



Maseru, Lesotho
6 May 2022

News release

Basotho want more powers for the King, Afrobarometer survey shows

Almost nine out of 10 Basotho say the King should have decision-making power on national issues as well as the power to appoint a caretaker government in the event of a parliamentary no-confidence vote for the prime minister, a recent Afrobarometer survey indicates.

Indeed, a substantial majority of citizens would approve allowing the King to govern the country, survey findings show.

Basotho also express majority support for a daughter's right to succeed to chieftainship.

These findings follow a recent High-Level Reflective Stakeholder Forum at which the National Reforms Authority (NRA) reported on progress in implementing a series of constitutional reforms aimed at ensuring peace and stability. At the end of the four-day meeting, the NRA released its 2021 National Reforms Authority Report, which cites a list of proposed reforms that would require a referendum, including "the powers of the King" and "female succession to chieftainship."

Key findings

- Almost nine out of 10 Basotho "agree" or "strongly agree" that the King should be able to make decisions even if they contradict advice from the prime minister (85%) and should have the power to appoint a caretaker government in the event of a successful no-confidence motion against the prime minister (86%) (Figure 1).
- More than two-thirds (69%) of respondents also express support for abolishing elections and Parliament and allowing the King to govern the country.
 - Most Basotho feel strongly about these issues: 70% say they "strongly agree" that the King should have decision-making power and the right to appoint a caretaker government (Figure 2). And 58% say they "strongly approve" of government by the King (Figure 3).
 - Support for the King's decision-making power is 80% or higher across key demographic groups (Figure 4).
- Nearly two-thirds (63%) of Basotho say chiefs' daughters should have the same rights as sons to succeed to chieftainship (Figure 5). Support for gender equality in chieftainship succession is stronger among women than men (73% vs. 53%) (Figure 6).

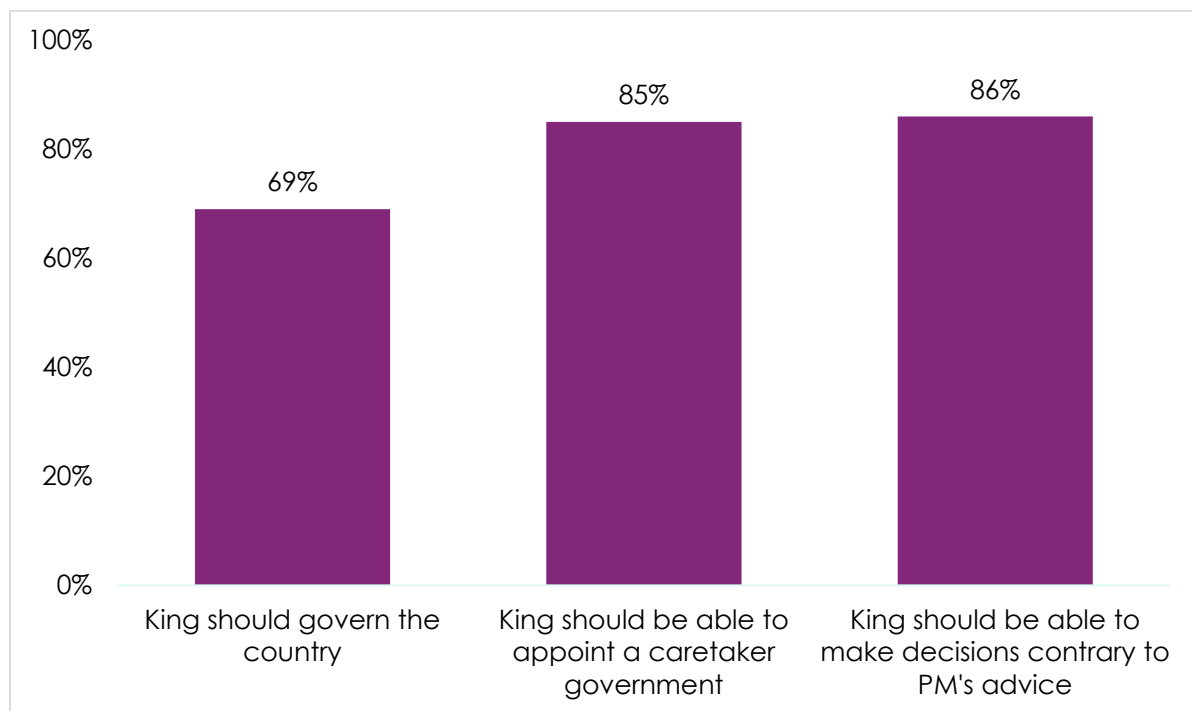
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight survey rounds in up to 39 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2022) are currently underway. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Lesotho, led by Advice Lesotho, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult citizens in February-March 2022. A sample of this size yields country-level results with a margin of error of +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. Previous surveys were conducted in Lesotho in 2000, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2020.

Charts

Figure 1: Views on the role of the King | Lesotho | 2022



Respondents were asked:

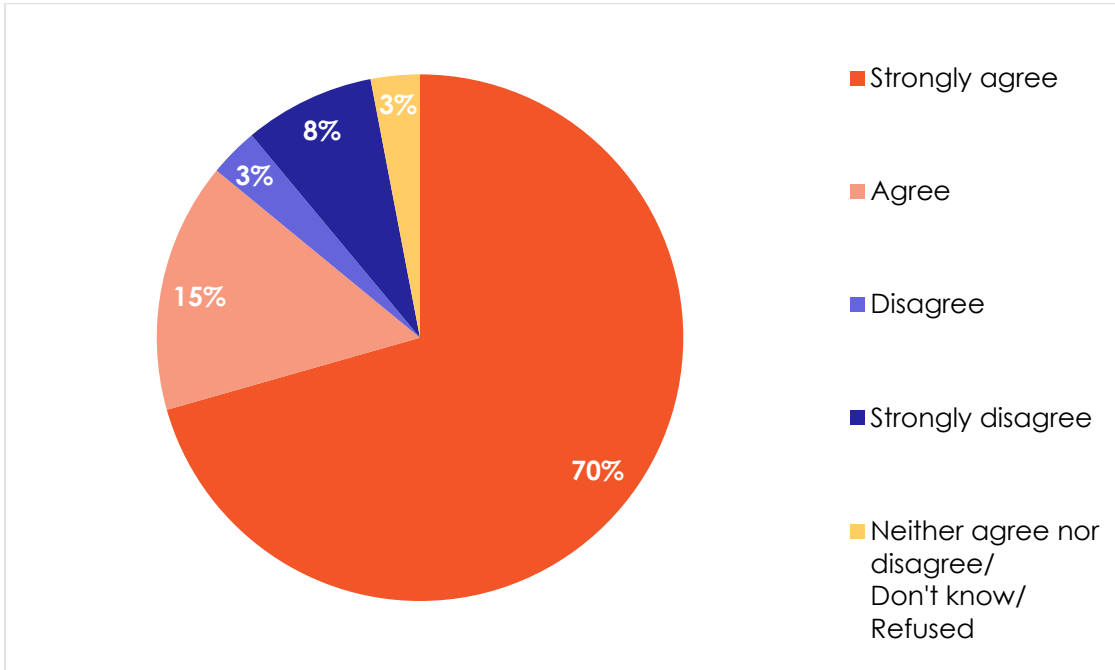
There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the King can govern the country? (% who "approve" or "strongly approve")

Currently, Lesotho is considering several proposals that are part of the ongoing constitutional reforms. For each of the following proposals, please tell me whether you agree or disagree, or have you not heard enough to say: (% who "agree" or "strongly agree")

The King should be allowed to make decisions that he thinks are in the interest of the country, even if they contradict advice of the prime minister?

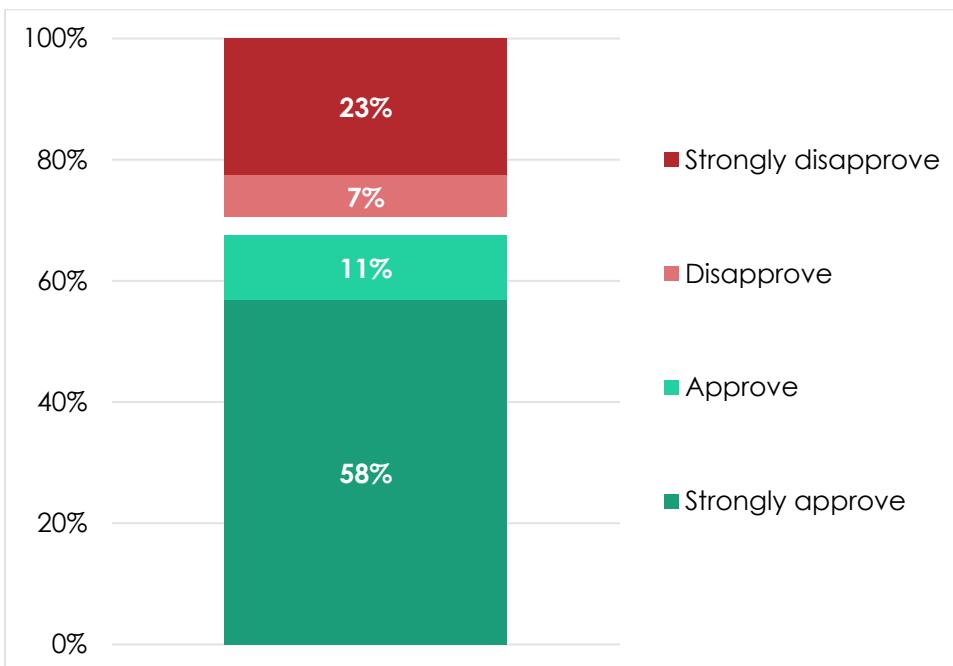
The King should be granted the power to appoint a caretaker government in the event of a no-confidence vote in the prime minister?

Figure 2: Should the King have the power to appoint a caretaker government?
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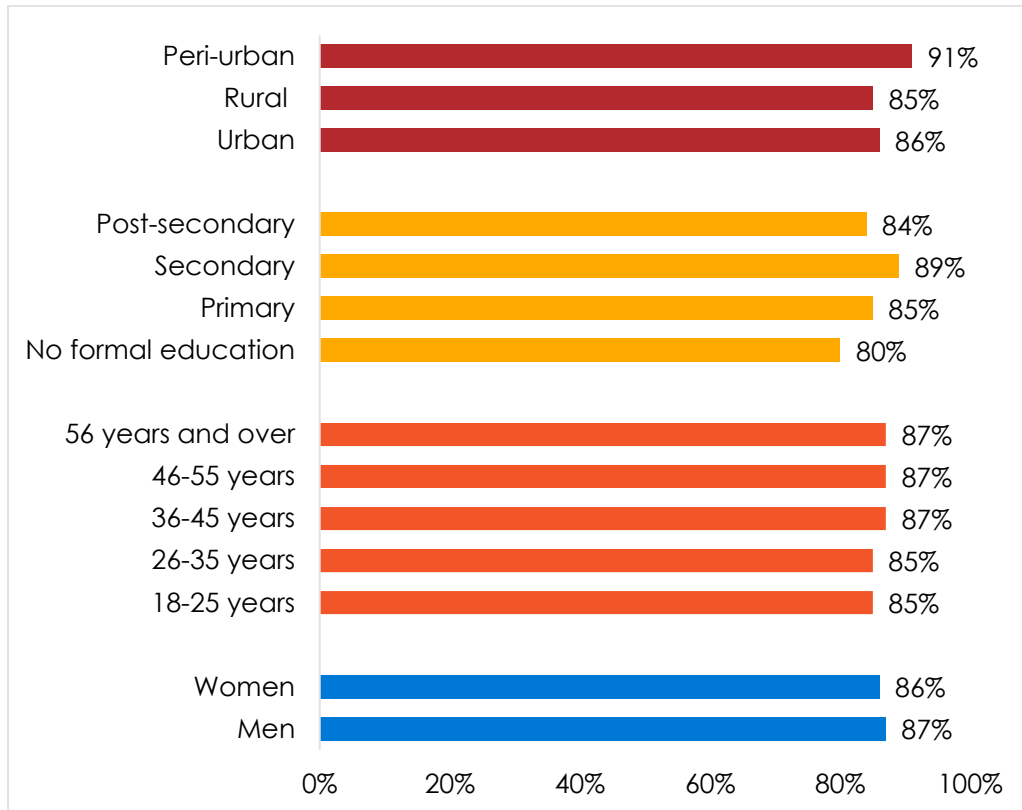
Respondents were asked: Currently, Lesotho is considering several proposals that are part of the ongoing constitutional reforms. For each of the following proposals, please tell me whether you agree or disagree, or have you not heard enough to say: The King should be granted the power to appoint a caretaker government in the event of a no-confidence vote in the prime minister?

Figure 3: Should the King govern the country? | Lesotho | 2022



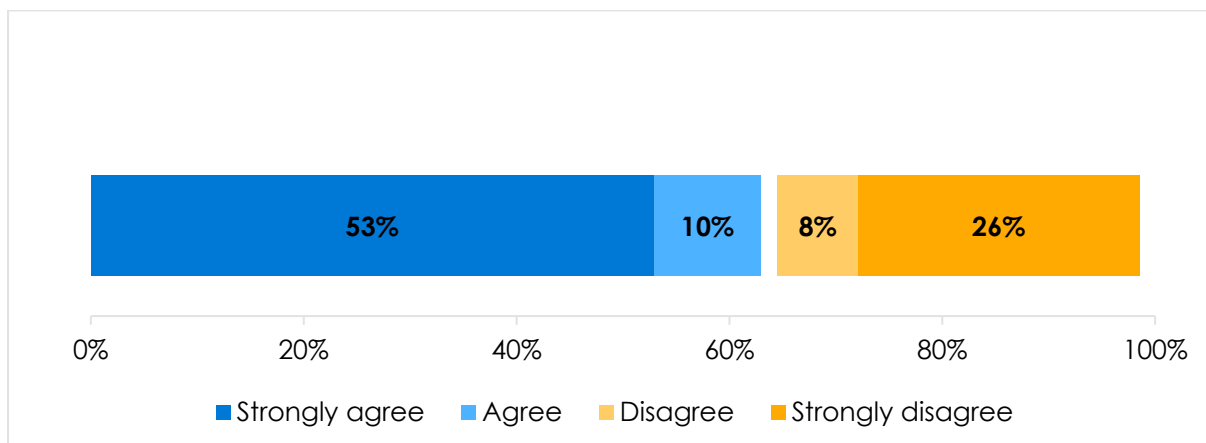
Respondents were asked: There are many ways to govern a country. Would you disapprove or approve of the following alternatives: Elections and Parliament are abolished so that the King can govern the country?

Figure 4: The King should have decision-making power | by demographic group
 | Lesotho | 2022



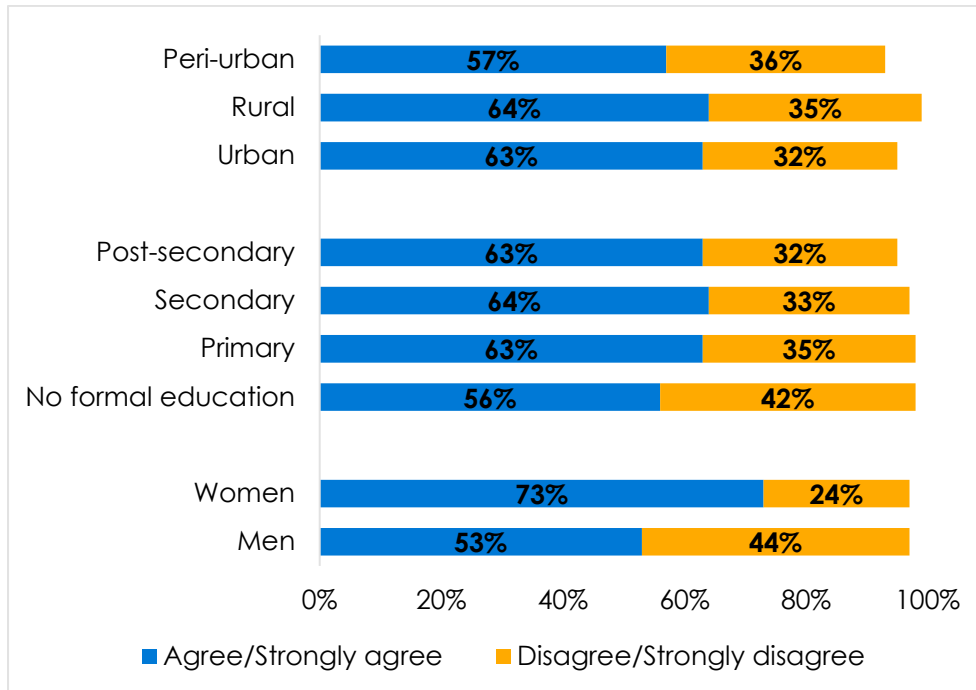
Respondents were asked: Currently, Lesotho is considering several proposals that are part of the ongoing constitutional reforms. For each of the following proposals, please tell me whether you agree or disagree, or have you not heard enough to say: The King should be allowed to make decisions that he thinks are in the interest of the country, even if they contradict advice of the prime minister? (% who “agree” or “strongly agree”)

Figure 5: Should daughters have the right to chieftainship succession? | Lesotho
 | 2022



Respondents were asked: For each of the following proposals, please tell me whether you agree or disagree, or have you not heard enough to say: Daughters should have the same rights of succession to chieftaincy as sons.

Figure 6: Daughters should have the right to chieftainship succession
 | by demographic group | Lesotho | 2022



Respondents were asked: For each of the following proposals, please tell me whether you agree or disagree, or have you not heard enough to say: Daughters should have the same rights of succession to chieftaincy as sons.

For more information, please contact:

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