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**Press Release  
For Immediate Release**

**While Investors Continue to Embrace ETFs, There's Still an Awareness Gap in Canada**

*Financial Literacy Month is an opportunity for Canadians to deepen their understanding of the potential benefits and usages of ETFs*

**Toronto, November 5, 2015** – With a twenty-five year history, exchange traded funds (ETFs) have seen consistent and record growth over the past decade<sup>1</sup>, yet only a fifth of Canadians claim to be familiar with the investment vehicle, according to a recent ETF Awareness Survey from BlackRock Canada of over 1,500 Canadians (ETF Awareness Survey)<sup>2</sup>.

While investing remains top of mind for Canadians, with 43 per cent saying that saving and investing is a top priority for them to achieving a comfortable retirement, there remains an education gap, with over half of Canadians still feeling that they aren't knowledgeable about investing<sup>3</sup>. In the increasingly complex investment landscape, understanding the options available to them, including ETFs, is a crucial step to help get them on the right track.

"We know that for some Canadians, investing can be an overwhelming process, that's why awareness and education are so important," said Warren Collier, Managing Director and Head of iShares at BlackRock Canada. "Financial Literacy Month is a great time to draw attention to these issues."

"As the ETF industry leader<sup>4</sup>, helping to provide Canadian investors with tools to further their investment education, is – and has always been - an important mandate for us. As the ETF investment landscape evolves, making ETF education accessible and easy to understand for all investors only grows in importance," added Collier.

***Evolving ETF Usages***

The ETF Awareness Survey found striking differences between how men and women perceive and interact with ETFs. While Canadian men tend to have a greater awareness of ETFs (27%) than women (9%), digging into why they use them revealed a further divide. Men seemed to have a deeper knowledge of the benefits and product attributes of ETFs than women. While men cited easy-to-use (37%) and low-cost (17%) as the top reasons for using ETFs, of the women surveyed, almost half said they used ETFs because their advisor recommended them (49%). When looking at how they use ETFs in their portfolios, men and women are almost on par in their use of ETFs for core holdings (36% and 32% respectively), but

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<sup>1</sup> Investor Economics, ETF and Index Funds Report, Third Quarter, 2015.

<sup>2</sup> BlackRock Asset Management Canada Limited. Unless otherwise stated, all statistics included in this press release are sourced from the ETF Awareness Survey.

<sup>3</sup> 2015 BlackRock Global Investor Pulse Survey.

<sup>4</sup> Based on assets under management ("AUM") CAD \$45.6bn, as of October 30, 2015.



men pull ahead when it comes to using them for strategic or tactical holdings -26% versus 11% for women.

Additional BlackRock research, the recently released annual Global Investor Pulse, revealed that Canadians are increasingly recognizing the inherent benefits that ETFs can offer with a quarter of Canadians accessing fixed income exposures through ETFs, almost double the amount they cite using ETFs for their equity exposures (16%).

“ETFs have really democratized investing, and fixed income is a great example of how they allow investors – of all types - to access exposures and markets that have traditionally been difficult to access in a cost-effective, transparent way,” said Collier.

### ***Helping Canadians Advance Their ETF Literacy***

As our research has shown, investors are embracing ETFs for both core holdings and strategic or tactical applications in their portfolios. Given this growing recognition of ETFs as efficient portfolio construction tools, BlackRock Canada launched the iShares Core – a suite of 14 low-cost ETFs that provide investors with greater simplicity in choice for their long-term investment holdings. Since launching in March of last year, the iShares Core has captured 29% of flows<sup>5</sup> across the suite of funds.

“Recognizing that the ETF investing landscape may be complex, we launched the iShares Core to make it easier for investors to identify investments that may be suitable for the foundation of their portfolios, in a low-cost, easy to access way,” said Collier. “

As part of iShares’ mandate to provide investors – of all types – tools and resources surrounding ETF education, a series of educational initiatives has recently been launched to help get Canadians started.

- ❖ **GET TO KNOW THE BASICS:** Visit the [ETF Education Centre](#) designed to help investors better understand what ETFs are, and how they can fit within an investment portfolio. The Centre includes:
  - What is an ETF
  - Keep More and Do More (understanding the impact of costs)
  - Ways to Invest with ETFs
  - How to Choose the Right ETF
  - How to Buy ETFs
  
- ❖ **GET STARTED WITH YOUR PORTFOLIO FOUNDATION:** With so many options available, sometimes getting started is the hardest part. Visit [the iShares Core Sample Portfolio Tool](#) created to help investors understand how to build a low-cost, well-diversified investment portfolio with just a handful of funds.

Further information on the iShares Funds can be found at [www.blackrock.com/ca](http://www.blackrock.com/ca).

#### **About BlackRock**

BlackRock is a global leader in investment management, risk management and advisory services for institutional and retail clients. At September 30, 2015, BlackRock’s AUM was US \$4.506 trillion. BlackRock helps clients around the world meet their goals and overcome challenges with a range of products that include separate accounts, mutual funds, iShares® (exchange-traded funds), and other pooled investment

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<sup>5</sup> Internal Research, BlackRock Canada, for the period of March 24, 2014 to September 30, 2015.



vehicles. BlackRock also offers risk management, advisory and enterprise investment system services to a broad base of institutional investors through BlackRock Solutions®. As of September 30, 2015, the firm had approximately 12,900 employees in more than 30 countries and a major presence in key global markets, including North and South America, Europe, Asia, Australia and the Middle East and Africa. For additional information, please visit the Company's website at [www.blackrock.com/ca](http://www.blackrock.com/ca) | Twitter: @BlackRockCA | Blog: [www.blackrockblog.com/can](http://www.blackrockblog.com/can)

### **About iShares ETFs**

iShares is a global leader in exchange-traded funds (ETFs), with more than a decade of expertise and commitment to individual and institutional investors of all sizes. With over 700 funds globally across multiple asset classes and strategies and more than US \$1 trillion in assets under management as of September 30, 2015, iShares helps clients around the world build the core of their portfolios, meet specific investment goals and implement market views. iShares funds are powered by the expert portfolio and risk management of BlackRock, trusted to manage more money than any other investment firm<sup>6</sup>.

### **About the Survey**

Conducted by Leger, The Research Intelligence Group, the survey took place during August 2015. The Canadian sample of 1578 Canadians was conducted using Leger's online panel, *LegerWeb*, the margin of error is +/- 2.5%.

iShares® ETFs are managed by BlackRock Asset Management Canada Limited.

*Commissions, trailing commissions, management fees and expenses all may be associated with investing in iShares ETFs. Please read the relevant prospectus before investing. Fund securities are not covered by the Canada Deposit Insurance Corporation or by any other government deposit insurer. There can be no assurances that the fund will be able to maintain its net asset value per security at a constant amount or that the full amount of your investment in the fund will be returned to you. The fund is not guaranteed, its values change frequently and past performance may not be repeated. Tax, investment and all other decisions should be made, as appropriate, only with guidance from a qualified professional.*

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<sup>6</sup> Based on US \$4.506 trillion in AUM as of 9/30/15.