



2.5 Unemployment

	Unemployment						Long-term unemployment			Unemployment by level of educational attainment		
	Male % of male labor force		Female % of female labor force		Total % of total labor force		% of total unemployment			% of total unemployment		
	1980-82 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1980-82 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1980-82 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a
Albania	..	..	..	..	5.6	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Algeria	..	26.9	..	24.0	..	26.4	..	..	..	55.9	32.1	4.6
Angola	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Argentina	..	15.4	..	17.6	2.3	16.3	..	..	..	55.7	28.7	4.8
Armenia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Australia	5.0	8.6	7.4	8.1	5.9	8.4	33.1	27.5	30.8	55.1	30.5	11.3
Austria	1.6	5.3	2.3	5.2	1.9	5.3	28.9	28.4	28.7	37.2	57.8	5.0
Azerbaijan	..	..	..	..	..	1.3	..	..	..	2.1	50.7	47.2
Bangladesh	..	2.7	..	2.3	..	..	..	..	..	47.4	28.4	..
Belarus	..	2.2	..	3.3	..	2.7	..	..	..	..	63.6	26.9
Belgium	..	7.1	..	11.5	..	9.0	59.4	61.5	60.5	..	..	..
Benin	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bolivia	..	3.7	..	4.5	..	4.2	..	..	..	24.0	42.1	28.9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Botswana	..	19.4	..	23.9	..	21.5	..	..	..	..	..	..
Brazil	2.8	5.7	2.8	8.8	2.8	6.9	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bulgaria	..	14.2	..	14.1	..	13.7	59.4	61.7	60.4	..	52.7	7.3
Burkina Faso	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Burundi	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cambodia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cameroon	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Canada	6.9	9.2	8.4	9.2	7.5	9.2	14.5	10.2	12.5	33.9	30.5	35.6
Central African Republic	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	54.3	3.7	2.0
Chad	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Chile	10.6	4.7	10.0	6.6	10.4	5.3	53.2	72.5	59.7	30.5	53.3	12.4
China	..	..	..	..	4.9	3.0	..	..	..	..	..	..
Hong Kong, China	..	2.3	..	2.0	..	2.2	..	..	..	..	..	..
Colombia	..	9.8	..	15.1	..	12.1	..	..	..	21.1	58.5	18.7
Congo, Dem. Rep.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Congo, Rep.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Costa Rica	5.3	4.9	7.8	7.5	5.9	5.7	..	..	..	69.8	16.0	..
Côte d'Ivoire	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Croatia	3.4	14.0	8.2	20.1	5.3	16.8	..	..	..	..	..	..
Cuba	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Czech Republic	..	3.8	..	5.8	..	4.7	31.3	29.9	30.5	33.3	63.7	3.1
Denmark	6.5	4.5	7.6	6.4	7.0	5.4	26.3	27.9	27.2	35.0	46.7	16.8
Dominican Republic	..	9.5	..	28.6	..	15.9	..	..	..	50.4	31.1	9.6
Ecuador	..	7.0	..	12.7	..	9.2	..	..	..	..	..	..
Egypt, Arab Rep.	3.9	7.6	19.2	24.1	5.2	11.3	..	..	..	..	..	..
El Salvador	..	9.5	..	5.3	12.9	8.0	..	..	..	53.9	18.8	8.3
Eritrea	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Estonia	..	10.7	..	9.2	..	10.0	..	..	..	22.0	45.7	32.9
Ethiopia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	27.5	38.3	3.3
Finland	4.5	13.8	4.7	15.1	4.6	14.4	33.9	28.9	31.4	40.0	50.2	10.0
France	4.1	10.8	9.1	14.2	6.1	12.3	39.1	43.3	41.2	..	..	..
Gabon	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Gambia, The	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Georgia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Germany	..	8.9	..	10.9	..	9.8	44.5	51.7	47.8	23.1	59.4	13.6
Ghana	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Greece	3.3	6.2	5.7	14.8	2.4	9.6	45.8	62.2	55.7	35.2	40.5	23.2
Guatemala	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Guinea	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Guinea-Bissau	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Haiti	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Honduras	..	3.2	..	3.2	..	3.2	..	..	..	..	..	..



Unemployment 2.5

	Unemployment						Long-term unemployment			Unemployment by level of educational attainment		
	Male % of male labor force		Female % of female labor force		Total % of total labor force		% of total unemployment			% of total unemployment		
	1980-82 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1980-82 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1980-82 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a	Primary 1994-97 ^a	Secondary 1994-97 ^a	Tertiary 1994-97 ^a
Hungary	..	9.5	..	7.7	..	8.7	52.6	49.2	51.3	41.1	56.1	2.8
India	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	38.1	27.3
Indonesia	..	3.3	..	5.1	..	4.0	..	..	..	..	..	..
Iran, Islamic Rep.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Iraq	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Ireland	11.4	10.3	8.2	10.3	10.5	10.3	63.3	46.9	57.0	63.4	25.5	10.8
Israel	4.1	6.8	6.0	8.8	4.8	7.7	..	..	..	23.6	44.3	31.2
Italy	4.8	9.7	13.2	16.9	7.6	12.5	66.5	66.2	66.3	60.2	31.7	6.4
Jamaica	16.3	9.9	39.6	23.0	27.3	16.0	18.3	29.3	25.6	..	..	..
Japan	2.0	3.4	2.0	3.4	2.0	3.4	28.8	11.8	21.8	22.8	53.6	23.7
Jordan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	50.2	14.8	32.4
Kazakhstan	..	..	..	..	..	4.1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kenya	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Korea, Dem. Rep.	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Korea, Rep.	..	2.8	..	2.3	..	2.6	3.5	0.9	2.5	14.0	55.4	23.4
Kuwait	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Kyrgyz Republic	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	34.4	54.5	11.1
Lao PDR	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Latvia	..	14.3	..	14.6	..	14.4	63.1	63.0	63.0	..	72.2	7.9
Lebanon	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Lesotho	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Libya	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Lithuania	..	6.6	..	6.9	..	6.7	..	..	..	37.5	37.8	24.7
Macedonia, FYR	15.6	35.0	32.8	44.5	22.0	38.8	..	..	..	..	..	..
Madagascar	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	37.4	4.1
Malawi	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Malaysia	..	..	..	..	..	2.5	..	..	..	..	..	..
Mali	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Mauritania	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Mauritius	..	7.8	..	13.9	..	9.8	..	..	..	35.4	63.8	..
Mexico	..	2.9	..	4.7	..	3.5	2.1	2.6	2.3	16.3	40.9	17.0
Moldova	..	..	..	..	..	1.0	..	..	..	..	..	..
Mongolia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Morocco	..	15.8	..	23.0	..	17.8	..	..	..	..	..	..
Mozambique	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Myanmar	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Namibia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Nepal	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Netherlands	4.3	4.4	5.2	7.0	4.6	5.5	49.9	48.5	49.1	30.1	33.6	15.5
New Zealand	..	6.6	..	6.7	..	6.7	22.2	16.1	19.5	..	..	..
Nicaragua	..	12.6	..	14.8	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Niger	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Nigeria	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Norway	1.2	4.0	2.1	4.3	1.7	4.1	13.0	7.7	10.6	25.8	55.9	15.1
Oman	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Pakistan	3.0	4.1	7.5	13.7	3.6	5.4	..	..	..	25.0	13.9	9.8
Panama	..	11.3	..	20.0	..	14.3	..	..	..	43.3	35.8	20.1
Papua New Guinea	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Paraguay	3.8	7.8	4.8	8.6	4.1	8.2	..	..	..	..	..	..
Peru	..	6.8	..	8.9	..	7.7	..	..	..	15.4	57.1	25.7
Philippines	3.2	7.5	7.5	8.5	4.8	7.4	..	..	..	..	..	..
Poland	..	9.5	..	13.2	..	11.2	33.5	41.9	38.0	23.9	71.5	4.6
Portugal	3.7	6.6	12.2	8.5	7.0	7.5	53.4	57.7	55.6	73.6	15.9	5.8
Puerto Rico	19.5	14.4	12.3	12.1	17.1	13.5	..	..	..	..	..	..
Romania	..	5.7	..	6.4	..	6.0	44.1	50.1	47.0	23.9	69.0	5.9
Russian Federation	..	9.6	..	9.0	..	11.3	29.5	36.8	32.8	19.4	72.3	8.3



2.5 Unemployment

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	Male % of male labor force		Female % of female labor force		Total % of total labor force		% of total unemployment			% of total unemployment		
	1980-82 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1980-82 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1980-82 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a	1994-97 ^a
Rwanda
Saudi Arabia
Senegal
Sierra Leone
Singapore	..	2.4	..	2.4	..	2.4	..	..	..	26.8	27.3	29.7
Slovak Republic	..	10.8	..	12.5	..	11.6	49.2	52.5	50.3	..	67.5	3.3
Slovenia	..	7.0	..	7.3	..	7.1	61.1	50.0	55.1	31.9	60.9	4.3
South Africa	5.1	..	..	..	..	..	..
Spain	10.4	15.8	12.8	28.3	11.1	20.6	49.9	60.4	55.5	55.9	17.8	18.8
Sri Lanka	..	8.0	..	17.6	..	11.3	..	..	..	..	..	..
Sudan
Sweden	1.7	8.3	2.3	7.5	2.0	7.9	31.8	26.9	29.6	31.0	53.2	9.1
Switzerland	0.2	4.3	0.3	3.9	0.2	4.1	25.5	32.8	28.5	..	..	..
Syrian Arab Republic	3.8	..	3.9	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Tajikistan	..	2.4	..	2.9	..	2.7	..	..	..	10.6	83.2	6.3
Tanzania
Thailand	1.0	0.9	0.7	0.9	0.8	0.9	..	..	..	63.3	11.3	20.5
Togo
Trinidad and Tobago	8.0	13.2	14.0	21.0	10.0	16.2	24.0	39.9	31.7	40.5	57.5	1.3
Tunisia	26.1	1.7
Turkey	9.0	6.0	23.0	7.4	10.9	6.4	38.1	49.0	41.6	..	..	..
Turkmenistan
Uganda
Ukraine	..	9.5	..	8.4	..	8.9	..	..	..	5.6	27.6	66.9
United Arab Emirates
United Kingdom	..	8.1	..	5.8	..	7.1	44.9	27.8	38.6	..	43.6	10.3
United States	6.9	4.9	7.4	5.0	7.1	4.9	9.4	8.0	8.7	..	37.2	39.2
Uruguay	..	8.0	..	13.2	..	10.2	..	..	..	..	..	..
Uzbekistan	..	0.3	..	0.5	..	0.4	..	..	..	..	..	..
Venezuela, RB	..	9.0	..	12.8	5.9	10.3	..	..	..	60.0	22.6	13.1
Vietnam
West Bank and Gaza
Yemen, Rep.
Yugoslavia, FR (Serb./Mont.)
Zambia
Zimbabwe	41.1	52.7	0.1

a. Data are for the most recent year available.



Unemployment 2.5

About the data

Unemployment and total employment in a country are the broadest indicators of economic activity as reflected by the labor market. The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the unemployed as members of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking work, including people who have lost their jobs and those who have voluntarily left work. Some unemployment is unavoidable in all economies. At any time some workers are temporarily unemployed—between jobs as employers look for the right workers and workers search for better jobs. Such unemployment, often called frictional unemployment, results from the normal operation of labor markets.

Changes in unemployment over time may reflect changes in the demand for and supply of labor, but they may also reflect changes in reporting practices. Ironically, low unemployment rates can often disguise substantial poverty in a country, while high unemployment rates can occur in countries with a high level of economic development and low incidence of poverty. In countries without unemployment or welfare benefits, people eke out a living in the informal sector. In countries with well-developed safety nets, workers can afford to wait for suitable or desirable jobs. But high and sustained unemployment indicates serious inefficiencies in the allocation of resources.

The ILO definition of unemployment notwithstanding, reference periods, criteria for seeking work, and the treatment of people temporarily laid off and those seeking work for the first time vary across countries. In many developing countries it is especially difficult to measure employment and unemployment in agriculture. The timing of a survey, for example, can maximize the seasonal effects of agricultural unemployment. And informal sector employment is difficult to quantify in the absence of regulation for registering and tracking informal activities.

Data on unemployment are drawn from labor force sample surveys and general household sample surveys, social insurance statistics, employment office statistics, and official estimates, which are usually based on combined information drawn from one or more of the above sources. Labor force surveys generally yield the most comprehensive data because they include groups—particularly people seeking work for the first time—not covered in other unemployment statistics. These surveys generally use a definition of unemployment that follows the international recommendations more closely than that used by other sources and therefore generate statistics that are more comparable internationally.

By contrast, the quality and completeness of data obtained from employment offices and social insurance programs vary widely. Where employment offices work closely with social insurance schemes, and registration with such offices is a prerequisite for receipt of unemployment benefits, the two sets of unemployment estimates tend

to be comparable. Where registration is voluntary, and where employment offices function only in more populous areas, employment office statistics do not give a reliable indication of unemployment. Most commonly excluded from both these sources are discouraged workers who have given up their job search because they believe that no employment opportunities exist or do not register as unemployed after their benefits have been exhausted. Thus measured unemployment may be higher in economies that offer more or longer unemployment benefits.

Long-term unemployment is measured in terms of duration, that is, the length of time that an unemployed person has been without work and looking for a job. The underlying assumption is that shorter periods of joblessness are of less concern, especially when the unemployed are covered by unemployment benefits or similar forms of welfare support. The length of time a person has been unemployed is difficult to measure, because the ability to recall the length of that time diminishes as the period of joblessness extends. Women's long-term unemployment is likely to be lower in countries where women constitute a large share of the unpaid family workforce. Such women have more access than men to nonmarket work and are more likely to drop out of the labor force and not be counted as unemployed.

Economies for which unemployment data are not consistently available or were deemed unreliable have been omitted from the table.

Definitions

- **Unemployment** refers to the share of the labor force without work but available for and seeking employment. Definitions of labor force and unemployment differ by country (see *About the data*).
- **Long-term unemployment** refers to the number of people with continuous periods of unemployment extending for a year or longer, expressed as a percentage of total unemployment.
- **Unemployment by level of educational attainment** shows the unemployed by level of educational attainment, as a percentage of total unemployed. The levels of educational attainment accord with the United Nations Educational, Cultural, and Scientific Organization's (UNESCO) International Standard Classification of Education.

Data sources

The unemployment data are from the ILO database Key Indicators of the Labour Market (1999 issue).

Table 2.5a

Unemployment rate by level of educational attainment %

		Less than primary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Austria	1997	..	37.2	57.8	5.0
Canada	1997	..	33.9	30.5	35.6
Japan	1997	..	22.8	53.6	23.7
Jordan	1996	2.5	50.2	14.8	32.4
Peru	1997	1.8	15.4	57.1	25.7
Poland	1997	..	23.9	71.5	4.6
Russian Federation	1996	..	19.4	72.3	8.3
Thailand	1997	4.7	63.3	11.3	20.5
Venezuela, RB	1996	4.1	60.0	22.6	13.1
Zimbabwe	1997	6.0	41.1	52.7	0.1

.. Not available.

Source: International Labour Organization, Key Indicators of the Labour Market.

The distribution of unemployed workers across education levels varies among countries, largely reflecting economic conditions and labor market institutions. Information about this distribution can aid both employment and education policy.

Knowing the education and skill levels of the unemployed can help in improving training programs for the jobless or designing job creation programs. And data on unemployment at different education levels can help in developing education and training strategies that improve education outcomes for workers.