

**Statistics
South Africa**

**Statistical release
P0141.1**

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Consumer Price Index

March 1999

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**Embargo: 11:30
Date: 20 April 1999**

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Published by
Statistics South Africa
Private Bag X44
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CONTENTS

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Key findings | 1 |
| Graphs | |
| 1. Consumer Price Index - Official inflation rate | 4 |
| 2. Seasonally adjusted - Monthly percentage change | 4 |
| Explanatory notes | 5 |
| Tables | |
| 1.1 Expenditure group indices and percentage change | 6 |
| 1.2 Annual inflation rate on a monthly basis | 6 |
| 2.1 Effect of annual price changes on the Consumer Price Index | 7 |
| 2.2 Effect of monthly price changes on the Consumer Price Index | 7 |
| 2.3 Effect of annual price changes on the core inflation index | 7 |
| 2.4 Effect of monthly price changes on the core inflation index | 7 |
| 3. Group indices - Weighted average | |
| 3.1 Metropolitan areas | 8 |
| 3.2 Metro and other urban areas | 9 |
| 4. Areas indices | |
| 4.1 Index for all items | 10 |
| 4.2 Index for food | 11 |
| 4.3 Index for all items excluding housing | 12 |
| 4.4 Index for all items excluding food | 13 |
| 5. Seasonally adjusted indices - Metropolitan areas | 14 |
| 6. Consumer Price Index for pensioners - areas indices | 15 |

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INFLATION RATE DECREASES TO 7,9% AT MARCH 1999

The official inflation rate, i.e. the annual rate of change in the Consumer Price Index for metropolitan areas, is 7,9% at March 1999. This rate is 0,7 of a percentage point lower than the corresponding annual rate of 8,6% at February 1999. From February 1999 to March 1999 the Consumer Price Index for metropolitan areas increased by 0,1%. The seasonally adjusted index also increased by 0,1% for the same period.

The annual increase of 7,9% in the Consumer Price Index for metropolitan areas is mainly due to annual increases in the price indices for housing (+2,7 percentage points), food (+1,0 percentage point), medical care and health expenses (+0,8 of a percentage point), household operation (+0,7 of a percentage point) and transport (+0,6 of a percentage point) (cf. Table 2.1).

The inflation rate for the metropolitan and other urban areas is being calculated from January 1998. This rate is based on price collections undertaken in other urban areas, in addition to the previous collections in the metropolitan areas, since January 1997. For the purpose of seasonal adjustment, three years of historical data is required, which will be available from January 2000. At that time it will be decided whether the inflation rate for metropolitan and other urban areas rather than merely for metropolitan areas will be taken as the official rate.

The inflation rate for metropolitan and other urban areas is 7,5% at March 1999. This rate is 0,6 of a percentage point lower than the corresponding annual rate of 8,1% at February 1999. From February 1999 to March 1999 the Consumer Price Index for metropolitan and other urban areas increased by 0,2%.

CORE INFLATION RATE

The core inflation rate for metropolitan areas (see note 7 on page 5) is 8,0% at March 1999. This rate is 0,2 of a percentage point higher than the corresponding annual rate of 7,8% for February 1999. From February 1999 to March 1999 the core inflation index for metropolitan areas increased by 1,0%.

The annual increase of 8,0% in the core inflation index for metropolitan areas is mainly due to annual increases in the price indices for housing (+1,7 percentage points), medical care and health expenses (+1,2 percentage points), household operation (+0,9 of a percentage point), transport (+0,9 of a percentage point), food (+0,8 of a percentage point) and cigarettes, cigars and tobacco (+0,5 of a percentage point) (cf. Table 2.3).

The core inflation rate for metropolitan and other urban areas (see note 7 on page 5) is 7,7% at March 1999, which is 0,2 of a percentage point higher than the corresponding annual rate of 7,5% for February 1999. From February 1999 to March 1999 the core inflation index for metropolitan and other urban areas increased by 1,0%.

METROPOLITAN AREAS

Contributions to monthly "change" in the CPI

The Consumer Price Index for metropolitan areas increased by 0,1% from February 1999 to March 1999. This monthly increase is due to monthly increases in the price indices for education (+0,3 of a percentage point, due to increases in education fees at all levels), transport (+0,1 of a percentage point), household operation (+0,1 of a percentage point), cigarettes, cigars and tobacco (+0,1 of a percentage point) and alcoholic beverages (+0,1 of a percentage point). These increases were partially counteracted by monthly decreases in the price indices for housing (-0,5 of a percentage point, mainly due to a decrease in interest rates on mortgage bonds) and food (-0,1 of a percentage point).

Contributions to monthly increase in core inflation index

From February 1999 to March 1999 the core inflation index for metropolitan areas increased by 1,0%. This monthly increase is due to monthly increases in the price indices for education (+0,4 of a percentage point), housing (+0,2 of a percentage point), household operation (+0,1 of a percentage point), transport (+0,1 of a percentage point), alcoholic beverages (+0,1 of a percentage point) and cigarettes, cigars and tobacco (+0,1 of a percentage point).

Food inflation

The price index for food reflects an annual rate of increase of 5,6% at March 1999. This rate is 1,5 percentage points lower than the corresponding annual rate of 7,1% at February 1999. From February 1999 to March 1999 this index decreased by 0,5%, while the seasonally adjusted index decreased by 0,4%.

The monthly decrease in the price index for food of 0,5% is mainly due to monthly decreases in the price indices for vegetables (-2,7%), fats and oils (-1,7%), meat (-1,0%) and milk, cheese and eggs (-0,5%). These decreases were partially counteracted by monthly increases in the price indices for sugar (+2,8%), fruit and nuts (+1,6%), fish and other seafood (+0,5%) and coffee, tea and cocoa (+0,4%).

Price index for non-food items

The price index for non-food items shows an annual rate of increase of 8,5% at March 1999. This rate is 0,4 of a percentage point lower than the corresponding annual rate of 8,9% at February 1999. From February 1999 to March 1999 this index as well as the seasonally adjusted index increased by 0,2%.

Relatively large monthly increases occurred in the price indices for education (+15,3%, due to increases in education fees at all levels), cigarettes, cigars and tobacco (+5,1%), alcoholic beverages (+4,0%), non-alcoholic beverages (+2,6%), household operation (+1,1%) and personal care (+1,0%). These increases were partially counteracted by relatively large monthly decreases in the price indices for housing (-1,8%, mainly due to a decrease in interest rates on mortgage bonds) and 'other' commodities and services (-0,3%).

An alternative expression of the change in the Consumer Price Index

An alternative expression of the change in the Consumer Price Index is to annualise the percentage change between the average index of the three months up to March 1999 and the average index of the previous three months. This approach, when using seasonally adjusted data shows an increase of 2,0% (which is 0,7 of a percentage point lower than the corresponding rate of 2,7% for February 1999), while the unadjusted data shows an increase of 3,0% (which is 0,5 of a percentage point higher than the corresponding rate of 2,5% for February 1999).

Pensioners

The annual inflation rate for pensioners in the metropolitan areas is 7,9% at March 1999, which is 0,3 of a percentage point lower than the corresponding annual rate of 8,2% at February 1999.

METROPOLITAN AND OTHER URBAN AREAS

Contributions to monthly "change" in the CPI

The Consumer Price Index for metropolitan and other urban areas increased by 0,2% from February 1999 to March 1999. This monthly increase is due to monthly increases in the price index for education (+0,3 of a percentage point), household operation (+0,1 of a percentage point), cigarettes, cigars and tobacco (+0,1 of a percentage point) and alcoholic beverages (+0,1 of a percentage point). These increases were slightly counteracted by a monthly decrease in the price index for housing (-0,4 of a percentage point).

Food inflation

The price index for food reflects an annual rate of increase of 5,5% at March 1999. This rate is 1,2 percentage points lower than the corresponding annual rate of 6,7% at February 1999. From February 1999 to March 1999 this index decreased by 0,3%.

The monthly decrease in the price index for food of 0,3% is due to monthly decreases in the price indices for vegetables (-2,0%), fats and oils (-1,3%), meat (-0,7%) and grain products (-0,1%). These decreases were partially counteracted by monthly increases in the price indices for sugar (+2,3%), fruit and nuts (+1,1%), coffee, tea and cocoa (+0,7%), fish products (+0,3%), milk, cheese and eggs (+0,2%) and 'other' food products (+0,1%).

Price index for non-food items

The price index for non-food items shows an annual rate of increase of 8,1% at March 1999. This rate is 0,3 of a percentage point lower than the corresponding annual rate of 8,4% at February 1999. From February 1999 to March 1999 this index increased by 0,3%.

Relatively large monthly increases occurred in the price indices for education (+17,1%, due to increases in education fees at all levels), cigarettes, cigars and tobacco (+5,0%), alcoholic beverages (+4,1%), non-alcoholic beverages (+2,4%), personal care (+1,4%) and household operation (+1,0%). These increases were partially counteracted by relatively large monthly decreases in the price indices for housing (-1,6%, mainly due to a decrease in the interest rates on mortgage bonds), 'other' commodities and services (-0,5%) and clothing and footwear (-0,2%).

An alternative expression of the change in the Consumer Price Index

An alternative expression of the change in the Consumer Price Index is to annualise the percentage change between the average index of the three months up to March 1999 and the average index of the previous three months. This approach, when using unadjusted data shows an increase of 2,8%, which is 0,2 of a percentage point higher than the corresponding rate of 2,6% for February 1999. A better method should be to use seasonally adjusted data for the calculation of the alternative expression, but at this stage there is no seasonally adjusted data available for metropolitan and other urban areas. This is due to the fact that the index for metropolitan and other urban areas exists only since January 1997. Seasonal adjustment can only significantly be done using at least three years' data.

Pensioners

The annual inflation rate for pensioners in the metropolitan and other urban areas is 7,3% at March 1999. The East London area recorded the highest rate of increase of 8,7%, while the lowest rate of 5,6% was recorded for other urban areas in Northern Cape.

Areas indices

The Nelspruit/Witbank area as well as the other urban areas in North West recorded the highest annual inflation rate of 8,4%, while the lowest rate of 5,5% was recorded for the other urban areas in Northern Cape.

Regarding food prices, the highest annual increase of 8,1% was recorded for the Nelspruit/Witbank area, while the other urban areas in the Northern Cape reflected the lowest increase of 2,2%.

CPI FOR APRIL 1999

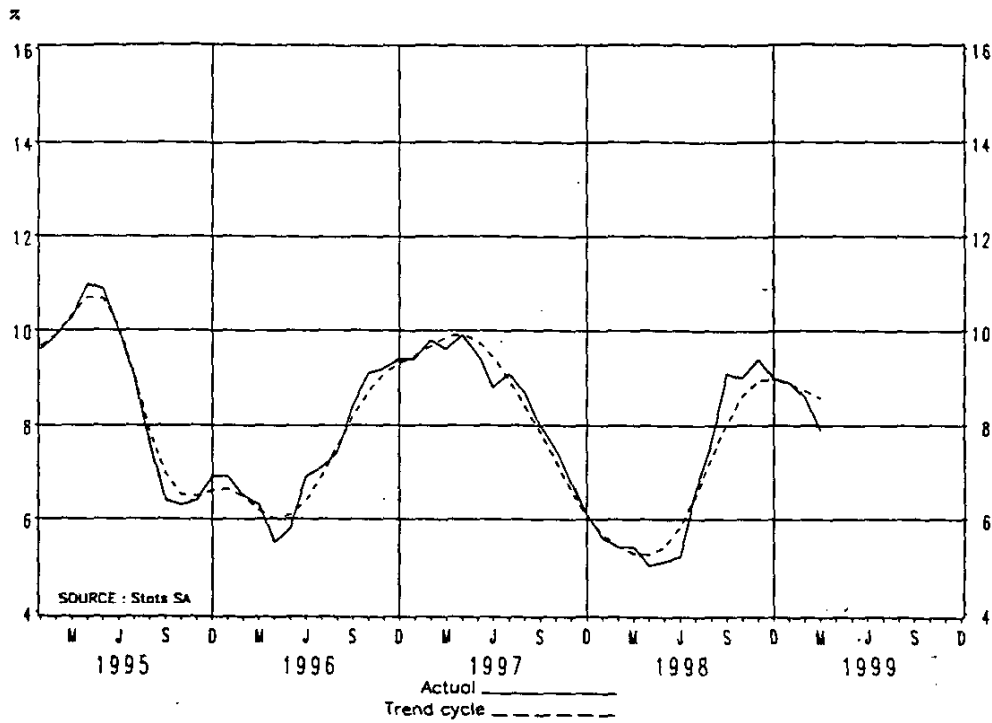
In addition to the usual price surveys for April 1999, it has come to the attention of Stats SA that changed prices will apply during the first seven days of April 1999 regarding water tariffs, motor licences and provincial hospital fees in certain areas as well as newspaper and magazine prices.

pp *M. Grobler*
Dr F M Orkin
Head: Statistics South Africa

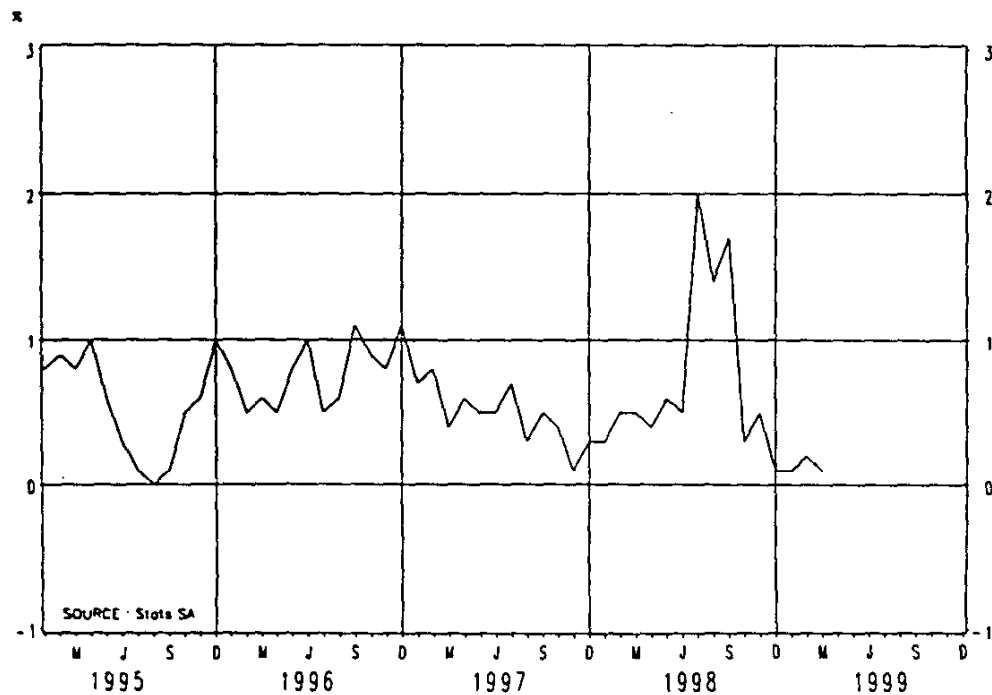
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Graph 1 – Consumer Price Index (metropolitan areas)
Annual percentage change



Graph 2 – Consumer Price Index (metropolitan areas)
Seasonally adjusted
Monthly percentage change



EXPLANATORY NOTES

1. All price information refers to the first seven days of the reference month.
2. By the phrase "each area compared with itself", Stats SA reminds the user that the consumer price indices relating to various metropolitan and other urban areas as shown in Table 4 and Table 6 do not permit inter-urban comparison of price levels or living costs. The indices do not indicate whether it is more expensive to live in one city than in another. The indices indicate for each urban area, independently of any of the other urban areas, the price changes which have taken place from time to time.
3. The indices for all items excluding food, Table 4.4, have been calculated for each area separately as from July 1994. These indices are calculated by means of the index for all items and the index for food of each area.
4. Value Added Tax (VAT) is included in general in the prices of all items on which VAT is applicable.
5. The five expenditure group categories or quintiles were defined according to total annual expenditure per household as in October 1995 as:

Very low expenditure group - up to R6 340.
 Low expenditure group - R6 341 up to R11 590.
 Middle expenditure group - R11 591 up to R21 909.
 High expenditure group - R21 910 up to R49 498.
 Very high expenditure group - R49 499 and more.
6. A more detailed set of weights for the metropolitan and other urban areas in total according to the new 1995-weighting structure of the CPI, as well as that for the core basket were published in Statistical release P0141.5 of 27 March 1997.
7. Core inflation:

The primary objective of calculating core inflation is to capture the underlying inflation pressures in the economy, i.e. the trend in the general price level which reflects the balance between aggregate demand and supply in the economy over the medium term. Core inflation is a measure designed in relation to the specific structure of a country's economy. Hence in the South African context, core inflation is derived by excluding items from the CPI basket on the basis that changes in their prices are highly volatile, subjected to temporary influences, or affected by government intervention and policy.

Items excluded from the CPI basket to obtain the "core" basket, and the reasons for exclusion are as follows:

 - Fresh and frozen meat and fish: Prices may be highly volatile, particularly during and following periods of drought.
 - Fresh and frozen vegetables and fresh fruit and nuts: Prices may be highly volatile from quarter to quarter due to their sensitivity to climatic conditions.
 - Interest rates on mortgage bonds and overdrafts/personal loans: These are excluded due to their "perverse" effect on the CPI. A tightening in monetary policy to counter inflation pressures would cause interest rates to rise and be reflected in the interest cost component of measured inflation. This, in turn, could provoke a further tightening of monetary policy resulting in excessive movements in the inflation rate.
 - VAT (Value Added Tax): VAT is predominantly determined by government (fiscal policy).
 - Assessment rates: These taxes are predominantly determined by local government.

The choice of exclusions was informed by best practice amongst several other international agencies, and after consultation with the South African Reserve Bank and other local technical experts.
8. Symbols used: * = revised
9. RESPONSE RATE
The response rate for the CPI for March 1999 was 90,8%.

7
TABLE 2.1 EFFECT OF ANNUAL PRICE CHANGES ON THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX
- ALL EXPENDITURE GROUPS (METROPOLITAN AREAS)

| Group | Contribution |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Food | 1.0 |
| Non-alcoholic beverages | 0.1 |
| Alcoholic beverages | 0.1 |
| Cigarettes, cigars and tobacco | 0.3 |
| Clothing and footwear | 0.1 |
| Housing | 2.7 |
| Fuel and power | 0.2 |
| Furniture and equipment | 0.1 |
| Household operation | 0.7 |
| Medical care and health expenses | 0.8 |
| Transport | 0.6 |
| Communication | 0.2 |
| Recreation and entertainment | 0.1 |
| Reading matter | 0.1 |
| Education | 0.3 |
| Personal care | 0.3 |
| Other | 0.2 |
| All items | 7.9 |

TABLE 2.2 EFFECT OF MONTHLY PRICE CHANGES ON THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX
- ALL EXPENDITURE GROUPS (METROPOLITAN AREAS)

| Group | Contribution |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Food | -0.1 |
| Alcoholic beverages | 0.1 |
| Cigarettes, cigars and tobacco | 0.1 |
| Housing | -0.5 |
| Household operation | 0.1 |
| Transport | 0.1 |
| Education | 0.3 |
| All items | 0.1 |

TABLE 2.3 EFFECT OF ANNUAL PRICE CHANGES ON THE CORE INFLATION INDEX
- ALL EXPENDITURE GROUPS (METROPOLITAN AREAS)

| Group | Contribution |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Food | 0.8 |
| Non-alcoholic beverages | 0.1 |
| Alcoholic beverages | 0.1 |
| Cigarettes, cigars and tobacco | 0.5 |
| Clothing and footwear | 0.1 |
| Housing | 1.7 |
| Fuel and power | 0.2 |
| Furniture and equipment | 0.1 |
| Household operation | 0.9 |
| Medical care and health expenses | 1.2 |
| Transport | 0.9 |
| Communication | 0.3 |
| Recreation and entertainment | 0.1 |
| Reading matter | 0.1 |
| Education | 0.4 |
| Personal care | 0.3 |
| Other | 0.2 |
| All items | 8.0 |

TABLE 2.4 EFFECT OF MONTHLY PRICE CHANGES ON THE CORE INFLATION INDEX
- ALL EXPENDITURE GROUPS (METROPOLITAN AREAS)

| Group | Contribution |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Alcoholic beverages | 0.1 |
| Cigarettes, cigars and tobacco | 0.1 |
| Housing | 0.2 |
| Household operation | 0.1 |
| Transport | 0.1 |
| Education | 0.4 |
| All items | 1.0 |

TABLE 3 GROUP INDICES - WEIGHTED AVERAGE
3.1 METROPOLITAN AREAS

BASE : 1995 = 100

| Group | Mar. 1999 | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 | Percentage change compared with | | Weights |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| | | | | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 | |
| All items | 130,4 | 130,3 | 120,8 | +0,1 | +7,9 | 100,00 |
| Expenditure groups - Very low | 132,9 | 132,4 | 123,3 | +0,4 | +7,8 | 0,51 |
| Low | 132,3 | 131,8 | 122,7 | +0,4 | +7,8 | 1,78 |
| Middle | 131,9 | 131,4 | 122,4 | +0,4 | +7,8 | 5,24 |
| High | 131,8 | 131,5 | 122,1 | +0,2 | +7,9 | 17,70 |
| Very high | 129,7 | 129,7 | 120,2 | 0,0 | +7,9 | 74,77 |
| Commodities | 126,3 | 125,9 | 119,0 | +0,3 | +6,1 | 55,00 |
| Services | 136,2 | 136,4 | 123,7 | -0,1 | +10,1 | 45,00 |
| All items, excluding housing | 129,2 | 128,2 | 120,8 | +0,8 | +7,0 | 75,93 |
| All items, excluding food | 130,9 | 130,7 | 120,7 | +0,2 | +8,5 | 81,98 |
| Food | 128,0 | 128,7 | 121,2 | -0,5 | +5,6 | 18,02 |
| Expenditure groups - Very low | 129,0 | 129,6 | 121,2 | -0,5 | +6,4 | 40,73 |
| Low | 129,2 | 129,8 | 121,6 | -0,5 | +6,3 | 34,39 |
| Middle | 129,5 | 130,1 | 121,5 | -0,5 | +6,6 | 31,12 |
| High | 128,7 | 129,3 | 121,4 | -0,5 | +6,0 | 25,42 |
| Very high | 127,3 | 128,0 | 121,0 | -0,5 | +5,2 | 14,84 |
| Processed | 129,9 | 129,9 | 121,7 | 0,0 | +6,7 | 9,12 |
| Unprocessed | 126,0 | 127,3 | 120,8 | -1,0 | +4,3 | 8,90 |
| Grain products | 133,8 | 133,8 | 122,6 | 0,0 | +9,1 | 3,31 |
| Meat | 118,0 | 119,2 | 116,9 | -1,0 | +0,9 | 5,33 |
| Fish and other seafood | 133,5 | 132,9 | 123,7 | +0,5 | +7,9 | 0,80 |
| Milk, cheese and eggs | 132,1 | 132,8 | 128,0 | -0,5 | +3,2 | 1,90 |
| Fats and oils | 140,6 | 143,0 | 124,9 | -1,7 | +12,6 | 0,85 |
| Fruit and nuts | 130,0 | 127,9 | 115,5 | +1,6 | +12,6 | 1,08 |
| Vegetables | 132,8 | 136,5 | 129,6 | -2,7 | +2,5 | 1,80 |
| Sugar | 132,7 | 129,1 | 122,6 | +2,8 | +8,2 | 0,59 |
| Coffee, tea and cocoa | 123,6 | 123,1 | 112,5 | +0,4 | +9,9 | 0,72 |
| Other | 133,0 | 133,0 | 123,3 | 0,0 | +7,9 | 1,64 |
| Non-alcoholic beverages | 143,1 | 139,5 | 130,0 | +2,6 | +10,1 | 0,82 |
| Alcoholic beverages | 136,4 | 131,1 | 125,9 | +4,0 | +8,3 | 1,18 |
| Cigarettes, cigars and tobacco | 211,2 | 200,9 | 164,4 | +5,1 | +28,5 | 0,95 |
| Clothing and footwear | 108,8 | 109,0 | 107,4 | -0,2 | +1,3 | 4,76 |
| Clothing | 108,7 | 108,8 | 106,8 | -0,1 | +1,8 | 3,55 |
| Footwear | 110,4 | 110,5 | 110,1 | -0,1 | +0,3 | 1,21 |
| Housing | 136,9 | 139,4 | 123,2 | -1,8 | +11,1 | 24,07 |
| Fuel and power | 129,7 | 129,7 | 122,5 | 0,0 | +5,9 | 3,11 |
| Furniture and equipment | 116,3 | 115,3 | 112,5 | +0,9 | +3,4 | 3,94 |
| Furniture | 123,2 | 121,3 | 117,0 | +1,6 | +5,3 | 1,62 |
| Appliances | 110,5 | 109,5 | 107,9 | +0,9 | +2,4 | 1,08 |
| Other household equipment and textiles | 112,0 | 112,5 | 110,4 | -0,4 | +1,4 | 1,24 |
| Household operation | 153,7 | 152,1 | 136,2 | +1,1 | +12,8 | 4,69 |
| Household consumables | 137,4 | 136,2 | 126,5 | +0,9 | +8,6 | 1,14 |
| Domestic workers | 169,2 | 167,2 | 147,3 | +1,2 | +14,9 | 3,19 |
| Other household services | 122,8 | 122,8 | 117,1 | 0,0 | +4,9 | 0,36 |
| Medical care and health expenses | 154,1 | 153,7 | 137,2 | +0,3 | +12,3 | 5,95 |
| Transport | 118,9 | 118,4 | 113,5 | +0,4 | +4,8 | 14,74 |
| Vehicles | 118,5 | 118,0 | 112,7 | +0,4 | +5,1 | 5,25 |
| Running cost | 124,2 | 123,3 | 116,9 | +0,7 | +6,2 | 5,75 |
| Public and hired transport | 114,3 | 114,3 | 112,1 | 0,0 | +2,0 | 3,74 |
| Communication | 128,0 | 128,0 | 118,8 | 0,0 | +7,7 | 3,06 |
| Recreation and entertainment | 113,0 | 113,1 | 108,8 | -0,1 | +3,9 | 2,38 |
| Reading matter | 136,3 | 136,3 | 124,3 | 0,0 | +9,7 | 0,74 |
| Education | 156,4 | 135,6 | 135,6 | +15,3 | +15,3 | 2,04 |
| Personal care | 131,0 | 129,7 | 120,7 | +1,0 | +8,5 | 3,06 |
| Other | 118,6 | 119,0 | 115,3 | -0,3 | +2,9 | 6,49 |

TABLE 3 GROUP INDICES --WEIGHTED AVERAGE
3.2 METRO AND OTHER URBAN AREAS

BASE : 1995 = 100

| Group | Mar. 1999 | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 | Percentage change compared with | | Weights |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------------------------|--------------|---------|
| | | | | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 | |
| All items | 129.9 | 129.7 | 120.8 | +0.2 | +7.5 | 100.00 |
| Expenditure groups - Very low | 132.0 | 131.3 | 122.8 | +0.5 | +7.5 | 0.93 |
| Low | 131.3 | 130.7 | 122.2 | +0.5 | +7.4 | 2.99 |
| Middle | 130.3 | 129.8 | 121.6 | +0.4 | +7.2 | 7.58 |
| High | 131.0 | 130.5 | 121.7 | +0.4 | +7.6 | 20.09 |
| Very high | 129.5 | 129.4 | 120.3 | +0.1 | +7.6 | 68.41 |
| Commodities | 125.6 | 125.1 | 118.7 | +0.4 | +5.8 | 57.34 |
| Services | 135.9 | 135.9 | 123.7 | 0.0 | +9.9 | 42.66 |
| All items, excluding housing | 128.9 | 127.9 | 120.6 | +0.8 | +6.9 | 77.55 |
| All items, excluding food | 130.4 | 130.0 | 120.6 | +0.3 | +8.1 | 80.52 |
| Food | 128.2 | 128.6 | 121.5 | -0.3 | +5.5 | 19.48 |
| Expenditure groups - Very low | 130.5 | 130.6 | 122.3 | -0.1 | +6.7 | 44.17 |
| Low | 130.2 | 130.3 | 122.4 | -0.1 | +6.4 | 38.83 |
| Middle | 129.5 | 129.8 | 122.0 | -0.2 | +6.1 | 32.67 |
| High | 128.6 | 128.9 | 121.6 | -0.2 | +5.8 | 25.61 |
| Very high | 127.4 | 127.8 | 121.3 | -0.3 | +5.0 | 15.02 |
| Processed | 129.5 | 129.1 | 121.3 | +0.3 | +6.8 | 10.52 |
| Unprocessed | 127.0 | 128.0 | 121.8 | -0.8 | +4.3 | 8.96 |
| Grain products | 133.6 | 133.7 | 123.3 | -0.1 | +8.4 | 3.73 |
| Meat | 117.0 | 117.8 | 115.7 | -0.7 | +1.1 | 5.84 |
| Fish and other seafood | 133.9 | 133.5 | 125.8 | +0.3 | +6.4 | 0.77 |
| Milk, cheese and eggs | 132.2 | 131.9 | 127.4 | +0.2 | +3.8 | 2.02 |
| Fats and oils | 139.1 | 140.9 | 123.7 | -1.3 | +12.4 | 0.94 |
| Fruit and nuts | 124.9 | 123.5 | 115.4 | +1.1 | +8.2 | 1.07 |
| Vegetables | 138.7 | 141.6 | 132.2 | -2.0 | +4.9 | 1.94 |
| Sugar | 133.5 | 130.5 | 123.2 | +2.3 | +8.4 | 0.73 |
| Coffee, tea and cocoa | 122.5 | 121.7 | 111.4 | +0.7 | +10.0 | 0.79 |
| Other | 132.6 | 132.5 | 123.0 | +0.1 | +7.8 | 1.65 |
| Non-alcoholic beverages | 146.6 | 143.1 | 131.5 | +2.4 | +11.5 | 0.82 |
| Alcoholic beverages | 137.6 | 132.2 | 126.9 | +4.1 | +8.4 | 1.17 |
| Cigarettes, cigars and tobacco | 204.2 | 194.4 | 161.1 | +5.0 | +26.8 | 1.04 |
| Clothing and footwear | 109.5 | 109.7 | 107.4 | -0.2 | +2.0 | 5.07 |
| Clothing | 109.1 | 109.3 | 107.2 | -0.2 | +1.8 | 3.80 |
| Footwear | 110.8 | 111.0 | 108.2 | -0.2 | +2.4 | 1.27 |
| Housing | 134.1 | 136.3 | 121.6 | -1.6 | +10.3 | 22.45 |
| Fuel and power | 125.5 | 125.3 | 120.0 | +0.2 | +4.6 | 3.54 |
| Furniture and equipment | 114.0 | 113.6 | 111.2 | +0.4 | +2.5 | 4.34 |
| Furniture | 119.2 | 118.6 | 115.1 | +0.5 | +3.6 | 1.77 |
| Appliances | 110.2 | 109.0 | 107.5 | +1.1 | +2.5 | 1.19 |
| Other household equipment and textiles | 110.5 | 111.0 | 109.5 | -0.5 | +0.9 | 1.38 |
| Household operation | 157.9 | 156.4 | 139.5 | +1.0 | +13.2 | 4.87 |
| Household consumables | 135.0 | 134.3 | 124.3 | +0.5 | +8.6 | 1.27 |
| Domestic workers | 170.9 | 168.8 | 148.0 | +1.2 | +15.5 | 3.25 |
| Other household services | 121.1 | 121.1 | 115.3 | 0.0 | +5.0 | 0.35 |
| Medical care and health expenses | 150.6 | 150.1 | 134.1 | +0.3 | +12.3 | 5.81 |
| Transport | 117.0 | 116.6 | 112.3 | +0.3 | +4.2 | 13.65 |
| Vehicles | 113.5 | 113.3 | 109.1 | +0.2 | +4.0 | 5.31 |
| Running cost | 124.0 | 123.2 | 117.1 | +0.6 | +5.9 | 5.16 |
| Public and hired transport | 111.4 | 111.4 | 109.6 | 0.0 | +1.6 | 3.18 |
| Communication | 131.8 | 131.8 | 122.4 | 0.0 | +7.7 | 3.21 |
| Recreation and entertainment | 109.4 | 109.4 | 105.3 | 0.0 | +3.9 | 2.18 |
| Reading matter | 134.1 | 134.1 | 122.5 | 0.0 | +9.5 | 0.69 |
| Education | 159.2 | 136.0 | 136.0 | +17.1 | +17.1 | 1.82 |
| Personal care | 132.0 | 130.2 | 121.5 | +1.4 | +8.6 | 3.08 |
| Other | 119.6 | 120.2 | 116.4 | -0.5 | +2.7 | 6.78 |

TABLE 4 AREAS INDICES
 TABLE 4.1 Index for all items
 Each area compared with itself

BASE : 1995 = 100

| Urban area | All items | | | Percentage change compared with | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| | Mar. 1999 | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 |
| Western Cape | 128,9 | 128,5 | 120,3 | +0,3 | +7,1 |
| Cape Peninsula | 130,0 | 129,8 | 120,5 | +0,2 | +7,9 |
| Other urban areas | 128,1 | 127,6 | 120,0 | +0,4 | +6,8 |
| Eastern Cape | 132,2 | 131,8 | 122,9 | +0,3 | +7,6 |
| Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage | 129,3 | 129,4 | 119,9 | -0,1 | +7,8 |
| East London | 133,0 | 132,6 | 122,8 | +0,3 | +8,3 |
| Other urban areas | 132,5 | 132,0 | 123,2 | +0,4 | +7,5 |
| Northern Cape | 126,8 | 126,5 | 119,9 | +0,2 | +5,8 |
| Kimberley | 131,3 | 131,0 | 121,6 | +0,2 | +8,0 |
| Other urban areas | 126,1 | 125,8 | 119,5 | +0,2 | +5,5 |
| Free State | 125,8 | 125,6 | 118,2 | +0,2 | +6,4 |
| Bloemfontein | 130,9 | 130,9 | 121,4 | 0,0 | +7,8 |
| Free State Goldfields | 125,9 | 125,2 | 117,7 | +0,6 | +7,0 |
| Other urban areas | 125,0 | 124,8 | 117,8 | +0,2 | +6,1 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 129,1 | 129,2 | 120,5 | -0,1 | +7,1 |
| Durban/Pinetown | 132,3 | 132,1 | 122,4 | +0,2 | +8,1 |
| Pietermaritzburg | 129,7 | 129,0 | 120,9 | +0,5 | +7,3 |
| Other urban areas | 127,3 | 127,6 | 119,3 | -0,2 | +6,7 |
| North West | 128,5 | 127,7 | 118,7 | +0,6 | +8,3 |
| Klerksdorp/Stilfontein/Orkney | 126,1 | 126,2 | 118,2 | -0,1 | +6,7 |
| Other urban areas | 128,6 | 127,7 | 118,6 | +0,7 | +8,4 |
| Gauteng | 131,3 | 131,1 | 121,4 | +0,2 | +8,2 |
| Pretoria/Centurion/Akasia | 130,4 | 130,1 | 121,3 | +0,2 | +7,5 |
| Witwatersrand | 130,3 | 130,3 | 120,3 | 0,0 | +8,3 |
| Other urban areas | 130,4 | 130,2 | 120,9 | +0,2 | +7,9 |
| Mpumalanga | 131,7 | 131,0 | 121,6 | +0,5 | +8,3 |
| Nelspruit/Witbank | 131,4 | 131,1 | 121,2 | +0,2 | +8,4 |
| Other urban areas | 131,3 | 130,5 | 121,3 | +0,6 | +8,2 |
| Northern Province | 128,7 | 128,0 | 120,2 | +0,5 | +7,1 |
| Pietersburg | 128,1 | 128,4 | 119,8 | -0,2 | +6,9 |
| Other urban areas | 129,0 | 128,1 | 120,4 | +0,7 | +7,1 |
| Weighted average - Metro and other urban areas | 129,9 | 129,7 | 120,8 | +0,2 | +7,5 |
| Weighted average - Metropolitan | 130,4 | 130,3 | 120,8 | +0,1 | +7,9 |

TABLE 4. AREA INDICES
TABLE 4.2 Index for food
Each area compared with itself

BASE : 1995 = 100

| Urban area | Food | | | Percentage change compared with | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| | Mar. 1999 | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 |
| Western Cape | 128,7 | 128,3 | 121,2 | +0,3 | +6,2 |
| Cape Peninsula | 129,5 | 129,3 | 120,5 | +0,2 | +7,5 |
| Other urban areas | 127,5 | 127,0 | 120,9 | +0,4 | +5,5 |
| Eastern Cape | 135,7 | 136,9 | 127,3 | -0,9 | +6,6 |
| Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage | 126,8 | 127,8 | 121,3 | -0,8 | +4,5 |
| East London | 133,6 | 134,1 | 127,3 | -0,4 | +4,9 |
| Other urban areas | 137,8 | 139,0 | 128,6 | -0,9 | +7,2 |
| Northern Cape | 123,6 | 123,5 | 120,4 | +0,1 | +2,7 |
| Kimberley | 125,9 | 125,6 | 119,5 | +0,2 | +5,4 |
| Other urban areas | 123,2 | 123,0 | 120,5 | +0,2 | +2,2 |
| Free State | 122,2 | 122,2 | 117,8 | 0,0 | +3,7 |
| Bloemfontein | 129,0 | 128,4 | 123,0 | +0,5 | +4,9 |
| Free State Goldfields | 121,3 | 121,3 | 116,5 | 0,0 | +4,1 |
| Other urban areas | 121,6 | 121,7 | 117,6 | -0,1 | +3,4 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 128,0 | 129,2 | 121,9 | -0,9 | +5,0 |
| Durban/Pinetown | 134,2 | 136,1 | 127,1 | -1,4 | +5,6 |
| Pietermaritzburg | 128,7 | 128,8 | 122,5 | -0,1 | +5,1 |
| Other urban areas | 125,6 | 126,6 | 119,9 | -0,8 | +4,8 |
| North West | 124,8 | 124,2 | 117,5 | +0,5 | +6,2 |
| Klerksdorp/Stilfontein/Orkney | 122,9 | 123,0 | 117,6 | -0,1 | +4,5 |
| Other urban areas | 124,9 | 124,2 | 117,4 | +0,6 | +6,4 |
| Gauteng | 127,3 | 127,7 | 120,7 | -0,3 | +5,5 |
| Pretoria/Centurion/Akasia | 130,7 | 131,0 | 123,5 | -0,2 | +5,8 |
| Witwatersrand | 125,9 | 126,7 | 119,6 | -0,6 | +5,3 |
| Other urban areas | 127,1 | 126,8 | 120,3 | +0,2 | +5,7 |
| Mpumalanga | 133,9 | 132,4 | 125,7 | +1,1 | +6,5 |
| Nelspruit/Witbank | 131,5 | 130,7 | 121,7 | +0,6 | +8,1 |
| Other urban areas | 134,5 | 132,8 | 126,4 | +1,3 | +6,4 |
| Northern Province | 131,9 | 132,4 | 125,0 | -0,4 | +5,5 |
| Pietersburg | 130,1 | 131,0 | 125,5 | -0,7 | +3,7 |
| Other urban areas | 132,2 | 132,6 | 125,0 | -0,3 | +5,8 |
| Weighted average - Metro and other urban areas | 128,2 | 128,6 | 121,5 | -0,3 | +5,5 |
| Weighted average - Metropolitan | 128,0 | 128,7 | 121,2 | -0,5 | +5,6 |

TABLE 4 AREAS INDICES
 TABLE 4.3 Index for all items excluding housing
 Each area compared with itself

BASE : 1995 = 100

| Urban area | All items excluding housing | | | Percentage change compared with | |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| | Mar. 1999 | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 |
| Western Cape | 128,7 | 127,4 | 120,5 | +1,0 | +6,8 |
| Cape Peninsula | 129,7 | 128,5 | 121,0 | +0,9 | +7,2 |
| Other urban areas | 127,9 | 126,6 | 120,1 | +1,0 | +6,5 |
| Eastern Cape | 132,4 | 131,5 | 123,1 | +0,7 | +7,6 |
| Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage | 129,0 | 128,2 | 120,6 | +0,6 | +7,0 |
| East London | 134,5 | 133,2 | 124,6 | +1,0 | +7,9 |
| Other urban areas | 132,6 | 131,7 | 123,2 | +0,7 | +7,6 |
| Northern Cape | 127,2 | 126,4 | 120,0 | +0,6 | +6,0 |
| Kimberley | 129,8 | 128,9 | 120,9 | +0,7 | +7,4 |
| Other urban areas | 126,8 | 126,0 | 119,8 | +0,6 | +5,8 |
| Free State | 126,5 | 125,7 | 119,1 | +0,6 | +6,2 |
| Bloemfontein | 131,1 | 130,1 | 122,8 | +0,8 | +6,8 |
| Free State Goldfields | 125,2 | 124,3 | 118,0 | +0,7 | +6,1 |
| Other urban areas | 126,1 | 125,4 | 118,8 | +0,6 | +6,1 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 127,1 | 126,6 | 119,8 | +0,4 | +6,1 |
| Durban/Pinetown | 129,8 | 128,9 | 122,0 | +0,7 | +6,4 |
| Pietermaritzburg | 127,6 | 126,4 | 119,8 | +0,9 | +6,5 |
| Other urban areas | 126,0 | 125,6 | 118,8 | +0,3 | +6,1 |
| North West | 126,5 | 125,3 | 118,3 | +1,0 | +6,9 |
| Klerksdorp/Stilfontein/Orkney | 125,0 | 124,4 | 118,4 | +0,5 | +5,6 |
| Other urban areas | 126,6 | 125,2 | 118,1 | +1,1 | +7,2 |
| Gauteng | 129,6 | 128,7 | 121,1 | +0,7 | +7,0 |
| Pretoria/Centurion/Akasia | 129,7 | 128,6 | 121,3 | +0,9 | +6,9 |
| Witwatersrand | 129,0 | 128,2 | 120,4 | +0,6 | +7,1 |
| Other urban areas | 128,3 | 127,3 | 120,3 | +0,8 | +6,7 |
| Mpumalanga | 129,6 | 128,1 | 120,9 | +1,2 | +7,2 |
| Nelspruit/Witbank | 129,7 | 128,6 | 120,9 | +0,9 | +7,3 |
| Other urban areas | 129,3 | 127,6 | 120,6 | +1,3 | +7,2 |
| Northern Province | 127,1 | 126,0 | 119,6 | +0,9 | +6,3 |
| Pietersburg | 128,2 | 127,3 | 120,8 | +0,7 | +6,1 |
| Other urban areas | 127,1 | 125,9 | 119,5 | +1,0 | +6,4 |
| Weighted average - Metro and other urban areas | 128,9 | 127,9 | 120,6 | +0,8 | +6,9 |
| Weighted average - Metropolitan | 129,2 | 128,2 | 120,8 | +0,8 | +7,0 |

TABLE 4. AREA INDICES (concluded)
 TABLE 4.4 Index for all items excluding food
 Each area compared with itself

BASE : 1995 = 100

| Urban area | All items excluding food | | | Percentage change compared with | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| | Mar. 1999 | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 |
| Western Cape | 129,0 | 128,7 | 120,0 | +0,2 | +7,5 |
| Cape Peninsula | 130,3 | 130,2 | 120,8 | +0,1 | +7,9 |
| Other urban areas | 128,3 | 127,8 | 119,7 | +0,4 | +7,2 |
| Eastern Cape | 131,2 | 130,5 | 121,6 | +0,5 | +7,9 |
| Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage | 129,8 | 129,7 | 119,4 | +0,1 | +8,7 |
| East London | 133,0 | 132,4 | 121,7 | +0,5 | +9,3 |
| Other urban areas | 130,9 | 129,9 | 121,7 | +0,8 | +7,6 |
| Northern Cape | 127,8 | 127,4 | 119,7 | +0,3 | +6,8 |
| Kimberley | 133,6 | 133,3 | 122,4 | +0,2 | +9,2 |
| Other urban areas | 126,9 | 126,6 | 119,2 | +0,2 | +6,5 |
| Free State | 127,0 | 126,6 | 118,3 | +0,3 | +7,4 |
| Bloemfontein | 131,7 | 131,8 | 121,1 | -0,1 | +8,8 |
| Free State Goldfields | 127,1 | 126,3 | 118,0 | +0,6 | +7,7 |
| Other urban areas | 126,2 | 125,8 | 117,9 | +0,3 | +7,0 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 129,4 | 129,2 | 120,1 | +0,2 | +7,7 |
| Durban/Pinetown | 131,9 | 131,2 | 121,4 | +0,5 | +8,6 |
| Pietermaritzburg | 129,9 | 129,1 | 120,4 | +0,6 | +7,9 |
| Other urban areas | 127,7 | 127,7 | 119,2 | 0,0 | +7,1 |
| North West | 129,4 | 128,6 | 119,0 | +0,6 | +8,7 |
| Klerksdorp/Stilfontein/Orkney | 126,6 | 126,7 | 118,3 | -0,1 | +7,0 |
| Other urban areas | 129,6 | 128,7 | 118,9 | +0,7 | +9,0 |
| Gauteng | 132,0 | 131,8 | 121,6 | +0,2 | +8,6 |
| Pretoria/Centurion/Akasia | 130,0 | 129,5 | 120,5 | +0,4 | +7,9 |
| Witwatersrand | 131,3 | 131,1 | 120,6 | +0,2 | +8,9 |
| Other urban areas | 131,3 | 131,1 | 121,1 | +0,2 | +8,4 |
| Mpumalanga | 131,0 | 130,5 | 120,6 | +0,4 | +8,6 |
| Nelspruit/Witbank | 131,1 | 130,9 | 120,8 | +0,2 | +8,5 |
| Other urban areas | 130,4 | 129,9 | 119,9 | +0,4 | +8,8 |
| Northern Province | 127,9 | 126,9 | 119,0 | +0,8 | +7,5 |
| Pietersburg | 127,5 | 127,6 | 118,4 | -0,1 | +7,7 |
| Other urban areas | 128,2 | 127,0 | 119,3 | +0,9 | +7,5 |
| Weighted average - Metro and other urban areas | 130,4 | 130,0 | 120,6 | +0,3 | +8,1 |
| Weighted average - Metropolitan | 130,9 | 130,7 | 120,7 | +0,2 | +8,5 |

TABLE 5 SEASONALLY ADJUSTED INDICES

BASE : 1995 = 100

| Group | Mar. 1999 | Feb. 1999 | Jan. 1999 | Dec. 1998 | Weights |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------|
| All items | 130,6 | 130,5 | 130,2 | 130,1 | 100,00 |
| Expenditure groups - Very low | .. | .. | .. | .. | 0,51 |
| Low | .. | .. | .. | .. | 1,78 |
| Middle | .. | .. | .. | .. | 5,24 |
| High | .. | .. | .. | .. | 17,70 |
| Very high | .. | .. | .. | .. | 74,77 |
| All items excluding food | 131,3 | 131,1 | 131,0 | 131,0 | 81,98 |
| Commodities | 126,5 | 126,0 | 125,4 | 125,0 | 55,00 |
| Food | 127,6 | 128,1 | 127,3 | 126,6 | 18,02 |
| Food and non-alcoholic beverages | 128,2 | 128,7 | 127,9 | 127,1 | 18,84 |
| Alcoholic beverages, cigarettes, cigars and tobacco | 173,4 | 166,5 | 164,8 | 163,5 | 2,13 |
| Clothing and footwear | 108,4 | 108,4 | 108,4 | 108,3 | 4,72 |
| Furniture and equipment | 116,2 | 116,2 | 115,9 | 115,3 | 3,85 |
| Vehicles | 118,5 | 118,3 | 118,1 | 116,9 | 5,25 |
| Other transport commodities | 128,6 | 124,9 | 124,1 | 125,5 | 4,63 |
| Other commodities | 130,7 | 130,4 | 129,8 | 129,7 | 15,58 |
| Services | 136,2 | 137,3 | 137,7 | 137,7 | 45,00 |
| Housing and domestic workers | 139,5 | 140,6 | 141,6 | 141,9 | 25,99 |
| Transport | 112,6 | 112,3 | 112,1 | 112,4 | 4,86 |
| Other services | 139,3 | 140,7 | 140,5 | 140,0 | 14,15 |
| All items (VAT excluded) | 130,5 | 130,5 | 130,4 | 129,9 | 100,00 |

TABLE 6 THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX FOR PENSIONERS - AREA INDICES
Each area compared with itself

BASE : 1995 = 100

| Urban area | All items | | | Percentage change compared with | |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| | Mar. 1999 | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 | Feb. 1999 | Mar. 1998 |
| Western Cape | 128,4 | 127,9 | 120,5 | +0,4 | +6,6 |
| Cape Peninsula | 131,5 | 131,2 | 122,4 | +0,2 | +7,4 |
| Other urban areas | 127,5 | 127,0 | 120,1 | +0,4 | +6,2 |
| Eastern Cape | 133,1 | 132,9 | 123,7 | +0,2 | +7,6 |
| Port Elizabeth/Uitenhage | 130,2 | 130,2 | 121,0 | 0,0 | +7,6 |
| East London | 134,5 | 134,1 | 123,7 | +0,3 | +8,7 |
| Other urban areas | 133,1 | 132,9 | 123,9 | +0,2 | +7,4 |
| Northern Cape | 129,6 | 128,9 | 122,4 | +0,5 | +5,9 |
| Kimberley | 135,5 | 134,9 | 124,8 | +0,4 | +8,6 |
| Other urban areas | 128,8 | 128,0 | 122,0 | +0,6 | +5,6 |
| Free State | 125,9 | 125,5 | 118,6 | +0,3 | +6,2 |
| Bloemfontein | 130,6 | 130,5 | 120,9 | +0,1 | +8,0 |
| Free State Goldfields | 126,1 | 125,5 | 117,5 | +0,5 | +7,3 |
| Other urban areas | 125,5 | 125,1 | 118,5 | +0,3 | +5,9 |
| KwaZulu-Natal | 128,2 | 128,1 | 120,3 | +0,1 | +6,6 |
| Durban/Pinetown | 130,9 | 131,1 | 122,4 | -0,2 | +6,9 |
| Pietermaritzburg | 129,0 | 128,3 | 120,0 | +0,5 | +7,5 |
| Other urban areas | 126,6 | 126,6 | 119,2 | 0,0 | +6,2 |
| North West | 129,5 | 128,5 | 119,5 | +0,8 | +8,4 |
| Klerksdorp/Stilfontein/Orkney | 130,0 | 129,4 | 121,0 | +0,5 | +7,4 |
| Other urban areas | 129,1 | 128,1 | 119,0 | +0,8 | +8,5 |
| Gauteng | 131,7 | 131,2 | 122,0 | +0,4 | +8,0 |
| Pretoria/Centurion/Akasia | 130,0 | 129,6 | 121,3 | +0,3 | +7,2 |
| Witwatersrand | 132,9 | 132,4 | 122,6 | +0,4 | +8,4 |
| Other urban areas | 129,4 | 129,0 | 120,5 | +0,3 | +7,4 |
| Mpumalanga | 134,2 | 133,0 | 123,9 | +0,9 | +8,3 |
| Nelspruit/Witbank | 133,9 | 133,1 | 123,7 | +0,6 | +8,2 |
| Other urban areas | 134,2 | 133,0 | 123,9 | +0,9 | +8,3 |
| Northern Province | 129,9 | 129,1 | 121,4 | +0,6 | +7,0 |
| Pietersburg | 133,2 | 132,7 | 123,8 | +0,4 | +7,6 |
| Other urban areas | 129,8 | 129,0 | 121,4 | +0,6 | +6,9 |
| Weighted average - Metro and other urban areas | 130,1 | 129,6 | 121,3 | +0,4 | +7,3 |
| Weighted average - Metropolitan | 132,0 | 131,6 | 122,3 | +0,3 | +7,9 |