



UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA

University of Botswana

5 October 2012, Gaborone, Botswana

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Batswana Show Support for Democracy; Note Areas for Improvement**

The Afrobarometer is a comparative series of public attitude surveys, covering up to 35 African countries in Round 5 (2011-2013). It measures public attitudes on democracy and its alternatives, evaluations of the quality of governance and economic performance. In addition, the survey assesses the views of the electorate on critical political issues in the surveyed countries. The Afrobarometer also provides comparisons over time, as four rounds of surveys have been held from 1999 to 2008 and Round 5 is currently underway.

Afrobarometer's work in Botswana is coordinated by the Southern African Barometer research team at the University of Botswana. Fieldwork for Round 5 was conducted in Botswana from 30 June to 11 July 2012. The survey interviewed 1200 adult Batswana, and a sample of this size yields results with a margin of error of +/-3% at a 95% confidence level.

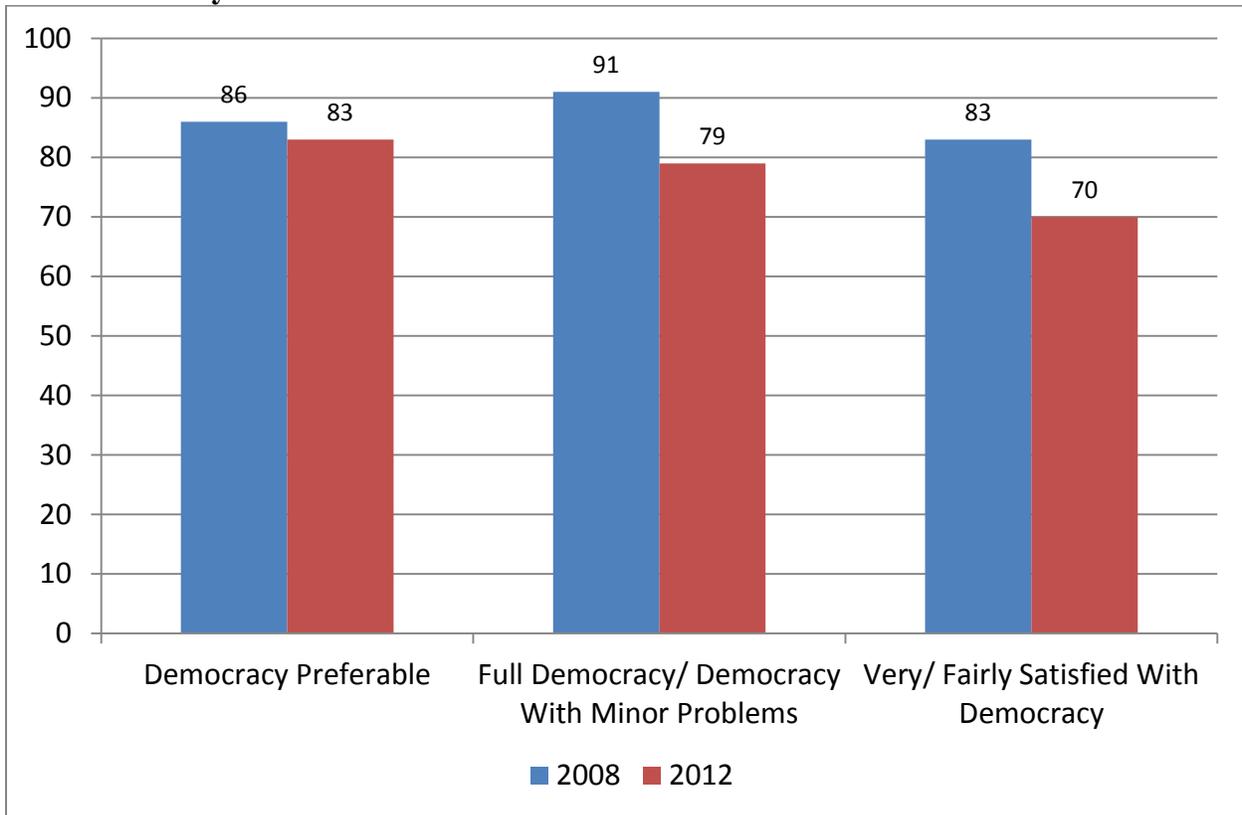
## FINDINGS

The most recent Afrobarometer survey reveals that Batswana find democracy preferable to any other form of government. Batswana believe the country is a full democracy or a democracy with minor problems, and Batswana express satisfaction with the country's democracy. Nevertheless, the survey does show a decrease in people's perception of the quality of democracy and satisfaction with democracy. In addition, the survey illustrates Batswana support for laws or procedures to prevent floor crossing (i.e. party switching) between elections and to ensure transparent financial disclosure.

### **Batswana's Assessments of Democracy Quality and Satisfaction Remain High, but Show Significant Declines**

A majority of Batswana (83%) believe that democracy is preferable to any other government. When asked to assess the quality of democracy in Botswana, a sizable majority (79%) suggest that Botswana is a full democracy or a democracy with minor problems. This assessment of democratic quality registered a considerable decline (by 12%) from the 91% who expressed the same opinion in the 2008 survey. Similarly, satisfaction with Botswana's democracy has declined from 83% in 2008 to 70% in 2012. In sum, although Batswana perceptions of democratic quality and satisfaction remain high, there is significant decline in both areas as represented in the 2008 and 2012 Afrobarometer surveys.

**Figure 1: Batswana Support for Democracy, Assessment of Democracy, and Satisfaction with Democracy**



*Question 1: Which of these three statements is closest to your own opinion:  
Statement 1: Democracy is preferable to any other kind of government (% Statement 1)  
Statement 2: In some circumstances, a non-democratic government can be preferable  
Statement 3: For someone like me, it doesn't matter what kind of government we have.*

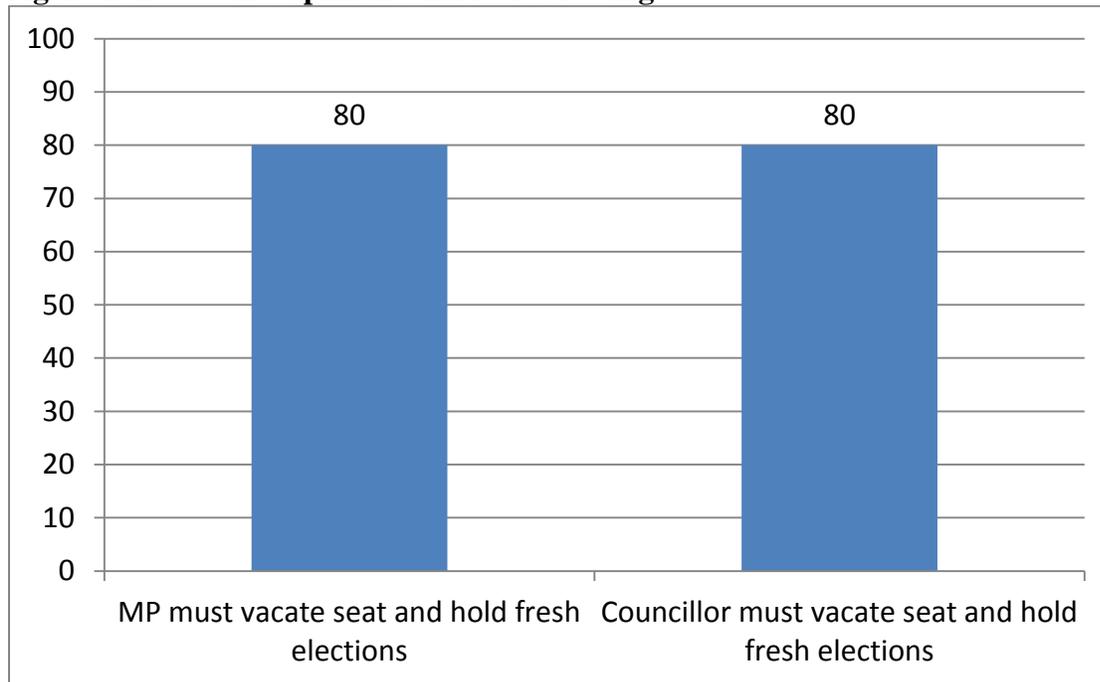
*Question 2: In your opinion how much of a democracy is Botswana today?  
Question 3: Overall, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Botswana?*

**Batswana Show Support for Regulating Floor Crossing and Increased Transparency**

The Constitution of Botswana allows freedom of association, which extends to members of parliament's ability to change parties without calling new elections (i.e. floor crossing). However, the survey reveals overwhelming Batswana support for procedures or laws that require members of parliament and councillors to vacate their office and participate in fresh elections if they switch parties. Specifically, 80% of Batswana support vacating and fresh election for members of parliament, and 80% have the same opinion for councillors.

Presently, cabinet ministers disclose their assets and liabilities to the president. Batswana are in support of measures to increase transparency and oversight of politicians' financial holdings. 54% of respondents would like cabinet members to disclose their finances to an independent agency, and a significant majority (64%) show support for a law that requires financial disclosure for all members of parliament and senior government officials.

**Figure 2: Batswana Opinions on Floor Crossing**

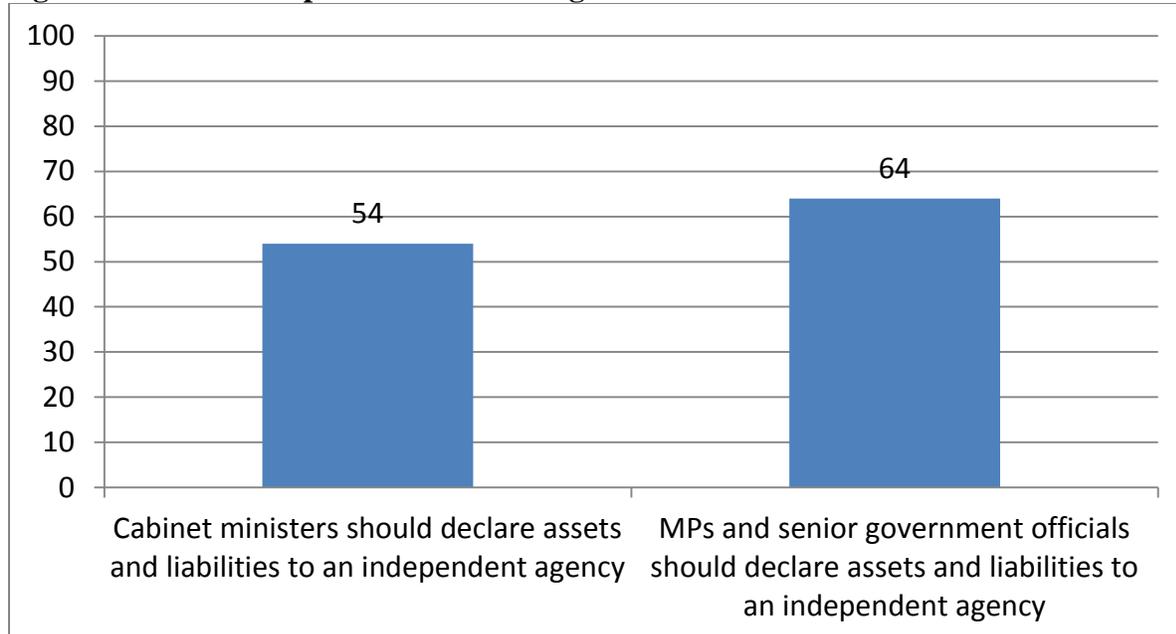


Question 1 and 2: Which of the following statements is closest to your view:

Statement 1: An MP/ Councillor who resigns from his or her party to join another party or stay independent, must vacate his or her seat so that fresh elections can be held in their area.

Statement 2: An MP/ Councillor should be allowed to resign from his or her party and join a party of his or her own choice without having to vacate his/her seat. (% Agree or agree very strongly with Statement 1)

**Figure 3: Batswana Opinions on Declaring Assets and Liabilities**



Question: Which of the following statements is closest to your view:

Statement 1: Cabinet ministers should be required to declare their assets and liabilities to an independent body instead of the current system of declaring to the President.

Statement 2: The current system where cabinet ministers declare their assets and liabilities to the President is sufficient and should therefore be left unchanged. (% Agree or agree very strongly with Statement 1)

Question 4: Which of the following statements is closest to your view:

Statement 1: The law on declaration of assets and liabilities by cabinet ministers should be expanded to include Members of Parliament and senior government officials.

Statement 2: The current law which requires only cabinet ministers to declare their assets and liabilities, is sufficient. (% Agree or agree very strongly with Statement 1)

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