
Afrobarometer Round 6

New data from
across Africa



Accra, Ghana
25 May 2016

News release

Africa Day: Could stronger public support move regional integration for Africa from rhetoric to reality? (Afrobarometer)

For advocates of regional integration as a path toward economic and political power for Africa, Afrobarometer's latest survey findings suggest that many citizens still need to be convinced of the benefits of integration.

The findings, which are being released on the occasion of Africa Day 2016 (May 25), show limited public support for integration, with wide variations by country and region. On average across 36 countries, a majority of Africans favour free cross-border movement of people and goods, but this is not the majority view in 15 of those countries. Meanwhile, only one in four citizens say it's easy to cross international borders.

When asked to choose between respecting national sovereignty vs. a regional role for states in protecting free elections and human rights in neighbouring countries, most Africans emphasize national sovereignty. And while a majority of Africans consider the African Union (AU) and regional economic communities (RECs) at least "a little bit" helpful to their countries, this is not the case in all countries, and about three in 10 citizens don't know enough about these organisations to have an opinion.

Titled "Regional integration for Africa: Could stronger public support turn 'rhetoric into reality'?" (Dispatch No. 91), the report is based on nearly 54,000 interviews in 36 African countries in 2014/2015. It is available in English and French at <http://globalreleases.afrobarometer.org>.

Key findings

- On average across 36 countries, a majority (56%) of Africans say they should be able to move freely across international borders in order to trade or work in other countries. But in 15 countries, less than half of citizens support free cross-border movement. Support is strongest in West and East Africa and weakest in North Africa (Figure 1).
- Only one in four citizens (26%) say it is "easy" or "very easy" to cross international borders to work or trade in other countries (Figure 2). Central and West African countries are most likely to describe crossing borders as "difficult" or "very difficult."
- Only one-third (34%) of respondents agree that governments should help guarantee free elections and human rights in neighbouring countries, while 58% instead emphasize the need to respect national sovereignty.
- About six of 10 citizens across 36 countries say the AU (58%) and respective regional organisations (61%) help their country at least "a little bit"; about four of 10 say they help "somewhat" or "a lot" (Figure 3). Liberians have by far the most positive perceptions of AU and REC (ECOWAS) assistance, while only one-fourth of Moroccans consider the AU and REC (UMA) even slightly helpful.

- Many citizens still know little about what these organisations are doing: About three in 10 citizens say they don't know enough about the AU (30%) or their respective RECs (28%) to assess their helpfulness. But access to information makes a difference: Citizens who often listen to radio news are more likely to consider the AU and regional organisations helpful than are those who consume radio news less frequently (Figure 4).

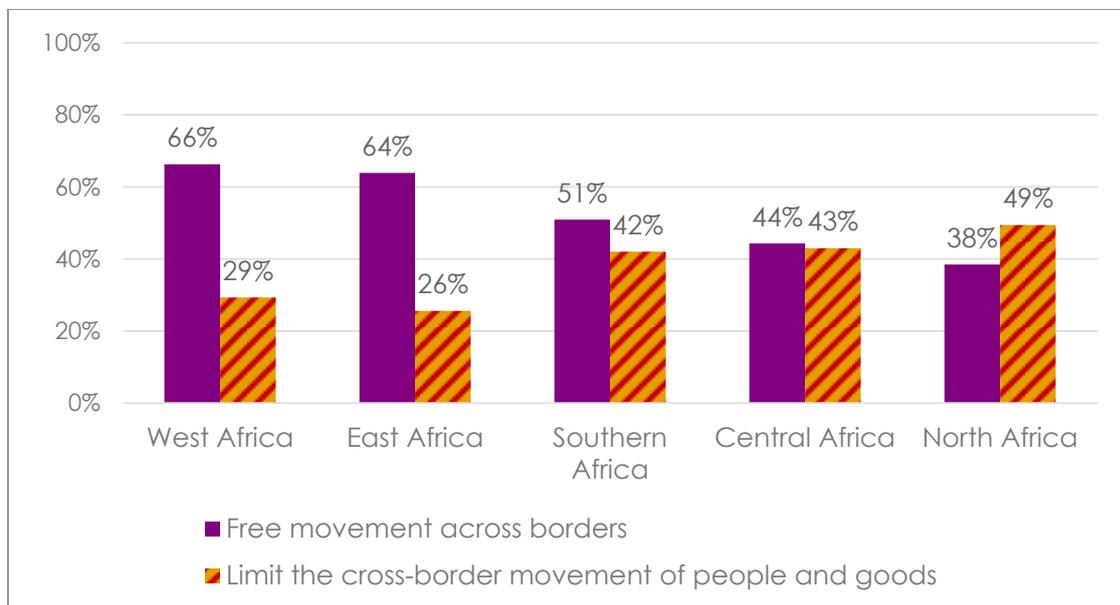
Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and findings from Round 6 surveys (2014/2015) are currently being released. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2% (for samples of 2,400) or +/-3% (for samples of 1,200) at a 95% confidence level.

Interested readers should visit <http://globalreleases.afrobarometer.org> for previous Round 6 releases and watch for additional releases over the coming months.

Charts

Figure 1: Support for free movement across borders | by region | 36 countries | 2014/2015



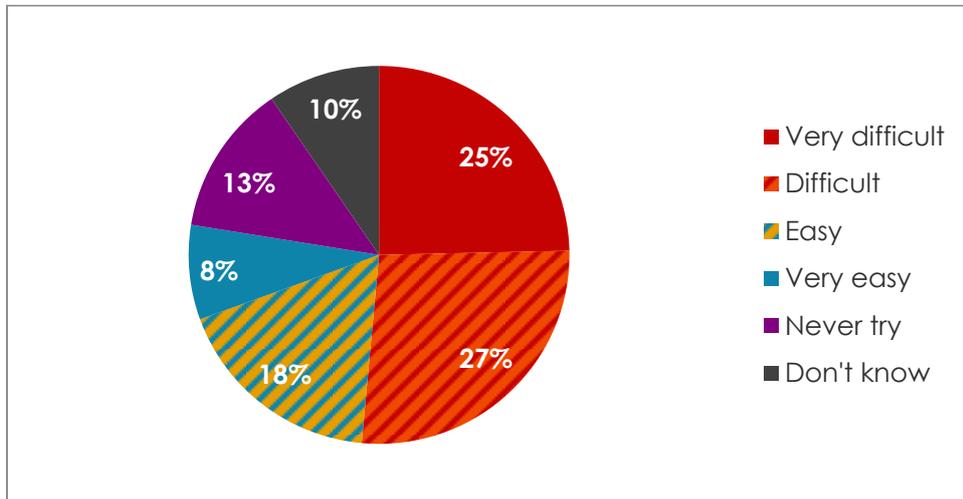
Respondents were asked: Which of the following statements is closest to your view?

Statement 1: People living in [region] should be able to move freely across international borders in order to trade or work in other countries.

Statement 2: Because foreign migrants take away jobs and foreign traders sell their goods at very cheap prices, governments should protect their own citizens and limit the cross-border movement of people and goods.

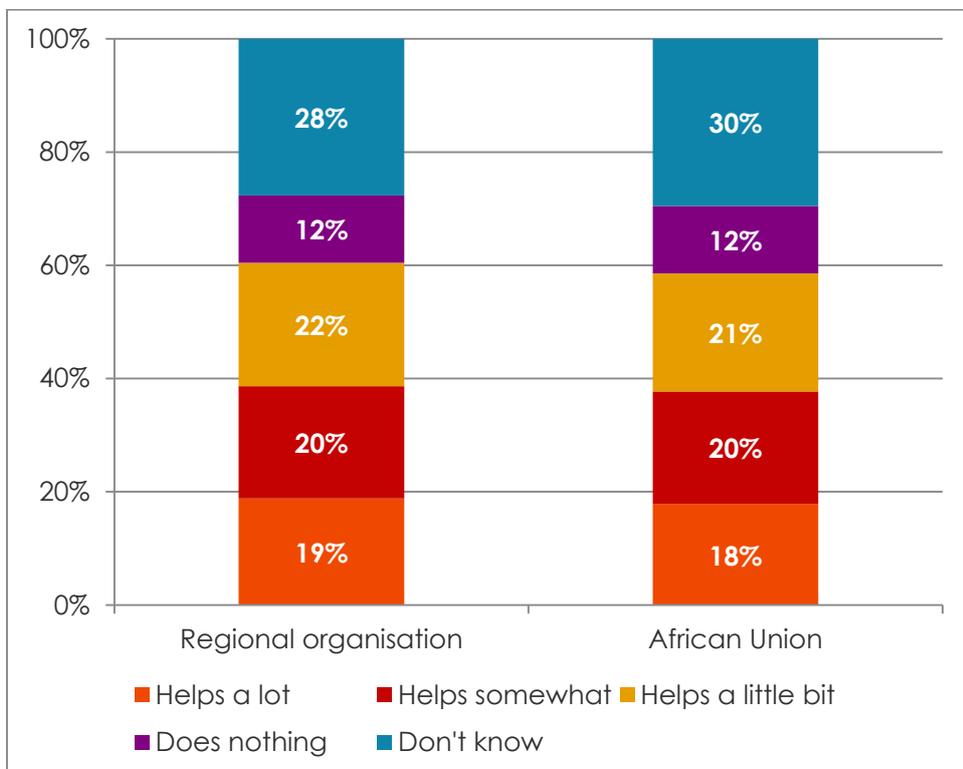
(% who "agree" or "agree very strongly" with each statement)

Figure 2: Perceived difficulty of crossing international borders | 36 countries
 | 2014/2015



Respondents were asked: *In your opinion, how easy or difficult is it for people in [region] to cross international borders in order to work or trade in other countries, or haven't you heard enough to say?*

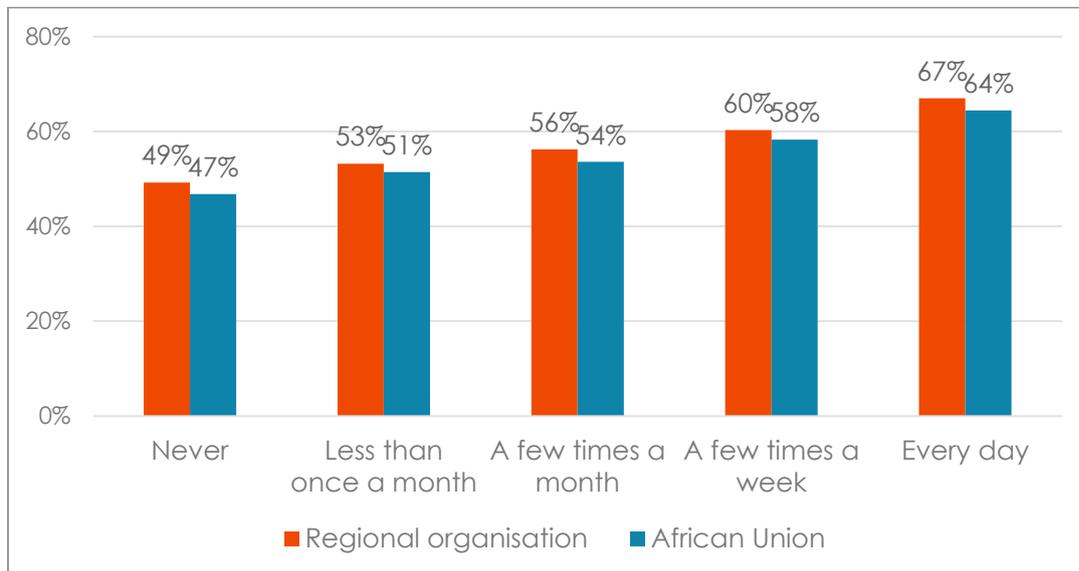
Figure 3: Perceived helpfulness of African Union and regional organisations
 | 36 countries | 2014/2015



Respondents were asked:

- *In your opinion, how much does [the regional organisation for your region] do to help your country, or haven't you heard enough to say?*
- *In your opinion, how much does the African Union do to help your country, or haven't you heard enough to say?*

Figure 4: Perceived helpfulness of African Union and regional organisations | by frequency of radio news consumption | 36 countries | 2014/2015



Respondents were asked:

- In your opinion, how much does [the regional organisation] do to help your country, or haven't you heard enough to say?
- In your opinion, how much does the African Union do to help your country, or haven't you heard enough to say?
- How often do you get news from the following sources: Radio?

(Figure shows % who say the AU and regional organization help "a little bit," "somewhat," or "a lot," disaggregated by how often respondents get news from the radio.)

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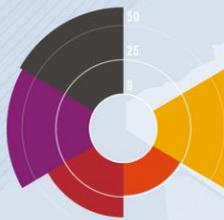
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Citizens' views on regional integration in Africa

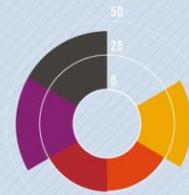
36 countries | 2014/2015

West Africa



66% 24% 40%
62% 64%

North Africa



38% 24% 25%
43% 43%

East Africa



64% 27% 36%
58% 59%

Central Africa



44% 17% 23%
70% 71%

Southern Africa



51% 32% 33%
58% 62%

36-country average



Favour free cross-border movement of people and goods



Say it's easy to move across borders



States should help protect elections/rights in neighbouring countries



African Union helps their country



Regional economic community helps their country