



Press Release

For further information or to arrange an interview with an Afrobarometer social scientists

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A Majority of Africans Say National Economic Conditions are Bad

New findings from Afrobarometer, based on surveys conducted in an unprecedented 34 African countries between October 2011 and June 2013, reveal widespread dissatisfaction with current economic conditions despite a decade of strong growth.

Annual GDP growth on the continent averaged 4.8% over the past decade (2002-11)¹, prompting *The Economist* magazine to tag Africa as 'The Hopeful Continent', and an abundance of upbeat macroeconomic statistics has made Africa a new darling of portfolio investors.

Afrobarometer's data on popular perceptions about the condition of national economies and the effectiveness of governments' efforts to manage them reveal a wide gap in between ordinary Africans and the global economic community, however. In particular:

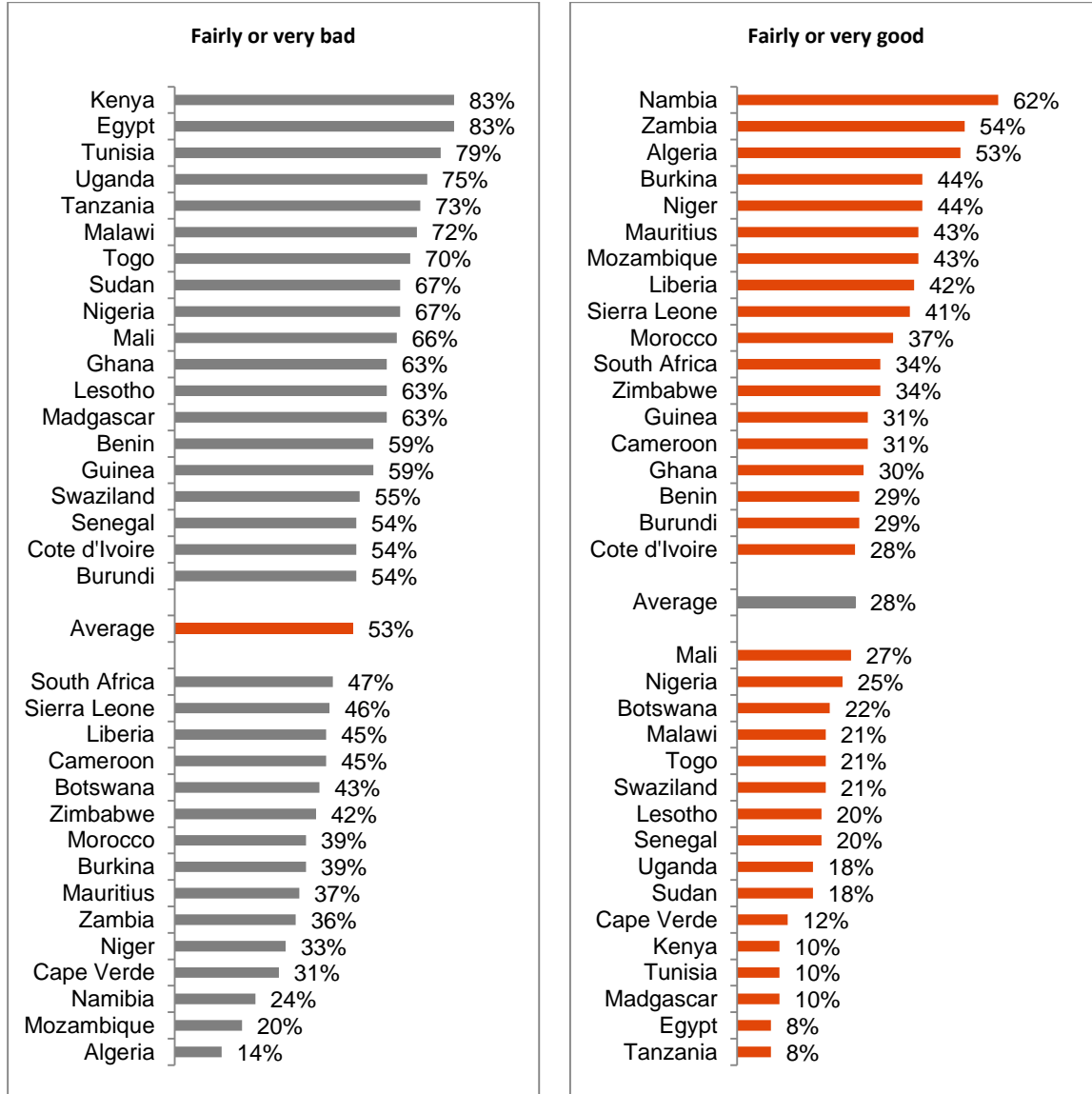
- Across 34 countries a majority (53%) rate the current condition of their national economy as 'fairly' or 'very bad', while just 29% offer a positive assessment.
- Just one in three Africans (31%) think the condition of their national economies has improved in the past year, compared to 38% who say things have gotten worse.
- Similarly, 32% say their own personal living conditions have improved in the past year, compared to 33% who say they have gotten worse (34% saw no change).
- Africans give their governments failing marks for economic management (56% say they are doing 'fairly' or 'very badly'), improving the living standards of the poor (69% fairly/very badly), creating jobs (71% fairly/very badly), and narrowing income gaps (76% fairly/very badly).
- Many Africans nonetheless express optimism about the future: 57% expect the economy to be better in a year
- West Africa tends to be the most positive and optimistic region, while East Africans are consistently the most negative, and the least optimistic about the future.

¹ Economic growth rates reported are annual averages calculated for the decade from 2002-11, based on data from African Development Bank available at <http://www.afdb.org/en/knowledge/statistics/>. Liberia growth rates are calculated for the period from 2004-2011. Somalia is excluded.

Charts

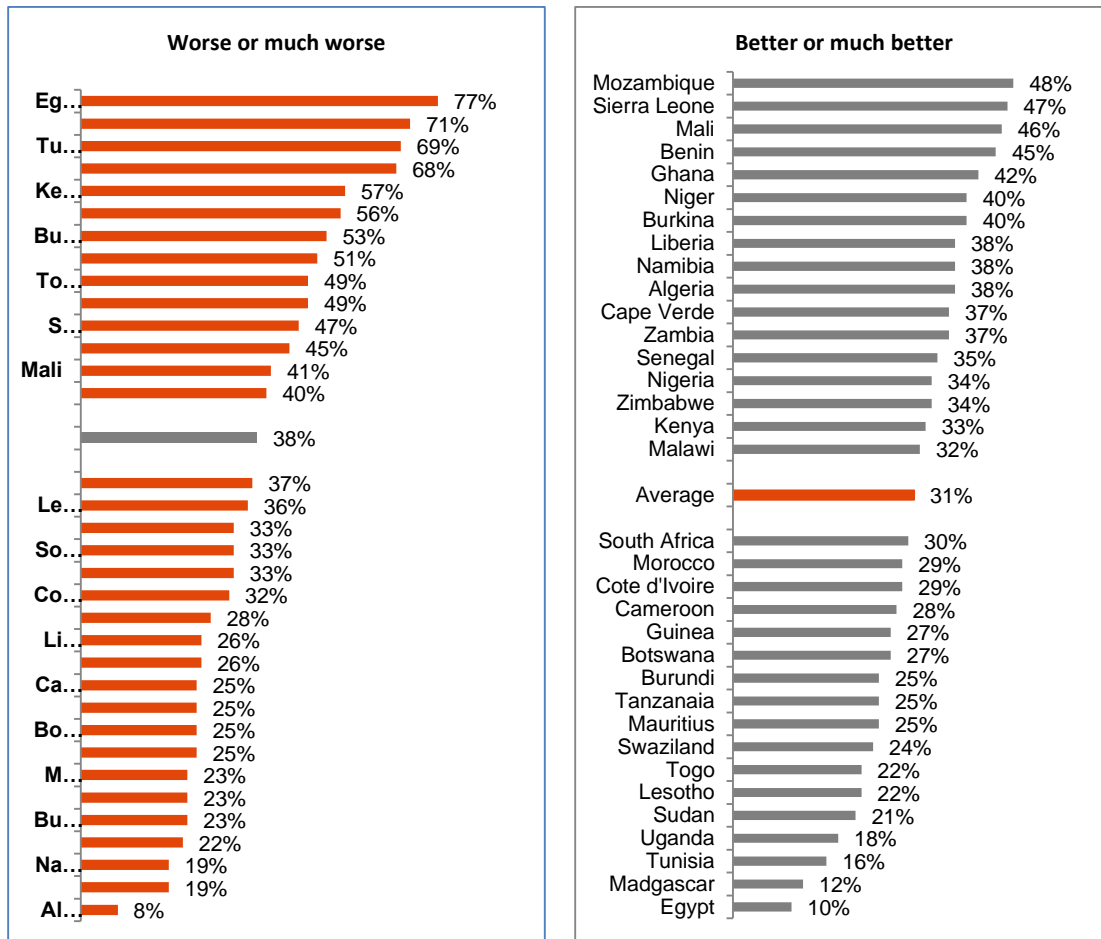
Satisfaction with national economic conditions by country, 2011-2013

Survey participants were asked: *In general, how would you describe the present economic condition of this country?*
 (% who say conditions are fairly or very bad; who say fairly or very good)

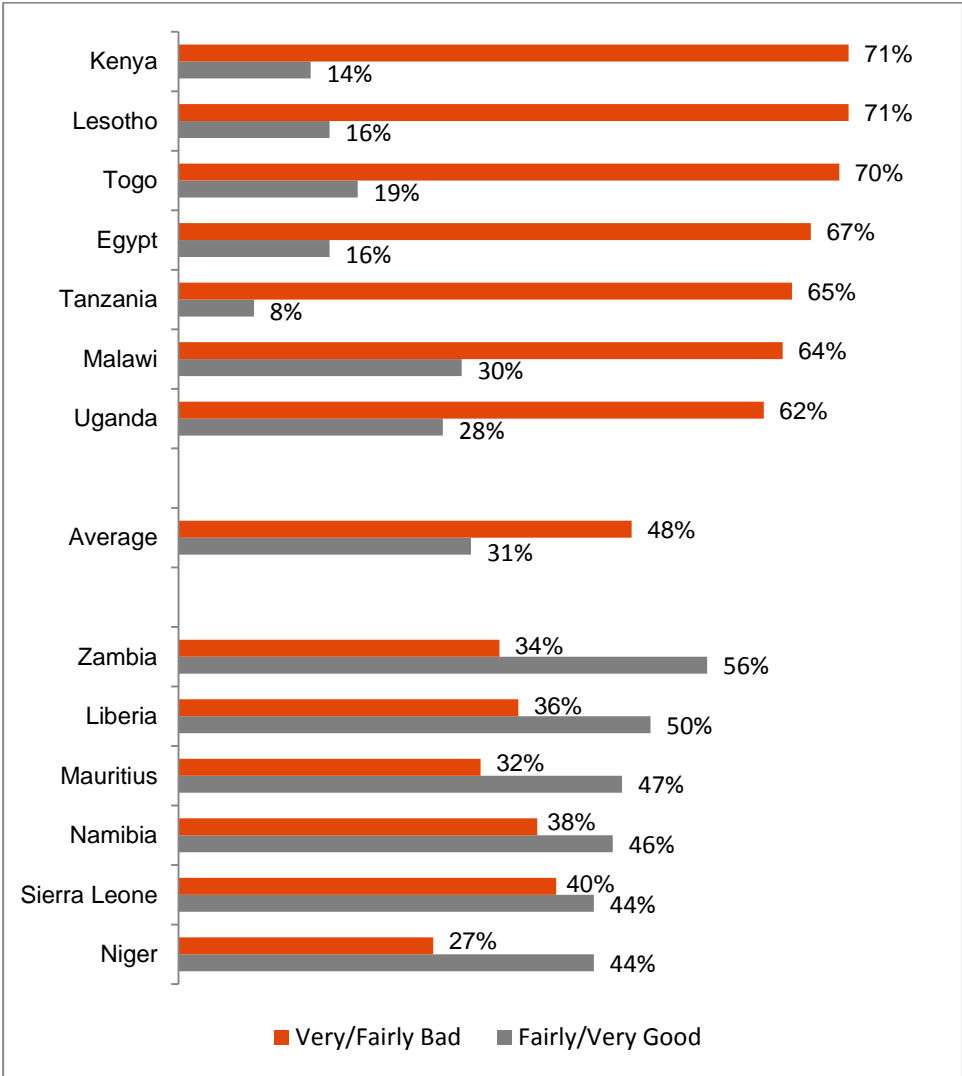


Current conditions of national economy compared with one year ago

Participants were asked: Looking back, how do you rate economic conditions in this country compared to one year ago? (% who said it was worse or much worse; better or much better)

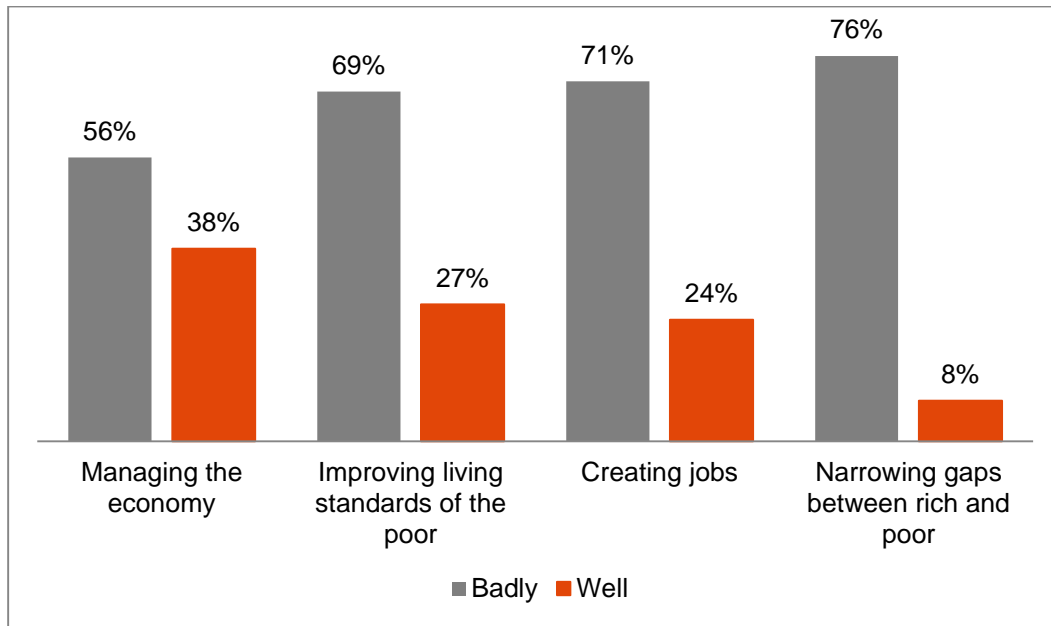


Personal living conditions, countries with highest bad and good ratings



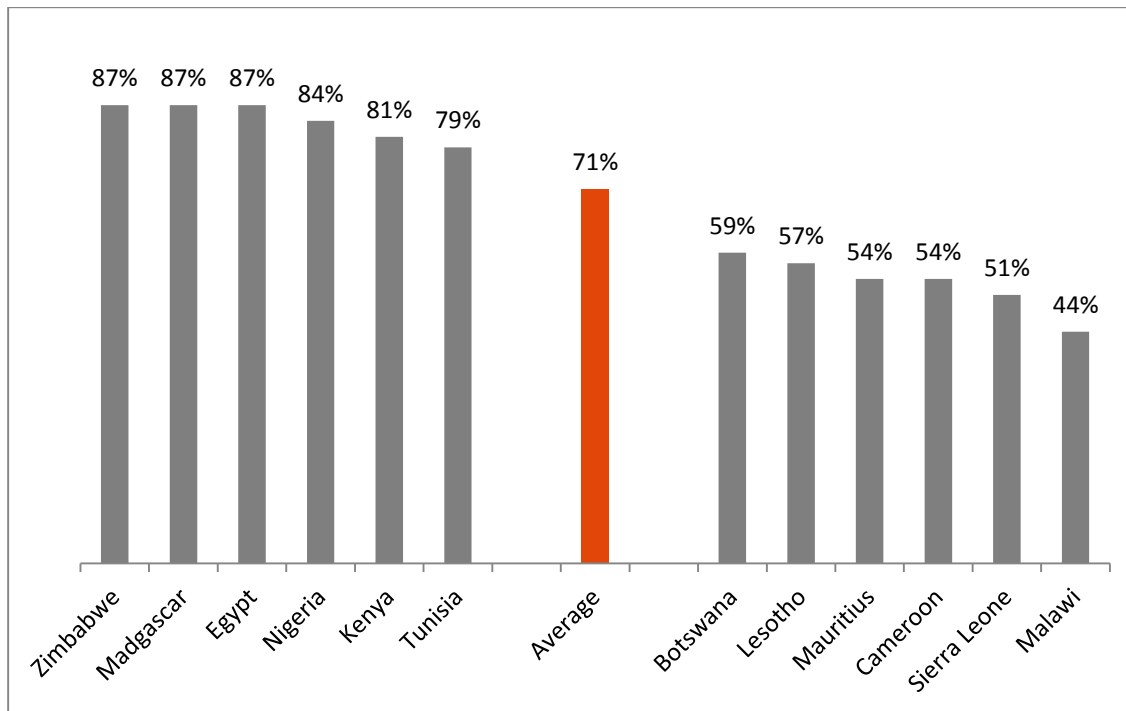
Participants were asked: In general, how would you describe your own present living conditions?

Citizen evaluations of government economic management in 34 countries



Participants 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? (% who said fairly and very badly or fairly and very well)

Countries with highest and lowest negative ratings of job creation work by governments



Participants were asked: how well or badly would you say the current government is handling the creation of jobs, or haven't you heard enough to say? (% who said fairly/very badly)

Note: Chart figures may not add up to 100% because the chart omits those who said "don't know" or who did not register any change in economic conditions

Afrobarometer

Afrobarometer (AB) conducts public opinion surveys that measure citizens' attitudes toward democracy, governance, the economy, leadership, identity, and other related issues. The AB is an independent, non-partisan, African-based network of researchers. The organization aims to give the public a *voice* in policy making by providing high-quality public opinion data to policymakers, civil society organizations, academics, media, donors and investors, and ordinary Africans.

Afrobarometer surveys are based on nationally representative samples. These 34-country results therefore represent the views of approximately three-quarters (76%) of the continent's population. Results from a 35th country, Ethiopia, will be available shortly. The total number of respondents in the 34 countries was 51,605.

Afrobarometer's economic management findings were released in Johannesburg, at the first of seven Afrobarometer release events in seven cities. Survey results on Internet usage will be released in Nairobi Oct. 16; data on government services and natural resource management will be presented in Accra Oct. 30; corruption results will be released in Dakar Nov. 13; taxation data in Lagos on Nov. 27; Gender findings in Addis Ababa on Dec. 4. Our signature democracy figures will be presented in Bamako on Dec. 12.

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