



Institute for Public Policy Research

10 April 2013
Windhoek

PRESS RELEASE

Namibians' Trust and Approval of Performance in their National Government Remains Generally High

The Afrobarometer is a comparative series of public attitude surveys, covering up to 35 African countries in Round 5 (2011-2013). It measures public attitudes on democracy and its alternatives, evaluations of the quality of governance, and economic performance. In addition, the survey assesses the views of the electorate on critical political issues in the surveyed countries. The Afrobarometer also provides comparisons over time, as four rounds of surveys have been held from 1999 to 2008 and Round 5 is currently underway.

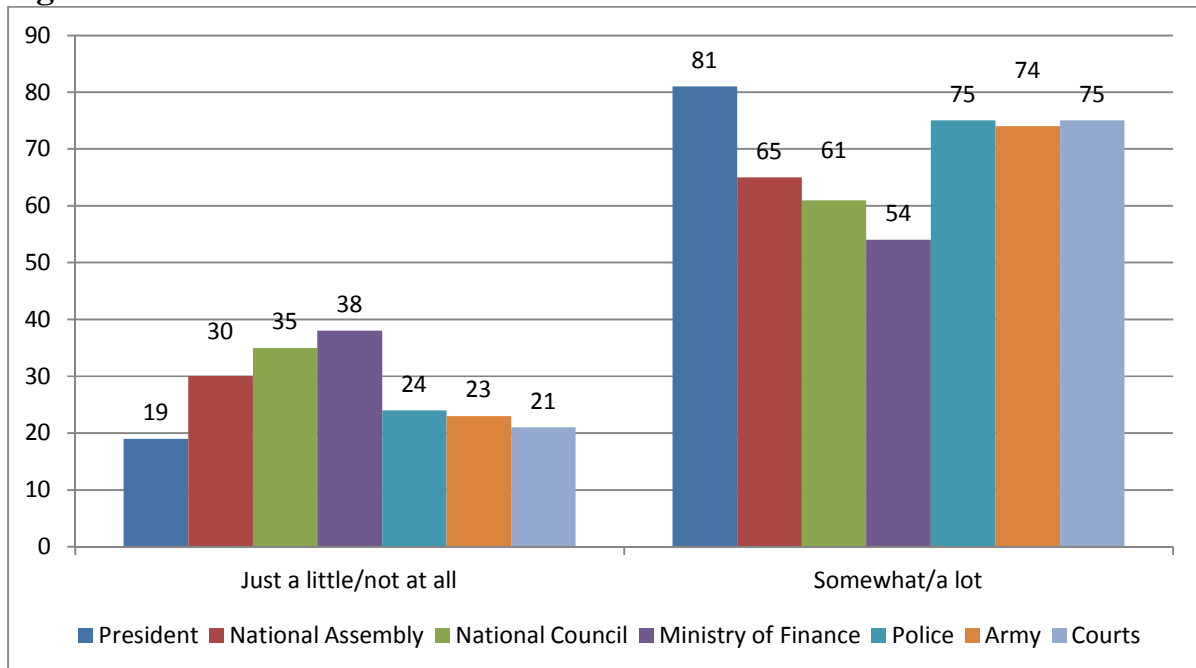
Afrobarometer's work in Namibia is coordinated by the **Institute for Public Policy Research**. Fieldwork for Round 5 was conducted in Namibia by **Survey Warehouse** from 19 November – 18 December 2012. The survey interviewed 1200 adult Namibians, and a sample of this size yields results with a margin of error of +/- 3% at a 95% confidence level.

FINDINGS

The Namibian government has enjoyed very strong trust and received high approval ratings on performance evaluations on most policy related questions in previous Afrobarometer surveys. Round 5 of the survey is no different. All of the major institutions tested enjoy high levels of popular support and government efforts on the policy front similarly find favour in most instances. However, unemployment and poverty related policies remain more problematic for government.

Both Founding President Nujoma and President Pohamba have consistently received the second highest trust evaluation among Presidents in African countries where the Afrobarometer surveys are being held. Likewise, parliament has received relatively high trust and performance levels over time. Other major institutional players in national governance, such as the courts, police, and army, also feature majority trust, which is important for regime legitimacy and democratic consolidation. Figure 1 shows the majority trust levels indicated by Namibian respondents for the different national offices in 2012.

Figure 1. Citizens' Trust in Public Institutions

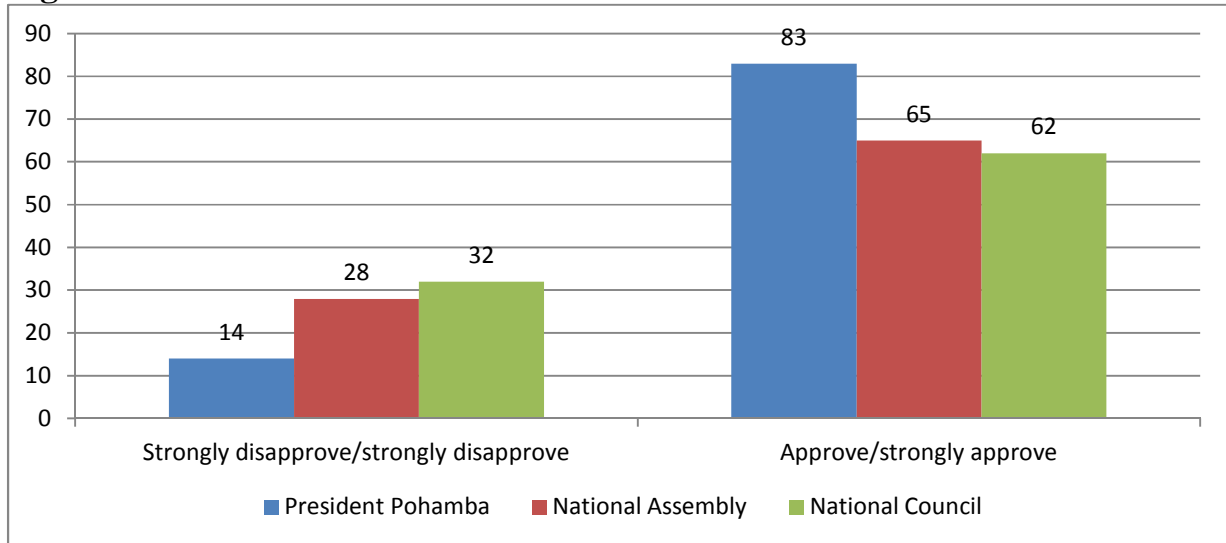


How much do you trust each of the following, or haven't you heard enough about them to say: ...

At 81% positive, President Pohamba still leads the institutional parade. His trust level remains at the same high level as in 2008 and is comparable to the positive responses that President Nujoma received in earlier surveys. However, at 66% positive trust, the National Assembly has slipped slightly from its previous 70% in 2008. The National Council rating at 61% positive trust, also slid by a 5% margin. In contrast, the police (Nampol) has increased its margin to 75% from a previous 71% positive. Also the courts continue to receive about 75% on the favourable trust measure. Respondents who were not “close to SWAPO” held views considerably lower than SWAPO supporters, but a majority of them were still supportive. The government of the day continues to hold the trust of the vast majority of Namibians, which helps to institutionalise the legitimacy of a democratic order.

In addition to trust, government institutions' performance rating has held up over time with very positive responses in the 2012 survey. As Figure 2 demonstrates, all of the national institutions rate very positively in terms of the public's perception of how well they do their jobs. This is an important measure of governmental effectiveness and legitimacy. It also helps to explain, in part, election results over the past 23 years.

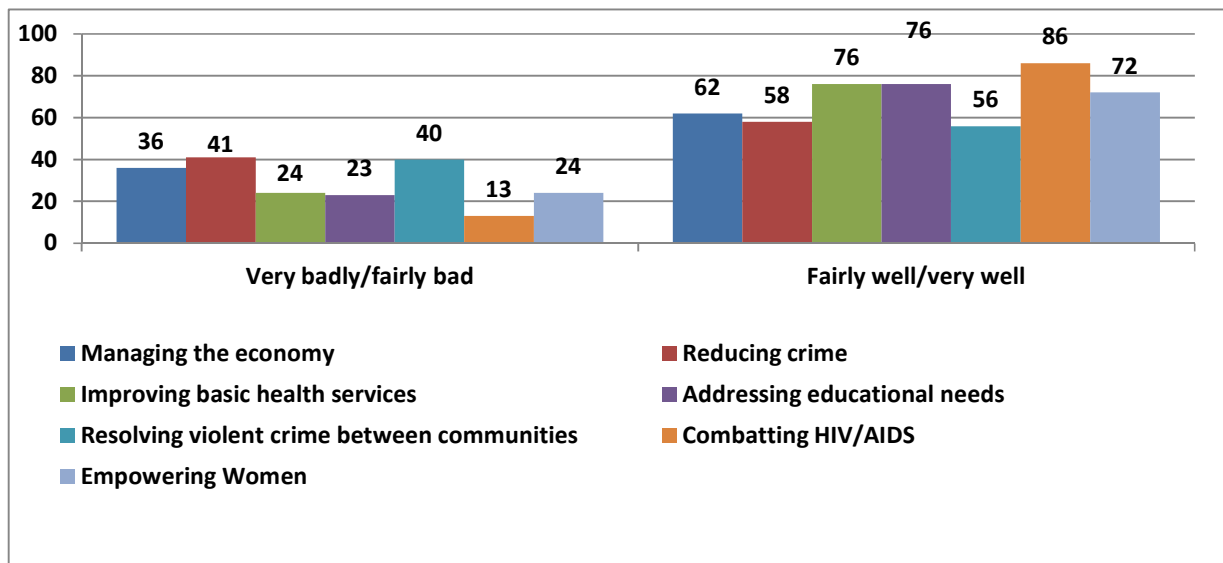
Figure 2. Government Performance



Do you approve or disapprove of the way the following people have performed their jobs over the past twelve months or haven't you heard enough to say: ...

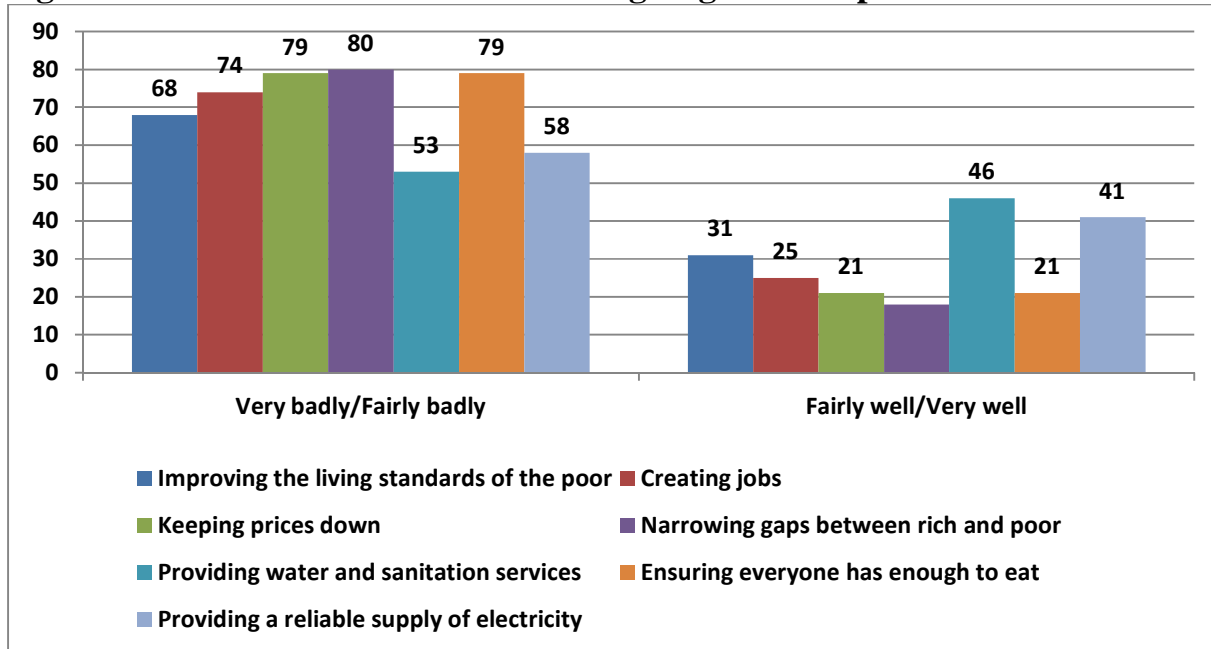
Although implementation is usually held up as the main culprit for government failures, Namibian respondents were able to distinguish between policy areas that were perceived as successful and those that were not. Figure 3 shows those policy areas that continue to receive positive sentiments from the majority Namibians particularly concerning education (76%), health (76%), HIV/AIDS (86%) and empowering women (72%), while Figure 4 displays those with a majority negative perception such as keeping prices down, narrowing the gap between rich and poor and ensuring that everyone has enough to eat. Again these results do not differ significantly from previous survey rounds' results. Little difference occurs between male and female respondents, while rural Namibians sometimes tend to be more positive or negative than urban ones, to government efforts by a slight margin. These distinctions will become clear in the forthcoming Summary of Results (SOR) due for release on 24 April.

Figure 3: Government Policies Receiving Positive Popular Support



How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: ...

Figure 4: Government Policies Receiving Negative Responses



Q65 How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say: ...

As indicated in previous releases, government is most vulnerable in its failure to deal with employment and poverty issues. Again at policy level, as indicated above, the government suffers from negative perceptions in these and related areas. As shown on Figure 4, Namibians by 79% disapprove the way the government deals with price stability, the same proportion blame the government for failure to deal with food security issues and 74% are not happy about unemployment issues. Nonetheless, government institutions and most policies rate favourably with the Namibian public as indicated in this release of results from Round 5 of the Afrobarometer survey.

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