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News release

Afrobarometer CEO highlights crucial role of data in effective governance

“Data is the lighthouse that guides effective governance, offering clarity in policy making, resource allocation, and strategic planning,” Afrobarometer CEO Joseph Asunka said Monday at the launch of the 2023 Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) Series Report on the power of data for governance in Accra.

The IIAG is a wide-ranging, publicly available data set produced by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation that measures governance performance across Africa. The 2023 Series Report, titled “The Power of Data for Governance: Closing Data Gaps to Accelerate Africa’s Transformation,” reveals a strong correlation between high-quality statistics and effective governance. But it also highlights the fact that Africa is the continent most impacted by data gaps, particularly in crucial areas such as health, the informal economy, the environment, violence against women, child labour, and illicit financial flows. The report cites underfunding of research and data infrastructure as a major contributor to the large data gaps on the continent.

Reacting to the IIAG report, Asunka emphasised the pivotal role that data play in bringing clarity to policy making.

“High-quality data enables governments and the public sector to identify policy and development gaps, effectively target interventions, and measure progress on policy implementation,” he said.

He also drew a connection between data gaps identified in the report and Afrobarometer findings on Africans’ most important problems.

“Recent Afrobarometer data shows that unemployment, management of the economy, and health top the list of most important problems that Africans want their governments to resolve,” he said. “Gender-based violence also tops the list of gender-related problems on the continent. Unfortunately, the report identifies some of these issues as where data gaps are acute.”

While commending improvements in the capabilities of government statistics agencies and the quality and availability of official data in some countries, Asunka called for a concerted effort to build capacity for data use by a variety of actors on the continent, including governments, civil society groups, and journalists. He stressed the importance of not only identifying and filling data gaps, as highlighted in the report, but also ensuring that relevant individuals possess the necessary skills to effectively leverage available data.



Afrobarometer has been contributing data to the IIAG since 2011 and it remains the sole source of data for the Citizens' Voices dimension of the IIAG, that offers a reality check on official data.

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 more than 385,000+ interviews in 42 countries, representing the views of more than three-fourths 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](#).

For more information, please contact:

Maame Akua Amoah Twum

Afrobarometer communications officer for anglophone West and North Africa

Email: maameakua@afrobarometer.org

Telephone: + 233 20 832 6343

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