Socioeconomic conditions

This section uses statistical data to look at some key aspects of socio-economic conditions in 2002 and 2003. The main point of interest is to update the poverty profile. Evidence on education, health, the labour market and utilities is also presented. The main source of information is the Living Standards Measurement Survey (LSMS) carried out by INSTAT.

# Water and electricity

Access to basic facilities such as water and electricity are indicators of households’ quality of life and as noted in the health section earlier, those who did not have access to running water and sanitation within their house tended to report worse health.

### Water supply and quality

Of all households in 2002, 50% had running water inside the dwelling, 17% had running water outside the dwelling, 22% used water from a spring, well or river while 11% used a public tap or water truck. Just under one third of households (32%) had a continuous supply of water and poor households were less likely than non-poor households to have running water or a continuous supply.

Figure 3.4 presents indicators of access and quality of water supply in urban and rural areas in 2002 and 2003. Urban households were more likely than rural households to have running water inside their dwelling. In contrast, rural households, where water was more likely to be from a spring or well, reported higher water quality levels in the sense that it was more often suitable for drinking. Similarly, those in rural areas were less likely to say that they boiled their drinking water than those in urban areas.

Water source and quality, 2002 and 2003



Between 2002 and 2003, there were improvements in water indicators, although the inequities between urban and rural areas remained broadly the same. Overall, there was an increase in the proportion of households with running water inside their dwelling to 60%. Conditions improved for rural areas where the proportion of households with running water inside the house increased from 24% in 2002 to 33% in 2003. In 2003, rural areas were as likely as urban areas to have a continuous water supply and the continuous supply had improved in all areas. The proportion of households reporting that their water was not good for drinking increased slightly in 2003 but on the other hand the percentage boiling their drinking water fell in both urban and rural areas. However, this may in part be because more households used bottled water for drinking (an increase from 40.3% of households in 2002 to 44.1% in 2003).

For households with running water either inside or outside the house, the average supply fell from 5.5 to 4.9 hours per day between 2002 and 2003. However, the mean for all households increased slightly from 1.9 to 2.0 hours per day during the same period. Urban areas were supplied with water 3 hours per day on average, while in rural areas the average supply was just 1 hour.

### Electricity

Improving the electricity supply is considered a priority, in particular to improve the regularity of the supply and reduce the number of electricity cuts experienced by households and businesses. In 2002, 13.5% of households in the LSMS said they never had any electricity cuts, 5.6% had cuts several times a month, 8.6% had cuts several times a week and 77.2% had cuts every day. For those experiencing cuts, the mean number of hours per day without electricity in the month before the survey was 8.6 hours. Urban households had on average no electricity for 7.2 hours per day and rural households for 9.5 hours per day.

Perception of the electricity service quality between 2003 and 2002



In 2003, the mean number of hours households had no electricity had fallen to an average of 4.8 hours per day. In urban areas the mean was 3.5 hours and in rural areas 6 hours per day. In 2003 households were also asked whether they thought the electricity service had improved over the past year. The majority (52%), thought that the service had improved over the past year while a further 28.5% thought it had stayed the same. Only 17.5% thought that the electricity service was worse than the year before. shows the distribution by urban and rural areas. Households in urban areas were more likely than those in rural areas to say that the electricity service had improved in the past year while those in rural areas were more likely to say that it had remained the same or worsened.