



stats sa

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) – Q3:2020

The results of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for the third quarter of 2020 indicate large movements out of the "other not economically active" category to "employed" and "unemployed" between quarter 2 and quarter 3 2020. The number of employed persons increased by 543 000 (3,8%) to 14,7 million compared to the second quarter of 2020. Unemployment increased substantially by 2,2 million (52,1%) to 6,5 million compared to quarter 2 of 2020 resulting in an increase of 2,8 million (15,1%) in the number of people in the labour force. The number of discouraged work-seekers increased by 225 000 (9,1%), and the number of people who were not economically active for reasons other than discouragement decreased by 2,9 million (15,8%) between the two quarters, resulting in a net decrease of 2,6 million (12,8%) in the not economically active population.

The movement was proportionately more towards the unemployed than for the employed, which resulted in a significant increase of 7,5 percentage points in the official unemployment rate to 30,8%. The unemployment rate according to the expanded definition of unemployment increased by 1,1 percentage points to 43,1% in quarter 3 2020 compared to quarter 2 2020.

Employment increased in all sectors in quarter 3 2020. Formal sector employment increased by 242 000 (2,4%); Informal sector employment by 176 000 (7,7%); Private households by 116 000 (11,5%) , and employment in Agriculture increased by 9 000 (1,1%). Employment increased in all industries, except Utilities and Transport. The industries which gained the more jobs were Finance (200 000), Community and social services (137 000) and Private households (116 000). Compared to quarter 3 2019, employment contracted in all industries except mining where it remained unchanged in quarter 3 2020. Most job losses were observed in Trade (400 000), Manufacturing (300 000), Community and social services (298 000) and Construction (259 000).

To capture changes brought about by the national lockdown, the additional questions that were included in the quarter 2: 2020 questionnaire were also included in Q3: 2020. The results indicate that, of the 14,7 million persons who were employed in Q3: 2020, more than seven out of ten people (73,2%) were expected to work during

the national lockdown by the companies/organisations they work for. Those who actually worked were predominately men in most industries, except in the Community and social services sector and Private households, where the majority were women. About nine out of ten people employed within the Construction industry who worked during the lockdown, were men.

Those who were expected to work in the reference week during the national lockdown but could not do any work during that period indicated the national lockdown as the main reason for not actually working (71,7%). Compared to the 2nd quarter of 2020 where 17,0% indicated that they worked from home, this proportion declined to 10,9% in the 3rd quarter of 2020. Working from home was more prevalent in Gauteng and Western Cape and among Professionals and Managers. The majority of those in employment continued to receive pay during the lockdown. However, those with lower levels of education were more likely to receive reduced salaries than those with higher levels of education.

Editor's note: Due to the lockdown restrictions, Stats SA continued to collect data telephonically in the 3rd quarter of 2020, unlike the usual face-to-face interviews. As such, data could not be collected from the full sample but only from households for which contact numbers were available. The bias brought about by this has been adjusted for, and the details on how the adjustment was done are contained in the report.

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