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Press Release

For Immediate Release

Though Canadian Women Continue to Hesitate with Investing, Confidence Increases Significantly with Age, BlackRock Survey Reveals

In the lead up to International Women's Day, opportunity exists to engage women in planning for financial future and get them off the "investing sidelines"

Toronto, March 7, 2016 – Today, BlackRock Asset Management Canada Limited (BlackRock Canada) released gender findings from its annual Global Investor Pulse Survey. The findings uncover the ongoing imbalance between men and women when it comes to financial planning and investing, with only 44% of women reporting 'confidence in decision making' and only 18% taking an active role in understanding their retirement investment plan.

Interestingly however, the research uncovered a trend among Canadian women as they age, with 67%, aged 65-74, reporting the feeling of 'confidence in decision making'. While this is an encouraging trend to be noted, the majority of Canadian women are still reluctant to get off the sidelines when it comes to investing, which could impact their financial future. Furthermore, as women's contributions to social and economic achievement continue to increase, a lack of gender parity still exists. International Women's Day is tomorrow and the theme: "Pledge for Parity", allows the opportunity to further the conversation and provide women with the tools and access they need to get on financial par with their male counterparts.

So what are the reasons women initially hesitate, but grow more confident with age? Though the answer is complex, the survey revealed three compelling trends that shed light on the issue.

1. **"Saver" Self-Identification:** An interesting sentiment revealed in the survey finds that an overwhelming majority of Canadian women "consider [themselves] to be a "saver" (78%) more than an "investor" (22%). In fact, 49% of women agreed with the statement "I like to have a certain amount of cash saved before I am willing to invest some of it."
2. **A Continued Lack of Education:** A consistent theme and common barrier to financial confidence continues to be a lack of education, with 63% of women stating they are simply "not knowledgeable about investments". Women were also more likely than men to agree with the statement "I need more information/advice before I am willing to invest some of it."
3. **Exposure Changes Perception:** Increased engagement over time and knowledge in their own finances increases confidence in a woman's ability to reach her investment goals. This can be attributed to an increase in the use of professional financial advisors as women age, from 26% among women 25-34 to 59% among women 65-74, adding fuel to the claim that consistent exposure to advice and resources dramatically changes a woman's perception of her financial acuity.

"With International Women's Day nearly here, it's incumbent on us to take stock of how Canadian women are faring with their finances," said Karrie Van Belle, Managing Director, BlackRock Canada. "According to

Statistics Canada¹, by 2014 women made up almost half the work force and are typically in charge of household financing, however there is still an alarming lack of confidence and knowledge when it comes to investing. This roadblock can have serious consequences. In fact, the survey revealed that of those who have started saving, men have saved nearly double what women have saved. While we are seeing a growing confidence with women as they age, it's crucial that all women are encouraged to seek out the resources they need to take their financial future into their own hands.”

When it comes to obtaining financial advice for women, the survey confirmed that banks are still the most common destination for Canadians seeking information about long-term savings and investment information. This is particularly true when it comes to women, with 46% stating financial institutions as their preferred choice. As true experts in the industry, a professional advisor can provide tailored, customized advice, which is undoubtedly valuable insight for any financial situation.

Another pathway to financial literacy that is gaining popularity among women aged 25-34 is turning to online sources. Of the online sources used for long-term savings and investment decisions, Canadian women turn mostly to bank websites for guidance, with 37% selecting this option. However, another online service that may warrant a closer look for women are “robo-advisors.” While many are unaware of the service, Robo-advisors provide convenience, simplicity and objective advice at a low-cost.

“BlackRock’s Global Investor Pulse Survey tracks these sentiments and trends on an annual basis and it is our hope that with better access and simple-to-use investment options we will see a marked improvement in the years to come,” says Van Belle. “Empowering women of all ages to be more engaged and involved in their financial futures is the first step to getting them off the bench and taking an active role early on, making sound investment contributions that will set them up for future financial wins.”

For more information about the BlackRock Investor Pulse Survey, visit: blackrockinvestorpulse.ca

About BlackRock

BlackRock is a global leader in investment management, risk management and advisory services for institutional and retail clients. At December 31, 2015, BlackRock’s AUM was US\$4.645 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 vehicles. BlackRock also offers risk management, advisory and enterprise investment system services to a broad base of institutional investors through BlackRock Solutions®. As of December 31, 2015, the firm had approximately 13,000 employees in more than 30 countries and a major presence in 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 | Twitter: [@BlackRockCA](https://twitter.com/BlackRockCA) | Blog: www.blackrockblog.com/can

About the Survey

One of the largest global surveys ever conducted, the BlackRock Global Investor Pulse survey interviewed over **31,100** respondents, in **20** nations: the US and Canada; in Europe, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the UK; In Latin America, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico; in Asia, China, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Singapore and Taiwan. The Canada sample comprised 2,000 respondents. Executed with the support of Cicero Group, an independent research company, the survey took place from July to August 2015. For the global sample the margin of error is +/-0.7% and for the Canada sample of 2,000 respondents the margin of error is **+/- 2.2 per cent**.

¹ Statistics Canada, Labour force participation rates of men and women aged 25 to 54, 1953 to 2014.