

## REGIONAL USER-CENTRED APPROACHES TO ASSESS JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE

### AFROBAROMETER, WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT

There is a growing recognition that access to justice should be seen from the perspective of people and should emphasize their practical ability to activate their formal rights. In spite of this movement, courts and other agencies rarely use user-focused or citizen-centered indicators to evaluate their performance. User-centered justice indicators could be helpful to summarize and communicate relevant information on various aspects of the justice system, evaluate performance, draw attention to issues for reform, and establish benchmarks.

The session will discuss the advantages of such approaches and the characteristics of such measures, and will provide examples of outcome indicators derived. The session will also touch on an important indicator often forgotten, trust in the judiciary, and will discuss some of the reasons why citizens often do not trust the judiciary or why they sustain that the judiciary cannot stand its ground against other branches of government. The panellists will examine the experience of various regions, with a special emphasis on Africa, and Latin America and South-East Asia and will focus on the findings of recent surveys conducted by Afrobarometer, the World Justice Project, and judicial bodies in some countries. The data in Africa illustrate the importance of public opinion data in the analysis of judicial integrity.

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### AFROBAROMETER

Afrobarometer is non-partisan, pan-African research institution conducting public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, the economy and society in 30+ countries repeated on a regular cycle.

### WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT

The World Justice Project (WJP) is an independent, multidisciplinary organization working to advance the rule of law worldwide. WJP's mutually-reinforcing lines of work therefore employ a multidisciplinary approach through original research and data, an active and global network and practical, locally-led programs to advance the rule of law worldwide.



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### Main Issues:

This session will contribute to the overall objectives of the Global Judicial Integrity Network in two important ways. First, it will underscore the power of user-centred assessments for evaluating and monitoring judicial institutions, and therefore, for strengthening judicial integrity and accountability. In addition, it will showcase the power of citizens' perceptions about judicial independence to monitor their legitimacy. Up to now, this crucial link between the judiciary and citizens has too often been overlooked. Second, by comparing countries in Africa, and Latin America and South-East Asia, this session will also contribute to our understanding about the differences in the causes of mistrust within the Global South. Ultimately, such a comparison can facilitate the finding of new ways to fight corruption.

### Specific Questions and Discussion Points:

Starting from the assumption that public support is critical to the legitimacy of the courts, the following questions will guide the session:

- What are the advantages and challenges of implementing user-centred approaches to evaluate judicial performance and as a result, strengthen judicial integrity?
- What types of indicators are more conducive to strengthening judicial integrity?
- How has trust and judicial legitimacy changed over time in Africa, and Latin America and South-East Asia?

### Proposed Outcomes of the Session:

This session aims at building a bridge between social science and the legal profession across regions. Specifically, it will help communicate the benefits of this measurement approach to audiences that often do not rely on data.

It will also aim at building a network of researchers and practitioners across disciplines. Finally, it will form a link between practitioners in three world regions – Africa, Latin America and South-East Asia - and practitioners in the Global North to further strengthen existing collaborations and develop new ones.

The session will also draw attention to the important work of projects such as the World Justice Project, Afrobarometer, Latinobarometer, the Judiciaries in Africa project and the Judicial Integrity Network in ASEAN.

Continued collaboration between the organizations after the meeting and exchange of information, approaches, findings, learnings and advice is anticipated as well.

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