

This is contained in the UBOS Labour Market Survey 2025, released in Kampala last Thursday.

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New data from Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) reveals that resignations are one of the leading drivers of job vacancies in both the formal and informal sectors, overtaking retirement and termination.

The UBOS Labour Market Survey 2025, released in Kampala last Thursday, shows that in the formal sector alone, 55,684 vacancies arose from resignations, far higher than those occasioned by retirement at 1,892.

Restructuring accounted for 13,277 vacancies, termination 9,769, expansion 46,562, and others 28,056.

The data also reveals that the country's labour market is facing a deeper crisis, with even those employed struggling to earn a meaningful living, with thousands leaving their jobs due to poor working condition.

The findings, therefore, point to a labour market where the real crisis is no longer just about joblessness, but the lack of decent, productive, and sustainable jobs, leaving millions of Ugandans working but with poor working and living standards.

The report shows Uganda has a working-age population of about 26.4 million people, but with about only 13.4 million employed, underscoring the scale of the challenges.

The survey reveals that unemployment has stagnated at 12.2 percent, nearly matching the 12.3 percent estimate by the International Labour Organisation.

But more telling is that only about 44 percent of Ugandans aged 15 and above are productively engaged, pointing to a labour market that is continuously failing to fully utilise its workforce.

This means more than half of the working-age population is either unemployed or underutilised, raising concerns about the quality and sustainability of jobs available.

Despite employing the majority, the informal sector also accounts for the highest number of job vacancies at

Resignations lead in creating job vacancies



State Minister for Finance-in-charge of Planning Amos Lugoloobi launches the UBOS Labour Market Survey 2025 in Kampala last Thursday. PHOTO/COURTESY

305,364, largely driven by expansion and high resignation rates.

The same data suggests the informal sector continues to absorb the majority of workers, employing 7,350,199 people (about 4 million males and 3.4 million females) compared to 2,373,109 (848,569 females and 1.5 million males) in formal employment.

However, most of these jobs are in the services sector, which is largely characterised by small-scale, low-productivity activities.

Of the informal jobs, 6,121,260 people are in the services sector, while industry accounts for 1,186,394. The findings that agriculture, forestry, and fishing employ the least in this category (42,547) has also sparked debate.

State Minister for Finance-in-charge

of Planning Amos Lugoloobi questioned whether the figures reflect the realities on the ground.

"For the case of agriculture, there's the least number of employees, and that doesn't seem to correlate with reality. I would expect to see more people reflected, especially in informal settings within the sector," he said during the release of the report.

Why are workers leaving?

The data shows that in the formal sector alone, 55,684 vacancies arose from resignations, far higher than those due to retirement at 1,892. Restructuring ac-

counted for 13,277, termination (9,769), expansion (46,562), and others (28,056).

The Permanent Secretary in the Gender Ministry, Mr Aggrey David Kibenge, attached poor working environments and weak enforcement of labour standards as factors pushing workers out of jobs. "Many workers are not attracted to the workplaces because the places are indecent, not inspected, and not attractive. Employers say these places are not effectively filled due to insufficient funds to service payments," Mr Kibenge said.

"We need to go back to the drawing board and ask ourselves if workplaces are being inspected enough and whether they are inclusive enough to

REGIONAL VARIATION

Bukedi Sub-region recorded the highest unemployment rate at 23.7 percent, which is almost double the national average that stands at 12.2 percent. Teso follows with 19.7 percent, while Tooro (16.2 percent), Busoga (15 percent), Kampala (14.7 percent), Elgon (13.4 percent), and Lango (12.8 percent) also rank above the national level. Buganda (11.9 percent) and Acholi (10.6 percent) also fall closer to the national average, while Bunyoro records the lowest unemployment rate at 4.5 percent, followed by West Nile (8.9 percent), Ankole (9.3 percent), and Karamoja (10 percent).

retain workers," he added.

The burden of unemployment continues to fall disproportionately on women, whose rate stands at 13.9 percent compared to 10.8 percent for men. Nationally, youth unemployment also remains high at 18 percent, with a higher rate among females (21 percent) compared to males (15.2 percent), driven by a mismatch between education and job market needs.

Mr Lugoloobi expressed optimism that Uganda will attain middle-income status, citing plans to expand industrialisation to absorb unemployed youth.

"The services sector has too many people compared to those in industry and agriculture in the formal sector, which is evident that we need to construct more industries to cover the large numbers of unemployed youth. We are hopeful we shall achieve middle-income status largely through this by 2040," he said.

Unemployment is also higher in urban areas (12.8 percent) than in rural areas (11.8 percent), reflecting growing migration to towns and cities.

The report also sparked debate over labour productivity, with Mr Lugoloobi urging UBOS to include productivity metrics in future surveys, arguing that employment figures alone do not fully capture economic performance.

"The productivity of our population is still very low, and I would implore you in the next findings to try and include data relating to productivity, how productive our population is," he said.

26.4m
UGANDANS OF
WORKING AGE