

Afrobarometer  
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## News release

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### Africa's digital gender divide may be widening, Afrobarometer survey finds

African women trail behind men in access to digital information and communications technologies, and the gap may be widening, the latest Afrobarometer survey shows.

Women are less likely than men to own a computer or a mobile phone with access to the Internet, and although women's Internet use has doubled over the past five years, the gender gap in regular Internet use has increased.

These findings from national surveys in 34 countries are part of a **soon-to-be-released Pan-Africa Profile** analysis based on a special gender-equality survey module. The new report will also examine popular support for gender equality, government performance on women's rights and opportunities, and persistent gender gaps in education, employment, and control over key assets.

#### Key findings

- On average across 34 African countries, women are less likely than men to own a mobile phone, to use it every day, to have a mobile phone with access to the Internet, to own a computer, to access the Internet regularly, and to get their news from the Internet or social media (Figure 1).
- Regular Internet usage (at least a few times a week) among women ranges from a high of 58% in Cabo Verde and 57% in Mauritius to fewer than one in 10 in Mali, Niger, Benin, Madagascar, Burkina Faso, and Malawi (Figure 2). The gap between men and women also ranges widely, from no gap in Mauritius to 18 percentage points in Benin, where only 7% of women secure regular access to the Internet.
- The proportion of women who regularly use the Internet has more than doubled over the past five years, from 11% to 26%. Some countries register remarkable gains: 36 percentage points in South Africa, 30 points in Cabo Verde, 28 points in Tunisia, 25 points in Sudan, 24 points in Mauritius, and 22 points in Namibia (Figure 3).
- But even so, the average gender gap has widened (Figure 4). Men's regular Internet use has also doubled over the period, from 17% to 34%, increasing the gender divide from 6 points to 8. The gap increased by 3 percentage points or more in 14 of 31 countries, most prominently in Benin (+16 percentage points), Kenya (+7 points), and Côte d'Ivoire (+7 points).

#### Afrobarometer surveys

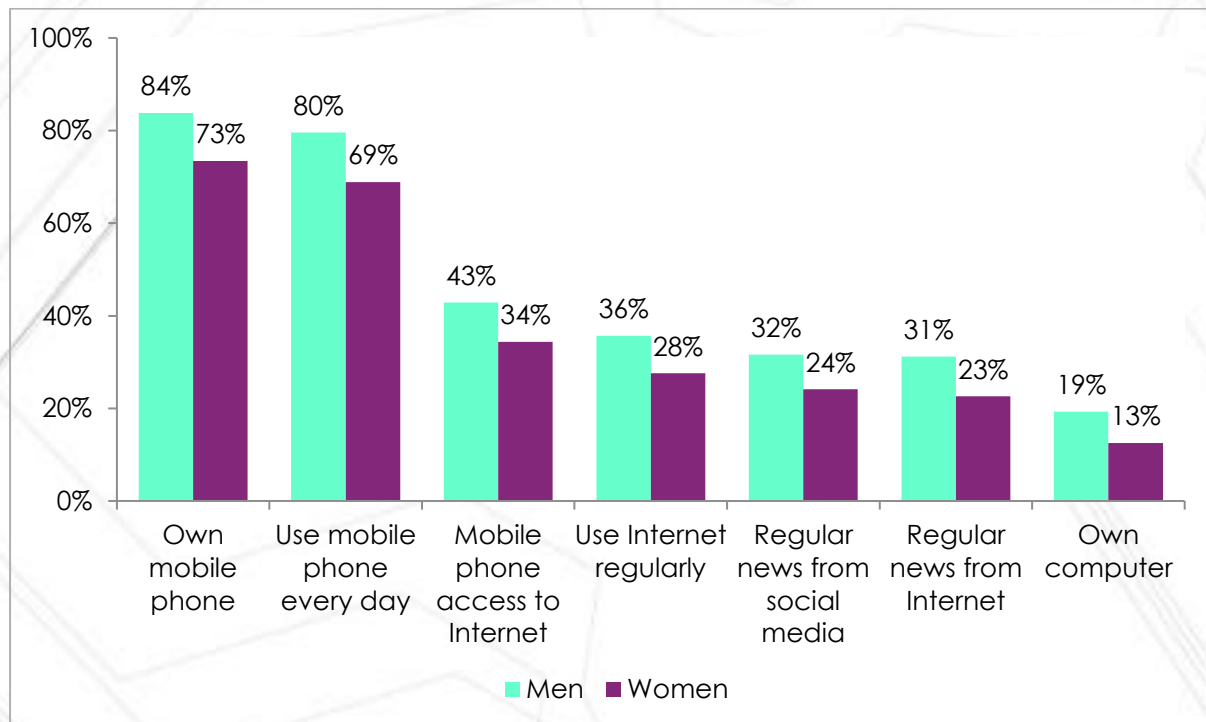
Afrobarometer heads a pan-African, nonpartisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across Africa. After six rounds of surveys in up to 38 countries between 1999 and 2015, Round 7 surveys included 45,823 interviews completed in 34 countries between September 2016 and September 2018. The special module on gender equality was carried out in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2 to +/-3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

Round 8 surveys are planned in at least 35 countries in 2019/2020. Interested readers may follow all our releases, including our Pan-Africa Profiles series of cross-country analyses, at #VoicesAfrica, and sign up for our distribution list at [www.afrobarometer.org](http://www.afrobarometer.org).

## Charts

**Figure 1: Evidence of a digital divide, by gender | 34 countries | 2016/2018**



**Respondents were asked:**

*Which of these things do you personally own: Mobile phone? Computer? (% "yes")*

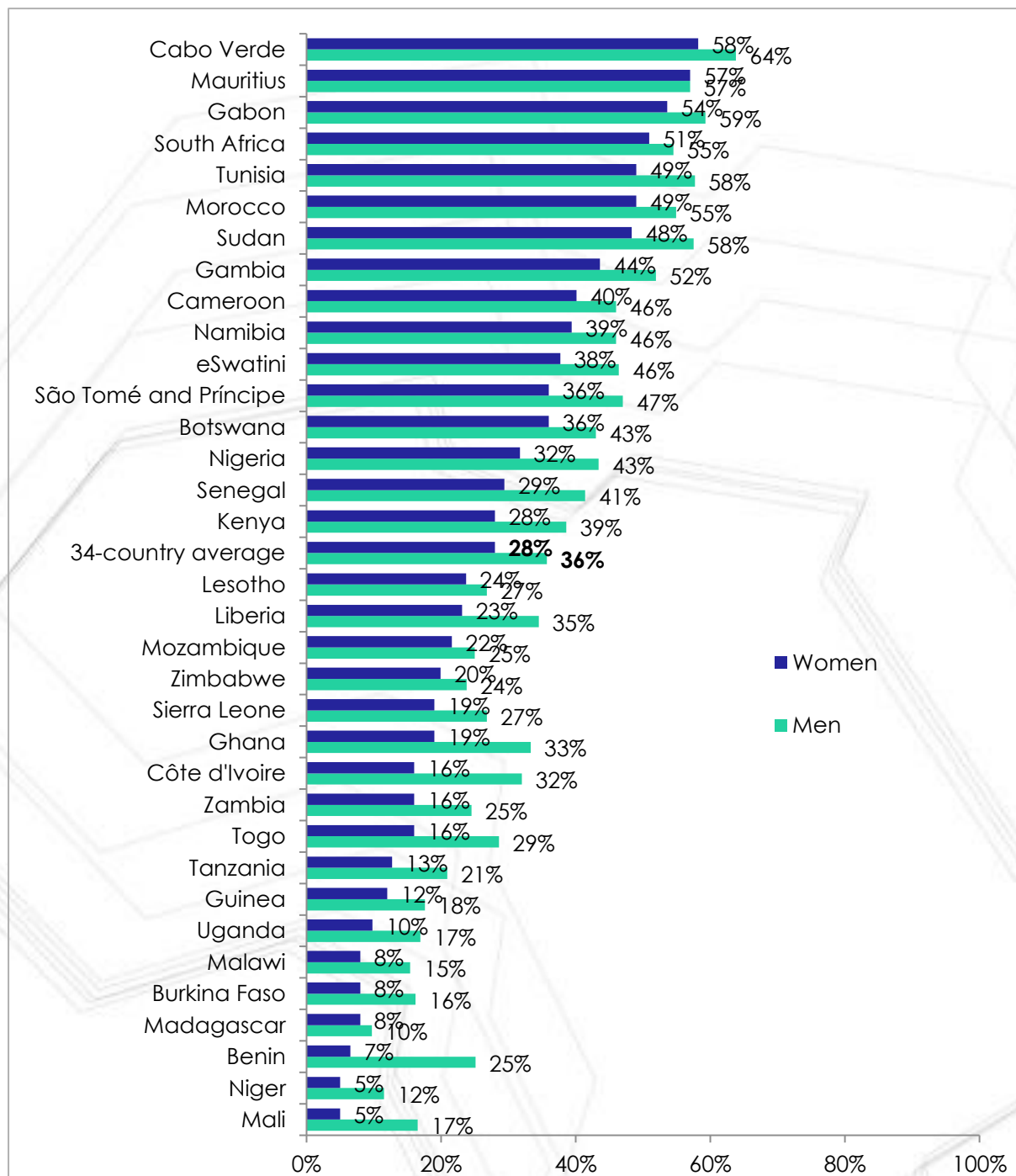
*Does your phone have access to the Internet? (% "yes")*

*How often do you use a mobile phone? (% "every day")*

*How often do you use the Internet? (% "a few times a week" or "every day")*

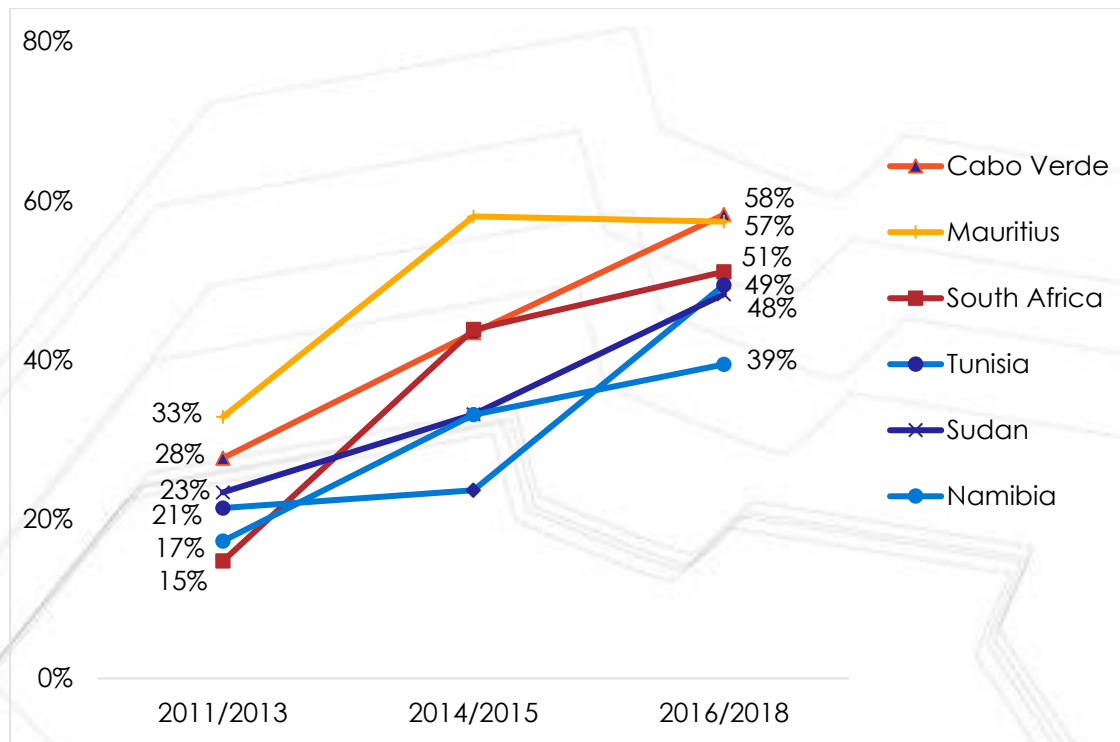
*How often do you get news from the following sources: Internet? Social media? (% "a few times a week" or "every day")*

**Figure 2: Regular Internet usage** | by gender | 34 countries | 2016/2018



**Respondents were asked:** How often do you use the Internet? (% who say "a few times a week" or "every day")

**Figure 3: Countries with fastest-growing regular Internet use by women | selected countries | 2011-2018**



**Respondents were asked:** How often do you use the Internet? (% who say "a few times a week" or "every day")

**Figure 4: Countries with widening gender gaps in Internet use (percentage points) | 31 countries | 2011-2018**

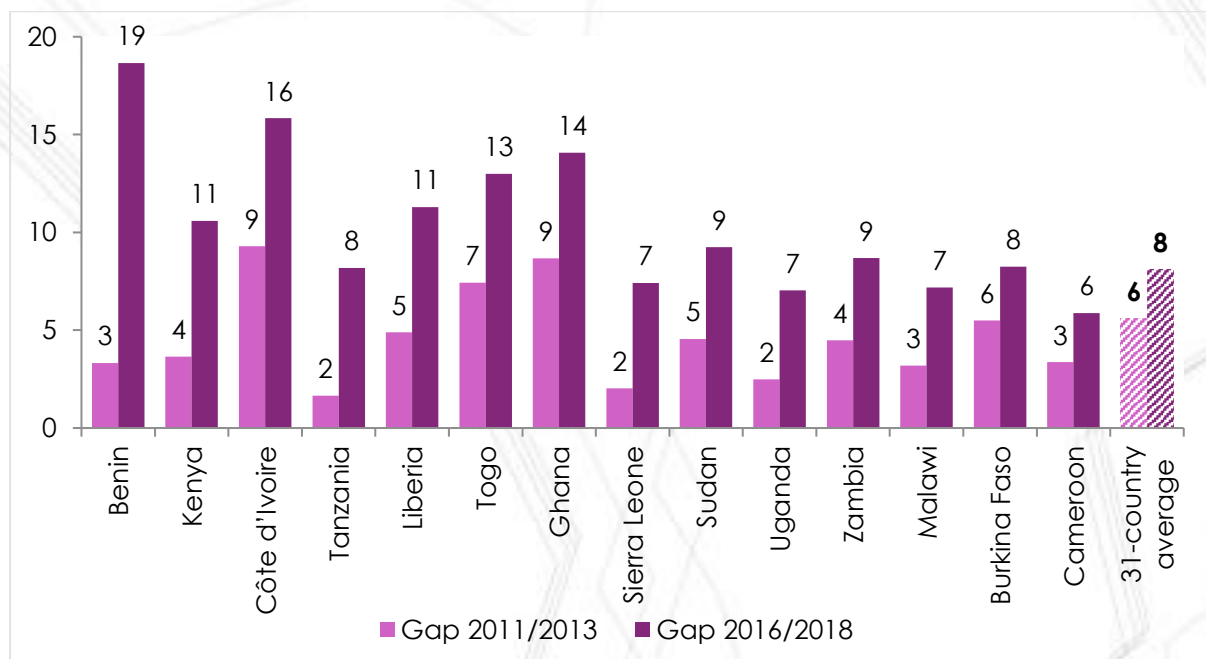


Figure shows differences in Round 5 (2011/2013) and Round 7 (2016/2018) surveys, in percentage points, in the proportions of men and women who said they use the Internet "a few times a week" or "every day."

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