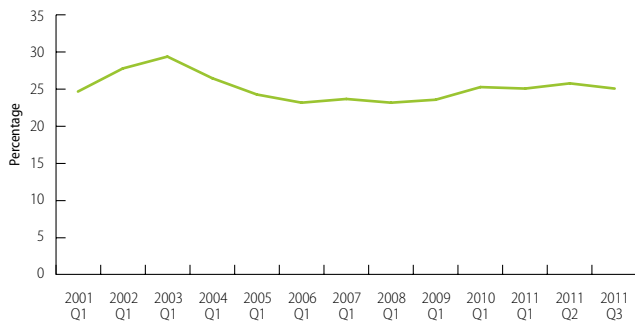


The Labour Market at a Glance

High levels of unemployment remain the South African economy's Achilles heel. At the end of 2011, formal unemployment stood at around a quarter of the population. This is significantly higher than any of its emerging market peers. The crisis in the labour market is most pronounced amongst young South Africans, with just over 70 per cent unable to find employment. Given the precarious position of workers, strike action has often been protracted and costly to the economy, peaking in 2010 with an extended public sector strike that amounted to about 20 million working days lost.

NARROW UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BETWEEN 2001–2011



Source: Statistics South Africa, Quarterly Labour Force Surveys 2008–2011

NUMBER OF FORMALLY EMPLOYED SOUTH AFRICANS ('000)



Source: Statistics South Africa, Quarterly Labour Force Surveys 2008–2011

South African unemployment in a comparative perspective

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Brazil	9.29	7.90	8.10	6.70	6.70
China	4.00	4.20	4.30	4.10	4.00
Egypt	9.21	8.78	9.52	8.99	10.41
Indonesia	9.11	8.39	7.87	7.14	6.80
Mexico	3.71	3.97	5.46	5.37	4.50
Nigeria	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	4.50
Russia	6.10	6.40	8.40	7.50	7.30
South Africa	22.23	22.91	23.94	24.91	24.51

Source: International Monetary Fund, 2011

Note: Unemployment rate can be defined by either the national definition, the ILO harmonised definition, or the OECD harmonised definition. The OECD harmonised unemployment rate gives the number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force (the total number of people employed plus unemployed). [OECD Main Economic Indicators, OECD, monthly]. As defined by the International Labour Organisation, unemployed workers are those who are currently not working but are willing and able to work for pay, currently available to work, and have actively searched for work. [ILO, <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/stat/res/index.htm>]. Estimates start after 2010.

40.9%
Proportion of
sector workers in
skilled positions

EMPLOYED SOUTH AFRICANS AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL WORKING-AGE POPULATION (15–64)



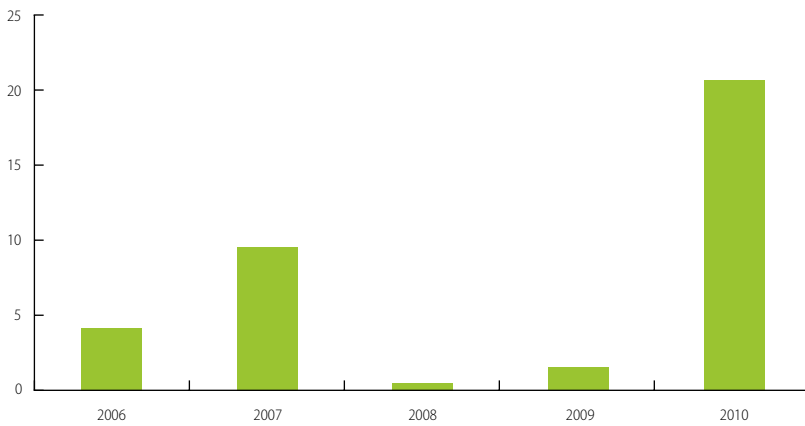
Source: Statistics South Africa, Quarterly Labour Force Surveys 2008–2011

YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 15–34 AS A PERCENTAGE OF UNEMPLOYED SOUTH AFRICANS



Source: Elaborated using data from Statistics South Africa, Quarterly Labour Force Surveys 2008–2011

NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS LOST* DUE TO INDUSTRIAL ACTION (MILLION)



Source: Department of Labour, 2010 Annual Industrial Action Report

Note: * Working days lost = the number of workers on strike or lockout multiplied by the length of the work stoppage.

Working days lost by industry in 2010 (actual days)	
Sector	Days
Agriculture	108
Mining	361 113
Manufacturing	384 980
Electricity	7 681
Construction	3 787
Wholesale, retail trade	394 584
Transport	640 757
Financial Intermediation	15 196
Community Services (Civil Service)	18 866 531

Source: Department of Labour, 2010 Annual Industrial Action Report

NUMBER OF WORK STOPPAGES AS A RESULT OF INDUSTRIAL ACTION

