

'JOBLESSNESS A CATASTROPHE'

Cosatu laments the loss of 61 000 more jobs

JOB statistics released yesterday are a "national catastrophe", Cosatu said.

"The fact that (the) rate of job losses is slowing down will be no comfort to those 5,5 million who are now condemned to a life of destitution," Cosatu said.

The union federation was reacting to Stats SA's Quarterly Labour Force Survey for the second quarter of 2010.

"The news that a further 61 000 jobs were lost in the second quarter of 2010, on top of the 171 000 jobs which disappeared during the first quarter, will cause many workers to question whether 16 years of democracy have done them any good at all."

It added that on average every worker supported five dependants, which meant that

over 5,5 million additional people had been plunged into a life of poverty and misery in just 18 months.

Cosatu said that while more and more workers sunk into deep poverty, they saw a small minority earning millions and living in luxurious mansions.

"Such poverty and inequality aggravates the anti-social consequences which we see - violent community protests, crime, xenophobia and the collapse of social and moral values."

Such a level of unemployment was not just a personal and family disaster but a national catastrophe, it said.

Solidarity spokesperson Jaco Kleynhans said: "The broad unemployment rate of 32,8 percent means that one out of three South Africans

who would like to work, cannot find work.

"In addition, the drop in employment, in particularly the formal manufacturing and construction sectors, is extremely worrying because these sectors are critically important for SA's economic recovery."

The official unemployment rate, which excluded those who had given up looking for work, rose to 25,3 percent from the 25,2 percent in the first quarter, according to Bloomberg news agency.

Cosatu said that yesterday's job figures made it "more determined than ever" to campaign for a significant cut in interest rates and to provide relief for employers struggling to avoid retrenching workers. - Sapa