

Afrobarometer
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News release

Taking stock: Survey findings track citizens' priorities, Sustainable Development Goals, and government performance in Africa

Good jobs and economic growth top the priorities of African citizens, but government performance on these issues lags, according to new Afrobarometer findings from across the continent.

In the first of its Pan-Africa Profiles based on recent public-opinion surveys in 34 countries, Afrobarometer reports that "decent work and economic growth" is Africans' highest priority among the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – but is also an area where governments are performing particularly poorly. Other highly prioritized SDGs include those focusing on hunger, health, and "peace, justice and strong institutions."



Pan-Africa Profiles

The new report, available at www.afrobarometer.org, links the "most important problems" identified by more than 45,800 Africans, as well as their assessments of their governments' performance on these issues, to the goals of the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. The analysis is designed to help governments and advocates design more effective interventions through a better understanding of how their intended beneficiaries – ordinary citizens – perceive and prioritize these goals.

Key findings

- Across 34 surveyed countries, unemployment tops the most important problems that Africans want their governments to address, followed by health, infrastructure/roads, water/sanitation, education, management of the economy, and poverty (Figure 1).
- Based on mapping the "most important problems" identified by Afrobarometer respondents onto the SDGs, SDG8, "decent work and economic growth," is the highest-priority SDG (57%), by a wide margin (Figure 2).
- Each of seven other SDGs captures the attention of between 20% and 31% of respondents, including SDG2 ("zero hunger") (31%), SDG3 ("good health and well-being") (27%), SDG16 ("peace, justice and strong institutions") (26%), SDG9 ("industry, innovation and infrastructure") (24%), SDG6 ("clean water and sanitation") (24%), SDG1 ("no poverty") (22%), and SDG4 ("quality education") (21%),
- The remaining SDGs draw only very modest levels of attention from respondents as "most important" priorities. However, other Afrobarometer data reveal that African publics typically also value these goals (e.g. gender equality, climate change), even if they are not the first things on their minds in the struggle for daily survival.
- Poverty and low socioeconomic development, both at the individual level and the country level, strongly shape priorities. Jobs/economic growth and good governance are higher priorities for wealthier individuals and for more economically developed countries. Among poorer people and countries, jobs and growth are still important,

but people place higher priority on fighting hunger and having adequate supplies of clean water and energy.

- The highest-priority sectors often record the worst government performance (e.g. jobs and economic management) (Figure 3).

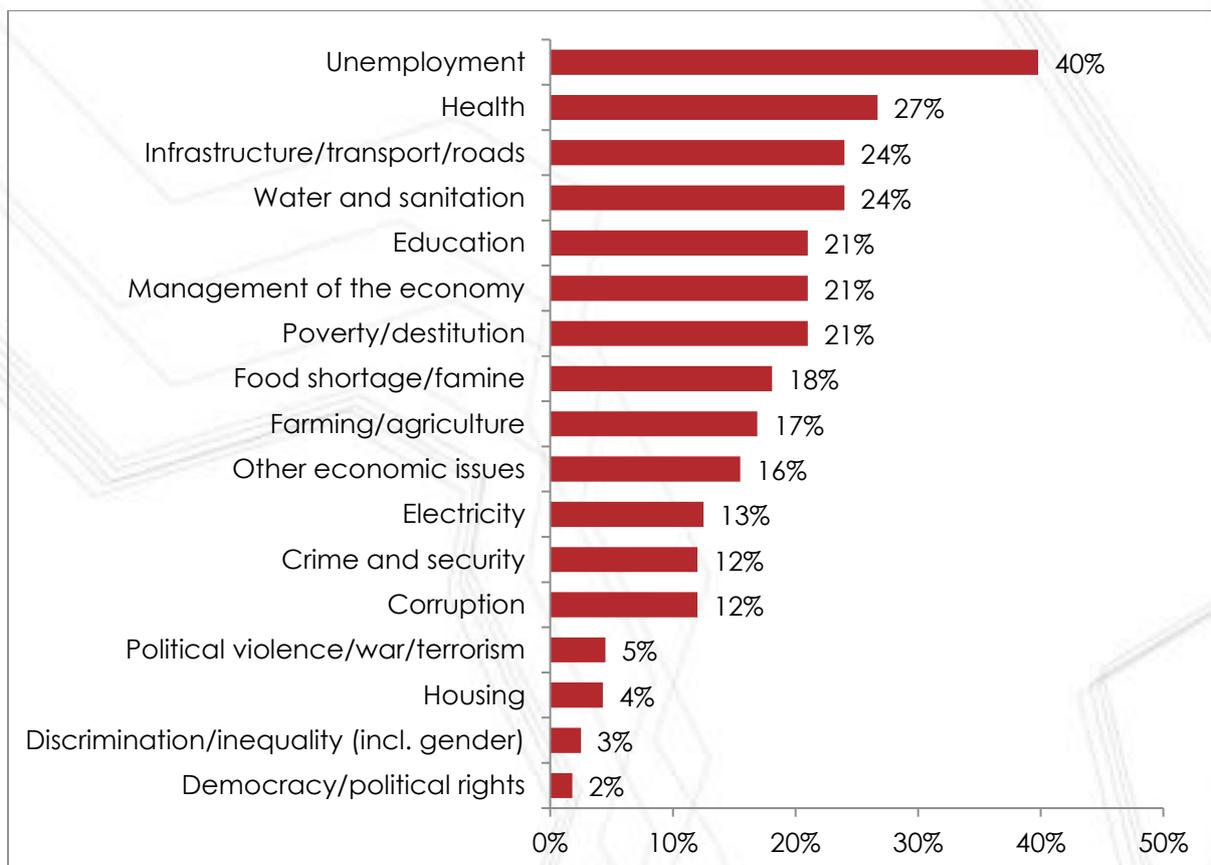
Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues in African countries. Six rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2015, and Round 7 survey findings in 34 countries are being released in 2018/2019. Interested readers may follow our releases, including our Pan-Africa Profiles series of Round 7 cross-country analyses, at #VoicesAfrica and sign up for our distribution list at www.afrobarometer.org.

Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples. Sample sizes of 1,200 or 2,400 yield country-level results with a margin of sampling error of +/-3 or 2 percentage points, respectively, at a 95% confidence level.

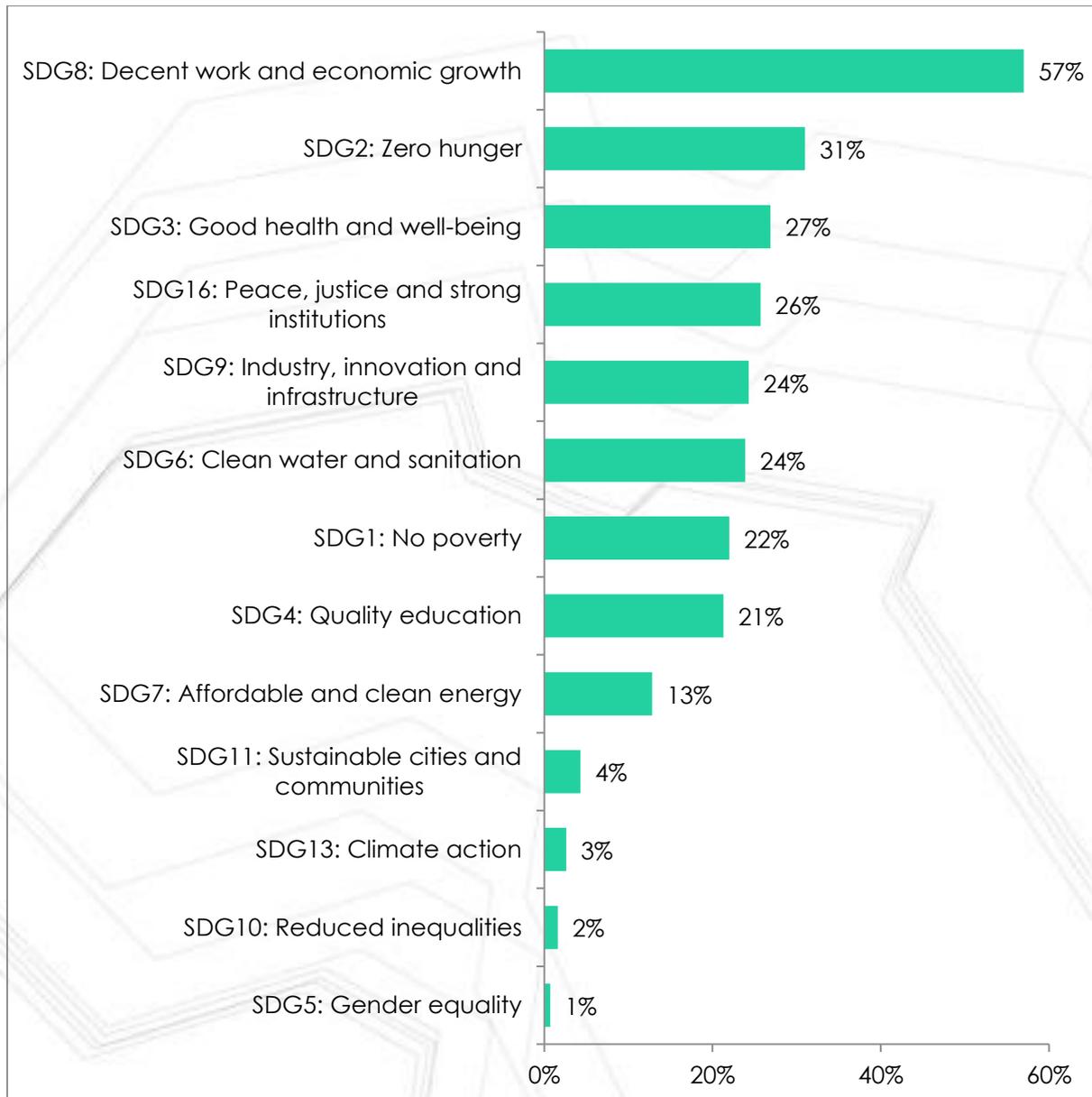
Charts

Figure 1: Most important problems | 34 countries | 2016/2018



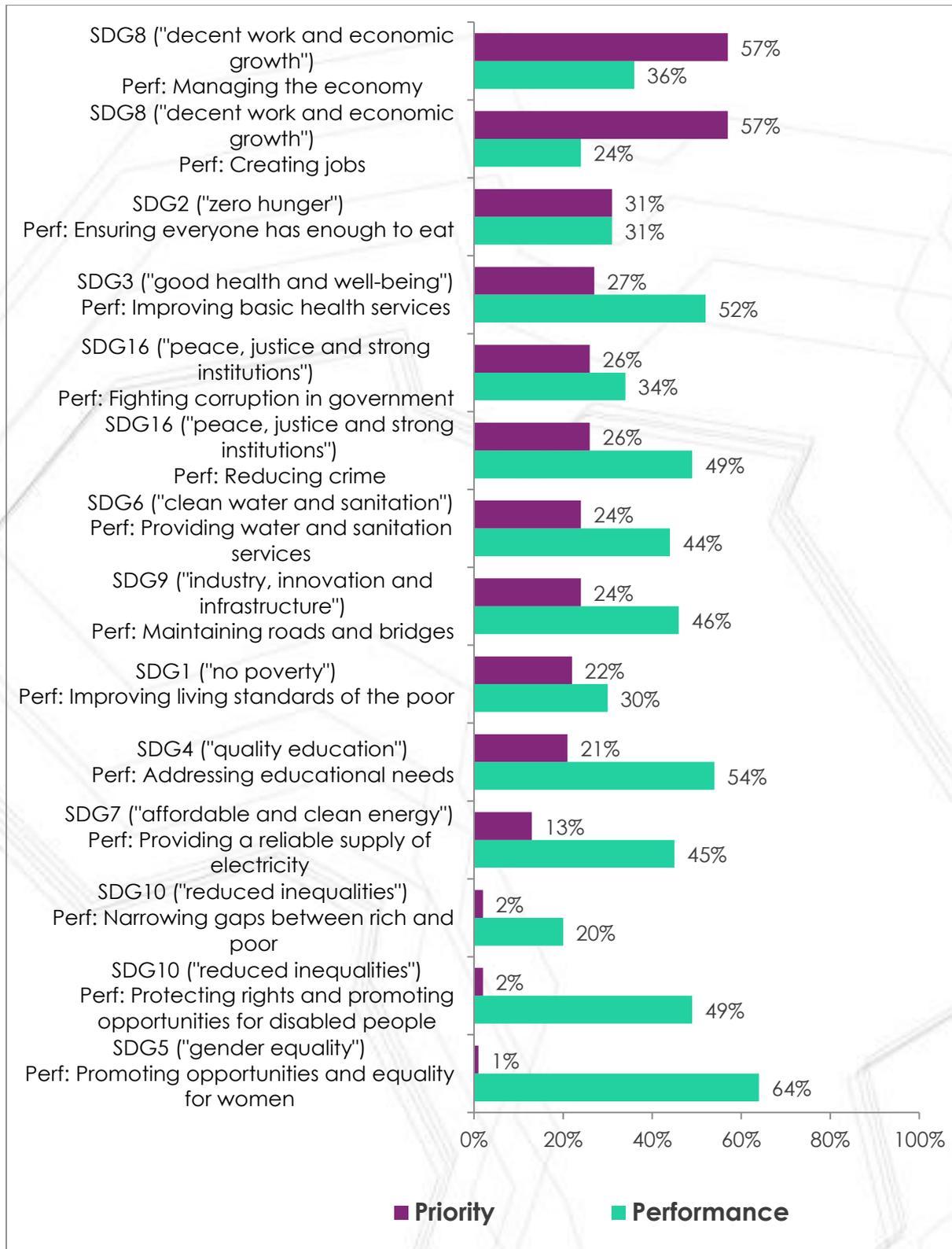
Respondents were asked: In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (**Note:** Respondents could give up to three responses. Figures show % of respondents who cite each problem as among their top three.)

Figure 2: Citizen prioritization of the SDGs | 34 countries | 2016/2018



(Figure shows % of responses to the question "In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address?" mapped onto the SDGs.)

Figure 3: SDG priority vs. government performance | 34 countries | 2016/2018



(Figure shows % of responses to Afrobarometer questions about most important problems ("Priority") and government performance ("Performance," "fairly well" or "very well"), mapped onto the SDGs.)

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