**MEDIA RELEASE 15 May 2018**

**Quarterly Labour Force Survey - QLFS Q1:2018**

The results of the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for the first quarter of 2018 released by Statistics South Africa today indicate that:

The South African working-age population increased by 153 000 or 0,4 per cent in the first quarter of 2018 compared to the fourth quarter of 2017. The rise in both employment (up by 206 000) and unemployment (up by 100 000) over the quarter led to a rise in labour force participation rate (from 58,8% to 59,3%). The unemployment rate (26,7%) remained unchanged over the first quarter of 2018 compared to the fourth quarter of 2017.

Employment gains were recorded in the formal sector (111 000), informal sector (93 000) and private households (5 000), while Agriculture recorded job losses (down by 3 000) in the first quarter of 2018. The number of discouraged work-seekers increased by 249 000 while the number of other not economically active persons decreased by 403 000, resulting in a net decline of 154 000 (down by 1,0 percentage point) in the number of people not economically active between the fourth quarter of 2017 and the first quarter of 2018,

Quarterly employment increase of 206 000 in Q1: 2018 was driven by six of the ten industries. The contributors to the increase were the Community and social services (95 000), Manufacturing (58 000), Construction (40 000) Trade (36 000) and Finance and other business services (30 000) industries. Employment declines were recorded in Transport (41 000), Mining (14 000), Utilities (6 000) and Agriculture (3 000).

While the official unemployment rate remained unchanged at 26,7% in Q1: 2018 compared to Q4: 2017, it increased in seven of the nine provinces and it decreased in two of the provinces. The largest increase in the unemployment rate was recorded in Mpumalanga (up by 3,5 percentage points), Northern Cape (up by 2,4 percentage points), and North West (up by 1,9 percentage points). KwaZulu-Natal (down by 1,8 percentage points) and Gauteng (down by 0,5 of a percentage point) recorded a decline in official unemployment rate. The expanded unemployment rate increased by 0,4 of a percentage point in Q1: 2018 to 36,7% quarter-to-quarter.

Of the 10,3 million persons aged (15-24 years) 32,4% (approximately 3,3 million) were not in employment, education or training (NEET) in the first quarter of 2018 – implying that close to one in three young South Africans between the ages of 15 and 24 years were disengaged from the labour market. Compared to the first quarter of 2017, the NEET rate remained unchanged in the first quarter of 2018.

***Issued by Statistics South Africa***

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