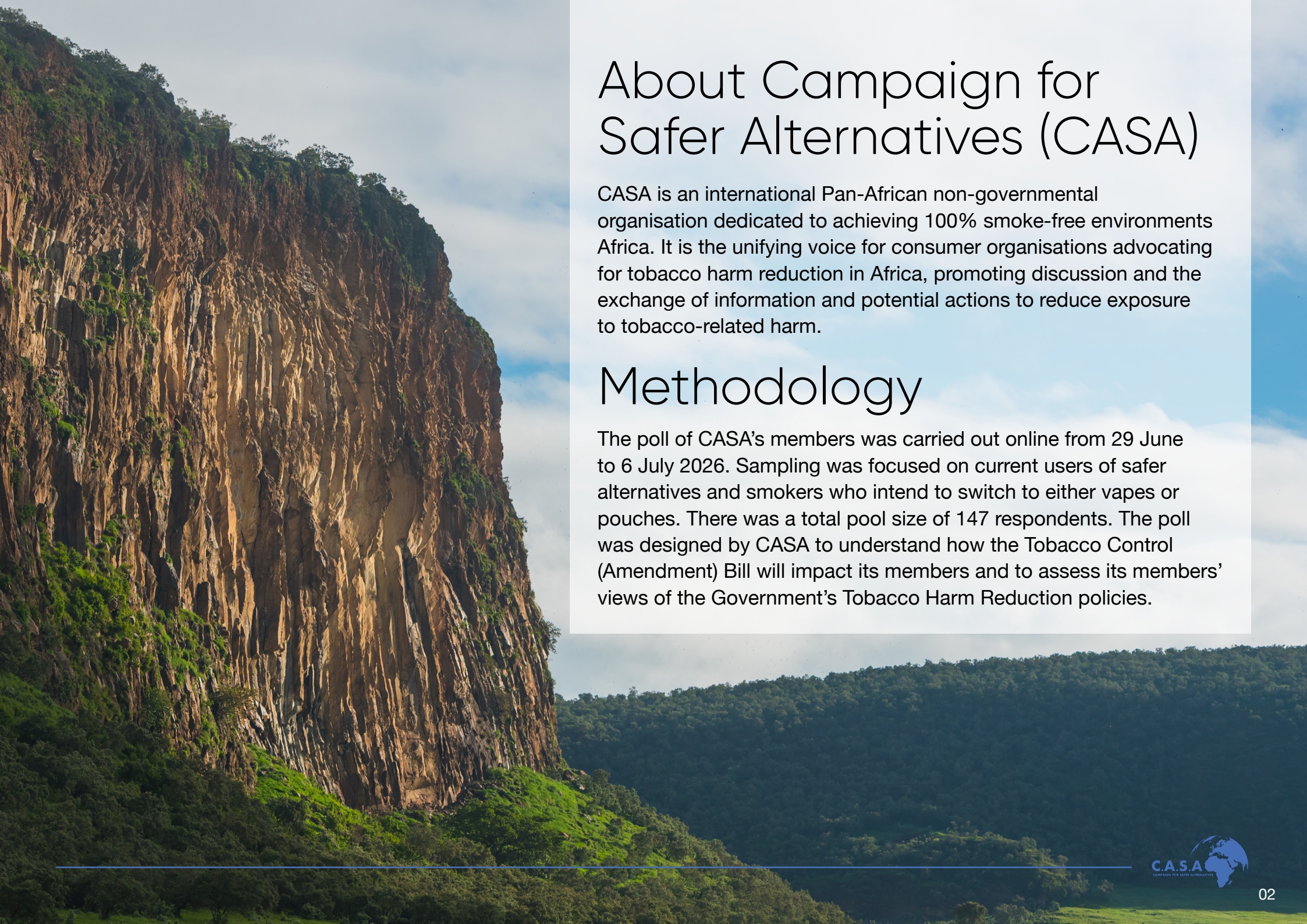


A return to smoking?

Survey shows nicotine flavours
ban would drive ex-smokers back
to cigarettes



August 2026 Poll, Kenya



About Campaign for Safer Alternatives (CASA)

CASA is an international Pan-African non-governmental organisation dedicated to achieving 100% smoke-free environments Africa. It is the unifying voice for consumer organisations advocating for tobacco harm reduction in Africa, promoting discussion and the exchange of information and potential actions to reduce exposure to tobacco-related harm.

Methodology

The poll of CASA's members was carried out online from 29 June to 6 July 2026. Sampling was focused on current users of safer alternatives and smokers who intend to switch to either vapes or pouches. There was a total pool size of 147 respondents. The poll was designed by CASA to understand how the Tobacco Control (Amendment) Bill will impact its members and to assess its members' views of the Government's Tobacco Harm Reduction policies.



Overview: 32% of Kenyans would return to smoking cigarettes if flavours were banned

Half of Kenyan consumers who use nicotine pouches and vapes say they rely on the products to help them quit smoking, while nearly one in three warn they would return to cigarettes if flavoured products were banned, according to CASA's latest member survey.

The revelations come as Parliament considers the Tobacco Control (Amendment) Bill, which would introduce sweeping new restrictions on smoke-free nicotine products, including a ban on most flavours.

When respondents were asked how they would respond to the proposal to ban flavoured vapes and nicotine pouches, 32% said they would return to smoking, almost one in five (18%) said they would smoke more and another 33% said they would seek flavoured products through alternative sources.

The results make it clear that banning flavours will do more damage to public health than good.



The survey also found strong support for greater public consultation before the legislation is finalised. 88% of respondents said the Government should hold consultations on the Tobacco Control Bill that are open to the public. A similar proportion said the Government should focus on helping smokers quit rather than banning flavoured alternatives to cigarettes.

The poll shows that users of smokeless nicotine products primarily do so for harm reduction purposes. 50% said they use nicotine pouches or vapes to help them give up smoking, while 47% said they use the products because they are a less harmful alternative to cigarettes.

Flavours were also shown to be key in supporting smokers to quit. More than half of respondents said flavours help them stay off cigarettes entirely, while 43% said flavours help them cut down the number of cigarettes they smoke. Just 14% said tobacco flavour was their preferred choice, with most opting for menthol, fruit or other non-tobacco flavours.

These results demonstrate that the proposed legislation will push many ex-smokers back to dangerous tobacco products. With one in two smokers dying from smoking-related diseases, our policymakers cannot in good conscience pursue prohibitionist-style regulation that will drive former smokers back to cigarettes.

Key findings

50%

Of Kenyans use **pouches** or **vapes** to quit smoking

The escape route must not be blocked

53%

Of Kenyans say **flavours** help them stay off cigarettes

A flavour ban will push vapers to smoking

A **flavour ban** would drive

32%

back to smoking

18%

Say they would **smoke more**

88%

Of Kenyans say **Government must listen:**

- ✓ Open consultation
- ✓ Better legislation

Source: CASA consumer survey, June 2026

The evidence on flavours

CASA supports decisive action to reduce smoking and its associated harms in Kenya. However, the Tobacco Control (Amendment) Bill - and particularly proposals to ban flavours in smokeless nicotine products risk pushing ex-smokers back to cigarettes. Evidence from multiple jurisdictions shows that flavour bans reduce the effectiveness of safer alternatives, lower quit rates and can sustain cigarette use.

Flavours contribute significantly to the effectiveness of tobacco-free nicotine products in supporting smokers to quit. Extensive international evidence shows that many adults adopt these products using non-tobacco flavours and go on to reduce or stop smoking.

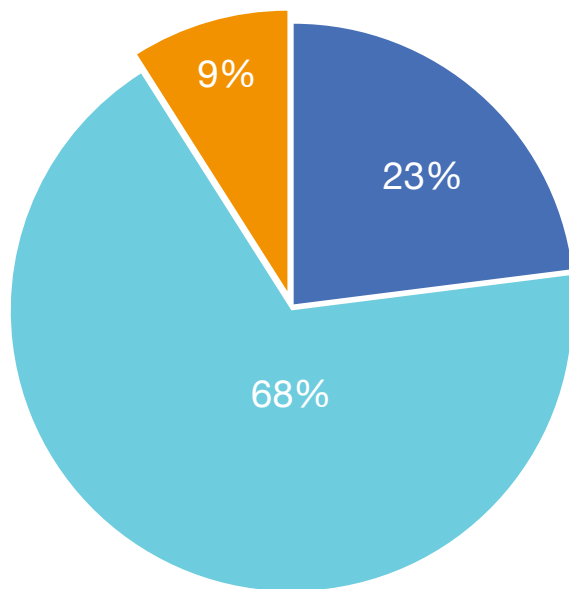
A study of more than 17,000 Americans, over a five-year period, showed that adults who used flavoured vaping products were 2.3 times more likely to quit using cigarettes altogether than vapers who consumed tobacco-flavoured products. The authors of this study, health researchers at Yale University, concluded that: “Although proponents of flavour bans have claimed that tobacco-flavoured e-cigarettes are adequate to help individuals who smoke, these results call for evidence to support that claim before it is acted on.”

Countries that have sought to ban flavours have also faced serious unintended consequences. For example, Denmark banned most vape flavours in 2022. Since then, youth vaping has risen while adults source banned flavours from informal markets.

This survey is an insight into how Kenyan users of smokeless nicotine products are responding to the proposed legislation and whether we can expect the unintended consequences experienced in other countries to be replicated at home.

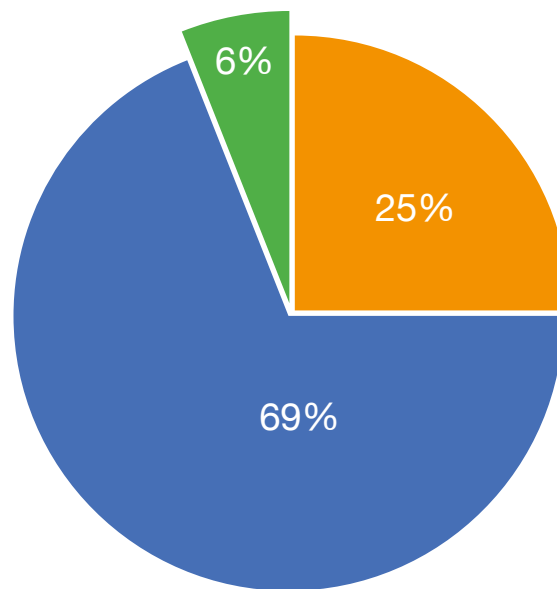


Q1: Do you smoke?



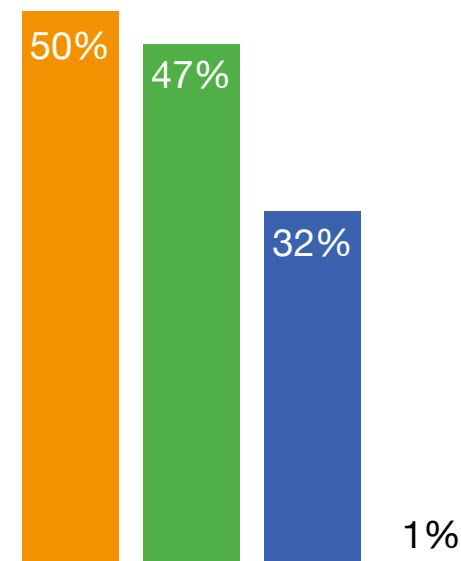
- No - I am an ex-smoker
- Yes
- No - I have never smoked

Q2: Which products have you used?



- I am a smoker but I'm considering using a vape or pouch
- Vapes
- Nicotine pouches

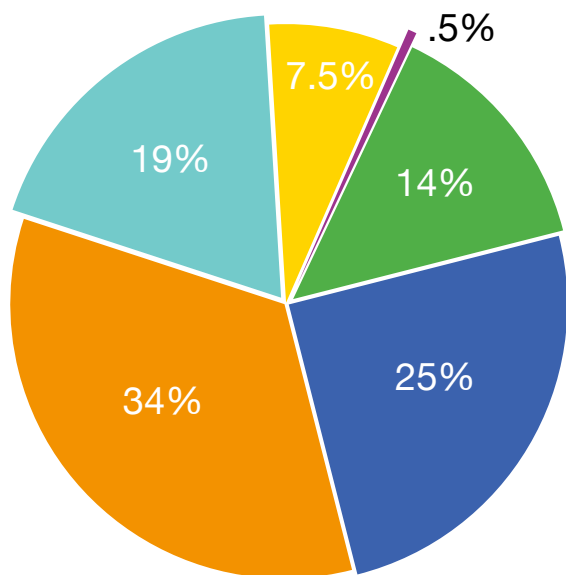
Q3: Why do you use vapes or pouches? (select all that apply)



- To help me give up smoking
- To reduce the amount I smoke
- It's a less harmful alternative to smoking
- Other

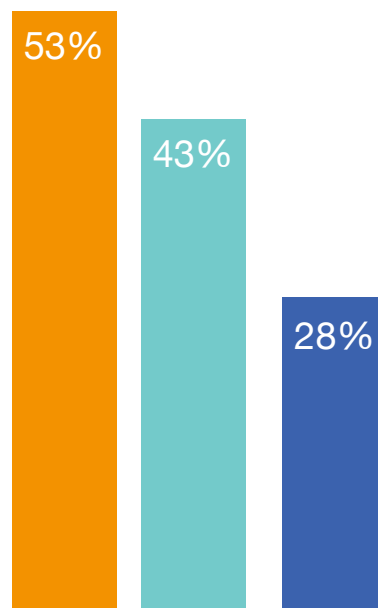


Q4: What flavoured vapes or nicotine pouches do you use most frequently?



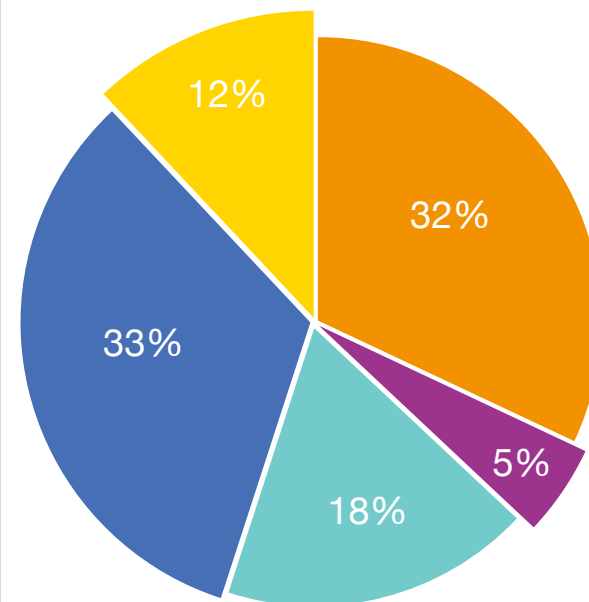
- Tobacco
- Fruit
- Menthol (including mint, herbal, etc.)
- Sweet (including dessert, etc.)
- Beverage (i.e., cola, etc.)
- Other

Q5: Why do you use flavours? (select all that apply)



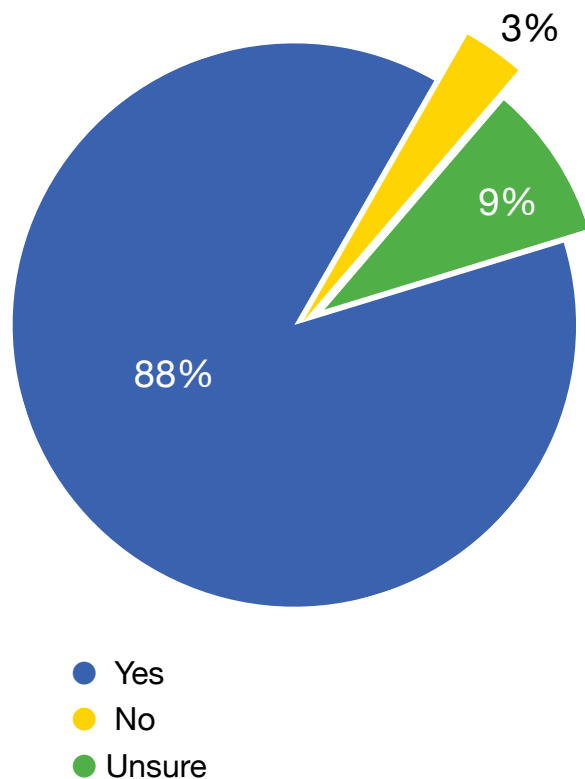
- I don't like the taste of tobacco
- Flavours help me cut down how much I smoke
- Flavours help me stay off cigarettes entirely

Q6: What would you do if there was a ban on flavours?

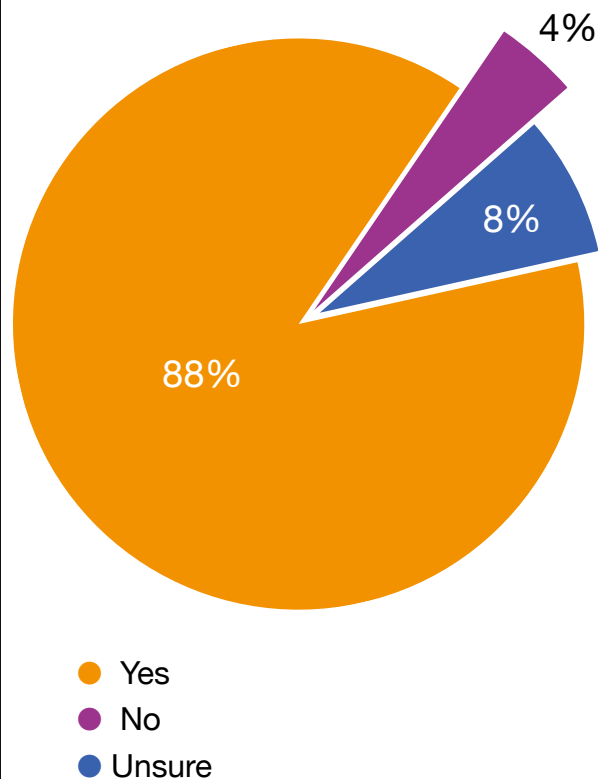


- I will go back to smoking
- I will stop vaping entirely
- I will smoke more
- I will source flavours by alternative means
- I will use tobacco flavour

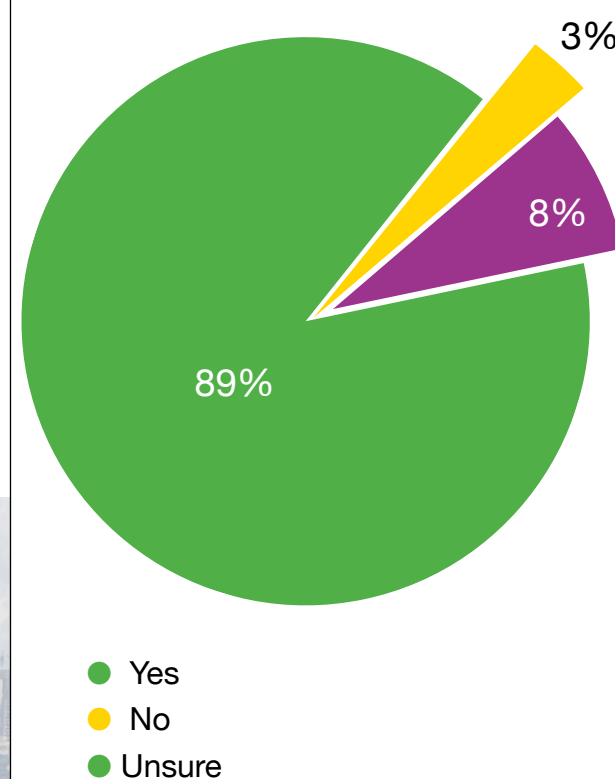
Q7: Do you think the Government should host consultations on the Tobacco Control Bill that are open to the public?



Q8: Do you think the Government is ignoring the concerns of smokers and nicotine product users?



Q9: Should the Government focus on helping smokers to quit instead of banning flavoured nicotine pouches?



Conclusion

By CASA Chairman, Joseph Magero



The poll findings are stark but not surprising. It is clear that the proposed legislation and particularly the measure to ban flavoured smokeless products will make it harder for smokers to quit traditional cigarettes.

Thousands of Kenyan smokers are using safer nicotine products because they want to leave cigarettes behind. Half of respondents say these products are helping them quit smoking, while many others are using them to smoke less. Parliament should build on that progress, not put it at risk.

The poll shows that flavours are an important part of many smokers' quitting journey. When half of respondents say that flavours help them stay off cigarettes entirely, policymakers should pay attention. These products are competing with cigarettes. Making them less appealing could make cigarettes more appealing again.

One in three respondents say they would return to smoking if flavours disappeared, while others say they would smoke more or turn to alternative sources.

That is a warning Parliament cannot afford to ignore. If our goal is to reduce smoking and save lives, legislation should help smokers move away from cigarettes, not make that journey more difficult."

It's clear that vapers and nicotine pouch users don't feel heard by elected officials and that enough isn't being done to support smokers to quit. Close to nine out of ten respondents want the Government to listen before changing the law. These are the people living with the consequences of smoking and trying to quit. Their voices deserve to be part of this debate.

CASA supports evidence-based regulation of smokeless products. We should be learning from countries such as Sweden and New Zealand which are on the verge of becoming officially smoke-free through the adoption of progressive Tobacco Harm Reduction policies. Instead of prioritising ideology, CASA asks that lawmakers listen to the voices of smokers who are desperate to quit their deadly habit and support them in their journey to becoming smoke-free.

