

Labour Force Survey (LFS) 2005- Summary Report

The Central Statistical Office in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security undertook the Labour Force Survey (LFS) in 2005. The survey was household based. The non availability of detailed Labour Market Information necessitated the undertaking of this survey. This survey is the first in nineteen years after the last LFS that was undertaken in 1986. The absence of key indicators of the labour market from the results of other surveys undertaken in Zambia made it extremely difficult for the Government to formulate appropriate labour market programmes, monitor and evaluate programmes and allocate necessary resources to these programmes.

The LFS was specifically designed to measure the labour market and to provide key indicators of the labour market such as unemployment, underemployment, hours of work etc. It also provides insight into a variety of issues related to the labour market, including the level and pattern of unemployment and the industrial and occupational structure of the labour market. The design of the questionnaire and definitions used conform to the requirements set by international bodies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The specific objectives of the Labour Force Survey were:

- (i) To determine the size, growth, composition and distribution of the Labour Force;
- (ii) To determine the level of unemployment and under employment;
- (iii) To determine the participation of different categories of the population especially women and youths in the labour force; and
- (iv) To determine the characteristics of employment and under employment in the informal sector.

Summary of Survey Findings

The survey results show that the size of the labour force grew from 2.4 million persons in 1986 to 4.9 million persons in 2005. Employment levels have remained above 80 percent for both the 1986 and 2005 Labour Force Surveys.

The 2005 LFS results show that 16 percent of persons in the Labour Force were unemployed, 14 percent of the males in the labour force and 17 percent of the females. Higher rates of unemployment were observed in more urbanised province than less urbanised ones. Comparing the two LFS, the proportion of unemployed persons registered a marginal increase from 13 percent in 1986 to 16 percent in 2005. This is largely as a result of the increase in the minimum age in the definition of unemployment, from 12 years and above used in 1986 to 15 years and above used in the 2005 survey.

The trend in unemployment rates by age group showed a decreasing pattern with an increase in age. The decrease in unemployment rates was observed between the age groups of 15 – 19 and 45 - 49. At national level, the labour force in the age group 15 - 19 showed the highest unemployment rate at 25 percent.

Of all persons aged 15 years and above, 80 percent were economically active while 20 percent were economically inactive. Eighty-six percent of the males and 74 percent of the female population were economically active.

In terms of residence, 87 percent of the rural population was economically active while 67 percent of urban population was economically active. There were more male than female economically active persons in both rural and urban areas.

Slightly over three-quarters or (77.3 percent) of the economically inactive persons reported that they are able to read or write. There were more males than females who reported that they were able to write or read in both rural areas and urban areas

The results also show that the highest proportion of persons who were economically active were those with degrees was economically active, followed by those who are of grade 1- 7 educational levels at 82 percent. Those that were not in school and/or had never been to school constituted 69 percent with 100 percent of female population not in school and/or never been to school.

The total employment to population ratio for Zambia was 77 percent, indicating that a substantial proportion of the population was involved in labour related activities. Males had a higher employment to population ratio than females. The employment to population ratio was higher in rural (91 percent) than urban (54 percent)

areas. The 40-44 years age group had the highest employment to population ratio at 91 percent, while the 15-19 years group had the lowest at 72 percent.

Of the total number of employed persons in Zambia, 43 percent were self employed, 17 percent were paid employees, 38 percent were unpaid family workers and 1 percent were employers.

Most of the literate persons (44 percent) were self-employed, whereas the majority of illiterate persons (54 percent) were unpaid family workers.

Persons with no education were highly likely to be unpaid family workers (69 percent). The majority of persons with tertiary education were paid employees (63 percent), while those with primary education were either paid employees (46 percent) or unpaid family workers (46 percent).

Of the total number of employed persons in Zambia, 3.1 percent had a university degree, 0.9 percent had attained A-level education, 58.3 percent had primary education, 19.7 percent had lower secondary education and 18 percent had higher secondary school education.

About 51.6 percent of the employed persons in Zambia were male and 48.4 percent were female. In rural areas, 48.6 percent of the employed persons were male, and 51.4 percent were females. More males (59.8 percent) than females (40.2 percent) were employed in urban areas. The occupation with the largest proportion of males was Production and related (76.9 percent), while females were the majority in Agriculture, forestry and fisheries (52.3 percent).

The majority of employed persons in Zambia were found in the age-groups 20-24 years and 25-29 years, 16.2 percent in each group. The older age-groups had lower proportions of employed persons, the lowest being the 60-64 years age-group at 2.6 percent.

The agriculture, forestry and fisheries industry accounted for the largest proportion of employed persons in Zambia at 73 percent. There were more females (78 percent) than males (69 percent) employed in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries industry. This industry further accounted for the largest proportion of employed persons in rural areas. In urban areas, the mining and quarrying industry had the largest proportion of employed persons.

Of all the employed persons in Zambia, about 72.4 percent were classified as part-time workers, as they worked for less than 40 hours per week. Approximately 77.7 percent of the part-time workers were female and 67.4 percent were male.

The part-time employment rate was higher in rural (83.3 percent) than urban (42.4 percent) areas. About 36.8 percent of the males in urban areas worked part-time, where as 50.6 percent of the females worked part-time.

Lusaka (42.5 percent) and Copperbelt (42.6 percent) provinces had the lowest part-time employment rates, while Western province (97.6 percent) had the highest proportion of part-time workers. In all provinces, female workers had higher part-time employment rates than their male counterparts.

The under-employment rate was estimated at 84.3 percent of total employed persons. The rate was higher for females than males in both urban and rural areas. The total under-employment rate was 87 percent and 81.7 percent for females and males respectively.

Amongst all the occupations, Agriculture, forestry and fisheries had the highest under-employment rate at 90.3 percent, while the Professional, technical and related had the lowest rate at 55.6 percent.

The most commonly cited reason for being under-employed for both males and females was that it was off-season. About 95.8 percent of all under-employed persons cited this reason for their status. Other reasons given for being under-employed were that persons were students or that they were ill/disabled.

The survey results showed that employed persons in Zambia spent an average of 35 hours of work per week. Male workers (37.4 hours) spent more time on work per week than their female counterparts (32.5 hours).

Persons in rural areas (30.6 hours) spent fewer hours on work per week than those in urban areas (46.5 hours). In both rural and urban areas, males worked more hours than females.

Workers in the Agriculture, forestry and fisheries occupation worked the least at 29.7 hours per week, while those in the Clerical and related spent the most time on work at 51.9 hours on average per week.

The full Labour Force Survey Report is for sale at the CSO Head Office in Lusaka. It costs K40,000:00 per copy.