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News release

Southern Africa's most pressing issues demand immediate attention: Unresolved unemployment, health, and infrastructure could fuel insecurity

- 40% of citizens in 34 African countries list unemployment as the most pressing concern
- One-quarter (24%) said that the main reason people in Mozambique join extremist groups is for personal enrichment.

Governments and development partners must pay attention to and resolve Southern Africa's most important problems including employment, health, and infrastructure, as they can fuel insecurity in the region.

The call was made at a workshop on *Addressing Transnational Organised Crime in Africa: Challenges and Opportunities*, convened by Good Governance Africa (GGA) in partnership with the Attorney Generals Alliance (AGA).

The two-day workshop in Johannesburg brought together stakeholders from government, civil society, and academia, including two African Union (AU) institutions – the African Governance Architecture (AGA) secretariat and the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) – to discuss the latest research, trends, and policy developments in countering transnational organised crime in the region.

"It is important to pay attention to what the data says about citizens' problems because these issues, if not resolved, often contribute to the factors that increase crime and insecurity within countries," said Nyasha Mpani, Project Officer of the Afrobarometer-led and EU-funded Data for Governance Alliance.

Mpani unpacked Afrobarometer's findings in survey rounds 7 and 8 carried out in 2016-2018, and in 2019-2021.

On average, across 34 African countries surveyed in 2016-2018, unemployment tops the list of most important problems that citizens want their government to resolve (cited by 40%), followed by health (27%), roads and infrastructure (24%). One in five Africans (18%) cite crime and security as the most important problems that governments urgently need to address.

Significant proportions of Southern Africans surveyed in 2019/2021 said they had feared violence in their neighbourhood or village during the previous two years. This insecurity reaches as high as 46% in Zambia.

One-third (32%) of Mozambicans reported that over the two years preceding the survey, they feared armed attacks by political or religious extremists. One-quarter (24%) said that the main reason people in their country join extremist groups is for personal enrichment. This was



followed by the perception that people are forced to join (22%), while others believe that people are motivated by a desire to escape poverty (13%).

At the event, the importance of maintaining incorruptibility for both individuals and teams was highlighted, as well as predictions that drug trafficking will likely worsen by 2050. Additionally, the need to further develop and improve technologies to tackle cyber-crime was discussed, alongside the banking and financial risks and the increasing/trending crimes to be aware of.

Mpani said the launch of the recently published edition of GGA's Africa in Fact Journal, with contributions from over twenty expert researchers and practitioners from across the continent on the same topic, further enriched the discussions.

About Data for Governance Alliance

The Data for Governance Alliance is a four-year project that promotes data-based advocacy and engagement between pan-African civil society organisations (CSOs) and African Union organs. The project is led by Afrobarometer with partners, including CDD Ghana, the Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and Laws.Africa. The project is funded by the European Union.

About Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan survey research network that provides reliable data on African experiences and evaluations of democracy, governance, and quality of life. Eight survey rounds in up to 39 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2022) are currently underway. Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples of 1,200-2,400.

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