



national treasury

Department:
National Treasury
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Private Bag X115, Pretoria, 0001 | 40 Church Square, Pretoria, 0002 | Tel: +27 12 315 5111



@Treasury_RSA



National Treasury RSA



National Treasury of South Africa



@treasuryrsa

www.treasury.gov.za

MEDIA ADVISORY

MINISTER OF FINANCE TO OPEN 2026 PUBLIC ECONOMICS CONFERENCE: YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Media are invited to attend the 2026 Public Economics Conference (PEC), taking place from 7-9 July under the theme, “Counting the Crisis: Data, Evidence and Solutions for Youth Unemployment in South Africa”. At a time when youth unemployment remains one of South Africa’s most urgent social and economic challenges, the conference will ask a central public-policy question: how can better data, stronger evidence and more effective implementation help connect young people to real opportunities? Statistics South Africa’s 2026 first quarter labour-market data shows that the national unemployment rate stood at 32.7%, while unemployment among 15–24-year-olds was 60.9% and among 25–34-year-olds was 40.6%. More than four in ten young people aged 15–34 were not in employment, education or training.

The conference will therefore ask not only how South Africa measures youth unemployment, but also how evidence can be used to improve policy choices. Discussions will focus on what current data captures and misses, including informality and the lived experiences of young work-seekers; what can be learned from existing employment interventions; and how technological change, digital transformation and artificial intelligence are reshaping the future of work.

The Public Economics Conference has grown out of GTAC and National Treasury’s Public Economics Capacity Building Initiative, to strengthen applied public economics and public-policy capability across government and academia. Piloted in 2016, the 2026 conference marks the eighth iteration of this platform and brings together government leaders, academics, researchers, practitioners, students and public voices to contribute to a more evidence-based agenda for tackling youth unemployment.



MEDIA ADVISORY

The conference will open with a pre-recorded video message from the Minister of Finance, Mr Enoch Godongwana, followed by a discussion between the National Treasury Director General, Dr Duncan Pieterse and South African Revenue Service (SARS) Commissioner, Dr Johnstone Makhubu. The keynote address will be delivered by leading economist, Dr Haroon Borhat.

Over the three days, participants will engage on the state of South Africa's labour market, the effectiveness of current employment interventions and the opportunities and challenges presented by the technological change and the future of work.

Programme outline:

- **Day 1: Understanding the Problem: Data and Trends**

The first day of the conference will focus on understanding the nature and scale of youth unemployment through data and evidence. Participants will explore different approaches to measuring employment and informality, examine key labour market trends since 1994, and discuss the structural drivers shaping employment outcomes. Sessions will also consider what existing data may be missing, particularly regarding the informal economy and the lived experiences of young South Africans. Senior leaders from National Treasury and the South African Revenue Service (SARS) will demonstrate how government data can be used more effectively to inform policy.

- **Day 2: From Job Creation to Job Access**

The second day will shift the discussion from measurement to action. Participants will examine South Africa's capacity to generate employment, the role of economic growth and public policy, and the effectiveness of programmes and interventions designed to support youth employment. Interactive poster presentations and a new Writers and Commentators session will provide additional perspectives on the challenges and opportunities facing young people in the labour market.

- **Day 3: The Future of Work**



national treasury

Department:
National Treasury
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



MEDIA ADVISORY

The final day will explore how technological change, digital transformation and artificial intelligence are reshaping the world of work. Discussions will focus on the implications for skills development, lifelong learning and future employment opportunities. Student debates will conclude the conference, challenging participants to engage with some of the most important policy questions shaping South Africa's economic future.

Together, these discussions aim to move beyond diagnosis and contribute to a more coherent, evidence-based agenda for tackling youth unemployment in South Africa.

For the full programme [click here](#).

Conference Details:

- **Date:** 7 – 9 July 2026
- **Time:** 08:30 – 17:00 (Registration opens at 08:30)

Media Accreditation

Journalists wishing to attend must RSVP to media@treasury.gov.za by 14h00 on Friday 3 July 2026. Please note that due to venue capacity limitations, only registered **broadcast media** will be accommodated in person, while other registered media representatives can follow online on: YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@GTACSouthAfrica>

For more information and to view the detailed programme, please visit our [Public Economics Conference page here](#).

Jointly issued by: National Treasury and GTAC

Date: 02 July 2026