

CSBAG BUDGET NEWS



Uganda's Shift Toward More Salaried Employment Must Translate Into Decent Work



A Zucchini Vegetable farmer based in Kenya tending to his garden. Source (Gardeners Path)

Recent findings from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) reveal a significant shift in Uganda's labour landscape. More Ugandans are moving away from subsistence farming and increasingly seeking salaried employment—a transition that reflects changing economic aspirations, urbanisation, and the evolving structure of the country's economy.

According to the **Uganda Harmonised Integrated Survey (UHIS)**, whose findings were disseminated and covered the Financial years 2021/22, 2023/24 and 2024/25 was released on Thursday, 21st May in Kampala.

Indicator	2021/22	2024/25	Change
Non-farm wage employment	14.9%	17.9%	+3.0%
Subsistence Work (age 15+)	30.4%	25.8%	-4.6%
On farm employment	17.1%	12.8%	-4.3%
Agriculture, Forestry and fishing employment			-8.3%

Note: One source reports 19.7% while others indicate 17.9%. The 17.9% figure is used here as it appears consistently across multiple verified outlets.

The data also shows growth in the services and industry sectors. Employment in the services sector rose from **29.5%** to **36.5%**, while industry sector employment increased from **8.9** to **10.3%**. These trends suggest that Uganda is gradually undergoing structural transformation as more citizens seek opportunities beyond traditional agriculture.

However, behind these promising statistics lies an important question: Are enough decent and sustainable jobs being created to meet the growing demand for salaried employment?

While more Ugandans are seeking formal employment, the national unemployment rate also increased slightly—from **10.2** to **11%**. This points to a widening gap between labour market aspirations and the actual availability of

stable jobs. For many young people, the desire for salaried work is often met with: limited formal job openings, underemployment (working below skill level), unstable short term contracts and low-paying informal work disguised as formal employment.

UBOS Executive Director Dr. Chris N. Mukiza, presenting the findings, noted that the survey covers Waves I, II and III for the periods 2021/22, 2023/24 and 2024/25, providing "up-to-date data on housing conditions, labour force characteristics, unemployment, access to grid electricity, financial services and other key development indicators.

Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world, with thousands of young people graduating each year and entering a labour market that struggles to absorb them. The shift away from subsistence farming reflects changing ambitions among youth who increasingly seek financial stability, career growth, and dignified work. The survey also revealed that **21.8% of individuals moved into employment** during the survey period, while **5.5%** entered unemployment and **21.3%** exited the labour force entirely. The transition raises important concerns for gender and regional equity. While salaried employment can improve household incomes and economic independence, unequal access to education, technology, childcare support, and safe working conditions continues to affect women disproportionately.

The same UBOS survey also found that female-headed households are increasing nationally, reflecting changing family and economic structures. For Rural populations, meanwhile, risk being left behind entirely. While mobile money access has surged from **34.4%** to **47.7%** nationally—and rural literacy has improved, economic transformation policies must intentionally support inclusive growth across all regions.

Labour must be measured by whether Ugandans can access dignified work, economic security, and genuine opportunities that improve their quality of life. As Uganda pursues its **FY2026/27** budget priorities, employment creation must be paramount.

CSBAG IN THE MEDIA

 @ubctvuganda

The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, together with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, has launched a new digital E-Accounting tool.

Link: youtu.be/ZJjeETtmURg
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#PARTICIPATORYBUDGETING

CSBAG was recognised for its efforts in embedding evaluation and strengthening M&E systems at the heart of budget advocacy, accountability, and inclusion during the 9th Uganda Evaluation Week 2026. The event was organised by the Uganda Evaluation Association in partnership with the Office of the Prime Minister and other Government MDAs.

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SOURCE: Uganda Harmonised Integrated Survey (UHIS)

