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News release

Afrobarometer delegation wraps up meetings in Washington, D.C., unveils critical findings on climate change and democracy ahead of UNGA

As world leaders gathered in New York for the United Nations General Assembly and upcoming Climate Ambition Summit convened by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, an Afrobarometer delegation concluded a four-day engagement with U.S. Africa policy actors in Washington, D.C., highlighting African views on climate change, democracy, governance, gender, and youth.

In meetings hosted by the United States Institute of Peace, Afrobarometer leaders presented the research network's latest findings on climate change, democracy, and gender to representatives of the U.S. State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), non-governmental organisations, and other democracy and governance advocates. The Afrobarometer delegation also met with the World Bank Africa Chief Economist, Andrew Dabalen and his team as well as the Africa Program of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) team led by Senior Director Dave Peterson.

Afrobarometer Round 9 surveys conducted in 2021-2022 offer critical insights on African citizens' views, aspirations, and experiences of governance, democracy, and climate change, which feature high on the United Nations General Assembly 2023 agenda.

"Our findings shed light key issues of interest to policy makers, offering insights that reflect the aspirations and lived experiences of Africans on climate change, democracy, and governance," said Afrobarometer Board Chair E. Gyimah-Boadi. "These should echo resoundingly within the halls of power at the United Nations General Assembly, urging concerted action."

Here are highlights of Round 9 survey findings shared during Afrobarometer engagements

On climate change

- On average across 36 African countries surveyed in 2021-2022, just about half (52%) of Africans say they have heard of climate change, while 46% say they have not heard about this phenomenon. Awareness varies widely across countries, from about 80% in Seychelles to just 22% in Tunisia.
- Among those who are aware of climate change:
 - Almost three-quarters (73%) say it is making their lives worse. This view is especially widespread in Madagascar (91%), Lesotho (88%), Mauritius (86%), Malawi (86%), and Benin (85%).
 - Few citizens are satisfied with the efforts of governments, developed countries, business and industry, and ordinary citizens to fight climate change, and most demand "a lot more" from these stakeholders.

- Majorities in all 36 countries want their government to take action now to limit climate change, even if it is costly, causes job losses, or takes a toll on the economy. In 14 countries, 80% or more of citizens who are aware of climate change share this view.

On gender equality and gender-based violence

- Almost three-fourths (73%) of respondents say women should have the same rights as men to own and inherit land, while a much smaller majority (58%) endorse equal rights in hiring.
- Three-fourths (75%) of citizens say women should have the same chance as men to vie for political office, rejecting the idea that men make better political leaders and should thus be given priority as candidates. This is the majority view in all countries surveyed **except Sudan** where a slim majority (53%) say men make better leaders.
- While a large majority (79%) of citizens think a woman will gain standing in the community if she runs for office, significant proportions also think it's likely that she will be criticised or harassed (52%) and face problems with her family (40%).
- Africans see gender-based violence as the most important women's-rights-related issue that their government and society need to address.
- But they are divided on whether domestic violence should be treated as a criminal matter (50%) or a private matter (47%).

On democracy and governance

- Clear majorities of Africans express support for democracy and accountable governance.
 - Two-thirds (66%) say they prefer democracy to any other system of government.
 - Even larger majorities reject non-democratic alternatives: "one-man rule" (80%), "one-party rule" (78%), and military rule (67%).
- Majorities also endorse norms, institutions, and practices associated with democratic governance, including choosing political leaders through the ballot box (75%), placing constitutional limits on presidential tenure (74%), multiparty competition (64%), free media (65%), and government accountability (61%).
- Across 30 countries surveyed consistently between 2014/2015 and 2021/2022, citizens have been largely consistent over time in their demand for democracy and accountable governance across many indicators.
- However, preference for democracy is now a minority opinion in four countries – Mali (39%), South Africa (43%), Angola (47%), and Lesotho (49%). Between 2014 and 2022, support for democracy has declined sharply in several countries: Mali (down by 36 percentage points), Burkina Faso (-26 points), South Africa (-21 points), and Guinea (-15 points).

About Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer (AB) is a trusted source of high-quality data and analysis on the experiences, attitudes, and preferences of African citizens. With an unmatched track record of 350,000+ interviews in 42 countries, representing the views of 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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