



EFF STATEMENT ON STATS SA QUARTERLY LABOUR FORCE STATISTICS FOR QUARTER 2 OF 2024

Tuesday, 13 August 2024.

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) notes the latest quarterly labour force statistics, released today by Statistics South Africa (Stats SA) for the second quarter of 2024, and how they reveal a grim reality for South Africa's working class. The unemployment rate has increased by 0.6% from quarter 1 to 33,5%—a damning indictment of a system that continues to fail the most marginalised.

This increase is defined by an increase in discouraged work-seekers by 147,000, coupled with a rise of 72,000 in the total number of economically inactive individuals. This highlights a growing disillusionment with a job market that is increasingly inaccessible.

The statistics for youth unemployment are equally alarming. Out of around 10.3 million young people aged 15 to 24 in the second quarter of 2024, a shocking 35.2% are entirely cut off from employment, education, or training. This is a worsening of the situation from last year, with the NEET (Not in Employment, Education, or Training) rate rising for both young men and women.

The situation for those aged 15 to 34 is equally dire, with an increase in NEET rates exposing the complete failure of current strategies to address youth unemployment. As it stands, over four in ten young people are left adrift, a testament to the catastrophic failure of policies that continue to let them down.

Despite the optimism projected by Stats SA, which paints a picture of progress through increased labour force participation rates, the truth remains that the outlook for women in the labour force is dismal. The so-called 'improvement' in women's labour force

participation—rising from 50.9% to 55.8% over the past decade—is a shallow victory in the face of a broader crisis.

The data shows that women's absorption rates remain critically low, falling to 35.8% from 36.9% in 2014, while men's absorption rates are at 44.9%. The wide gap in absorption rates—where men have consistently outperformed women—demonstrates systemic bias entrenched in the labour market.

The persistence of gender disparity in unemployment rates, with women enduring consistently higher rates across all educational levels, starkly exposes the failures of policies and systems that are supposed to uplift and equalise. The rise in women's labour force participation is, therefore, meaningless when the structural barriers that perpetuate their exclusion and marginalisation remain untouched.

This situation is worsened by the horrid DA-ANC Government given the extractive and exploitative policies of the DA. The DA has sprung into action fast-tracking work visas, which prioritise the influx of cheap, across the borders labour and amendments to the Labour Relations Act that will allow employers to exploit a desperate labour force. We can only wish that job creation loved the DA as much as the Rand does.

As the EFF has consistently stated, the only way to achieve meaningful job creation is through robust economic growth. Yet, our economy has limped along with a mere 2% growth over recent years. To truly turn the tide, we must embark on a path of radical reindustrialisation driven by the state.



This involves a multifaceted approach: significantly enhancing state capacity to oversee and implement economic strategies; embracing state-led and protected industrialisation to shield and nurture domestic industries; and diversifying our industrial base to reduce dependency on a few sectors. We must also protect both emerging and established industries through strategic measures such as increasing tariffs to guard against foreign competition and providing targeted subsidies to boost black entrepreneurship, particularly women and the youth.

Additionally, a concerted effort to promote South African products—both within our borders and across the continent and global markets—is crucial. It is only through such progressive and comprehensive strategies that we can foster an environment where job creation is not just a promise, but a reality for all.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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