

Unemployment rate falls to 34.5% in first quarter

The unemployment rate in South Africa has decreased by 0.8 of a percentage point to 34.5% in the first quarter of 2022, Statistics South Africa has revealed.



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In the last quarter of 2021, the country saw the highest unemployment rate on record of 35.3%.

Releasing the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for quarter 1 of 2022 on Tuesday, Statistician-General Risenga Maluleke said these results indicate that 370,000 jobs were gained between the fourth quarter of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022.

The biggest job gains were recorded in community and social services with 281,000 jobs, manufacturing with 263,000 jobs and trade with 98,000.

However, there were job losses in private households at 186,000, finance at 72,000, construction at 60,000 and agriculture at 23,000.

"The total number of persons employed was 14.9 million in the first quarter of 2022. The number of unemployed persons decreased by 60,000 to 7.9 million in the 1st quarter of 2022 compared to the previous quarter.

"The number of discouraged work seekers decreased by 54,000 (1.4%) and the number of people who were not economically active for reasons other than discouragement decreased by 112,000 (0.8%) between the two quarters resulting in a net decrease of 166,000 in the not economically active population," Maluleke said.



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Stats SA said the changes in employment and unemployment resulted in the official unemployment rate decreasing by 0.8 of a percentage point from 35.3% in the fourth quarter of 2021 to 34.5% in the first quarter of 2022.

"The unemployment rate according to the expanded definition of unemployment also decreased by 0.7 of a percentage point to 45.5 % in quarter one of 2022 compared to quarter four of 2021," Maluleke said.

Although there was a slight decline in the number of unemployed youth in quarter one of 2022, Stats SA said the youth remained vulnerable in the labour market.

The first quarter of 2022 saw the total number of unemployed youth aged 15-34 declining by 0.1% (or 5,000) to 4.7 million from quarter four of 2021.

There was a noticeable increase in the number of youth in employment by 5.0% or 244,000 during the same period.

"The increase in employment and decline in unemployment among the youth resulted in a decrease in youth unemployment rate by 1.2 percentage point to 47.8% in quarter one of 2022," Maluleke said.

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