



PRESS RELEASE

2012 LABOUR FORCE SURVEY

10 APRIL 2012

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1. The Namibia Statistics Agency is pleased to release the results of the 2012 Labour Force Survey (LFS). The 2012 LFS was the fifth post-independence Labour Force Survey and was conducted in close collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare. The survey represents yet another milestone in the statistical system of the Republic of Namibia as it has been conducted under the strictest international standards and codes of data collection and analysis while taking into account Namibian specificities.
2. It should be noted that the results of the latest LFS are not fully comparable with previous Labour Force Surveys as there were significant changes in methodology, including sample design, questionnaire design, training of trainers and enumerators, as well as general coverage of the population. The results today, however, as a result of these improvements, present the most accurate data and labour force information and constitute the official situation about employment and unemployment in Namibia.
3. The public is cautioned not to attribute movements in labour force indicators from previous periods to specific policy interventions during

Board of Directors

Mr Paul Hartmann (Chairperson), Ms Florentia Amuenje, Ms Florette Nakusera,
Mr Sikongo Haihambo, Ms Anna Matebele, Mr Martin Mwinga, Dr John Steytler

the review period as the methodologies employed between previous surveys and the current survey are not consistent. The NSA will, however, henceforth maintain the same methodology for comparability purposes going forward and also to assist policy makers in assessing the effectiveness of policy making.

4. The attention of the public is also drawn to the fact that the results of today do not say anything about the quality of work, or what is also referred to as decent working conditions of the labour force in Namibia. In subsequent publications the NSA may compile reports on decent working conditions, although this does not fall solely within the ambit of the NSA's responsibilities. In this regard, we would like to encourage users of data to initiate such studies while the NSA stands ready to avail anonymised data sets for such research undertakings.
5. Before coming to some of the highlights of the 2012 LFS, let me now highlight some of the key methodological changes that the NSA introduced in the 2012 LFS. These methodological changes were introduced following extensive internal analytical work, critique by independent researchers of the previous labour force survey, as well as views from a user-producer workshop that preceded the design of the questionnaire and conduct of the LFS.
6. First and foremost we have significantly increased the sample size of the 2012 LFS compared to the previous LFS. In total 9,108 households were interviewed compared to 5,975 during the previous labour force survey, representing an increase of about 65 per cent. In addition, the number of sampling units was increased from 239 during the previous labour force survey to 506 during the 2012 labour force survey enabling the

NSA to have a wider and more diverse coverage of the Namibian population. The increases in the sample size and number of primary sampling units were necessitated by the fact that the previous LFS had a high sampling error, and as a result of this intervention the sampling error has been reduced to within acceptable limits.

7. Secondly, the number of questions to determine whether a person is employed or not has drastically increased from two in the previous labour force survey to nine in the 2012 LFS.
8. Other measures introduced to improve the quality of the 2012 LFS include intensive piloting of the questionnaire prior to the actual survey, improved training manuals and more time spent on training of trainers, as well as training of enumerators. The amount of time spent on training more than doubled compared to previous similar exercises. Finally the scope of the LFS also increased in the sense that modules on the informal sector and domestic workers were included, while more attention was also paid to subsistence workers in the agricultural sector.
9. Let me now return to some of the key highlights of the 2012 Labour Force Survey.
10. First, the broadly defined unemployment rate is estimated at 27.4 per cent while the narrowly defined unemployment rate is 16.7 per cent. These figures should not be seen as indicating declines when compared to the previous labour force survey, because, as was mentioned before the methodology employed is not 100 per cent comparable.
11. While the broadly defined unemployment rate may be seen as more moderate compared to previous estimates, it hides discrepancies

between rural and urban areas, across regions, across gender and more especially across age groups. In this regard, the unemployment rate among the youthful segments of the population remains alarmingly high at 56 per cent for the age category 15-19 years and 49 percent for the age category 20–24 year. In contrast, the unemployment rate for the population in the age category 50-54 years is only 13 percent. On average, females are more likely to be unemployed than males, and people in urban areas more likely to be unemployed than people in rural areas. The region with the highest unemployment rate is Ohangwena with an unemployment rate of 34.6 per cent, while Karas with an unemployment rate of 23.9 per cent has the lowest unemployment rate.

12. Secondly as in the past there is a clear positive relationship between educational attainment and the unemployment rate. The higher the educational attainment rate, the lower the unemployment rate. In this connection, the unemployment rate for people with no secondary education is estimated at 29.7 per cent, while the unemployment rate for people with tertiary education is less than 10 per cent.

13. The 2012 Labour Force Survey reveals that the majority of the labour force is employed in the subsistence agricultural sector that employs about 99 thousand people, representing a share of 15.8 per cent of all employed people.

14. In terms of income levels the most lucrative jobs are found in the transport & communication sector where more than 53 per cent earn more than N\$8,000 per month followed by the mining sector with 51 per cent and education with 50 per cent. The lowest paid workers are in private households where less than 0.5 per cent earn more than

N\$8,000 per month and in agricultural where less than 2 per cent earn more than N\$8,000 per month.

15. In conclusion, I would like to thank all those who contributed to the successful conduct of the 2012 LFS in particular those households that were selected to form part of the survey. The NSA would like to invite the main users and producers of labour force information, including the general public, to access the report and anonymised micro data via our website for additional value addition and analysis.

JOHN STEYTLER
STATISTICIAN-GENERAL