

Harare, Zimbabwe
4 April 2024

News release

Zimbabweans report worsening droughts, favour climate action by the government

Six in 10 Zimbabweans say they are experiencing worsening droughts, setting the stage for urgent climate action by the government, according to the most recent Afrobarometer survey.

Zimbabwean President Emmerson Mnangagwa has declared a national disaster in response to droughts impacting farming activities in the country. With millions facing hunger, he has stressed the urgent need for more than \$2 billion in aid to ensure sufficient food supplies.

The latest Afrobarometer survey in Zimbabwe, conducted in 2022, shows that the proportion of citizens experiencing more severe droughts has almost doubled since 2017. While climate change is still an unknown concept to more than half of Zimbabweans, those who are aware of it overwhelmingly say that climate change is making their lives worse.

Citizens expect far more climate action from the government – even at considerable cost to the economy – as well as from developed countries, the private sector, and their co-citizens.

Key findings

- A majority (60%) of Zimbabweans say droughts have become “somewhat more severe” or “much more severe” over the past 10 years (Figure 1).
 - Compared to 2017, the proportion of Zimbabweans who say droughts have gotten more severe has increased by 27 percentage points.
 - Rural residents are more likely than urbanites to report increasingly severe droughts (64% vs. 54%) (Figure 2).
 - Geographically, at least three-fourths of citizens in Midlands (78%), Bulawayo/Matabeleland North/Matabeleland South (78%), and Mashonaland Central (75%) report worsening drought, compared to just 41% in Harare.
- Fewer than half (45%) of Zimbabweans say they have heard of climate change. Among those who are aware of climate change:
 - Eight in 10 (80%) say it is making life in Zimbabwe worse.
 - Almost two-thirds (64%) believe that ordinary citizens can help curb climate change, and even more (71%) want the government to take immediate action to limit climate change, even if it is expensive, causes job losses, or takes a toll on the economy (Figure 3).
 - Only small minorities are satisfied with efforts to date by the government (2%), business and industry (3%), developed countries (4%), and ordinary citizens (11%) to fight climate change (Figure 4). Large majorities believe more needs to be done, including 78% who say the government needs to do “a lot more.”

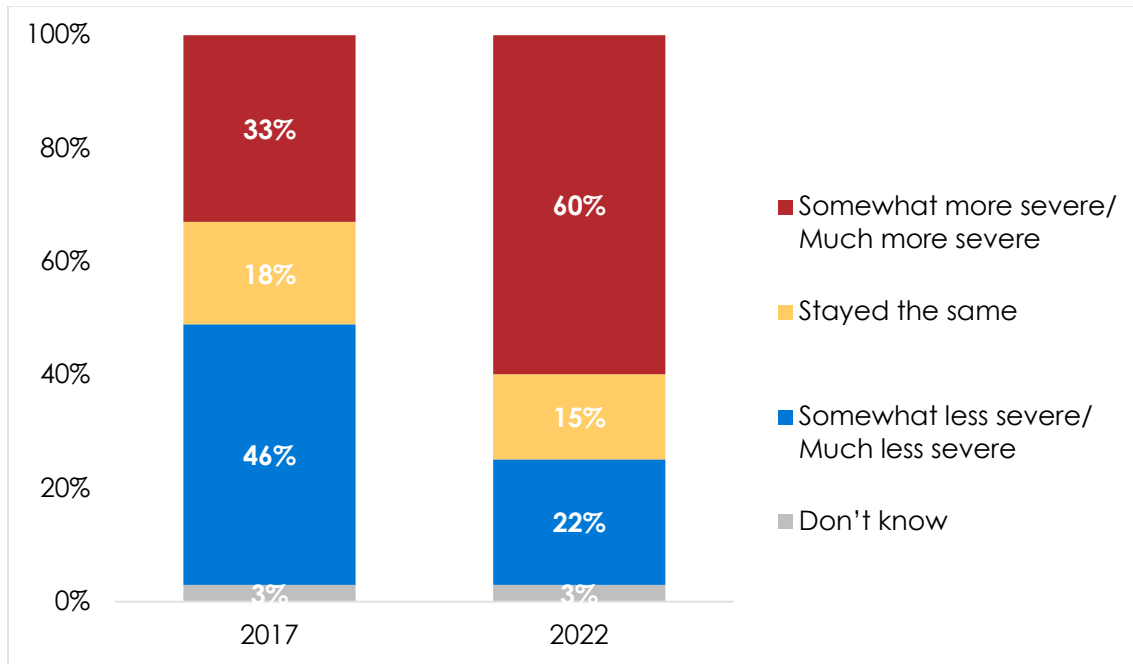
Afrobarometer surveys

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. Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2023) cover 39 countries. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice.

The Afrobarometer team in Zimbabwe, led by the Mass Public Opinion Institute (MPOI), interviewed 1,200 adult citizens between 28 March and 10 April 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 standard surveys were conducted in Zimbabwe in 1999, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2012, 2014, 2017, and 2021.

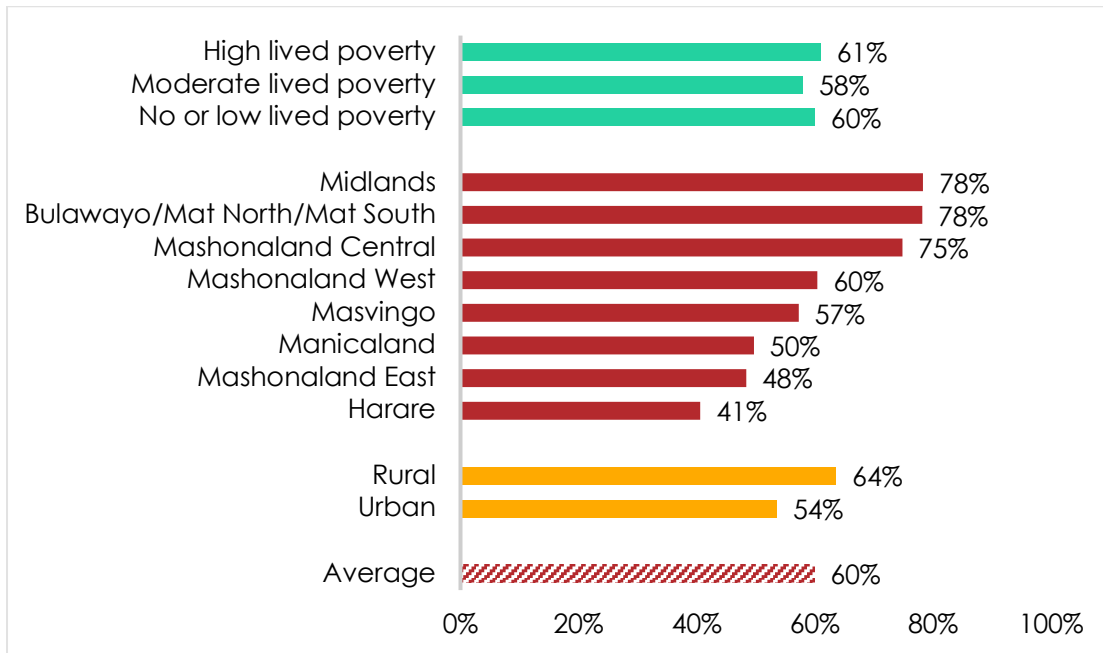
Charts

Figure 1: Severity of droughts | Zimbabwe | 2017-2022



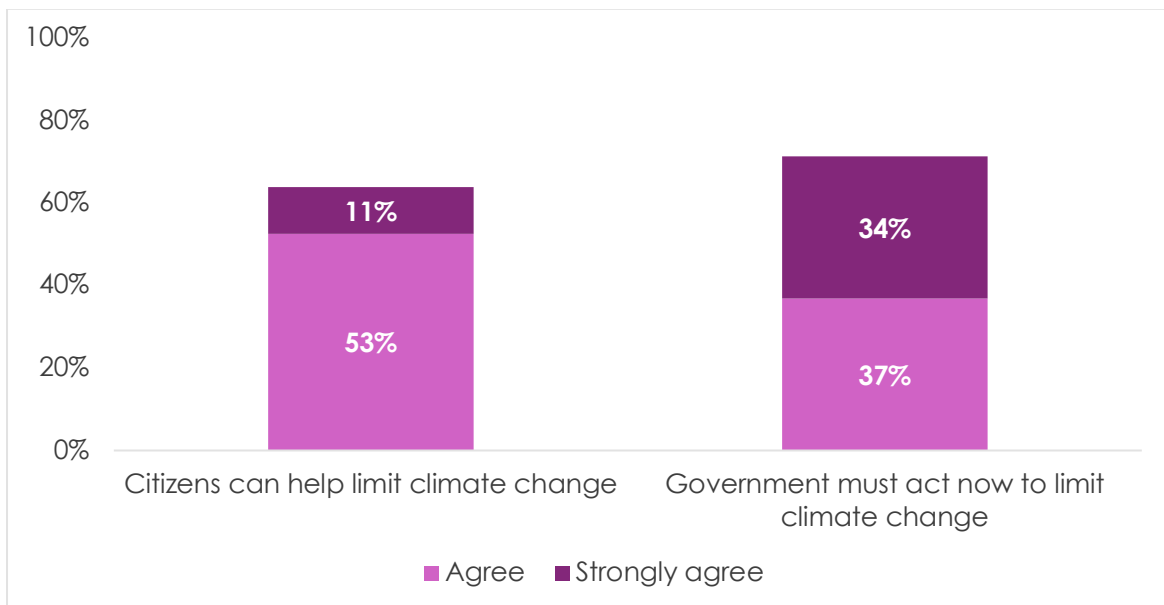
Respondents were asked: *In your experience, over the past 10 years, has there been any change in the severity of the following events in the area where you live: Droughts? Have they become more severe, less severe, or stayed about the same?*

Figure 2: More severe droughts | by demographic group | Zimbabwe | 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: Droughts? Flooding? (% who say "somewhat more severe" or "much more severe")

Figure 3: Limiting climate change | Zimbabwe | 2022



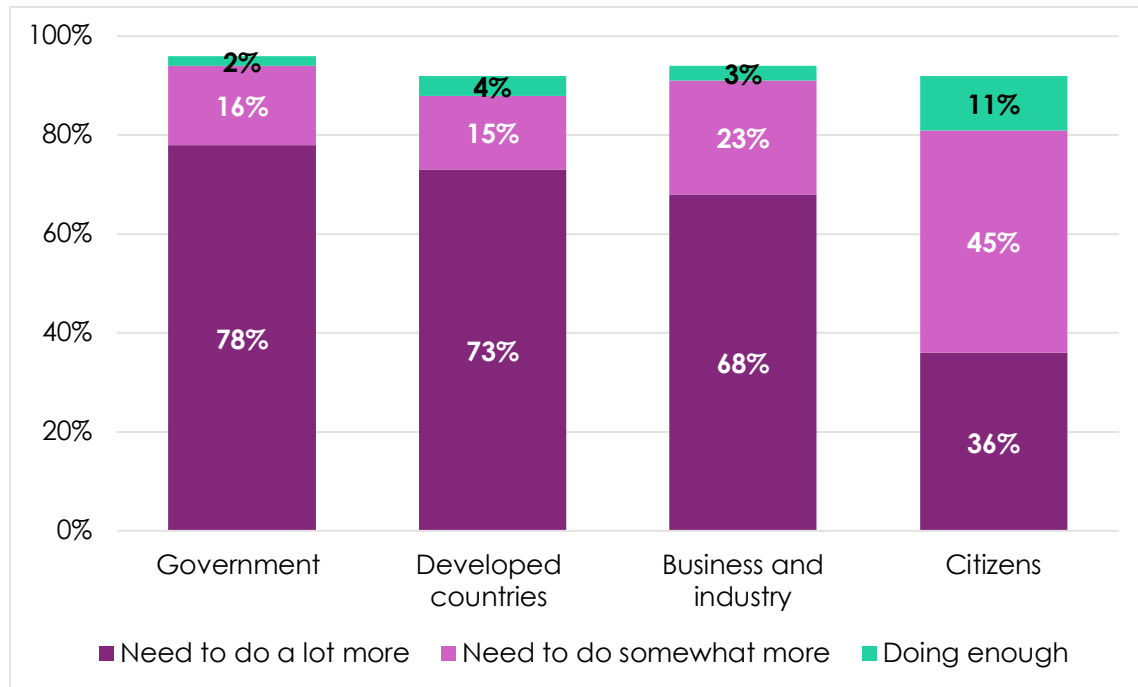
Respondents who are aware of climate change were asked: For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you disagree or agree:

Ordinary Zimbabweans 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 4: Are stakeholders doing enough to limit climate change? | Zimbabwe
 | 2022



Respondents who are aware of climate change were asked: Do you think each of the following are 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.)

For more information, please contact:

Mass Public Opinion Institute
 E.V. Masunungure
 Telephone: +263-242-771358
 Email: info@mpoi.org.zw

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