



Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
Cape Town, South Africa
24 November 2015

News release

Government performance has declined even in positive areas

For two decades, South Africa has been grappling with the agonizing triple challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation address in February 2015 called upon the nation to be united in advancing economic freedom. Most South Africans would acknowledge that despite gains in political freedom, much remains to be done to overcome poverty and bring economic independence to the Rainbow Nation.

A new Afrobarometer survey shows that unemployment remains the most important problem for government to address, cited as one of their three top priorities by nearly three-quarters of the survey respondents. In a list of citizen priorities that is largely unchanged from Afrobarometer's previous survey in 2011, unemployment is followed by housing, crime, education, poverty, and corruption.

Key findings

- Unemployment remains by far the most important problem for South Africans, followed by housing, crime, education, poverty, and corruption. Education moved up in the priority list, but overall the problems that government should address have not changed substantially since 2011.
- Public evaluations of government performance on key issues – especially economic issues – are overwhelmingly negative. More than seven in 10 South Africans say the government is performing “fairly badly” or “very badly” in fighting corruption in government (80%), narrowing income gaps (78%), reducing crime (77%), creating jobs (77%), keeping prices down (76%), and managing immigration (72%).
- South Africans give the government high marks for its performance in ensuring welfare payments to eligible recipients, and a majority of respondents also approve of the government's performance in uniting the country, ensuring food security, addressing educational needs, maintaining roads and bridges, improving basic health care, and providing water and sanitation.

Afrobarometer

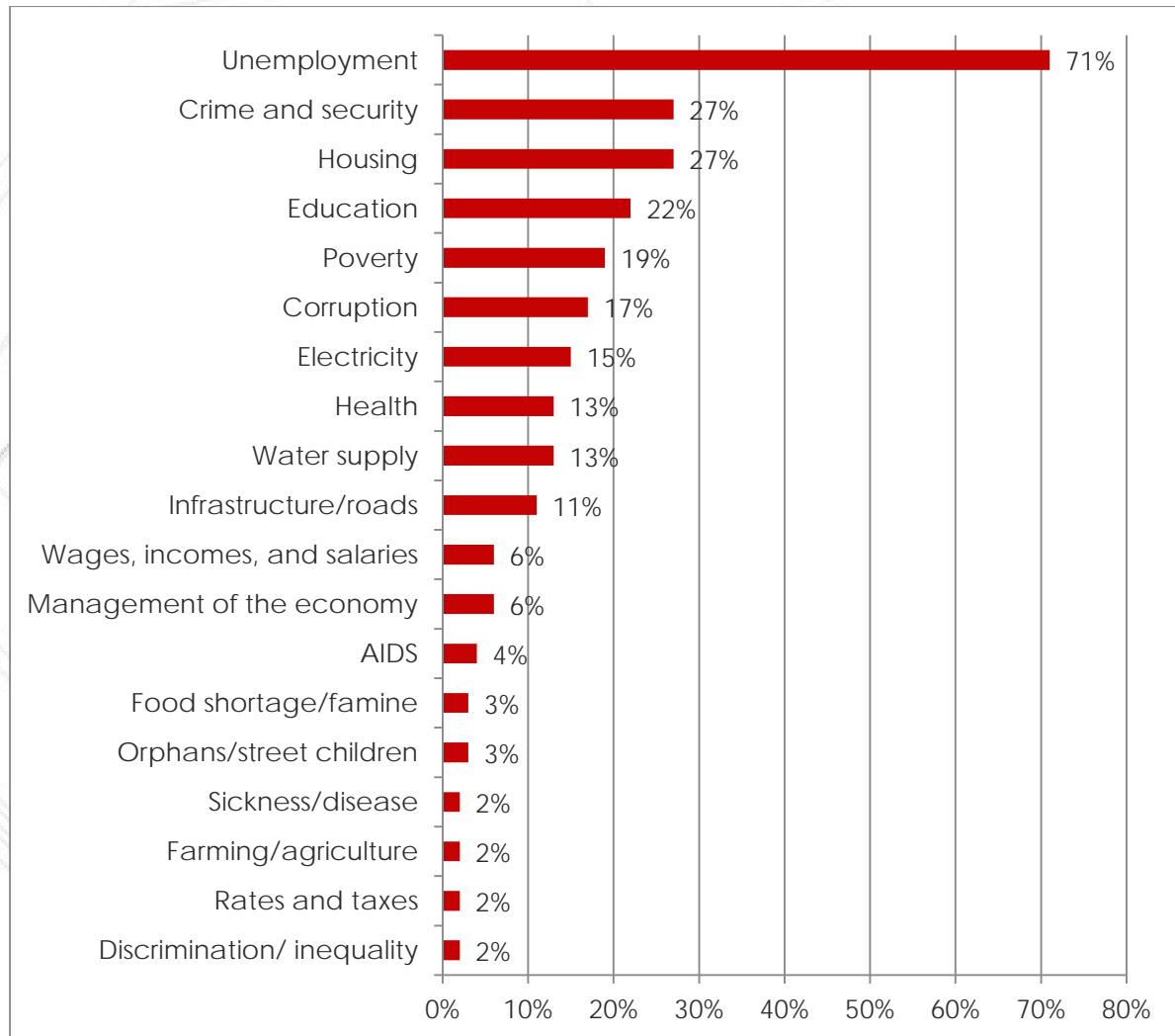
Afrobarometer is an African-led, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across more than 30 countries in Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and Round 6 surveys are currently under way (2014-2015). Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of between 1,200 and 2,400 respondents.

The Afrobarometer team in South Africa, led by Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and Plus 94 Research interviewed 2,400 adult South Africans in August and September 2015. A sample of this size yields results with a margin of error of +/-2% at a 95% confidence level.

Previous surveys have been conducted in South Africa in 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, and 2011.

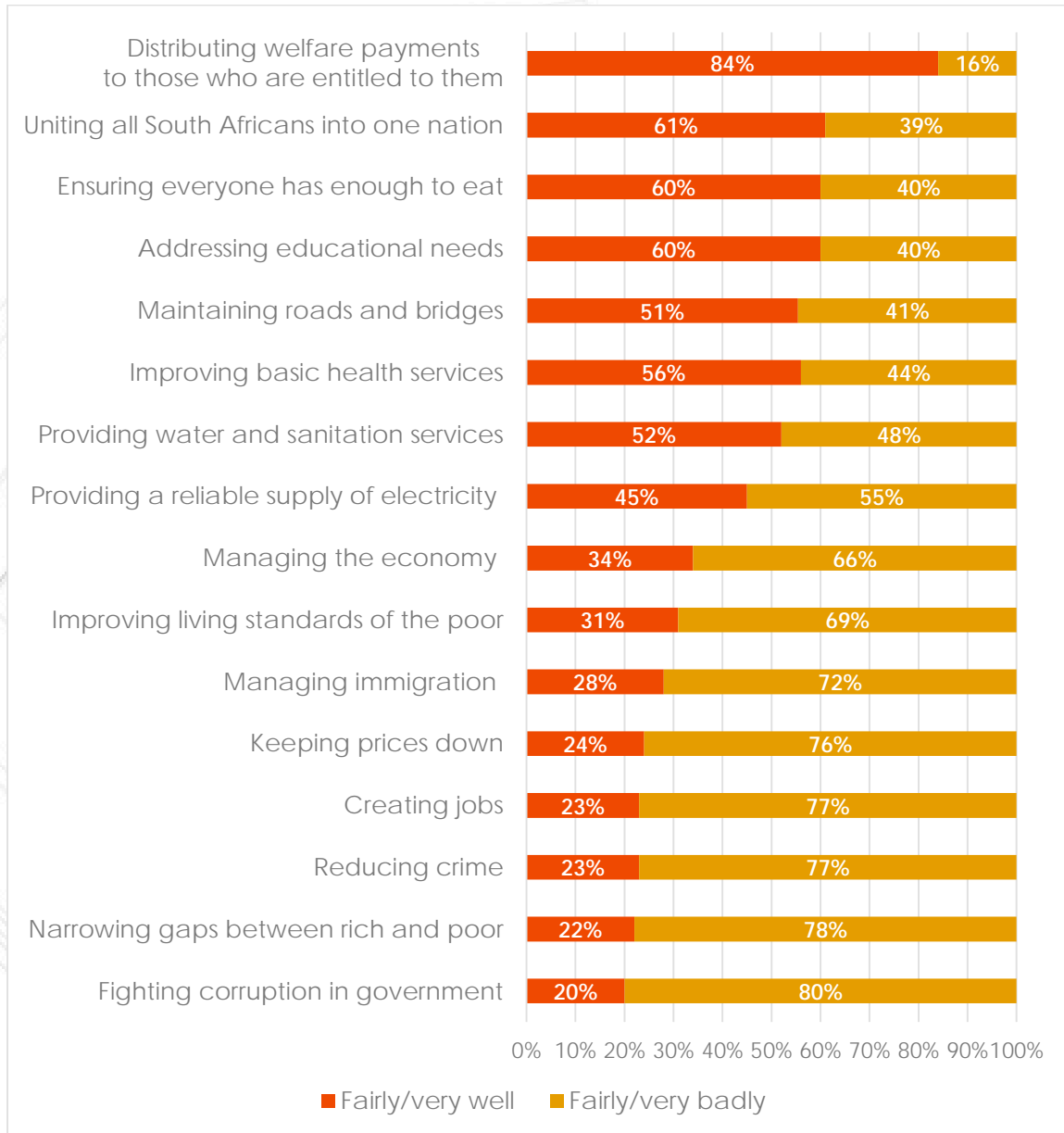
Charts

Figure 1: Citizens' top-priority concerns | South Africa | 2015



Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that the government should address? (Figure aggregates up to three responses per interviewee.)

Figure 2: Assessment of government performance | South Africa | 2015



Respondents were asked: How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say? ("Don't know" responses, which made up 3% or less of all responses, are excluded from this analysis.)

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