

Institute for Justice and Reconciliation
Cape Town, South Africa
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News release

South Africans disapprove of government's performance on unemployment, housing and crime

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.

Yet on most of these high-priority issues, large majorities of South Africans say their government has performed "fairly badly" or "very badly." Furthermore, public disapproval of government performance on crime reduction, management of the economy, and the fight against corruption all increased by more than 10 percentage points since 2011.

However, notable exceptions to this trend are the majority approval of government performance in the areas of welfare distribution, uniting the country, food security and meeting educational needs.

For more information, please see **Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 64** (available at www.afrobarometer.org).

Key findings

- Unemployment remains by far the most important problem for South Africans (71%), followed by housing (27%), crime (27%), education (22%), poverty (19%), and corruption (17%). Education moved up in the priority list, but overall the problems that government should address have not changed substantially since 2011.¹
- 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%).
- In contrast, South Africans give the government high marks for its performance in social service delivery issues-welfare distribution, health, food security, education, maintenance of roads and bridges and provision of water and sanitation.

- While most ratings are similar to 2011 assessments, public disapproval of government performance on crime reduction, management of the economy, and the fight against corruption increased by more than 10 percentage points from the previous survey.

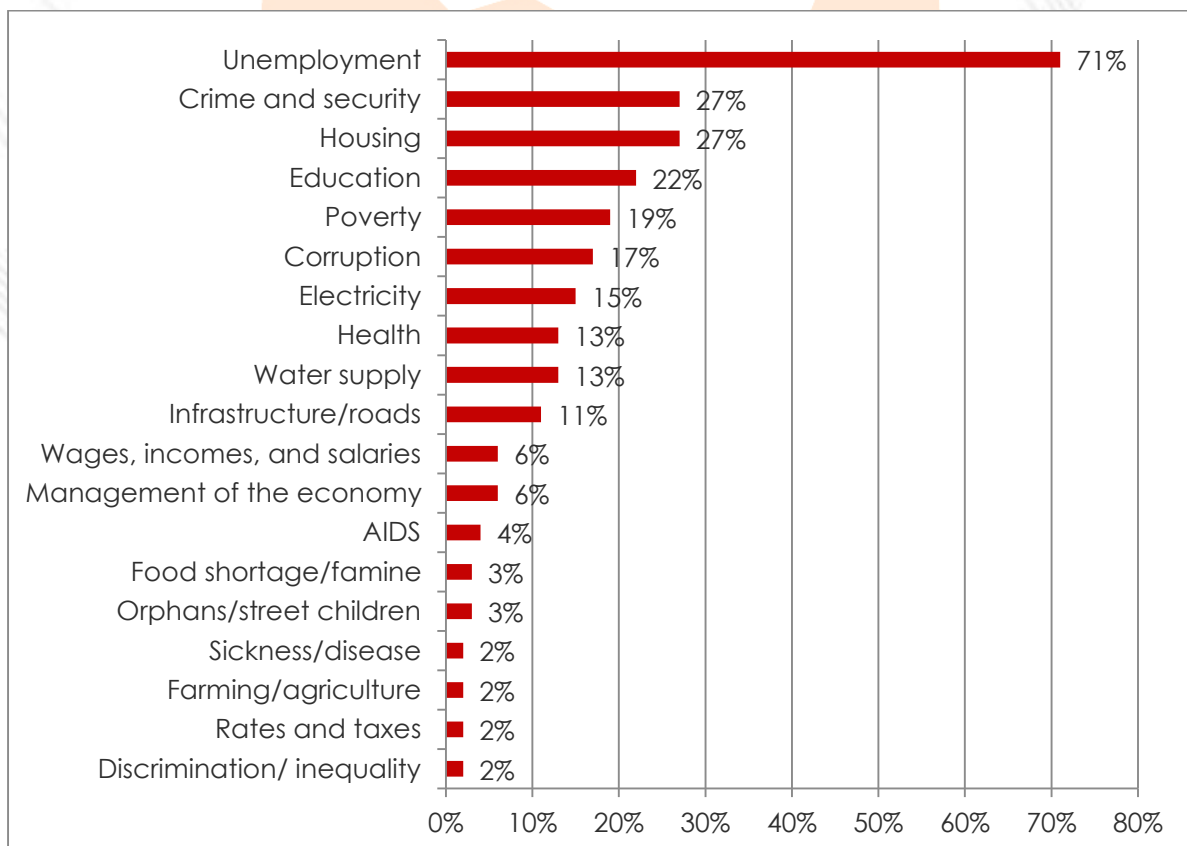
Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, 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 the team at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and Plus 94 Research interviewed 2,400 adult South African between 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, 2005, 2008 and 2011.

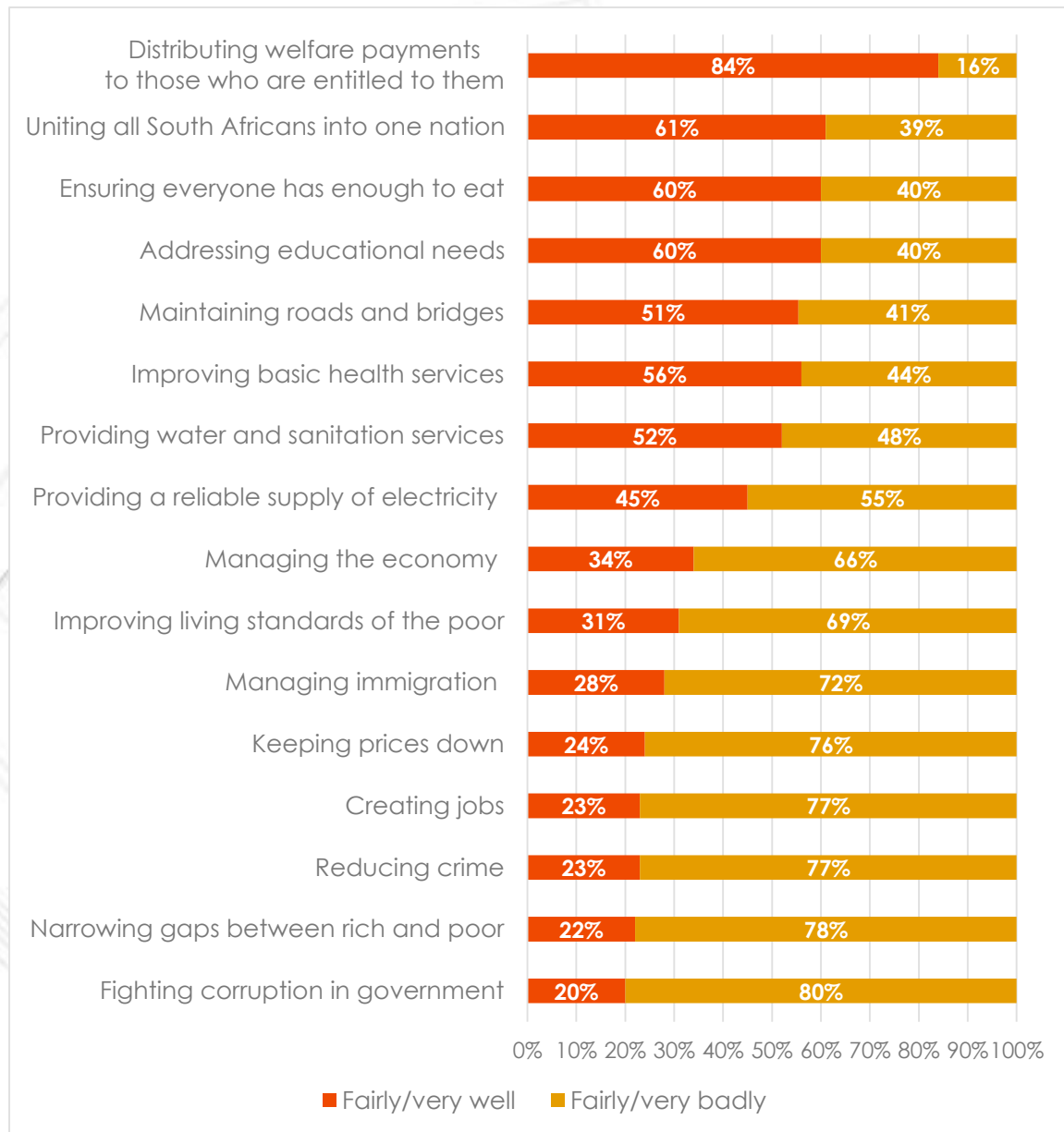
Charts

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



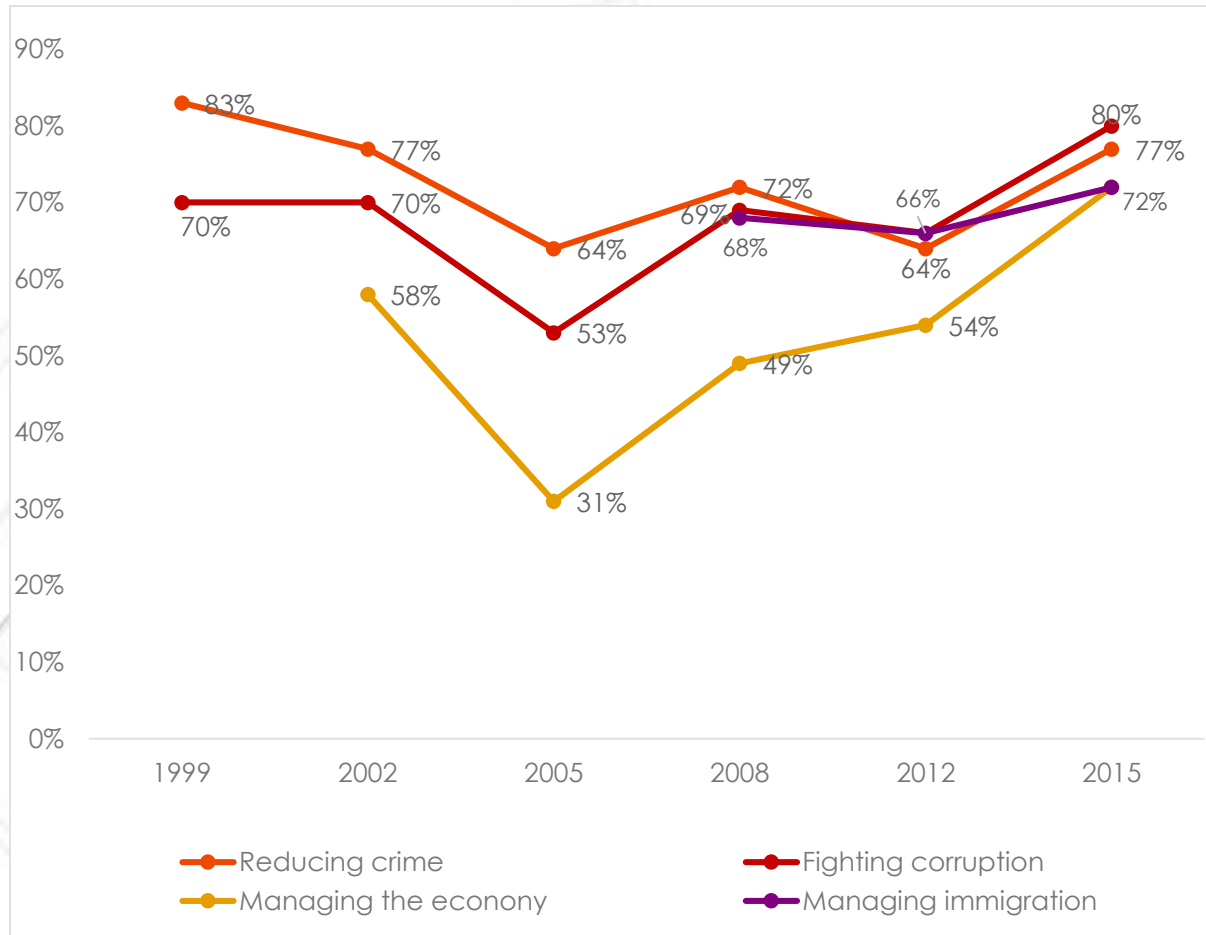
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that the government should address? (Figure aggregates up to three responses per interviewee.)

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.)

Figure 3: Increases in negative ratings | South Africa | 1999-2015



(% who say "fairly badly" or "very badly")

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