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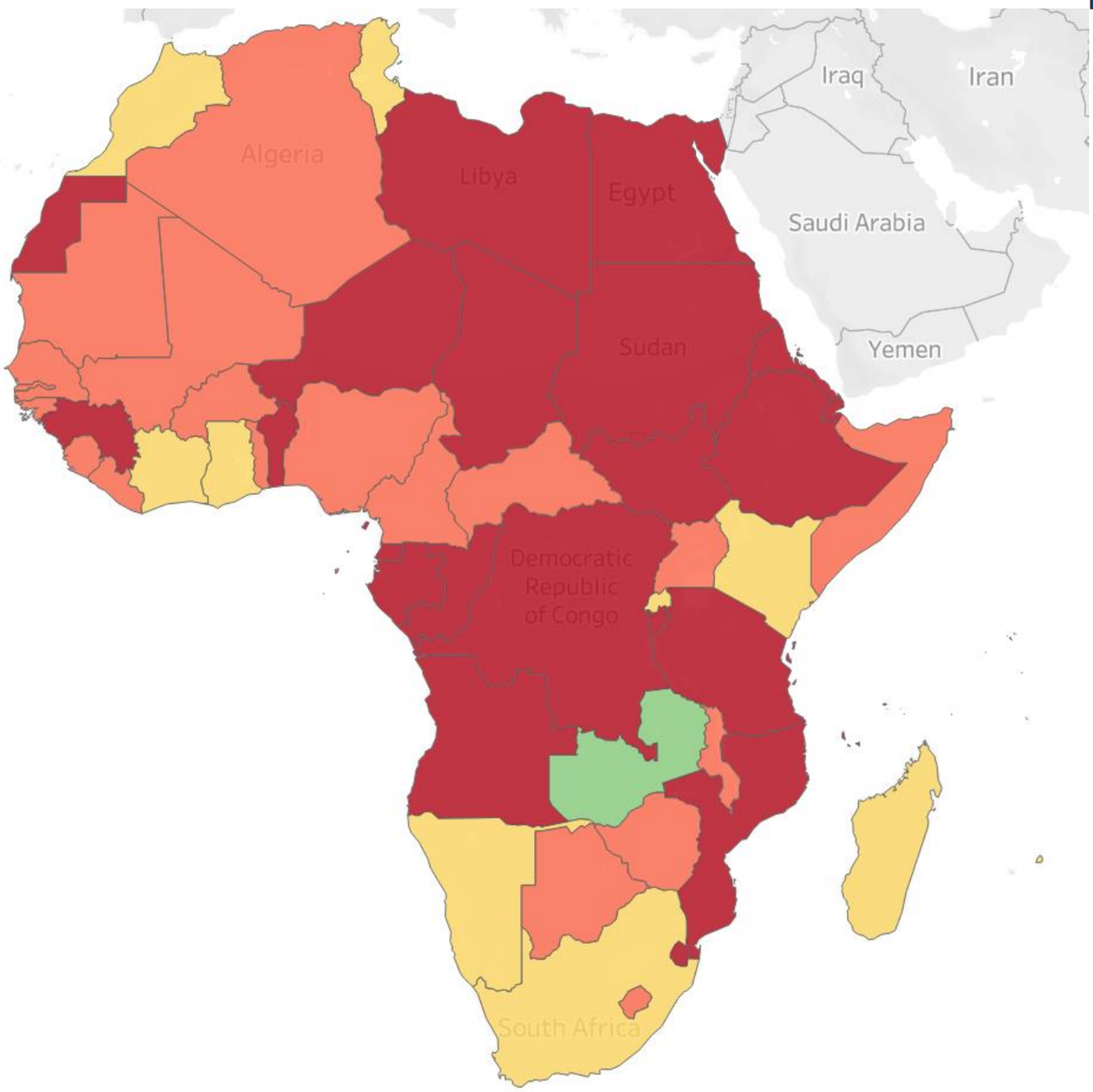
AFRICA INTEGRITY INDICATORS

Integrity Narratives 2026



Institutions Matter: Progress, Divergence and Democratic Resilience in Africa

This report was prepared by:
The African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP)



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AN AFRICA WHERE EVIDENCE IS USED CONSISTENTLY TO TRANSFORM LIVES

About AFIDEP

We exist to make evidence matter

The African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) is a non-profit policy and research institute established in 2010 to bridge the gap between research, policy and practice in Africa's development efforts. The Institute is registered as a non-governmental organisation in Kenya and has diplomatic status in Malawi, and is recognised as a 501(c)(3) non-profit institution in the United States of America.

AFIDEP's work is oriented towards advancing the realisation of the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with gender equality and equity as central cross-cutting considerations. Our work is organised in two programme areas: Human Capital Development, and Sustainable Growth and Governance.

The Institute champions the systematic use of evidence in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of development strategies, policies, and programmes, through three complementary functions: equipping policymakers with knowledge, tools, and technical support; optimising policy discourse to stimulate evidence-informed development action; and embedding evidence generation, innovation, and evidence-informed policy practice within policymaking and governance structures.

The Africa Integrity Indicators is an AFIDEP's project that is funded by the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

Foreword

The African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) is pleased to present the first edition of *Integrity Narratives*, the flagship report of the Africa Integrity Indicators (AII). Since AFIDEP assumed full stewardship of the AII from Global Integrity in 2023, our aim has been to ensure that this rich body of governance data does more than sit in a database. Over more than a decade, the AII has documented how governance institutions in Africa function in practice, beyond what constitutions and laws prescribe. Yet the data remain under-used in policy debates on the continent. *Integrity Narratives* is designed to close that gap by turning the evidence into accessible insights that governments, parliaments, civil society, the media, researchers and continental institutions can use.

This edition comes at a moment of transition for the AII itself. Governance in Africa is fluid, and the indicators must evolve with it. In 2024, we undertook a comprehensive review of the index with governance experts from academia, think tanks, civil society, and public and multilateral institutions. That review recalibrated existing indicators and introduced new ones in areas of growing importance, including transparency in national debt, the protection of immigrants from discrimination, the representation of youth and persons with disabilities in national cabinets, issuance and affordability of passports to citizens and efforts to counter misinformation and disinformation. For the first time, the AII now covers all 55 African Union member states, with the inclusion of the Sahrawi Republic. We have also moved from an annual to a biennial cycle, giving us the time to analyse the data in greater depth and engage more meaningfully with the stakeholders who use it.

The research period for Round 13, from September 2023 to June 2025, was an eventful one for African governance. More than 20 countries held elections, some ushering in new governments and others returning incumbents. In the Sahel, countries including Niger and Burkina Faso continued to navigate transitions following military takeovers, with Burkina Faso's junta extending its rule. The war in Sudan between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces deepened one of the world's gravest humanitarian crises, while rival authorities in Libya continued to contest power. Youth-led protests in Kenya renewed attention to the relationship between citizens and the state. Beyond the continent, a sharp reduction in development assistance and mounting debt pressures have intensified calls for self-reliance, debt justice, fairer international financial architecture and greater transparency in the exploitation of Africa's natural resources, including critical minerals.

Against this backdrop, the findings of Round 13 tell a story of modest progress and stark divergence. Transparency and accountability have recovered from their 2021 low, and social development has improved over the longer term. Women's representation across the three branches of government remains the strongest area of performance. Yet progress is starting from a weak base. The continental average for transparency and accountability has never reached the moderate threshold of 50, and only 6 of the 55 countries assessed reached that level. Electoral performance has weakened, and political finance remains the weakest area of governance on the continent. Most strikingly, the gap between countries consolidating their democratic institutions and those experiencing regression remains wide.

The central lesson of this report is that institutions matter, but only when they work. Across the continent, the difference between stronger and weaker performers lies less in whether institutions exist than in whether they can act independently, are adequately resourced, and are open to scrutiny by citizens, journalists and civil society. Africa does not lack governance commitments. Agenda 2063, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the African Peer Review Mechanism set out a clear vision. The task now is to translate these commitments into institutions that deliver in practice.

We hope that *Integrity Narratives* will inform policy dialogue, support reform efforts and strengthen the hand of those working to make governance more transparent, accountable and responsive across Africa. We are grateful to the more than 120 in-country researchers, peer reviewers, country specialists and thematic experts whose rigorous work underpins this report, and to the Mo Ibrahim Foundation for the continued support.

Eliya Msiyaphazi Zulu
Executive Director, AFIDEP

Executive Summary

Africa's governance trajectory presents a striking paradox. Governments across the continent have adopted constitutions, laws, institutions and regional commitments designed to advance democracy, accountability and sustainable development, yet how well these institutions work in practice varies sharply from country to country. Round 13 of the Africa Integrity Indicators (AII) shows that Africa has made progress in important areas of governance and social development, but that this progress is uneven. A wide divide separates countries with functioning institutions and oversight mechanisms from those where institutions remain weak, politically constrained, under-resourced or disrupted by conflict. This divide matters for democratic resilience, public trust and Africa's capacity to achieve Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Round 13 assessed all 55 African Union member states, including the Sahrawi Republic for the first time, using 58 in-practice indicators across two dimensions: Transparency and Accountability, and Social Development. Covering September 2023 to June 2025, it draws on evidence gathered by more than 120 in-country researchers, country specialists and thematic experts, validated through double-blind peer review. Its focus on what happens in practice, rather than what laws prescribe, shows where accountability mechanisms work and where implementation gaps persist. The round also introduced new indicators on national debt transparency, protection of immigrants, representation of youth and persons with disabilities, and efforts to counter misinformation. The data collection for Round 13 took place in a turbulent period that saw more than 20 national elections, military-led transitions in Niger, Burkina Faso and Gabon, and war in Sudan.

Progress has come from a weak base. The continental average for Transparency and Accountability rose only from 28.2 in 2014 to 29.8 in 2025, recovering from a low of 27.3 in 2021 but never reaching the moderate threshold of 50. Only six countries reach that threshold: South Africa (68.8), Seychelles (60.2), Mauritius (59.4), Morocco (58.6), Namibia (54.7) and Senegal (53.9). Eritrea (1.6), Equatorial Guinea (3.1), Sudan (4.7) and South Sudan (9.4) rank lowest. These gaps reflect differences in judicial independence, public auditing, procurement systems, access to information, media oversight and the space for citizens and civil society to scrutinise government.

Regional disparities reinforce this picture. No region reaches the moderate threshold: Southern Africa performs best (36.3), followed by West Africa (35.2), East Africa (27.7) and North Africa (26.5), while Central Africa trails at 19.5. Stronger performers such as South Africa, Mauritius and Namibia show how independent institutions and accountability mechanisms support better governance outcomes. In lower-ranking countries, political interference, weak enforcement, limited access to information, conflict and restrictions on civic oversight hold performance back. The result is not a single African governance trajectory but increasingly divergent national experiences.

The overall rankings confirm that divergence. Seychelles (67.2) overtook South Africa (65.5) for first place, followed by Mauritius, Namibia and Morocco, while Sudan (5.2), Eritrea (8.6) and Equatorial Guinea (11.2) remain at the bottom. Only 10 of 55 countries reach the moderate threshold overall. Since 2014, Morocco has gained 30 points, while Niger, Botswana, Tanzania, Benin and Burundi have declined. Niger alone lost 10.5 points between 2024 and 2025, a reminder that governance gains are reversible.

Social Development has also improved over the longer term, rising from 38.5 in 2014 to 44.8 in 2024 before falling to 41.6 in 2025. The 2025 score of 41.6 is calculated on an expanded indicator set that now includes youth and disability representation, areas where nearly all countries score poorly; the difference therefore

largely reflects these newly measured gaps rather than a significant decline in previously measured areas. In this category, Seychelles leads (76.0), followed by Mauritius, Cabo Verde, Namibia and South Africa, while Sudan is lowest (5.8). Progress is associated with public health systems that respond effectively to outbreaks, greater participation of women in decision-making, and stronger civil registration and statistical systems. Inadequate poverty data, weak social safety nets, and discrimination against minority groups continue to constrain progress, particularly where statistics, social protection and human rights institutions are weak or under-resourced.

The thematic findings sharpen these conclusions. Electoral performance fell to 26.8 in 2025, below its 2014 level, and political finance remains the weakest area of governance, with an average score that has never exceeded 10. Women's representation across the three branches of government remains strongest area (67.4), though it declined in 2025 for the first time since 2016. Transparency over national debt, state-owned enterprises and natural resources varies widely.

Taken together, the findings point to a clear policy priority. Africa's central governance challenge is no longer the absence of institutions, laws or continental commitments, but the gap between formal institutional architecture and effective implementation. Strengthening governance therefore requires more than creating new institutions. Existing institutions must be protected from political interference, given predictable financing and professional capacity, empowered to enforce rules, and required to make information accessible to citizens.

National governments should prioritise the independence and capacity of judiciaries, electoral management bodies, supreme audit institutions, anti-corruption agencies, procurement authorities, national statistics offices and social protection institutions.

National governments should prioritise the independence and capacity of judiciaries, electoral management bodies, supreme audit institutions, anti-corruption agencies, procurement authorities, national statistics offices and social protection institutions. They should make the disclosure of party funding, public debt, state-owned enterprise accounts and natural resource contracts routine; protect civic space and the watchdog role of the media and civil society; broaden the participation of women, youth and persons with disabilities; and protect migrants from discrimination. The African Union and Regional Economic Communities should shift attention from adopting continental norms to implementing and enforcing them at national level, use peer learning to spread practices that work, and direct targeted support to countries where institutional weakness, conflict and instability have produced the largest governance deficits.



CHAPTER 01

Introduction:

Strong Institutions as a Foundation for Transparency, Accountability and Social Development

Africa has some of the world's fastest-growing economies, abundant natural resources and a youthful population. Together, these give the continent real potential for rapid socioeconomic development. Whether that potential is realised depends on strong and transparent institutions, people-centred governance and leadership, active civic participation, gender equality and equal opportunity, respect for the rule of law, and peace and security. Democratic consolidation is therefore central to achieving sustainable development in Africa. Yet the gap between countries whose institutions deliver and those whose institutions do not remains wide.

Africa does not lack commitments to good governance. Agenda 2063, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Governance Architecture, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance and the African Peer Review Mechanism together set out a clear vision for democratic, accountable and inclusive development. National governments have written many of these commitments into their constitutions, laws and policies. In practice, however, implementation often falls short. Poor leadership, abuse of power, selective application of the law, corruption, clientelism, electoral malpractice, politicised judiciaries and conflict persist across the continent. Weak institutions and poor oversight lie at the heart of this gap, limiting the ability of many countries to achieve and sustain transformational development.

The Africa Integrity Indicators (AII) were created to measure this gap. Global Integrity, now defunct, launched the AII in 2012 in partnership with the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, and the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) has managed it since 2023. The AII assesses how governance institutions and accountability mechanisms function in practice at the national level, rather than what laws and policies prescribe. Its aim is to help governments, civil society and the media understand the state of their governance systems and identify where reform is most needed.

This report presents the findings of Round 13, which covers September 2023 to June 2025, an eventful period for African governance. More than 20 countries held presidential, legislative, local or general elections, some ushering in new governments and others returning incumbents (see Table 1).

Table 1: African electoral calendar, September 2023 – June 2025

No.	Country	Date	Election
1	Eswatini	29-Sept-23	House of Assembly election
2	Mozambique	11-Oct-23	Local Assembly
3	Liberia	10 Oct 2023; 14 Nov runoff	President + House of Representative and Senate
4	Nigeria	11-Nov-23	State (Off-cycle governorship)
5	Chad	17-Dec-23	Constitutional Referendum
6	Egypt	10–12 Dec 2023	President
7	DRC	20-Dec-23	President + National Assembly + provincial assemblies
8	Tunisia	24-Dec-23	Local
9	Madagascar	16-Nov-23; Dec-2024	President + Local
10	Comoros	14-Jan-24	President + Governors (First Round)
11	Senegal	24-Mar-24	President
12	Togo	29-Apr-24	National Assembly + Regional Councils
13	Burkina Faso	25-May-24	Presidential- not held; transition extended to 2029
14	Cabo Verde	1-Dec-24	Local
15	Chad	6-May-24; 29-Dec-24	President + Legislative

No.	Country	Date	Election
16	Ethiopia	7-Oct-24	President (Indirect, by Parliament)
17	Guinea Bissau	Nov 2024	President
18	Madagascar	29-May-24	National Assembly
19	Libya	2024	Local
20	Mali	Feb 2024	President
21	South Africa	29-May-24	National Assembly + provincial Legislatures
22	Mauritania	29-Jun-24	President
23	Algeria	7-Sept-24	President
24	Rwanda	15-Jul-24	President and Chamber of Deputies
25	South Sudan	2024	President, National Assembly and Local
26	Tanzania	27-Nov-24	Local
27	Tunisia	6-Oct-24	President
28	Mozambique	9-Oct-24	President + National Assembly and Provincial
29	Botswana	30-Oct-24	National Assembly
30	Mauritius	10-Nov-24	National Assembly
31	Senegal	17-Nov-24	National Assembly
32	Namibia	27–30 Nov 2024	President + National Assembly
33	Ghana	7-Dec-24	President + Parliament
34	Comoros	12-Jan-25	National Assembly
35	Togo	May-25	President (Indirect, by Parliament)
36	Gabon	12-Apr-25	President
37	Burundi	5-Jun-25	National Assembly + Communal Councils

Notes:

Comoros, Mozambique, Togo and Senegal conducted more than one election during the period.

Elections in Guinea Bissau were scheduled for November 2024 but were postponed. The President's term ended on 27 February 2025, but he remained in power and ran for re-election late 2025.

Elections in Mali were postponed from February 2024.

Elections in South Sudan were postponed from 22 December 2024 to 2026.

Source: Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa

Countries emerging from coups faced continued instability, notably Niger and Burkina Faso. In Sudan, war between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces deepened the country's crisis. In Libya, rival governments continued to contest power, and in Kenya, youth-led protests renewed attention to the relationship between citizens and the state. Several countries also undertook political, institutional and legal reforms. Together, these developments affected press freedom and freedom of expression, the accountability of elected officials and state institutions, judicial independence, the representation of women, youth and marginalised groups, and the welfare of citizens. All of these are reflected in the Round 13 results.

Round 13 of the AII offers significant insights. The data shows a gap between high-performing and underperforming countries, signaling the need for urgent and concerted action to bridge governance and accountability gaps. For instance, as some countries make efforts to transition from coups to proper governance systems, citizens' trust in public leadership, citizen-state relations and civic participation remain key issues, with some countries witnessing a decline in public trust, civic participation and citizen-state relations.

Findings from Round 13 of the AII reveal that integrity remains a very important component in governance, and continuous monitoring is imperative for achieving sustainable development and Agenda 2063 across the continent. This demonstrates the centrality of the AII in Africa's development. By assessing how countries perform in this fulcrum, AII aids in identifying intervention areas where countries are lagging and where other countries are making progress. These insights are critical for national and regional governments, including the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs), in addressing context-specific challenges and barriers that affect collective socioeconomic development on the continent.

Structure of the Report

This edition of the *Integrity Narratives* examines the status of governance across the continent by focusing on key trends and key issues affecting governance across the 55 African Union member countries. The report begins with a concise description of the AII and the transformations it has undergone since its inception to Round 13. Following this, the report provides detailed information on the methodology and the associated justifications that guide the conceptual framing for indicator development, data collection, and analysis. The report then presents the findings from Round 13, by providing an overview of how countries and regions performed. This is followed by findings on specific themes, including elections, political finance, women's representation in the three branches of government, transparency in national debt, natural resource exploitation and operations of state-owned enterprises, and immigration. The report then ends with a conclusion highlighting recommendations critical for strengthening governance, transparency and corruption performance across Africa.

About the Africa Integrity Indicators

The Africa Integrity Indicators (AII) generate quality, comprehensive and timely governance indicators on social, economic, political and anti-corruption mechanisms across the 55 African Union member states. The AII assesses the extent to which policies are implemented and services are delivered across the continent. The AII data stimulate actions for addressing existing and identified governance challenges in Africa by supporting governments, civil society, academia and the media in African countries to understand and evaluate the status of government systems and identify intervention points for subsequent reform efforts. Launched in 2012 and first published as a pilot in 2013, the AII is now in its 13th round. Global Integrity (GI) collected the data from the project's inception. In 2022, GI and AFIDEP jointly managed the data for the 10th round. Since then, the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) has been responsible for data collection and publication, starting with the 11th round (2023).[1] From 2014 AII data was collected annually. From Round 2 to Round 12, AII data were released annually. From Round 13, the AII moved to a biennial release to allow deeper analysis. Round 13 therefore covers a longer study period, from September 2023 to June 2025, following directly on from Round 12 (September 2022 to September 2023).

The AII collects data with the help of over 120 contributors (in-country researchers, country specialists, thematic experts, and editors) to generate original governance data. In-country researchers conduct the initial field research across Africa. Following that, the project management team, country specialists and thematic experts rigorously review the draft research data, enhancing the validity of the information provided.

[1]Year labels in brackets refer to the data year e.g Round 2 (2014), Round 3(2015), Round 4(2016), Round 5(2017), Round 6(2018), Round 7 (2019), Round 8(2020), Round 9(2021), Round 10(2022), Round 11(2023), Round 12(2024) and Round 13(2025)



Highlight Box: Indicators Transformation

The AII is regularly reviewed and revised to meet the contemporary needs of the African continent. The revision contributes to enhancing the context-relevance of the AII. Between Round 2 (2014) and Round 6 (2018), the AII dataset evaluated both the in-law and in-practice aspects of corruption and governance. The in-law aspect looked at the provisions of existing laws of countries, while in-practice explored what actually pertains on the ground. However, the need to focus on the practical experience became increasingly relevant over the years, resulting in a shift to focus mainly on the in-practice aspects of governance, starting from Round 7 (2019).[2] In 2024, an in-depth reformulation of the indicators resulted in the removal of two indicators,[3,4] the addition of 6 new indicators and the reformulation of another 6 indicators. This resulted in a total of 58 indicators in the Round 13 (2025) dataset. Furthermore, the frequency of the dataset release was changed from annually to biennially. With the change to a biennial release, the study period also changed. From Round 2 to Round 12, data were released annually, and each round covered September of one year to September of the next as a study period; Round 12, for example, covered September 2022 to September 2023. The study period for Round 13 covers from September 2023 to June 2025, continuing directly from the end of Round 12, and its data were collected between 2025 and 2026.

The 58 in-practice indicators are divided into two main categories:

- **Transparency and Accountability:** This consists of 32 indicators examining issues divided in the thematic areas of rule of law, accountability, elections, police oversight, public management integrity, civil service integrity, and access to information. The indicators look into the transparency of the public procurement process, media freedom, asset disclosure requirements, independence of the judiciary, and conflict of interest laws, among many others.
- **Social Development:** This consists of 26 indicators about gender, rights, welfare, business environment, health, education, vital statistics and national statistics environment. These indicators evaluate factual and precise aspects of social development.

Category	Sub-Category	Indicator No.
Social Development	Gender & Inclusion	84, 85, 86, 87, 116, 117
	Human Rights	65, 67, 68, 69, 70, 72, 74, 76, 119
	Statistics	91, 92, 93
	Welfare, Health & Civil Registration	101, 102, 103, 104, 107, 113, 114, 115
Transparency and Accountability	Access to Information & Openness	42, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 52, 53, 55, 56, 118, 120
	Accountability & Elections	12, 13, 14, 18, 21, 22, 23
	Public Management & Public Service Integrity	25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 38, 39
	Rule of Law	2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9

[2]The analysis for this report focused exclusively on in-practice indicators from 2014 to 2025.
[3]Indicator 66: In practice, corporations observe labor laws and recognise and uphold human rights.
[4]Indicator 97: In practice, there is a functioning safety monitoring system for air transport.

Highlight Box: What's New in Round 13

New Indicators:

Unlike the previous AII rounds, Round 13 (2025) of the AII included new indicators that have previously not been considered. The new indicators introduced included the protection of immigrants from discrimination across African countries, national efforts to ensure issuance and affordability of passports to citizens, representation of persons with disabilities in the national cabinet, representation of youth in the national cabinet, government transparency of national debt obligations and debt management systems, and campaigns to raise awareness and combat misinformation/disinformation. Additionally, existing indicators were also modified in Round 13.

This included adjustments in the scoring/threshold for women's representation in the cabinet,[5] legislature, and judiciary, regular disclosures of public funding from both government and political parties, citizens' access to records related to natural resource exploitation with revised scoring criteria, and a third scoring criterion assessing whether the judiciary has a predictable and consistent source of funding from year to year. These changes reflect observations from previous AII and emerging challenges related to governance across the continent.

[5]Round 13 introduced revised thresholds for the women's representation indicators. To keep the 2014–2025 series comparable, all years, including 2025, are scored here under the previous thresholds, so changes over time reflect actual changes in representation. Data under the new thresholds will be published separately.



CHAPTER 02

Methodology

AII uses a robust methodology for the development of indicators, scoring criteria, data collection, and analysis for better insights and inferences.

Conceptual Framework for Indicators Development

The AII works with evidence-based assessment methodology, allowing in-country researchers and experts to compile and document verifiable data points that serve as evidence to inform the final assessment of a country. This approach minimises the chances of researchers using their own perceptions and experiences as benchmarks or data points for the assessment of a country. The strength of this methodology lies in the mandatory requirement for a variety of current and up-to-date sources of information (e.g., legal review, interviews with experts, review of in-country media stories, statistics, review of academic studies, etc.) that provide substantial and credible evidence to substantiate the scores assigned to each indicator for a country.

Two broad elements of governance and development form the central anchors of the AII: transparency and accountability, and social development. In the AII's conceptual framework, these two broad categories are critical for development on the continent. Considering the historical antecedents on the African continent coupled with the rise of globalisation and contemporary global efforts towards sustainable development, how countries practice transparency, accountability, and social development are key to understanding and explaining national development efforts. This assumption guides the robust development and continued transformation of AII. Within the two broad categories of indicators, AII prescribes precise indicators for measuring or assessing governance and development performance across the continent. For instance, benchmark indicators, such as how countries conduct national elections, manage public office and space, and ensure accountability of elected officials and state institutions, among others, are critical elements of transparency and accountability. Similarly, how countries address issues of human rights, gender equality, welfare, and human capital development needs are highly essential for understanding social development performance and trajectories across countries. These indicators are then translated into clear questionnaires for data collection. The AII therefore uses conceptually grounded indicators and research methodology. This approach is applied across all rounds and as was the case in Round 13 to collect data on 58 indicators from 55 African countries.

Each of the 58 indicators includes three components: a score, an explanatory comment, and sources. These components offer a wealth of information, allowing users to refer to the comments for context and insights into why a country has received a specific score. While scores enable broad comparisons across countries, the comments and sources provide deeper and richer contextual information, offering credence to, and justification for, the scores. Each indicator is scored against detailed criteria: 100 for "Very Strong," 75 for "Strong," 50 for "Moderate," 25 for "Weak," and 0 for "Very Weak."



Highlight Box: How to Interpret the average scores in the Integrity Narratives report

All indicators in the report, unless stated, are computed using average scores, meaning each value reflects the overall performance across all criteria rather than any single strong or weak result. When an average score is around 0, it aligns with the "Very Weak" criteria and indicates that, on average, the indicator shows substantial deficiencies, performing very poorly in the dimensions that the indicator is measuring. An average score of 25 aligns with the "Weak" criteria, implying that performance is poor, with some criteria showing partial capability but overall results remaining

below acceptable strength. An average score of 50 falls in the "Moderate" category, indicating generally average performance with several criteria meeting expectations, though notable gaps still prevent the indicator from being classified as strong. An average score of around 75 reflects "Strong" performance, meaning the indicator demonstrates consistently high capability across most criteria, with only minor weaknesses preventing a perfect average score of 100 ("Very Strong).

Data Collection, Data Sources and Validation

The AII follows a rigorous process of data collection and validation to enhance the transparency of the assessment and findings. The data collection and scoring processes involve in-country researchers using an evidence-based investigation methodology. AFIDEP employs a robust approach for the recruitment of in-country experts (Lead Researchers and Peer Reviewers) for data collection and validation. Lead Researchers collect data and score countries, and Peer Reviewers assess the validity and reliability of the scores for each country. Experts are selected based on their governance knowledge and expertise. A detailed but practical and hands-on training is provided to the experts based on their roles.

Lead Researchers collect data and score countries using primary and secondary sources of data. From 2014, data were collected annually, covering September of one year to September of the next. From 2024, AII transitioned to biennial release with Round 13 covering September 2023 to June 2025. An important requirement for assessment and scoring is that Lead Researchers must use a variety of current and up-to-date sources of information to arrive at scores for each indicator for each country. Also, each indicator must have at least one primary source of information. This includes interviewing individuals or stakeholders with in-depth knowledge and practical experience related to a particular indicator for a country. Thus, the AII's methodology relies on qualitative research and triangulation of information, gathering data from various sources.

Scores are assigned based on clearly defined criteria, backed by qualitative comments, and all sources are transparent to ensure validity and reliability. AFIDEP follows strict confidentiality protocols for anonymous sources. Complete draft scorecards are submitted to AFIDEP, where an initial review is conducted in-house, followed by reviews by a panel of peer reviewers, consisting of country-specific experts. The review process explores conformity of the data with in-practice aspects on the ground in a country. Reviewers raise questions, objectively comment on scores and make recommendations for improvement backed by relevant data sources. Lead Researchers respond to the reviewers' comments, improve upon scores and offer justifications where possible. Using a double-blind approach, researcher-reviewers' interactions and exchanges contribute to the validity and reliability of the process and the ensuing data for the AII. Finally, AFIDEP conducts a robust final editorial review and consistency checks for all the submitted scores for the 55 African countries. Given that similar weighting was applied to the indicators and scores, the data was analysed using descriptive statistics including average, margin of change, and presented in diverse visualisations.

Comparability Across Rounds

The 2024 review of the AII added, removed and reformulated the highlighted indicators. To assess whether these changes affect comparisons over time, 2024 and 2025 averages were also calculated on the indicators that remained unchanged in both rounds. For Transparency and Accountability, the effect of the revised indicator set is not material, and the trends reported are not driven by the changes. For Social Development, the new indicators, particularly the representation of youth and persons with disabilities in national cabinets, scored very low across almost all countries and lowered the 2025 average. Changes in Social Development between 2024 and 2025 should therefore be read with this in mind.

AFIDEP conducts a robust final editorial review and consistency checks for all the submitted scores for the 55 African countries.



CHAPTER 03

Round 13 Highlights: Progress, Setbacks and a Mixed Picture

The overarching insight from Round 13 is that strong institutions and oversight mechanisms are critical for governance, democracy and socio-economic development in Africa. The outlook shows that countries with strong institutions and oversight mechanisms perform better across indicators than their counterparts, bringing to the limelight the need for AU, RECs and national governments to strengthen institutions and oversight mechanisms. In Round 13 as shown in Figure 1 (overall scores for both transparency and accountability and social development) the top 10 best-performing countries overall are Seychelles (67.2), South Africa (65.5), Mauritius (62.9), Namibia (59.1), Morocco (56.0), Cabo Verde (53.4), Senegal (52.2), Ghana (50.4), Kenya (50.4), and Rwanda (50.4), while the bottom 10 are Sudan (5.2), Eritrea (8.6), Equatorial Guinea (11.2), Somalia (16.8), Libya (16.8), Sahrawi Republic (18.1), Burundi (18.1), South Sudan (18.5), Congo (19.4), and Niger (20.3).[6]

Between 2024 and 2025, the top of the ranking remained largely stable, with one notable change: Seychelles (67.2) overtook South Africa (65.5) to rank first, as South Africa's score fell by 3.2 points while Seychelles improved marginally. Mauritius (62.9) and Namibia (59.1) held their positions in third and fourth place, while Morocco (56.0) edged past Cabo Verde (53.4) into fifth place (Figure 1).

Overall, several of the strongest performers in 2024 recorded lower scores in 2025. This included South Africa, Namibia, Cabo Verde, Senegal, Ghana and Kenya. The largest gains, by contrast, were concentrated among middle- and lower-ranked countries. DRC recorded the biggest improvement (+5.3 points), followed by Gabon (+5.0), Zambia (+4.4), Liberia (+4.2) and Egypt (+3.9).

The outlook shows that countries with strong institutions and oversight mechanisms perform better across indicators than their counterparts, bringing to the limelight the need for AU, RECs and national governments to strengthen institutions and oversight mechanisms.

[6]Throughout this report, the Republic of the Congo is referred to as "Congo" and the Democratic Republic of the Congo as "DRC"

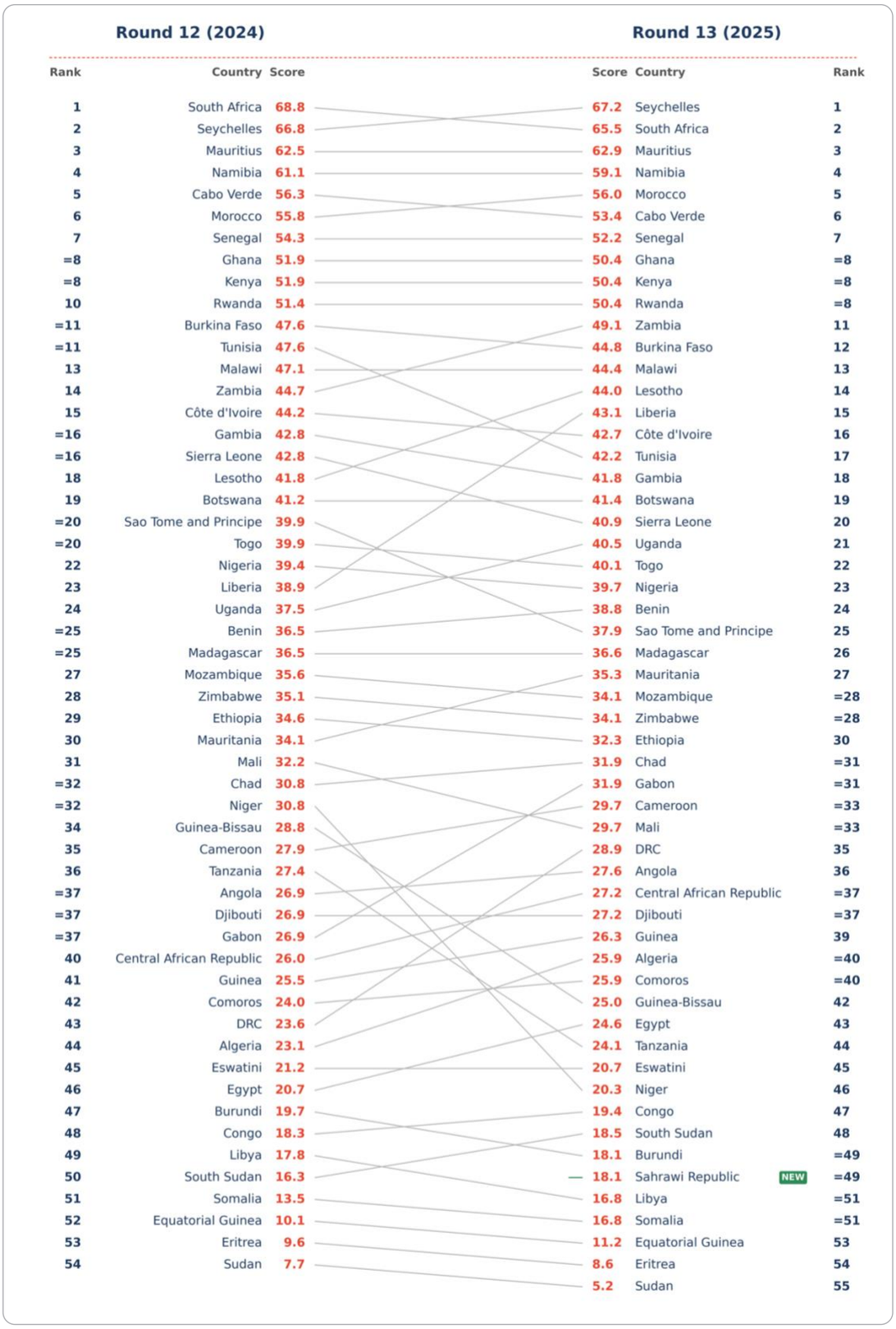


Figure 1: Country Ranking by Overall Integrity Score, 2024-2025

At the other end, Niger experienced the sharpest deterioration (Figure 2). Its score fell by 10.5 points (from 30.8 to 20.3). Tunisia (−5.4), Guinea-Bissau (−3.8), Tanzania (−3.3) and South Africa (−3.2) also recorded notable declines. The bottom of the ranking remained unchanged, with Equatorial Guinea (11.2), Eritrea (8.6) and Sudan (5.2) occupying the last three positions. Sudan's score also fell further, by 2.5 points.[7]

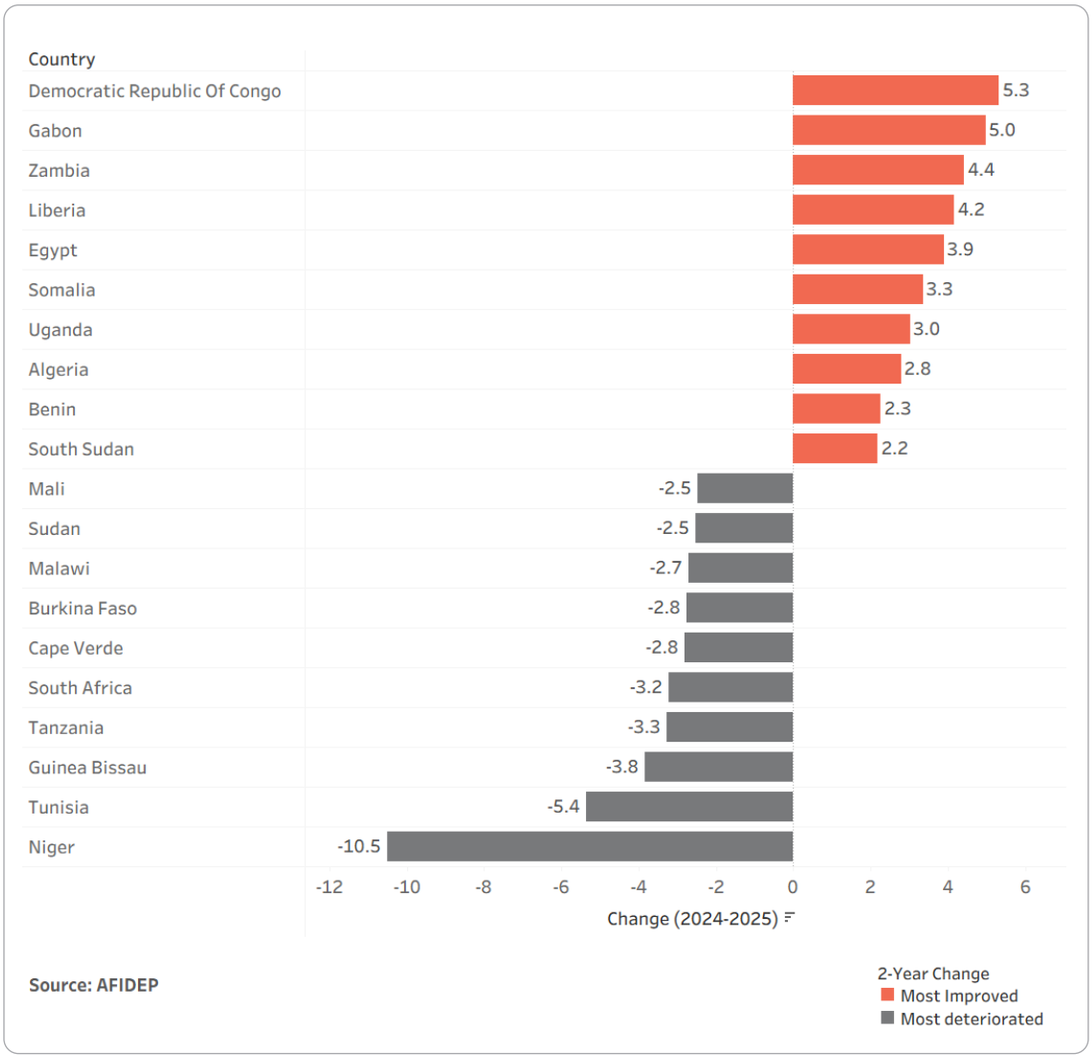


Figure 2: Most improved and most deteriorated countries in overall integrity performance between Round 12 (2024) and Round 13 (2025)

The 2025 ranking also includes the Sahrawi Republic for the first time.[8] Its inclusion expands the number of countries assessed from 54 to 55.

[7]The 2025 scores are calculated on the revised Round 13 indicator set, which added six indicators. On two of them, the representation of youth and of persons with disabilities in national cabinets, almost every country scored 0. These additions alone lower most countries' 2025 scores by one to two points. Small declines, including several among the top performers, may therefore reflect the expanded indicator set rather than a deterioration in governance, while some gains are slightly understated. Larger shifts, such as Niger's 10.5-point fall, are far too large to be explained by the indicator changes and point to real changes in practice. Annex 1 discusses comparability in more detail

[8]The Sahrawi Republic's statehood is disputed internationally. It is, however, a member of the African Union, justifying its inclusion in the Africa Integrity Indicators

Table 2: Average Score changes between Round 12 and Round 13

Country	Score (2024)	Score (2025)	Change (2024–2025)
Democratic Republic of Congo	23.6	28.9	5.3
Gabon	26.9	31.9	5.0
Zambia	44.7	49.1	4.4
Liberia	38.9	43.1	4.2
Egypt	20.7	24.6	3.9
Somalia	13.5	16.8	3.3
Uganda	37.5	40.5	3.0
Algeria	23.1	25.9	2.8
Benin	36.5	38.8	2.3
South Sudan	16.3	18.5	2.2
Lesotho	41.8	44.0	2.1
Cameroon	27.9	29.7	1.9
Comoros	24.0	25.9	1.8
Mauritania	34.1	35.3	1.2
Central African Republic	26.0	27.2	1.2
Republic Of Congo	18.3	19.4	1.1
Chad	30.8	31.9	1.1
Equatorial Guinea	10.1	11.2	1.1
Guinea	25.5	26.3	0.8
Angola	26.9	27.6	0.7
Mauritius	62.5	62.9	0.4
Seychelles	66.8	67.2	0.4
Morocco	55.8	56.0	0.3
Nigeria	39.4	39.7	0.2
Djibouti	26.9	27.2	0.2
Togo	39.9	40.1	0.2
Botswana	41.2	41.4	0.2
Madagascar	36.5	36.6	0.1
Eswatini	21.2	20.7	-0.5
Libya	17.8	16.8	-1.0
Gambia	42.8	41.8	-1.0
Eritrea	9.6	8.6	-1.0
Rwanda	51.4	50.4	-1.0
Zimbabwe	35.1	34.1	-1.0
Kenya	51.9	50.4	-1.5
Ghana	51.9	50.4	-1.5
Mozambique	35.6	34.1	-1.5
Cote Divoire	44.2	42.7	-1.6

Burundi	19.7	18.1	-1.6
Sierra Leone	42.8	40.9	-1.8
Sao Tome And Principe	39.9	37.9	-2.0
Namibia	61.1	59.1	-2.0
Senegal	54.3	52.2	-2.2
Ethiopia	34.6	32.3	-2.3
Mali	32.2	29.7	-2.5
Sudan	7.7	5.2	-2.5
Malawi	47.1	44.4	-2.7
Burkina Faso	47.6	44.8	-2.8
Cape Verde	56.3	53.4	-2.8
South Africa	68.8	65.5	-3.2
Tanzania	27.4	24.1	-3.3
Guinea Bissau	28.8	25.0	-3.8
Tunisia	47.6	42.2	-5.4
Niger	30.8	20.3	-10.5
Sahrawi Republic		18.1	

Source: AFIDEP



CHAPTER 04

Transparency and accountability remains stagnant over time in Africa

Transparency and accountability are essential benchmarks to assess governance, democracy and development, particularly following globalisation, and the transition to democratic governance across the African continent. Data shows that between 2014 and 2025, transparency and accountability has been broadly stagnant at a weak level, with some recovery since 2021. Throughout the period, the continental average remained well below 50, the threshold for a moderate score on the Africa Integrity Indicators, which points to persistently poor performance. The average transparency and accountability score was 28.2 in 2014 and peaked at 30.9 in 2016 (Figure 3). Scores then declined from 30.6 in 2017 to 27.3 in 2021, before recovering from 27.9 in 2022 to 29.8 in 2025. Even at its 2016 peak, the score was about 19 points short of the moderate threshold.

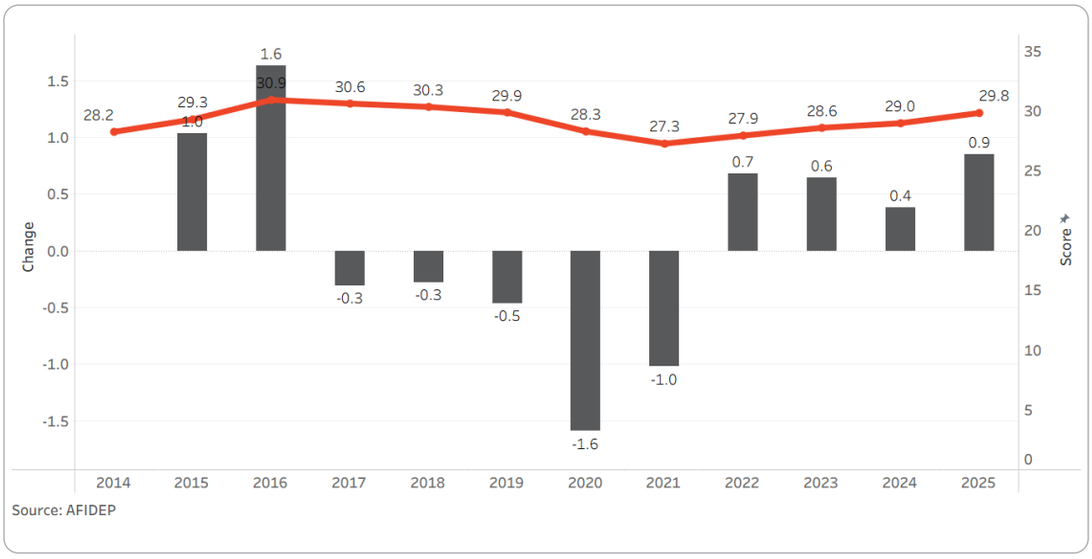


Figure 3: Africa - transparency and accountability average scores and yearly changes

From Figure 4 there is evidence of substantial improvements between 2014 and 2025 in transparency and accountability in Morocco, Gambia, Seychelles and Mauritania. However, countries such as Botswana, Niger, Tanzania, Comoros, Benin and Tunisia experienced substantial declines in transparency and accountability.

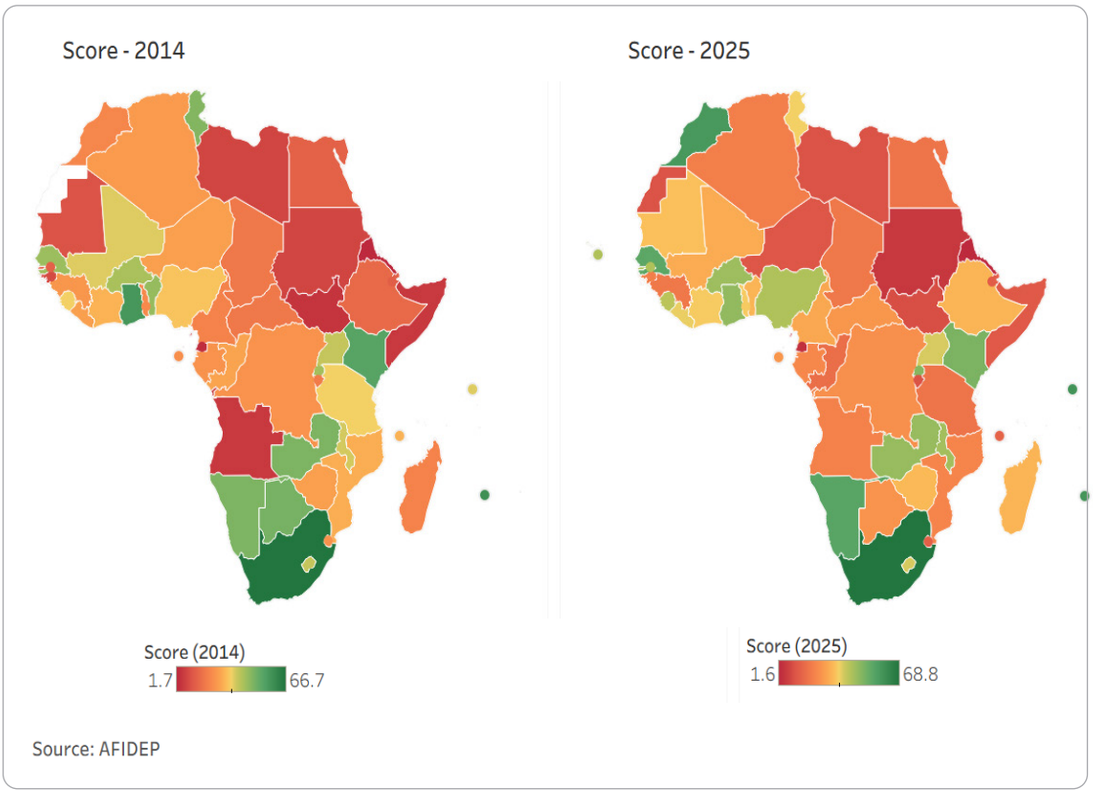


Figure 4: Transparency and accountability improvement in Africa

Generally, transparency and accountability recorded its lowest average scores in 2021 and 2022 at 27.3 and 27.9 respectively (Figure 3). Several African countries, such as Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal had some sort of a challenge in the release of audit reports, hindering oversight and the watchdog roles of civil society organisations. In Kenya, decline in public access to audit reports was observed in 2020 and 2021, with the indicator score of 50 and 25 for 2020 and 2021, respectively.

Notwithstanding the improvement in transparency and accountability, there is an unequal performance across the continent (Figure 5).

Table 3: Indicators in the transparency and accountability category and respective average scores (2014-2025)

Indicators	Year											
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
2. In practice, the independence of the judiciary is guaranteed.	33.3	36.1	39.4	40.3	39.8	37.5	36.6	37.0	34.3	30.6	30.6	29.1
3. In practice, national-level judges appointments (justices or magistrates) support the independence of the judiciary.	31.5	34.7	40.3	40.3	37.0	38.0	36.6	34.7	37.0	36.6	35.2	32.7
4. In practice, national-level judges give reasons for their decisions/judgments.	55.6	56.0	60.6	56.5	57.4	59.3	55.6	57.4	59.7	60.2	60.6	61.8
7. In practice, the independence of the supreme audit institution is guaranteed.	38.9	40.3	45.8	43.5	41.7	42.1	39.4	38.9	39.4	39.4	40.3	36.8
8. In practice, appointments to the supreme audit institution support the independence of the agency.	33.8	39.4	47.7	45.8	42.1	44.4	43.5	42.6	43.1	42.1	41.7	40.0
9. In practice, the supreme audit agency releases frequent reports that are accessible to citizens.	19.9	18.1	20.8	24.1	28.2	29.2	30.6	28.2	33.8	37.5	39.4	43.6
12. In practice, allegations of corruption against senior level politicians and/or civil servants of any level are investigated by an independent body.	34.3	29.6	33.3	32.4	33.8	36.1	34.3	30.6	31.5	33.8	35.2	34.5
13. In practice, the body/bodies that investigate/s allegations of public sector corruption is/are effective.	30.6	31.9	33.8	35.2	34.3	35.6	35.6	33.3	32.9	33.3	33.3	35.0
14. In practice, appointments to the body/bodies that investigate/s allegations of public sector corruption support/s the independence of the body.	25.9	24.5	32.4	31.9	30.1	27.3	26.9	23.1	23.6	24.1	23.6	24.1
18. In practice, the mechanism for citizens to report police misconduct or abuse of force is effective.	17.1	22.2	28.7	31.0	32.4	30.1	29.2	27.3	29.6	31.9	33.8	33.6
21. In practice, appointments the agency/agencies mandated to organize and monitor national elections support the independence of the agency/agencies.	31.0	36.1	35.6	33.8	34.7	34.3	31.5	30.1	27.8	25.9	26.4	25.5
22. In practice, the agency/agencies mandated to organize and monitor national elections make/s timely, publicly available reports before and after a national election.	27.8	29.6	29.6	27.3	31.0	26.4	23.6	23.1	25.9	28.7	30.1	30.5
23. In practice, candidates/political parties have equitable access to state-owned media outlets.	28.2	33.8	31.9	30.6	33.8	29.6	26.4	25.9	25.0	26.9	26.9	24.5
25. In practice, major public procurements involve competitive bidding.	42.1	41.2	42.1	41.2	43.5	42.6	38.0	35.2	37.5	38.4	40.3	40.0
26. In practice, citizens can access the results and documents associated with procurement contracts (full contract, proposals, execution reports, financial audits, etc.).	24.5	25.0	24.5	28.2	27.3	25.9	25.0	24.5	25.0	26.4	26.9	25.9
28. In practice, companies found guilty of violating procurement regulations are prohibited from participating in future bids.	27.3	30.1	28.2	31.9	29.6	29.2	27.3	25.5	26.4	29.2	29.6	30.5
29. In practice, citizens can access the financial records of state-owned companies.	12.5	14.4	13.0	14.4	17.1	17.6	17.6	18.5	19.9	19.4	19.9	20.5
30. In practice, citizens can access records associated with natural resources exploitation (gas, oil and mining), whether they involve the participation of public or private corporations.												24.5
30(x). In practice, citizens can access the financial records associated with natural resources exploitation (gas, oil and mining), whether they involve the participation of public or private corporations.	21.3	22.7	23.1	20.8	20.4	19.9	18.5	19.4	20.8	22.2	23.1	
38. In practice, civil servants' work is not compromised by political interference.	29.2	32.4	34.3	31.5	26.4	24.5	23.6	20.8	22.7	22.2	21.3	20.0
39. In practice, civil servants are appointed and evaluated according to professional criteria.	22.7	22.7	27.8	32.4	27.3	26.9	24.5	25.9	25.9	25.9	25.5	23.6
42. In practice, citizen requests for public information are effective.	13.0	12.0	15.3	16.2	18.1	18.1	16.2	15.3	15.3	18.5	19.4	20.9
43. In practice, citizens can access legislative processes and documents.	38.0	37.5	38.4	40.7	38.9	38.9	40.3	41.7	43.5	43.5	44.0	43.6
45. In practice, the asset disclosure process for senior officials of the three branches of government (heads of state and government, ministers, members of Parliament, judges, etc.) is effective.	2.8	1.9	2.8	0.9	2.8	5.1	6.5	5.6	6.0	7.9	10.2	10.9
47. In practice, the asset disclosure process for members of the civil service is effective.	0.9	0.9	0.5	0.9	1.9	1.9	2.8	1.9	2.8	4.2	6.0	6.8
49. In practice, there are regular disclosures of public funding (funds sourced from the government) to political parties and the disclosures are easily available to the public.												15.0
49(x). In practice, political parties regularly disclose public donations (funds that are sourced from the government) and the disclosures are easily available to the public.	17.6	19.4	17.1	16.7	17.6	17.6	15.3	13.0	12.5	13.4	13.0	
51. In practice, political parties regularly disclose private donations and the disclosures are easily available to the public.	3.2	1.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.5	1.9	2.8	3.2	3.2
52. In practice, media organizations (print, broadcast, online) disclose the identities of their owners to the public.	50.0	56.0	54.2	52.3	52.3	51.4	52.8	50.5	50.5	50.0	50.9	51.4
53. In practice, journalists and editors adhere to strict, professional practices in their reporting.	37.0	35.6	36.1	39.4	38.9	37.5	35.6	33.8	34.3	35.2	36.1	35.9
55. In practice, there is no prior government restraint (pre-publication censoring) and the government doesn't promote the media's self-censorship.	35.2	32.4	30.1	26.4	25.5	25.0	20.8	20.8	21.8	19.4	17.6	15.5
56. In practice, there is no prior government restraint (pre-publication censoring) of citizen-created content online and the government doesn't promote the self-censorship of citizens online (in blogs, social media, etc.).	62.0	59.7	58.8	50.5	44.9	43.1	32.9	33.3	28.7	28.7	25.9	23.2
118. In practice, government is transparent about its national debt obligations and debt management systems								0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	49.1
120. In practice, there are campaigns to raise awareness and combat misinformation and disinformation								0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	41.8

Source: AFIDEP

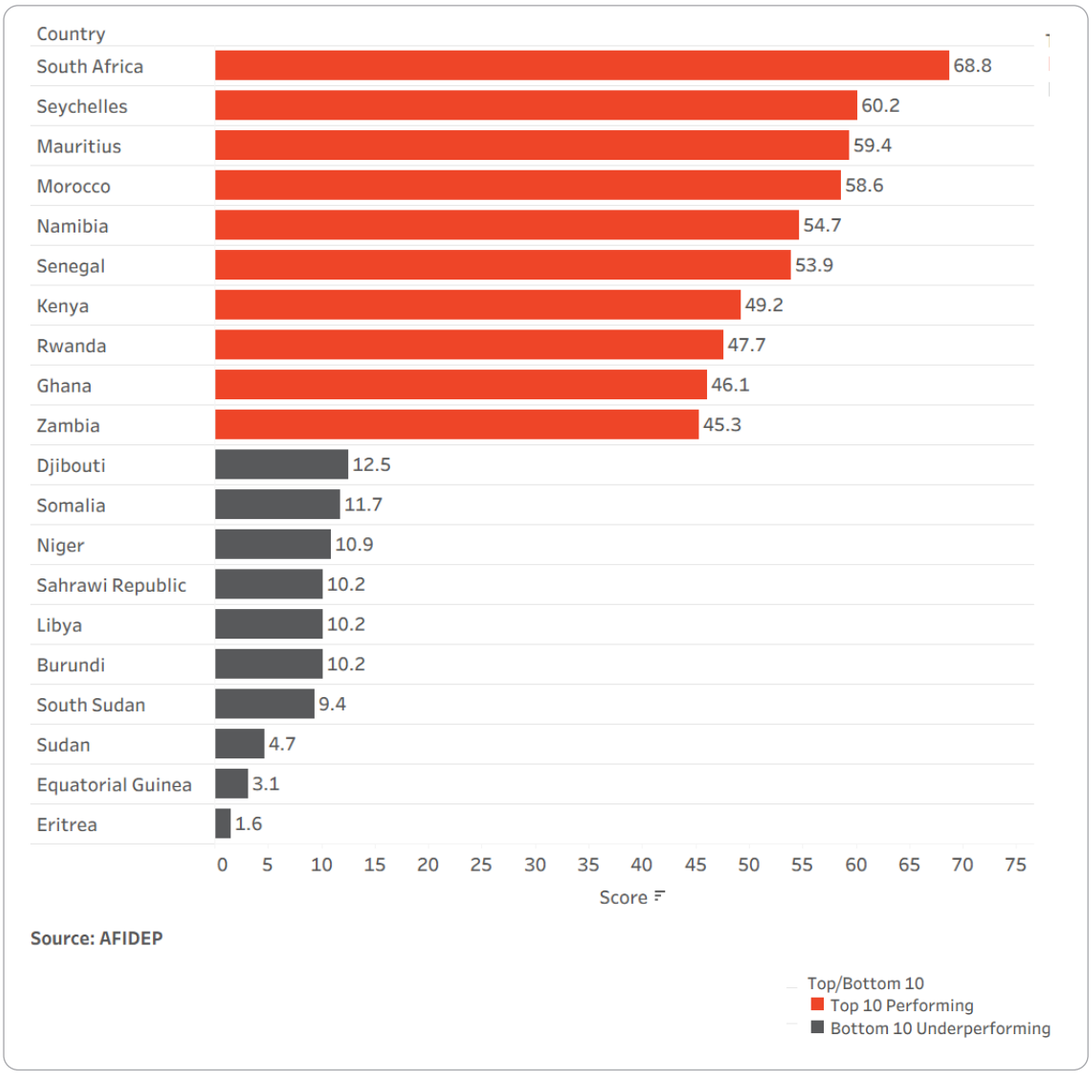


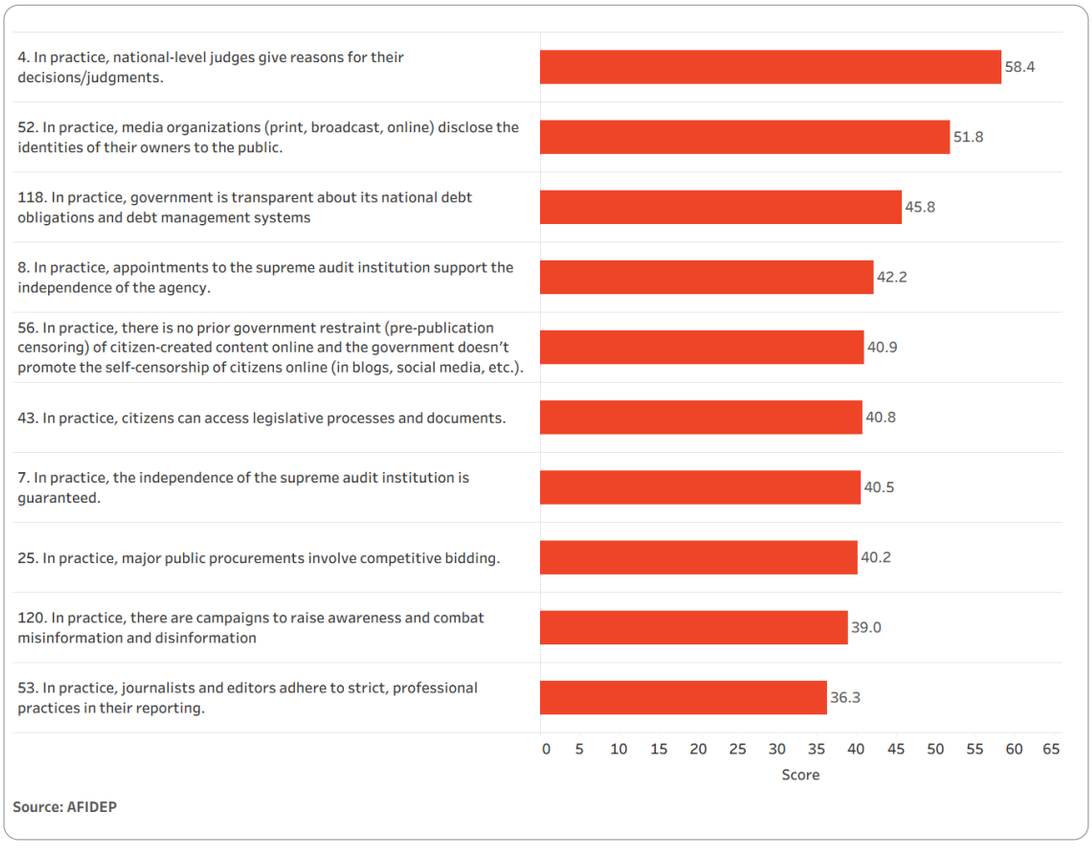
Figure 5: Top and Bottom 10 countries in Transparency & Accountability from Round 13 (2025)

In Round 13 (2025) South Africa emerged as the best-performing country in terms of transparency and accountability, with an average score of 68.8, followed by Seychelles (60.2), Mauritius (59.4), Morocco (58.6), Namibia (54.7) and Senegal (53.9). Although Kenya (49.2), Rwanda (47.7), Ghana (46.1) and Zambia (45.3) also featured among the top 10, their average scores fell below the moderate threshold of 50. This means that only six of the continent's top 10 performers reached a moderate level of transparency and accountability. On the contrary, some African countries perform poorly in terms of accountability and transparency. This category of countries is led by Eritrea, which has the lowest average score of 1.6, followed by Equatorial Guinea (3.1), Sudan (4.7), and South Sudan (9.4). Others in the list of underperforming countries are Burundi, Libya, Sahrawi Republic, Niger, Somalia, and Djibouti. It is important to highlight that it is the first time the Sahrawi Republic has been included in the AII. While the Sahrawi Republic is among the least performing countries, its performance is better than that of Eritrea, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan and South Sudan.

Where Transparency and Accountability are Strongest

Strong institutions are associated with greater transparency and accountability. As indicated by the data, progress in Africa is associated with several factors (Figure 6), most notably an independent judiciary that provides credible reasoning for its decisions and exercises its mandate as an arm of government.

This is peculiar in top-performing countries like South Africa, where judicial independence and sound judgement have enabled the judiciary to halt ministerial decisions. For instance, in 2024, the Pretoria High Court overturned a 2020 ministerial decision to procure new coal-fired power, citing insufficient consideration of its impact on the health of future generations. Similarly, in Mauritius, as of June 2025, the courts continued to hear a case against the serving Prime Minister, Navin Ramgoolam, brought under the Financial Intelligence and Anti-Money Laundering Act in 2015, before his return to office. Also, the former Prime Minister, Pravind Jugnauth, faced alleged money laundering charges. These demonstrate the strength of the judiciary in top-performing countries to not only address civil cases but also alleged criminal cases against high-profile individuals while ensuring government policies align with national interests and the constitution. Essentially, citizens' trust in the judiciary, from local to national-level judges, lies not only in the independence of the judiciary but also in its ability to give sound judgements grounded in constitutional and legal provisions. Where citizens feel that decisions of the judiciary do not align with constitutional provisions, it erodes trust in the judiciary and undermines the transparency of the judicial system.



Source: AFIDEP

Figure 6: Transparency and accountability indicators that drive positive performance (2014-2025)

Note: Indicators introduced in Round 13 (debt transparency and misinformation campaigns) are based on 2025 data only

Another important driver of transparency and accountability as evidenced from the data is the public disclosure of the identities of the owners of media houses. For instance, in Cabo Verde, Decree No. 47/2018, which came into force in August 2018, obliges media organisations, whether print, audiovisual or online, to disclose the identities of their owners to the Media Regulatory Agency (ARC). Also, in Ghana, the majority of media houses (be it major or less known media houses) publicise the names of their owners to the public and in situations where the information is not available, it can be requested from the Registrar-General's Department, the National Communications Authority (NCA) or the National Media Commission. This is highly important in promoting accountability of media reportages, as the media play instrumental roles in democracy and governance, particularly their watchdog and oversight roles over the affairs of the government, elected officials and heads of public institutions. Considering the importance of the media, their reportages must be free from bias, political-orientation and sensationalism. Hence, disclosure of the identities of media owners enables the public to judge the quality and impartiality of the reports from media houses, allowing citizens to hold media houses accountable. Particularly, in contexts like Ghana and other democracies in Africa where political parties and politically exposed individuals own media houses, it is important for the identities of media owners to be made public.

Increasing transparency through publicly available information on governments' national debt obligations and debt management systems is imperative for governance and development in Africa. In Seychelles, for example, the Ministry of Finance, National Planning and Trade issues regular updates through its website and maintains an archive, ensuring that debt data is transparent and accessible to the public. The Quarter 1 Debt Bulletin 2025 published by the Government of Seychelles in April 2025, provided updated figures on the country's total debt stock, composition, and repayment obligations. Debt Bulletins are complemented by the Annual Borrowing Plan 2025, released in January 2025, which outlines projected borrowing needs and strategies for the year. Additionally, the Debt Management Strategy 2025–2027, published in October 2024, sets the medium-term framework for debt sustainability and risk management. These measures ensure transparency in national debt management, a persistent challenge for many African economies. Recent geopolitical crises, including the Russian-Ukraine war and the June 2025 Israel-Iran conflict, have further affected the debts of developing economies, due to the economic pressures and depreciation of local currencies against major currencies. Soaring national debts have withered the ability of developing countries to access the global financial market, hindering development projects, and further worsening poverty and hardship, particularly among the poor and vulnerable populations. This has necessitated the need for African governments to address rising national debts, with political parties proposing diverse measures, including tackling corruption and capital flight, and strengthening fiscal and monetary macroeconomic policies, during national elections. Evidently, the need for governments to increase public awareness about debt obligations and debt management systems is imperative, and serves as a cornerstone for governance and democracy, enabling citizens and watchdogs to monitor fiscal discipline related to government expenditures.

Closely linked to debt obligations and debt management systems are competitive procurement and tendering, and an independent supreme audit institution that scrutinises government, state institutions and state-managed enterprises. In Namibia, the Central Procurement Board of Namibia oversees high-value procurements and publishes bid advertisements and awards on its official website. Additionally, the eProcurement portal of the Government of Namibia serves as a centralised platform where public entities post tender notices, bid documents and award information, facilitating broader access to procurement opportunities. Equally in Seychelles, the Procurement Oversight Unit and the National Tender Board ensure major procurement opportunities are publicly advertised via multiple channels, including the Seychelles Nation newspaper (for a minimum of three consecutive days), the websites of the Procurement Oversight Unit and the National Tender Board and the websites of procuring bodies. This approach allows both domestic and international bidders access to tenders. Competitive procurement and tendering processes minimise corrupt practices (e.g., sole sourcing), and promote open and transparent awards of government contracts.

Also, regular audit reports released by independent supreme audit institutions enable citizens, CSOs and other stakeholders to hold governments accountable in managing state resources, including the national resources on the continent. Their independence, either in their appointments or performance of their duties, therefore,

contributes to promoting transparency and accountability in governance and democracy. In South Africa, for instance, the Auditor-General of South Africa - the country's supreme audit institution, is independent and free to audit accounts. This allows the institution to make decisions independent of executive interference or political intimidation. In Rwanda, the Office of the Auditor General exercises autonomy to audit state institutions, and auditors are subject to the highest code of ethics, including strict conduct rules to avoid conflicts of interest, ensuring the autonomy of the institution. Thus, independent supreme audit and procurement institutions provide strong foundations on which transparency and accountability are monitored and assessed. This necessitates the need for states to ensure strong and independent supreme audit and procurement institutions that are free from political interference as critical elements of democracy.

In addition, campaigns that create awareness and tackle misinformation, strict adherence to high and ethical standards of media reporting, citizens' access to legislative process and documents as well as the prevention of self-censorship and restraints of citizens' online content and activities by government and government agencies contribute to the promotion of transparency and accountability. Thus, minimizing censorship and preventing misinformation enable the public to actively engage in open discussions of social and development issues as well as the performance of governments.

Where Transparency and Accountability Fall Short

All data reveals indicators that undermine transparency and accountability across countries on the African continent (Figure 7), requiring urgent attention to address underlying factors affecting the performance of these indicators. Non-disclosure of private donations by political parties, weak asset disclosure regimes, secrecy and lack of transparency that limit the ability of citizens to access documents associated with procurement contracts and public information, excessive political interference in the work of civil service, media censorship, limited transparency in natural resource exploitation and management, and autocratic control of financial records associated with state-owned enterprise substantially derail good governance and democracy.

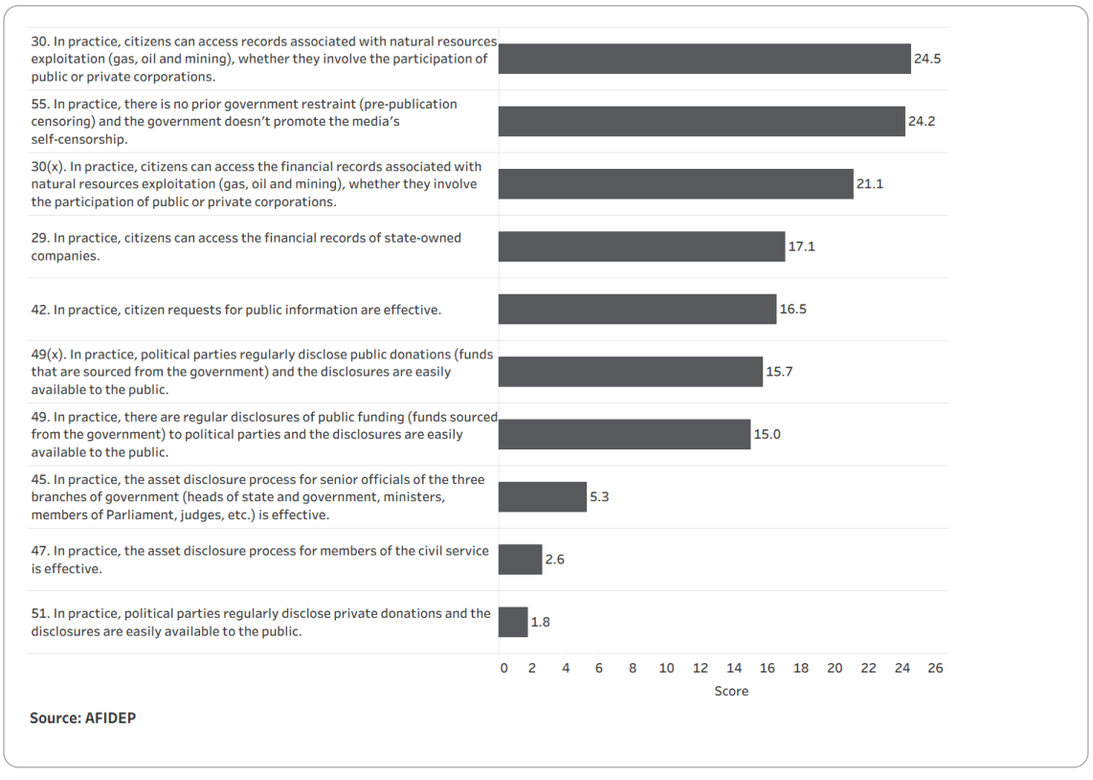


Figure 7: Transparency and accountability indicators that drag underperforming countries (2014-2025)

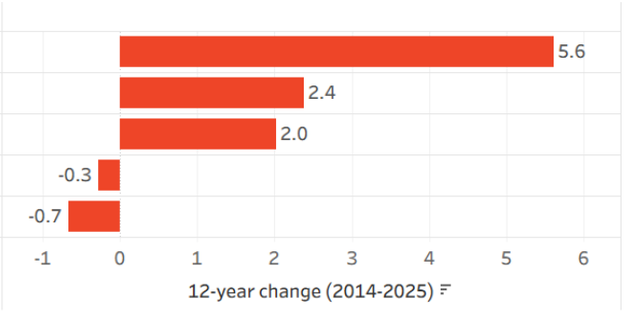
For example, Equatorial Guinea and Eritrea have consistently scored 0 from 2014 to 2025 in relation to the public release of public procurement contracts. Implicitly, there is no archive containing full records of all procurement contracts, whether in a central government office or at each contracting institution, or full records are rarely or never available on/off line for scrutiny by journalists, auditors, competitors or any citizens who request them. This generally reflects the weakness of institutions in these countries, coupled with the limited capability of stakeholders, including civil society, to effectively perform their oversight and watchdog roles.

Additionally, the ineffective mechanisms that hinder citizens' request and access to public information, nondisclosure of public and private donations by political parties, weak and poor asset disclosure by senior government officials and civil servants undermine transparency and accountability. Essentially, these practices are prominent in contexts where the prevailing political systems do not allow state institutions to function effectively, as in the case of Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Sudan and Somalia. In Eritrea and Sudan, there is non-existence of public disclosure of donations to political parties. This is particularly the case of Eritrea where there is no opposition party. Thus, the poor performance of these indicators directly and indirectly reflects the low strength of institutions and their transparency and accountability mechanisms. For instance, when the civil service is compromised, the ability to hold government and civil servants accountable is diminished. Similarly, public and private donations that are not disclosed by political parties can serve as a conduit for corruption, as elected officials tend to reward donors without recourse to their expertise and competence. These practices entrench patronage and clientelist politics, undermining open, transparent and accountable governance in Africa. Tightening the knot on these practices through strong institutions and oversight mechanisms can contribute substantially to improving transparency and accountability on the continent.

Regional Performance on Transparency and Accountability

The results from AII data show regional differences or gaps in transparency and accountability, affecting the outlook of good governance and democracy on the continent.

Region	Score (2014)	Score (2025)
Northern Africa	20.8	26.5
Western Africa	32.8	35.2
Eastern Africa	25.7	27.7
Central Africa	19.8	19.5
Southern Africa	37.0	36.3



Source: AFIDEP

Figure 8: Regional performance of transparency and accountability

Regional rankings remained unchanged between 2014 and 2025.[9] Southern Africa was the best-performing region in both years, with average scores of 37.0 in 2014 and 36.3 in 2025. Central Africa was the worst-performing, scoring 19.8 and 19.5 respectively. No region reached the moderate threshold of 50 in either year, underscoring the persistently weak state of transparency and accountability across the continent.

[9]The report followed the African Union division of 55 member states into five geographic regions namely; Central Africa (Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe), Eastern Africa (Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda), Northern Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Sahrawi Republic, Tunisia), Southern Africa (Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe), Western Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo)

The relative change shows that between 2014 and 2025, North Africa recorded the strongest change, with a change point of 5.6 while Southern Africa recorded the lowest change of -0.7.

Changes between 2024 and 2025 point to modest short-term improvement within this longer-term stagnation. Four of the five regions improved their average scores (Figure 9). Central Africa recorded the largest gain, of 2.4 points (from 17.1 to 19.5), yet it remained the lowest-scoring region. Southern Africa followed with a 1.6-point gain (from 34.8 to 36.3), pulling ahead of Western Africa; the two had been level at 34.8 in 2024. Eastern Africa (27.7) and Western Africa (35.2) made marginal gains of 0.5 and 0.4 points respectively.

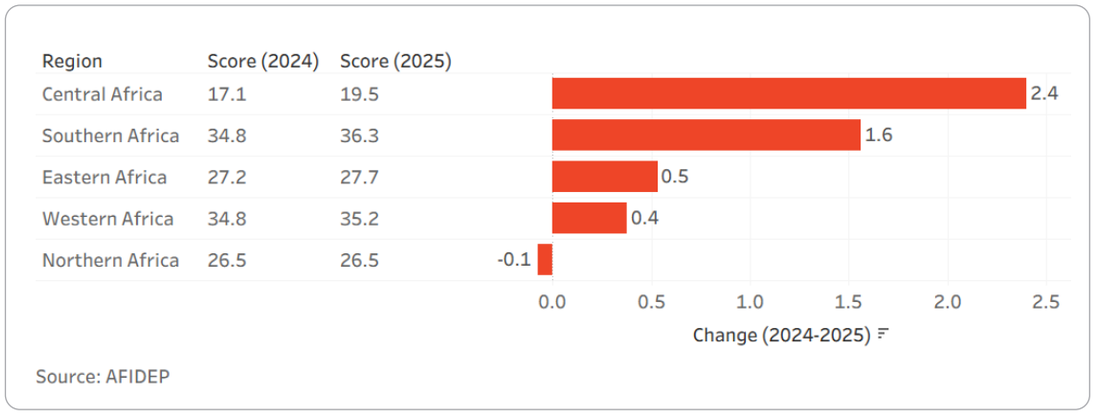
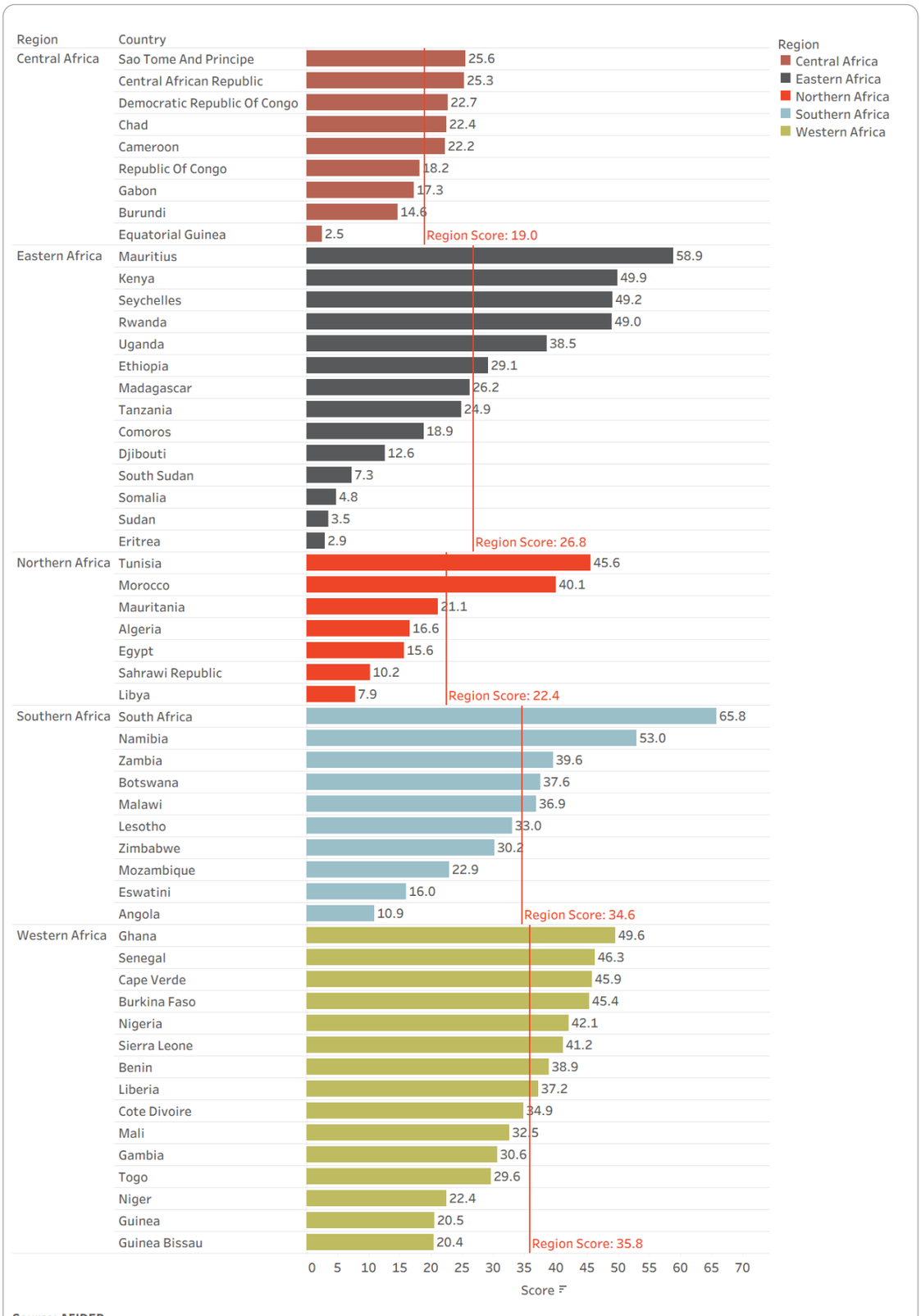


Figure 9: Transparency & Accountability Score (2024 and 2025)

Northern Africa was the only region to decline, edging down by 0.1 points to 26.5. However, these gains were too small to change the overall picture, and every region remained well below the moderate threshold of 50.[10] The presence of strong institutions and robust accountability mechanisms in Southern African countries such as South Africa and Namibia, which both had average scores above the moderate threshold of 50, contributes to the region's strong performance. Contrary, most of the countries in Central Africa are characterised by weak institutions and poor democratic governance, demonstrating poor transparency and accountability performance of the region.





Source: AFIDEP

Figure 10: Regional performance on transparency and accountability - average scores (2014-2025), with reference line showing regional score.



CHAPTER 05

Social Development Matters for Governance and Democracy in Africa

Promoting socio-economic development is central to governance and democracy in Africa.[11] Citizens expect governments and state institutions to advance their wellbeing, including access to quality social amenities, gender equality and women's participation in decision-making. Additionally, African citizens' expectations for social development also include human rights and their ability to exercise their fundamental human rights enshrined in national constitutions.

All data show substantial improvements in social development across Africa, particularly from 2015 to 2024 (Figure 11). The average score was 38.5 in 2014, declining to 36.9 in 2015, before rising from 39.9 in 2016 to 44.8 in 2024.

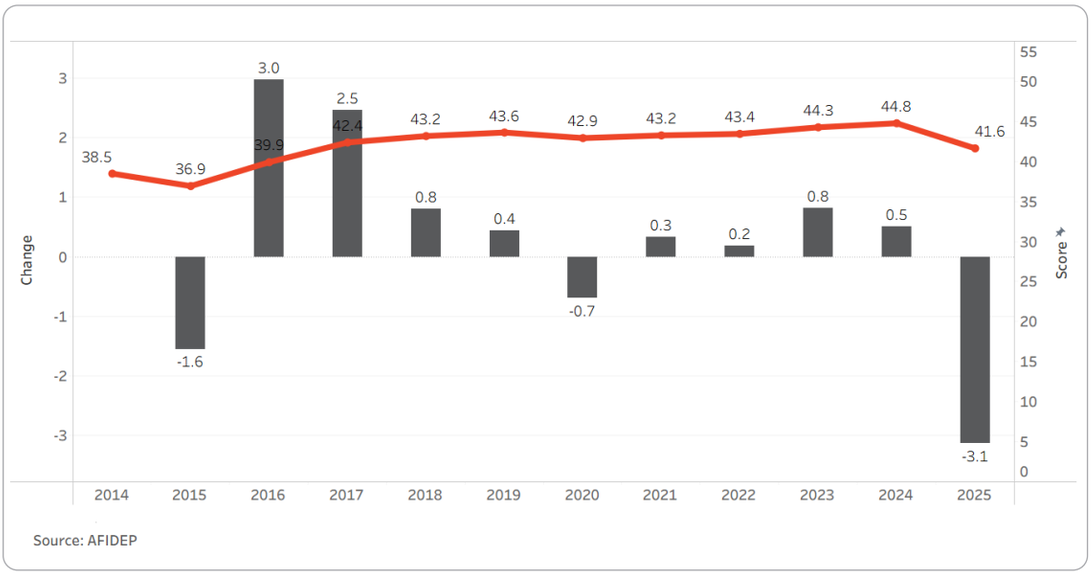


Figure 11: Average social development scores and yearly changes (2014-2025)

> **Note:** 2025 scores are based on the revised Round 13 indicator set, which added four new Social Development indicators. Performance on the two representation indicators was very poor. On disability representation, 52 of 55 countries scored 0, giving a continental average of about 2.7. On youth representation, 48 countries scored 0, giving an average of about 4.1. Protection of immigrants from discrimination averaged 40.5, with 14 countries scoring 0. Because these new indicators score well below the other Social Development indicators, they lower the 2025 average. Changes between 2024 and 2025 are therefore not directly comparable with earlier years, and partly reflect the expanded indicator set rather than changes in performance.

In 2025, the social development average stood at 41.6, 3.2 points lower than in 2024. Table 4 presents the average social development scores for all African countries. Several African countries saw moderate to substantial improvement in social development (Figure 12), with Zambia, Mauritania, Morocco and Seychelles, observing significant progress. However, Malawi (-16.1), Niger (-15.8), Guinea (-15.7), and Mali (-14) observed substantial declines between 2014 and 2025.

[11] Aliyu, M. (2026). ***Inequality, social protection, and democratic erosion in West Africa.*** https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/news/2026/inequality-social-protection-and-democratic-erosion-west-africa

Table 4: Average social development scores of African countries

Country	Avg. 2014 Score	Avg. 2025 Score
South Africa	68.8	61.5
Mauritius	76.3	67.3
Seychelles	56.3	76.0
Cape Verde	62.5	67.3
Namibia	56.3	64.4
Ghana	51.3	55.8
Rwanda	43.8	53.8
Kenya	37.5	51.9
Senegal	50.0	50.0
Zambia	32.5	53.8
Benin	56.3	48.1
Tunisia	52.5	51.0
Botswana	62.5	61.5
Lesotho	51.3	51.9
Malawi	61.3	45.2
Uganda	33.8	44.2
Morocco	32.5	52.9
Burkina Faso	43.8	45.2
Nigeria	37.5	36.5
Sierra Leone	37.5	41.3
Liberia	41.3	51.9
Sao Tome And Principe	47.5	52.9
Cote Divoire	46.3	52.9
Mozambique	52.5	49.0
Gambia	32.5	41.3
Zimbabwe	23.8	36.5
Togo	38.8	47.1
Mali	43.8	29.8
Madagascar	37.5	43.3
Tanzania	36.3	31.7
Democratic Republic Of Congo	30.0	34.6
Gabon	37.5	43.3
Ethiopia	26.3	33.7
Guinea	51.3	35.6
Cameroon	31.3	30.8
Comoros	30.0	40.4
Chad	33.8	48.1
Angola	21.3	35.6
Mauritania	17.5	38.5
Algeria	32.5	32.7
Djibouti	30.0	45.2

Country	Avg. 2014 Score	Avg. 2025 Score
Niger	47.5	31.7
Central African Republic	38.8	28.8
Republic Of Congo	33.8	23.1
Guinea Bissau	30.0	30.8
Egypt	31.3	32.7
Burundi	32.5	27.9
Eswatini	26.3	29.8
South Sudan	22.5	29.8
Libya	22.5	25.0
Somalia	8.8	23.1
Sudan	13.8	5.8
Equatorial Guinea	12.5	21.2
Eritrea	12.5	17.3
Sahrawi Republic	–	27.9

Source: AFIDEP

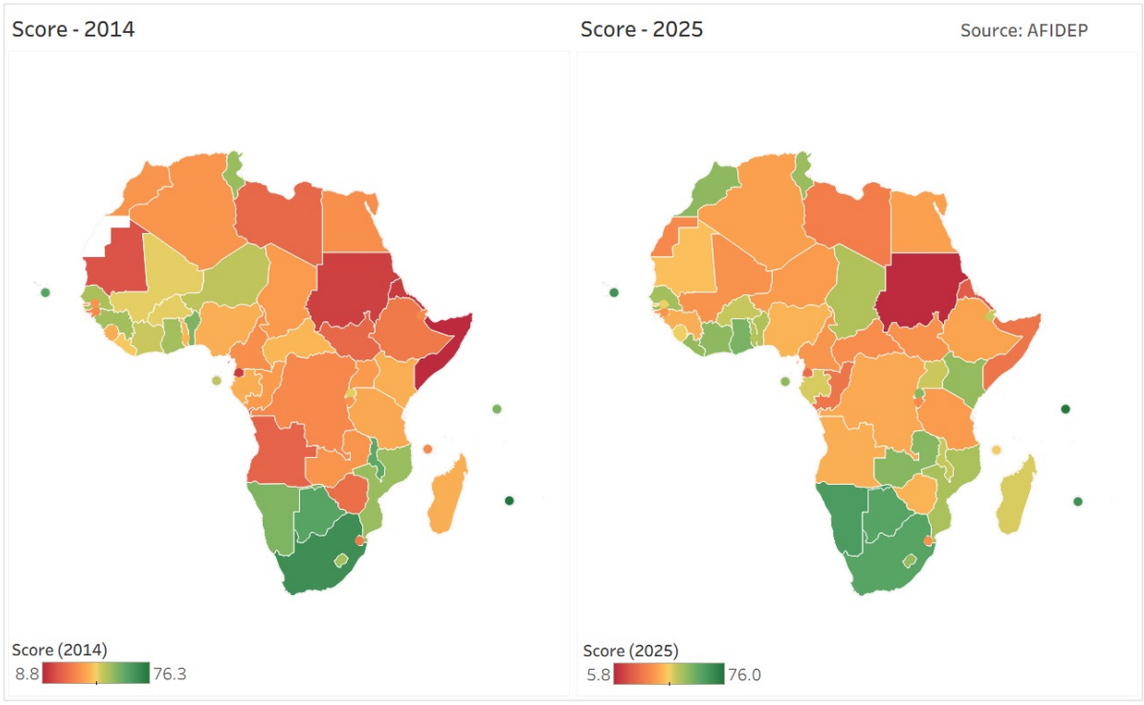
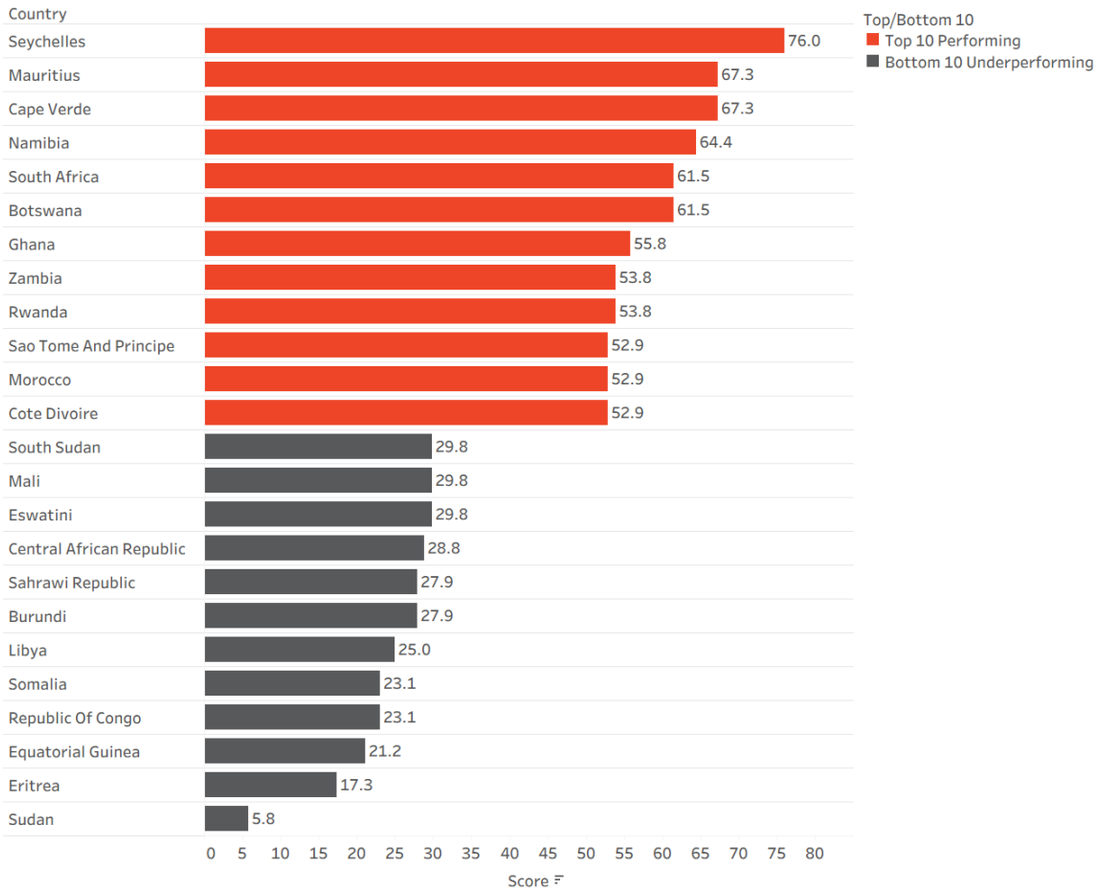


Figure 12: African map depicting changes in social development across countries

Figure 13 shows the top 10 performing and bottom 10 underperforming countries in relation to social development in Round 13. Seychelles leads the top performing countries with an average score of 76.0, followed by Mauritius (67.3), Cabo Verde (67.3), Namibia (64.4), South Africa (61.5) and Botswana (61.5). Other countries include Ghana, Zambia, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Morocco and C te d'Ivoire. Conversely, in Round 13, the worst performing countries in terms of social development on the continent include Sudan (5.8), Eritrea (17.3), Equatorial Guinea (21.2), Congo (23.1), Somalia (23.1), and Libya (25.0). The wide gap between the highest and lowest performing countries reveals stark differences in social development across the continent.

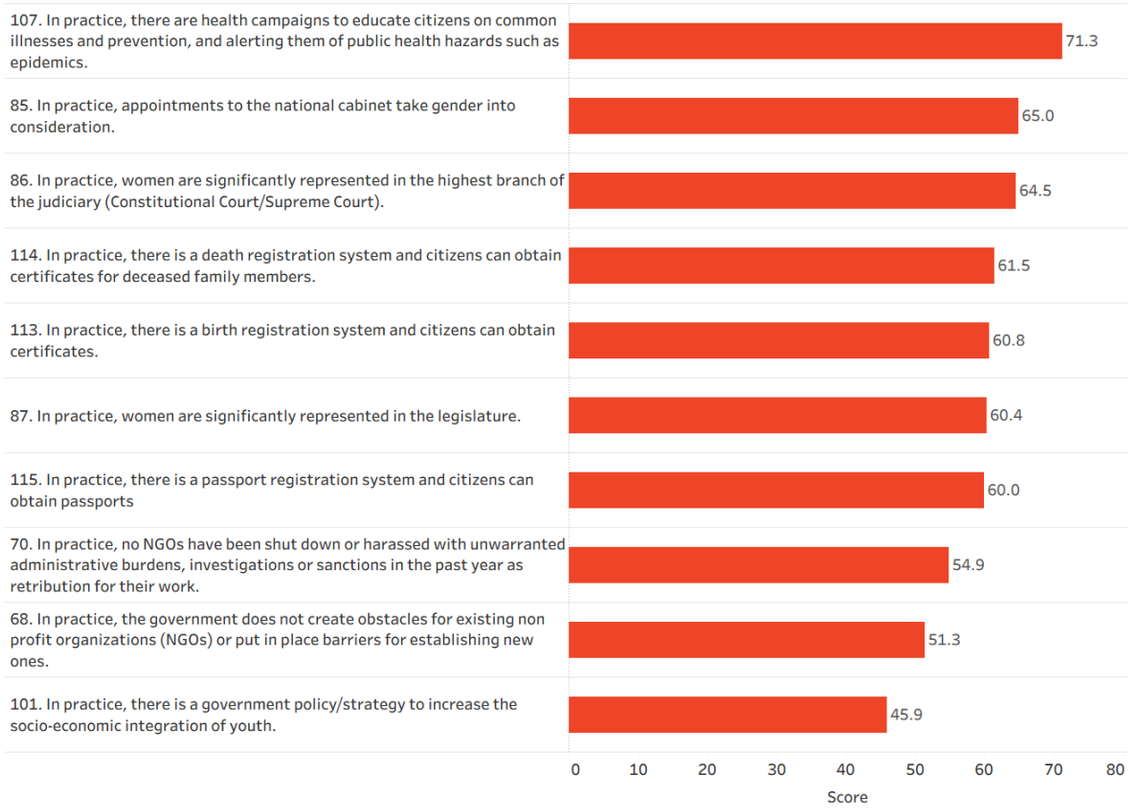


Source: AFIDEP

Figure 13: Average scores of the top 10 performing and bottom 10 underperforming countries in social development (Round 13)

What Sustains Social Development Over the Years

Progress in social development across parts of Africa is driven by several factors. Data shows that public health campaigns contribute substantially (Figure 14). In Cabo Verde, for instance, the National Institute of Public Health and the General Directorate of Health are mandated to organise public health campaigns, such as the response to the dengue fever outbreak in 2024.



Source: AFIDEP

Figure 14: Key indicators that drive progress in social development (2014-2025)

In Ghana, too, the Ministry of Health and the Ghana Health Service are responsive to health emergencies through the Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response (IDSR) framework, and the Ghana Health Service launched the Emergency Preparedness and Response Capacity Building for the African Volunteers Health Corps that help in rapid campaigns and proactive response to diseases and outbreaks, such as the Polio detection in Eastern Ghana in 2024, Mpox in Accra in 2025 and acute respiratory infections. Similarly, in Botswana, the Ministry of Health and its Department of Communication provide rapid information on outbreaks, including the 2025 Malaria outbreak in Okavango, Boteti, Gantsi, Ngami and Tutume, and the Mpox outbreak in parts of the country.

This demonstrates the existence of strong institutions and structures for public health and disease prevention, explaining why top-performing countries consistently received an indicator score of 75 to 100. Health campaigns facilitate awareness, early detection and prevention, which is crucial for containing diseases and pandemics. In a continent that has high infant and maternal mortality rates, low life expectancy, malnutrition, frequent outbreaks of diseases, such as cholera, dengue and malaria, coupled with pandemics including Ebola, Marburg and COVID-19, the need to strengthen health awareness and promote healthy living is imperative.[12] Ebola and COVID-19 in Africa exposed the vulnerability of Africa's health system, necessitating the need for improved and coordinated health surveillance, health infrastructure development and a one health approach to tackling diseases and pandemics on the continent.

[12]WHO Regional Office for Africa. (2023). Country Disease Outlook. https://www.afro.who.int/publications/country-disease-outlook

Participation of women in governance, leadership and decision-making also contribute to improvements in social development. For instance, Rwanda has more than 50% of women occupying legislative positions, while Ghana, Namibia, among others, have increased women's portfolios in parliament, cabinet and judiciary. Mauritius, which occupies the second position, witnessed a reduction in women's representation in the cabinet from 3 out of 21 cabinet ministers (representing 14.3%) in 2024 to 2 out of 25 cabinet ministers (representing 8%) in 2025. Nevertheless, women in top-performing countries occupy relevant ministerial positions, including ministries of Gender, Finance, Labour, Environment, Sports, and ICT. Women also occupied important judicial positions, such as the Chief Justice in the case of Ghana, South Africa, Nigeria, Mauritius, Kenya and Rwanda.

Women in leadership and decision-making improves human rights and enhances human capital development and empowerment, an essential benchmark for social development. Consistent with Agenda 2063 of the African Union, policies and strategies that seek to enhance women in decision-making and the integration of youth in the development process are essential for Africa's socioeconomic development, governance and democracy, particularly as the continent faces high gender inequality and youth unemployment.[13]

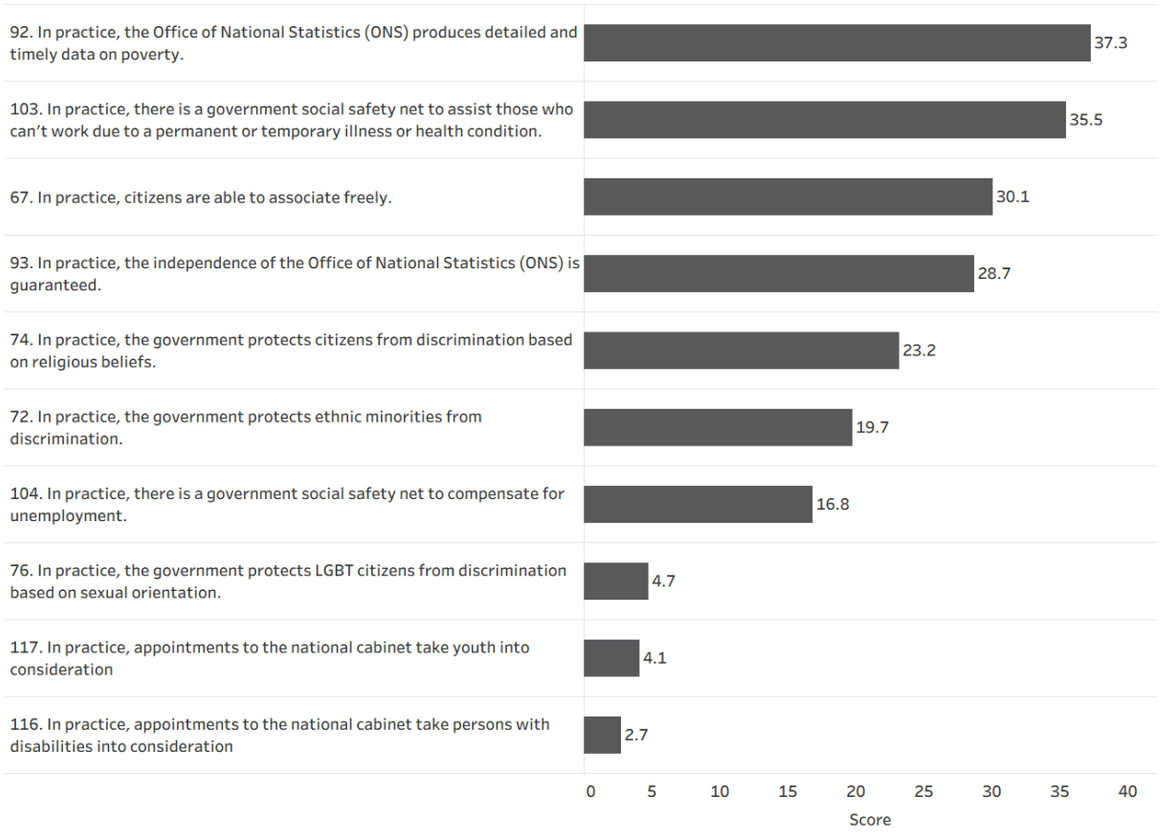
The findings further show that other institutional architectures contribute to advancing social development. These include a robust data infrastructure for birth and death registries, an efficient passport registration and issuance system, and a conducive environment for NGOs to operate, with direct and indirect implications for social development. Particularly for the poor and vulnerable, an efficient registry system increases their access to state interventions, as available data enables targeted planning and implementation among policy-makers. Additionally, efficient passport systems enhance the mobility of citizens, opening them up to opportunities for social and economic advancement. Evidently, strong institutions play a major role not only in transparency and accountability but also in social and economic development.

Areas Requiring Improvement for Social Development

Poor or lack of data on poverty, limited social safety net for the vulnerable and unemployed, excessive religious, sexual and sociocultural discrimination, particularly among minority groups, and limited integration of youth and persons with disability in leadership are key barriers to social development (Figure 15). These barriers are prominent in countries where there are weak institutions, as in the case of Equatorial Guinea, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan. In the case of Equatorial Guinea, for instance, while the National Institute of Statistics, a department of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, is responsible for producing national statistics, political interference, bureaucratic control and limited funding limit the ability of the institution to produce timely statistics.

In conflict-affected countries, such as Sudan, Libya and Somalia, the shift in government priorities from social development to gaining territorial control has subsequently diminished the provision of statistics for development. Thus, in underperforming countries, unavailability and timely release of poverty data hinders targeted decision-making. The Offices of National Statistics responsible for the timely release of poverty data in these countries are often ineffective and under-resourced, undermining the relevance of data for informed decision-making.

[13]African Union Commission. (2015). Agenda 2063 framework document: The Africa we want. https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/agenda2063-framework.pdf



Source: AFIDEP

Figure 15: Underperforming social development indicators in Africa (2014-2025)

In underperforming countries, such as Sudan and Equatorial Guinea, marginalised and ethnic minority groups have limited protection and are therefore easy targets by governments, politicians and rebel groups. In Equatorial Guinea, for instance, as reported in the Round 13 scorecard, an environmental-based protest by people from the island of Annobon, a largely ethnic minority group of the Annobonese, resulted in the arrest and detention of 37 members in 2024. Additionally, social safety nets for the poor and persons with disabilities are dysfunctional in underperforming countries, partly due to loss of focus by governments, corruption, prevailing conflicts and political instability. While certain institutions exist for implementing social safety net programmes, such as the General Directorate of Multisectoral Planning, Assistance to the Elderly and Disabled, and the National Institute of Social Security, in the case of Equatorial Guinea, these institutions are underfunded or underprioritised.

In Eritrea, too, social safety net programmes implemented by the Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare, and the Rehabilitation and Integration Division within the Social Welfare Department, for persons with disability largely target war-disabled veterans.

Essentially, social development in Africa, and particularly in poor contexts, can be improved if institutions are strengthened and resourced humanly, technologically, financially and materially, to provide essential services that meet the priorities of citizens, generally, and the poor and vulnerable, specifically.

Highlight Box

Inclusion beyond gender: youth and persons with disabilities

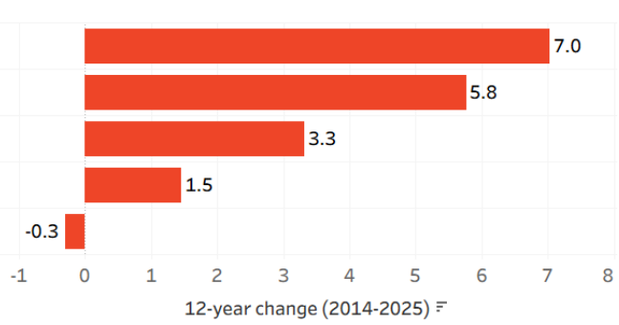
Round 13 assessed, for the first time, whether appointments to national cabinets take youth and persons with disabilities into account. The results reveal one of the starkest gaps in the AII. On disability representation, 52 of 55 countries scored 0. Only Djibouti (75), Lesotho (50) and Uganda (25) scored above 0, giving a continental average of about 2.7. Youth representation was only slightly better: 48 countries scored 0. Sierra Leone and Namibia scored 50, and Uganda, Togo, Niger, Comoros and Botswana each scored 25, for a continental average of about 4.1.

These results contrast sharply with women's representation, the strongest-performing area in the AII (average 67.4 in 2025). The progress made on gender shows that deliberate commitments, constitutional provisions and sustained advocacy can change who sits at the decision-making table. Comparable commitments for youth and persons with disabilities are largely absent, despite Africa having the world's youngest population and the commitments made under Agenda 2063 and the African Disability Protocol. Because these indicators score so low across almost all countries, they also account for much of the fall in the 2025 Social Development average.

Regional Performance on Social Development

Across Africa, Southern African countries performed best in delivering social development to their citizens, with an average score of 48.9 in 2025, followed by Western Africa (44.4), Eastern Africa (40.2), Northern Africa (37.2) and Central Africa (34.5) (Figure 16).

Region	Score (2014)	Score (2025)
Eastern Africa	33.2	40.2
Northern Africa	31.5	37.2
Southern Africa	45.6	48.9
Central Africa	33.1	34.5
Western Africa	44.7	44.4



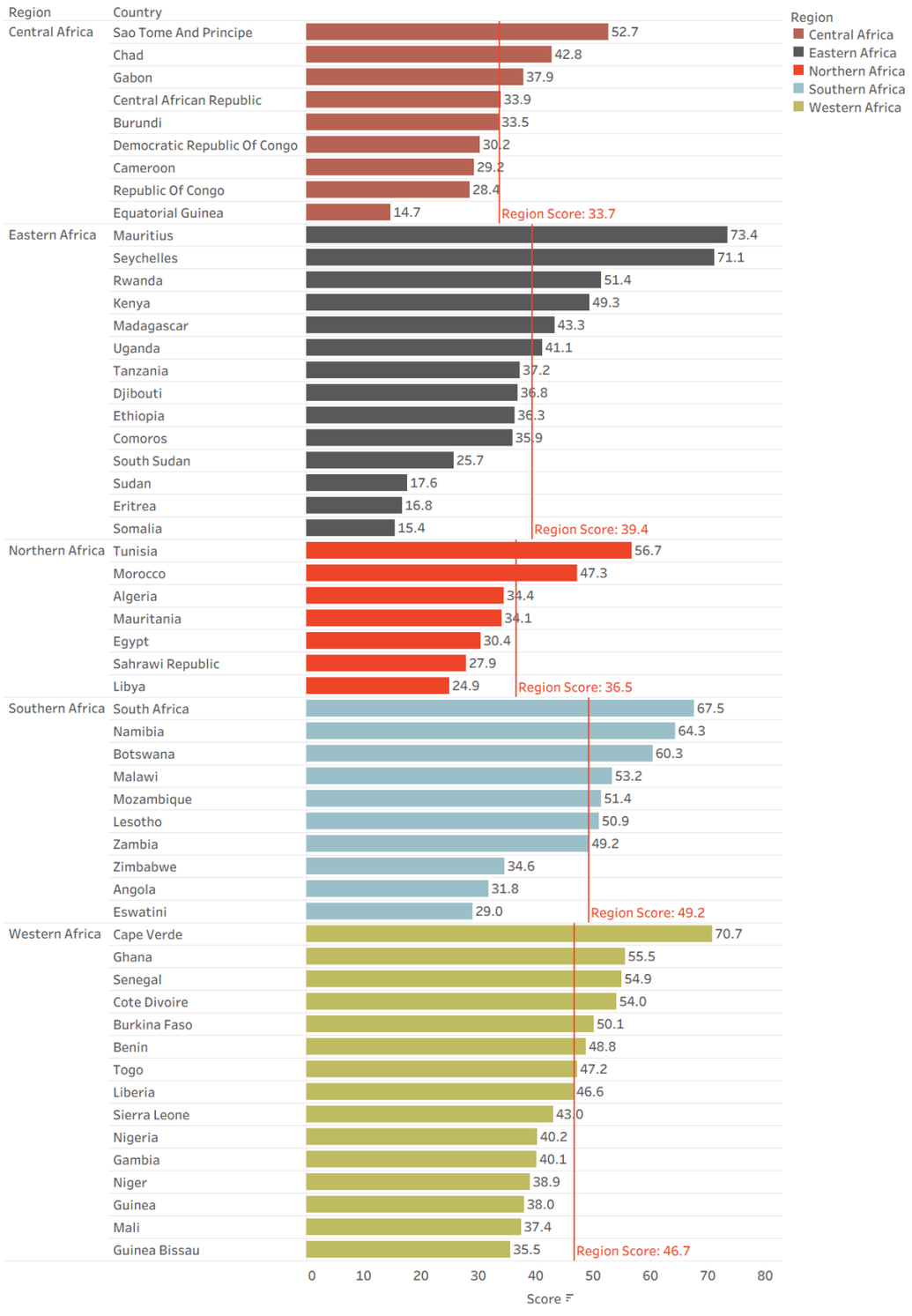
Source: AFIDEP

Figure 16: Regional performance in social development (2014-2025)

Over the longer term, social development improved in four of Africa's five regions between 2014 and 2025 (Figure 16). Eastern Africa recorded the largest gain, rising by 7.0 points from 33.2 to 40.2, followed by Northern Africa (+5.8 points, from 31.5 to 37.2). Southern Africa improved by 3.3 points to 48.9, keeping its position as the top-performing region throughout the period. Central Africa made only modest progress (+1.5 points, to 34.5). Western Africa was the only region with a lower score in 2025 than in 2014, edging down by 0.3 points to 44.4, although it remained the second-highest-scoring region.

These changes reshaped the lower end of the regional ranking. Northern Africa, the lowest-scoring region in 2014, moved up to fourth place, while Central Africa, which started level with Eastern Africa, fell to last. The gap between the best- and worst-performing regions, however, stayed broadly the same, at 14.1 points in 2014 and 14.4 points in 2025.

These long-term changes should be read alongside the revision of the indicator set in Round 13. The 2025 scores include new indicators on which most countries scored very low, which lowered every region's 2025 average.



Source: AFIDEP

Figure 17: Regional performance on social development - average scores (2014-2025), with reference line showing regional score.

Generally, Southern African countries, such as South Africa, and Namibia, Botswana have institutions that are resourced to independently plan and supervise social development interventions, including health directorates, social support systems, and human rights promotion agencies, that ensure the rights of women, youth and minority groups are protected.

These conditions facilitate the implementation of targeted social development programmes and interventions. On the contrary, Central Africa observed the least performance in terms of social development. Limited social interventions, weak policies and institutions, coupled with abuse of power and human rights infringement, allude to the poor performance among Central African countries.

Generally, Southern African countries, such as South Africa, and Namibia, Botswana have institutions that are resourced to independently plan and supervise social development interventions, including health directorates, social support systems, and human rights promotion agencies, that ensure the rights of women, youth and minority groups are protected.



CHAPTER 06

Overall Integrity Performance Across Countries Since 2014

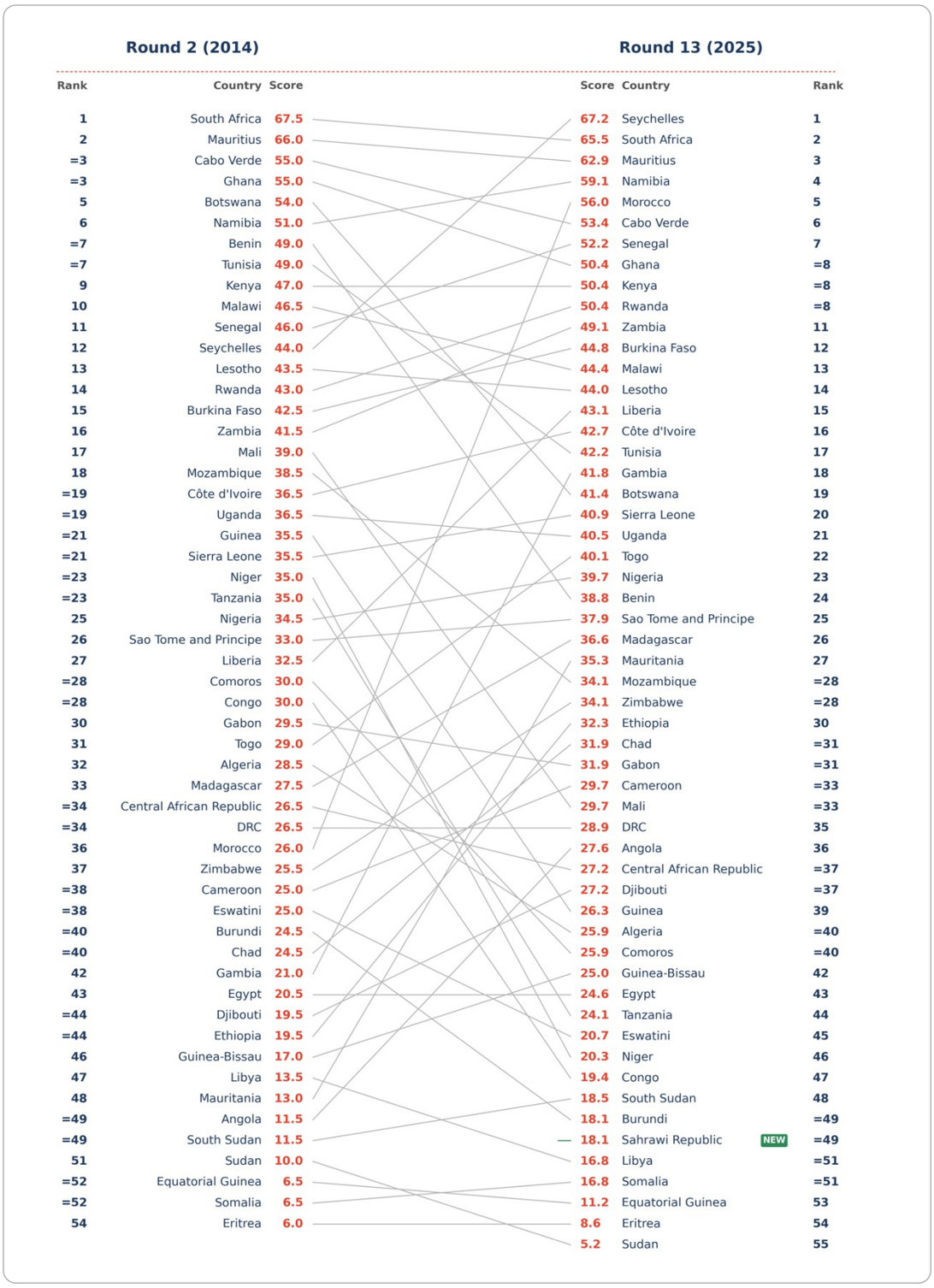


Figure 18: Overall performance of transparency, accountability and social development in Africa (2014 and 2025)

The figure shows the changing positions of countries based on their overall indicator performance since 2014.

Round 13 ranks Seychelles first overall (67.2), followed by South Africa (65.5), Mauritius (62.9), Namibia (59.1) and Morocco (56.0). The most significant progress relative to 2014 in terms of score improvement was made by Morocco. It recorded the largest gain, rising by 30 points from 26.0 to 56.0 (Figure 19).

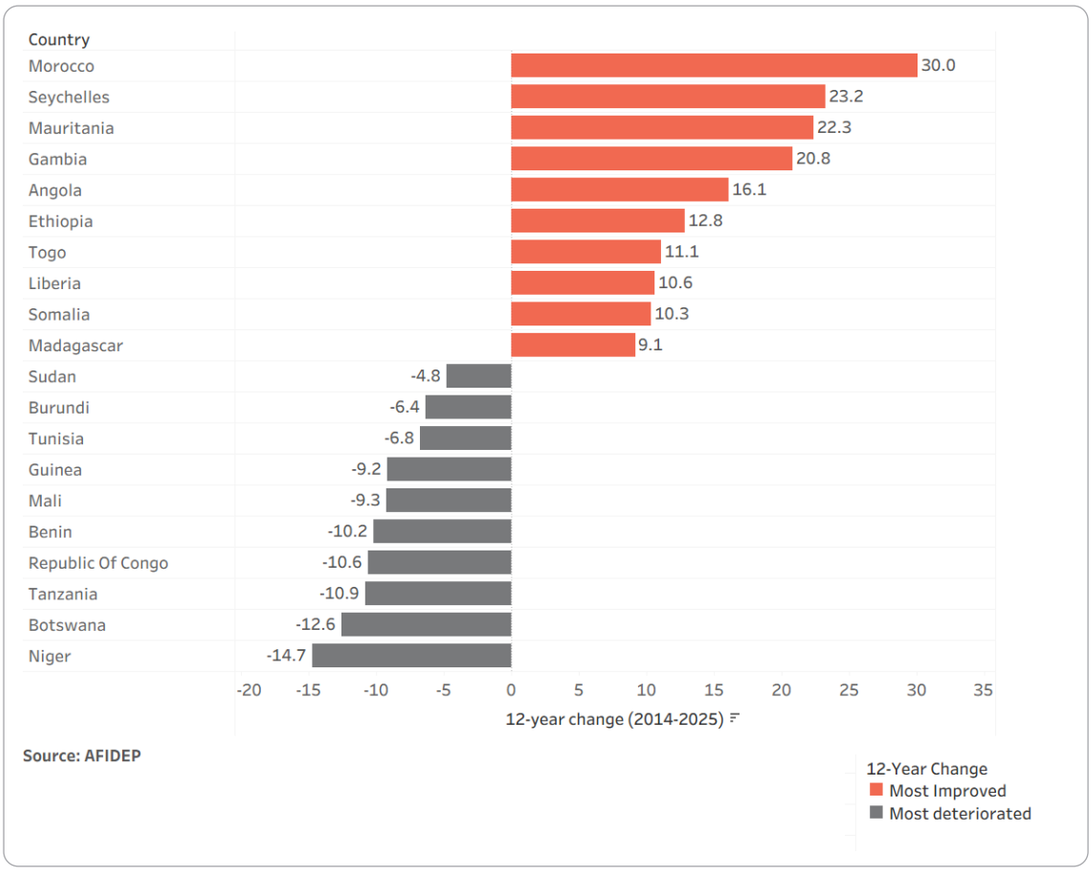


Figure 19: Most improved and most deteriorated countries in overall integrity performance

Sudan remains the lowest overall with 5.2, followed by Eritrea with 8.6. Niger witnessed the most significant decline, falling from 35.0 in 2014 to 20.3 in 2025 (-14.7). Niger had an initial average score of 35 in 2014 but this declined to 20.3 in 2025. The decline is invariably associated with the change in political regime in Niger and the challenges associated with transitioning to democratic rule, which negatively affects not only the ability of institutions to function effectively but also the effective participation of citizens, civil society and other stakeholders in governance and democracy in the country.

The trends of the overall integrity performance of the most improved and the most deteriorated countries are presented in Figures 20 and 21. From Figure 20, Seychelles performance has consistently been on the rise since 2016. Myriad factors account for the improvement in top performing countries including smooth transition of power, separation of power between the three arms of government, enhancing the independence and strength of institutions, oversight mechanism by state and non-state actors, and the active participation of citizens in public discourse, governance and democracy in these countries.

While Liberia is among the most improved countries (Figure 19),however, the country observed a sharp decline in overall integrity performance between 2018 and 2021 before rising from 2022 to 2025.

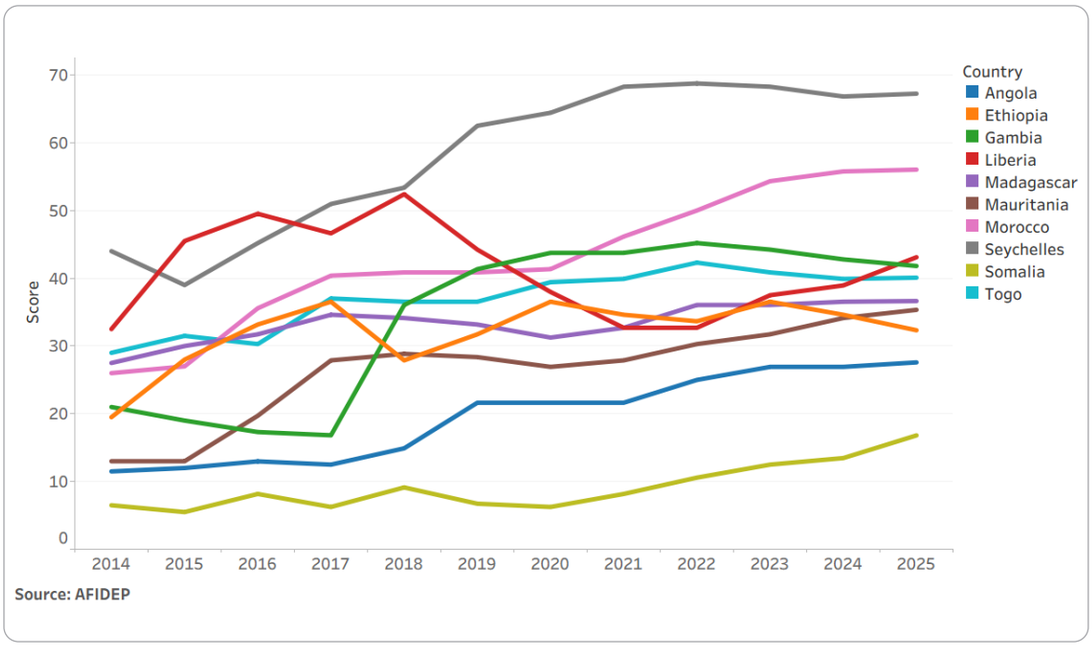


Figure 20: Trend of most improved countries in overall integrity performance (2014-2025)

Liberia's performance in social safety nets, women participation in cabinet, protection of citizens from discriminations, disclosure of political party funding sources, asset disclosure by members of the civil service, political interference in civil service, particularly in terms of appointment, equal access to media coverage for political parties among others declined during the period. Also, among the most improved countries, a gradual decline in the overall integrity performance of Ethiopia was observed, particularly from 2022 to 2025. The decline is partly accounted for by political interference in the appointment of national-level judges, constraints of the body that investigates corruption, reduced mechanisms for citizens to report police misconduct, limited operations of NGOs, and political insecurity warranted by conflicts in parts of the country.

Among the most deteriorated countries (Figure 21), significant decline was observed between 2014 and 2025, particularly in Botswana, Benin, Burundi and Tanzania. For instance, Botswana's average score fell from 54 in 2014 to 41.4 in 2025, while Tanzania's declined from 35 to 24.1. The drop in performance in Tanzania can be attributed to the decline in public trust about the independence of the judiciary and the perceived lack of independence of the supreme audit institution.

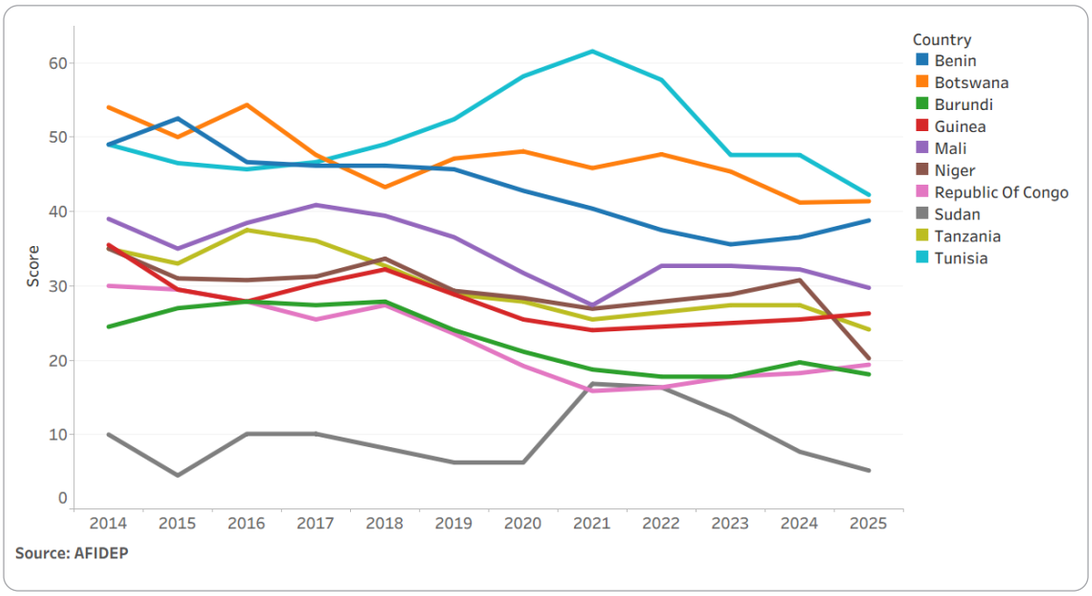


Figure 21: Trend of most deteriorated countries in overall integrity performance (2014-2025)

Tunisia's overall integrity performance also peaked in 2021 but has since declined due to the ineffectiveness of the audit institution in the release of timely audit reports, political interference in the appointments to the bodies that investigate corruption and conduct national elections, limited mechanisms for citizens to report police misconduct, inequitable access to media space for political parties, interference in civil service work, weak asset disclosure regimes, particularly among members of the executive, judiciary and legislature as well as members of the civil services, among others. These factors reveal erosion in the strength of institutions and oversight mechanisms that are critical for governance and democracy.

Remarkably, Sudan is the lowest-performing country. Figure 21 shows that overall integrity performance in Sudan has not been encouraging. Apart from 2021 where substantial progress was made, the country has been on a rapid decline, especially from 2022 to 2025. Since 2020, Sudan has consistently received 0 score for several AII indicators including appointment to national-level judges and the agency mandated to organise national elections, independence of the supreme audit institution, investigation of corruption among senior members of the government, mechanism for citizens to report police misconduct, and equitable access to state-owned media by political parties. Similarly, over the years Sudan has recorded weak procurement regimes, limited access to information on natural resource exploitation and the financial records of state-owned companies, excessive political interference in the civil service, poor asset disclosure by government appointees and senior civil servants, non-disclosure of donations by political parties, media censorship, weak social safety nets and limited protection of ethnic minorities and women from discrimination. Essentially, Sudan has witnessed a consistent deteriorating political environment largely due to the armed conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), led by Abdelfattah al-Burhan, and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), led by Mohamed Hamdan "Hemedti" Dagalo.

The coup in 2021 and the outbreak of war in April 2023 have substantially decimated governance and democracy in Sudan. Human and labour rights violations, particularly among women and the ethnic minority, have contributed to the deterioration of social development in the country. For instance, as reported in the Round 13 scorecard, following the outbreak of the war in 2023, Lt. General Abdelfattah Al-Burhan ordered the suspension of all trade unions and the confiscation of their assets and bank accounts, civil servants were also compulsorily placed on unpaid leave or their appointment terminated. The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), an essential institution that supports the government's planning and implementation of interventions, saw mass

resignations in protest of political appointments at the institute. Additionally, NGO workers were detained, interrogated, beaten, and arrested, while others were killed. The working environment for NGOs in Sudan deteriorated significantly. For instance, the Sudanese Consumer Protection Society had its registration revoked after winning a legal case against the government concerning the internet blackout that followed the 2021 coup. As shown in the case of Sudan, the weak institutions do not only affect democracy and governance but also essential social services required for socioeconomic development.

Over the years Sudan has recorded weak procurement regimes, limited access to information on natural resource exploitation and the financial records of state-owned companies, excessive political interference in the civil service, poor asset disclosure by government appointees and senior civil servants, non-disclosure of donations by political parties, media censorship, weak social safety nets and limited protection of ethnic minorities and women from discrimination.



CHAPTER 07

Power, People and Resources: The Governance Questions Shaping Africa

This section presents countries' performance across sub-categories of indicators measuring elections, women's representation, political finance, transparency in debt and natural resource management, transparency in the financial operations of state-owned enterprises, and immigration. The section allows a deep dive into the indicators associated with these thematic focuses and how countries performed.

Elections are the leading indicator that sets the tone of the continent's governance and accountability trajectory and more than 20 African countries had elections in the period under review. Women's representation across the three arms of the state are the long-standing best performing cluster of indicators across the cumulative findings. Transparency about sources of funding for political parties, on the other hand, have been the worst performing sets of indicators and it appears there is a profound dearth of institutional capacity and oversight mechanisms to catalyse improvement. Transparency around debt, financial operations of state-owned enterprises and natural resource exploitation are topical governance issues on the continent as the continent contends debt injustice and fighting for a fairer international finance infrastructure and resource sovereignty. Rising anti-immigrant sentiment in parts of the continent has brought immigration back to the centre of governance debates and calls for deeper reflection on how to manage migration in the best interests of Africa's development.

Elections

Elections are crucial for governance, democracy and development in Africa. They determine how leaders are selected, allow citizens to directly participate in that selection, and establish a social contract that enables citizens to hold leaders accountable. Following democratic transitions across the continent, elections have become a major hallmark of democracy. Countries such as Ghana, South Africa, Mauritius, Botswana and Kenya, among others, have witnessed smooth transitions of power through elections. However, there is a general perception across the continent that citizens' participation in governance and democracy is largely concentrated on elections.

The findings show general decline in election performance on the continent (Figure 22), particularly after 2018. The average score was 29 in 2014, rising to 33.2 in 2015, before declining to 30.6 in 2017. After a remarkable progress in 2018 with an average score of 33.2, elections performance has been on a decline up to 2022. While marginal gains were made, particularly from 2022 to 2024, election performance in 2025 retrogressed to an average score of 26.8 on the continent. The declining performance of elections were prominent in Angola, Congo, Tanzania, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan (Figure 23).

However, significant progress was also observed in South Africa, Namibia, Madagascar, Ghana, Senegal and the Central African Republic. The countries with the least performance in elections include Eritrea, the Sahrawi Republic, South Sudan, Eswatini and Sudan among others.

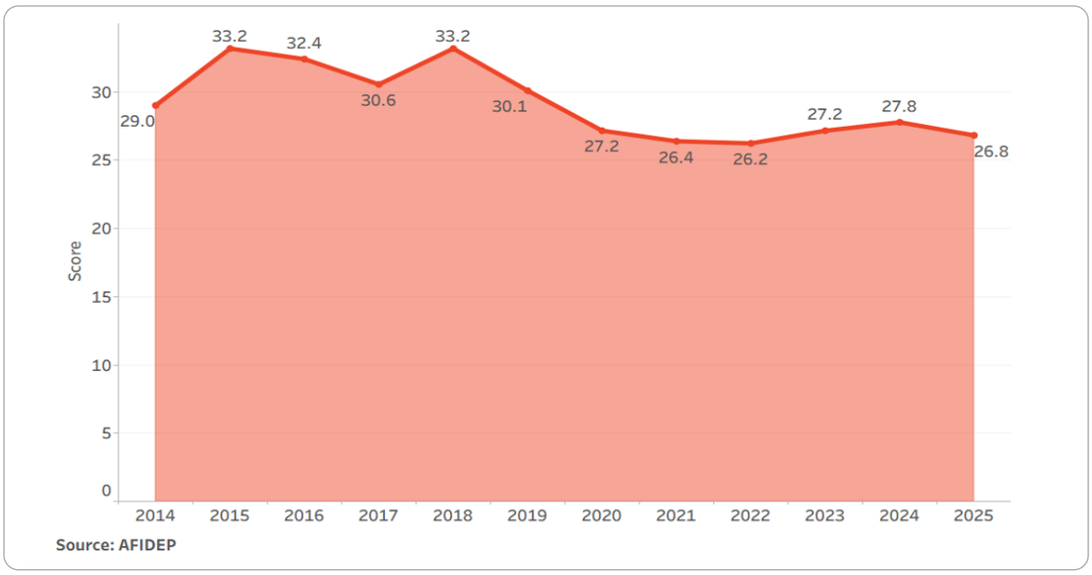


Figure 22: Average score of election indicators

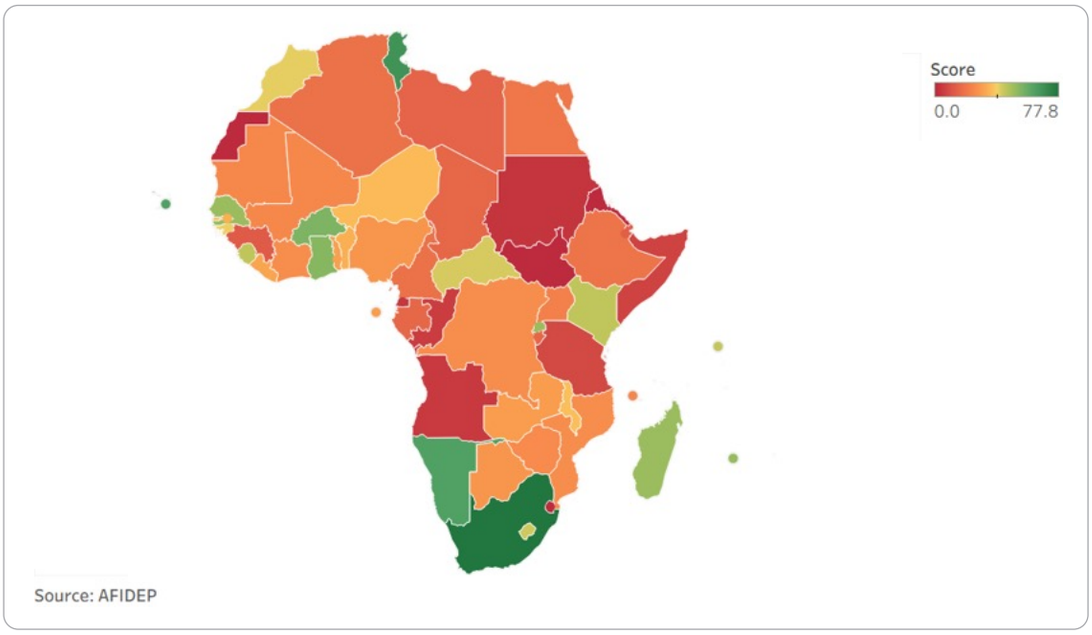


Figure 23: Average score of election indicators by country (2014-2025)

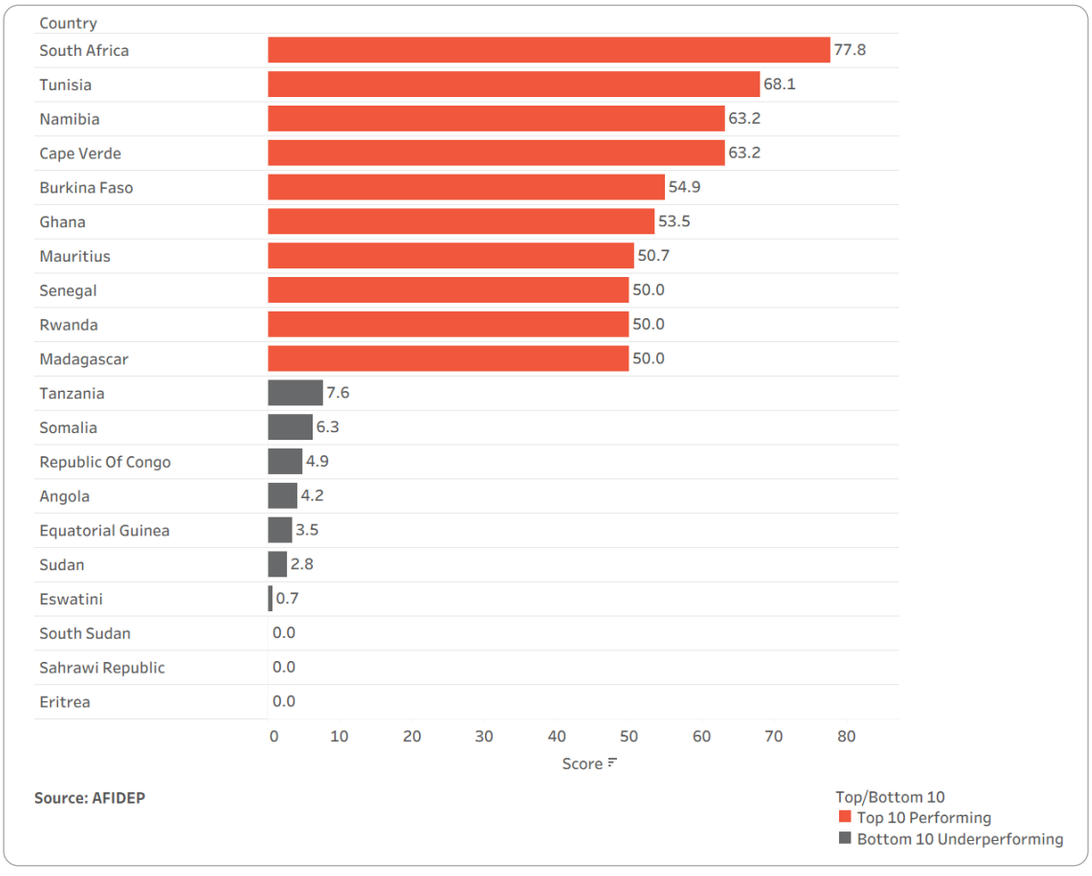


Figure 24: Average scores of the top/bottom 10 countries' performance in elections (2014-2025)

These indicators establish the strength of electoral management bodies, the independence to organise and monitor national elections as well as the political atmosphere for a transparent, inclusive and equitable access to state-owned media by political parties and candidates. Countries' performance across these indicators reveals the state of electoral process and election organisations across Africa.

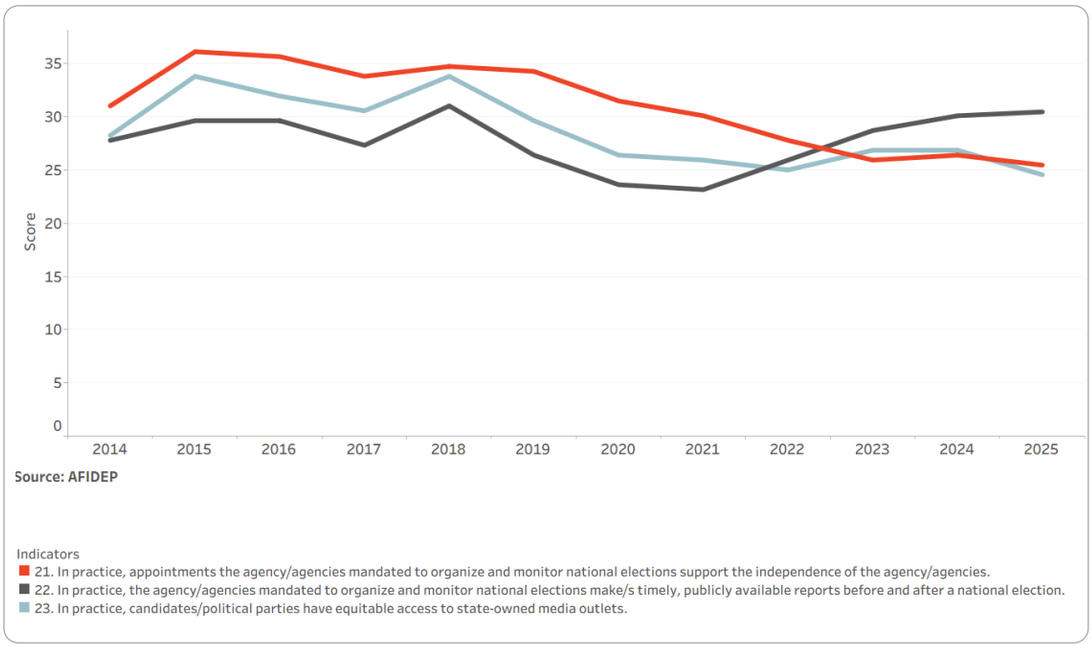


Figure 25: Performance of election indicators (2014-2025)

The indicator measuring the effectiveness of electoral management bodies in producing timely and publicly accessible reports recorded the highest average score in 2025 (30.5). This was followed by the indicator measuring the independence of the appointment process to the electoral management bodies which received an average score of 25.5 in 2025. Equitable access to state-owned media by candidates and political parties ranked last in 2025 with an average score of 24.5. Generally, the performance of these indicators, particularly from 2020, have observed a sharp change, with the indicator measuring the effectiveness of electoral management bodies in producing timely and publicly accessible reports surpassing both the equitable access to state-owned media indicator and the independence of the appointment process to the electoral management bodies indicator, especially from 2023.

Table 5: Election Indicators average scores (2014-2025)

Indicators	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
21. In practice, the agency/agencies mandated to organise and monitor national elections is/are protected from political interference.	31.0	36.1	35.6	33.8	34.7	34.3	31.5	30.1	27.8	25.9	26.4	25.5
22. In practice, the agency/agencies mandated to organise and monitor national elections make/s timely, publicly available reports before and after a national election.	27.8	29.6	29.6	27.3	31.0	26.4	23.6	23.1	25.9	28.7	30.1	30.5
23. In practice, candidates/political parties have equitable access to state-owned media outlets.	28.2	33.8	31.9	30.6	33.8	29.6	26.4	25.9	25.0	26.9	26.9	24.5

Source: AFIDEP

The dynamics of these indicators are evident in the performance of countries. Particularly, among the top-performing countries, such as South Africa, Tunisia, Namibia among others, electoral organizing and monitoring agencies enjoy independence under national constitutions and laws that establish the agencies.[14] In South Africa, for instance, elections are managed by the Electoral Commission of South Africa. The Electoral Commission of South Africa is a Chapter 9 institution vis- -vis the constitution, and the constitution and the Electoral Commission Act dictate that the commissioners be appointed based on merit. The National Assembly makes recommendations from a list of candidates selected by a committee chaired by the Chief Justice. The president makes the final appointment. The president also has the power to remove commissioners on the grounds of misconduct, incapacity or incompetence, after a process that is started by the Electoral Court and supported by the National Assembly. Thus, the strength of the election management bodies, particularly their autonomy and independence, is highly crucial for the successful, fair and transparent conduct of elections, and the smooth transition of power.

However, the appointment processes that ensure the independence of national election bodies can be compromised by political interference. In Ghana, in June 2018 President Akufo Addo removed Charlotte Osei as the chair of the Electoral Commission and her two deputies on grounds of stated misbehaviour and incompetence under Article 146(1) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. The President then appointed Jean Mensa and her deputies, who have come under pressure under President John Mahama's government, following the change of government, and leading to the resignation of a deputy commissioner. Undoubtedly, the changing performance in appointment processes even in democratic countries may partly explain the recent underperformance of the indicator on the appointment processes that ensure the autonomy and independence of national election management bodies. Thus, electoral management bodies' autonomy influences their ability to release timely and publicly available reports as well as ensure fair and transparent opportunities for political parties and candidates. As such, eroding autonomy further affects the performance of other crucial functions of electoral management bodies.

[14]Tunisia's long-run average is high but it has recently declined especially in Rounds 12 and 13

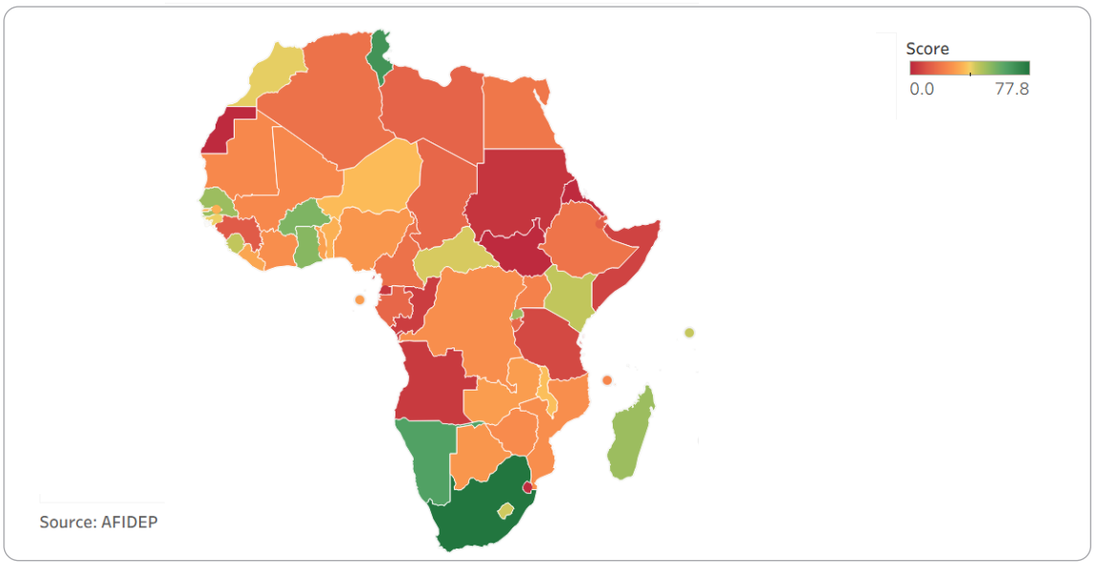


Figure 26: Map showing average score of election indicators by country (2014-2025)

In underperforming countries, such as Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan and Equatorial Guinea, the autonomy of national election bodies is excessively compromised, affecting their ability to conduct national elections in a transparent manner, timely release of reports and the provision of equitable space and opportunities for candidates and political parties. Most of these countries have consistently received 0 indicator scores from 2014 to 2025 across the three indicators for elections. In Eritrea, an agency mandated to organise and monitor national elections does not exist. Although an electoral commission was established in the country in September 2000 but was dissolved in 2001 before organizing its first election. In Sudan too, there is no functioning independent electoral management body in place. The previous National Elections Commission (NEC), formed under the 2005 Interim Constitution, was dissolved following the 2019 revolution. The 2019 Constitutional Declaration mandated the formation of a new, independent electoral commission; however, no such body has been appointed or operationalised to date.

In South Sudan, the National Elections Commission Act, which established the National Elections Commission (NEC), stipulates that appointments to the commission should be based on merit. According to the act, the chairperson and eight members of the commission are supposed to be nominated by the president in consultation with political parties that were parties to the 2018 peace agreement. Appointments to the nine-member commission are subject to approval by a resolution adopted by a two-thirds majority of the members of the National Transitional Legislative Assembly, after which they are formally appointed by the president. Yet, in November 2023, in the appointments of the new NEC commissioners, the Legislative Assembly was bypassed by the president. The National Elections Commission in South Sudan has largely remained defunct with limited autonomy due to political tension in the country. For instance, while the National Elections Commission was reconstituted in 2023, it suffers from political interference, understaffing and limited funding. Similarly, the current composition of the Revitalised Transitional Government of National Unity, set up to implement the peace agreement, has blurred the lines between the independence of the commission and loyalty to the ruling government. The chairperson of the NEC is a party member of the ruling South Sudan People's Liberation Movement led by President Kiir, raising concerns about a conflict of interest. The prevailing conditions in underperforming countries reveal a system of weak, defunct and poor organised institutions.

Women's Representation

Women's representation in the three branches of government has consistently been the best-performing clusters of indicators since 2014. Although the average score declined to 67.4 in 2025, it had consistently improved since 2016, peaking at 70.8 in 2024 (Figure 27).

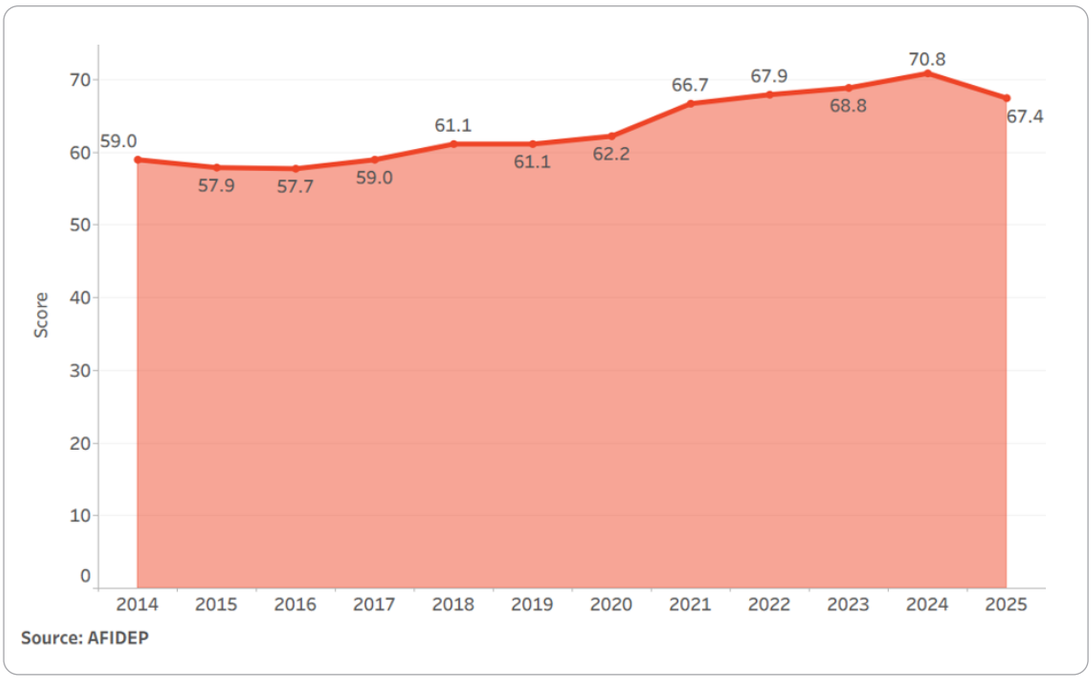


Figure 27: Trend of women's representation scores (2014-2025)

Several African countries, especially in Southern and East Africa, have observed substantial improvement in women representation in the three arms of government (Figure 28). This includes South Africa, Angola, Uganda and Rwanda as well as Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar and Tunisia. However, countries, such as Botswana, Congo, Somalia, and Egypt have not observed any substantial progress in women's representation in the arms of government.

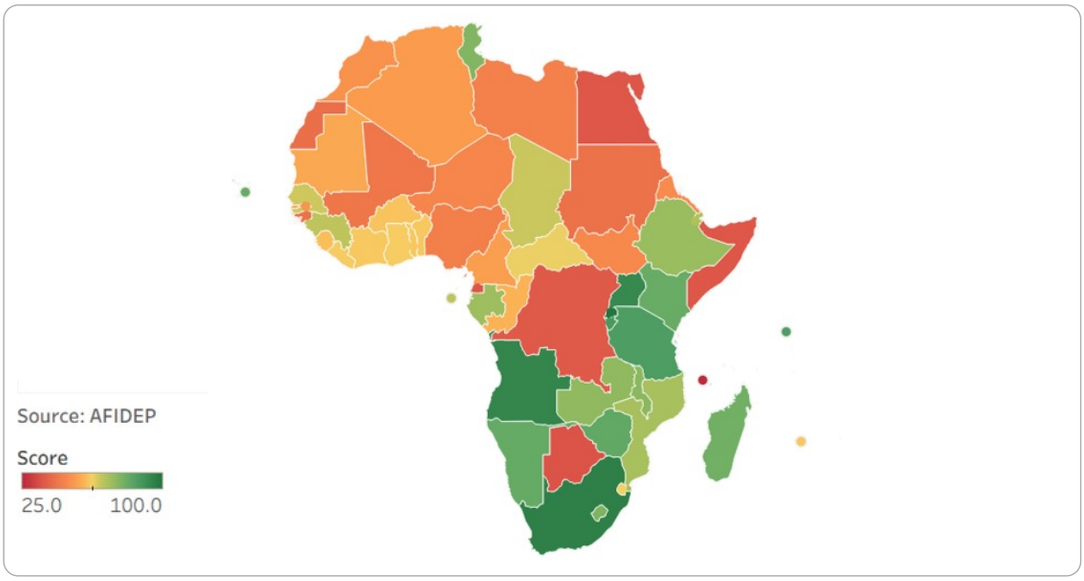


Figure 28: Average score on women representation indicators by country (2014-2025)

Rwanda tops the list of top performing countries, followed by South Africa, Angola, Uganda and Burundi. However, Comoros tops the list of underperforming countries, followed by Botswana, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea and Somalia (Figure 29).

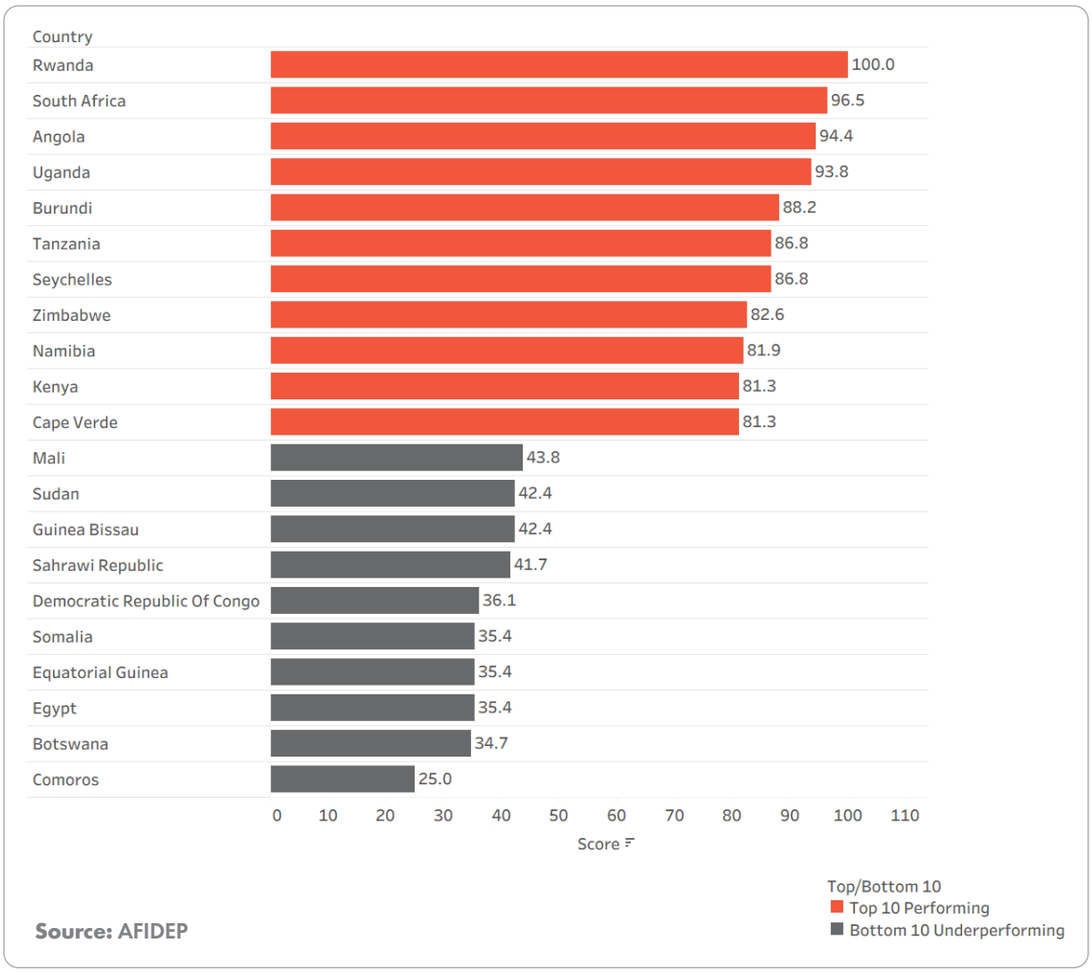


Figure 29: Average score of the Top/Bottom 10 countries in women representation (2014-2025)

Countries' performance is measured against three main indicators measuring the representation (in percentage) of women in the cabinet, women representation in the highest branch of the judiciary and women representation in the legislature (Figure 30).



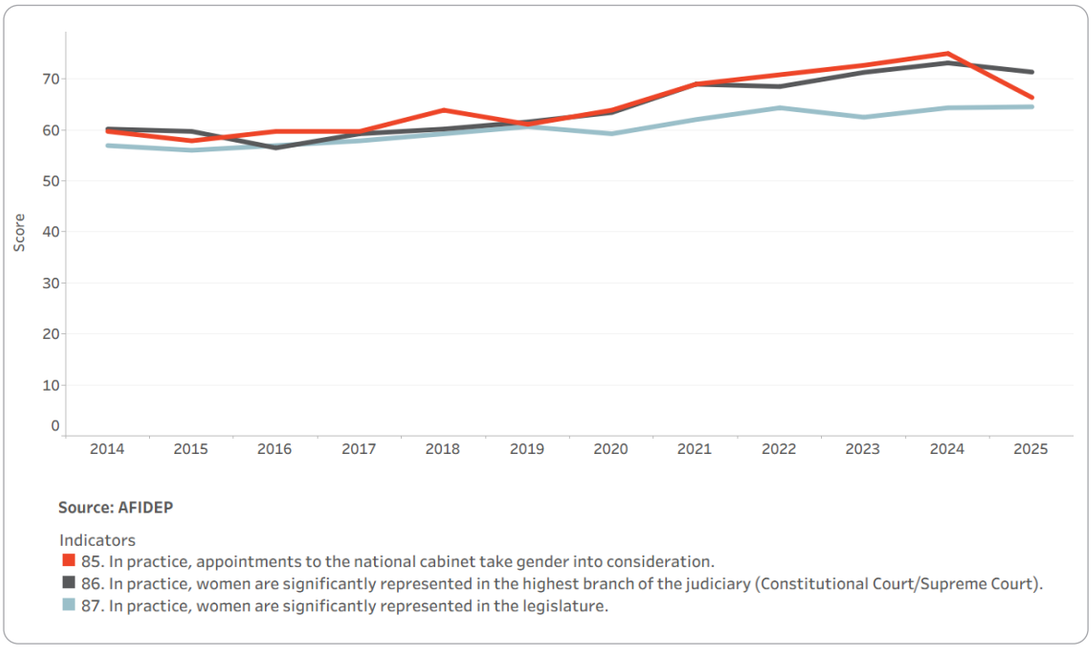


Figure 30: Performance of women representation indicators (2014-2025)

All the three indicators for women representation have witnessed significant improvement, especially after 2016. Gender consideration in cabinet appointments has shown the largest improvement of the three indicators over time, but its average fell from 75.0 in 2024 to 66.4 in 2025. Because both years are scored under the same thresholds, this reflects a genuine decline in women's representation in cabinets rather than a change in measurement.

In Rwanda, women's representation in the cabinet has consistently increased. Between 2023 and 2025, the cabinet had 32 members, 13 of whom were women, representing 40.6%. Women are either full ministers or state ministers in dockets ranging from ministers in the Office of the President and in the Prime Minister's Office to positions in the ministries of Gender, Labour, Environment, Sports, and ICT, among others. Also, there are three women serving among the six judges of the Supreme Court in Rwanda, representing 50%. Similarly, women are well represented in the Parliament of Rwanda consisting of the Upper House (Senate) and the Lower House (the Chamber of Deputies). In the Upper House, there are 14 women out of 26 senators (53.8%), while in the Lower House there are 51 women out of 80 members (63.8%). In total, the Parliament of Rwanda has 65 women out of 106 members, translating to 61.3% women's representation. In Uganda, there are 14 women cabinet ministers, constituting 45.2% of the 31 cabinet ministers. Also, Uganda has almost achieved full gender parity in terms of representation in both the Constitutional/Court of Appeal and in the Supreme Court. At the Court of Appeal, out of the 20 justices, nine are women, accounting for 45% representation. On the Supreme Court, out of the 11 justices, six are women, representing 54.5%. The total number of judges in the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court is 31 out of which 15 are women, representing 48.4% of women in the two courts.

Similarly, in Angola, the government of Angola consists of a cabinet made up of 24 ministers. Among them, 7 women hold ministerial positions, which accounts for approximately 29.2% of the total. In July 2024, the President appointed Maria Bragan a as a state minister for Social Area. This highlights the government's efforts to improve female representation in high-level decision-making roles. Women are significantly represented in the high court in Angola, and there has been the promotion of gender representation within its judiciary, particularly in the Constitutional and Supreme Courts. The Constitutional Court of Angola maintains a composition of 11 judges and 5 (45.5%) are women. The Supreme Court has 22 judges and 8 (36.4%) are women. In February 2025, the National Assembly unanimously approved the appointments of Am lia Augusta Varela and Emiliana

Margareth Morais Nangacovie as advisory justices, nominated by the ruling MPLA and the opposition UNITA, respectively. These appointments replaced outgoing judges Maria da Concei o Almeida Songo and Josefa dos Santos Neto. In total, both the Constitutional and the Supreme Court have 33 judges, with the 13 women representing 39.4%. Intuitively, the continuous representation of women in the arms of government across African countries is driven in part by national provisions in national constitutions as well as regional and interventions agenda, including the African Union Agenda 2063, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and improved advocacy by civil society, development partners and others stakeholders for gender equality and women empowerment.

However, the women's representation in the arms of government across the continent is not fairly distributed. For instance, Comoros had the lowest average score for women's representation, followed by Botswana, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Somalia among others. For instance, in Comoros, Article 61 of the constitutions mandates a government composition that ensures equitable gender representation, yet only 13.3% (2 out of 15 members), 12.1% (4 out of 33 members) and 11.1% of women are represented in the executive, the National Assembly of the Union of Comoros and the highest judicial body, respectively. Harimia Ahmed, Comoros' first female lawyer and former Minister of Justice, was appointed president of the Constitutional and Electoral Division of the Supreme Court, a position she held until her removal in December 2023, on the eve of the presidential election. While Botswana has witnessed remarkable performance in women representation in previous AII rounds, particularly receiving an indicator score of 75 for women representation in cabinet between 2021 and 2024, the country observed a drop to an indicator score of 50 for women representation in cabinet for 2025. Also, Botswana witnessed underperformance of women representation in the legislature, having consistently received an indicator score of 25 from 2014 to 2025. In Botswana, women are still underrepresented in the national cabinet, consisting of only 4 members out of a 29-member cabinet. Out of the four women, three were appointed by the President through the specially elected member dispensation, a mechanism that allows the President to exercise discretionary power in appointments. Again, women representation in the Botswana parliament is at its lowest with only 3 elected and 3 Specially Elected Members (SEMPs) in a house of 67 members. The special nomination is in accordance with section 4 of the Constitution, making only 9% of women representation, a decline from 11% of the previous parliament.

Political Finance and Disclosures

Relative to other AII indicators, political finance continues to be the area where most African countries perform poorly (Figure 31 and 32).

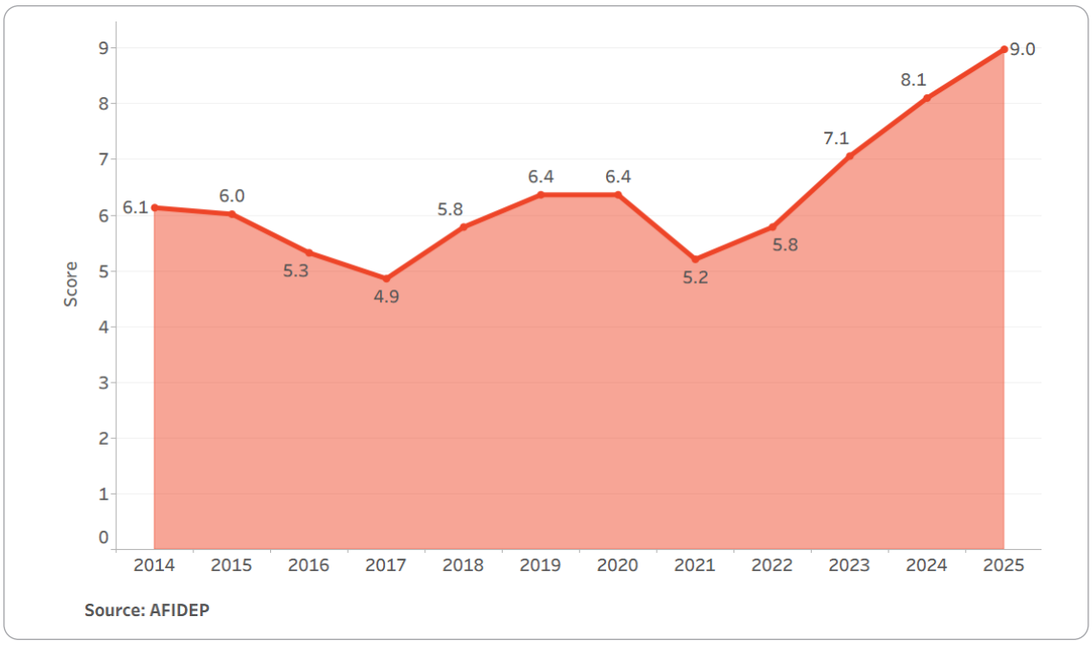
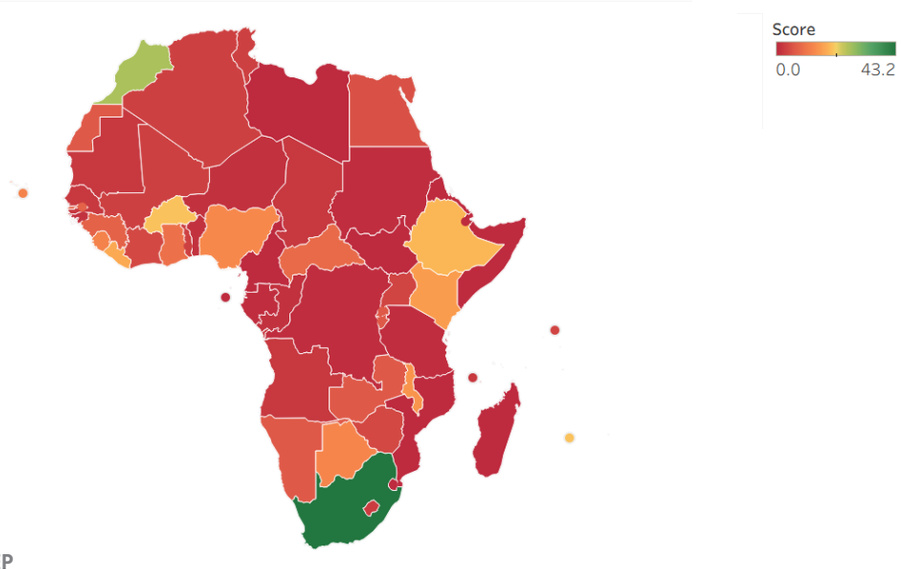


Figure 31: Trend of political finance average score (2014-2025)

While the continent experienced a seeming improvement in political finance, particularly after 2021, the average score for political finance has never crossed 10, making it the least performing indicator. For instance, in 2025 where the highest improvement was observed, the average score was still 9.



Source: AFIDEP

Figure 32: Average score on political finance indicators by country (2014-2025)

South Africa ranks as the best performing country followed by Morocco (Figure 33). Other countries, such as Mauritius, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Liberia among others, have seen some form of improvement in political finance. Conversely, Cameroon, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Libya and Madagascar, among others, are at the top of the lowest performing countries.

In South Africa, there are effective mechanisms for the disclosure of public donations or public funding to political parties. Consistent with the Political Party Funding Act, the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC), which is mandated to monitor and conduct elections, disburses public funds through the Represented Political Parties Fund from National Treasury to political parties represented in Parliament and provincial legislatures. The national and provincial legislatures further distribute funds received directly from National Treasury to political parties represented in the various legislatures in accordance with a formula prescribed in the Political Party Funding Act. The onus is on the IEC or the legislatures to disclose the public funding to the parties, which are often done through the IEC's annual reports.

For private donations in the case of South Africa, political parties have been obliged since the coming into force of the Political Party Funding Act of 2018 (PPFA) in April 2021 to disclose private donations from a single source above R100,000 (about US$6,033) per annum but smaller donations need not be declared. Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs passed a resolution to raise the declaration threshold to R200,000 (about US$ 12,066), pending a debate and vote by the National Assembly before being assented by the President. However, with the passage of the Electoral Matters Amendment Act, there was no requirement for parties to disclose private donations from 8 May 2024 to 16 August 2024 as a lacuna was created in the political party funding regime. As a result, My Vote Counts, a non-governmental organisation, took the case to the Western Cape High Court, which reinstated the previous threshold of R100 000 on 16 August 2024, compelling political parties to disclose donations or funding sources. Evidently, institutional mandates grounded in the Political Party Funding Act and Electoral Matters Amendment Act coupled with judicial oversight strengthen the political financing regime of South Africa.

Like South Africa, similar architecture exists in Morocco for the disclosure of political financing, where the political parties report information on the public and private funds they receive only to the Court of Auditors. It is the Court of Auditors' responsibility to publish this information to the general public. The information is available online on the Court of Auditors' website. Some parties choose, of their own accord, to disclose these expenditures to journalists during press conferences. The expenses subject to annual reporting by political parties include administrative expenses, the acquisition of fixed assets, and the costs of holding their regular national conventions. Evidently, political financing regimes are strong in countries where there are legal provisions that establish authoritative and independent bodies mandated to ensure compliance to the disclosure of political parties' financing, as observed in the case of Morocco and South Africa.

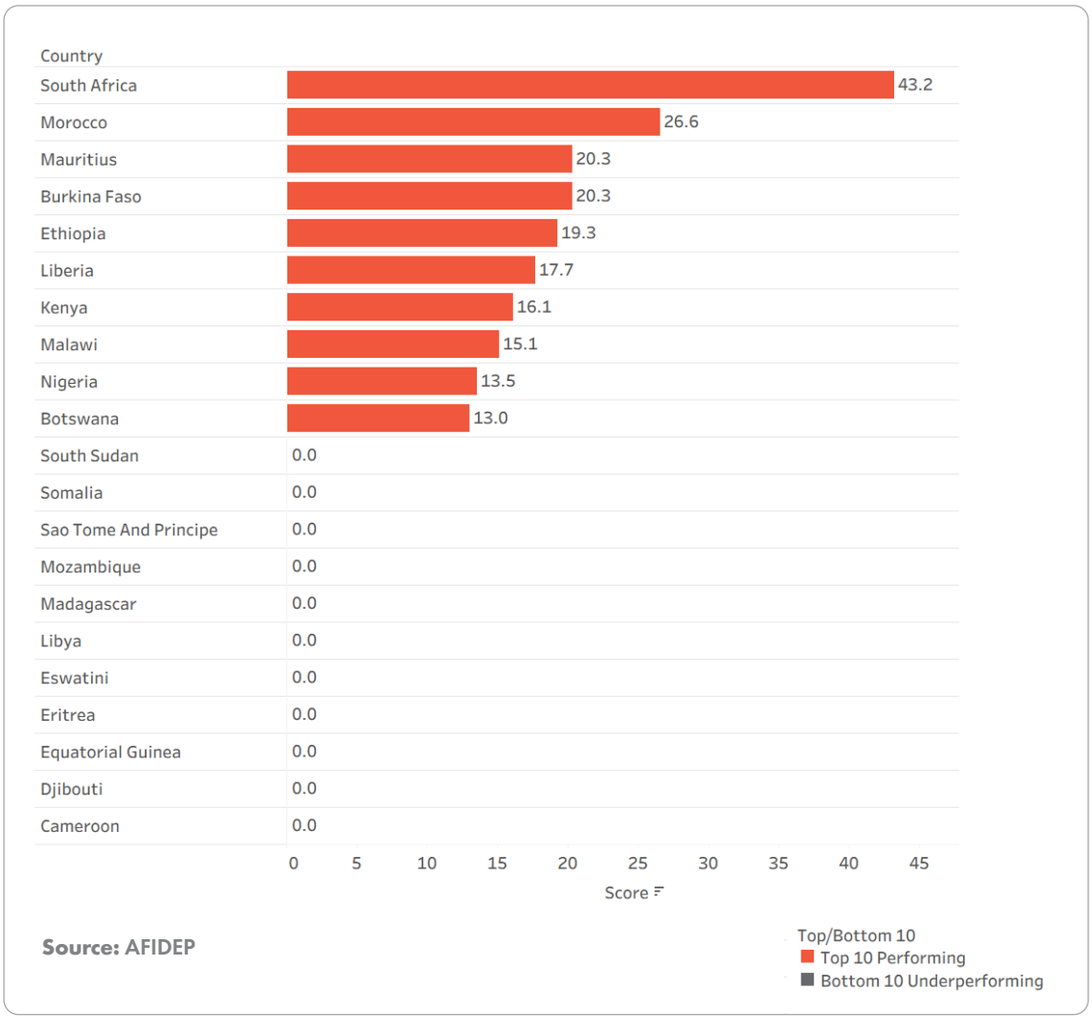


Figure 33: Average scores of the top/bottom 10 performing and underperforming countries (2014-2025)

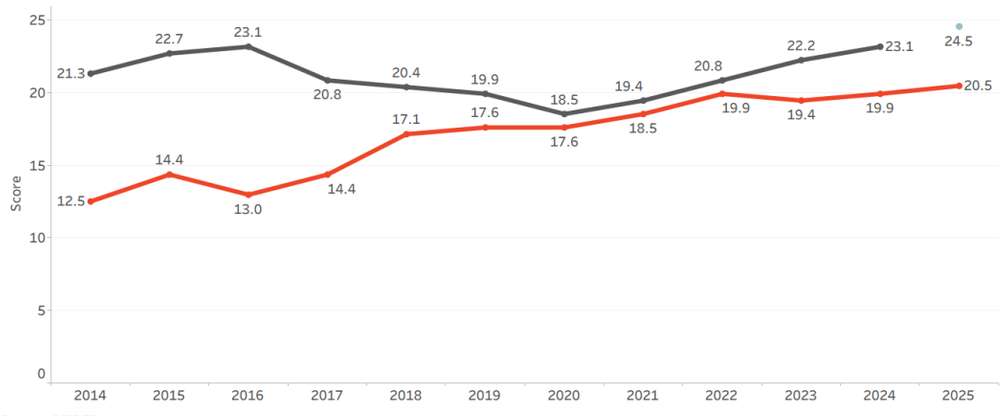
In underperforming countries such as Cameroon, political parties rarely disclose private donations received. This is particularly because Article 278 of the Electoral Code prohibits political parties from accepting private donations, stipulating that 'no political party may receive subsidies or funding from individuals, organisations, foreign authorities, or foreign states.' In practice, parties tend to conceal information on private donations from any source. Political parties therefore present financial statements only at general assemblies, and this information is available solely to members present. With regard to public funding, state financing is allocated for each election in two installments, one before and one after the election, based on party ranking. In the most recent

Senate elections, the allocation was CFA 5,680,000, about US$10,064, per approved slate. While Article 286 of the Electoral Code, Law No. 2012/001 of 19 April 2012, sets out the mechanism for political party financing, with the first installment shared equally among candidates after publication of the candidate list and the second paid after announcement of results, the political financing regime remains weak and ineffective. Compliance is low because of weak institutions and political interference in the body mandated to enforce compliance.

In Djibouti, officially registered political parties recognised by the state receive an annual budget allocation from the government in accordance with the Constitution. In practice, this allocation is larger for parties in the ruling coalition, while opposition parties receive little or no allocation. In addition, all political parties, whether in ruling coalitions or in opposition, receive donations from allies, including contributions from the diaspora. These donations are never published or disclosed to the public, as party leaders treat them as confidential. Internally, this financial information often remains within a very small circle, generally limited to the party president, the secretary-general and the treasurer. Other members, including active members, have no say in the origin or use of these funds.

Transparency in Financial Operations of State-Owned Enterprises and Natural Resource Exploitation

As one of the world's most resource-rich continents, Africa faces persistent challenges linked to resource exploitation. This makes transparency in natural resource management an important benchmark for governance and democracy. The findings from Round 13 show that African countries generally have seen some improvement in transparency on natural resource exploitation, although performance remains below average (Figure 34).



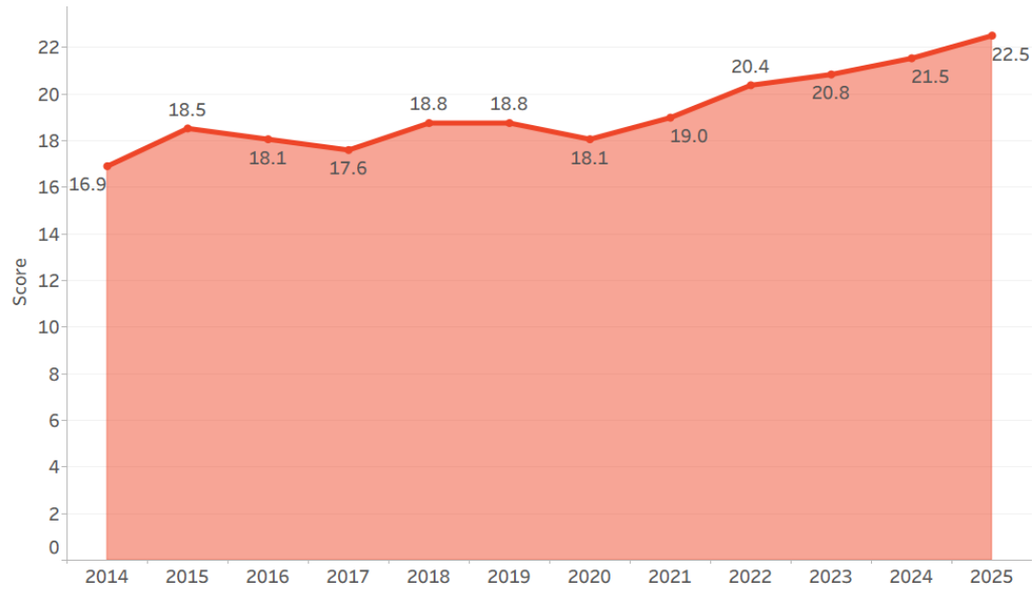
Source: AFIDEP

Indicators
- 29. In practice, citizens can access the financial records of state-owned companies.
- 30. In practice, citizens can access records associated with natural resources exploitation (gas, oil and mining), whether they involve the participation of public or private corporations.
- 30(x). In practice, citizens can access the financial records associated with natural resources exploitation (gas, oil and mining), whether they involve the participation of public or private corporations.

Figure 34: Performance of individual indicators on transparency in financial operations of state-owned enterprises and natural resource exploitation

Performance on transparency in natural resource exploitation increased from an average of 21.3 in 2014 to 23.1 in 2016, after which it declined steadily to 18.5 in 2020. This was followed by a substantial recovery from 2020 onward, with the score returning to 23.1 in 2024. It improved further to 24.5 in 2025 after the indicator was reformulated. Similarly, although still below average, African countries improved on disclosure of financial records of state-owned enterprises, with the average score rising from 12.5 in 2014 to 20.5 in 2025.

Overall, transparency around natural resource exploitation and financial operations of state-owned enterprises fluctuated between 2014 to 2025, recording a low of 16.9 in 2014 and a high of 22.5 in 2025 (Figure 35).



Source: AFIDEP

Figure 35: Average score in transparency in natural resource management and financial operations of state-owned enterprises in Africa (2014-2025)

The strongest performance was observed in South Africa with an average score of 58.3, followed by Nigeria (53.1), Senegal (49.0) and Tunisia (45.8), as shown in Figures 36 and 37. The weakest performers were Comoros, Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan, all with average scores of 0. In South Africa, where transparency in natural resource exploitation is closely linked to state-owned enterprises, the dissolution of the Department of Public Enterprises by President Cyril Ramaphosa in August 2024, following the 29 May 2024 elections and the formation of a coalition government, intensified public calls for open and transparent natural resource management.

In South Africa, where transparency in natural resource exploitation is closely linked to state-owned enterprises, the dissolution of the Department of Public Enterprises by President Cyril Ramaphosa in August 2024, following the 29 May 2024 elections and the formation of a coalition government, intensified public calls for open and transparent natural resource management.

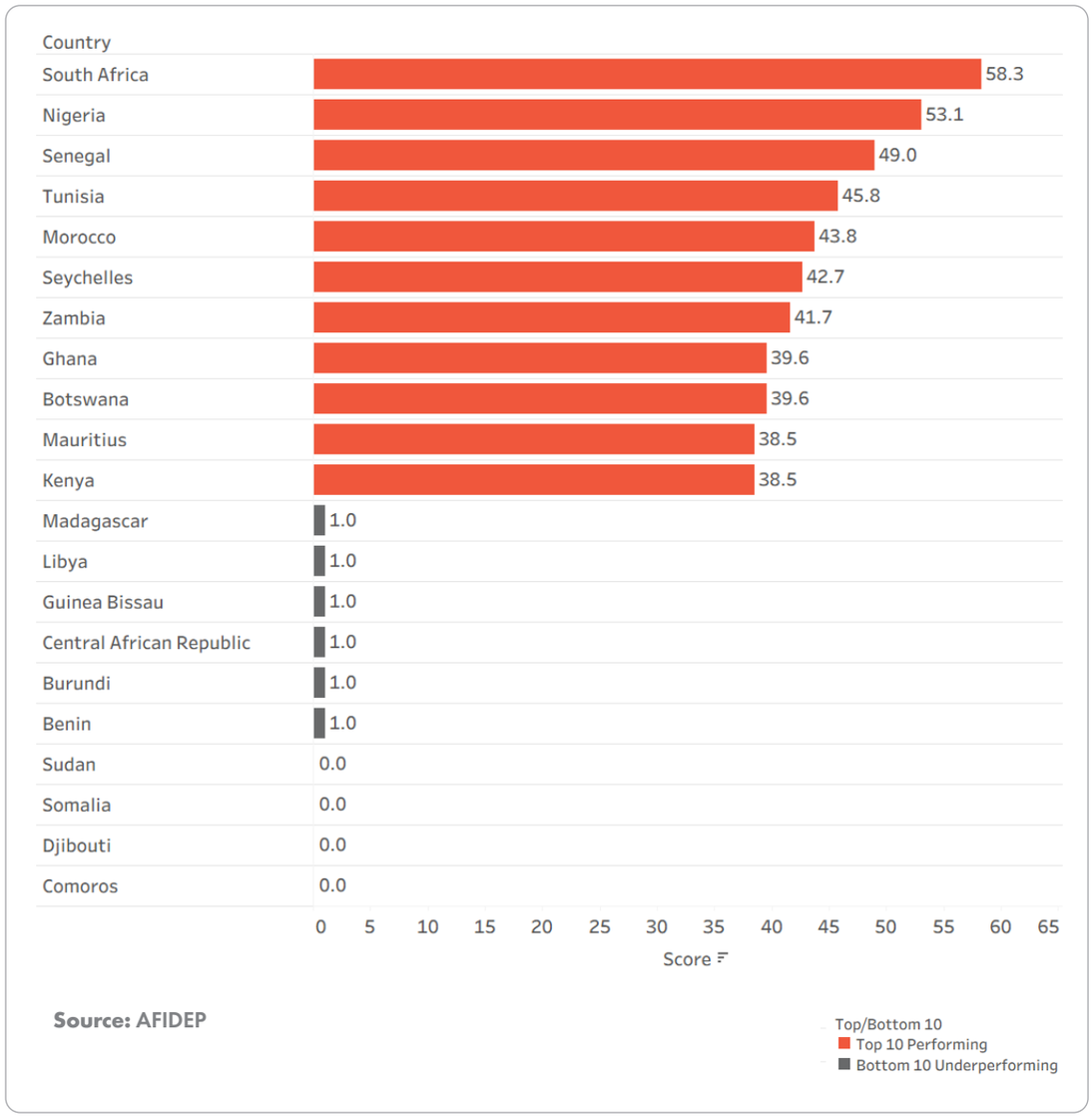
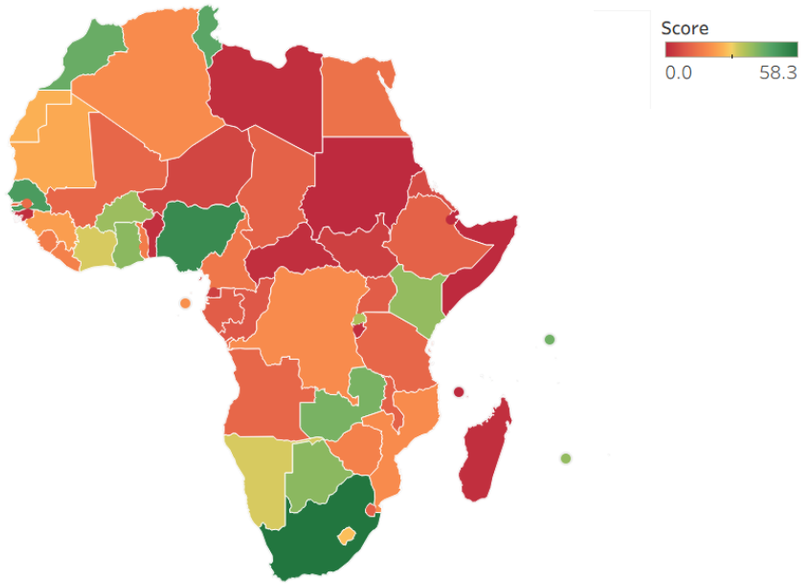


Figure 36: Average score of the top/bottom 10 countries on transparency in natural resources exploitation and financial operations of state-owned enterprises (2014-2025)

In South Africa, transparency is promoted through regular publication of financial records and auditing of state-owned enterprise accounts by the Auditor-General, who is mandated to ensure compliance with legal provisions on financial records and performance. For instance, the Industrial Development Corporation is cited by the Auditor-General as having good audit outcomes, as it publishes its financial results annually on the website. Similarly, energy utility Eskom, which has been under great scrutiny since 2008 due to periodic rolling blackouts, publishes its financial results on its website every six months. The coming into force of the Promotion of Access to Information Act 2000 (PAIA) provides an avenue for citizens to monitor and scrutinise the financial records and performance of state-owned enterprises in South Africa.



Source: AFIDEP

Figure 37: Average score on transparency in natural resources exploitation and financial operations of State-Owned enterprises by country (2014-2025)

Specific to natural resource management too, the South African tax laws require that the extractive industries declare ownership, operational and financial information and a number of these have audited financials readily available. For example, Harmony, which focuses on gold mining, uploads results to its website every quarter. Sibanye-Stillwater, which focuses on platinum group metals and gold, publishes reports annually. Anglo-Australian multinational Rio Tinto, which focuses on mineral sands in South Africa, publishes its reports annually, and it has a declared commitment to transparency. In addition to annual reports, it also provides reports focusing on the taxes it pays to the countries in which it operates. Changes in the Financial Intelligence Centre Act and the Companies Act enforce greater transparency around beneficial ownership, which makes it easier to identify those who own companies related to natural resource management in South Africa.

In Nigeria, institutional structures enhance transparency in natural resource management. The extractive sector watchdog, the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), produces annual reports that cover oil, gas, and solid minerals production and revenues. The reports show the top solid minerals produced and exported, as well as the amounts paid in royalties by extractive companies. Similarly, the sector regulator, the Nigeria Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority, provides monthly reports on domestic fuel and gas consumption. These arrangements enable state-owned enterprises to comply with provisions on the publication of financial records of state-owned enterprises. For instance, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), a government-owned entity, periodically publishes financial records detailing oil and gas production. State-owned institutions including the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation and the Nigerian Railway Corporation ensure compliance by publishing financial records. However, compliance is not even across all state-owned enterprises, as the financial reports of several other state-owned entities, such as the Bank of Agriculture, Nigerian Film Corporation, Transmission Company of Nigeria, Nigeria Bulk Electricity Trading Plc, and the Nigerian Security Printing and Minting Plc, are seldom available online to citizens.

In underperforming countries such as Comoros, Djibouti, Somalia and Sudan, institutions and oversight mechanisms are weak, or enforcement institutions to ensure compliance on transparency in natural resource exploitation and financial operations of state-owned enterprises do not exist. In Comoros, for example, access to financial information on state-owned enterprises remains very limited. State-owned enterprises do not regularly publish their financial statements, balance sheets, audit reports, or annual reports. Where such documents exist, they are inaccessible to the general public. The lack of accountability mechanisms and prevailing impunity does not incentivise state-owned enterprises to make this information public. Although Comoros does not yet exploit natural resources commercially, laws governing all oil-related activities exist in the Union of the Comoros, including the Petroleum Code adopted in 2012. While anyone with questions about oil can contact the Ministry of Energy or the Comoros Geological Office (BGC), financial records for projects related to natural resources are never made available. There is effectively a complete blackout on this activity in the Comoros. The unavailability of this information is very often explained by the fact that these records are considered a matter of state security.

Similarly, in Djibouti, detailed financial statements, annual activity reports and audit reports of public enterprises are not systematically published and are not available online or in an accessible format. Where they exist, these documents are generally submitted to the oversight authorities, namely relevant ministries, without wide dissemination, making it difficult for citizens, civil society or the media to verify how public resources are used and how these enterprises perform. While Djibouti's natural resources are limited, the government has begun to exploit some, particularly salt. A Chinese company, Salt Investment, is involved in this operation and exports to Europe and Asia. However, details on the economic benefits of these exports are not readily available online or offline, raising concerns about transparency.

The Federal Government of Somalia does not have state-owned enterprises. Foreign corporations involved in significant infrastructure projects, including the construction of hospitals, highways and ministry buildings and rehabilitation works, frequently operate under revenue-sharing agreements with the government. However, the financial details of these agreements remain undisclosed, further reducing accountability in the management of public resources. There is also no dedicated agency that oversees domestic and international businesses engaged in the mining and oil industries. As such, financial records related to the exploitation of natural resources are not available to the public. Even though the Somali Petroleum Authority (SPA), established in July 2020, is tasked with promoting the country's petroleum industry and ensuring the effective recovery of oil and gas resources, it only became fully active and began its operations in October 2023. In a significant development, the Somali government signed two major agreements on March 7, 2024: one with Liberty Petroleum for oil exploration, and another with the government of Turkey focused on the exploration and development of offshore oil and natural gas resources. These agreements were officially announced to the public and published on the SPA's website. Yet no financial data, contracts or detailed reports regarding the exploitation of these natural resources are made publicly available. Thus, weak and under-resourced institutions, coupled with political interference and insecurity, undermine the oversight mechanisms for ensuring compliance with transparency in natural resource exploitation and financial operations of state-owned enterprises in parts of the continent.

Transparency in National Debt Management

In addition to transparency in natural resource exploitation and financial operations of state-owned enterprises, transparency in debt management is also a critical governance issue in Africa. As a newly introduced indicator, results limited to Round 13 show that several African countries recorded moderate to strong performance in transparency in national debt management (Figure 38).

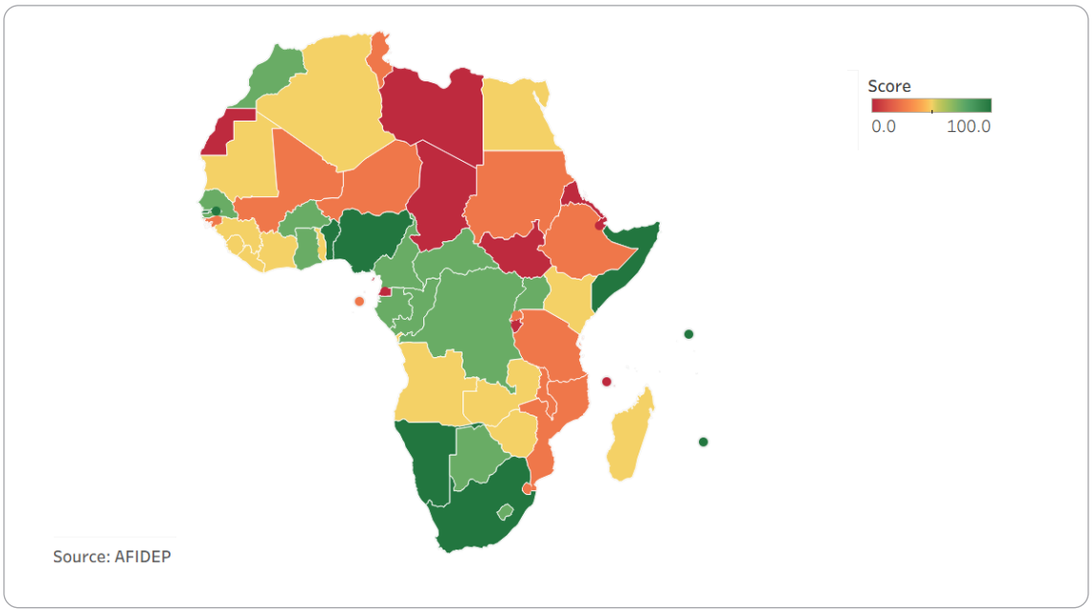


Figure 38: Country performance on national debt management (2025)

Countries such as South Africa, Namibia, Somalia, Nigeria and Benin recorded a very strong performance, with an overall score of 100, while the weakest performance was recorded in Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Libya, South Sudan, Djibouti and the Sahrawi Republic, each with a score of 0 (Table 6).

In some countries such as Somalia, transparency in national debt management is enforced. The Debt Management Unit of the Ministry of Finance of Somalia has an archive called "Publications" that contains details of the extent of national debt, creditors and progress toward servicing it either online or offline. The government provides updates on the national debt every three months through a report called the Quarterly Public Debt Bulletin. These reports are made available to the public and can be accessed for free on the publication site of the Ministry of Finance's official website. If a citizen needs specific debt-related information that is not available online, they can make a formal request and usually receive a response within two weeks. Any related costs for the request are minimal and mostly limited to making print copies. Similarly in Benin, the Independent Debt Management Agency (CAGD) regularly publishes statistical bulletins on public debt on a well-established quarterly basis. These bulletins contain detailed information on the total volume of public debt, creditors (international and domestic), maturities, and debt service information. They are freely available online to anyone, whether for reading or downloading, demonstrating full accessibility to citizens.

Table 6: Countries total scores on national debt management

Country	Score
South Africa	100.0
Somalia	100.0
Seychelles	100.0
Nigeria	100.0
Namibia	100.0
Mauritius	100.0
Gambia	100.0
Benin	100.0
Uganda	75.0
Senegal	75.0
Republic Of Congo	75.0
Morocco	75.0
Lesotho	75.0
Ghana	75.0
Gabon	75.0
Democratic Republic Of Congo	75.0
Central African Republic	75.0
Cameroon	75.0
Burkina Faso	75.0
Botswana	75.0
Zimbabwe	50.0
Zambia	50.0
Togo	50.0
Sierra Leone	50.0
Mauritania	50.0
Madagascar	50.0
Liberia	50.0
Kenya	50.0

Country	Score
Guinea	50.0
Egypt	50.0
Cote Divoire	50.0
Cape Verde	50.0
Angola	50.0
Algeria	50.0
Tunisia	25.0
Tanzania	25.0
Sudan	25.0
Sao Tome And Principe	25.0
Rwanda	25.0
Niger	25.0
Mozambique	25.0
Mali	25.0
Malawi	25.0
Guinea Bissau	25.0
Ethiopia	25.0
Eswatini	25.0
South Sudan	0.0
Sahrawi Republic	0.0
Libya	0.0
Eritrea	0.0
Equatorial Guinea	0.0
Djibouti	0.0
Comoros	0.0
Chad	0.0
Burundi	0.0

Source: AFIDEP

The government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), through the General Directorate of Public Debt (DGDP), publishes annual and quarterly reports on the status of public debt. The DGDP, which operates under the Ministry of Finance, is the government's primary advisory body on public debt. Pursuant to Article 4 of Decree No. 09/061 of December 3, 2009, establishing its creation and organisation, the DGDP is tasked with managing the DRC's public debt—both domestic and foreign, direct and indirect – as well as medium- and long-term borrowings, including consolidated debt and budget arrears dating back more than one year. These annual and quarterly reports are published on the DGDP's website, and they are freely accessible to the public. However, the publication sometimes delays, limiting access to the public.

In weak performing countries such as Burundi, Chad and Comoros, the lack of institutions or ineffectiveness of existing institutions coupled with insecurity and governance dynamics serve as barriers to transparency in national debt. In Burundi for instance, about 60% of its national debt is domestic, through borrowing from the Bank of the Republic of Burundi (BRB). However, the BRB is one of the agencies under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Finance, but it also reports to the Office of the President, which limits the actual independence of the institution in ensuring transparency in national debt. According to reports published by the Ministry of Finance, outstanding public debt in Burundi stood at more than US$ 900 million. However, while these aggregate figures are available, detailed information regarding the composition of the debt, creditors, borrowing terms, and debt service remains incomplete.

In the case of Chad, in reality, the Chadian government lacks transparency regarding national debt obligations and public debt management mechanisms. The Ministry of Finance, Budget, Economy, Planning, and International Cooperation does not publish any information on the status of the debt or on progress made in repaying creditors. Records on national debt are not accessible to the public, either online or in print. Requests for information regarding national debt submitted by journalists, citizens, civil society actors, and researchers to the Debt Directorate of the Ministry of Finance, Budget, Economy, Planning, and International Cooperation have consistently gone unanswered. While the National Assembly holds a debate on the state budget each year, this debate does not provide detailed data on the national debt. The ministry also very rarely organises information sessions on the budget or the finance law, and these meetings do not provide sufficient details on public debt or repayment terms.

Similarly, the Comorian government is not very transparent about the country's debt situation. Very little information on this subject is made public. The government does not publish reports on the national debt. According to some observers, data on the Union's debt is considered sensitive and confidential. The agencies responsible for managing the national debt lack the capacity for rigorous and transparent management. Although the Ministry of Finance has an official website, it contains no information on the national debt.

Evidently, in countries where performance in transparency in national debt management is strong or moderate, there are structures and mechanisms in place to ensure periodic publication of national debt management strategies. This increases public trust in the management of national debt. Conversely, secrecy dominates in countries where performance is poor or low. This stems from limited or weak institutions mandated to ensure transparency in national debt management.

Immigration

Immigration is critical to Africa's development, as envisioned by the African Union Agenda 2063 and the African Continental Free Trade Area. For Round 13, a new indicator was introduced and measured the performance of African countries on immigration, particularly focusing on how national governments protect immigrants from discrimination.

In Round 13, several North African countries performed poorly on protection of immigrants (Figure 39).

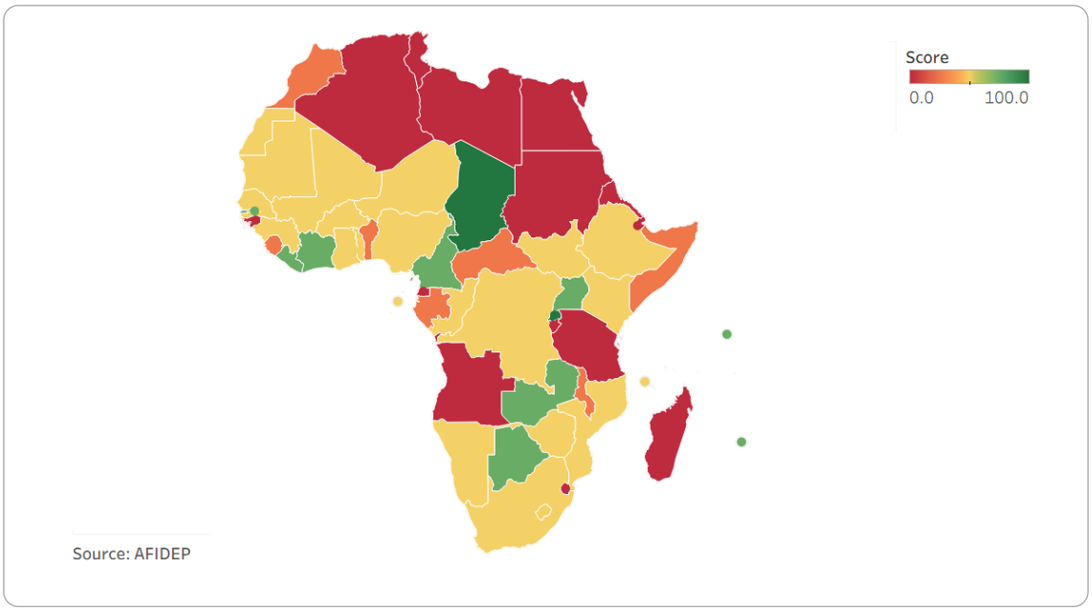


Figure 39: Performance of countries on immigration (2025)

Rwanda and Chad are the best performing countries in terms of immigration and the protection of immigrants with a score of 100, followed by Zambia, Uganda and Seychelles among others (Figure 40). On the contrary, Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Djibouti and Egypt, among others, are the worst performers.

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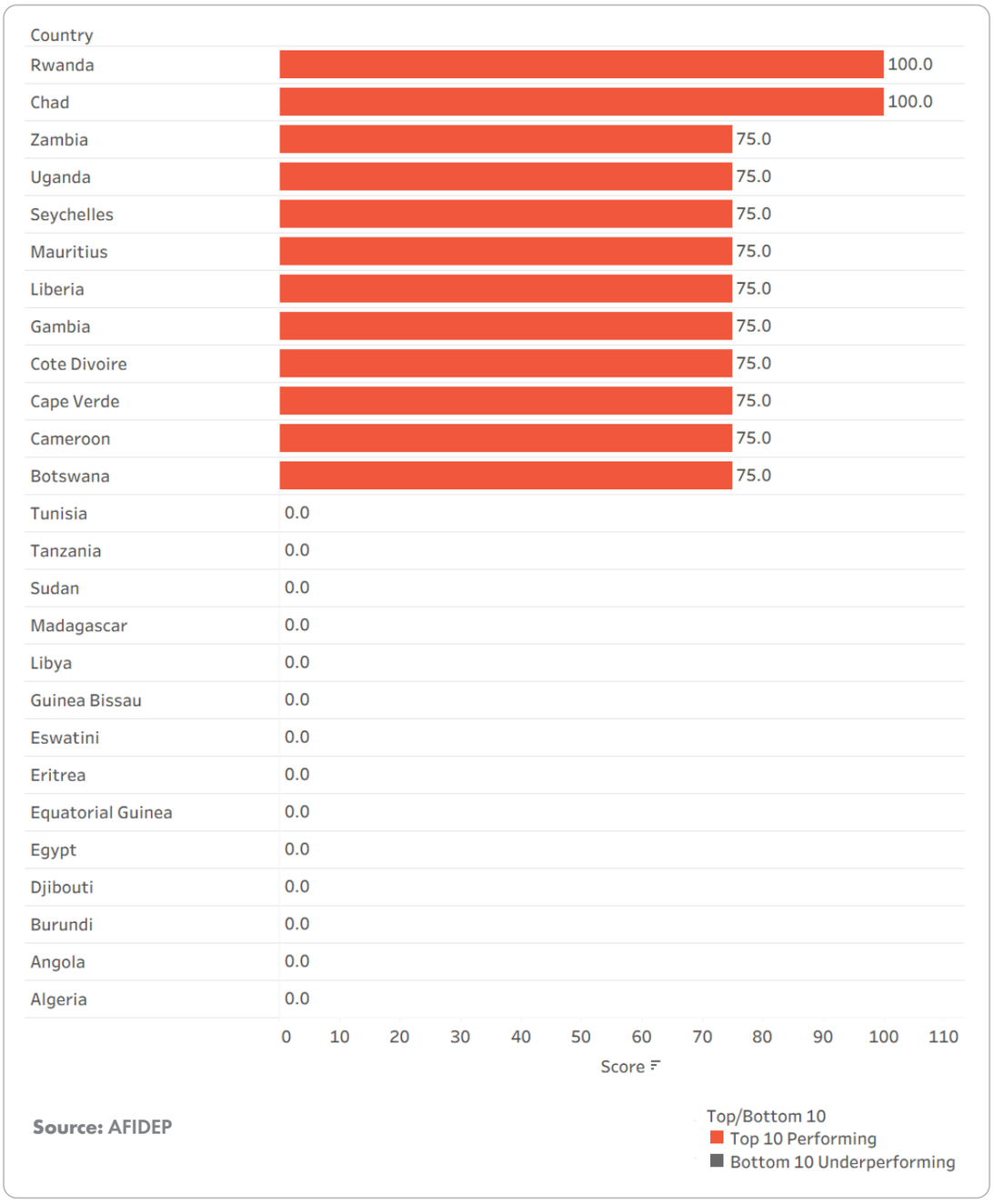


Figure 40: Scores of top/bottom 10 countries (2025)

In Rwanda, the Rwanda Migration Office and the Rwanda National Police play critical roles in ensuring the safety and protection of immigrants, enabling Rwanda to welcome citizens from different nations, including Afghanistan, Sudan, South Sudan etc. The Rwanda Migration Office has been proactive and tried to implement programmes designed to reduce discrimination of immigrants in collaboration with the Rwanda National Police. Immigrants in Rwanda have easy access to both the police and the migration office. For example, the migration office delivered travel and residence documents to immigrants online via the Irembo platform.

Table 7: Ranking of Countries on the Indicator measuring the existence and effectiveness of mechanisms designed to protect immigrants from discrimination

Country	Score
Rwanda	100.0
Chad	100.0
Zambia	75.0
Uganda	75.0
Seychelles	75.0
Mauritius	75.0
Liberia	75.0
Gambia	75.0
Cote Divoire	75.0
Cape Verde	75.0
Cameroon	75.0
Botswana	75.0
Zimbabwe	50.0
Togo	50.0
South Sudan	50.0
South Africa	50.0
Senegal	50.0
Sao Tome And Principe	50.0
Sahrawi Republic	50.0
Republic Of Congo	50.0
Nigeria	50.0
Niger	50.0
Namibia	50.0
Mozambique	50.0
Mauritania	50.0
Mali	50.0
Lesotho	50.0
Kenya	50.0

Country	Score
Guinea	50.0
Ghana	50.0
Ethiopia	50.0
Democratic Republic Of Congo	50.0
Comoros	50.0
Burkina Faso	50.0
Somalia	25.0
Sierra Leone	25.0
Morocco	25.0
Malawi	25.0
Gabon	25.0
Central African Republic	25.0
Benin	25.0
Tunisia	0.0
Tanzania	0.0
Sudan	0.0
Madagascar	0.0
Libya	0.0
Guinea Bissau	0.0
Eswatini	0.0
Eritrea	0.0
Equatorial Guinea	0.0
Egypt	0.0
Djibouti	0.0
Burundi	0.0
Angola	0.0
Algeria	0.0

Source: AFIDEP

In Chad too, the protection of immigrants is championed by several institutions that are authorised to receive complaints: the Immigration Directorate of the National Police, the National Human Rights Commission, and the National Commission for the Reception and Reintegration of Refugees and Returnees, an agency specializing in the protection of immigrants and refugees. The Commission receives complaints from immigrants and conducts investigations both independently and in collaboration with the National Police and the Judicial Police. In the review period, the Commission received 37 complaints from immigrants and refugees, of which 31 had been resolved and six remained under investigation. Again, the Commission organises awareness campaigns on peaceful coexistence between immigrants and local populations and a scientific symposium on the economic and social contributions of immigrants in Chad.

Similarly, in Uganda, as reported in the Round 13 scorecard, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) mainly looks at discrimination related issues especially on grounds of race, color, ethnic origin, tribe, religion, or social standing. Complaints can be lodged in person, by post, or online through their website within 6 months of the incident. Uganda is lauded globally for its inclusive refugee-hosting model. However, implementation gaps persist in Uganda. Enforcement is inconsistent, registration systems are cumbersome, and urban refugees, particularly in secondary cities like Mbarara, Hoima, Koboko and Adjumani, face documentation challenges, limited-service access, and heightened risk of harassment. Over half of urban refugees lack complete civil documentation, affecting health care, education, inheritance rights and formal employment.

As in the case of Rwanda, Chad and Uganda, Zambia's performance is grounded in the existence of strong institutions. The Zambian government protects immigrants from discrimination based on their nationalities and complaint mechanisms, government programmes, and accessibility have been designed to protect such people from discrimination. In 2023, the government, during the 13th Cabinet Meeting, approved Zambia's National Refugee Policy, which marked a commendable stride toward fostering a more inclusive and equitable society and enhancing the overall well-being of the refugees and their children residing in Zambia. The Human Rights Commission (HRC) and Ministry of Home Affairs handle complaints, though no specialised unit exists. In addition to state-led interventions, efforts by NGOs and development partners contribute to the protection of immigrants in Zambia. For instance, in 2025, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and local NGOs held refugee rights workshops in Maheba Refugee Settlement.

The protection of immigrants in some African countries, especially in Algeria, remains weak. In Algeria, the government does not protect immigrants from discrimination based on their nationality

Conversely, the protection of immigrants in some African countries, especially in Algeria, remains weak. In Algeria, the government does not protect immigrants from discrimination based on their nationality. The legal framework draws a clear distinction between nationals and foreigners, particularly in the area of employment. A foreigner may register a business provided they are a minority partner with an Algerian. The National Human Rights Council (CNDH) is responsible for promoting and protecting human rights in Algeria, especially among the migrant communities through its website designed to allow citizens to report cases of discrimination. However, migrants have limited access to the website, making it impossible to use in practice, even for those directly affected.

In Angola, Article 23 of the Constitution of the Republic of Angola (CRA) enshrines the principle of equality and non-discrimination, including on the grounds of nationality, race, place of birth, or other status. However, in practice, the protection framework is non-operational, as there are no institutional channels dedicated to monitoring discrimination, receiving complaints, or conducting investigations into abuses faced by immigrant

communities. Angola remains both a destination and transit country for migrants, particularly from the DRC, Guinea-Conakry, Mali, Senegal, and Nigeria. Many of these migrants engage in informal cross-border trade, artisanal mining, or domestic work, yet reports continue of systematic police harassment, arbitrary arrests, and extortion practices, particularly targeting West African traders and Congolese nationals in the provinces of Luanda, Cabinda, and Lunda Norte. Incidents documented by civil society organisations, such as OMUNGA and Mosaiko Instituto para a Cidadania, describe arbitrary detentions, confiscation of goods, and physical violence by law enforcement agents. These acts are seldom investigated, and victims rarely obtain judicial redress. In early 2024, media outlets also reported forced returns ("expuls es sum rias") of foreign nationals, mainly Congolese families, without due process, raising concerns of violations of Article 33 of the Constitution, which guarantees protection against collective expulsions. The Law on Foreigners and Refugees (Law No. 10/15) and related regulations provide a legal framework for asylum and residence, but have remained unimplemented as no policies or institutional structures exist to address xenophobia, hate crimes, or discriminatory policing.

Poor performance of African countries on immigration has serious implications on the success of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and other regional provisions that seek to enhance cross-border movement and intra-African trade. When African citizens are discriminated against by receiving countries' citizens or state-led institutions, this affects the integration of migrants into local economies and structures. In some cases, discrimination against migrants can lead to destabilisation of democracy, as observed in South Africa, where Afrophobic anti-migrant protests against immigrants have resulted in clashes between citizens and immigrants or between citizens, immigrants and the police. There are reports of the economic implications of the march against immigrants on the local economy in South Africa.[15] Limited protection for immigrants can derail regional efforts and the associated agenda such as the AfCFTA aimed at promoting free movement and trade among African countries.

[15]Anyadike, O., & Nkala, O. (2026, August 5). South Africa feels the economic cost of anti-migrant xenophobia. Politics and Economics of the New Humanitarian. https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/analysis/2026/08/05/south-africa-feels-economic-cost-anti-migrant-xenophobia



CHAPTER 08

Conclusion

Institutions Matter: Closing Africa's Governance Divide

Round 13 of the Africa Integrity Indicators does not show uniform decline, and it does not show uninterrupted progress. It shows gradual gains in some areas alongside wide and persistent gaps in how well institutions perform. The continental Transparency and Accountability average has recovered from its 2021 low but, at 29.8, has never reached the moderate threshold of 50. Social Development has improved over the longer term. Its 2025 average of 41.6 is lower than in 2024, but largely because new indicators were added on which almost every country scores poorly. Only 10 of the 55 countries assessed reach a moderate level overall. Seychelles, South Africa, Mauritius, Namibia and Morocco lead the rankings. At the other end, conflict, political instability and weak accountability continue to hold back countries such as Sudan, Eritrea and Equatorial Guinea.

The central lesson from the report is that having institutions is not enough. What matters is whether they can carry out their mandates independently, transparently and effectively. In the stronger performers, institutions scrutinise public spending, protect judicial independence, run credible elections, publish information and regulate procurement. Citizens, journalists and civil society in these countries also have room to hold governments to account. Where political interference, under-resourcing, secrecy or conflict weaken these functions, performance falls.

The thematic findings make this pattern concrete. Electoral performance fell to 26.8 in 2025, below its 2014 level, raising concerns about the independence of the bodies that manage democratic competition. Political finance remains the weakest area of governance on the continent, with an average score that has never exceeded 10. Undisclosed party funding leaves room for opaque influence and patronage. Women's representation, by contrast, remains the strongest area at 67.4, despite falling in 2025. It shows what sustained constitutional, policy and advocacy commitments can achieve.

Transparency over debt, state-owned enterprises and natural resources varies sharply between countries. Resource wealth and public borrowing do not in themselves lead to either secrecy or openness; the surrounding institutions make the difference.

Accountability is possible where:

- governments publish debt information;
- state-owned enterprises disclose their accounts;
- independent auditors scrutinise public entities;
- extractive-sector regulators publish revenue and production data;
- citizens can obtain information on contracts and ownership.

Where these mechanisms are missing, under-resourced or politically constrained, even basic financial information stays out of public view. This matters greatly for a continent where many countries face rising debt and depend on revenue from oil, gas and minerals. Citizens need to know who borrows, how much and on what terms, how public money is spent, who owns extractive companies, and what governments earn from natural resources. Disclosure of this kind is a core part of democratic governance, not just sound fiscal management.

The social development findings show why governance matters to citizens' daily lives. Weak poverty statistics undermine targeted policy. Under-resourced social protection leaves vulnerable groups without support. Discrimination limits people's ability to participate equally in society. Youth and persons with disabilities remain almost entirely absent from national cabinets. Weak protection of immigrants violates individual rights and also undercuts the continent's ambitions for free movement and trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Closing Africa's governance divide requires moving from building institutions on paper to making them work in practice.

National governments should do four things:



Protect oversight institutions from political interference and fund them predictably, with the staff, skills and technology they need. These include judiciaries, electoral management bodies, supreme audit institutions, anti-corruption agencies, procurement authorities, statistics offices and social protection agencies.



Make disclosure routine. This covers party funding, public debt, state-owned enterprise accounts, natural resource contracts and beneficial ownership.



Protect civic space and the watchdog role of the media and civil society.



Broaden representation of women, youth and persons with disabilities, and protect migrants from discrimination.

The African Union and Regional Economic Communities already oversee an extensive set of governance commitments, including Agenda 2063, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, and the African Peer Review Mechanism. Their priority should now be implementation: monitoring how commitments translate into practice, using peer learning to spread approaches that work, and directing targeted support to countries facing fragility, conflict or democratic erosion.

Parliaments, civil society, the media and development partners can use AII data to track whether institutions deliver. They can press for disclosure where information is withheld and support the oversight bodies that make accountability possible.

Africa is not moving along a single governance pathway. Some countries show that strong institutions, credible oversight and public access to information can improve both accountability and social development. Others show how quickly gains can be lost when institutions lose independence, capacity or legitimacy. Niger's 10.5-point fall in a single round is a reminder of how fragile progress can be.

The choice facing the continent is not between having institutions and having none, but between institutions that exist and institutions that work. Building independent, adequately resourced, transparent and inclusive institutions is essential to rebuilding public trust, strengthening democratic resilience, managing debt and natural resources responsibly, and realising the ambitions of Agenda 2063. The divide can be narrowed, but only with sustained political commitment to make institutions work for all citizens.



Annexes

Annex 1: Limitations

The Africa Integrity Indicators are designed to show how governance institutions work in practice, and the evidence-based method of the project reduces, but does not remove, the uncertainty involved in doing so. Readers should keep the following limitations in mind when interpreting the findings, particularly when comparing countries with similar scores or tracking small changes over time.



Expert judgement and a coarse scale: Each score is a judgement made by an in-country researcher against defined criteria, supported by evidence and tested through peer review. Judgement nevertheless remains part of the process, and reasonable experts can disagree on whether practice in a country is "Weak" or "Moderate." Because each indicator is scored in steps of 25 points, a single one-step change moves a country's overall score by about 0.4 points, its Transparency and Accountability score by about 0.8 points, and its Social Development score by about 1.0 point. Differences and changes of this size can therefore reflect one scoring decision rather than a broad shift in governance, and should be read with caution.



Unequal access to evidence: The quality of evidence varies between countries. In closed political systems and conflict-affected settings, including Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Libya and Somalia, official records are often unavailable, interviewees may face risks in speaking openly, and researchers may have limited freedom to work. In these contexts, a low score can reflect both weak practice and the absence of verifiable information about it. Data for the Sahrawi Republic, assessed for the first time, should be treated as a first baseline.



Comparability over time: The indicator set has changed several times since 2014, most recently in the 2024 review, which removed two indicators, added six and reformulated six. Trends are presented for the in-practice indicators in each year, but the composition of that set is not identical across rounds. The new indicators on youth and disability representation scored 0 in most countries, which lowers 2025 scores relative to earlier years. This affects country overall scores and rankings as well as the Social Development average. Furthermore, round 13 covers a 22-month research period, whereas earlier rounds covered 13 months, so a single score summarises a longer and, in some countries, more turbulent period. Year labels refer to the data year, not the calendar year in which events took place.



Weighting and aggregation: All indicators carry equal weight. Because the overall score is the average of all 58 indicators, Transparency and Accountability (32 indicators) contributes about 55% of the overall score and Social Development (26 indicators) about 45%. This is a methodological choice rather than a claim that each indicator matters equally for governance outcomes. Averages can also mask variation, as a country with mixed results across indicators can receive the same score as one with uniformly moderate performance.



Rankings: Rankings are provided for ease of reading, but many countries are separated by less than one point, and several share identical scores. Tied countries share a rank, marked "=", and the following rank skips the tied places (standard competition ranking). For example, three countries tied at 8th are followed by the 11th-ranked country. Ties are based on scores rounded to one decimal place.

Scope of measurement: The AII measures practice at the national level. It does not assess the content of laws, citizens' perceptions or experiences of governance, or differences between regions within a country, all of which can diverge substantially from national practice. It also does not cover every dimension of governance, and a country's results should be read alongside other sources.

Timing: Scores reflect evidence for September 2023 to June 2025. Developments after June 2025, including subsequent elections, appointments and court decisions, are not reflected in the scores, even where they are mentioned for context.





National goverments should broaden representation of women, youth and persons with disabilities, and protect migrants from discrimination.

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