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MEDIA RELEASE

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Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) – Q1:2023

The official unemployment rate was 32,9% in the first quarter of 2023.

The results of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) indicate that the number of employed persons increased by 258 000 to 16,2 million in the first quarter of 2023 compared to the fourth quarter of 2022.

The number of unemployed persons increased by 179 000 to 7,9 million during the same quarter. Additionally, the number of people who were not economically active for reasons other than discouragement decreased by 209 000 to 13,2 million. The discouraged work-seekers decreased by 87 000 in the first quarter of 2023 compared to the fourth quarter of 2022 resulting in a net decrease of 296 000 in the not economically active population.

The above changes in employment and unemployment resulted in the official unemployment rate increasing by 0,2 of a percentage point from 32,7% in the fourth quarter of 2022 to 32,9% in the first quarter of 2023. The unemployment rate according to the expanded definition decreased by 0,2 of a percentage point to 42,4% in Q1:2023 compared to Q4:2022.

Both the formal and informal sectors recorded increases in employment of 209 000 and 107 000 respectively. The following industries Finance (184 000), Community and Social Services (175 000), and Agriculture (27 000) recorded the largest employment gains. While employment losses were recorded in Private households (85 000), Trade (28 000), Mining (24 000), Construction (11 000) and Manufacturing (2 000).

Gauteng (up by 80 000), Limpopo (up by 71 000), Western Cape (up by 62 000), KwaZulu-Natal (up by 54 000) and Eastern Cape (up by 41 000) recorded the largest

employment increases in Q1:2023. Employment losses were recorded in Mpumalanga (down by 45 000), North West and Free State (down by 4 000 each) during the same period.

The youth remain vulnerable in the labour market, with the first quarter of 2023 results showing that the total number of unemployed youth (15-34 years) increased by 241 000 to 4,9 million while there was an increase of 28 000 in the number of employed youth to 5,6 million during the same period. This resulted in an increase in youth unemployment rate by 1,1 percentage points to 46,5% in Q1:2023.

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