

Afrobarometer Round 6

New data from
across Africa



Accra, Ghana
14 March 2016

News release

Powerless: Lack of grid access, unreliable electricity supply still plague majority of Africans, survey finds

While more Africans live within reach of an electric grid than a decade ago, only four in 10 enjoy a reliable power supply, according to new survey findings from Afrobarometer. In some countries, that proportion is four in 100.

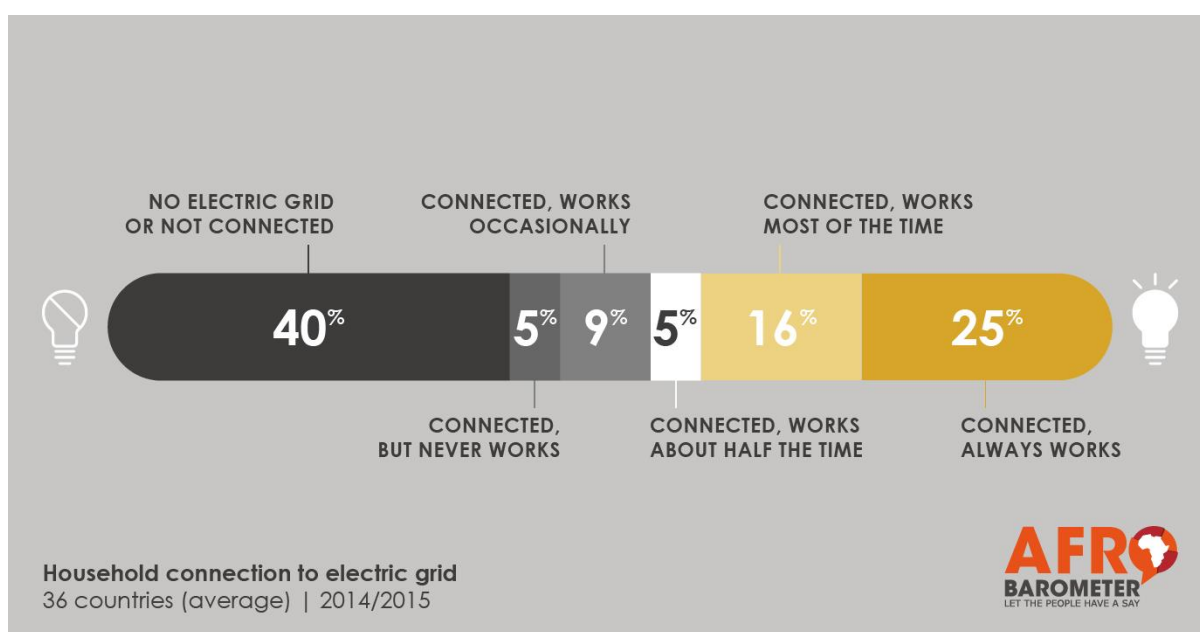
Based on nearly 54,000 interviews in 36 African countries in 2014/2015, Afrobarometer's report concludes that more than a century after the invention of the light bulb, a majority of Africans are still in the dark, either intermittently or constantly.

While North African countries and Mauritius are able to provide reliable electricity for most or all of their citizens, they are the exception, particularly when it comes to serving rural and poor populations. In some countries, the electric grid reaches only a fraction of the population; in others, an extensive grid is undermined by inadequate supply and poor service.

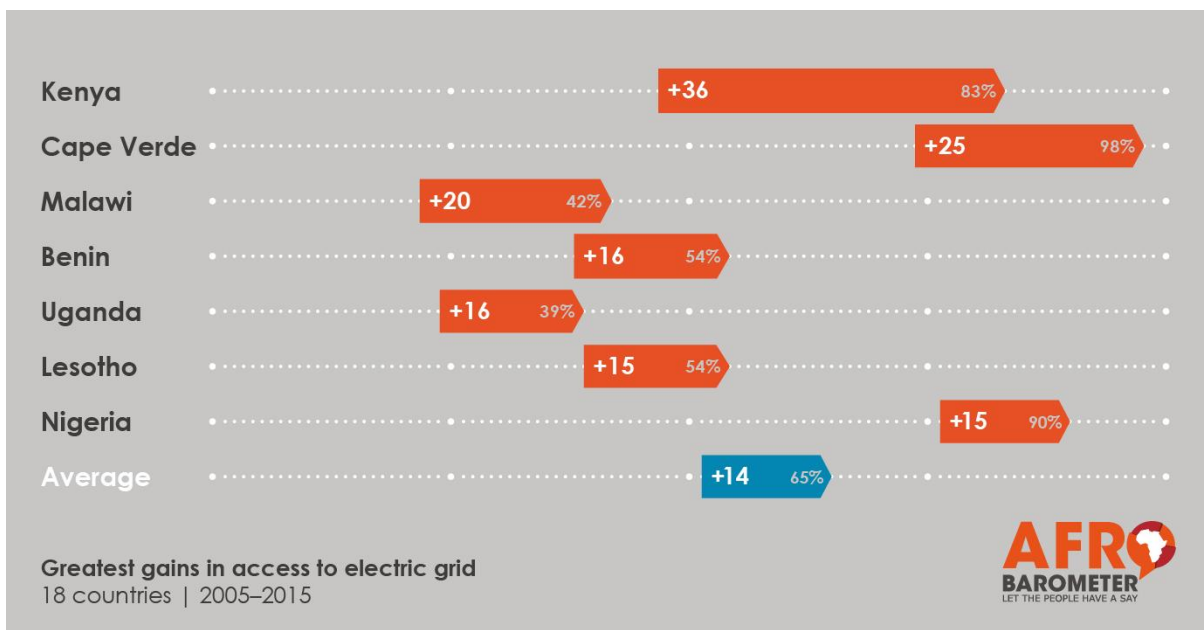
The report, titled “**Off-grid or ‘off-on’: Lack of access, unreliable electricity supply still plague majority of Africans,**” is available in English and French at www.afrobarometer.org.

Key findings

- On average across 36 countries, two-thirds (66%) of Africans live in zones served by an electric grid, a 14-percentage-point increase from 2005. But this proportion varies widely across the continent, from 17% in Burundi and 25% in Burkina Faso to 100% in Mauritius and Egypt. Access is most limited in rural areas.



- Six in 10 Africans (60%) are actually connected to an electric grid, ranging from less than one in seven citizens in Burundi (11%), Malawi (12%), and Burkina Faso (14%) to universal coverage in Mauritius and Tunisia.
- Of those connected, two-thirds (69%) enjoy a reliable power supply, while about one-third of connections work “about half the time” (9%), occasionally (14%), or “never” (8%). In a striking example, 96% of Nigerians are connected, but only 18% of those connections work “most of the time” or “always.”
- Combining the effects of no electric grid, no household connection, and poor connection quality means that in Burundi and Guinea, only 4% of all citizens have a reliable power supply, followed by Malawi (7%), Sierra Leone (7%), Burkina Faso (10%), and Liberia (10%). At the other extreme are Mauritius (100%), Morocco (92%), Egypt and Algeria (both 88%), and Tunisia (83%).
- On average, only four in 10 Africans (41%) say their government is performing “fairly well” or “very well” in ensuring a reliable supply of electricity.



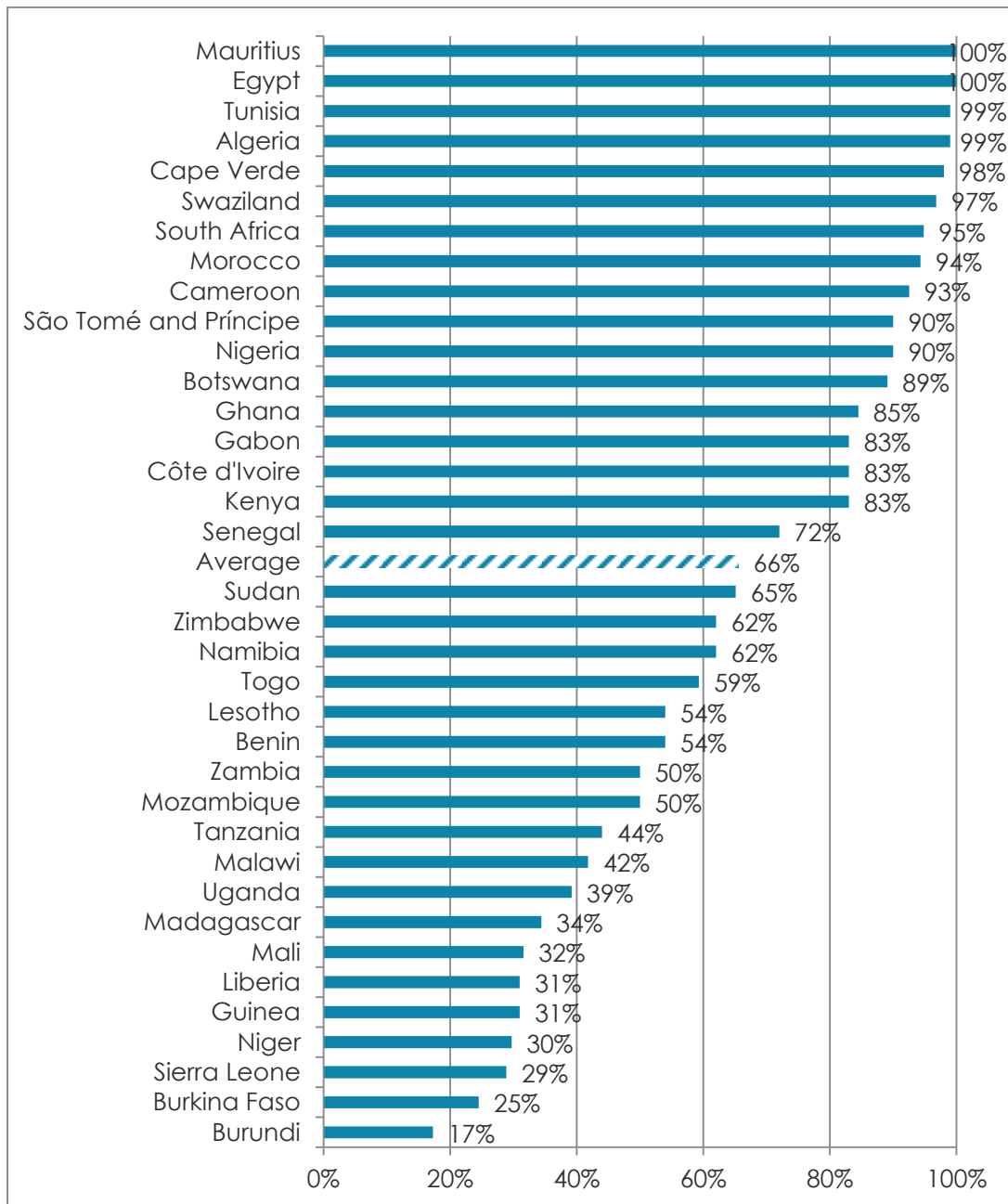
Afrobarometer

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 findings from Round 6 surveys (2014/2015) are currently being released. Afrobarometer conducts face-to-face interviews in the language of the respondent's choice with nationally representative samples that yield country-level results with margins of error of +/-2% (for samples of 2,400) or +/-3% (for samples of 1,200) at a 95% confidence level.

Interested readers should watch for additional findings to be released over the coming months (see <http://afrobarometer.org/countries/results-round>).

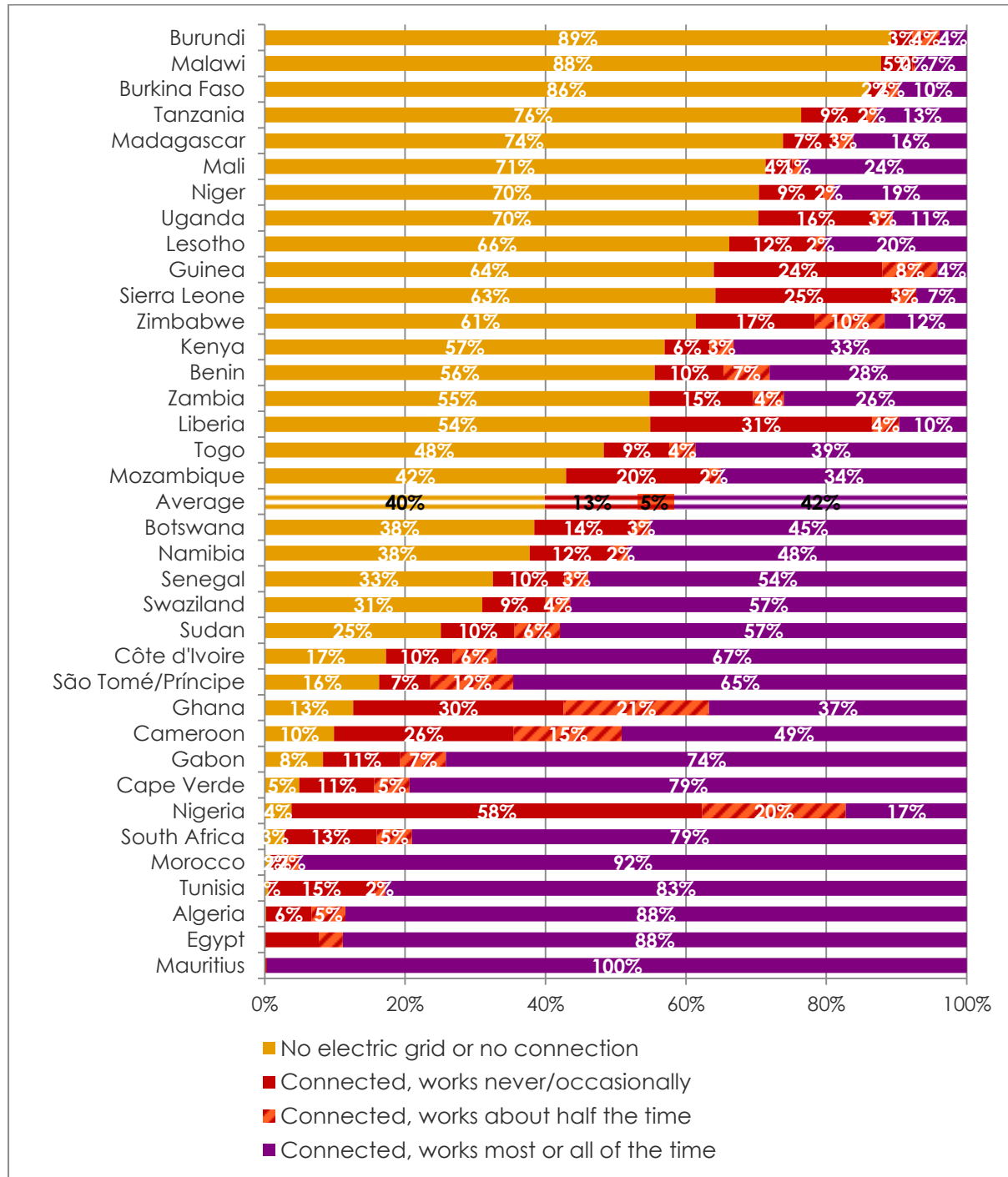
Charts

Figure 1: Access to the electric grid | 36 countries | 2014/2015



Surveyors recorded whether the enumeration area had an electricity grid that most houses could access.

Figure 2: Connection to the grid: quantity and quality | 36 countries | 2014/2015



Respondents were asked: Do you have an electric connection to your home from the mains? [If yes:] How often is electricity actually available? (Figure shows % of all survey respondents, including those without a connection to an electric grid.)



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