

Angolans say government must act on climate change, even if it's expensive

Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 562 | Kelechi Amakoh

Summary

Rising sea levels threaten Angola's coastal areas, where almost half of the population lives. Drought and flooding threaten the agricultural sector, which employs 85% of Angolan adults. Heightened exposure to disease, water scarcity, and food insecurity represents a menace for all Angolans (USAID, 2018; World Bank Group, 2022).

These and other projected impacts of climate change place Angola among the most vulnerable and least prepared countries in the world, ranking 154th out of 182 countries in the Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative's Country Index (2020).

The government's steps to confront climate change include establishing the National Committee on Climate Change and Biodiversity in 2012 and a Climate Change Office in the Ministry of Environment in 2014. A set of national plans and programmes seeks to integrate climate change adaptation into national development strategies (World Bank Group, 2022; USAID, 2018.). The United Nations Development Programme (2022) reports that Angola's most recent national climate plan shortens its timeline for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by five years and outlines mitigation and adaptation actions across all sectors.

This dispatch reports on a special survey module included in the Afrobarometer Round 9 questionnaire to explore Angolans' experiences and perceptions of climate change.

Findings show that fewer than half of Angolans have heard of climate change, including just one in four rural residents. A majority of those who are aware of climate change say it is making life in Angola worse. Awareness of climate change in general and of its negative impact increases sharply with citizens' education level.

Among those familiar with climate change, large majorities say the government, business and industry, developed countries, and ordinary citizens need to do more to fight it.

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 Angola, led by Ovilonwa – Estudos de Opinião Pública, interviewed a nationally representative sample of 1,200 adult Angolans between 9 February and 8 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. A previous survey was conducted in Angola in 2019.

Key findings

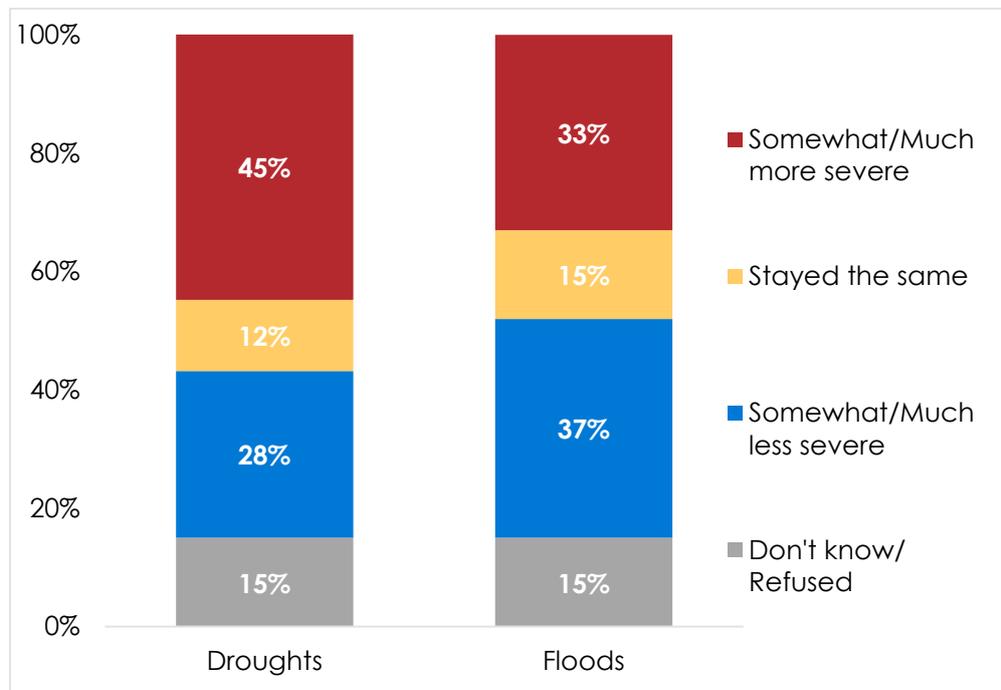
- Almost half (45%) of Angolans say droughts have become more severe in their region over the past 10 years. One-third (33%) say the same about floods.
- Fewer than half (46%) of Angolans say they have heard of climate change. Among those who are aware of climate change:
 - A majority (56%) say it is making life in Angola worse.
 - More than six in 10 say that ordinary citizens can help limit climate change (63%) and that the government should take immediate action to limit climate change (61%), even if it is expensive, causes job losses, or takes a toll on the economy.
 - Only small minorities say the government (10%), business and industry (12%), developed countries (16%) and ordinary citizens (21%) are making enough of an effort to fight climate change.

Extreme weather conditions

Before asking about climate change, Afrobarometer asked respondents about their experiences with extreme weather conditions. Almost half (45%) of Angolans say droughts have become “somewhat more severe” or “much more severe” over the past 10 years, while 28% say they have become less severe and 12% report no change in their severity (Figure 1).

Only one-third (33%) of citizens say floods have worsened over the past decade, while 37% say their severity has decreased.

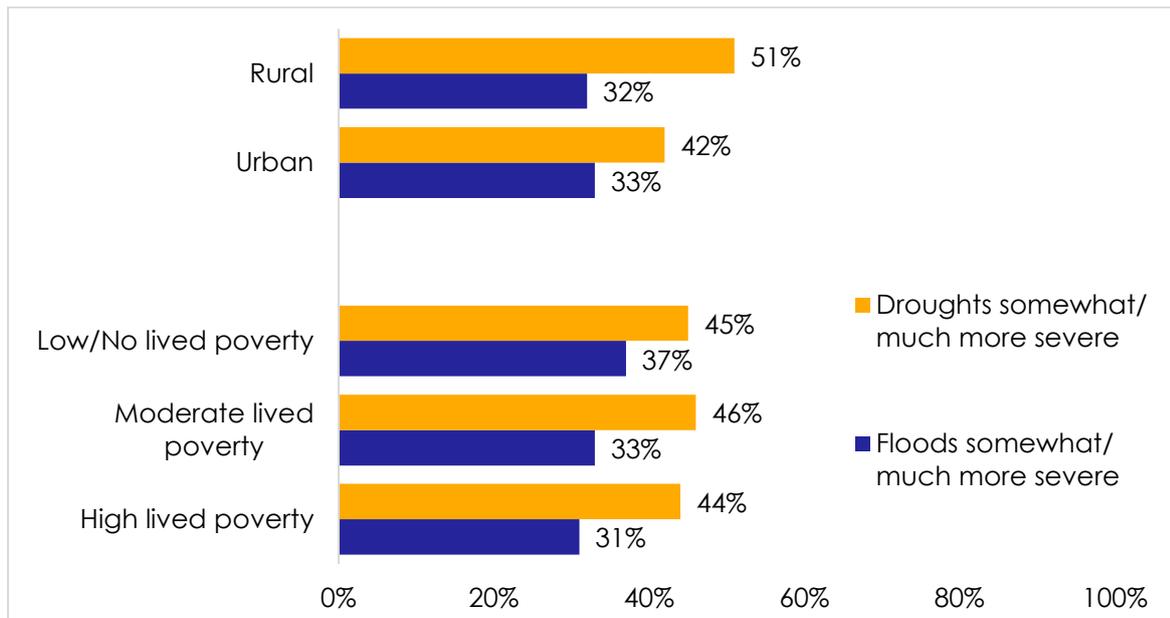
Figure 1: Severity of droughts and floods | Angola | 2022



Respondents were asked: In your experience, over the past 10 years, has there been any change in the severity of the following events in the area where you live: Drought? Flooding? Have they become more severe, less severe, or stayed about the same?

Rural residents are more likely than urban dwellers to report worsening drought (51% vs. 42%) (Figure 2). Respondents who are economically well off (those experiencing no or low “lived poverty”¹) are somewhat more likely to see increasingly severe floods (37%) than their less-well-off counterparts (31%-33%).

Figure 2: More severe droughts and floods | by urban-rural residence and lived poverty | Angola | 2022



Respondents were asked: In your experience, over the past 10 years, has there been any change in the severity of the following events in the area where you live: Drought? Flooding?

Climate change

Awareness of climate change

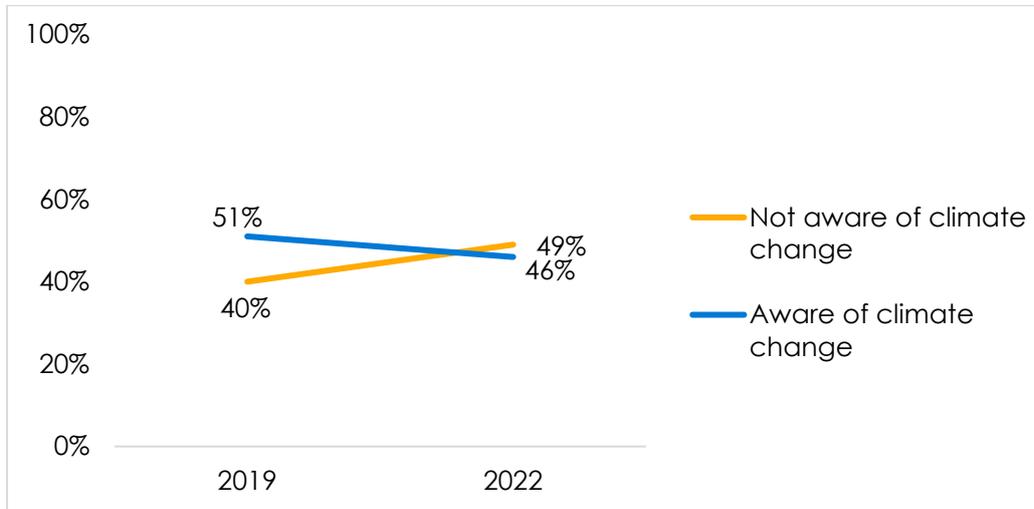
Fewer than half (46%) of Angolans say they have heard of climate change, a 5-percentage-point decrease compared to 2019 (Figure 3).

Awareness of climate change is particularly low in rural areas (25%, vs. 57% in cities) (Figure 4), despite its potentially catastrophic implications for agriculture. It is also low among Angolans with no formal education (23%) or only primary schooling (26%), increasing sharply with secondary (56%) or post-secondary (79%) education.

Poorer citizens are less familiar with the term “climate change” (34% among those with high lived poverty vs. 58% among those with low or no lived poverty). More men than women are aware of the concept (52% vs. 40%). Older citizens (38%) are less likely to have heard of climate change than younger respondents (44%-48%).

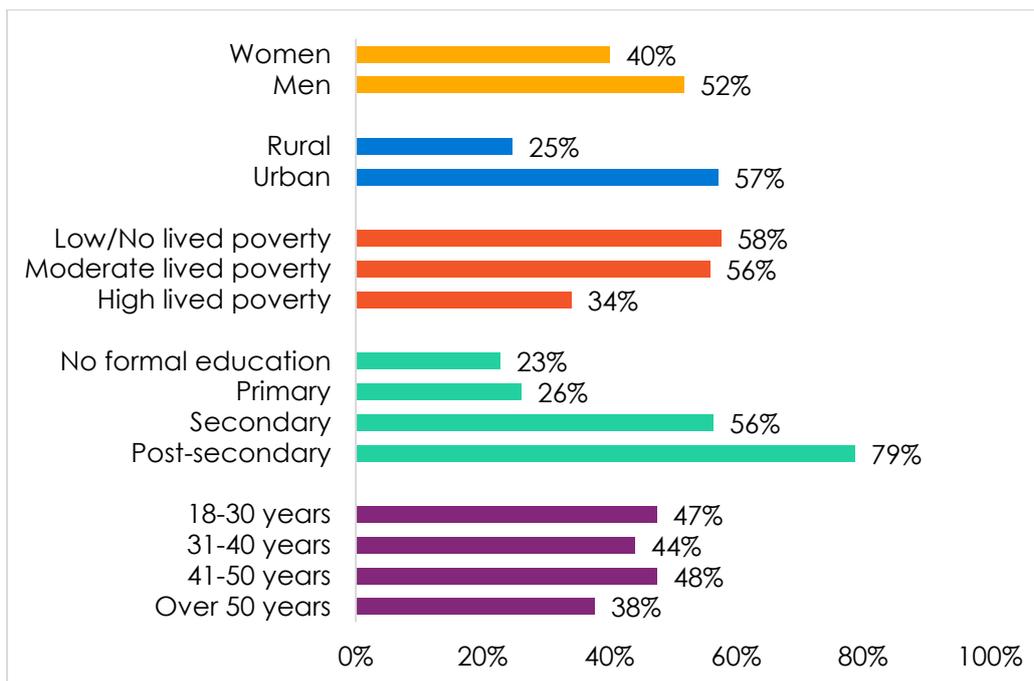
¹ Afrobarometer’s Lived Poverty Index (LPI) measures respondents’ levels of material deprivation by asking how often they or their families went without basic necessities (enough food, enough water, medical care, enough cooking fuel, and a cash income) during the preceding year. For more on lived poverty, see Mattes (2020).

Figure 3: Awareness of climate change | Angola | 2019-2022



Respondents were asked: Have you heard about climate change, or haven't you had the chance to hear about this yet?

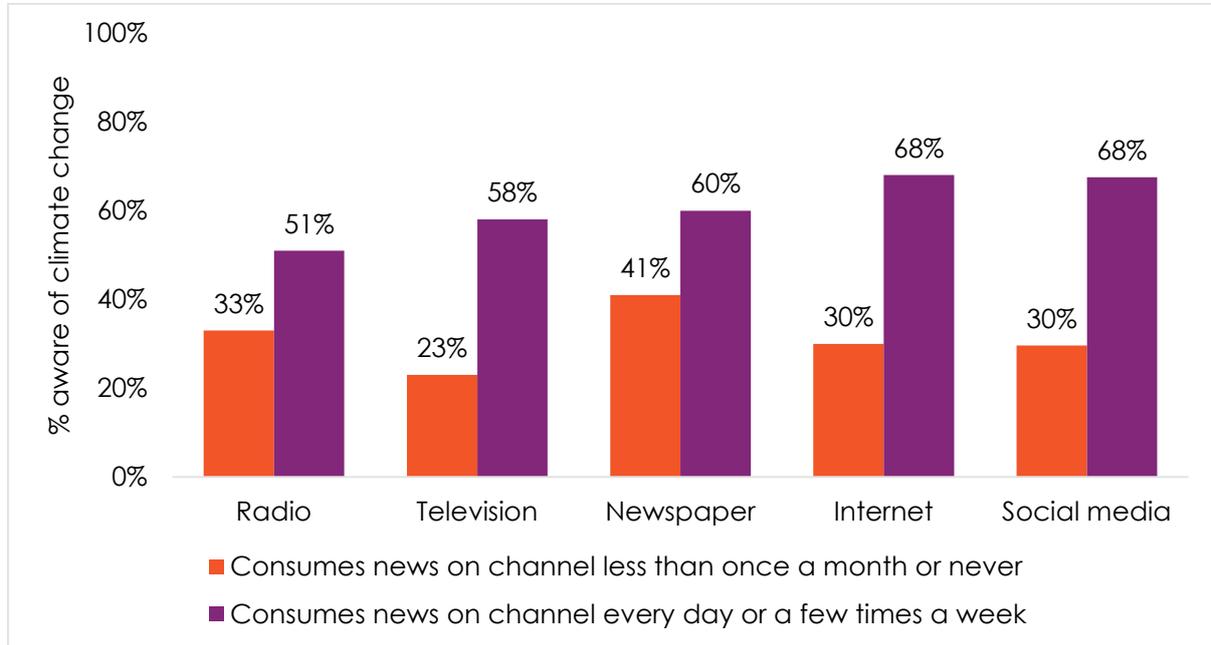
Figure 4: Awareness of climate change | by demographic group | Angola | 2022



Respondents were asked: Have you heard about climate change, or haven't you had the chance to hear about this yet? (% who say "yes")

Awareness of climate change also increases with respondents' news consumption, no matter which media channel they use. For example, among respondents who regularly (daily or a few times a week) get news from television, 58% have heard of climate change, compared to just 23% of those who consume TV news less than once a month or never. Overall, awareness of climate change is as high as about six in 10 among respondents who frequently get news from the Internet (68%), social media (68%), and newspapers (60%) (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Awareness of climate change | by news media consumption | Angola | 2022

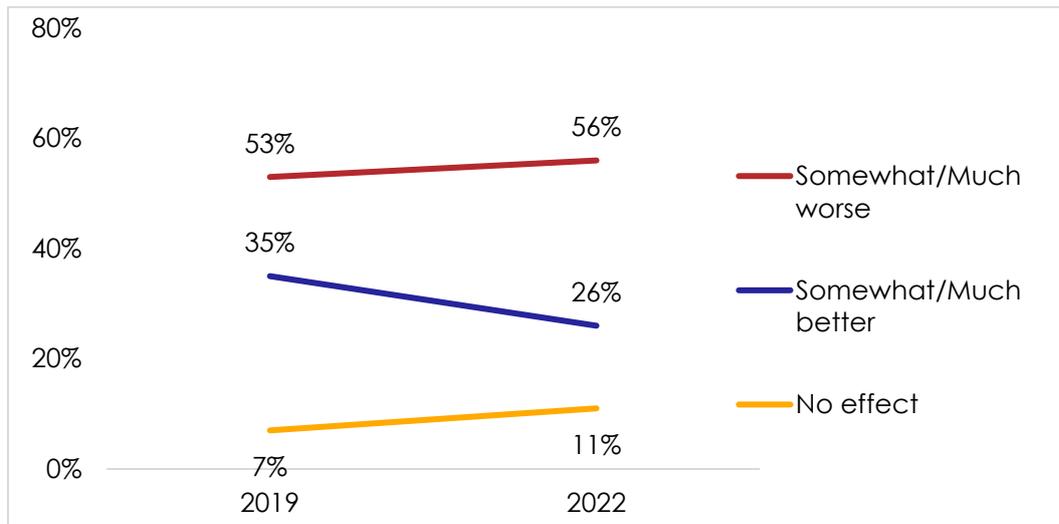


Respondents were asked: Have you heard about climate change, or haven't you had the chance to hear about this yet? (% who say "yes")

Effects of climate change

A majority (56%) of Angolans who are aware of climate change say it is making life in their country "somewhat worse" (26%) or "much worse" (30%). About half as many (26%) think it is making life better, a 9-percentage-point decrease compared to 2019, while 11% say it has no effect on the quality of life (Figure 6).

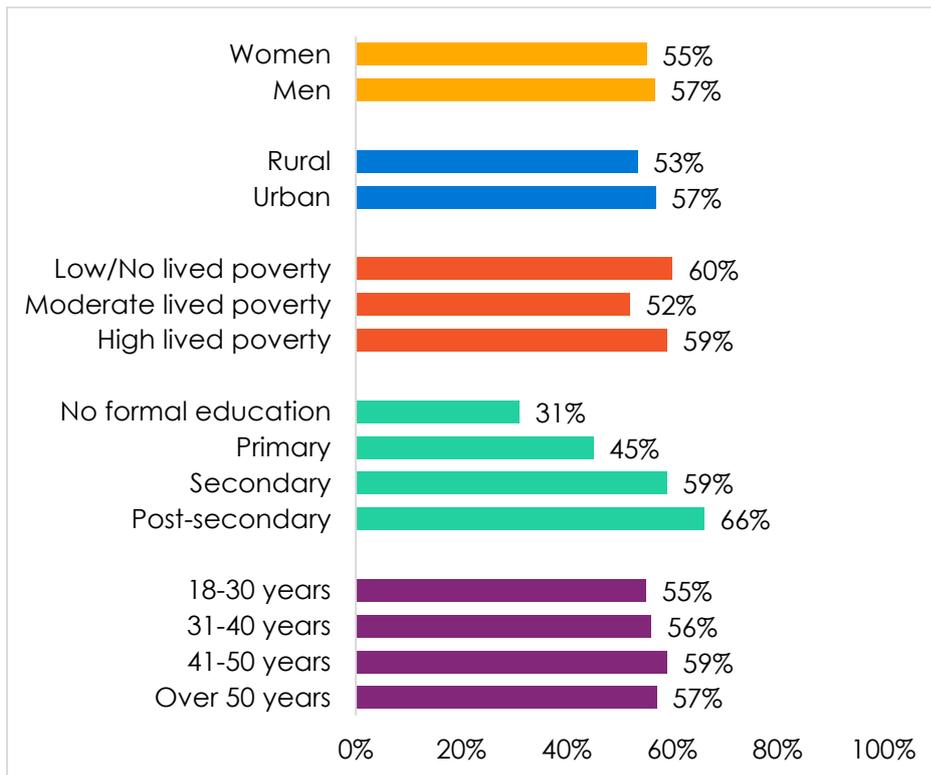
Figure 6: Effect of climate change | Angola | 2019-2022



Respondents who are aware of climate change were asked: Do you think climate change is making life in Angola better or worse, or haven't you heard enough to say? (Respondents who are not aware of climate change are excluded.)

Perceptions of the negative impact of climate change increase with respondents' education level, ranging from just 31% of those with no formal schooling to 66% of those with post-secondary qualifications (Figure 7). Urban residents are slightly more likely than their rural counterparts to say climate change is making life worse (57% vs. 53%).

Figure 7: Climate change is making life worse | by demographic group | Angola | 2022



Respondents who are aware of climate change were asked: Do you think climate change is making life in Angola better or worse, or haven't you heard enough to say? (% who say "somewhat worse" or "much worse") (Respondents who are not aware of climate change are excluded.)

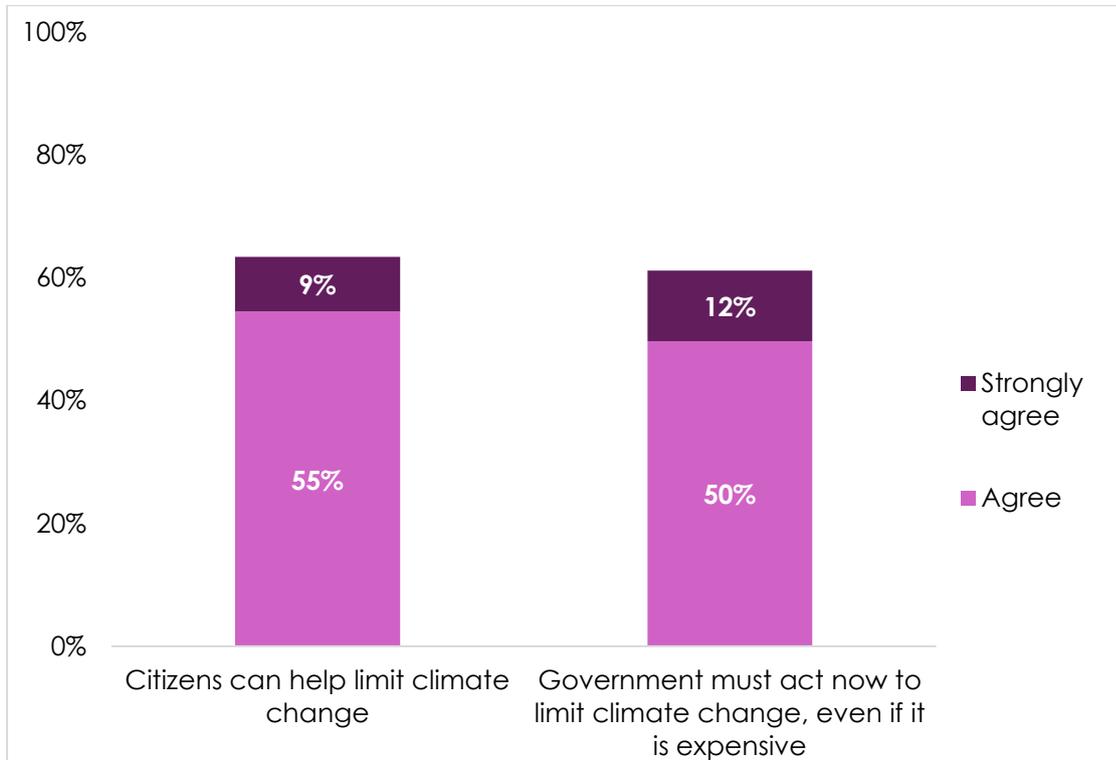
Limiting climate change

A majority of Angolans who are aware of climate change say both ordinary citizens and the government have a role to play in limiting it. More than six in 10 (63%) "agree" or "strongly agree" that citizens can help curb climate change, and a similar proportion (61%)² say the government should take steps now to limit climate change, even if it is expensive, causes job losses, or takes a toll on the economy (Figure 8).

Asked who they think should have primary responsibility for limiting climate change and reducing its impact on the country, Angolans most frequently say it's the government (41%), followed by ordinary people (29%). Fewer respondents assign primary responsibility to business and industry (12%) and developed countries (11%) (2%) (Figure 9).

² Due to rounding, percentages for combined categories may differ slightly from the sum of sub-categories (e.g. 50% "agree" and 12% "strongly agree" sum to 61%).

Figure 8: Limiting climate change | Angola | 2022



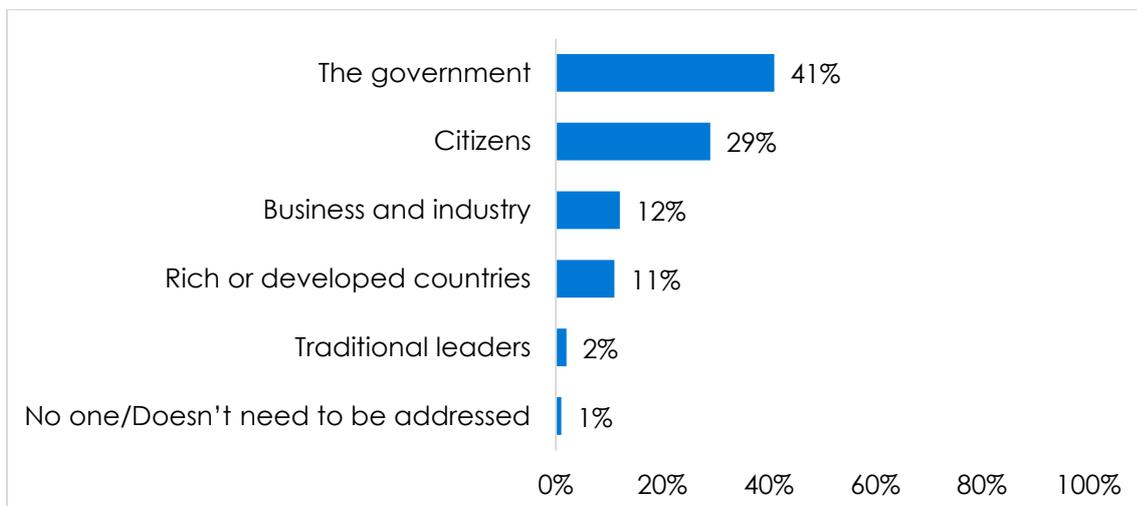
Respondents who are aware of climate change were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree:

Ordinary Angolans can play a role in limiting climate change.

It is important for our government to take steps now to limit climate change in the future, even if it is expensive or causes some job losses or other harm to our economy.

(Respondents who are not aware of climate change are excluded.)

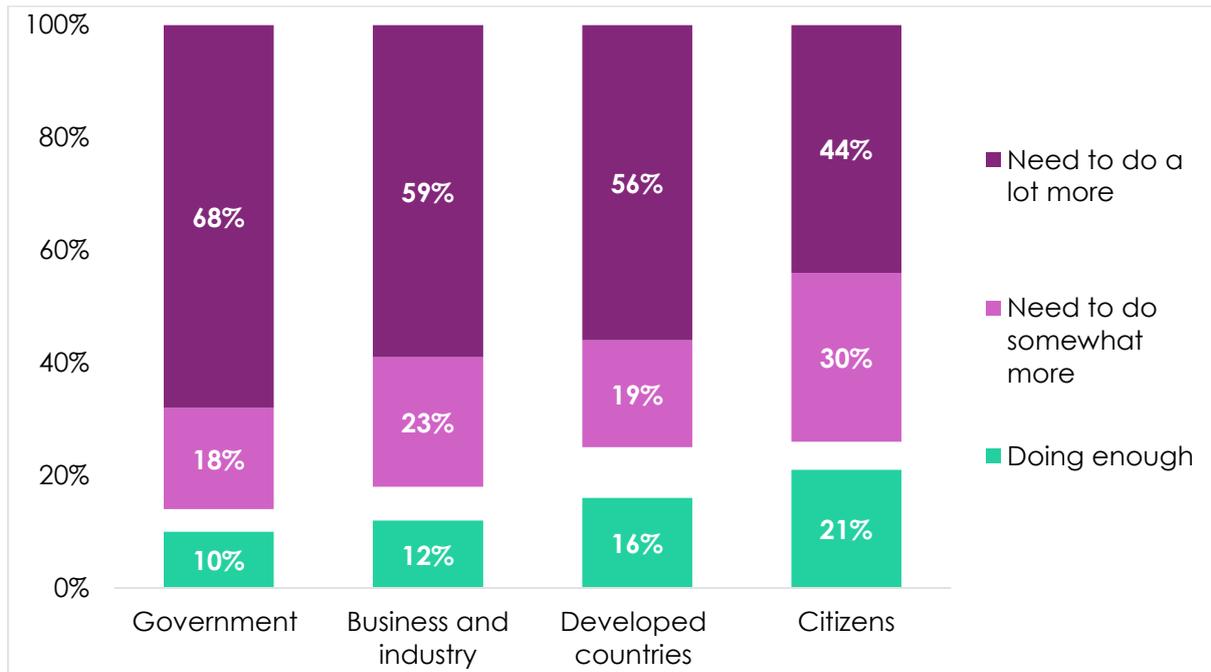
Figure 9: Who has primary responsibility for limiting climate change? | Angola | 2022



Respondents who are aware of climate change were asked: Who do you think should have primary responsibility for trying to limit climate change and reduce its impact? (Respondents who are not aware of climate change are excluded.)

Are stakeholders doing enough to limit climate change? Respondents answer with a resounding “No.” Only small minorities say the government (10%), business and industry (12%), developed countries (16%), and citizens (21%) are making enough of an effort to fight climate change (Figure 10). Large majorities believe more needs to be done, including 68% who say the government needs to do “a lot more.”

Figure 10: Are stakeholders doing enough to limit climate change? | Angola | 2022



Respondents who are aware of climate change were asked: Do you think each of the following is doing enough to limit climate change, or do they need to do more, or haven't you heard enough to say? (Respondents who are not aware of climate change are excluded.)

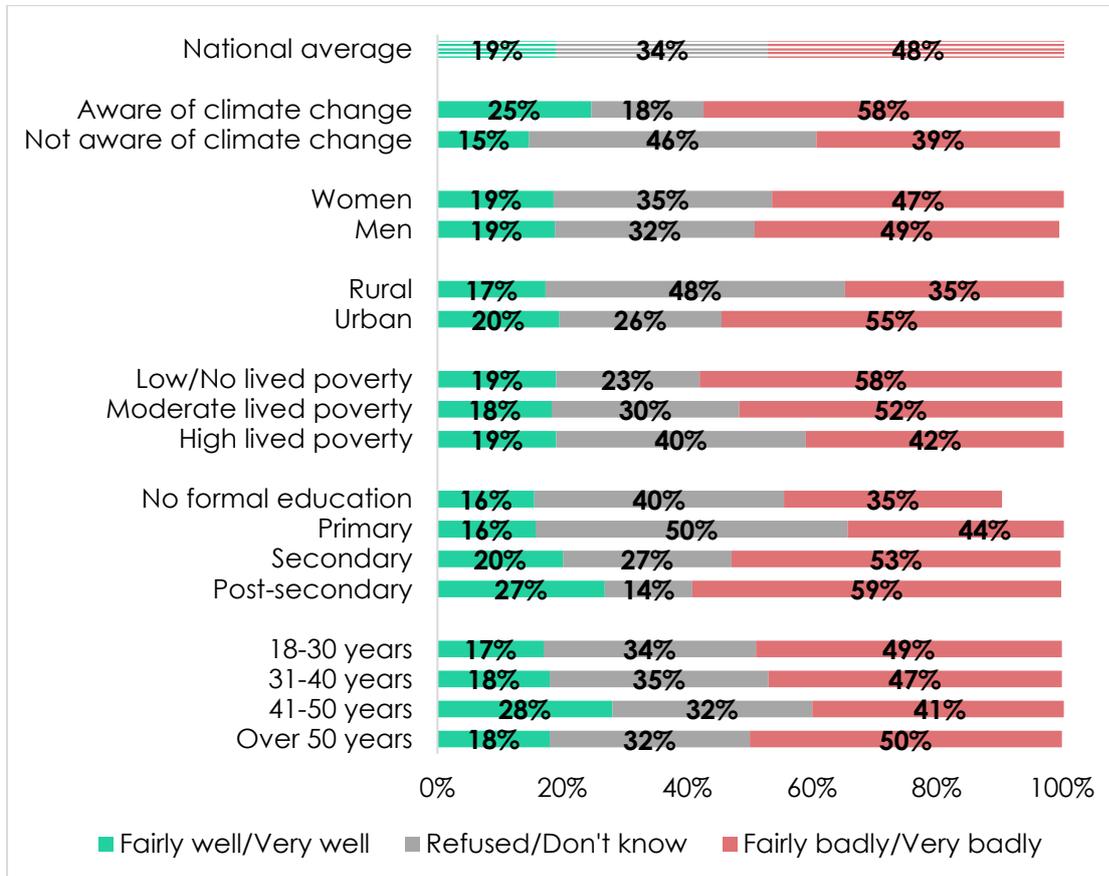
When Angolans were asked to assess their government's style of addressing the problem of climate change, almost half (48%) of all survey respondents describe the government's performance as “fairly” or “very” badly, while a paltry 19% give the government a passing grade on this issue (Figure 11).

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Respondents who are unaware of the term “climate change” are more unlikely to rate the government favorably than those who are aware (25% vs.15%). Poor

and uneducated citizens are less critical of the government's efforts than their economically well-off and more educated counterparts.

Figure 11: Government performance in handling climate change | by demographic group | Angola | 2022



Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Addressing the problem of climate change?

Conclusion

Angolans who have heard of climate change speak clearly: They expect action by the government, by business and industry, by developed countries, and by their fellow citizens to avert its potentially disastrous impacts on their lives. A majority want urgent government action, "even if it is expensive or causes some job losses or other harm to our economy."

But fewer than half of Angolan adults are even aware of the threat. Especially among rural, poor, and less educated citizens, information campaigns could be an important step toward building public support for policies to mitigate climate change in Angola.

References

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Afrobarometer, a nonprofit corporation with headquarters in Ghana, is a pan-African, non-partisan research network. Regional coordination of national partners in about 35 countries is provided by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana), the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) in South Africa, and the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) at the University of Nairobi in Kenya. Michigan State University (MSU) and the University of Cape Town (UCT) provide technical support to the network.

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