
Afrobarometer Round 6

**New data from
36 African countries**



Dispatch No. 76 | 22 March 2016

Lack of safe water, sanitation spurs growing dissatisfaction with government performance

Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 76 | Corah Walker

Summary

If water is fundamental to life and human dignity, no issue is more pressing for 663 million people for whom access is still lacking (United Nations, 2015). As World Water Day (March 22) reminds us, safe and readily available water is a human right and an important contributor to public health, whether it is used for drinking, washing, food production, or recreational purposes. Contaminated water and inadequate sanitation help transmit diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, dysentery, and typhoid; diarrheal deaths due to unclean drinking water are estimated at 502,000 each year, most of them of young children (World Health Organization, 2015). Improved access to safe water and sanitation boosts economic growth, contributes to poverty reduction, and is highly relevant to achieving all of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), from health and education to food security and environmental sustainability (World Bank, 2014).

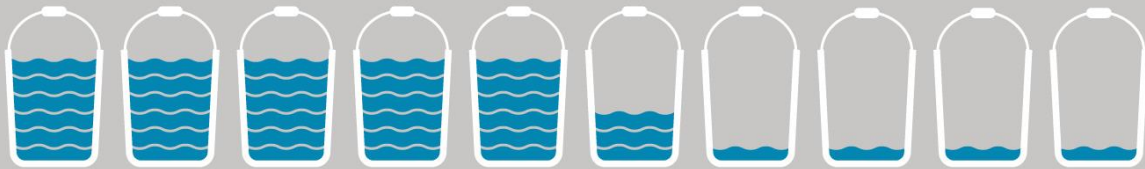
Substantial progress was made under the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) initiative; worldwide, the target of reducing by half the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water was met in 2010. But in sub-Saharan Africa, most countries fell short, and achieving the new SDG No. 6 – ensuring access to water and sanitation for all by 2030 – will require intensive and sustained action.

In observance of World Water Day, new findings from Afrobarometer's Round 6 surveys in 36 African countries give voice to citizens who call on their governments to address inadequate water supply and sanitation as a top priority. Despite some infrastructure improvements, nearly half (45%) of Africans went without enough clean water for home use during the past year. More than half (51%) have to leave their compounds in order to access water. One-third of surveyed communities lack access to a piped-water system, and two-thirds lack access to sewage infrastructure. Citizens' ratings of their government's performance in providing water and sanitation services worsened over the past decade: A majority say their government is doing a "fairly" or "very" poor job.

Afrobarometer surveys

Afrobarometer is a pan-African, non-partisan research network that conducts public attitude surveys on democracy, governance, economic conditions, and related issues across Africa. Five rounds of surveys were conducted between 1999 and 2013, and results 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, which yield country-level results with a margin of sampling error of +/-2% (for a sample of 2,400) or +/-3% (for a sample of 1,200) at a 95% confidence level.

This dispatch draws mainly on Round 6 data from nearly 54,000 interviews in 36 countries, with over-time comparisons for some countries that were also surveyed in previous rounds (see Appendix Table A.1 for a list of countries and survey dates).



45% of people went without enough clean water at least once during the previous year

Going without enough water
36 African countries (average) | 2014/2015

The contextual data on service infrastructure reported here are captured before and after interviews with survey respondents. Afrobarometer field teams make on-the-ground observations in each census enumeration area (EA) about services and facilities that are available in the area. These observations are recorded and confirmed by survey field supervisors. Since the EAs visited are selected to represent the population of the country as a whole, these data provide reliable indicators of infrastructure and service availability.

Interested readers should watch for additional Round 6 findings to be released over the coming months (see <http://afrobarometer.org/countries/results-round>).

Key findings

- Across 36 countries, almost half (45%) of respondents say they went without enough clean water at least once during the previous year. One in five (19%) did so “many times” or “always.”
- A majority of Africans (51%) can only access water outside of their compound.
- More than one-third (36%) of surveyed communities have no infrastructure for piped water. More than two-thirds (68%) lack sewerage infrastructure.
- One in five citizens (20%) have to leave their compound to use a latrine, and almost one in 10 (8%) have no access at all to a latrine or toilet, even outside their compound.
- Rural residents have far less access to water and sanitation than their urban counterparts. North Africa outperforms other regions, while East Africa lags behind.
- Water supply ranks fifth among important problems that citizens say their governments must address. In Burkina Faso, Guinea, and Niger, it's problem No. 1.
- A majority (55%) of African citizens rate their government's handling of water supply as “fairly bad” or “very bad.” Across 18 countries tracked since 2005/2006, negative ratings have increased by 14 percentage points.

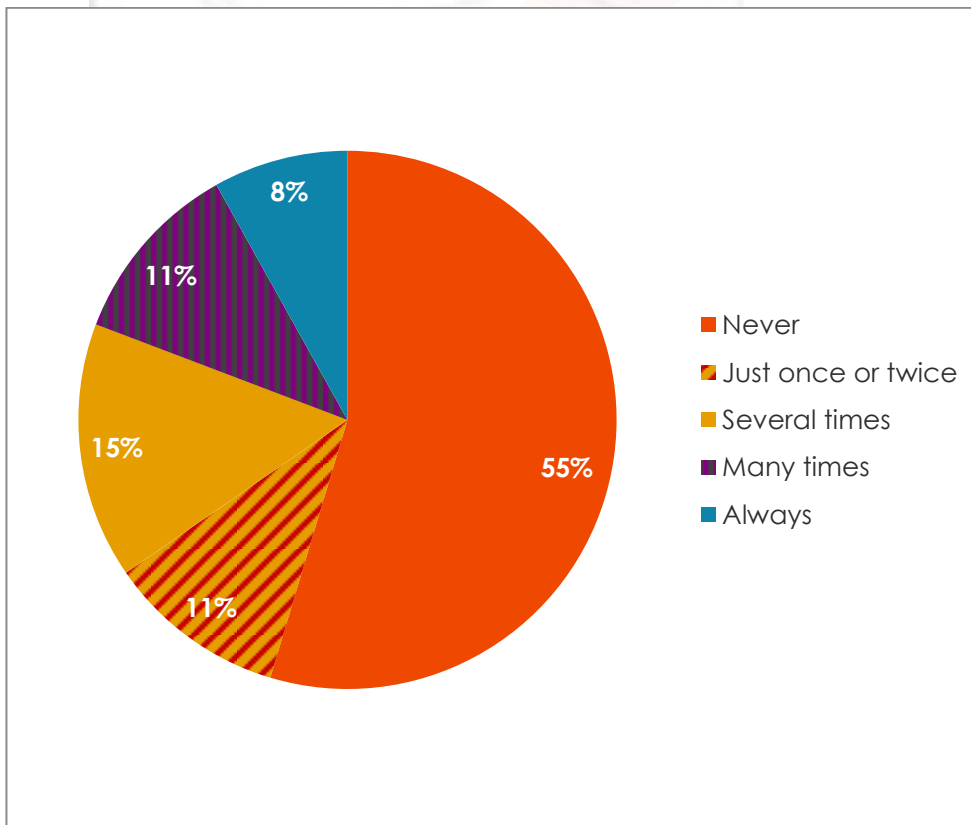
Limited access to water and sanitation

On average across 36 countries, almost half (45%) of respondents say they went without enough water for home use at least once during the previous year, including one in five (19%) who say they went without water “many times” or “always” (Figure 1). Almost three-fourths of citizens in Gabon (74%) and Liberia (72%) report going without enough water, compared to 8% in Mauritius and 15% in Cape Verde (Figure 2). Going without enough water “many times” or “always” affected more than one-third of citizens in Madagascar (42%), Gabon (39%), Guinea (38%), and Togo (37%).

Do your own analysis of Afrobarometer data – on any question, for any country and survey round. It’s easy and free at www.afrobarometer.org/online-data-analysis.

By region,¹ Central Africa (55%) has the highest proportion of respondents who say they went without enough water at least once, while North Africa has the lowest (33%). Rural residents are more likely than their urban counterparts to experience water scarcity, 50% vs. 39%. (Urban-rural and regional differences are summarized in Figure 16 and Figure 17 on Page 19.)

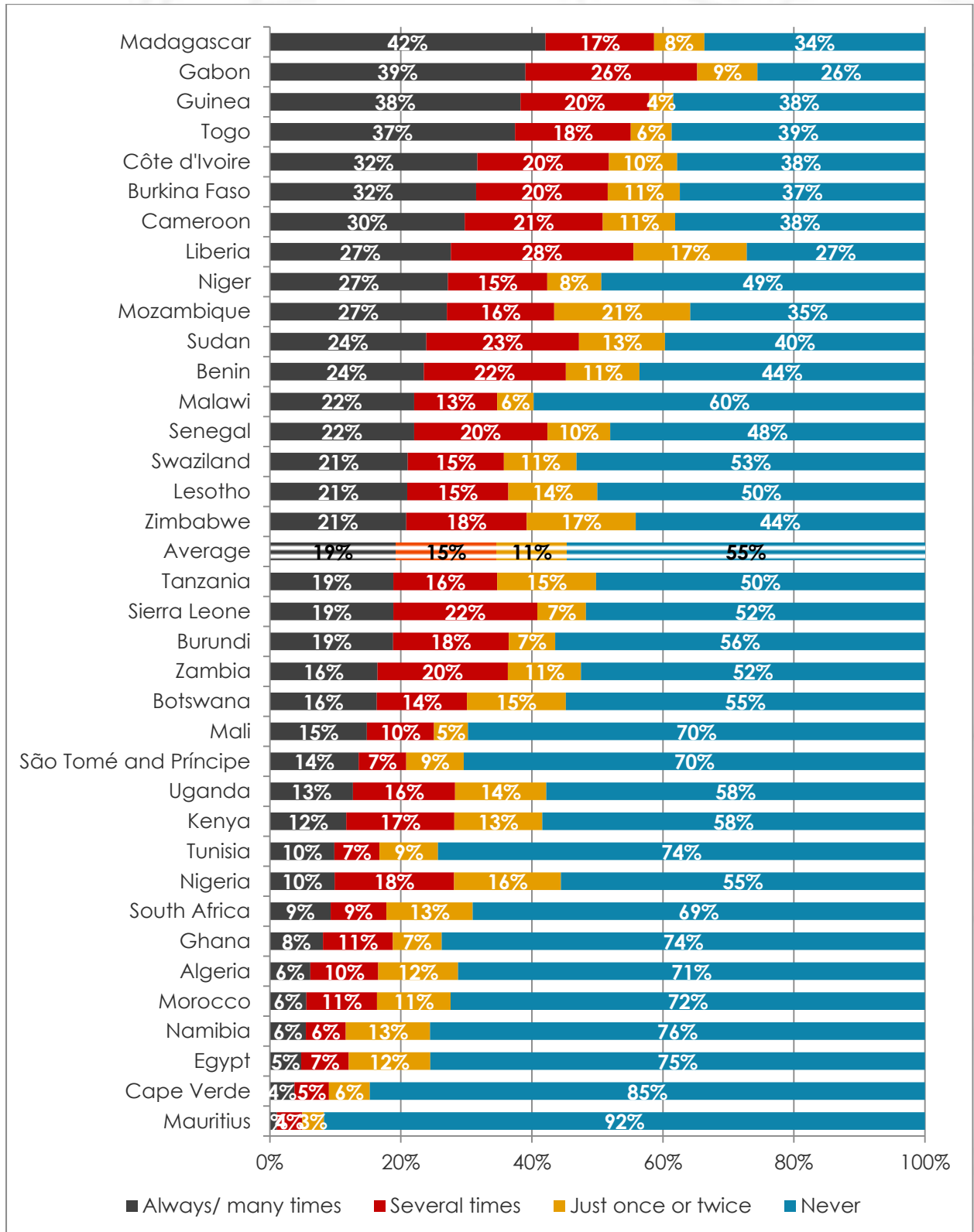
Figure 1: How often went without enough water | 36 countries | 2014/2015



Respondents were asked: *Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without enough clean water for home use?*

¹ Regional groupings are: North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia), Central Africa (Cameroon, Gabon, São Tomé and Príncipe), East Africa (Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda), West Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo), Southern Africa (Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, Zimbabwe).

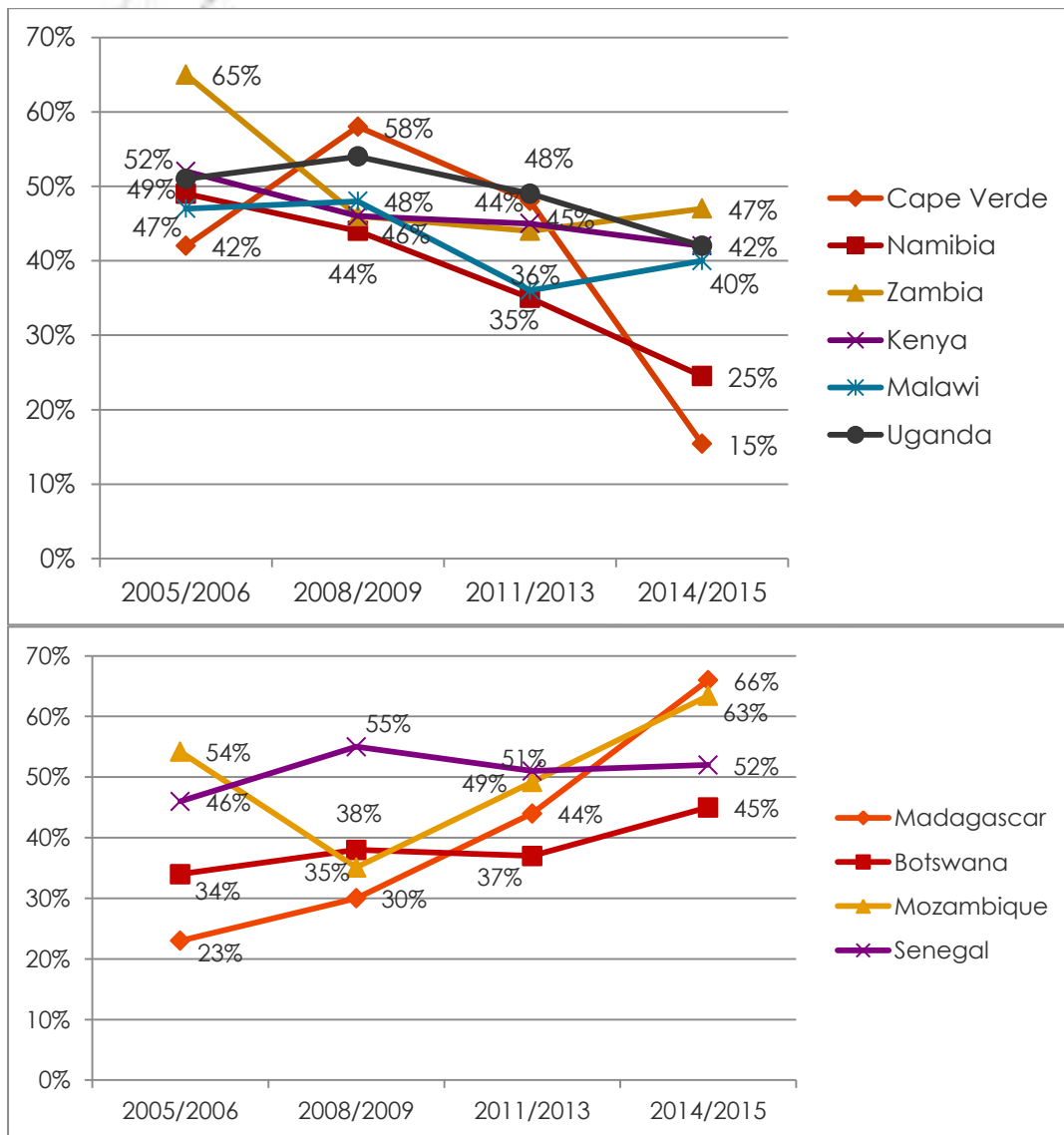
Figure 2: How often went without enough water | by country | 36 countries
 | 2014/2015



Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without enough clean water for home use?

Overall, the past decade has seen no improvement in the experience of water scarcity. Across 18 countries tracked by Afrobarometer surveys since 2005/2006,² the average proportion of respondents who went without enough water increased marginally, from 40% to 43%. Six countries significantly reduced the proportion of citizens who went without water, led by Cape Verde (a 27-percentage-point drop) and Namibia (-25 points) (Figure 3, top).³ The proportions increased in four countries, most dramatically (by 43 percentage points) in Madagascar (Figure 3, bottom).

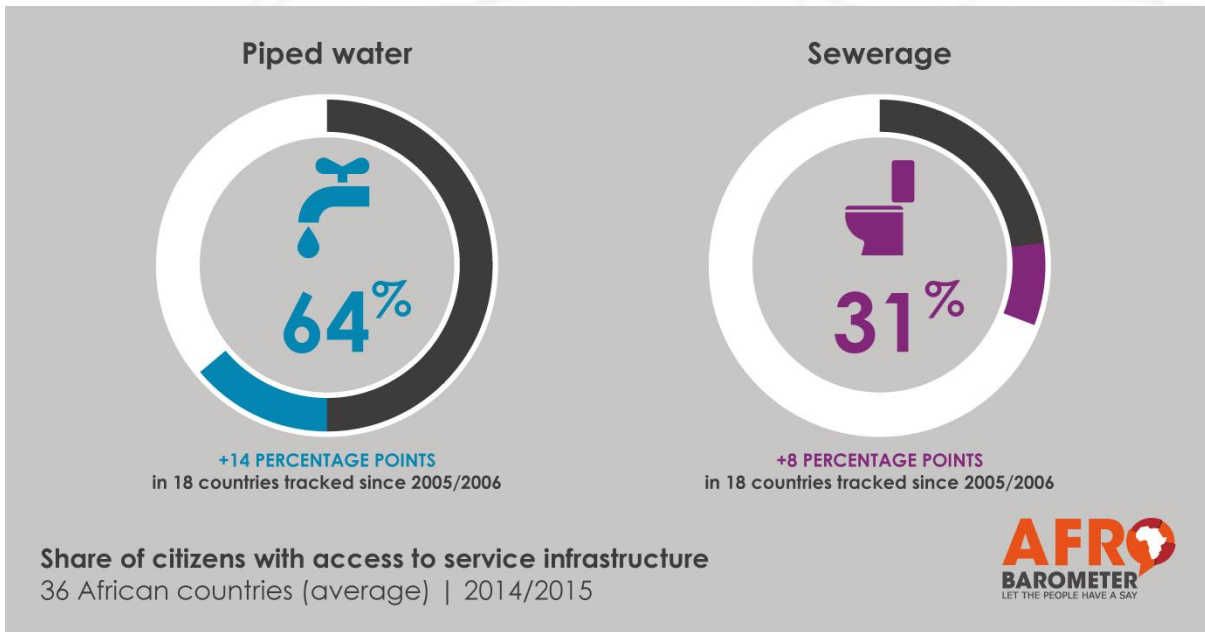
Figure 3: Countries with reduced (top) and increased (bottom) proportions of the population going without water at least once | 2005-2015



Respondents were asked: Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without enough clean water for home use? (% who went without water at least once in the preceding year)

² The 18 countries are Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

³ Due to rounding, the sum of subcategories may vary by 1 percentage point from reported totals.

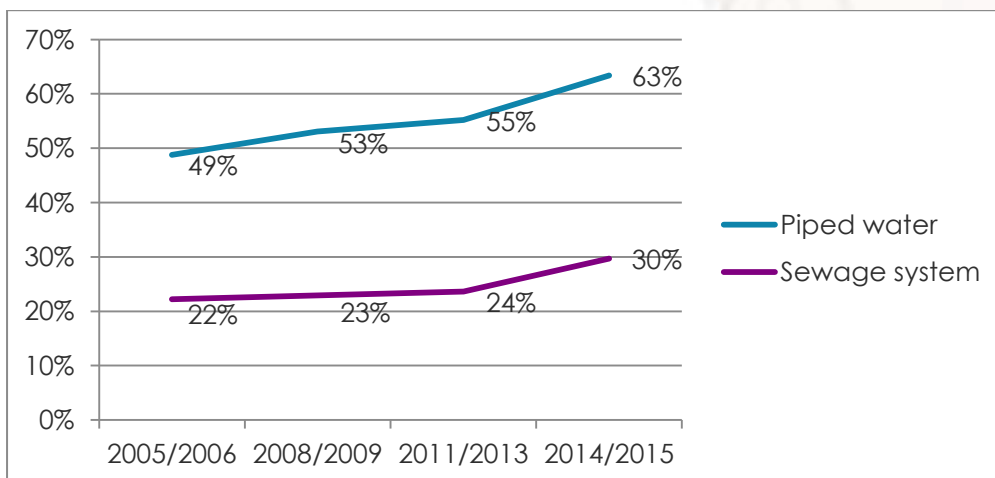


Limited water and sanitation infrastructure

The frequency of going without enough water reflects in part a lack of access to basic infrastructure. Afrobarometer interviewers gather observational data about the availability of public services, including the presence of piped water and sewerage systems “that most houses could access,” in the enumeration areas (typically 150-300 per country) where they conduct surveys.

On average across 36 countries, more than one-third (36%) of respondents live in zones without piped-water infrastructure, and more than two-thirds (68%) have no sewerage infrastructure in their communities. In the 18 countries tracked by Afrobarometer since 2005/2006, access to basic service infrastructure has increased modestly over the past decade – by 14 percentage points for piped-water systems and just 8 percentage points for sewage systems (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Improved availability of basic infrastructure | 18 countries | 2005-2015



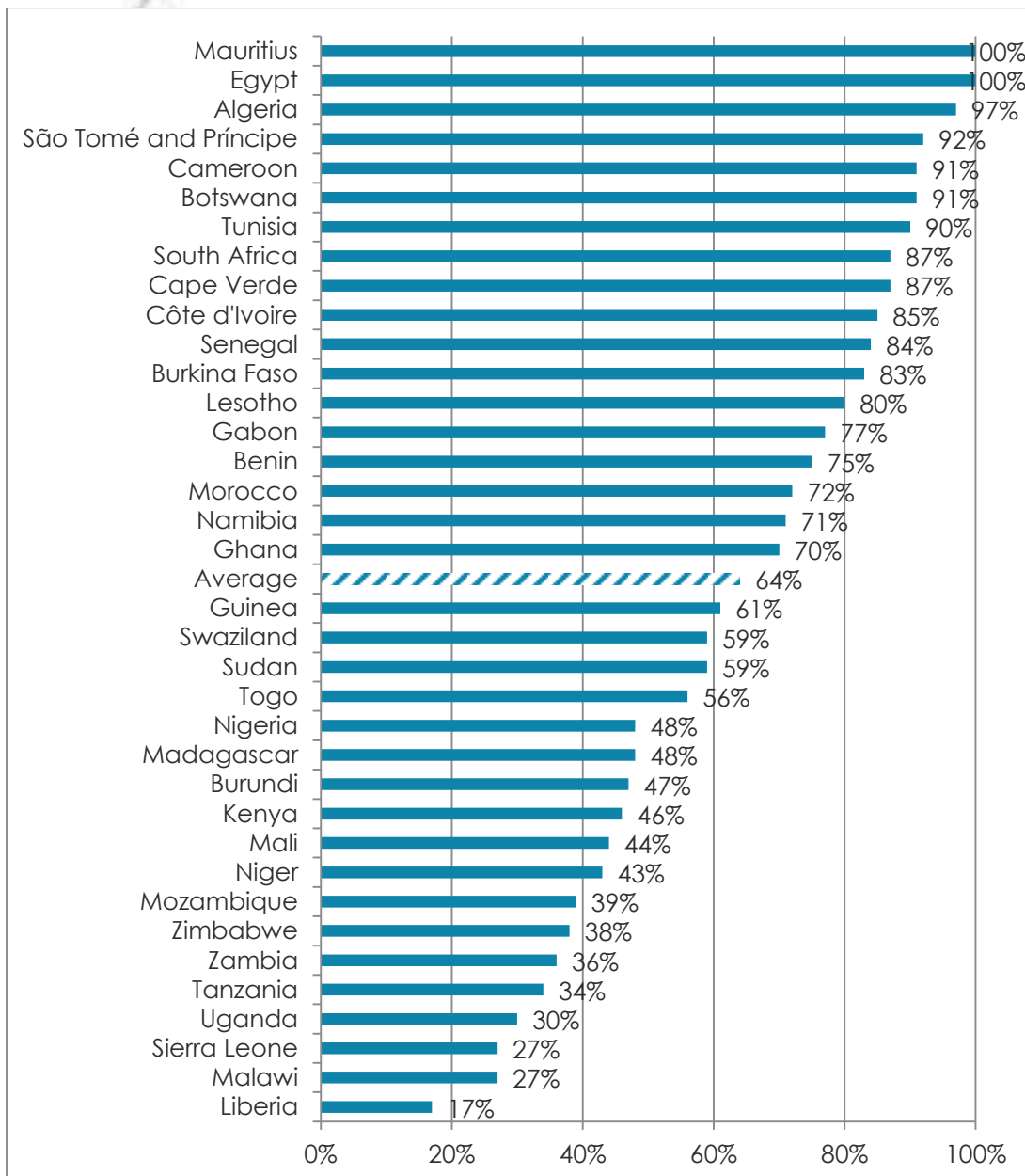
Afrobarometer interviewers were asked to observe: Are the following services present in the primary sampling unit/enumeration area: Piped-water system that most houses could access? Sewerage system that most houses could access? (% of enumeration areas where services are available)

Piped-water infrastructure

The availability of piped-water infrastructure varies widely among countries. Piped-water systems are available in all or nearly all enumeration areas in Mauritius (100%), Egypt (100%), and Algeria (97%). In contrast, less than one-third of enumeration areas have piped-water systems in Liberia (17%), Malawi (27%), Sierra Leone (27%), and Uganda (30%) (Figure 5).

Central Africa (87%) and North Africa (83%) have the highest proportions of enumeration areas with piped-water systems, while East Africa trails at 39%. Urban areas are about twice as likely to have piped-water infrastructure as rural areas, 89% vs. 45%.

Figure 5: Proportion of citizens living in enumeration areas with piped water systems
 | 36 countries | 2014/2015

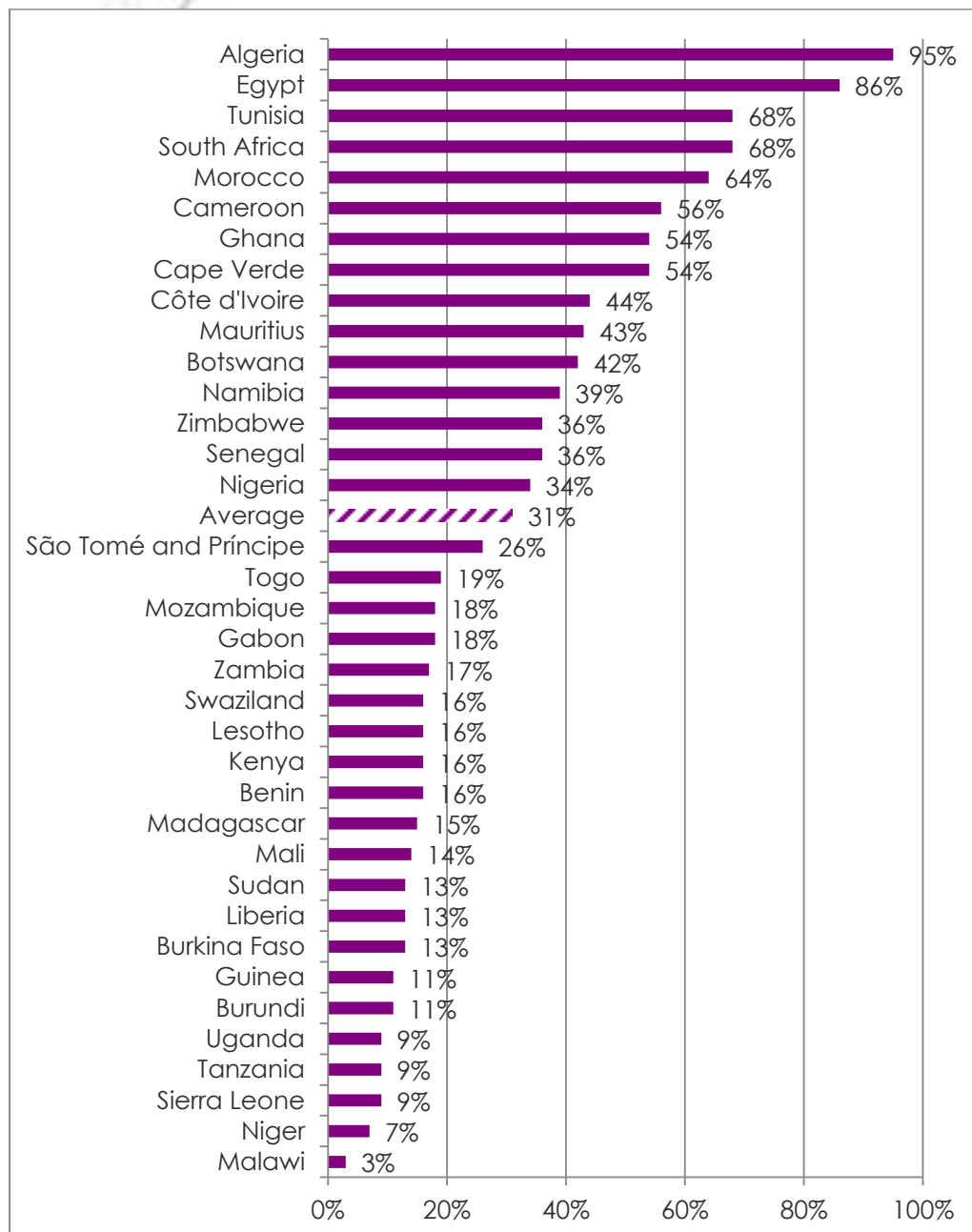


Afrobarometer interviewers were asked to observe: Are the following services present in the primary sampling unit/enumeration area: Piped-water system that most houses could access? (% with piped-water system)

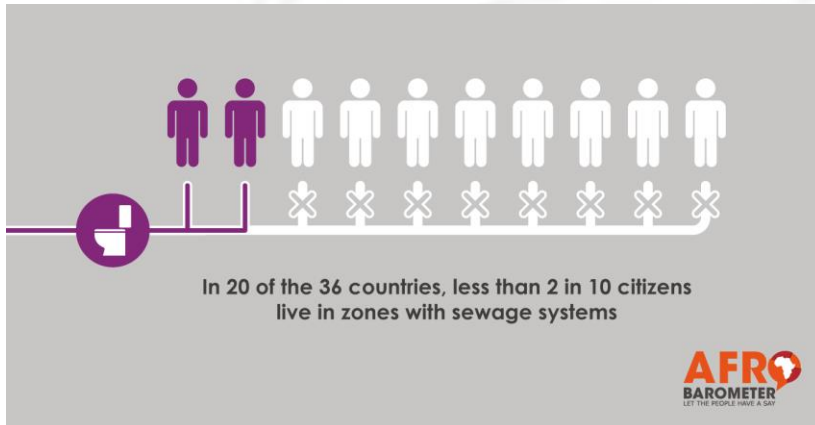
Sewage infrastructure

If substantial proportions of the population lack access to piped-water systems, the situation is even worse with regard to sewerage. On average, less than one-third (31%) of enumeration areas have sewerage systems. Algeria (95%) and Egypt (86%) are the only countries where more than seven in 10 citizens live in enumeration areas that have sewerage systems. Less than one in 10 have access to sewerage systems in Malawi (3%), Niger (7%), Sierra Leone (9%), Tanzania (9%), and Uganda (9%) (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Proportion of citizens living in enumeration areas with sewerage systems
 | 36 countries | 2014/2015



Afrobarometer interviewers were asked to observe: Are the following services present in the primary sampling unit/enumeration area: Sewage system that most houses could access? (% with sewage system)



North Africa (65%) has twice the average proportion of enumeration areas with sewerage systems, while East Africa again trails far behind (11%). Urban residents (59%) are six times as likely as their rural counterparts (10%) to live in zones with sewage systems.

For more details on piped-water and sewage infrastructure, see

Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 67, "Building on progress: Infrastructure development still a major challenge in Africa," available at www.afrobarometer.org.

Point of access to water and latrines

Even if they live in a zone served by piped-water infrastructure, many Africans do not have easy access to running water – a factor with important implications for hygiene and health. A majority (51%) of respondents do not have access to piped water inside their home or compound. About three in 10 (28%) say their primary source of household water is within their home, while about one-fifth (21%) have access to water within their compound but outside their home.

Again, there are dramatic differences between countries. Almost all Mauritians and Egyptians (both 96%) have running water inside their home, compared to less than 5% of citizens in Sierra Leone, Uganda, Guinea, Lesotho, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Madagascar, Mali, Malawi, Tanzania, and Niger (Figure 7). In 20 of the 36 countries, a majority of citizens have to go outside their compound to access water.

As in the case of infrastructure, North Africa leads the way on readily accessible water, with 81% of respondents reporting piped water inside their homes, while East Africa trails at 5%. Rural residents are twice as likely as city dwellers to lack access to water inside their compound, 66% vs. 30%.

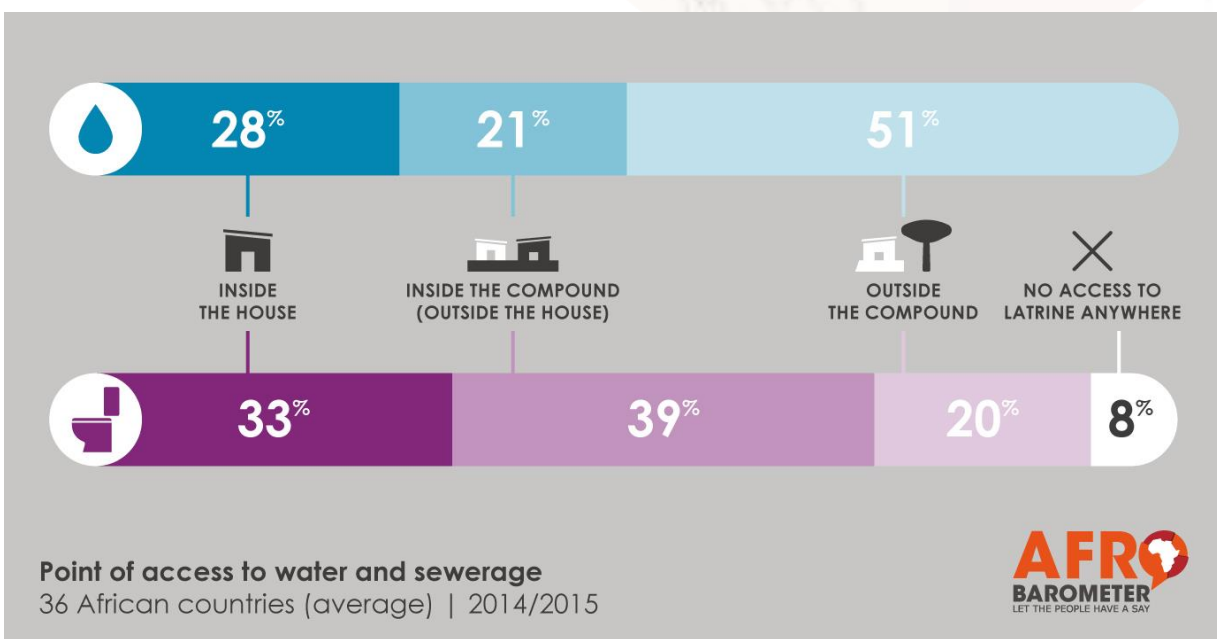
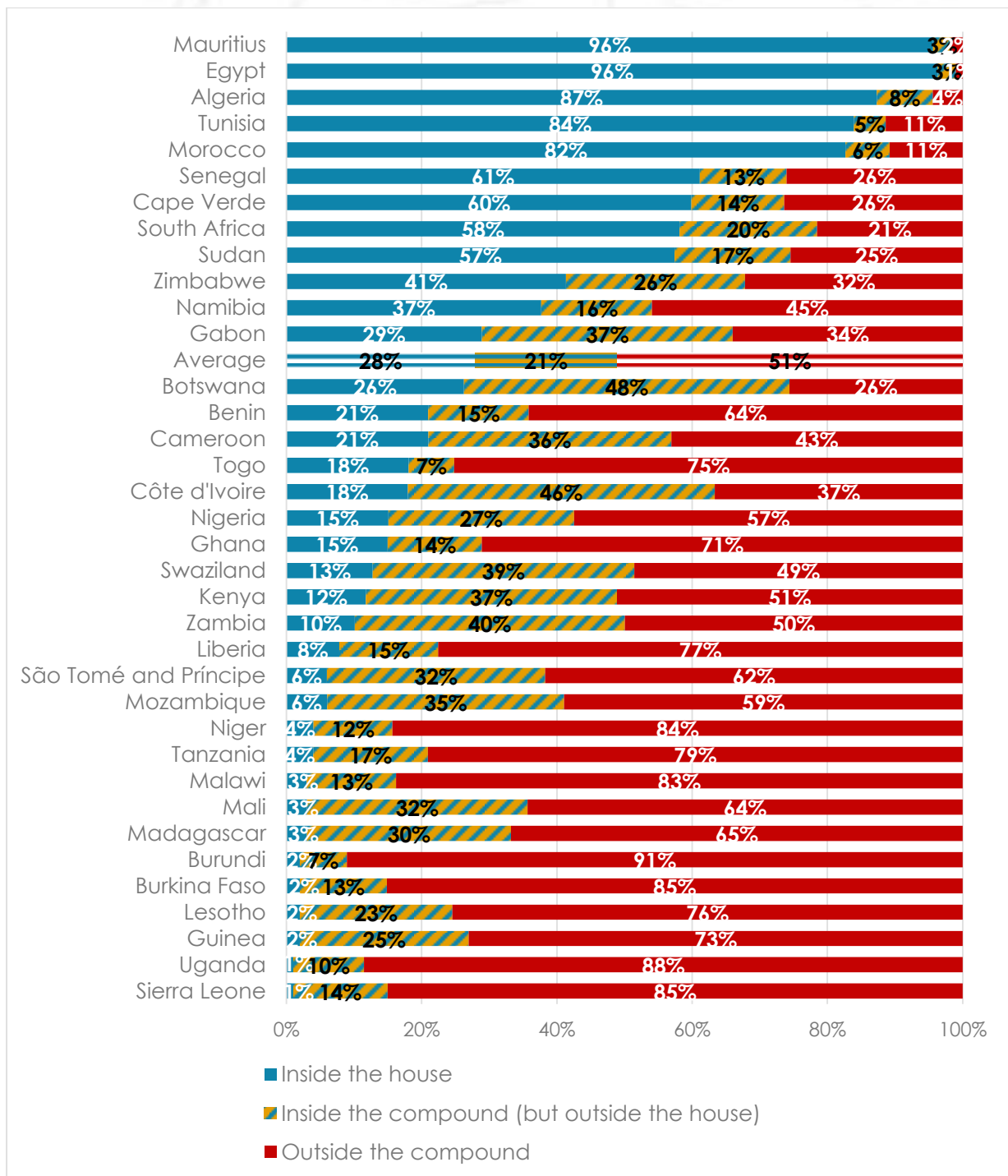


Figure 7: Primary source of water for household use | 36 countries | 2014/2015



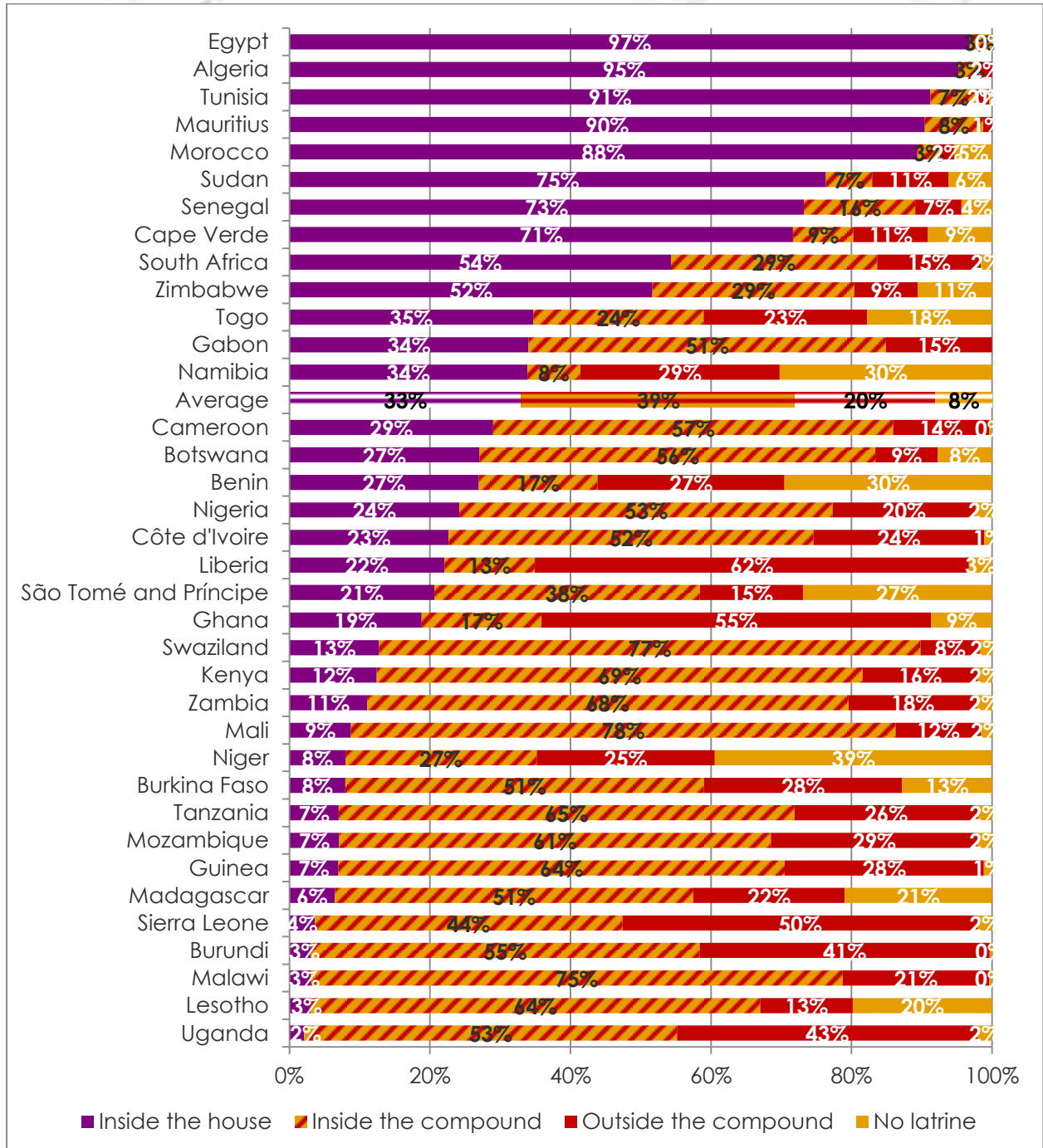
Respondents were asked: Please tell me whether each of the following are available inside your house, inside your compound, or outside your compound: Your main source of water for household use?

Almost one-tenth (8%) of respondents say they have no access to a latrine or toilet, even outside their compounds. This is most common among citizens of Niger (39%), Namibia (30%), Benin (30%), and São Tomé and Príncipe (27%) (Figure 8). Most Egyptians (97%) and Algerians (95%) have toilets inside their homes, while this is the case for less than one in 20 citizens in Uganda, Lesotho, Malawi, Burundi, and Sierra Leone.

North Africans are more than three times as likely as residents of other regions to have toilets inside the home (89%). East Africans report the fewest toilets inside the home (6%) but are less likely than West, Central, and Southern Africans to lack access to latrines anywhere, even outside the compound.

Rural residents are more likely to access toilets/latrines outside the compound (27%) or to have no access at all (11%) than people living in the city (12% and 3% respectively).

Figure 8: Location of toilet or latrine | 36 countries | 2014/2015

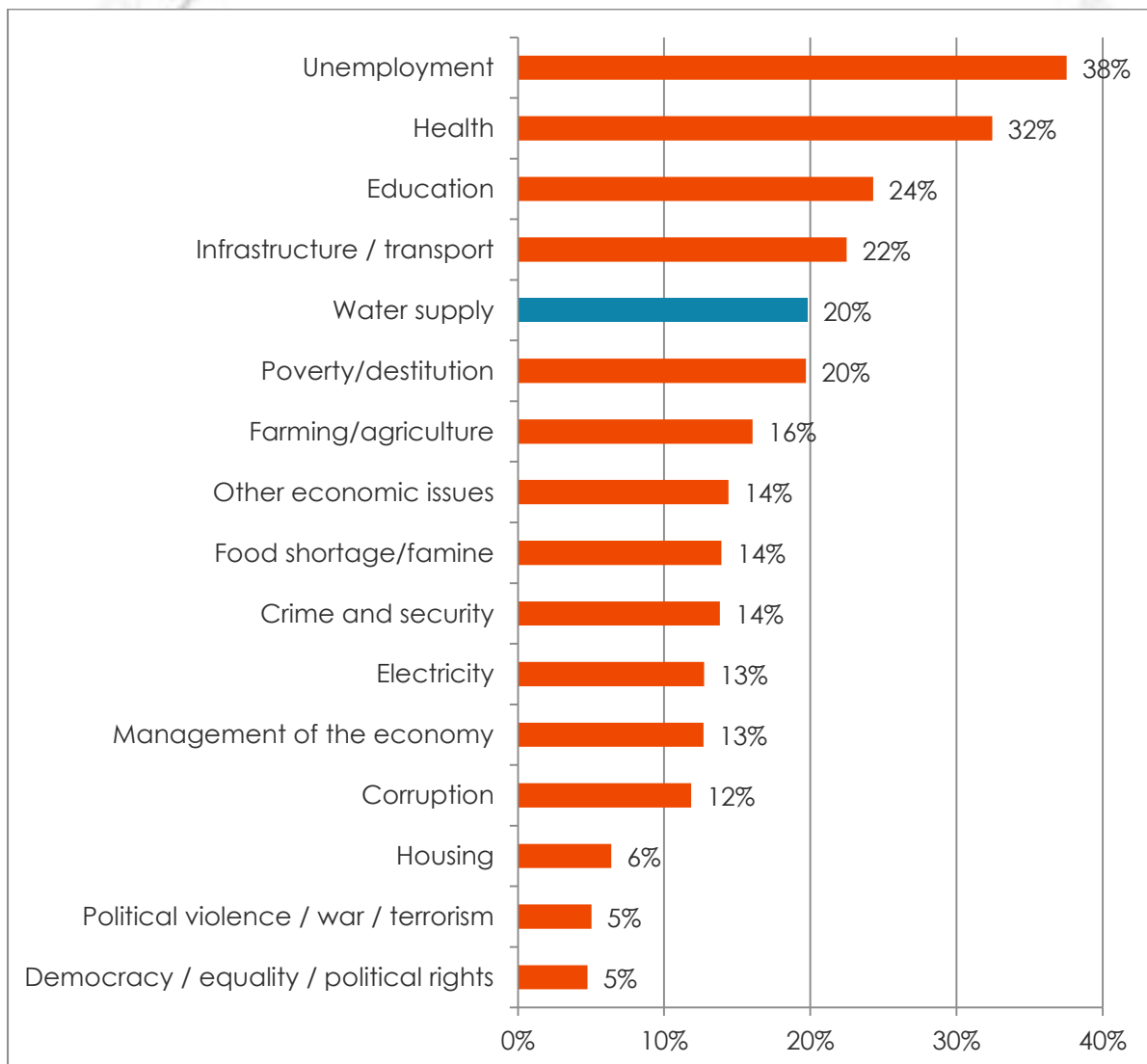


Respondents were asked: Please tell me whether each of the following are available inside your home, inside your compound, or outside your compound: A toilet or latrine?

Water supply among citizens' top priorities

Given the widespread lack of access to basic infrastructure and to sufficient water, water supply is understandably a high priority for Africans. Across the 36 surveyed countries, one in five respondents (20%) list water as one of the three most important problems that government should address, placing it at No. 5 among all issues (Figure 9). Citizens in Burkina Faso (60%), Guinea (59%), and Niger (49%) express the greatest concern about water supply, while less than one in 10 citizens in the North African countries, Liberia, Mauritius, Cape Verde, Madagascar, and Nigeria rank water among their top three priorities (Figure 10).

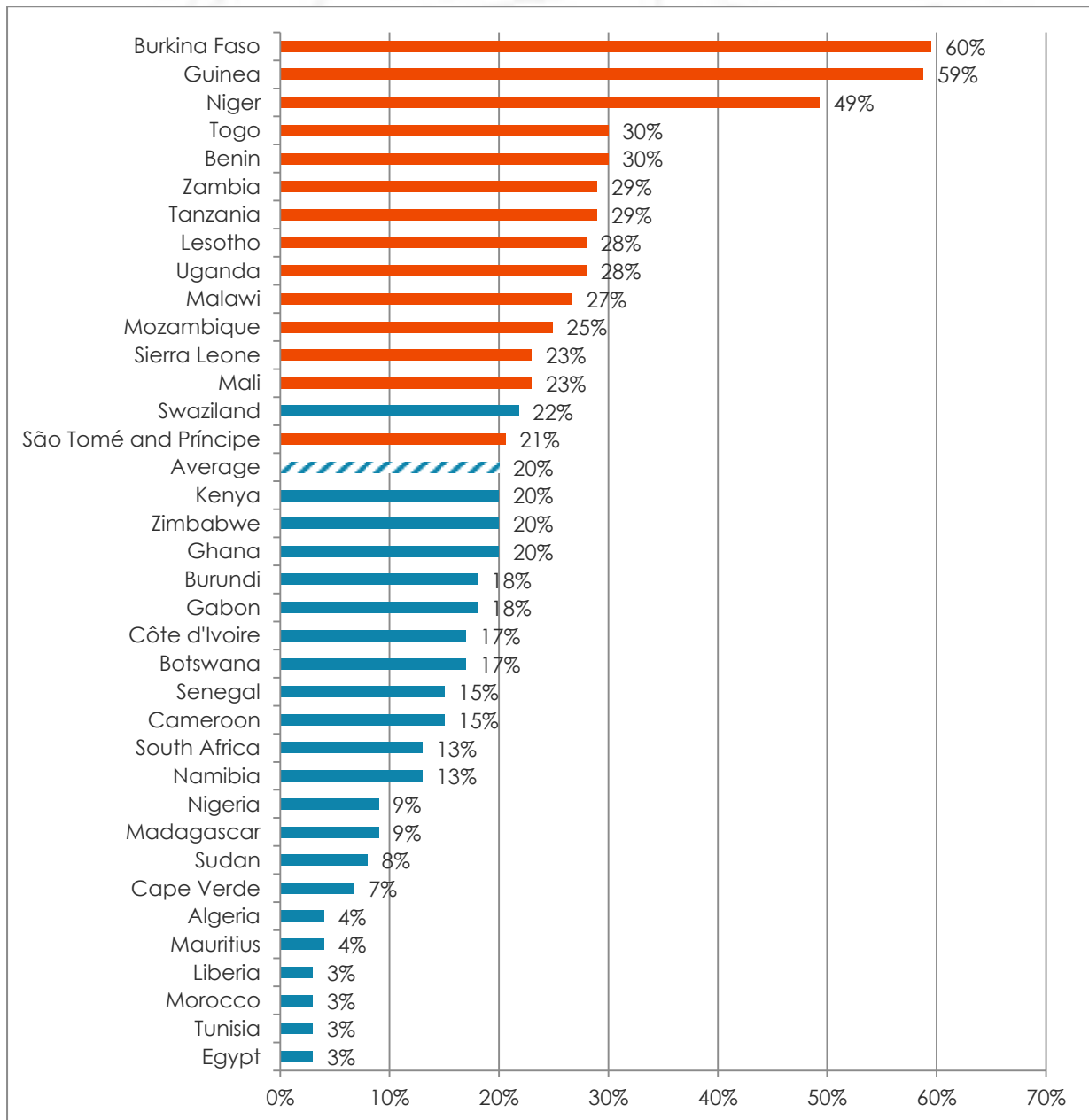
Figure 9: Citizen perceptions of most important problems | 36 countries | 2014/2015



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. Figure shows % of respondents who cite each problem among their three responses.*

Figure 10: Water supply among top priorities | 36 countries | 2014/2015



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. Figure shows % of respondents who cite each problem among their top three. Orange colour shows countries in which water supply was among the five most frequently-cited problems.*

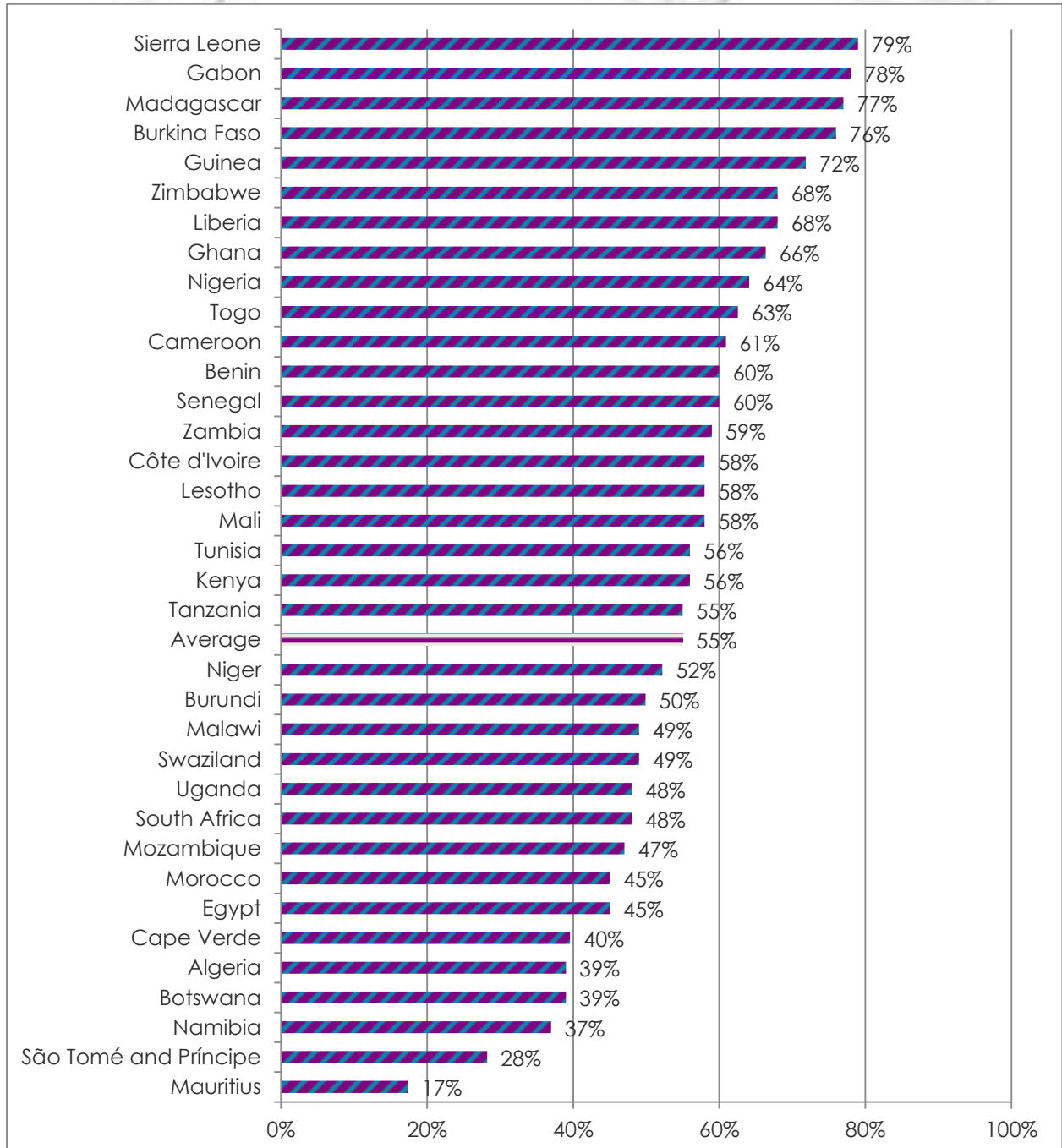
Poor government performance on water/sanitation issues

While many citizens consider water supply a priority, they are not satisfied with how their governments are addressing the issue. On average across 35 countries,⁴ a majority (55%) of

⁴ Questions about government performance were not asked in Sudan.

citizens rate their government's performance in handling water and sanitation services as "fairly bad" or "very bad" (Figure 11). This negative appraisal is the majority view in all regions except North Africa, where 46% of respondents rate their government's handling of water and sanitation services as "fairly" or "very" bad. Rural residents (58% disapprove) are somewhat more critical than city dwellers (51%).

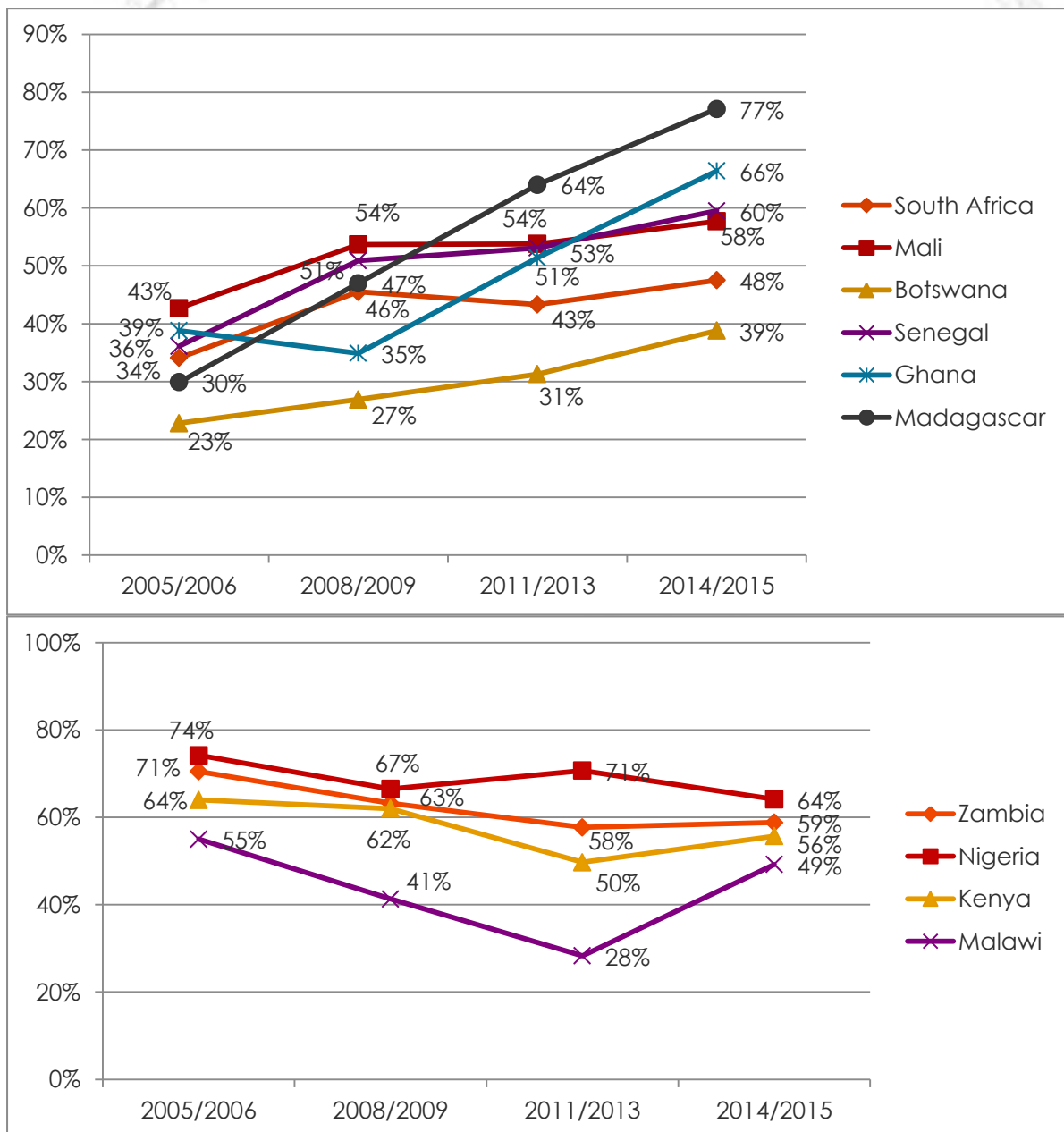
Figure 11: Poor government performance in handling water and sanitation services
 | 35 countries | 2014/2015



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: Providing water and sanitation services? (% who say "fairly badly" or "very badly")

Across the 18 countries tracked over the past decade, negative public ratings of government performance in providing water and sanitation services increased from 41% in 2005/2006 to 55% in 2014/2015. They worsened dramatically in Madagascar (an increase of 47 percentage points in “fairly/very bad” ratings), followed by Ghana (28 points), Senegal (23 points), Botswana (16 points), Mali (15 points), and South Africa (13 points) (Figure 12, top). Though still largely negative, ratings became somewhat more positive in four countries (Zambia, Nigeria, Kenya, and Malawi) (Figure 12, bottom).

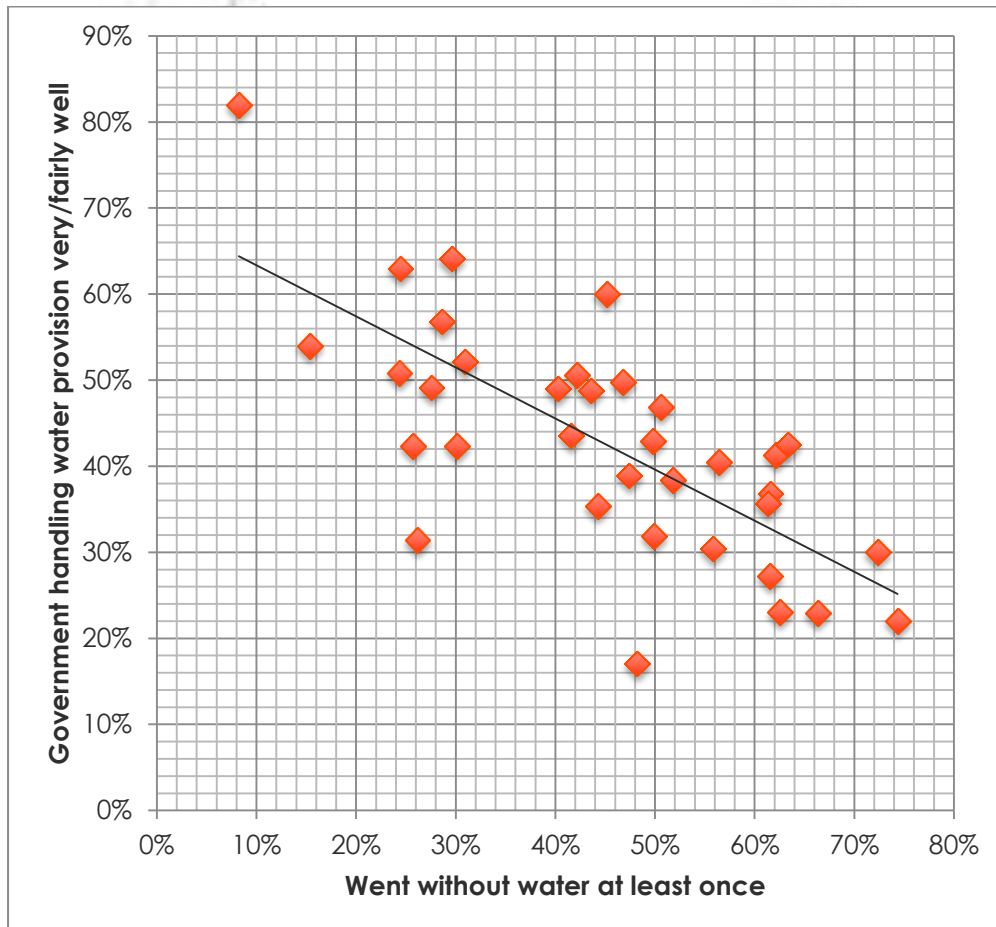
Figure 12: Poor government performance: Countries with increased (top) and decreased (bottom) negative ratings | 2005-2015



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: Providing water and sanitation services? (% who say “fairly badly” or “very badly”)

Figure 13, whose data points represent the 35 countries surveyed about government performance in 2014/2015, suggests a moderately strong relationship between the experience of going without enough water and assessments of the government's performance: The greater the proportion of the population that went without enough water at least once during the preceding year, the smaller the proportion who say the government is performing "very well" or "fairly well" in providing water and sanitation services.

Figure 13: Relationship between going without enough water and government performance rating | 35 countries | 2014/2015



Respondents were asked:

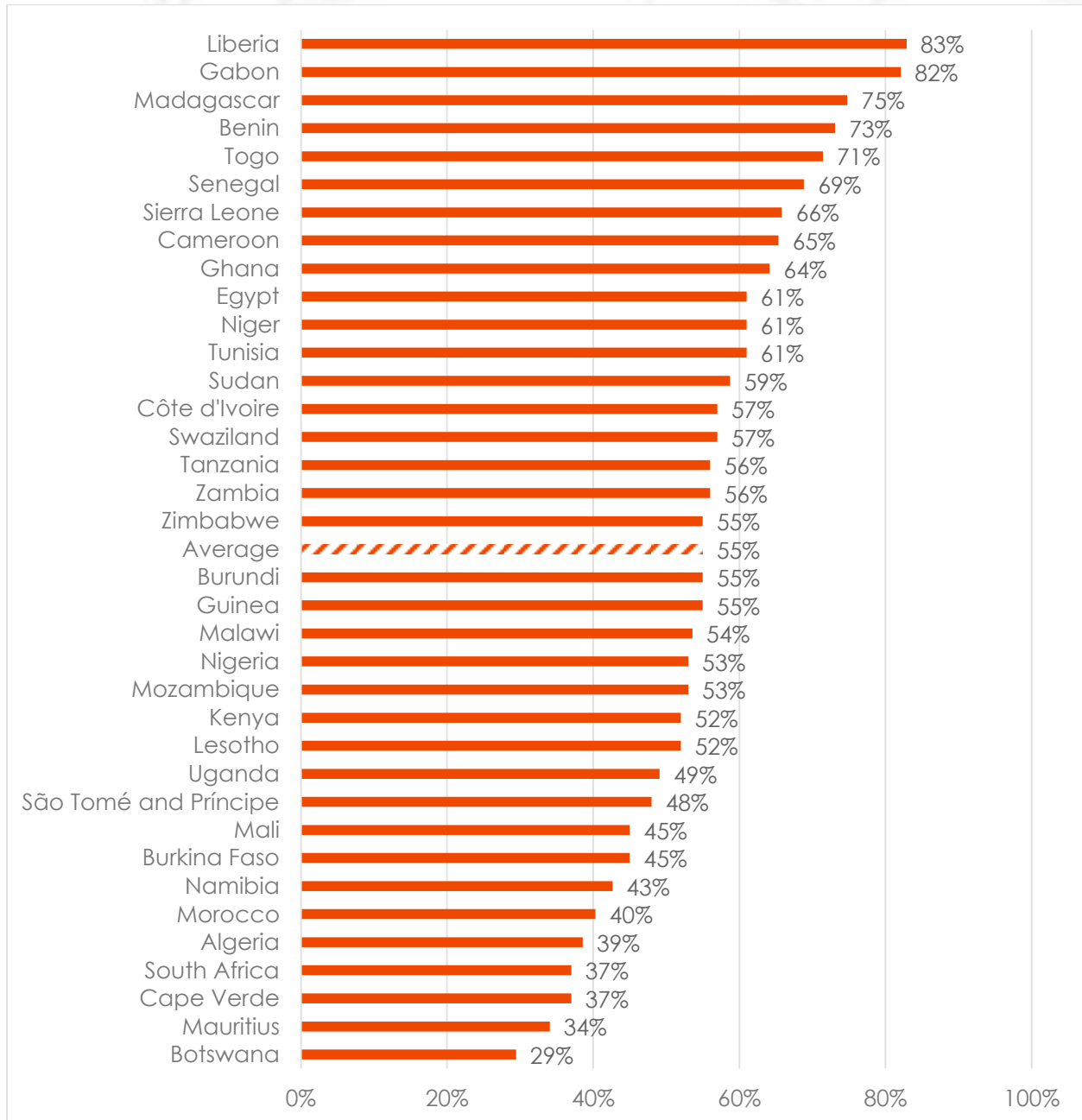
- Over the past year, how often, if ever, have you or anyone in your family gone without enough clean water for home use? (% who went without water at least once in the preceding year)
- How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: Providing water and sanitation services? (% who say "very well" or "fairly well")

Note: Pearson's $r = -0.7219$ (significant at .01 level)

Difficulty obtaining water and sanitation services

One factor that may contribute to dissatisfaction with water and sanitation service provision is the difficulty of obtaining these utilities. Among respondents who tried to obtain water, sanitation, or electricity services from the government during the year preceding the survey, more than half (55%) say it was "difficult" or "very difficult" to get the services they needed. The proportions complaining of difficulty range from 29% in Botswana to 82% in Liberia (Figure 14).

Figure 14: Difficulty of obtaining water, sanitation, or electric services | 36 countries
 | 2014/2015

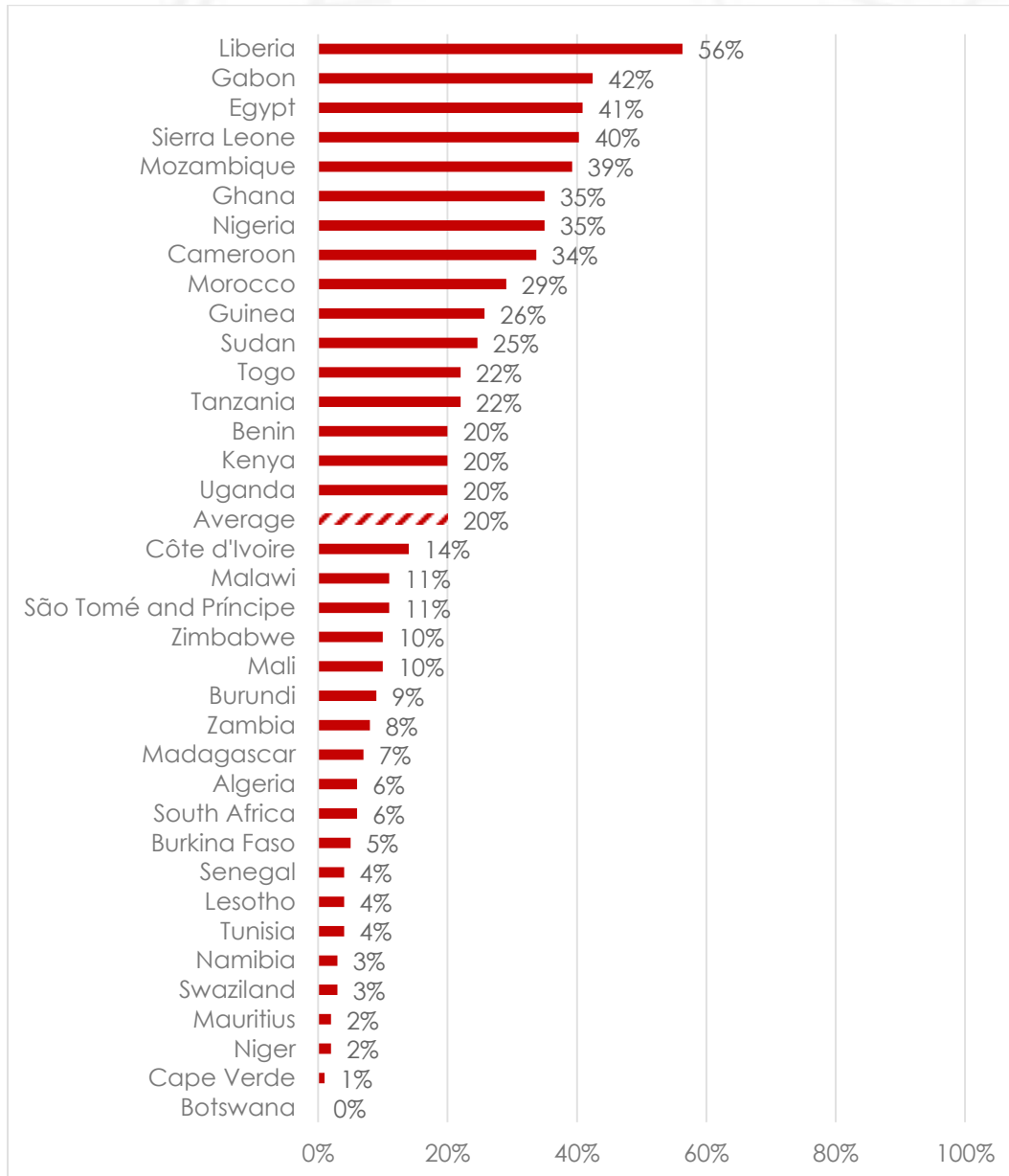


Respondents were asked: *In the past 12 months, have you tried to get water, sanitation, or electric services from government? (If yes:) How easy or difficult was it to obtain the services you needed? (% who say "difficult" or "very difficult")*

Bribery to obtain water, sanitation, or electric services

Among citizens who tried to obtain water, sanitation, or electric services from the government during the year preceding the survey, about one in five (18%) say they had to pay a bribe or do a favour in order to get the services they needed. Liberians (56%) were the most likely to have to pay a bribe, while in Botswana no respondent reports having to pay a bribe for utility services (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Paid a bribe to obtain water or sanitation services in past year
 | 36 countries | 2014/2015



Respondents were asked: *In the past 12 months, have you tried to get water, sanitation, or electric services from government? (If yes;) And how often, if ever, have you had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favour to government officials in order to get the services you needed? (Among respondents who tried obtain services, % who say they paid a bribe "once or twice," "a few times," or "often")*

Urban-rural and regional differences on water and sanitation indicators

Urban-rural differences related to water and sanitation, summarized in Figure 16, reflect a large disadvantage for rural residents when it comes to access but only minor differences in the difficulty of obtaining services, the likelihood of having to pay a bribe, and public assessments of government performance.

Regional differences, summarized in Figure 17, show North Africa generally in the lead and East Africa trailing with regard to access, while results on other indicators are mixed.

Figure 16: Urban-rural differences on water/sanitation indicators | 36 countries | 2014/2015

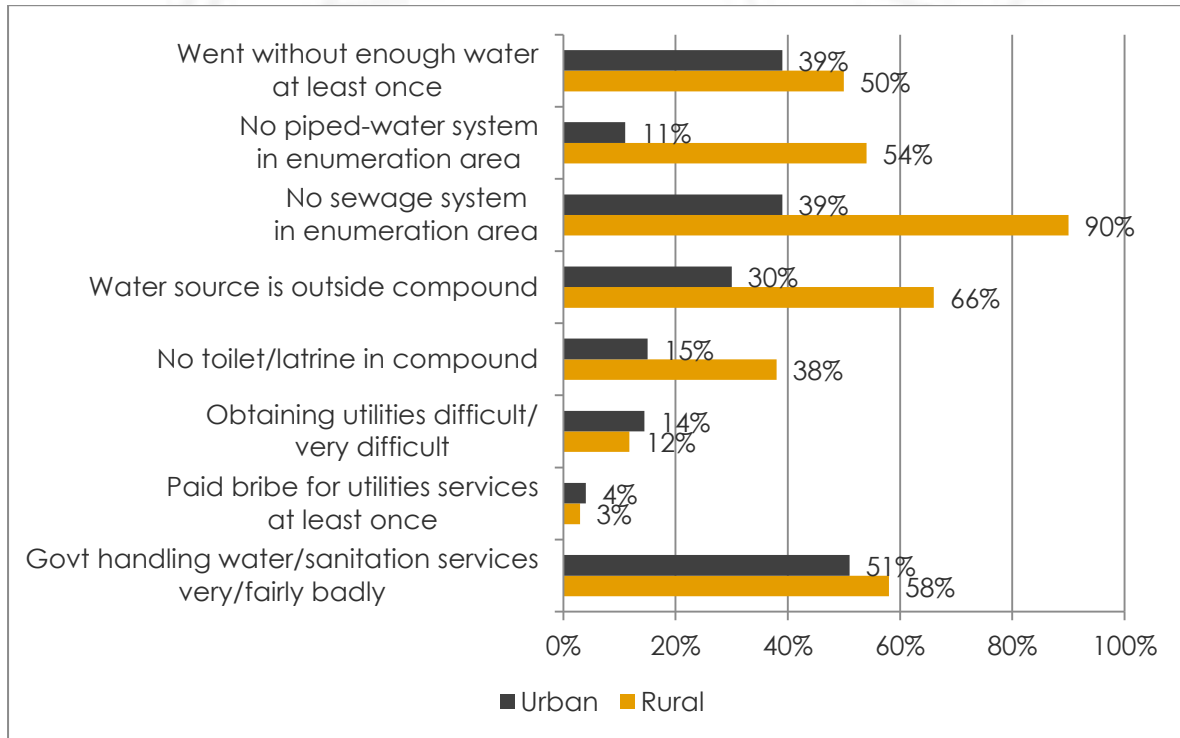
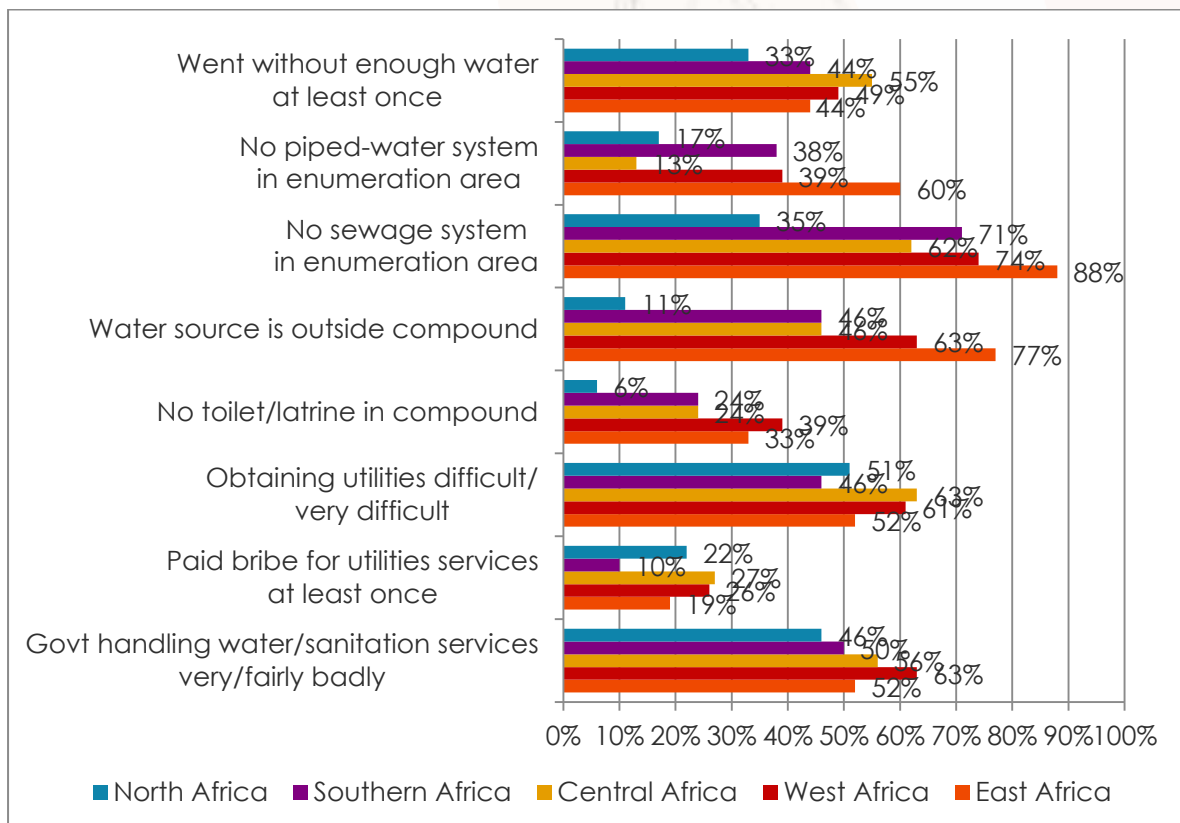


Figure 17: Regional differences on water/sanitation indicators | 36 countries | 2014/2015



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Appendix

Table A.1: Afrobarometer Round 6 fieldwork dates and previous survey rounds

Country	Months when Round 6 fieldwork was conducted	Previous survey rounds
Algeria	May-June 2015	2013
Benin	May-June 2014	2005, 2008, 2011
Botswana	June-July 2014	1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012
Burkina Faso	April-May 2015	2008, 2012
Burundi	September-October 2014	2012
Cameroon	January-February 2015	2013
Cape Verde	November-December 2014	2002, 2005, 2008, 2011
Côte d'Ivoire	August-September 2014	2013
Egypt	June-July 2015	2013
Gabon	September 2015	N/A
Ghana	May-June 2014	1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012
Guinea	March-April 2015	2013
Kenya	November-December 2014	2003, 2005, 2008, 2011
Lesotho	May 2014	2000, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012
Liberia	May 2015	2008, 2012
Madagascar	December 2015-January 2015	2005, 2008, 2013
Malawi	March-April 2014	1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012
Mali	December 2014	2001, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2013
Mauritius	June-July 2014	2012
Morocco	November 2015	2013
Mozambique	June-August 2015	2002, 2005, 2008, 2012
Namibia	August-September 2014	1999, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2012
Niger	April 2015	2013
Nigeria	December 2014-January 2015	2000, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2013
São Tomé and Príncipe	July-August 2015	N/A
Senegal	November-December 2014	2002, 2005, 2008, 2013
Sierra Leone	May-June 2015	2012
South Africa	August-September 2015	2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2011
Sudan	June 2015	2013

Country	Months when Round 6 fieldwork was conducted	Previous survey rounds
Swaziland	April 2015	2013
Tanzania	August-November 2014	2001, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012
Togo	October 2014	2012
Tunisia	April-May 2015	2013
Uganda	May 2015	2000, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2012
Zambia	October 2014	1999, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2013
Zimbabwe	November 2014	1999, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2012

Other Round 6 global releases

- **Where to start? Aligning sustainable development goals with citizen priorities.** (2015). Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 67. Available at http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/publications/Dispatches/ab_r6_dispatchno67_african_priorities_en.pdf.
- **Building on progress: Infrastructure development still a major challenge in Africa.** (2016). Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 69. Available at www.afrobarometer.org/publications/ad69-building-progress-infrastructure-development-still-major-challenge-africa.
- **Africa's growth dividend? Lived poverty drops across much of the continent.** (2016). Afrobarometer Policy Paper No. 29. Available at <http://www.afrobarometer.org/publications/pp29-africas-growth-dividend-lived-poverty-drops-across-the-continent>.
- **Good neighbours? Africans express high levels of tolerance for many, but not for all.** (2016). Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 74. Available at <http://afrobarometer.org/publications/tolerance-in-africa>
- **Off-grid or 'off-on': Lack of access, unreliable electricity supply still plague majority of Africans.** Afrobarometer Dispatch No. 75. Available at <http://afrobarometer.org/publications/ad75-unreliable-electricity-supply-still-plague-majority-of-africans>

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