

Cosatu calls for plan to halt job losses

The government, business and labour must implement development policies to stop the loss of jobs in the economy, the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu) said on Tuesday (5 February).



The Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) released by Statistics SA (StatsSA) showed that the country's workforce decreased by 235,000 people between the third and fourth quarters of 2012.

Cosatu spokesman Patrick Craven said the figures made it more urgent for government, labour and business to put into action policies such as the Infrastructure Development Plan, Industrial Policy Action Plan and parts of the New Growth Path.

"Combined with this approach, we need to speed up the reforms in our education and training sectors to ensure that school-leavers are equipped to take on the jobs which should by now be coming on stream," he said.

Craven said a possible increase in electricity tariffs would lead to more job losses and would become a disincentive to new investment.

The QLFS is a household-based sample survey conducted by StatsSA and covers the labour market activities of people aged 15 to 64. The latest survey covers the period from October to December.

It found that in the third quarter (July to September last year), the South African labour force numbered 18.3m, but that this dropped to just over 18m in the fourth quarter.

"This decrease was reflected in a decrease in the number of both unemployed persons (166,000) and employed persons (68,000), which saw the unemployment rate decline by 0.6 of a percentage point, from 25.5% to 24.9% in the fourth quarter."

StatsSA said this was the first time since the inception of the QLFS that there had been a decrease in employment in the fourth quarter of a year and added that the decrease in employment was a result of job losses in the formal sector (down by 52,000) and in private households (down by 8000).

Employment in agriculture and in the informal sector had increased by 24,000 (3.6%) and 8000 (0.4%) respectively.

The number of discouraged work-seekers increased by 87,000 between the third and fourth quarter while other not economically active people increased by 259,000.

In the fourth quarter of 2012, there were 4.5m unemployed. During the same period, there were 15m people "not economically active", a figure which included almost 2.3m discouraged work-seekers.

Of those employed, 9.6m were in the formal sector; 2.2m in the informal sector; 685,000 in agriculture. About a million people were employed in "private households".

There are just over 33m people in South Africa aged between 15 and 64.

Source: *Sapa* via I-Net Bridge

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