



MEDIA RELEASE:

IPPR Responds to Criticisms of Afrobarometer Survey

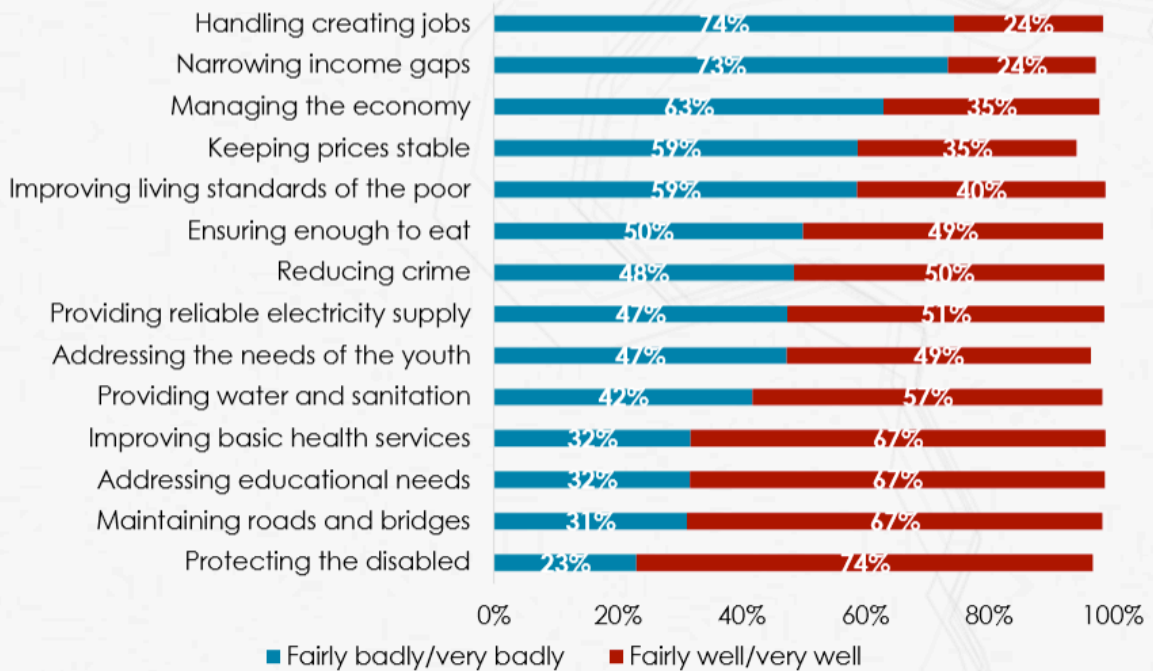
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The IPPR, as the local partner of the Afrobarometer survey, notes with concern some of the comments made by Minister of Poverty Eradication and Social Welfare Rev. Zephania Kameeta and Deputy Minister of Urban and Rural Development Derek Klazen regarding the Afrobarometer survey in Namibia.

The Namibia Press Agency (Nampa) reported that Minister Kameeta suggested, “it is clear that [Afrobarometer research] has an agenda to turn the people of this country against the government, and for the citizens not to work with the government in place.” Minister Klazen was quoted as saying: “Who sent them, and where are they coming from? They just want to pump lies into the people of this country, and discourage the good work the government is doing.”

The aim of the Afrobarometer survey is to find out what ordinary Namibian citizens think about a range of political and economic issues. On some issues, Namibians are critical of government performance – as with poverty, where a majority of Namibians say that government has not done enough to fight poverty. When the Afrobarometer survey finds that that Namibians are critical of government, it does not mean that Afrobarometer as an organisation or the IPPR as the local partner is condemning government. Rather, the Afrobarometer survey reflects what ordinary Namibians think about these issues. As can be seen from the figure below, respondents to the survey were negative about some aspects of government's performance and positive about others.

Government performance | Namibia | 2017



Respondents were asked: Now let's speak about the performance of the present government of this country. How well or badly would you say the current government is handling the following matters, or haven't you heard enough to say?

It is incorrect to portray the survey as simply having negative findings about government. Previously, the IPPR publicised those issues on which Namibians praised government. For example, we previously reported that Namibians have very high levels of trust in the President – some of the highest levels on the continent, in fact. Such parts of the survey did not draw accusations of a hidden agenda from government ministers.

It is important to understand that neither Afrobarometer nor the IPPR as the local partner are pushing any agenda or providing our own opinion. Statements such as, “An Afrobarometer survey ... found that the government is doing little to address unemployment and poverty” (as stated in the Nampa report) are potentially misleading. A more accurate phrasing would have it that “an Afrobarometer survey found that **Namibians think** the government is doing little to address unemployment and poverty.”

Deputy Minister Klazen spoke at the event where we first presented the figures showing high levels of confidence in the President. It is therefore surprising that he spoke out against Afrobarometer’s methodology over the weekend. The Deputy Minister suggested that because Afrobarometer interviewed only a subset of the population our results are not representative of the nation as a whole. This is a common misconception about polling and it is not an accurate description of our work. In fact, we are confident that our results represent the opinions of voting-age Namibians to a high degree of confidence (95% confidence level with a margin of error of +/-3 percent). The methodology which Afrobarometer uses is based on best statistical practices and has been used successfully around the world. The Afrobarometer has been recognised as a gold standard in Africa and across the globe.

The Afrobarometer process is designed so that each adult citizen has an equal chance of being included in the sample. Actual selection of respondents is done with randomization at every step of the process, while ensuring that each region is represented to the same degree as its proportion of the overall population. Members of the survey team travelled across the country, surveying urban and rural residents in all regions, in a number of local languages as well as English. The methodology used by Afrobarometer was drawn up by experts in survey methodology and has produced excellent results over many years. It is also transparent: the details of every step of the process can be found online.¹ We are therefore confident that what we report are the best available data on the opinions of Namibians.

It is disappointing to be subjected to such attacks by government leaders who should welcome independent, high-quality research that could help them better shape their policies. The critiques over the weekend were especially disappointing as Deputy Minister Klazen spoke at one of our events, where he could have made those criticisms. We also repeatedly invited Minister Kameeta to speak at our event on poverty, but his office never responded to us.

Finally, it is disappointing that neither Nampa nor the various other media outlets reporting on these speeches reached out to us for comment. We would have liked to explain our stance: that Afrobarometer results are not our opinions, but those of the Namibian people, that our methodology follows best practices, and that we believe the criticisms we have received are based on a misunderstanding of our work.

Ends

Further information: Graham Hopwood (IPPR Executive Director) (081 231 9722) or Max Weylandt (081 777 7918)

¹ http://afrobarometer.org/sites/default/files/survey_manuals/ab_r7_survey_manual_en.pdf