



**Statistics
South Africa**



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PRESS RELEASE

Stats SA presenting its work programme to the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Finance – to show how it intends to spend the money allocated

The presentation of the Stats SA work programme to South Africa's elected officials for the first time represents a watershed in the life of the statistics agency. It not only cements Stats SA's contract with the people of South Africa, but also shows a greater clarity and vision within the organization, about what it takes to produce quality official statistics that can be trusted by everyone.

The Statistician-General, Mr. Pali Lehohla, passionately believes that Stats SA is earning its credibility by sheer hard work, professionalism and a single-mindedness of purpose among his new top management and the leadership of the organisation.

"We have not yet arrived" he said, "but we are turning the corner and we are working on it. There are no victories without mountains to climb."

The new work programme depicts various critical milestones, that measure what Stats SA is going to undertake over the next few years - culminating in the Census of 2011. Stats SA is going to parliament with the confidence that it is on the right course to produce accurate, relevant and reliable statistics that it knows South Africans and parliament can trust. Stats SA's concrete work programme, aligned to the organisation's strategy, will inevitably translate into better management through providing the measures against which the entire organisation can be held accountable.

Previously the organisation suffered an acute shortage of well-trained staff in official statistics and was struggling to build a coherent leadership core, to translate its vision into reality. Through addressing these two challenges, Stats SA is cohering as an organization, and working towards the production of more accurate, relevant and reliable official statistics. Stats SA is focused on providing relevant information that meet user requirements, through developing and implementing common standards, definitions and classifications, establishing partnerships and growing human capacity.

The work programme defines plans to improve the measurement of GDP, by introducing new and better ways of collecting information on construction, communication, business and personal services, transport and tourism.

The measurement of price changes will also continue to be improved, with consistent attention to the Consumer Price Index that is critical for inflation targeting by the Reserve Bank. The measurement of price changes at the point of the production will also be re-engineered.

Another area that is in the process of a big overhaul is the Labour Force Survey. The changes to be made are designed to ensure more accurate reporting on employment and unemployment levels, based on international best practice and advice. It is envisaged that the first reports from the re-engineered quarterly Labour Force Survey will be published in 2008.

In February 2007, Stats SA will undertake a large-scale household survey, the Community Survey – interviewing the people living in 300 000 homes across the length and breadth of the country. This will provide information on the life circumstances of South Africans and measure both the extent and impact of service delivery.

An important element of Stats SA's work programme is the continued development of a skilled cadre of statisticians for the future. The organization has been running an internship programme for two years and is in the process of establishing a Statistical Training Institute. In the interim, the organisation continues to provide its staff with opportunities to study at various institutions of higher learning, both in South Africa and abroad.

Stats SA is supporting the participation of 18 mathematics teachers in the 7th International Conference on the Teaching of Statistics to be held in July 2006, as part of its outreach programme towards a numerate society. Two weeks ago, 2000 teachers of mathematics throughout the country participated in a national mathematical Olympiad, to qualify to participate in the Brazil conference.

Capacity building efforts will continue, to ensure that in the future Stats SA will continue to produce quality statistics that South Africans can trust.

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For more information please contact Trevor Oosterwyk at (012) 310 8130 or 0829089104.