**MEDIA RELEASE 30 October 2018**

**Quarterly Labour Force Survey - QLFS Q3:2018**

The results of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for the third quarter of 2018 released by Statistics South Africa today, reveal that the South African working-age population increased by 153 000 or 0,4% in the third quarter of 2018 compared to the second quarter of 2018. The number of employed persons increased by 92 000 to 16,4 million and the number of unemployed persons rose by 127 000 to 6,2 million in Q3: 2018. The absorption rate remained unchanged at 43,1% and the unemployment rate increased by 0,3 of a percentage point to 27,5% in the same period.

During the third quarter of 2018, the informal sector recorded employment gains of 188 000, while the Formal sector, Private households and Agriculture recorded declines in employment. The number of discouraged work-seekers declined by 131 000 while the number of other not economically active persons increased by 65 000, resulting in a decrease of 66 000 (down by 0,4%) in the number of people not in the labour force between the second and third quarters of 2018.

The number of employed persons declined in seven of the ten industries. However, these declines were offset by employment gains in Finance and other business services (102 000), Trade (86 000) and Construction (27 000) industries, which resulted in a net increase of 92 000 in the third quarter of 2018. The industries that recorded larger declines in employment were Private households (which declined by 30 000), Mining (29 000) and Manufacturing (25 000). Employment gains were recorded in seven of the nine provinces in the third quarter of 2018. The largest employment increases were recorded in Limpopo (41 000), Gauteng (22 000) and Mpumalanga (20 000). Free State (14 000) and Eastern Cape (13 000) were the only provinces that recorded employment losses.

While the official unemployment rate increased by 0,3 of a percentage point at the national level in Q3: 2018 compared to Q2: 2018, the rate decreased in five of the nine provinces. The largest declines were recorded in Northern Cape (down by 1,9 percentage points), Mpumalanga (down by 0,7 of a percentage point), and Limpopo (down by 0,4 of a percentage point). The unemployment rate in increased in four provinces. Year-on-year, the official unemployment rate declined by 0,2 of a percentage point. The largest decline was recorded in Northern Cape at 2,9 percentage points, followed by KwaZulu-Natal (1,6 percentage points) and Western Cape (1,5 percentage points).

Compared to Q2: 2018, the expanded unemployment rate increased by 0,1 of a percentage point in Q3: 2018 to 37,3%. The largest increases were recorded in Free State (1,4 percentage points) and Limpopo (0,7 of a percentage point). Compared to Q3: 2017, the expanded unemployment rate also increased by 0,5 of a percentage point, with Free State recording the largest increase of 3,0 percentage points, followed by Limpopo with 2,3 percentage points.

Between Q3: 2017 and Q3: 2018, the percentage of young persons aged 15–24 years who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) increased by 0,8 of a percentage point to 31,1%. While the NEET rate increased for both males and females, it was higher for females compared to that of their male counterparts in both time periods. Compared to Q3: 2017, the percentage of youth aged 15–34 years who were not in employment, education or training (NEET) increased by 0,7 of a percentage point from 38,3% to 39,0% in Q3: 2018 - almost four in every ten young females were not in employment, education, or training.

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