abroad and at home. The leaders' debates can strengthen our democracy by ensuring Canadian voters are informed on these issues. We would welcome an opportunity to support you in this endeavor and discuss our request further.

Sincerely,

Ben Rowswell, President, Canadian International Council

Colin Robertson, Vice-President, Canadian Global Affairs Institute

Julia Anderson, CEO, Canadian Partnership for Women and Children's Health

Nicolas Moyer, CEO, Cooperation Canada

Robert Greenhill, Executive Chairman, Global Canada