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STATIN Releases Revised Labour Force Survey Incorporating 19th, 20th and 21st ICLS Recommendations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

KINGSTON July 17, 2024: The Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN) is pleased to present the key indicators from the January 2024 Labour Force Survey (LFS), the first release of the recently revised Survey. The revision to the LFS incorporates the recommendations from the 19th, 20th and 21st International Conferences of Labour Statisticians (ICLS). The ICLS, convened every five years by the International Labour Organization (ILO), plays a pivotal role in setting international standards on labour statistics. These standards, in the form of resolutions and guidelines, relate to concepts, definitions, classifications and other methodological approaches, ensuring international comparability.

The revised Labour Force Survey aligns with STATIN's commitment to providing the most accurate, comprehensive, and timely labour market information. The changes reflect the latest international standards and approved guidelines in labour statistics proposed by the ILO, ensuring that the data provided by the Institute remains relevant and comparable nationally and internationally.

The revised Labour Force Survey introduces several key changes, each designated to enhance the quality and relevance of the data produced. These changes are:

- **Updated definitions and classifications** of employment:
 - Central to this change is the introduction of the first internationally agreed statistical definition of “work” aligned with the general production boundary for the System of National Accounts (SNA). Employment in this new framework is more narrowly defined as **work performed for pay or profit**. As a result, activities such as own-use production work, volunteer work and unpaid trainee work are now excluded.

- **Improved data analysis and presentation** to provide clearer insights into labour market trends and dynamics:

Labour underutilisation (LU) as a rate is now not only measured and analysed using the headline indicator unemployment (LU1) but also underemployment (LU2), the potential labour force (LU3) and a composite of all three (LU4).

Other changes incorporated in the Newly Revised Labour Force Survey:

1. Reference Week Adjustment:

- The reference week for the LFS has shifted from the last full week of the previous quarter to the first full week of the current quarter.

2. Minimum Age Limit Update:

- The minimum age for inclusion in the LFS has been raised to 15, which is consistent with the ILO recommendations (previously 14 years old).

3. Rigorous (Strict) Definition of Unemployment:

- To be classified as unemployed, an individual must now meet all three conditions:
 - Absence of employment
 - Active job-seeking
 - Availability for work
- Previously, Jamaica employed a more relaxed definition of unemployment that did not require active job-seeking.

It is important to note that these changes represent a break in the series, and as such, data comparability with previous quarters is not advised. Importantly, however, these changes will greatly enhance the value of Jamaica's Labour Force Survey as a tool for policymakers, researchers, and the public.

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The following are highlights of the findings from the January 2024 Labour Force Survey¹, with a reference week of January 7 to 13, 2024.

Labour Force Participation:

In January 2024, there were 1,486,400 persons in the labour force. The labour force comprised 788,500 males (53.0%) and 697,900 females (47.0%), with an overall labour force participation rate of 68.9 per cent. The male labour force participation rate was higher at 74.5 per cent compared to 63.6 per cent for females.

Employment:

Of the labour force, 1,405,700 persons were employed in January 2024. The gender distribution slightly favoured males with 757,200 employed males (53.9%) and 648,500 females (46.1%). Among the employed population, 28,100 or 2.3 per cent were underemployed (time-related), meaning they worked part-time but wanted additional hours.

The occupation group with the highest number of employees was 'Services and Sales Workers', employing 328,600 individuals. This constituted 23.4 per cent of the total employed population. This group also employed the most females, with a count of 213,300. The second largest occupation group was 'Elementary Occupations', employing 197,900 individuals followed by 'Skilled Agricultural, Forestry and Fishery Workers' which employed 188,200 persons. For males, the occupation group with the highest employment was 'Craft and Related Trades Workers' (153,200).

Regarding industry groups, 'Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles' was the largest employer, engaging 266,500 individuals (19.0%), with a slightly higher female

¹ The survey was conducted between January and March 2024.

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representation (147,200 or 55.2%). The ‘Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing’ industry employed 195,300 individuals, predominantly males (74.6%).

Unemployment:

In January 2024, there were 80,700 unemployed persons; females accounted for 61.2 per cent of those unemployed. The number of unemployed youths (persons aged 15 -24 years) was 32,300, of which 17,600 or 54.5 per cent were females.

The unemployment rate (LU1) for January 2024 was 5.4 per cent. The unemployment rate was higher among females (7.1%) than males (4.0%). Youth unemployment was higher at 16.0 per cent, with female youths experiencing a higher unemployment rate (18.5%) than their male counterparts (13.8%). By region, the unemployment rate was lowest for the Greater Kingston Metropolitan Area (GKMA) at 4.3 per cent compared to 6.7 per cent for Other Urban Centres (OUC) and 5.7 per cent for Rural Areas.

Outside the Labour Force:

Outside the labour force, there were 669,400 individuals, with a higher number of females (399,200) than males (270,200). Of these, 34,100 (5.1%) were part of the potential labour force. The potential labour force refers to persons looking for a job but not available or those available but not looking for a job.

There were 142,200 males and 146,600 females within the youth population of 15 to 24 years outside the labour force. Additionally, there were 100,700 youth who were not employed, not enrolled in educational activities or currently in training (NEET), of which 49,400 were males and 51,400 females.

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Other Labour Underutilisation Rates

The combined rate of time-related underemployment and unemployment (LU2) was 7.3 per cent. This rate represents a combined estimate of unmet need for employment based on persons who have insufficient work time (employed but would like to work more hours) or persons who are available and actively seeking work.

The combined rate of unemployment and potential labour force (LU3), including unavailable job seekers or available non-job seekers, was 7.5. The aggregate measure of labour underutilisation (LU4) was 9.4, representing the proportion of persons who were in time-related underemployment, unemployment and those in the potential labour force.

For more information about the revised Labour Force Survey, please visit STATIN's website at www.statinja.gov.jm or contact the Institute's Library at 876 630-1600 or via email at info@statinja.gov.jm.

About Us: The Statistical Institute of Jamaica is the National Statistics Office and the leading provider of official statistics on the country's economic, social, demographic, and environmental conditions. The Institute periodically releases monthly, quarterly, and annual products such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Inflation rate, trade statistics, and population statistics. STATIN is dedicated to delivering accurate, comprehensive, and timely data that supports informed decision-making and aligns with the Institute's mission.

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