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News release

Ghana: Afrobarometer kicks off Round 10 planning meeting with former Liberian President Sirleaf and partners from across the continent

The pan-African survey research network Afrobarometer kicked off its Round 10 planning meeting Monday with a ceremony featuring former Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Ambassador Perpetua Dufu representing Ghana's minister of foreign affairs and regional integration, and national partners from 40 African countries.

Sirleaf, a member of Afrobarometer's International Advisory Council, and Dufu were joined by former Swedish Foreign Affairs Minister Margot Wallström, Peter Kellner, Riva Levinson, Frank Mwititi, and Afrobarometer board members to open the five-day gathering in Ada, Ghana.

Sirleaf highlighted the importance of Afrobarometer's 24-year record of projecting citizens' voices into policy-making processes. "Your work is of great importance because it provides valuable data on public opinion, political attitudes, and socioeconomic issues crucial for policy makers, civil society organisations, researchers, and other stakeholders in understanding African countries' challenges and opportunities," the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize laureate told the gathering.

"Moreover, by gathering data from diverse populations across the continent, your work helps inform evidence-based decision making and contributes to developing policies and programmes that respond to the needs and aspirations of African citizens."

Meeting participants are planning the design and implementation of Afrobarometer's Round 10 surveys in 40 countries in all regions of Africa starting in late 2023. By providing reliable data and analysis on Africans' experiences and evaluations, Afrobarometer helps make citizen voice a pillar of Africa policy and decision making.

Dufu noted the impact of Afrobarometer's work within executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. "I must say that Afrobarometer's knowledge sharing through research in the areas of democracy, government, and economic development have influenced policies and programmes by the various arms of government, ... demonstrated through sharing of democratic experiences and technical cooperation among countries on the continent," she said.

The meeting will involve a series of plenary and working-group sessions to discuss and design survey instruments and methodologies, data quality assurance measures, and results dissemination strategies.

The first network-wide in-person gathering since before the COVID-19 pandemic, it will also provide an opportunity for Afrobarometer's core and national partners to share experiences and best practices in conducting survey research and using findings to inform current policy debates.

For Afrobarometer CEO Joseph Asunka, Round 10 will continue to enable public participation beyond elections. "Afrobarometer creates a platform for ordinary African citizens to continually make their views and experiences known to their elected representatives," he said. "All of us gathered here are committed to this agenda, and we

receive confirmation every day that governments and policy actors around the globe see the value of this work. Our goal is to cover all countries on the continent as and when conditions allow."

Other notable quotes

Margot Wallström, former foreign affairs minister of Sweden: "When democracy is in a downturn, I think that Afrobarometer has an important role by letting the people have a say to provide the facts and figures to support democracy. This is the important mission of Afrobarometer."

E. Gyimah-Boadi, Afrobarometer co-founder and board chair: "We made a massive expansion of coverage from 20 countries in Round 4 to 35 countries in Round 5. This unique achievement was deeply satisfying to all of us. ... Most importantly, it significantly heightened Afrobarometer's relevance as a key resource for Africa research and policy making, and raised its prestige as a major African research and policy-making brand."

Michael Bratton, retired University Distinguished Professor of Political Science and African Studies at Michigan State University and co-founder of Afrobarometer: "Afrobarometer data is based on questions that are asked to ordinary people, and we make an effort to include every type of person in the country. We have a cross-national sample so that we get people from urban areas, people from rural areas, and people from different regions so that the picture that we create from their answers gives us an overview of what the people as a whole are thinking. It's very important to have that on the record so that government is aware of what's on people's minds and what the people want so that the government can be held accountable."

Robert Mattes, University of Strathclyde professor and Afrobarometer co-founder: "Africa has greatly expanded the number of countries that have elected leadership, since the 1990s, but elections only happen every four or five years, so between then we have elected representatives, local councils, and parliaments, but also things like public opinion polls. New technology can be a way of maintaining a continuous dialogue, so that leaders can know, first of all, how people think they're doing, how they're judging their performance, and [people can] let them know about their needs. What are the greatest needs? What kinds of issues do they think government ought to focus on? So long as leaders are willing to listen, all of these things should make democracy work better. And we know where democracy works better, people tend to do better. Levels of poverty are lower, infant mortality is lower, and a whole range of outcomes come about in functioning democracies. This is the real contribution of Afrobarometer."

"We're very happy to say that we're at Round 10, and we're working in so many countries, and this organisation has evolved into a real institution where there are rules and practices and procedures, and these outlive the founders and are not identified with whoever is leading the project. It's no longer a personal project. I think another definition of what a real institution is is one where the people in the organisation value it. From everything I hear from people, I think there's a lot of pride in doing this work. And also outside, I think people outside of the organisation value it. We heard very positive things this morning about our reputation among other African organisations in civil society and a growing reputation amongst African governments."

About Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer (AB) is a trusted source of high-quality data and analysis on what Africans are thinking. With an unmatched track record of 350,000+ interviews in 41 countries, representing the views of about 75% of the African population, AB is leading the charge to bridge the continent's data gap. AB data inform many global indices, such as the Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer, and the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators. The data are also used for country risk analyses and by credit rating and forecasting agencies such as the Economist Intelligence Unit. All AB data sets are publicly available on the [website](#) and may be analysed free of charge using AB's [online data analysis tool](#).

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