

Global Societal Trends on Sustainability

Global Public Opinion Research for the
Routes to Transformation Program

October 2026

**Globe
Scan**



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Executive Summary

How 34 markets respond

- **People feel global pressure:** 86% rate today's social, environmental, and economic challenges as the worst crisis humanity has ever faced – up vs 2012, stable since 2024.
- **Many people question starting families:** 43% are reconsidering whether to have children because of the climate crisis, up since 2022 and stable since 2024.
- **Hope for technology and AI are high but becoming complicated:** 59% believe technology will solve climate change – down from 65% in 2023 in 13 markets tracked over time. Meanwhile, AI is seen as positive for most shifts, except misinformation, privacy, and jobs.
- **Companies are key, but exact role questioned:** 79% believe companies are essential for solving global crises, down from 85% in 2023. Now only 48% of people globally feel that companies are honest about social and environmental performance, down from 57% in 2023 in 18 tracked markets.
- **Regulation is widely supported:** 72% in 18 tracked markets globally support regulation of companies to go beyond economic roles and work to make a better society – a near-historic high.

What this can mean



Many feel locked in a “permacrisis,” unsure how to respond. Concern on specific issues is dropping. It can be too exhausting to stay highly concerned about many issues where progress is slow.



People do not make all decisions with a climate lens. But the fact that many people are reconsidering one of the most fundamental parts of society shows how this influences wider uncertainties.



Technology can feel like a solution that requires less individual compromise. But this faith is being tested. AI can fix many issues, but driving misinformation damages trust in politics and business, making shared solutions harder. This becomes a priority to address.



Spreading information and misinformation is already affecting trust in companies, with 10–15% drops over two years in the USA, Germany, Kenya, South Korea, and many more.



When problems feel large, technology becomes uncertain and trust is questioned, regulation to change the system becomes a stronger priority. The next question is how to ensure the regulation builds both impact and faith in the system.

Methodology Summary

- Representative online samples of approximately 1,000 adults in each of 34 markets (500 each in Hong Kong, Kenya, Nigeria, and Singapore, and 1,500 in China and USA) ($n=33,110$).
- Samples are representative of online population, weighted to reflect general population census data.
- Online surveying in July and August 2026.



**Belief Current
Challenges Biggest
Crisis Humanity
Has Ever Faced**

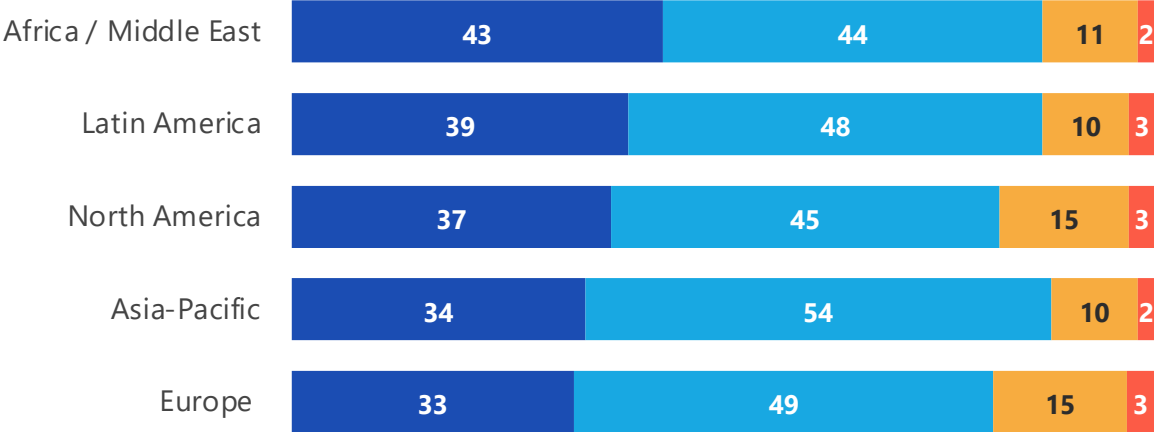
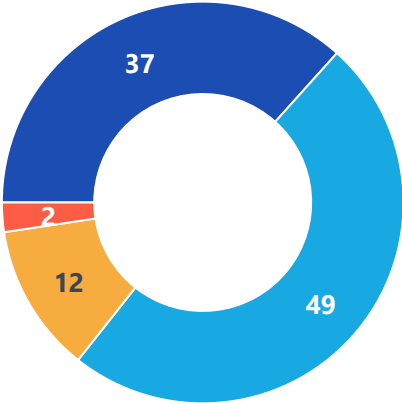


A large majority see today's social, environmental, and economic challenges as the biggest crisis humanity has ever faced, with conviction strongest in Africa / Middle East

Belief Current Challenges Biggest Crisis Humanity Has Ever Faced

Average of 34 Markets and by Region, 2026

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

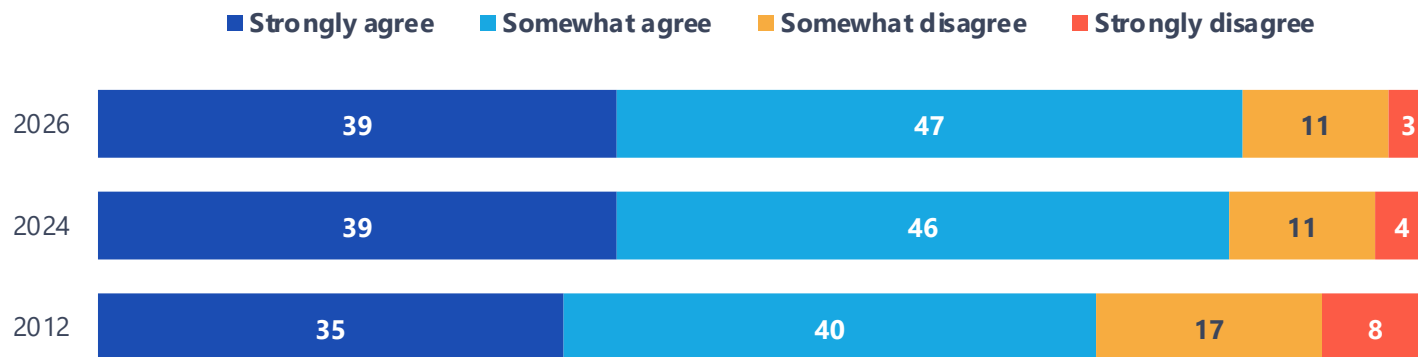


T8. For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. - The social, environmental, and economic challenges currently facing the world represent a bigger crisis than the human race has ever faced before.

Across 15 tracked markets, 86 percent now see today's challenges as the biggest crisis humanity has ever faced, up from 75 percent in 2012 and steady since 2024

Belief Current Challenges Biggest Crisis Humanity Has Ever Faced

Average of 15 Markets,* 2012–2026



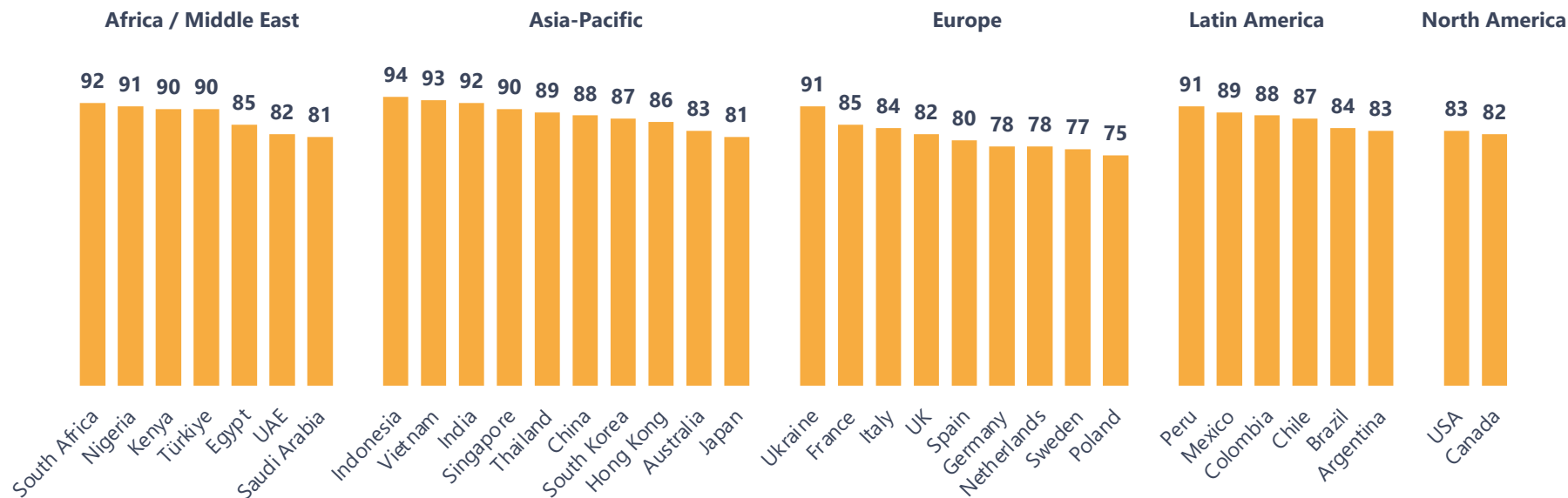
*Includes Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Spain, Türkiye, UK, and USA. Not asked in all markets in all years. Before 2019 this question was asked using an in-person and telephone methodology. In 2012, respondents were able to answer "don't know;" 2012 results have been recalculated excluding these responses.

T8. For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. - The social, environmental, and economic challenges currently facing the world represent a bigger crisis than the human race has ever faced before.

Agreement that we are facing unprecedented challenges is near-universal across most markets, with lowest agreement seen in Northern Europe

Belief Current Challenges Biggest Crisis Humanity Has Ever Faced

"Strongly" and "Somewhat Agree," by Market, 2026



T8. For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. - The social, environmental, and economic challenges currently facing the world represent a bigger crisis than the human race has ever faced before.

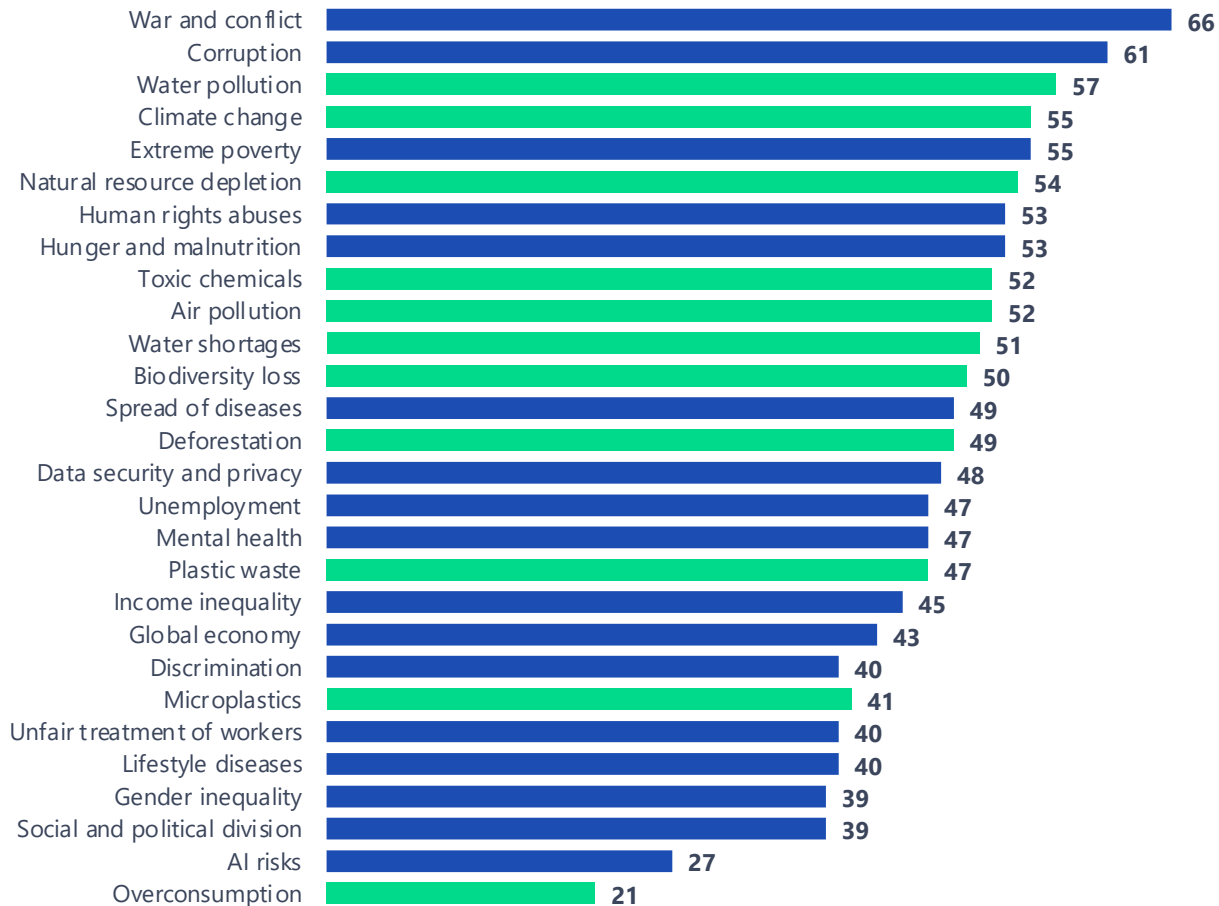
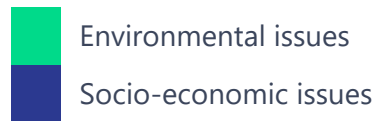
Perceived Seriousness And Personal Impact of Global Problems



War and conflict top global concerns, but water pollution and climate are also top of mind

Perceived Seriousness of Global Problems

"Very Serious," Average of 34 Markets, 2026

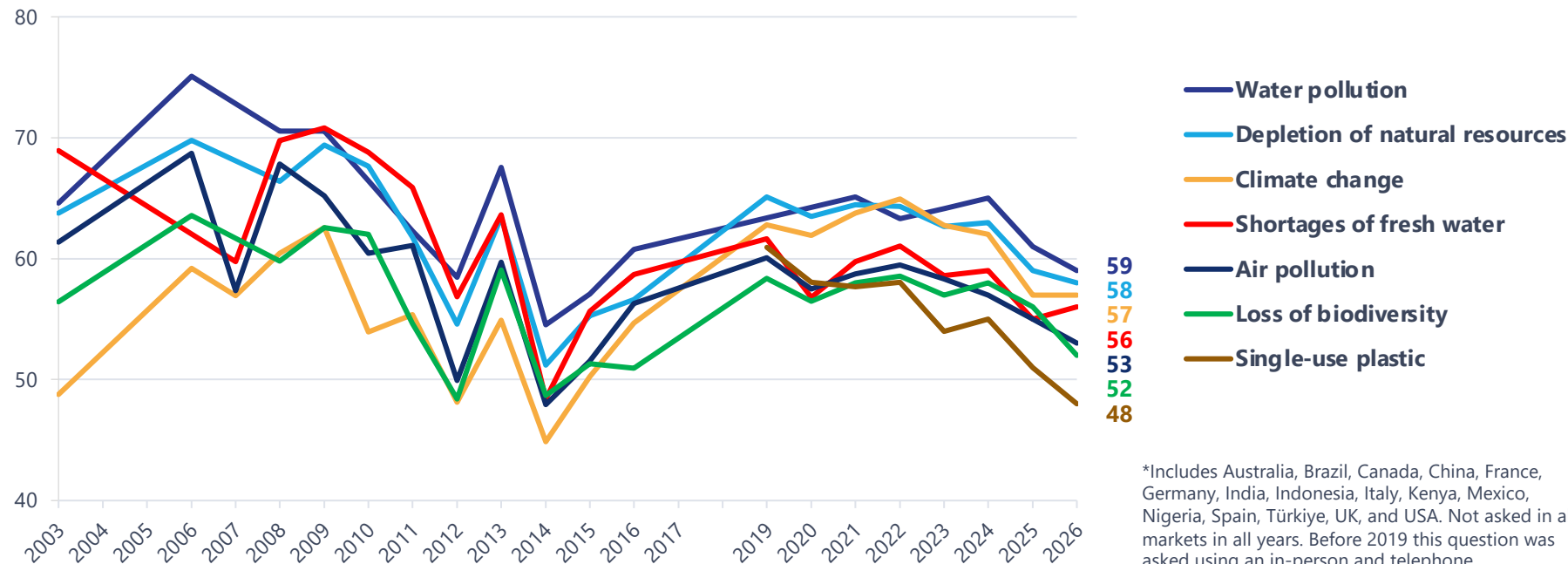


T1. For each of the following possible global problems, please indicate if you see it as a very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious or not at all serious problem.

Concern about environmental issues remains strong, but continues to trend slightly downward

Perceived Seriousness of Global Problems

"Very Serious," Average of 16 Markets,* 2003–2026



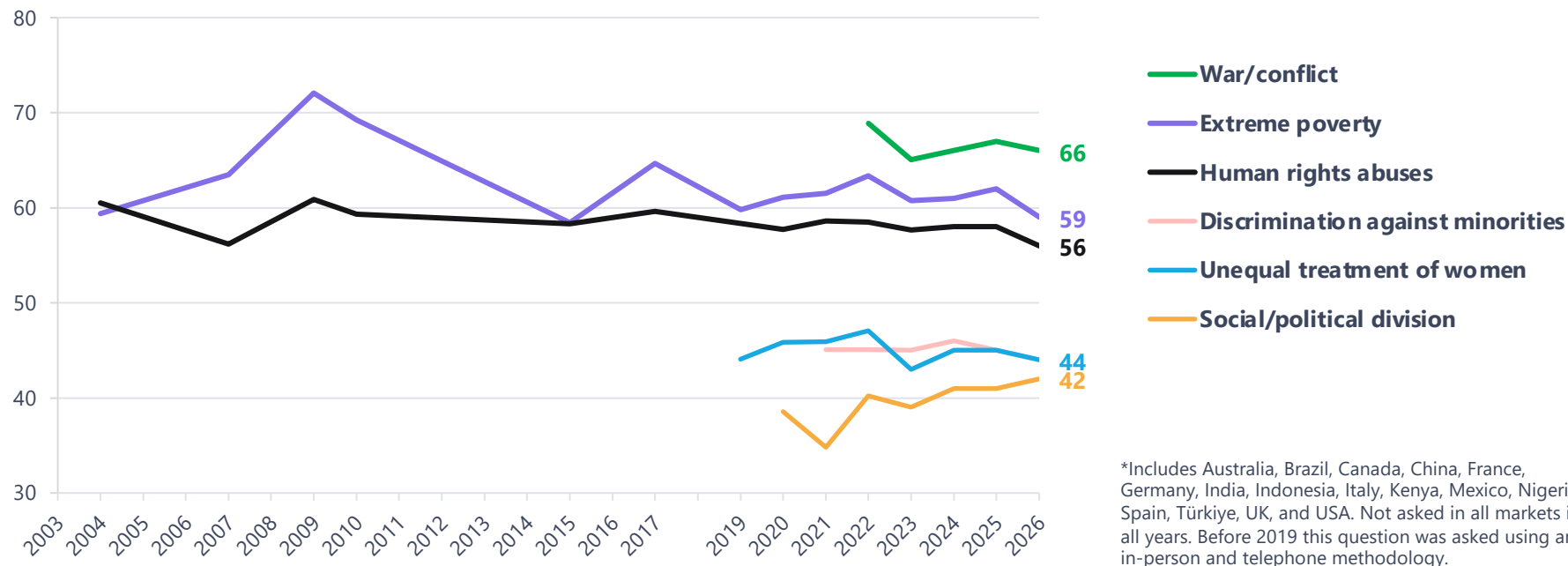
*Includes Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Spain, Türkiye, UK, and USA. Not asked in all markets in all years. Before 2019 this question was asked using an in-person and telephone methodology.

10 T1. For each of the following possible global problems, please indicate if you see it as a very serious, somewhat serious, not very serious or not at all serious problem.

Concern about extreme poverty eased slightly in 2026, but war and conflict remains by far the most serious issue for people worldwide

Perceived Seriousness of Social Problems

"Very Serious," Top Issues, Average of 16 Markets,* 2003–2026

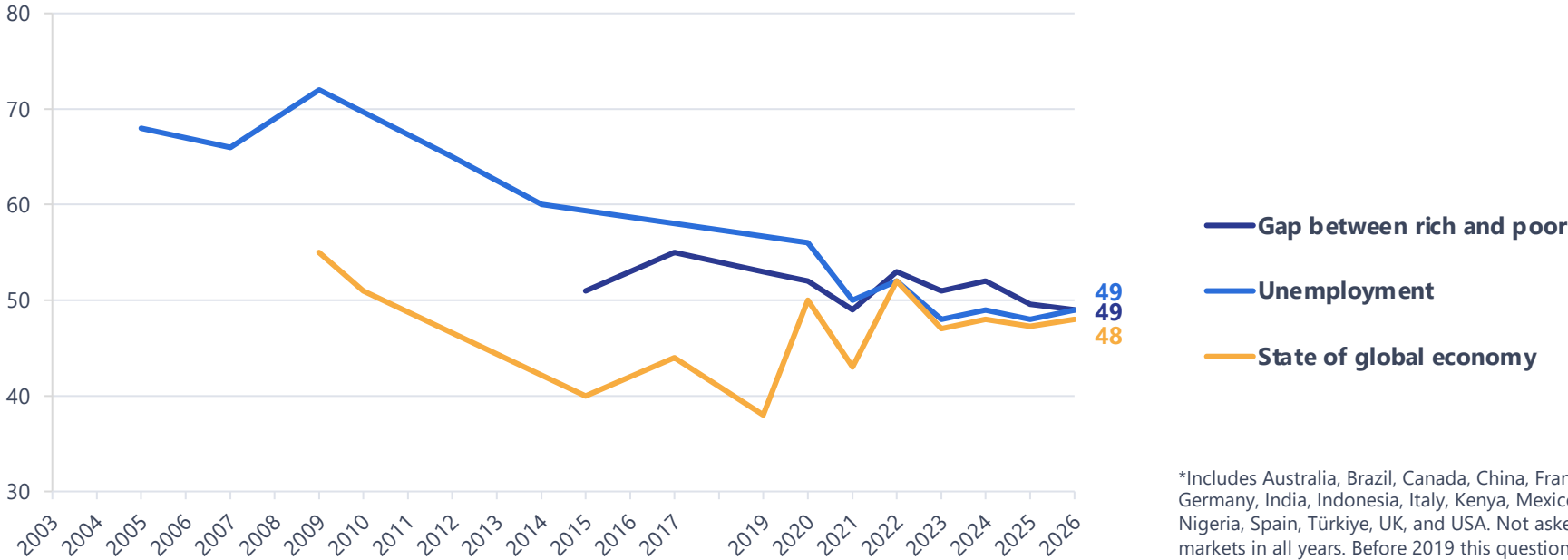


*Includes Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Spain, Türkiye, UK, and USA. Not asked in all markets in all years. Before 2019 this question was asked using an in-person and telephone methodology.

Concern about economic problems remains relatively low and steady in 2026, with worries about economic inequality continuing to trend down slightly

Perceived Seriousness of Economic Problems

"Very Serious," Top Issues, Average of 16 Markets,* 2003–2026



*Includes Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Spain, Türkiye, UK, and USA. Not asked in all markets in all years. Before 2019 this question was asked using an in-person and telephone methodology.

War and conflict and corruption dominate concerns in every region, but water pollution is also a top issue in most regions

Perceived Seriousness of Global Problems

"Very Serious," Top Issues, by Region, 2026

	Africa / Middle East	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America
1	Corruption (71%)	War and conflict (52%)	War and conflict (74%)	Corruption (83%)	War and conflict (65%)
2	War and conflict (68%)	Climate change (50%)	Corruption (56%)	Water pollution (80%)	Extreme poverty; Corruption (57% each)
3	Human rights abuses (66%)	Corruption (46%)	Water pollution (55%)	War and conflict (77%)	
4	Water pollution (65%)	Air pollution; Water pollution; Data security and privacy (41% each)	Natural resource depletion; Hunger and malnutrition (54% each)	Natural resource depletion (76%)	Hunger and malnutrition (56%)
5	Unemployment; Toxic chemicals (64% each)			Extreme poverty (75%)	Mental health (54%)

Water pollution is the top environmental concern in every region except Asia-Pacific, where climate change leads; Latin America is generally most concerned, Asia-Pacific least

Perceived Seriousness of Global Environmental Problems

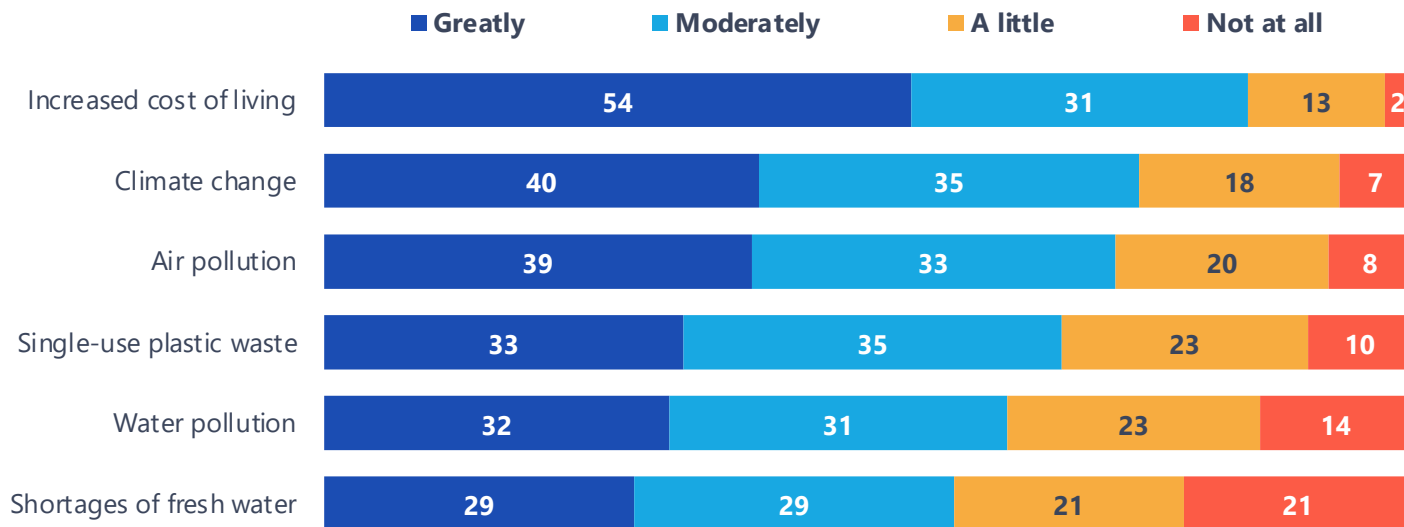
"Very Serious," Top Environmental Issues, by Region, 2026

	Africa / Middle East	Asia-Pacific	Europe	Latin America	North America
1	Water pollution (65%)	Climate change (50%)	Water pollution (55%)	Water pollution (80%)	Water pollution (52%)
2	Toxic chemicals (64%)	Water pollution; Air pollution (41% each)	Natural resource depletion (54%)	Natural resource depletion (76%)	Toxic chemicals (51%)
3	Water shortages (61%)		Water shortages (53%)	Climate change; Air pollution (72% each)	Natural resource depletion (49%)
4	Air pollution (60%)	Natural resource depletion (40%)	Climate change (51%)		Climate change; Biodiversity loss (48% each)
5	Natural resource depletion (58%)	Toxic chemicals (39%)	Biodiversity loss (51%)	Biodiversity loss (72%)	

Cost of living hits people hardest at a personal level, but four in ten also feel greatly affected by climate change and air pollution

Extent Personally Affected by Economic and Environmental Challenges

Average of 34 Markets, 2026



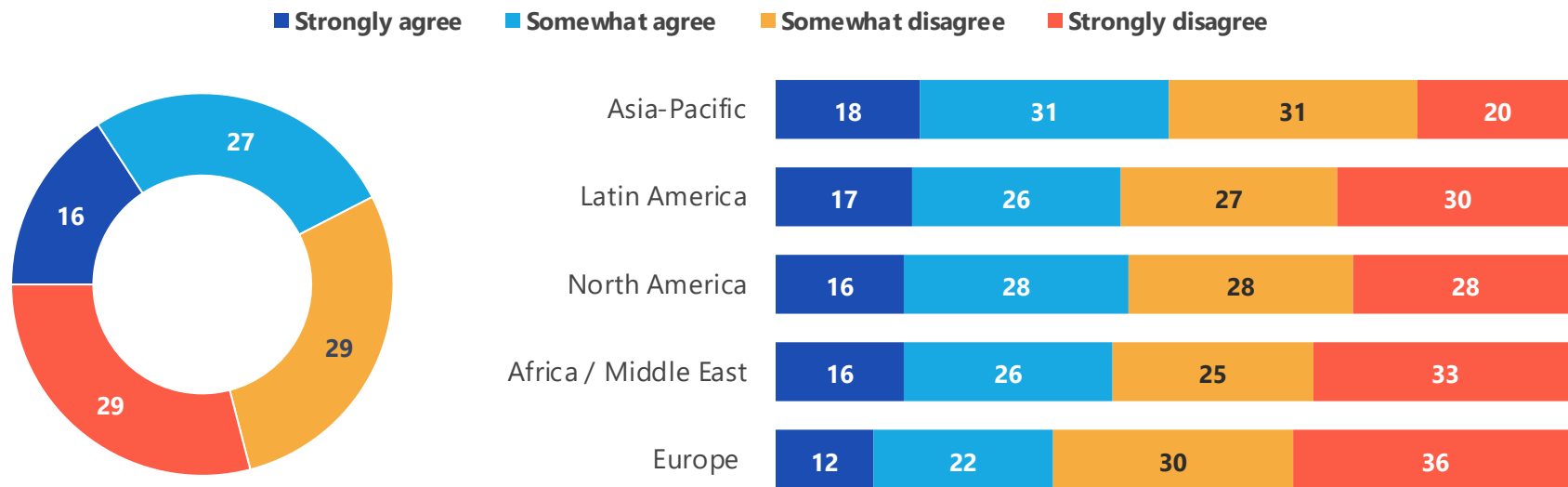
**Do Not Want to
Have Children
Because of
Climate Change**



More than four in ten say climate change would make them reluctant to start a family, peaking in Asia-Pacific and lowest in Europe

Do Not Want to Have Children Because of Climate Change

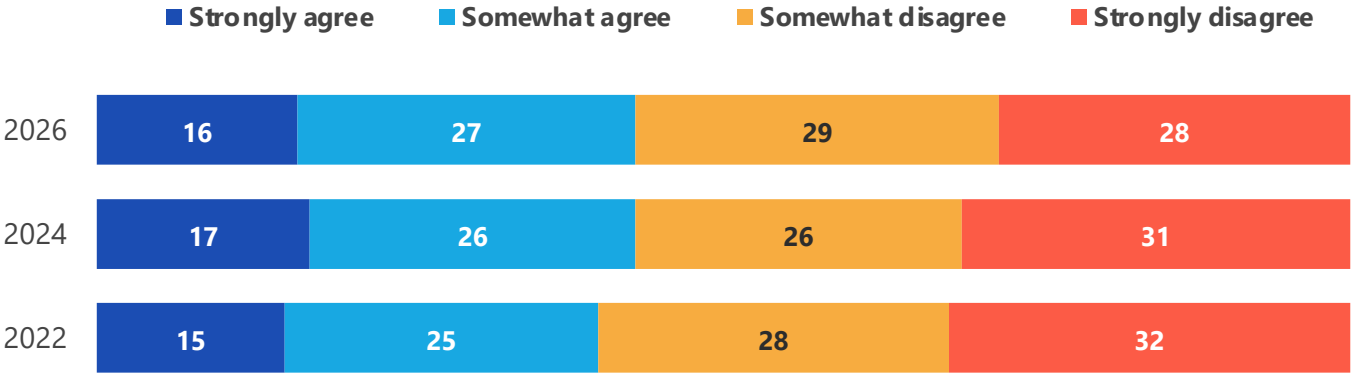
Average of 34 Markets and by Region, 2026



After rising between 2022 and 2024, unwillingness to have children because of climate change has remained high

Unwillingness to Have Children Because of Climate Change

Average of 31 Markets,* 2022–2026

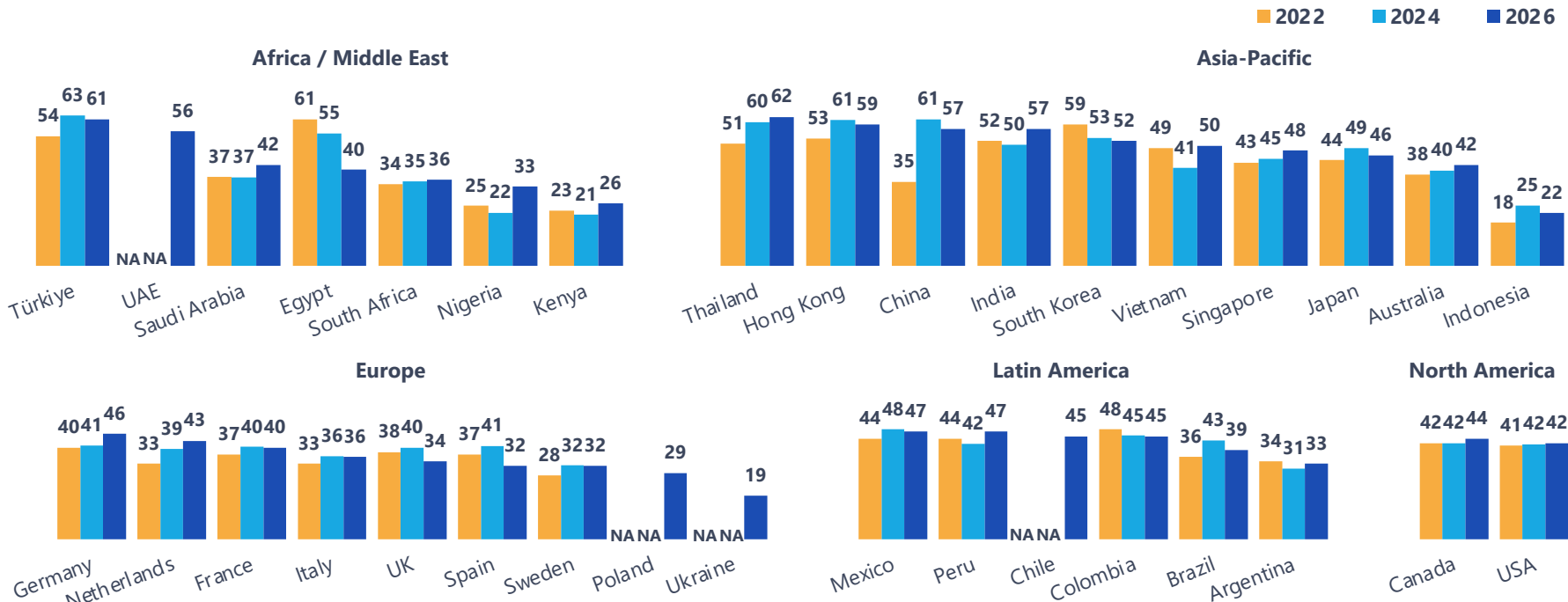


*Chile, Poland, UAE, and Ukraine were not included in this analysis as these markets were not surveyed in 2022 and 2024.

Majorities in several Asian markets surveyed say climate change would make them reluctant to start families

Do Not Want to Have Children Because of Climate Change

"Strongly" and "Somewhat Agree," by Market, 2022–2026



19 T8. For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. - I don't want to have children, or if I could, I would not want to have children, because of the effects of climate change.

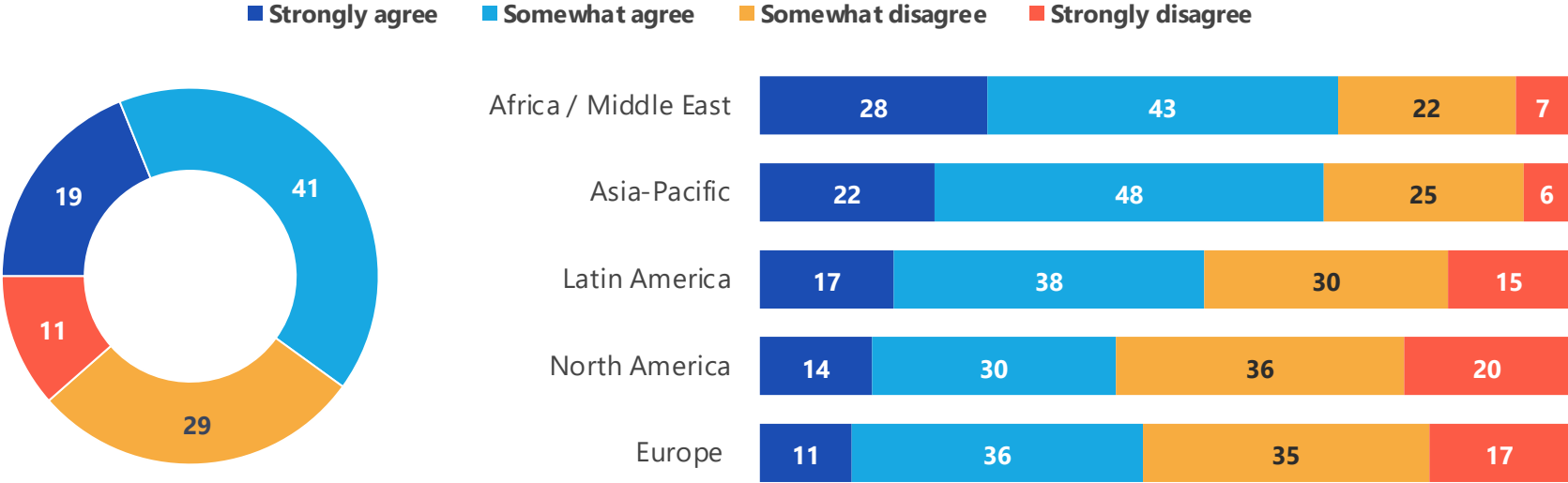
Belief that New Technology Will Solve the Problem of Climate Change & AI Impacts



Six in ten think new technology alone can solve climate change, a view far more common in Africa and the Middle East than in Europe or North America

Belief that New Technology Will Solve the Problem of Climate Change

Average of 34 Markets and by Region, 2026

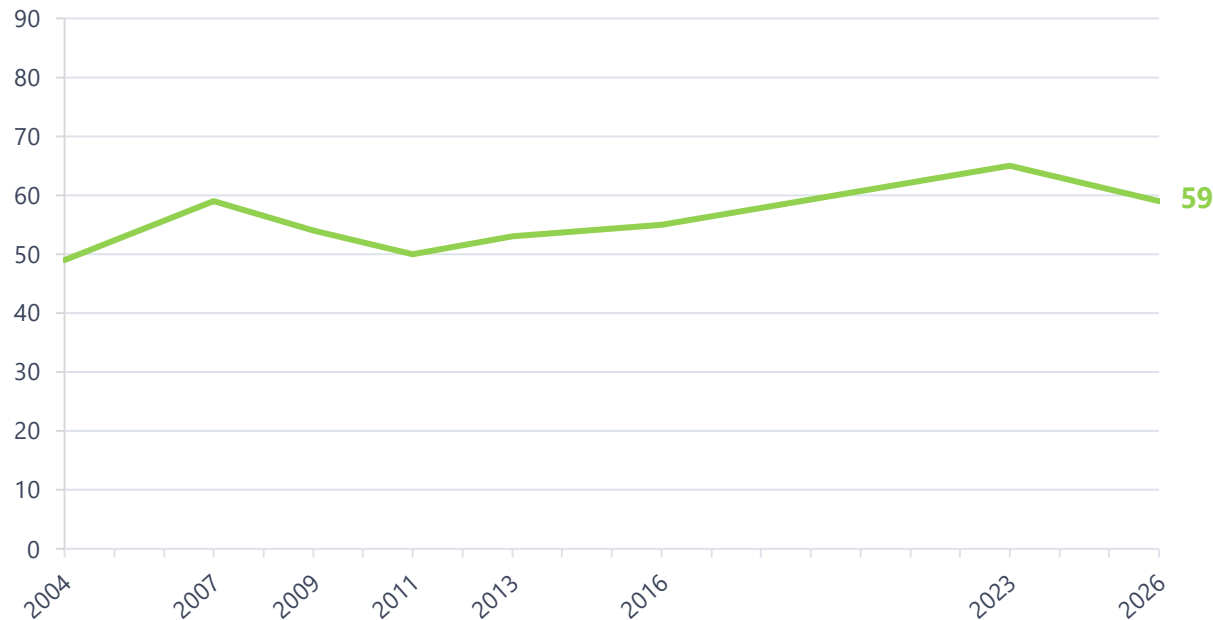


21 T8. For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. - New technology will solve the problem of climate change, requiring only minor changes in human thinking and individual behavior.

Belief that technology alone will solve climate change has slipped back from its 2023 peak, though it remains well above its mid-2000s level

New Technology Will Solve the Problem of Climate Change

"Strongly" and "Somewhat Agree," Average of 13 Markets,* 2004–2026



*Includes Brazil, Canada, China, Germany, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Spain, Türkiye, UK, and USA. Before 2020 this question was asked using an in-person and telephone methodology.

T8. For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. - New technology will solve the problem of climate change, requiring only minor changes in human thinking and individual behavior.

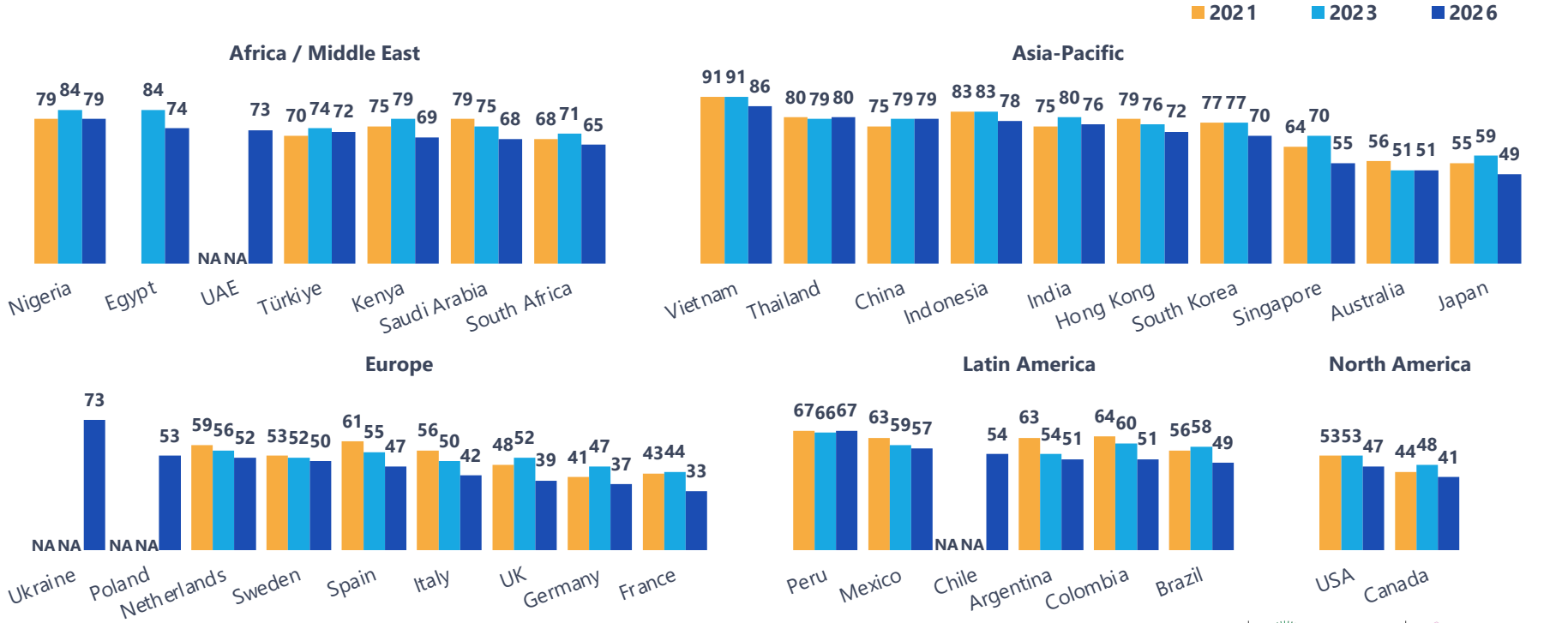


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Belief that technology alone will solve climate change remains highest across Africa and the Middle East and Asia-Pacific; it is lowest in Western Europe and North America

New Technology Will Solve the Problem of Climate Change

"Strongly" and "Somewhat Agree," by Market, 2021–2026

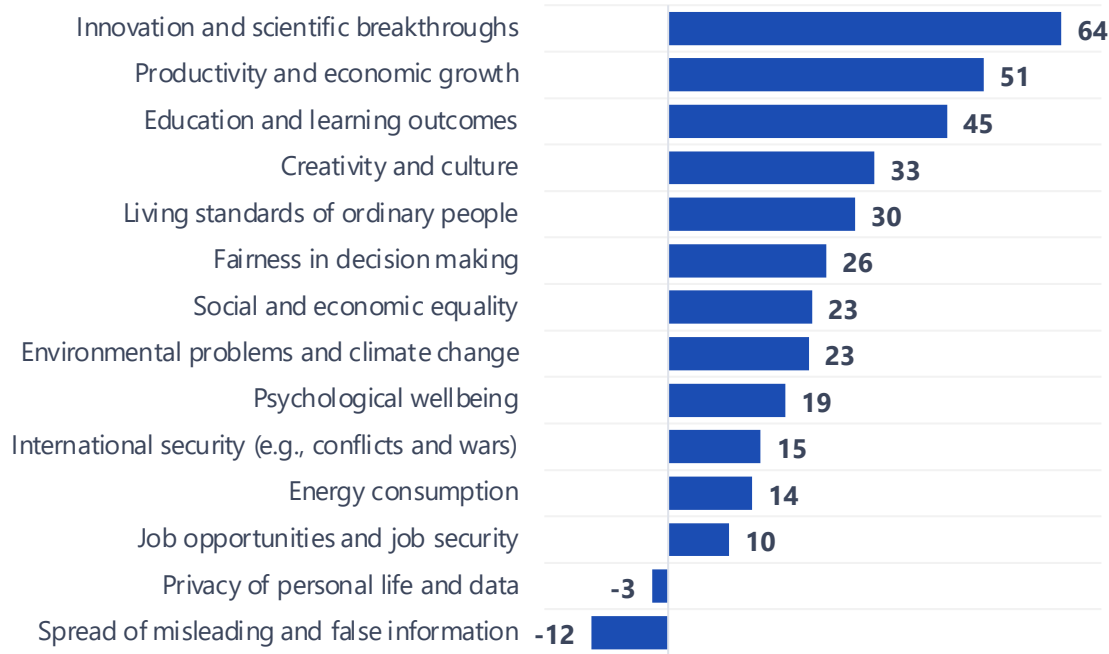


T8. For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. - New technology will solve the problem of climate change, requiring only minor changes in human thinking and individual behavior.

AI seen as most positive for innovation, the economy, and education, while it is perceived as most negative for misinformation, privacy, and jobs

Expected Future Impact of AI on Range of Social, Economic, and Environmental Area

Net Impact (positive minus negative), Average of 34 Markets, 2026



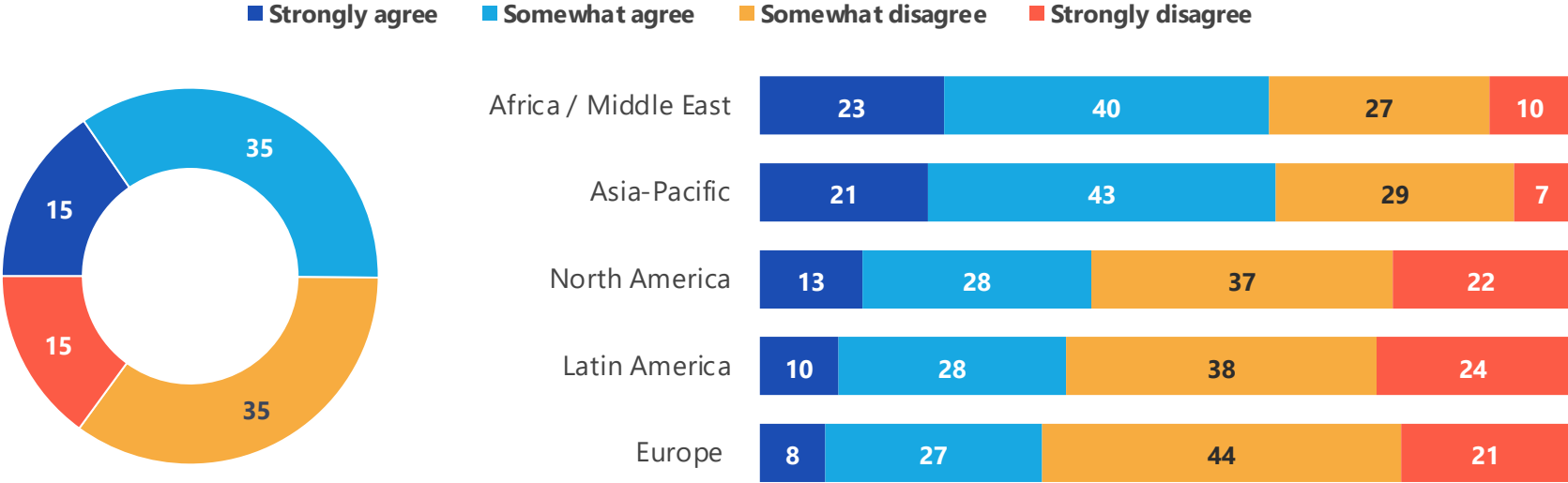
**Belief that Companies
Communicate
Honestly about
Social/Environmental
Performance**



Only half believe companies communicate honestly about their social and environmental performance, with people in Europe most likely to disagree

Belief that Companies Communicate Honestly about Social/Environmental Performance

Average of 34 Markets and by Region, 2026

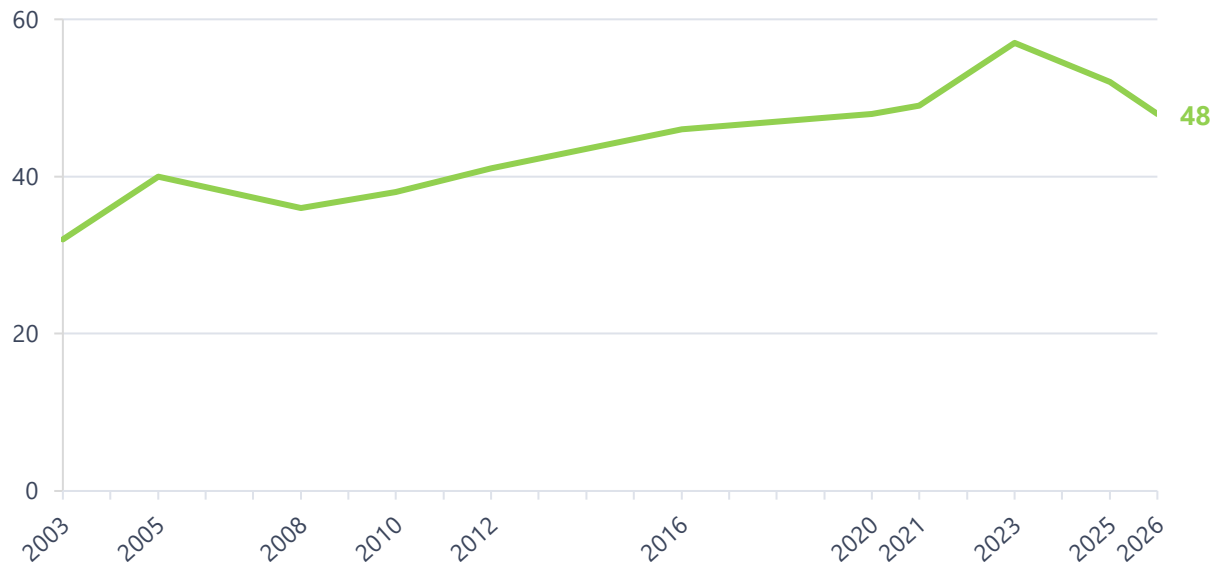


26 T8. For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. - Companies communicate honestly and truthfully about their social and environmental performance.

Perceptions of whether companies communicate honestly about their social and environmental performance have now fallen for a second straight wave

Companies Communicate Honestly about Social/Environmental Performance

"Strongly" and "Somewhat Agree," Average of 18 Markets,* 2003–2026

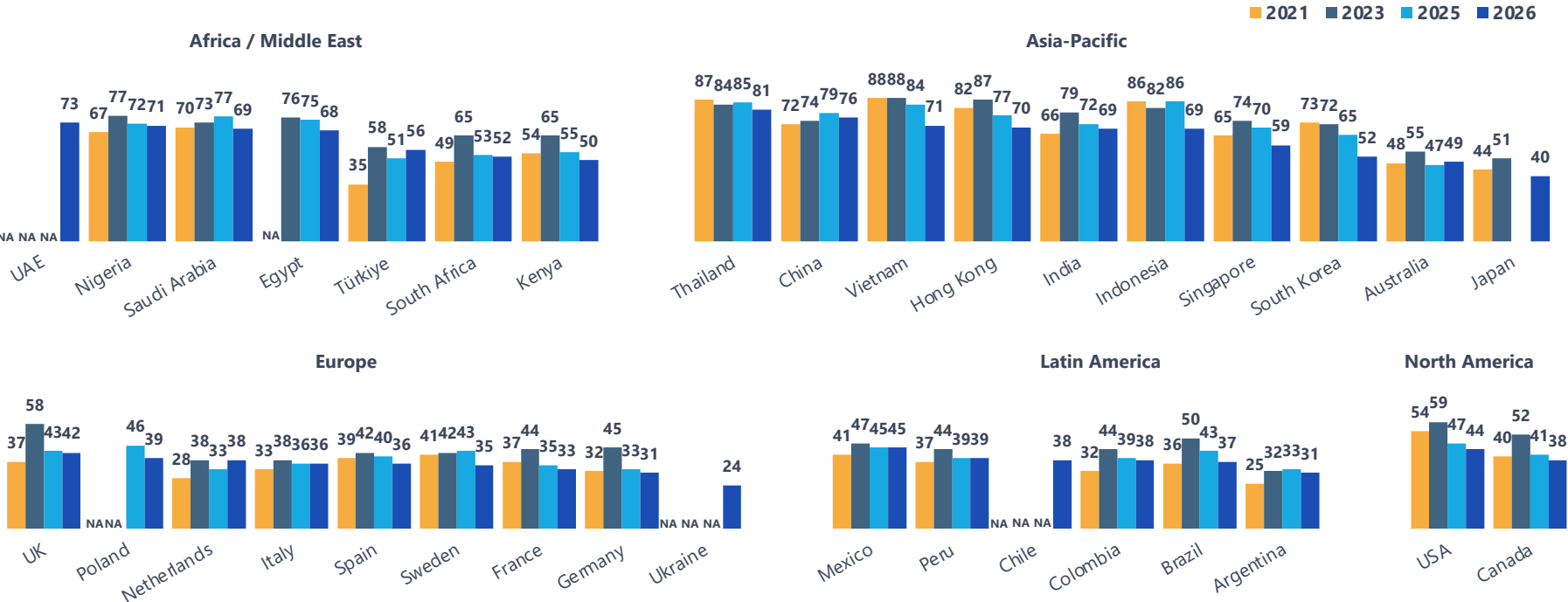


*Includes Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, South Korea, Spain, Türkiye, UK, and USA. Before 2020 this question was asked using an in-person and telephone methodology.

People in most markets surveyed have become less likely to say that companies communicate honestly about their social and environmental performance

Companies Communicate Honestly about Social/Environmental Performance

"Strongly" and "Somewhat Agree," by Market, 2021–2026



28 T8. For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. - Companies communicate honestly and truthfully about their social and environmental performance.

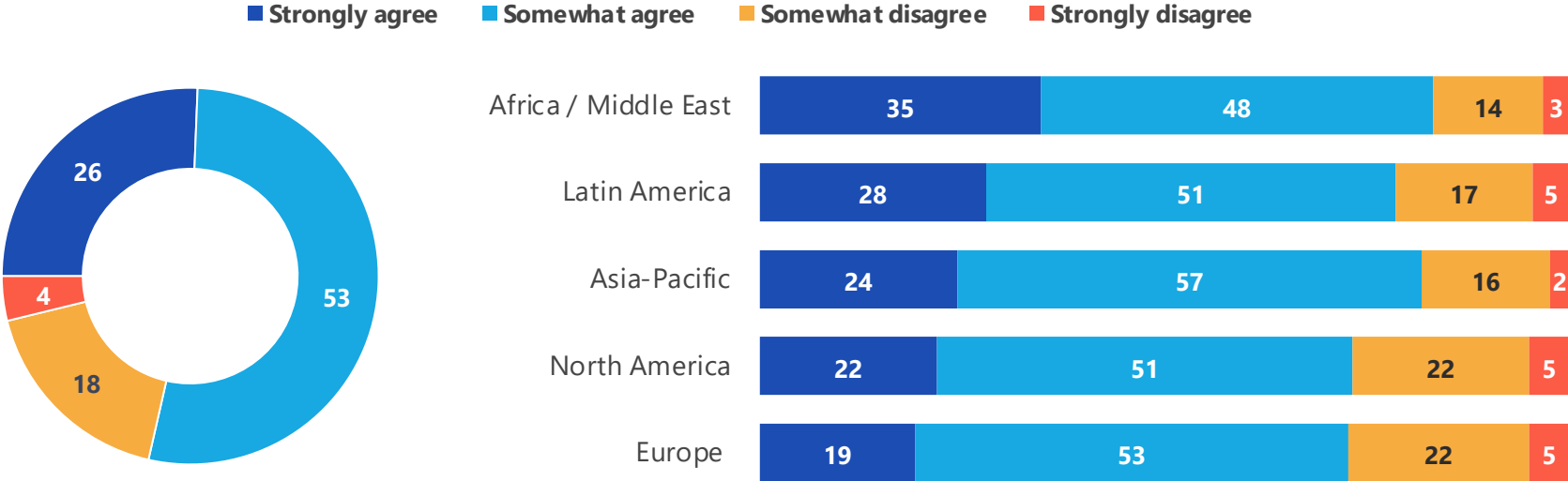
**Belief Companies
and Brands Are an
Essential Part of
the Solution**



Almost eight in ten see companies and brands as an essential part of the solution to global challenges

Companies Are Essential for Solving Challenges Facing Humanity

Average of 34 Markets and by Region, 2026

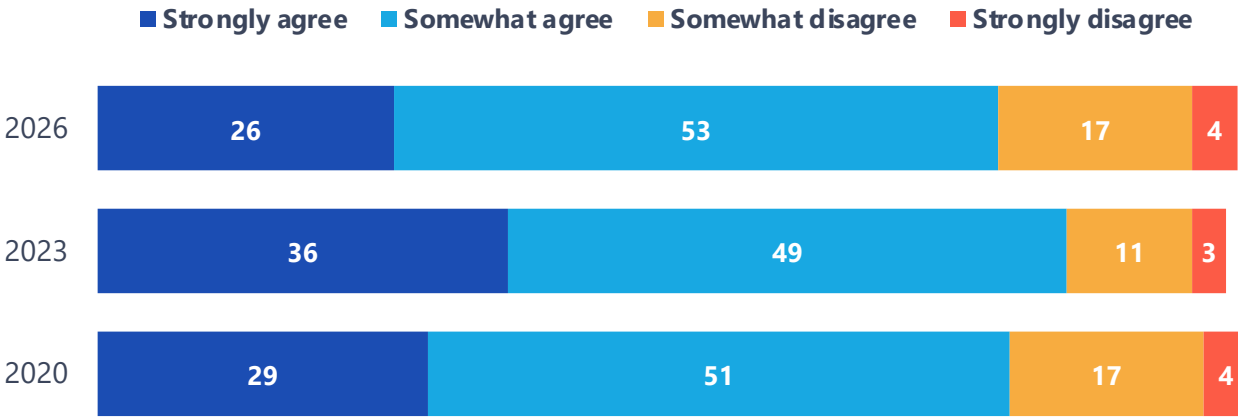


30 T8. For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. - I believe that companies and their brands are an essential part of the solution for the challenges facing humanity today.

Belief that companies are essential to solving global challenges has dropped compared to 2023 at the global level

Companies Are Essential for Solving Challenges Facing Humanity

Average of 26 Markets,* 2020–2026

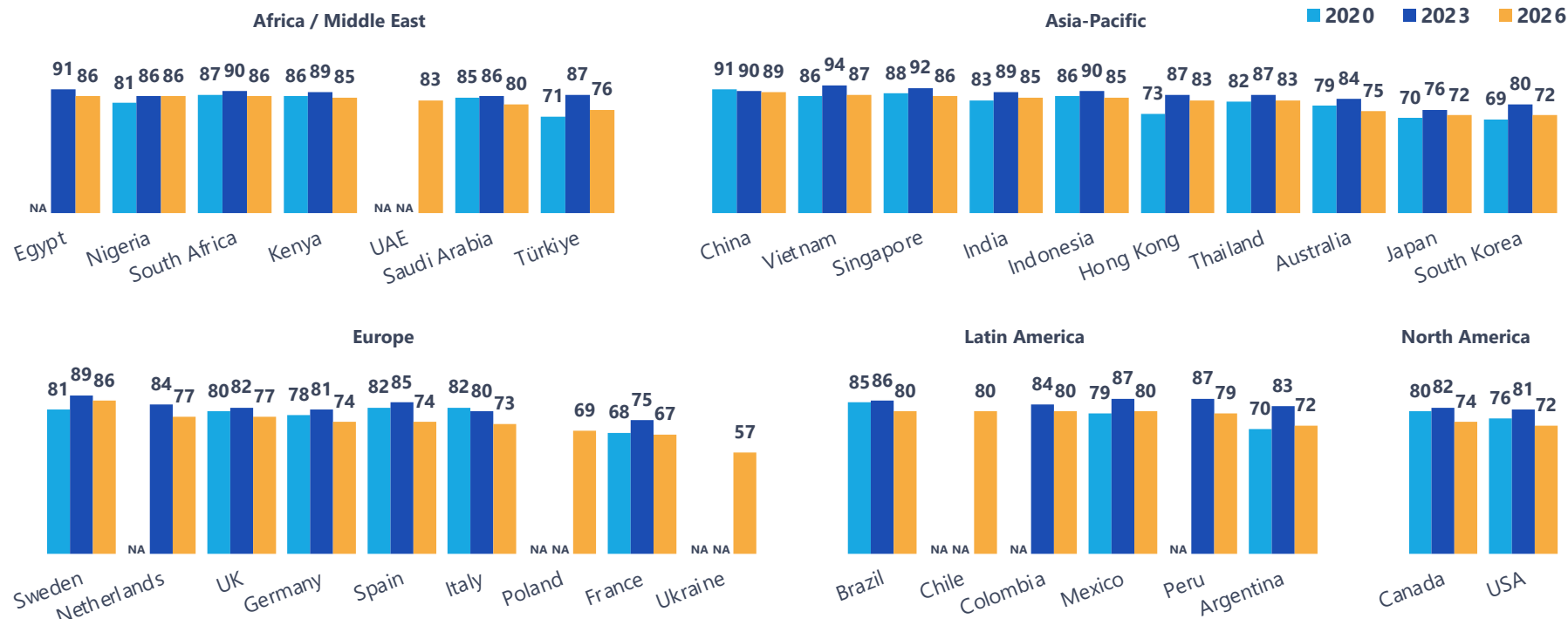


*Includes Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, Türkiye, UK, USA, and Vietnam.

Agreement that companies are essential to solving humanity's challenges has fallen back from 2023 in almost every market, though most remain above 2020 levels

Companies Are Essential for Solving Challenges Facing Humanity

"Strongly" and "Somewhat Agree," by Market, 2020–2026



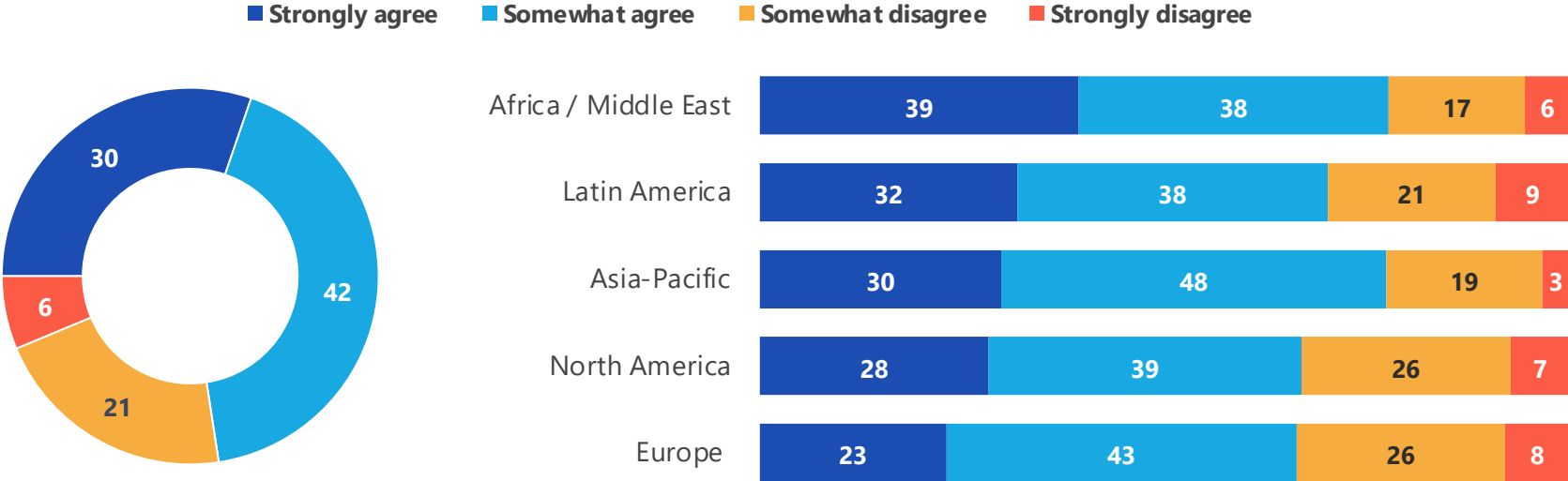
Support for Regulation of Corporate Responsibility



Nearly three-quarters want governments to require companies to go beyond their economic role, led by people in Africa / Middle East

Support for Regulation of Corporate Responsibility

Average of 34 Markets and by Region, 2026

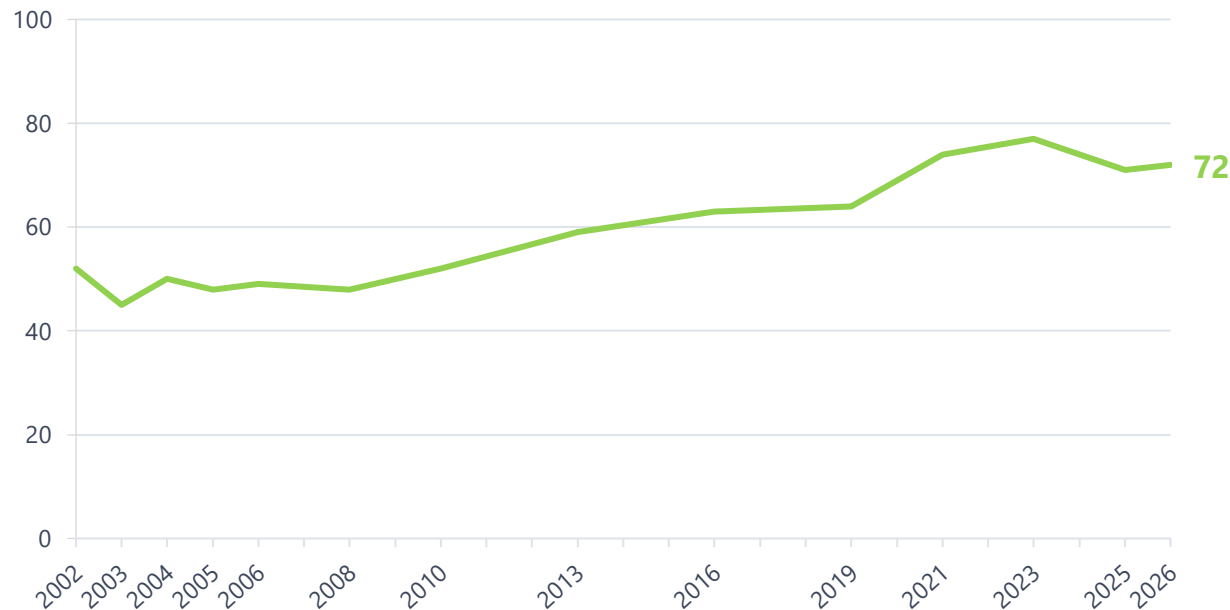


34 T8. For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. - Our government should create laws that require large companies to go beyond their traditional economic role and work to make a better society, even though this could lead to higher prices and fewer jobs.

Support for regulating corporate responsibility holds steady at 72% in 2026 — far above the 52% of the early 2000s, but below the 2023 peak of 77%

Support for Regulation of Corporate Responsibility

"Strongly" and "Somewhat Agree," Average of 18 Markets* 2002–2026



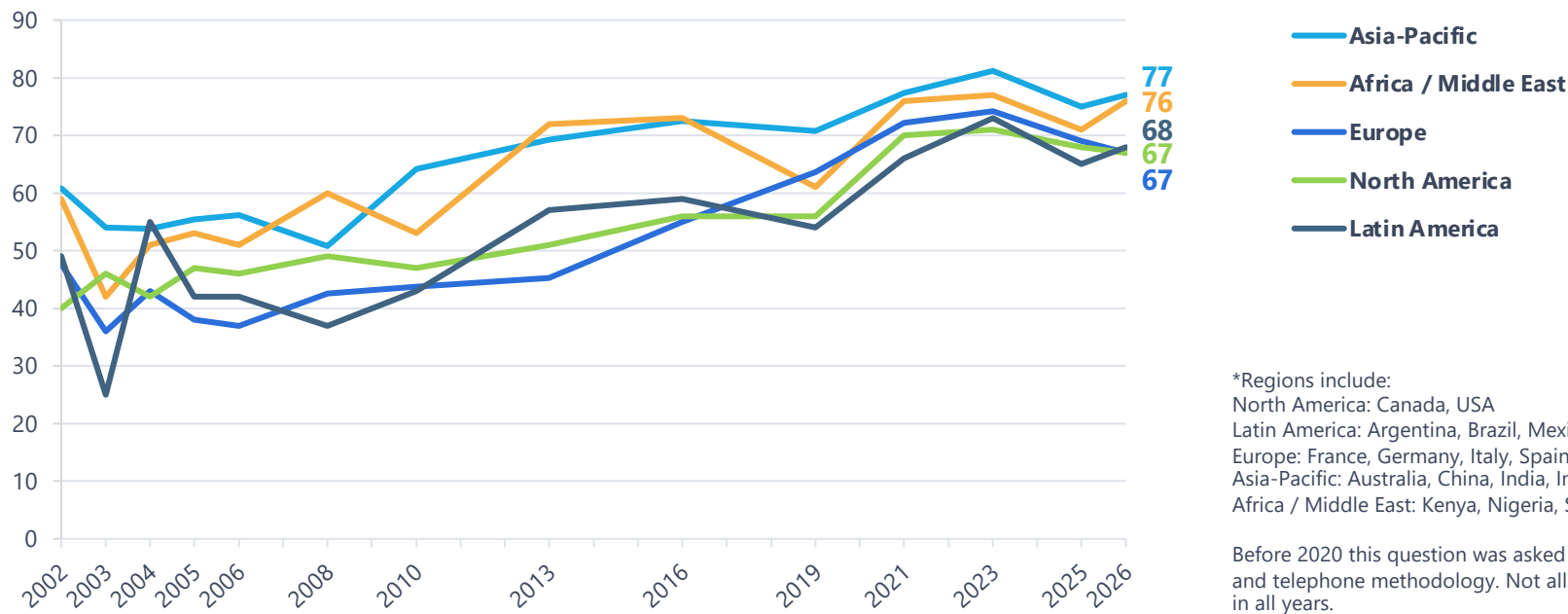
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People in Asia-Pacific and Africa / Middle East remain the strongest backers of regulating corporate responsibility, but support in other regions has also grown

Support for Regulating Corporate Responsibility

"Strongly" and "Somewhat Agree," by Region,* 2002–2026



*Regions include:

North America: Canada, USA

Latin America: Argentina, Brazil, Mexico

Europe: France, Germany, Italy, Spain, UK

Asia-Pacific: Australia, China, India, Indonesia, South Korea

Africa / Middle East: Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa

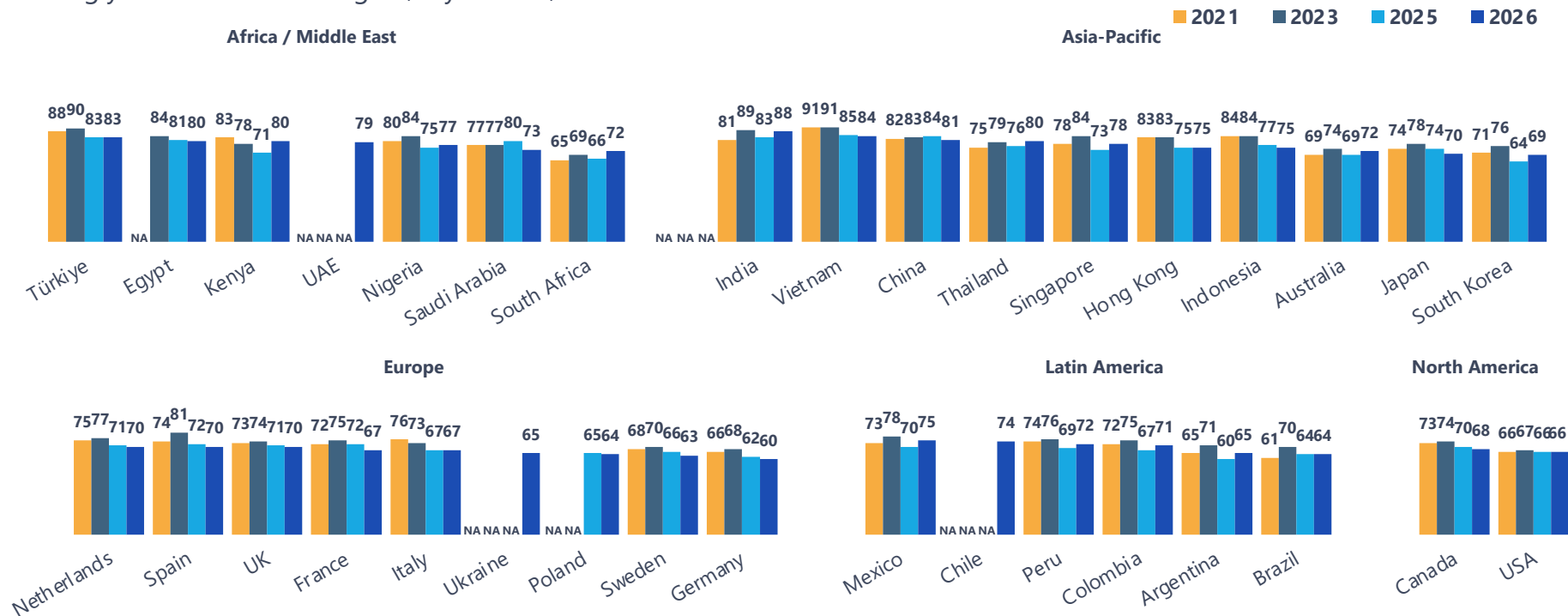
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Support for regulating corporate responsibility remains broad with support ranging from a low of six in ten in Europe to almost nine in ten in India

Support for Regulating Corporate Responsibility

"Strongly" and "Somewhat Agree," by Market, 2021–2026



T8. For each of the following statements, please indicate if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree. - Our government should create laws that require large companies to go beyond their traditional economic role and work to make a better society, even though this could lead to higher prices and fewer jobs.

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