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MEDIA RELEASE

23 June 2020

Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) – Q1: 2020

The results of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for the first quarter of 2020 indicate that employment decreased by 38 000 to 16,4 million and the number of unemployed persons increased by 344 000 to 7,1 million. As a result, the official unemployment rate increased by 1 percentage point to (30,1%) compared to the fourth quarter of 2019.

The South African working-age population increased by 147 000 to 38,9 million and the labour force increased by 306 000 to 23,5 million such that the percentage of South Africans aged 15-64 years with jobs (the absorption rate) has declined by 0,3 of a percentage point to 42,1% and the labour force participation rate increased by 0,5 of a percentage point to 60,3% in the first quarter of 2020 compared to the fourth quarter of 2019. The number of discouraged work-seekers increased by 63 000 and those who were not active in the labour market for other reasons other than discouragement decreased by 222 000 resulting in a net increase of 107 000 in the number of those who were not economically active.

A net decline in total employment in the first quarter of 2020 was mainly driven by decreases in the number of people employed in the formal sector (50 000) and Agriculture (21 000). Increases in employment were observed in the informal sector (3 000) and Private household (30 000) during this period.

Most industries experienced job losses in the first quarter of 2020, compared to the fourth quarter of 2019. Finance shed most jobs (50 000), followed by Community and social services (33 000), Agriculture (21 000), Transport (17 000), Manufacturing (15 000), Construction (7 000) and Utilities (4 000) industries. Year-on year there was a net increase of 91 000 in total employment with Community and social services (185 000), Agriculture (27 000), Mining (18 000), being the largest contributors to the observed increase.

There were approximately 10,3 million persons aged 15–24 years in Q1:2020. The proportion of these young people who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) increased by 2,1 percentage points from 32,0% in Q4:2019 to 34,10% (3,5 million) in Q1:2020. Of the 20,4 million young people aged 15-34 years, 41,7% were not in employment, education or training (NEET) in Q1:2020 – an increase of 1,6 percentage points compared to Q4:2019.



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Issued by Statistics South Africa

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