

Accra, Ghana  
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## News release

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### **Africans' bleak views of economic conditions match their escalating experience of poverty, Afrobarometer surveys find**

Africans' concerns about economic management have surged in recent years, placing the issue second only to unemployment among the top priorities that citizens want their government to address, the latest Afrobarometer [Pan-Africa Profile](#) shows.

Based on surveys in 39 African countries between late 2021 and mid-2023, the analysis shows that citizens offer increasingly gloomy appraisals of their country's economic condition and their personal living conditions, and fewer than half expect things to improve in the near future.

In growing numbers, Africans report going without basic necessities such as a cash income, medical care, food, and water. In most surveyed countries, majorities are experiencing moderate or high lived poverty, and citizens' ratings on key indicators of their government's economic performance are bleak and getting worse.

#### **Key findings**

- On average across 39 countries surveyed between late 2021 and mid-2023, unemployment and management of the economy top the list of the most important problems that Africans want their government to address, along with health (Figure 1).
  - Across 31 countries surveyed consistently since 2014/2015, the proportion of citizens citing management of the economy among their top priorities has more than doubled.
- About two-thirds (65%) of citizens assess their country's economic condition as "fairly bad" or "very bad" (Figure 2). More than half (52%) also hold gloomy views of their personal living conditions.
- On average across 31 countries surveyed consistently since 2014/2015, negative reviews of the country's economic condition have risen by 15 percentage points, and those of personal living conditions by 7 points (Figure 3).
- Citizens are divided as to whether economic conditions will get better (40%) or worse (35%) over the next 12 months.
- Eight in 10 respondents (81%) say they or a family member went without a cash income at least once during the previous year, including 43% who did so "many times" or "always" (Figure 4).
  - Two-thirds (65%) report having gone without medical care at least once, and about six in 10 suffered shortages of food (59%) and water (56%).
- Six in 10 Africans (61%) experienced moderate or high lived poverty during the past year.

- Moderate-to-high lived poverty has been increasing and affected majorities in all but eight of 39 surveyed countries, including more than eight in 10 citizens in Congo-Brazzaville (86%), Mauritania (84%), Niger (84%), and Cameroon (81%).
- Only a quarter (26%) of Africans say their governments are doing “fairly well” or “very well” in managing the economy (Figure 5).
- Even fewer give their governments passing marks for their efforts to improve the living standards of the poor (22%), create jobs (20%), narrow income gaps (16%), and keep prices stable (12%).

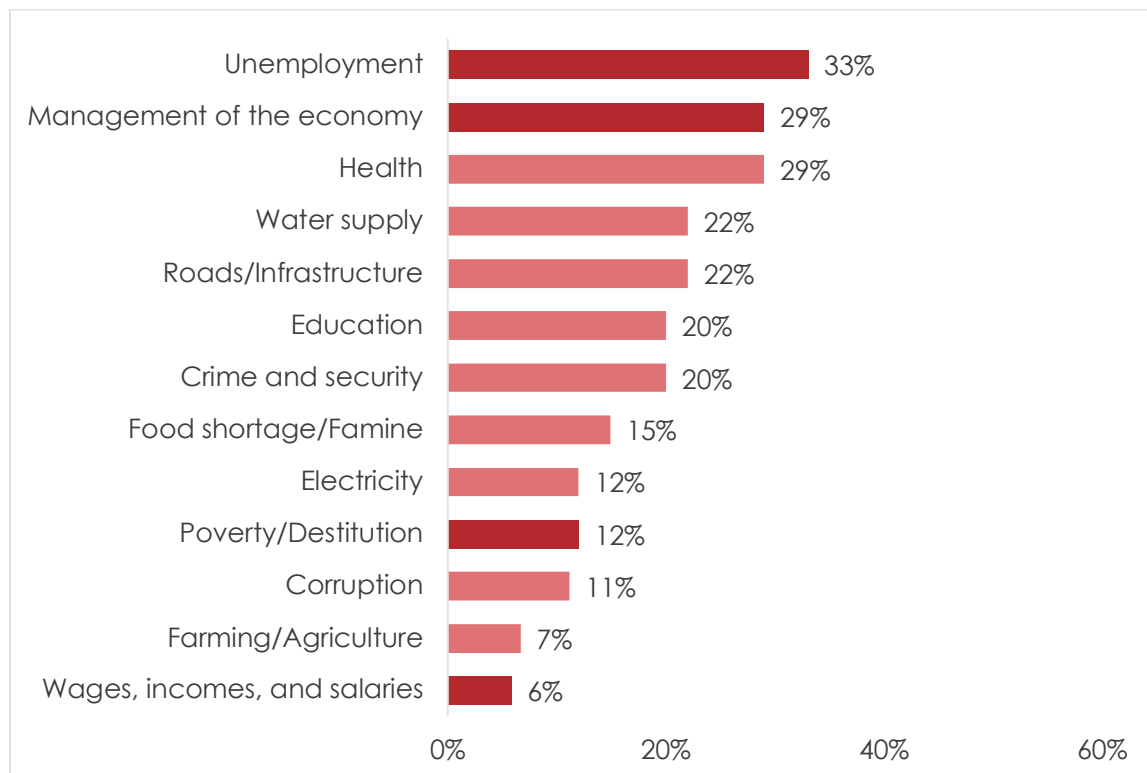
### Afrobarometer surveys

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. Nine survey rounds in up to 42 countries have been completed since 1999. Round 9 surveys (2021/2023) cover 39 countries.

Afrobarometer's national partners conduct face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with samples of 1,200-2,400 adults that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-3 to +/-2 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

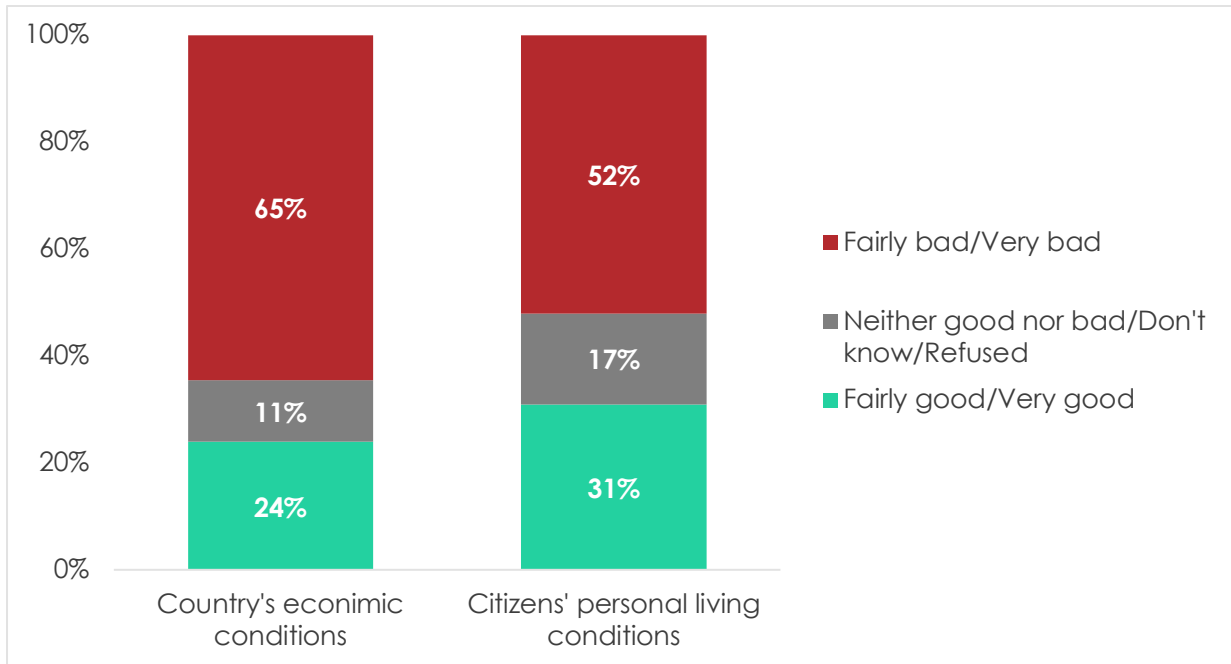
### Charts

**Figure 1: Most important problems** | 39 countries | 2021/2023



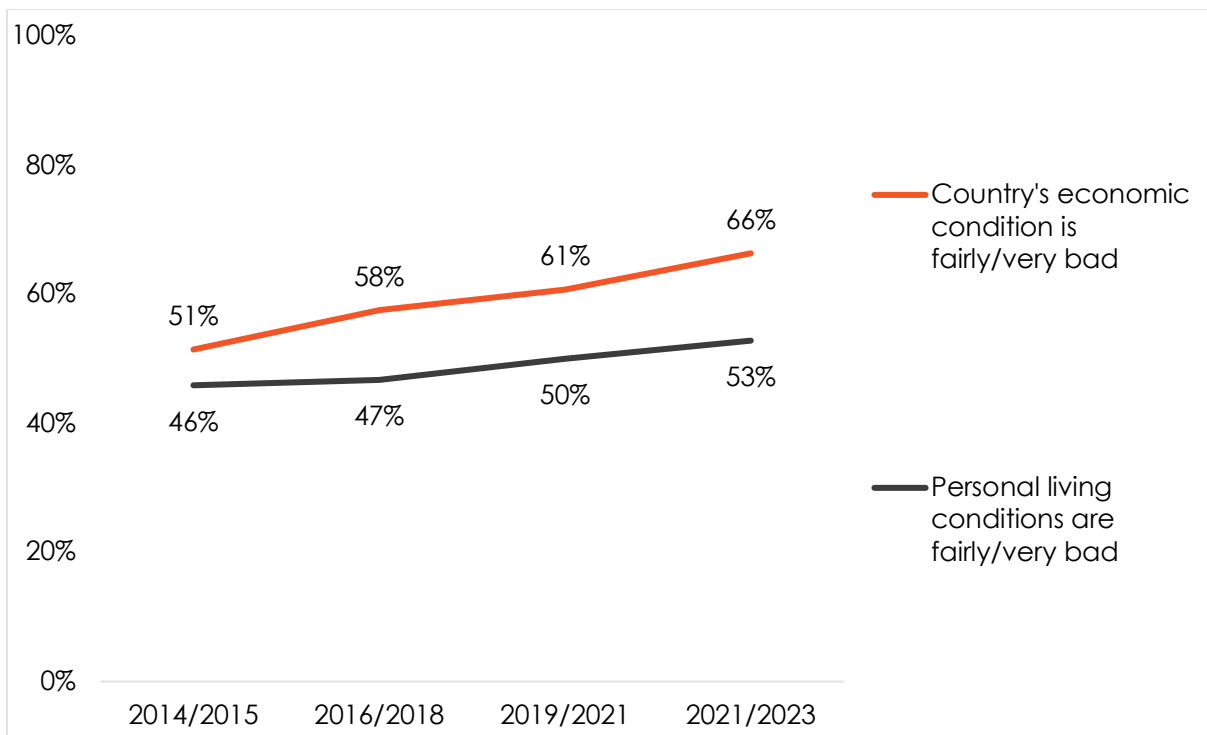
**Respondents were asked:** *In your opinion, what are the most important problems facing this country that government should address? (Up to three responses per respondent; figure shows % of respondents who cite each problem as one of up to three priorities.)*

**Figure 2: Assessment of economic and living conditions** | 39 countries | 2021/2023



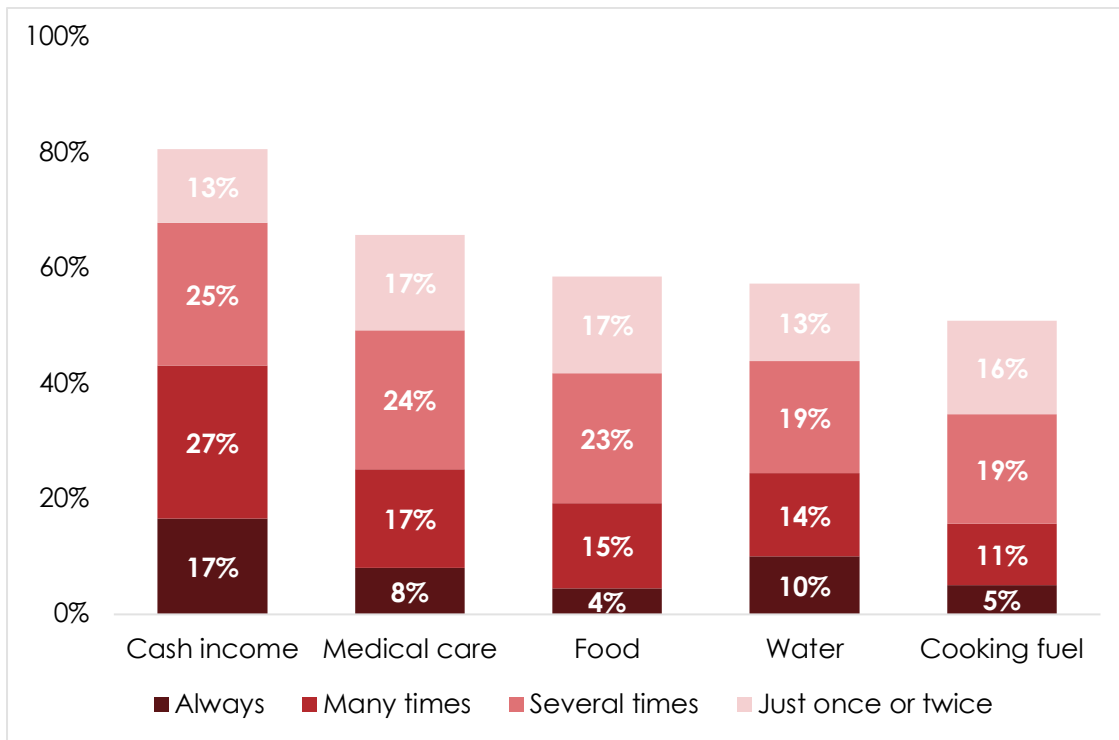
**Respondents were asked:** In general, how would you describe: The present economic condition of this country? Your own present living conditions?

**Figure 3: Negative assessments of economic and personal living conditions**  
 | 31 countries | 2014-2023



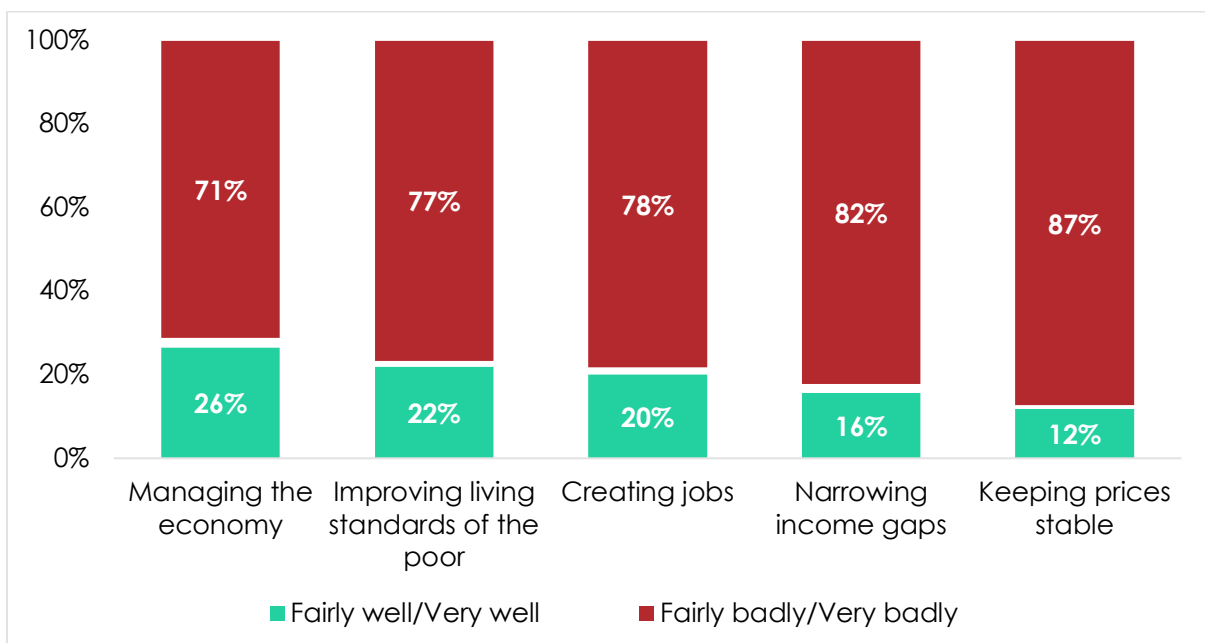
**Respondents were asked:** In general, how would you describe: The present economic condition of this country? Your own present living conditions?

**Figure 4: Went without basic necessities** | 39 countries | 2021/2023



**Respondents were asked:** Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without: Enough food to eat? Enough clean water for home use? Medicines or medical treatment? Enough fuel to cook your food? A cash income?

**Figure 5: Evaluation of government's economic performance** | 39 countries | 2021/2023



**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?

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