

Unemployment and underemployment statistics for February – April 2025

According to the latest labour force statistics (i.e. provisional figures for February – April 2025) released today (May 20) by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased from 3.2% in January – March 2025 to 3.4% in February – April 2025. The underemployment rate also increased from 1.1% in January – March 2025 to 1.3% in February – April 2025.

Comparing February – April 2025 with January – March 2025, the unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) increased in many major economic sectors, with more distinct increases observed in the construction sector, accommodation services sector, food and beverage service activities sector, and financing sector. Meanwhile, declines in the unemployment rates were seen in the information and communications sector; insurance sector; and arts, entertainment and recreation sector. As to the underemployment rate, increases were mainly seen in the construction sector and cleaning and similar activities sector.

Total employment decreased by around 15 600 from 3 692 700 in January – March 2025 to 3 677 100 in February – April 2025. Over the same period, the labour force also decreased by around 9 000 from 3 815 500 to 3 806 500.

The number of unemployed persons (not seasonally adjusted) increased by around 6 600 from 122 800 in January – March 2025 to 129 400 in February – April 2025. Over the same period, the number of underemployed persons also increased by around 4 900 from 42 700 to 47 600.

Commentary

Commenting on the latest unemployment figures, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, said, "The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate increased by 0.2 percentage point from a low level in January – March 2025 to 3.4% in February – April 2025. The underemployment rate went up to 1.3%. The labour force and total employment decreased further to 3 806 500 and 3 677 100 respectively from the preceding three-month period."

Looking ahead, Mr Chris Sun said, "Various industries in Hong Kong are undergoing a transitional period, and the trends of their unemployment rates may go upward or downward. However, the recent easing of trade tensions, the continued growth in the Mainland economy, the Government's various measures to boost economic momentum and the continuous positive growth of the overall economy will provide support to the labour market."

Mr Chris Sun said, "Although we see some recent closures of shops, there have also been openings of many new shops. As at end-2024, the number of companies registered in Hong Kong has reached a record high of 1.46 million,

likely against emergence of new demands and new consumption trends. The recent successful organisation of a series of mega events in Hong Kong, coupled with the concerted efforts of the Government in tandem with different industries including tourism, catering, hospitality and retail, has led to a significant increase in the number of inbound visitors, which will bring about more opportunities to the labour market."

Further information

The unemployment and underemployment statistics were compiled from the findings of the continuous General Household Survey.

In the survey, the definitions used in measuring unemployment and underemployment follow closely those recommended by the International Labour Organization. The employed population covers all employers, self-employed persons, employees (including full-time, part-time, casual workers, etc.) and unpaid family workers. Unemployed persons by industry (or occupation) are classified according to their previous industry (or occupation).

The survey for February – April 2025 covered a sample of some 26 000 households or 68 000 persons, selected in accordance with a scientifically designed sampling scheme to represent the population of Hong Kong. Labour force statistics compiled from this sample represented the situation in the moving three-month period of February to April 2025.

Data on labour force characteristics were obtained from the survey by interviewing each member aged 15 or over in the sampled households.

Statistical tables on the latest labour force statistics can be downloaded at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode200.html). More detailed analysis of the labour force characteristics is given in the "Quarterly Report on General Household Survey" which is published four times a year. The latest issue of the report contains statistics for the quarter October – December 2024 while the next issue covering the quarter January – March 2025 will be available by end May 2025. Users can also browse and download this publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1050001&scode=200).

For enquiries about labour force statistics, please contact the General Household Survey Section (3) of the C&SD (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: ghs@censtatd.gov.hk).