



South Africans' Ratings of Government Performance

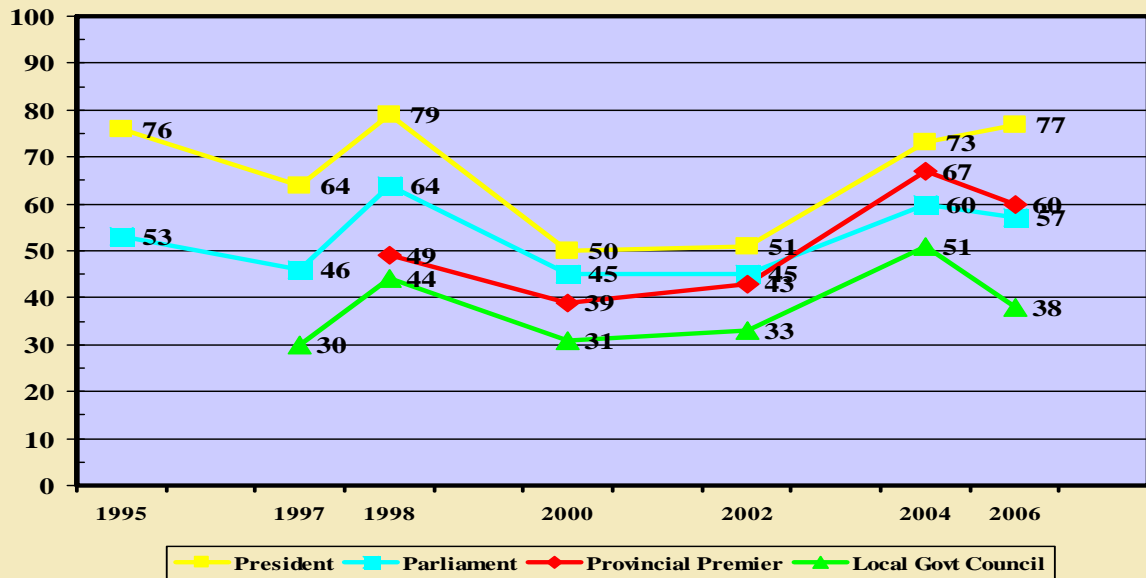
President Thabo Mbeki has reached new heights of public popularity with current job approval ratings matching the best ratings given to Nelson Mandela. These findings stand in stark contrast to the current crisis within the ANC and its alliance partners as manifested in sharp divisions over the treatment of former Deputy President Jacob Zuma, and the selection of the Party's next candidate for President, as well as unprecedented attacks on Mbeki's policies and leadership style by the South African Communist Party and the Congress of South African Trade Unions.

This is one of the many important results revealed by the recent Afrobarometer survey of a representative sample of 2,400 South Africans, conducted in January and February 2006 by Citizen Surveys.

Job Approval of Elected Leaders

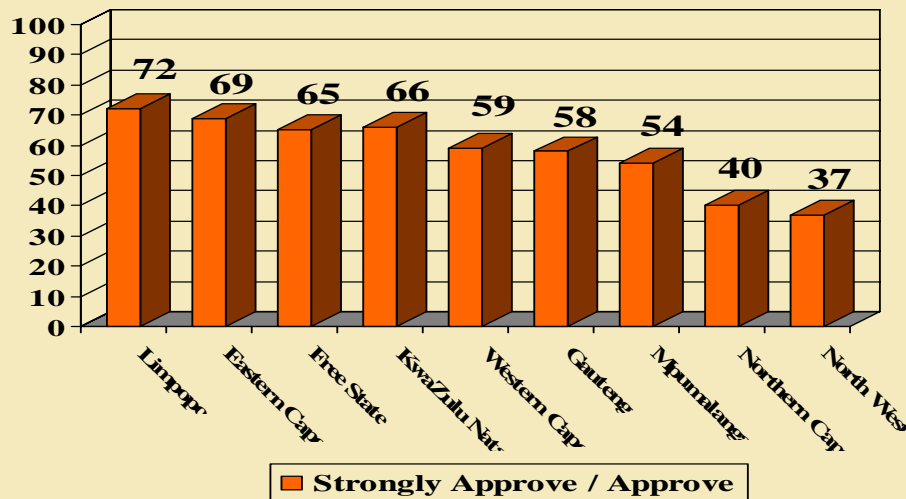
- As of January and February 2006, nearly eight in ten South Africans approve of the job **President Thabo Mbeki**. When asked about the way the President has performed his job over the past year, 77 percent said they "approved" (49 percent) or "strongly approved" (28 percent).
- This is the highest level of job approval for Mbeki yet recorded by the Afrobarometer, and constitutes a 26 percentage point increase since the 2000 survey found him with bare majority (51 percent).
- This new level is also statistically indistinguishable from Nelson Mandela's high water mark of 79 percent registered in 1998. At the same time, public approval for Mbeki is far less intense. Where 42 percent "strongly approved" (and 37 percent "approved") of Mandela in the 1998 survey, the current structure of opinion toward Mbeki is reversed as just 28 percent "strongly" approve (and 49 percent "approve").
- Mbeki enjoyed majority support among respondents of all race groups, ranging from 80 percent among Africans to 55 percent of white respondents. Across the provinces, support ranged from 96 percent in the Free State to 63 percent in KwaZulu-Natal. His support is higher among union members (83 percent) than non union members (76 percent).
- Mbeki's popular approval is at least twice as high as that given by Nigerians to Olusegun Obasanjo (32 percent) and by Zimbabweans to Robert Mugabe (27 percent) the two least popular leaders in the 18 countries surveyed by the Afrobarometer. At the same time, it lags behind the incredible 94 percent enjoyed by new Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete and the 90 percent enjoyed by Namibia's Hifikepune Pohamba.
- While Mbeki's support increased since the 2004 survey, public approval of other elected leaders or institutions slipped downward since 2004. 57 percent approved of the performance of the **Members of Parliament** over the past year, down very slightly from 60 percent in 2004.

Job Approval of Elected Leaders



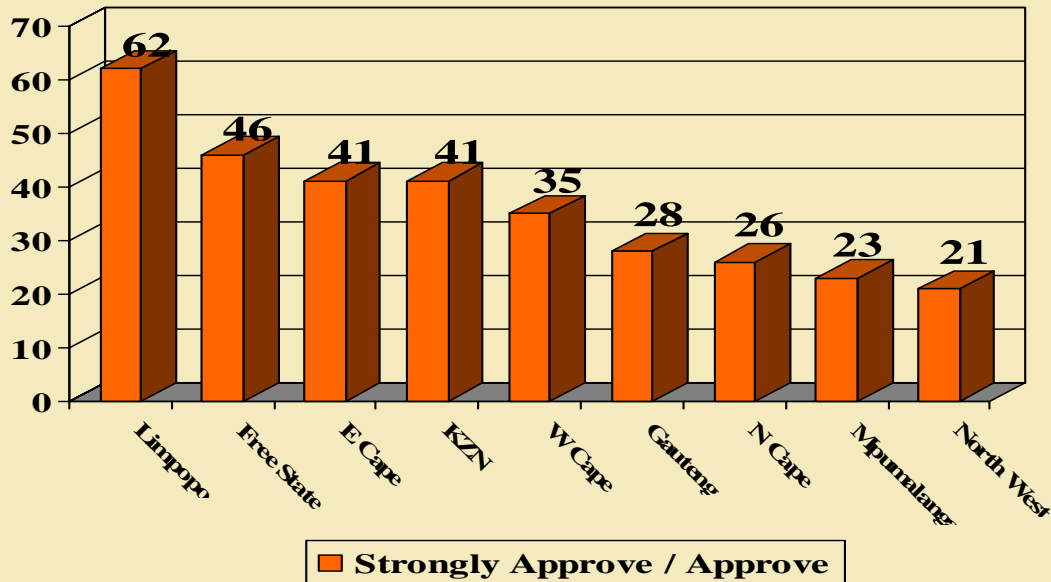
- Sixty percent approved of the performance of their **provincial Premiers**, but this was down from 67 percent two years ago. Premiers' job approval runs from highs of 72 percent for Sello Maloto, Premier of Limpopo and 69 percent for Nosimo Balidlela of Eastern Cape to lows of 40 percent for Dipuo Peters in Northern Cape (where fully 37 percent said they didn't know enough about her to offer an opinion) and 37 percent for Edna Molewa in Northwest.

Job Approval of Provincial Premiers



- The sharpest drop in public satisfaction with elected officials was for elected **local government councilors**. While 51 percent gave them a positive mark in 2004, this figure dropped to 38 percent in early 2006, a 13 point drop. Approval of councilors ranged from highs in Limpopo (62 percent) and Free State (46 percent) to lows in Mpumalanga (23 percent) and Northwest (21 percent). Large percentages in Northern Cape (46 percent) and Western Cape (23 percent) said they didn't know enough about their councilor to offer an opinion.

Job Approval of Local Government Councilors

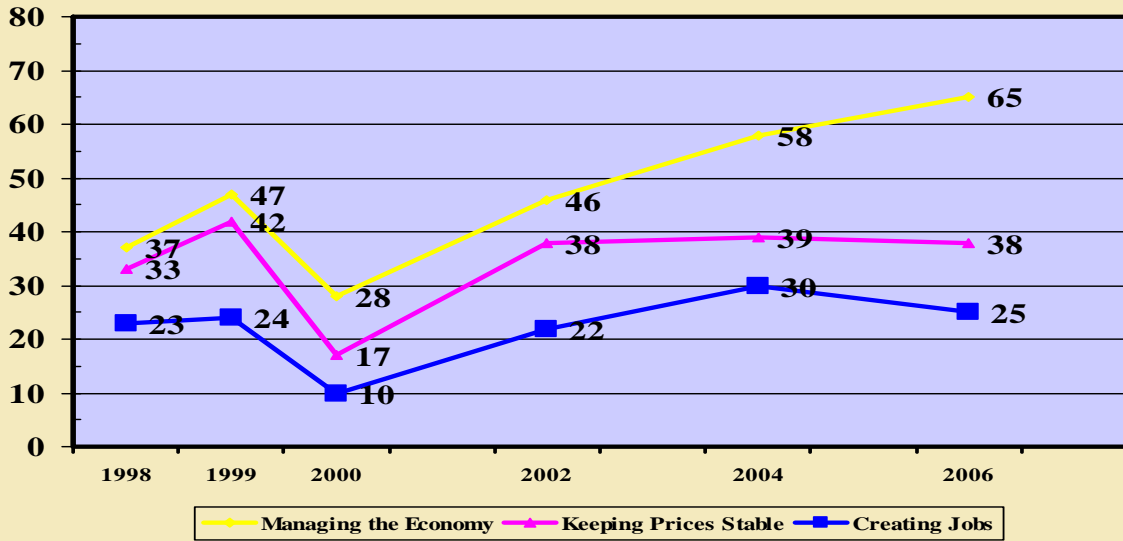


Rating National Government Performance on the Issues

The Afrobarometer also asks people to rate government performance on a range of different policy areas. We can break these down into various clusters.

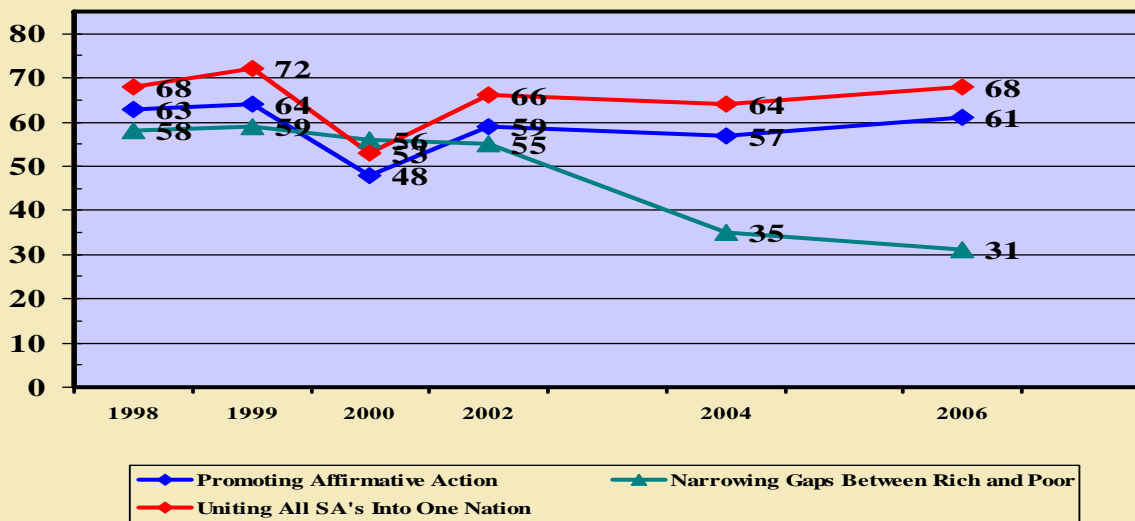
- In the area of macro-economic management, overall public satisfaction continues to rise, with 65 percent now saying the government is doing its job “well” or “very well” in **managing the economy** (a rise of 37 points since a low point of 28 percent in 2000). At the same time, people continue to be unhappy with government attempts **to keep prices stable** (even though inflation has been relatively low over the past few years), with 38 percent telling interviewers that the government is doing its job well or very well. But with just 26 percent approval, government performance in **creating jobs** remains the government’s Achilles heel.

Evaluations of Government Performance Macro-Economic Management

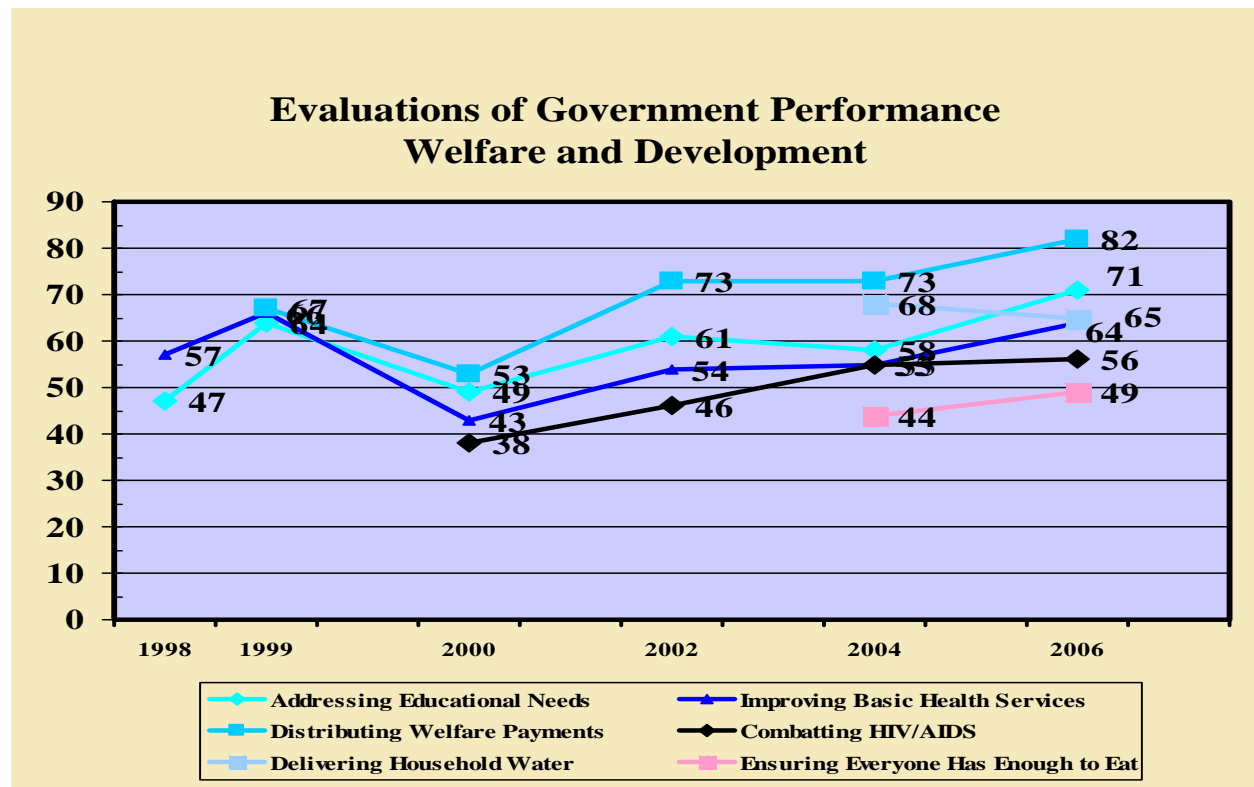


- Turning to the broad areas of equality, redistribution and nation-building, the government continues to receive strong ratings for its efforts to **unite all South Africans into one nation** (68 percent) and **promote affirmative action** (61 percent). At the same time, South Africans are increasingly disenchanted with the government's success in **narrowing gaps between rich and poor**, with just 31 percent satisfied (down sharply from 58 percent in 1998).

Evaluations of Government Performance Equality, Redistribution and Nation Building

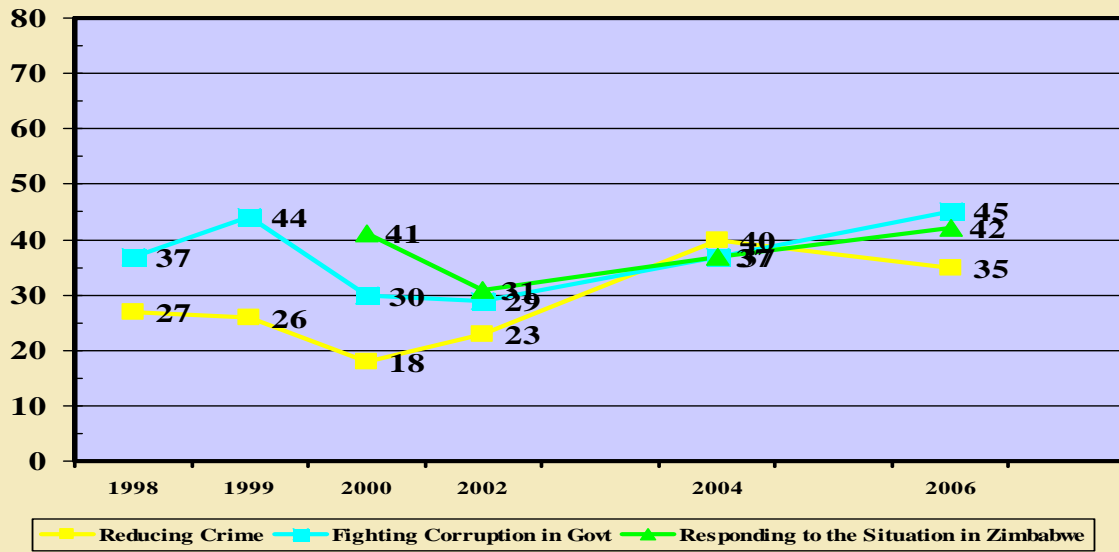


- On matters of welfare and development, the government receives increasingly positive scores across a range of issues such as **distributing welfare payments** (at 82 percent, its most popular performance area), **addressing educational needs** (71 percent), **improving basic health services** (64 percent), and **delivering household water** (64 percent). Approval of government performance at **combating HIV/AIDS** remained steady (56 percent). However, just 49 percent give positive marks to government attempts to **ensure everyone has enough to eat**.



- When it comes to issues of political governance, the government receives far lower levels of approval. Forty five percent say the government is **fighting corruption in government** well or very well, and 35 percent are satisfied with government efforts to **reduce crime**. Finally, in the lone area of foreign policy covered by the survey, 41 percent give positive ratings to government attempts to **respond to the situation in Zimbabwe**.

Evaluations of Government Performance Political Governance



The Survey

Face to face interviews were conducted in the eleven official languages with a nationally representative, area probability sample of 2400 respondents across all nine provinces in January and February 2006. In the first stage of sampling, 600 Census Enumerator Areas (EAs) were randomly selected from a frame of all EAs, stratified by province and race, with the probability of selection proportionate to population size based on the most recent Statistics SA midyear 2005 population estimates. This ensures that every eligible adult has an equal and know chance of being selected. The realized sample was weighted by age, gender, race and province to ensure it matched current population estimates. In the second stage of sampling, four households were randomly selected within each EA. In the third and final stage, one South African citizen over the age of 18 was randomly from a list of all household members to be interviewed. The final sample size of 2,400 supports estimates to the national population of all adults that is accurate to within a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percentage points at a confidence level of 95 percent.

Fieldwork for this survey was conducted by Citizen Surveys. For more information about Citizen Surveys, see www.citizensurvey.com or email them at info@citizensurvey.com.

Afrobarometer

The Afrobarometer is produced collaboratively by social scientists from 18 African countries. Coordination is provided by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), the Centre for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) and Michigan State University. For more information, see: www.afrobarometer.org.

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